

THE RELIGIOUS POLICY OF AL-MUTAWAKKIL ALĀ ALLĀH AL-ABBĀSĪ

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ABS'TRACT

This thesis examines the religious policy of the caliph al-Mutawakkil 'alā Allāh, the tenth 'Abbāsīd caliph, (232-247/847-861). The study focuses on the following headings: the main features of al-Mutawakkil's life and reign; his attitude towards 1) the Ahl al-Kitāb, 2) the orthodox Muslims, 3) the Mu'tazila, 4) the Shī'a, and 5) the Ṣūfīs. It is suggested that although al-Mutawakkil's policy toward each of these groups was governed by his own strong orthodoxy, the policy was conditioned chiefly by political factors.

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By

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INTRODUCTION

The 'Abbāsīd dynasty, which ruled the Muslim community from 132/750 until 656/1258, in addition to superseding the Umayyad, constituted at its inception a great revolution in Islām. If we look back to the 'Abbāsīds' secret propaganda (100-132 A.H.) we find that they based their movement on their kinship with the family of the Prophet, the Banū-Hāshim who were the common ancestors of 'Abbās (from whom the 'Abbāsīds took the name of their dynasty), 'Alī (Muḥammad's cousin and son-in-law), and the Prophet.¹ The 'Abbāsīds used religion as a means for their political goals. For the first time in Islamic history the Caliphs created names for themselves, which had religious connotations. Thus the caliphs became well-known by these names. For example al-Manṣūr (the one who is supported [by God]), al-Mahdī (the one who is guided [by God]), al-Rashīd (the one who is following the right way), al-Mutawakkil 'alā Allāh (the one who trusts in God), etc. By this and other means the 'Abbāsīds caliphs succeeded in gaining the mass of the community to their side. Moreover the caliphs ordered the rebuilding of the Holy places (Mecca and Medina) and they organized the pilgrimage from Iraq on a regular basis. "Al-Manṣūr's (the second 'Abbāsīd caliph) renunciation of the heterodox origins of the 'Abbāsīd movement was followed under his successors by a deliberate policy of wooing the orthodox (i.e., the Sunnī) theologians and laying a greater stress on the religious element in the nature of

the authority exercised by the Caliphs."²

Once the 'Abbāsids had succeeded in winning the caliphate, many changes in the form of government quickly took place. Instead of the leader of the Arab aristocracy, the caliph became an autocrat claiming divine origin for his authority. Clearly, the 'Abbāsids adopted religion as a means of consolidating their authority, weakening the Arab tribal solidarity and gaining the support of other racial groups. This policy is best summarized, perhaps, by Bernard Lewis who states: "To replace the weakening bond of Arab nationality the caliphs laid increased stress on Islamic orthodoxy and conformity, trying to weld their cosmopolitan empire into a unity based on a common faith and common way of life."³

This religious policy culminated when the caliph al-Ma'mūn attempted to impose the Mu'tazilī doctrine as the official doctrine of the state in 218/833, which some scholars have claimed was an official attempt at a compromise with the Shī'a.⁴ From the time of al-Mutawakkil this attempt was abandoned, and thereafter the 'Abbāsids adhered, formally at least, to the most rigid orthodoxy.

It is with the religious policy of al-Mutawakkil 'alā Allāh al-'Abbāsī (232-247 A.H., 847-861 A.D.) that this study deals. His religious policy is important, because he put an end to the policy of favoritism toward the Mu'tazilites and adopted a rigid stand against the Shi'a and the non-Muslims. In other words, though al-Mutawakkil continued the 'Abbāsī policy of using religion as an instrument of state, he gave it a new use.

For the purposes of analysis, we can consider al-Mutawakkil's religious policy in terms of his attitude toward the orthodox Muslims on the one hand and the attitude of his Sunnī supporters toward the non-Sunnīs, including non-Muslims, on the other. In spite of the obvious importance of this study in the history of 'Abbāsīd religious intellectual development, a surprisingly small amount of scholarly attention has been devoted to it. First, it should be pointed out that neither al-Mutawakkil nor any aspect of his reign has been the subject of detailed study; when al-Mutawakkil is mentioned, it is only briefly, in a sentence or two which comes in a more general context.

As far as recent studies are concerned some historians have viewed al-Mutawakkil's policy as a reflection of a personality steeped in bigotry. Muir, for example, whose book The Caliphate: Its Rise, Decline and Fall, summarizes the primary sources for a history of the caliphate from its beginning up to the year 926/1520, states the following concerning al-Mutawakkil: "Praise given by the annalists to this reign of fifteen years for the caliph's return to orthodoxy and generous patronage of poets and men of learning, makes but sorry amends for a life of cruel tyranny, bigotry and self-indulgence."⁵ The same view is reflected in recent times in J.J. Saunderson's popular study A History of Medieval Islam, when he states: "He (al-Mutawakkil) was a narrow bigot, who made enemies everywhere by his persecution of Christians, Jews, Shi'ites and the defenders of the doctrine of the created Koran, and quarrels among his sons gave the Turks an

excuse to mutiny and kill him."⁶ The same explanation is offered by such different historians as Syed Ameer 'Ali,⁷ Reuben Levy,⁸ and R.D. Osborn.⁹

In contradistinction to this group of historians some see political motives involved in his behaviour. This outlook is represented in the works of such distinguished historians as von Grunebaum,¹⁰ Nabia Abbott,¹¹ Montgomery Watt,¹² A.S. Tritton,¹³ and Muṣṭafā Shākīr.¹⁴ Von Grunebaum, for instance, in a general cultural study of Islam, based on primary sources, characterizes this policy as an attempt to unify the Muslim community. He states that "unifying Muslim society entailed, almost of necessity, the desire to eliminate organized religious dissent. Not only when sectarianism could be interpreted as a mask for 'nationalism', as was the case with Hārījism in Iran or among the Berbers, did the government feel entitled to use force, but within Sunnite Islam itself major deviations were unbearable to the caliph. The Miḥna of the Mu'tazilites was abolished by Mutawakkil (ca 851), and the government employed its machinery to uphold orthodox against its theological critics as well as against the partisans of the house of 'Alī, the Shi'ā."¹⁵ More briefly, Watt states simply: "After the accession of al-Mutawakkil the policy of the ruling institution was finally reversed (for political and not theological reasons)."¹⁶

Finally, other historians have particularized this political interpretation of al-Mutawakkil's religious policy by drawing attention

to its utility as a weapon against the increasing power of the Turkish military officers: Bernard Lewis, for instance, in his article "Abbāsids" in The Encyclopedia of Islam mentions that "A serious attempt to reassert the supremacy of the Caliphate was made by his (al-Wāthiq) successor al-Mutawakkil, who tried to break the power of the Turkish guards and to rally support against them among the theologians and civil population, whose orthodox fanaticism he sought to placate by renouncing and suppressing the Mu'tazilī doctrines of his predecessors and enforcing the regulations against the Christians and Jews. The attempt ended in failure."¹⁷ This same view is mentioned by Ḥaṣan A. Maḥmūd in his recent work Al-ʿĀlam al-Islāmī fī al-ʿAsr al-ʿAbbāsī. When he states that "The conflict between the caliph al-Mutawakkil and the Turkish guards reached a point that everybody wanted to get rid of the other. The caliph had already determined to put an end to the Turks. But his son al-Muntaṣir opposed him and associated with the Turks, because of al-Mutawakkil's policy with the ʿAlids."¹⁸ The same idea is already presented by such different historians as Carl Brockelmann,¹⁹ and Sayyid Fayyaz Mahmud.²⁰

The studies mentioned above, though they allude to the religious policy of al-Mutawakkil, are not directly concerned with this subject. Comparatively, more direct and recent study on this subject has been done by D. Sourdél in his article La politique Religieuse des successeurs d'al-Mutawakkil, which sheds some light on al-Mutawakkil's policy. Although the writer does not deal with

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al-Mutawakkil per se, he, however, sees his policy weighed against the backdrop of the reign of his successors as motivated purely by politico-religious reasons.²¹

When we turn to the primary sources, again we find very little attention devoted to the religious policy of al-Mutawakkil and again we find their information within a broader or narrower context. But these sources generally never deal with the problem as such, so that there is no elaborate explanation or interpretation for this policy. Rather there are surveys for his whole reign without any indication for the cause of his religious policy. This work is presented by such Muslim historians as Ya'qūbī²² who is the earliest SHI'Ī historian (d. 282/895), Ṭabarī²³ (d. 310/922), Ibn Kathīr²⁴ (d. 774 A.H.), Ibn Khaldūn²⁵ (d. 808/1405) and Suyūṭī²⁶ (d. 911/1605) etc. It can be said that there are, however, some indications and certain facts in other chroniclers on the basis of which we can form certain opinions. It is not fair to attribute some of the opinions as a cause for the religious policy of al-Mutawakkil. Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1238), for instance, states when he mentions the events of 236 A.H. that "al-Mutawakkil was animated by violent personnel hatred for 'Alī and his descendants. He punished everybody who intended to visit their shrines. Among his companions was 'Ubādah al-Mukhnath, who used to put a pillow on his belly and uncovered his bald head and danced before the caliph, while the singers sang "Here is the bald one, the bellied one, the caliph of the Muslims, i.e., 'Alī, and the caliph was amused by that."²⁷ This view is reflected by such

historians as Ibn Ṭaḳṭaḳā²⁸ who was descended from the caliph 'Alī, i.e., Shī'ī (d. 680/1281), Abū al-Fidā'²⁹ (d. 732/1331) and Ibn al-Wardī³⁰ (d. 749/1348).

In short, we feel obliged to fill the gaps and present a coherent interpretation of his religious policy since no primary sources deal with it as such.

There is a lack of historical vision for the causes of this policy and its development under al-Mutawakkil's reign and its consequences. This lack of research study on the problem necessitates a new approach to it in which one can avoid both the broader and the narrower context which are the characteristics of our primary sources, and also to investigate the one single interpretation which has been given to explain al-Mutawakkil's policy.

Our study attempts to view al-Mutawakkil's religious policy in its proper historical perspective and to outline the ramifications of this policy on the politico-religious life of the empire. By doing so we hope that succeeding studies may ultimately reveal the influence which al-Mutawakkil's policy has brought to bear on the succeeding political evolution of the 'Abbāsids/ empire. It would be presumptuous, we recognize, to claim that al-Mutawakkil's policy was the sole element in the future development of the politico-religious life of the empire. That development we hasten to point out involved a complex of factors. But, nevertheless, the development of religious life in the 'Abbāsids/ empire manifests elements whose roots may be found in, among other origins, the religious policy of al-Mutawakkil.

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CHAPTER I

The Main Features of al-Mutawakkil's Life and Reign

Before turning to an analysis of the religious policy of al-Mutawakkil, it would be useful, for the purpose of this study, to try to sketch the main features of his life and reign as a whole. Although this paper focuses on religious policy, it is with the assumption that it cannot be understood in the abstract, divorced, that is, from al-Mutawakkil's character and personality and the way in which he conducted himself as a caliph.

It is difficult, however, to gain the type of biographical knowledge which we need from the primary sources. As I have indicated in the preceding pages, the space devoted to al-Mutawakkil in general histories is small; likewise, the biographers do little more than record the main political events of his reign.

Nevertheless, a certain amount of useful information is forthcoming, from which we can reconstruct the context in which al-Mutawakkil's religious decisions were made. The information for this chapter is based mainly on Ṭabarī and other historians who record important political events, which, a later chapter will show, were related to his religious policy. Before examining this subject let us see who al-Mutawakkil was.

al-Mutawakkil ʿalā Allāh abū al-faḍl Jaʿfar Ibn Muḥammad b. Hārūn b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad dhī al-thafanāt b. ʿAlī al-Sajād b. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbbās b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib. He was born on the 11th of

Shawwāl 206 A.H., became the 10th 'Abbāsīd caliph on the 23rd of dhī al-Hijjah 232 A.H., and was murdered on the 4th of Shawwāl 247 A.H. His mother was a slave lady named Shujā¹.

Al-Mutawakkil reigned for approximately fifteen years. He received homage right after his brother Wāthiq's death, when the government officers failed to nominate Wāthiq's son Muḥammad, because they disagreed on the issue concerning his age.²

Apparently, there was a conflict between Wāthiq and his brother, al-Mutawakkil. After the former's death in 232/847, al-Mutawakkil in 233/848 dismissed and imprisoned Muḥammad al-Zayyāt, al-Wāthiq's wazīr, who was a Mu'tazilī sympathizer, because of al-Zayyāt's alleged mistreatment of him in accordance with Wāthiq's instructions.³ Probably this personal conflict with Zayyāt and others had its influence on his religious policy, as will be explained later.

In 234 A.H. al-Mutawakkil issued a decree forbidding any kind of discussion on the createdness of the Qur'ān. This decree was met by general approval, because it settled the issue. Al-Mutawakkil's virtues were exalted to the extent that people claimed that the caliphs are but three: Abū Bakr - because of his position against apostates, 'Umar II - because of his attitude towards tyrants, and al-Mutawakkil - because of his revitalization of the Sunnah.⁴ In spite of the fact that al-Mutawakkil had gained support of the majority of the Muslim community, he faced the enmity of the Mu'tazilites and their supporters.

In 235 A.H. al-Mutawakkil issued discriminatory laws regarding

non-Muslims.⁵ This event took place because of the political and personal challenges between the Muslims and the non-Muslims. These new regulations led to a kind of conflict between the caliph and the non-Muslims on the one hand and between the orthodox Muslims and non-Muslims on the other.

As a result of the increasing power of the Turkish guards, al-Mutawakkil in the same year (235 A.H.) got rid of Itākh, one of the Turkish generals who had actually played an important role in raising al-Mutawakkil to the throne.⁶ Al-Mutawakkil's conflict with the Turkish guards has been interpreted by some historians as the main reason for his religious policy as we stated in the preceding pages. The caliph during this period of time had already nominated his three sons as his successors, al-Muntaşir, al-Mu'tazz and al-Mu'ayyad. Moreover the caliph divided the empire among them.⁷ This event played a significant role in putting an end to the life of al-Mutawakkil, because it created a conflict between the caliph and his eldest son, al-Muntaşir, who was favoured by the 'Alids and a group of Turkish officers, while his father, of course, opposed them.⁸ Moreover, it can be said that the companions and the opponents of both al-Mutawakkil and his son played their role in widening the conflict between them.

In 236 A.H. al-Mutawakkil ordered the demolition of Ḥusayn's grave and the area surrounding it. This so angered the population, even the Sunnīs, that public displeasure was shown by means of derogatory titles and accusations written on the walls.⁹

Subkī (d. 771 A.H.) in his Tabaqāt claimed that the common people hated al-Mutawakkil for two reasons:¹⁰ (1) The nomination of the tyrannical Ifraydūn al-Turkī, one of his slaves, as governor of Damascus, and (2) al-Mutawakkil's negative attitude toward the 'Alids. However this event has been interpreted by many historians, scholars and writers, whether they were Shī'īs or not, so that diverse opinions have reached us concerning the issue; these will be discussed briefly in the chapter concerning the attitude of al-Mutawakkil towards the Shī'a.

In 237 A.H. al-Mutawakkil dismissed the Qādī Muḥammad b. Abī Du'ād, who was holding this office since 234 A.H., and shortly after he was imprisoned with his father.¹¹ By dismissing his Mu'tazilī Qādī he might have felt free to act in the Sunnīs' favour. Meanwhile, al-Mutawakkil appointed Yaḥyā Ibn Aktham as chief Qādī in Sāmarrā', who replaced most of the Mu'tazilī Qādīs with Sunnīs. During this year the Sunnīs probably found themselves restored to their previous political role which had been denied them during the Miḥna (218/833 - 232/847). At the same time this year (237/851) marks the end of the Mu'tazilites' political ambitions. As a result of al-Mutawakkil's positive attitude toward Sunnīs, he allowed the family of Aḥmad b. Naṣr al-Khuzā'ī (who was murdered during Wāthiq's reign because of his strong position against the Miḥna) to bury his body. Tradition states that the caliph had already tried to do so, in 234/849, but that the masses reacted with such enthusiasm as led by al-Mutawakkil not to fulfil his decree.¹² He might have feared

that vulgar attitude towards Aḥmad would overflow the proper bounds.

In foreign affairs al-Mutawakkil launched continual raids along the north-east borders against the Byzantines. But in 238 A.H. the Byzantines started their raid against Damietta (one of the most important cities in Egypt). The inhabitants were terrified and strove to escape by a stream which lay between the city and the port. In their hurried confusion, they missed the track, and most of them perished in this attempt. The Byzantines plundered the city and then destroyed it.¹³ Here we find that the caliph did not take revenge against the invaders but rather proclaimed new regulations in 239 A.H. against the non-Muslims which were more severe than the former ones.¹⁴ The non-Muslims, in their turn, got the chance shortly after to show their reaction against these regulations, when the people of Hams in 241 A.H. revolted against their ruler. Non-Muslims associated with them. When the news reached al-Mutawakkil, he ordered the governor to suppress the revolt and sent him military reinforcement from Damascus for that purpose. The revolt was put down and the caliph continued to show his enmity towards the non-Muslims either by exiling or putting some of them to death, or by destroying their churches.¹⁵

Finally the conflict between the caliph and his son on the one side and between the caliph and his enemies, whether they were Turkish or Shī'a, on the other, led to put an end to the life of the caliph in 247 A.H. Ṭabarī states that "The caliph and his vizier al-Faṭḥ ibn Khāqān planned to have al-Muntaṣir and the Turkish officers

assassinated."¹⁶ However, on the night of his death, al-Mutawakkil was drinking with his companions and al-Muntaşir was there also. When al-Mutawakkil found himself at that time on bad terms with his designated successor, he ordered his vizier to hit al-Muntaşir twice, which he did. Moreover, the caliph annoyed him before the council and said "You are my witnesses on the issue that I dismiss the Musta'jil (he who is in a hurry)." Al-Muntaşir said "O you, the commander of the believers" but al-Mutawakkil continued and said "I called you al-Muntaşir while the people called you al-Muntaşir (he who waits) because of your stupidity and now you have become the Musta'jil." As a result of this annoyance, al-Muntaşir decided to put an end to the life of his father and he fulfilled his decision on the same night with the help of the caliph's enemies.¹⁷ The murder of the caliph al-Mutawakkil has been considered as a turning point in the history of the caliphate because from now on the caliph became a pawn in the hands of the Turkish guards and no respect was remaining for the caliph in the eyes of his guards.

This summary shows the important political events which took place during the reign of al-Mutawakkil. We will find out how these political events influenced his religious policy through this study. We admit that there are other political events that happened during his time; but they are irrelevant to this study and for this reason we have not mentioned them above.

Concerning the economic and social life of this reign, it is well described by the Shī'ī historian and geographer al-Mas'ūdī

(d. 341/956) who ascribes to it beauty, grace, and luxurious life. The majority of the people were satisfied and praised it as a time of prosperity, not of adversity. Some of them said the days of al-Mutawakkil were better than the public security on the commercial roads, the cheap prices, the desire of love and the days of youths. So a poet has composed the following in this connection:

"Your (al-Mutawakkil's) company is more
enviable to us than the ease of life and
the security of the paths.
More enviable than the nights of love,
followed by days of beautiful youth."¹⁸

Moreover Mas'ūdī himself said "Mutawakkil had more excellent deeds and news other than what we mentioned in this book. We have already discussed and explained them briefly in our books Akhbār al-Zamān, and al-Awsat."¹⁹

We can conclude from this summary that there were certain elements in al-Mutawakkil's conduct which could affect religious policy. His personal inclination towards the orthodox in general and the Shāfi'ī school in particular²⁰ might have great influence on this policy. This penchant probably led him to suppress the Shī'īs and Mu'tazilites' power and even the non-Muslims who were in favour of the rational movement during the Mihna. To curb the rising power of Turkish generals, he adopted a policy which necessitated a change in the religious policy of his predecessor. It is with the assumption that the Turkish guards were generally in favour of Mu'tazilites, because at least they did not oppose the policy of

the caliphs during the Mihna. But since the common people had become antagonized with the Mu'tazilites because of persecutions, there was a possibility to win public favour by opposing the policy of the Mihna and it might eventually have helped in the restraint of the Turkish power. It is true that his personal attitude toward the orthodox had great influence on his relation with the non-Muslims, but the invasion of Damietta ~~at~~ the hands of Byzantines encouraged the caliph to suppress non-Muslims on the one hand and urged the non-Muslims to use any means to act against the caliph on the other.

Nevertheless, it can be said in conclusion the caliph's personal conflict with the Shī'īs, Mu'tazilites, Turkish guards and the influence of his companions upon him could be an important factor in his religious policy. This point will be discussed briefly below.

CHAPTER II

Al-Mutawakkil's Attitude towards Ahl al-Kitāb

Ahl al-Kitāb means People of the Book or the adherents of a revealed religion. This is a Qur'ānic term which refers to Christians and Jews, but was later extended to the Ṣabeans.¹ The Ahl al-Kitāb are part of the Muslim community but their rights and duties differ from those of the Muslims.² As we shall see, many of their rights and duties varied according to the dictates of the rulers; one fact, however, remained constant - in return for Muslim toleration and protection, they were required to pay the special tax, Jizya.³

It would serve no purpose here to give a detailed theoretical discussion of the religious, social and political interrelationship between Muslims and the Ahl al-Kitāb; instead, we shall give a brief historical survey to show how the relations of the Dhimmīs and the Muslim government worked in practice after the time of the Prophet.⁴ In this respect it would be more significant for the purpose of this study to analyze ~~the~~ 'Umar's covenant⁵ with the Dhimmīs which refers clearly to the position of Ahl al-Kitāb at a fairly early stage of Muslim society and their rights and duties within this community as a subservient group. This covenant can be easily presented by one letter from the Christian Dhimmīs of the city of Damascus addressed, in the version of Ibn 'Asākir, to the caliph 'Umar I. For our purpose, it is not of great importance to go into the controversy concerning whether the covenant was drawn up in

the reign of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb or 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, as long as it is realized that this is the first concrete evidence of caliphal policy towards Ahl al-Kitāb prior to the reign of al-Mutawakkil. It reads as follows:

When you ('Umar I) came to us we asked of you safety for our lives, our families, our property, and the people of our religion on these conditions: to pay tribute out of hand and be humiliated; not to hinder any Muslim from stopping in our churches by night or day, to entertain him there three days and give him food there and open to him the doors; to beat the nākūs only gently in them and not to raise our voices in them in chanting; not to shelter there, nor in any of our houses, a spy of your enemies; not to build a church, convent, hermitage, or cell, nor repair those that are dilapidated, nor assemble in any that is in a Muslim quarter, nor in their presence; not to display idolatry nor invite to it, nor show a cross on our churches, nor in any of the roads or markets of the Muslims; not to learn the Qur'^{ān} nor teach it to our children; not to prevent any of our relations from turning Muslim if he wish it; to keep to our religion; not to resemble the Muslims in dress, appearance, saddles, the engraving on our seals that we shall engrave them in Arabic; not to use their nicknames (Kunya); to honour and respect them, to stand up for them when we meet together; to guide them in their ways and goings; not to make our houses higher (than theirs); not to keep weapons or swords, nor wear them in a town or on a journey in Muslim lands; not to sell wine or display it; not to light fires with our dead in a road where Muslims dwell, nor to raise our voices at their (?our) funerals, nor bring them near Muslims; not to strike a Muslim; not to keep slaves who have been the property of Muslims. We impose these terms on ourselves and our co-religionists; he who rejects them has no protection. 6

This is the first document which shows clearly the position that the Ahl al-Kitāb had accepted for themselves in Muslim society and how, as a submissive group, they behaved in relation to the Muslims.

Although the language of the letter indicates that the Dhimmīs imposed these regulations on themselves, one should not forget that the Ahl al-Kitāb capitulated to the victorious Muslims and that the victors forced these regulations on them. Whether the Ahl al-Kitāb decreed these regulations by themselves or were compelled to accept them by the Muslim authority, the covenant signifies that the Dhimmīs' religious freedom was restricted.

If we agree with the theory that this covenant belongs to 'Umar II, then we can state that this caliph issued a second decree which specified regulations which the Dhimmīs had to follow in regard to their dress and mounts. For example, he forbade the Ahl al-Kitāb in general from using saddles; women had to use a pack saddle when riding a camel. He also forbade Ahl al-Kitāb to wear the kubā' (the short Persian jacket), silk garments and a special kind of cloak, 'īṣbah. They were not allowed to wear girdles and turbans or to let their hair grow long.⁷ Furthermore, it is recorded that he ordered the demolition of all new churches and synagogues.⁸

In the early 'Abbāsīd period, Dhimmīs were again the object of special provisions during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd who decreed that the Ahl al-Kitāb were to be subjected to regulations which would call attention to their special status. They were to wear a thick cord as a girdle, a quilted tall cap, Mudarraba kalansuwa, twisted thongs on the sandals, and shoes different from those of the Muslims. In addition, their saddles had to have two wooden balls as

big as pomegranates on the back, and the women had to use pack saddles when riding on camels.⁹ Shortly after al-Rashīd's accession to the throne, his governor in Egypt pulled down the newly built churches there.¹⁰

In other words Hārūn al-Rashīd wished to re-establish in practice the authority of these regulations governing the Dhimmīs during the reign of 'Umar II. One should not overlook the fact that these regulations were issued by caliphs who were noted either for their religious zeal or were forced by the political circumstances to hold such positions with the Dhimmīs. This idea is well presented by T.W. Arnold saying that:

The beginning of a harsher treatment of the native Christian population dates from the reign of Harun al-Rashid (786-809) who ordered them to wear a distinctive dress and give up the government posts they held to Muslims. The first of these orders shows how little one at least of the ordinances ascribed to 'Umar was observed, and these decrees were the outcome, not so much of any purely religious feeling, as of the political circumstances of the time ... Religious fanaticism is, however, responsible for many of such persecutions, as in the reign of the caliph al-Mutawakkil (847-861).¹¹

The assumption that politico-religious reasons had led the caliphs to adopt such kinds of policy toward the Ahl al-Kitāb, is reflected on the work of F. Omar. He said:

In his religious policy al-Rashīd stressed the religious character of the caliphate ... Al-Rashīd's attitude towards the dhimmīs seems to have been stricter than that of his predecessors. In 191/908 he ordered churches along the Muslim Byzantine frontiers to be demolished, and ordered the dhimmīs in Baghdād to wear different clothes from those of the Muslims and to ride different animals. His motive is so doing may

have been to win over Muslim public opinion or else the necessity to be on guard against foreign spies.¹²

When we observe the position of the Dhimmīs in the period of other caliphs, it is evident that the Dhimmīs found a suitable environment for practising their religious duties without discrimination; this is particularly true during the reign of the caliphs al-Mā'mūn, al-Mu'taṣim and al-Wāthiq (195-232, 810/847), possibly because the Jews and Christians scholars played a significant role in the spreading, teaching and translating of Greek philosophy which was the main concern of Muslim scholarship at the caliphal court and elsewhere in this period.¹³ Through this role they may have acquired the respect and tolerant attitude towards non-Islamic people, especially the Ahl al-Kitāb. For this reason, many of the Dhimmīs' intellectuals became high officials and enjoyed the respect of their caliphs.¹⁴ This situation changed when al-Mutawakkil became caliph (232/847) and showed his negative attitude towards the rationalistic idea⁵. This position, towards the Mu'tazila may have urged al-Mutawakkil to stand against the Shī'ites, the Dhimmīs and the increasing power of the Turkish guards.¹⁵

Once again, like 'Umar II and Hārūn al-Rashīd, al-Mutawakkil decreed discriminatory measures in regard to the Ahl al-Kitāb. The earliest evidence of these measures is recorded by Ṭabarī in his annal of the year 235 (850), in which he lists the specific measures adopted by al-Mutawakkil and then reproduces a letter on this subject

written by al-Mutawakkil to the provincial governors. The specific measures were as follows:

The caliph al-Mutawakkil ordered the Christians and all the Dhimmīs to wear honey coloured garments and girdles; to ride on saddles having stirrups made of wood and with saddles bearing two balls at the ends. Those Dhimmīs who wore a cap qalansuwa should wear one of different colour from that of the Muslims and it should have two buttons on it. They have to fix two patches on the outer garments of their slaves, of a colour different from that of the garment on which they are sewn. One of these patches should be placed on the chest and the other on the back; the size of each patch should be four fingers in diameter, and it should be honey coloured. Whoever wore a turban should have it likewise honey coloured. Whenever their women went outdoors in public they should appear in a like coloured loincloth (izār). The Dhimmīs should wear girdles of the zunnāra, not the minṭaqa, variety.

All their newly built places of worship should be demolished; he ordered that the tithe ('ushr) should be collected from their houses (Manāzil); and if the place (Mawdi') was large it should be turned into a mosque; if not so, it should be levelled; all Dhimmīs should nail on the door of their houses a wooden image of the devil in order to distinguish their dwellings from that of the Muslims. He (the caliph) forbade the use of the Dhimmīs in the Dīwāns or the activity of the government in which judgments would bear upon the Muslims. He forbade the educating of Dhimmīs' sons in Muslim schools and the teaching of them by a Muslim. The public display of the cross in their festivals such as Palm Sunday was forbidden, and they were not to light a fire in the street.* Their graves should be on the same level with the ground so that they should not resemble those of the Muslims.¹⁶

From this list of measures, it is evident al-Mutawakkil was repeating the earlier formulae of 'Umar II and Hārūn al-Rashīd in the determination to stress the separate and inferior status of the Ahl al-Kitāb within the Umma. The rationale which lay behind this

policy may be seen from the instructions which he sent his governors in the form of a letter. Tabarī reproduces this decree immediately following the list. It clearly reflects the enthusiastic religious ideas of the caliph and his desire to practise justice in the Umma. The message reads as follows:

In the name of God, the Compassionate and Merciful. God who is blessed and exalted by His greatness to which no one can reach, and His power over what He wants, has chosen Islam (as a religion) and He has been pleased with it, and bestowed it as privilege upon His saints by it (Islam) too. God protected it by devoutness, surrounded it with victory, guarded it from infirmity and made it victorious over other religions. He made it (Islam) free from obscurities, infallible, surrounded by glorious virtues. It is specified with the most pure and excellent rules, with the most fitting and most noble religious duties which are the most just and satisfactory ordinances; the best and most direct practical actions.

God honoured the Muslims with what He declared lawful for them and with what He declared forbidden. He made clear to them His regulations and ordinances; specified for them His legal punishments and His procedures; prepared for them from His abundant requital and rewards. He said in His book regarding His orders and prohibitions, His inducements and admonitions in it, the following: 'Surely Allāh enjoins justice and the doing of good (to others) and the giving to the kindred, and He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion. He admonishes you that you may be mindful.' XVI.90.

God prohibited to the Muslims unclean things (which the Ahl al-Kitāb were using) with regard to food, drink, and marriage, with a view to keeping them (Muslims) from such unclean things, purifying their religion and making them (Muslims) superior to the others (the Ahl al-Kitāb). 'Forbidden to you is that which dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that on which any other name than that of Allāh has been invoked, and the strangled animal, etc.' V.3.

Then He sealed what He forbade them from, in this verse, with verses protecting His religion from those who

denied it and perfecting His bounty to His people whom He had made the selected ones, saying, 'This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion, so fear them not, and fear Me. This day have I perfected for you your religion, etc.' (V:3). Also saying: 'Forbidden to you are your mothers, your daughters, etc.' (IV:27) Saying also: 'O you who believe, intoxicants and games of chance and (sacrificing to) stones set up and (dividing by) arrows are only an uncleanness; the devil's work, etc.' (V:90). God prohibited Muslims from eating the tainted and dirty foods of the people of the other religions, and from their drinks that which leads them to enmity and hatred and prevents them from the remembrance of God from prayer. God forbade inter-marriage with them (the Ahl al-Kitāb), because in His view it was the greatest of sins and according to the men of sagacity and intelligence was the most worthy of being forbidden, then God bestowed upon His people good qualities of character and the best divine graces. He made them the people of faith and fidelity, virtue and mercy, certainty and truth.

God did not permit in their religion (Islam) enmity and strife, nor scorn and pride, nor disloyalty and treachery, nor injustice and oppression; nay, He ordered (them) to perform the former and forbade the latter. God Almighty promised Paradise and reward (for the former) and threatened (the latter) with Hell and punishment. The Muslims, because He has singled them out for His munificence and earmarked for them merit by their religion which He has chosen for them are superior to (the followers of) other religions, because of their pure laws; their pure satisfying ordinances; their illuminating proofs. And by making pure their religion (Islam) by that which He made lawful for them and unlawful against them, He made it His decree to them, to glorify His religion compulsorily and willingly, in making victorious His truth; to manifest His duties effectively and willingly, completing His beneficence to the Muslims effectively in order 'That he who perishes should perish by clear argument, and he who lives might live by clear argument.' (VIII:42) And in order that God may give reward and victory to the pious ones, and place shame on the infidels both in this world and hereafter ...¹⁷

Following this general introduction, there is a long passage which

contains some of the measures against the Dhimmīs already mentioned by Ṭabarī. These include the measures which were listed in 235/850 but some of them are omitted.¹⁸ The letter ends with the following paragraph:

You (governors) shall caution your employees of what the Commander of the Faithful has ordered in this message, as a warning to encourage them to investigate what you shall present to them in this regard and to warn them against sympathetic treatment and inclination towards them (the Dhimmīs). Rather show them that punishment will come to them. Any Dhimmī opposing this decree whether by way of resistance or disregarding of others shall be punished. All the Dhimmīs shall limit themselves to their category and class in the way that the Commander of the Faithful has ordered them to carry out, and to practise them according to the wish of God. Make sure (the governors) that this is the decision and the instruction of the caliph; send to your employees in your district what you have received and act accordingly with God's wishes, etc.¹⁹

The letter summarizes the Qur'ānic passages which present the Islamic doctrine in regard to the relation between Muslims and the Dhimmīs. In other words, al-Mutawakkil's purpose was clearly to present, and act in accordance with, Qur'ānic law. In consequence, the letter implies that al-Mutawakkil was a pious man, wishing to win God's acceptance by adopting the proper Islamic religious policy, i.e. the very revelation of God, which he considered as basic to this religious policy. There are certain Qur'ānic references in this letter which refer to the superiority of the Muslims over the people of other religions, namely Christians and Jews. These references may have had a great effect on al-Mutawakkil's religious

ideas or possibly on the general Muslim trend which pushed al-Mutawakkil to adopt such a policy against the Ahl al-Kitāb. In addition, the measures may have had a political effect, for by so doing the caliph could possibly bring the pious members of society to his side and use them for the purposes of his political-religious goals.

The language of the letter seems harsh in that the caliph warned his governors against any kind of sympathy; urging them to enforce with these provisions as soon as possible. It is clear, moreover, that al-Mutawakkil's attitude towards the Dhimmīs was a part of his religious policy in general, which stressed the ritual duties of the Believers according to Islam and which included what God had commanded or prohibited Muslims to do in regard to their inter-relationship with the Dhimmīs. The Dhimmīs should limit themselves to God's command by submitting to the Muslims' authority. Finally, it appears that the caliph al-Mutawakkil wished to isolate the Dhimmīs from the Muslims and therefore re-enacted 'Umar's covenant.

Another letter, this one preserved by Ibn Qayyīm (d. 751/1353) must be considered for the light it sheds on practical political motives which undoubtedly conditioned al-Mutawakkil's religious policy. Specifically, it deals with the question of the Ahl al-Kitāb in relation to their employment in the Muslim government. The letter is issued in 235/850, immediately after the decree, and reads as follows:

God has chosen Islam as the religion; honoured and exalted it. He guided, enlightened and supported it, manifested, preferred and perfected it. It is the only religion which is acceptable. God Almighty said, 'And who so seeketh as a religion other than Islam it will not be accepted from him, and he will be a loser in the Hereafter.' (III.85) With it (Islam) He sent His children and the best man among His creatures, Muḥammad, God's blessing upon him. He made him the seal of the prophets, the Imām of pious men, and the master of the messengers, "To warn whosoever liveth, and that the word may be fulfilled against the disbelievers.' (XXVII.70) He revealed a precious book "To which falsehood cannot come either from before or from behind it. (It is) a revelation from the wise, the owner of praise,' (XLI.47) which brought happiness to his community and made them, 'The best community that hath been raised up for mankind. Ye enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency; and ye believe in Allāh. And if the people of the scripture had believed it had been better for them. Some of them are believers; but most of them are evil-livers.' (III.110) He humiliated polytheism and its people, rebuked them, belittled them, suppressed, deserted and abandoned them. Humiliation, and wretchedness were stamped upon them.

He said, 'Fight those who believe not in Allāh, nor in the Last Day, nor forbid that which Allāh and His Messenger have forbidden, nor follow the Religion of Truth, out of those who have given the Book, until they pay the tax in acknowledgement of superiority and they are in a state of subjection.' (IX.29) God imprinted their hearts and the wickedness of their hearts and consciousness; He forbade (Muslims) from trusting or believing in them due to their enmity toward the Muslims, and their swindling and hatred. God said, 'O you who believe: take not for intimates others than your own folks, who would spare no pains to ruin you; they long to hamper you. Hatred is revealed by (the utterance of their mouth, but that which their breasts hide is greater.) We have plain for you the revelations if you will understand.' (III.118)

God also said, 'O you who believe: choose not disbelievers for (your) friends in place of believers. Would you give Allāh a clear warrant against you?' (IV.144) And He said, 'Let not the believers take disbelievers for their friends in preference to believers. Who so doth that hath no connection with Allāh unless (it be) that you but guard yourselves against them, taking (as it were) security.

Allāh biddeth you, beware (only) of Himself. Unto Allāh is the journeying.' (III:28) Moreover, God said, 'O you who believe: take not the Jews and the Christians for friends. They are friends one to another. He among you who taketh them for friends is (one) of them. Lo! Allāh guideth not wrongdoing folk.' (V:51)

The Commander of the Faithful has come to know that some people who have no judgment or deliberation, seek the help of the Dhimmīs in their activities and take them as intimates to the exclusion of the Muslims, imposing their authority (over Muslims) so that they oppress them and they extend their injustice, suppression and aggression against the Muslims. The Commander of the Faithful is distressed by this and renounces it, giving much importance and prays to God to be rid of it. For the caliph (al-Mutawakkil) likes to seek God's closeness by cutting this unjust practice down and by forbidding it. The Commander of the Faithful decided to write to his governors in the districts and provinces, the commanders of the frontiers and the troops so that they might abandon the employment of the Dhimmīs in any kind of works or affairs or letting them participate in their governing or in all that the Commander of the Faithful has delegated and entrusted to them. The Commander of the Faithful considered the faithfuls' trust in their religion and loyalty in their conduct with their faithful brothers (Muslims) and guarding well what they are responsible to (by the caliph) and they are satisfied with what they asked for and keeping to their responsibility, which will make infidels' help unnecessary, because they deny God's messengers; do not believe in His verses; and associate with Him another God while He is One without any associates.

The Commander of the Faithful, whose actions were inspired by God as such, hopes that God would reward and give him an honourable acceptance; may God help the Commander of the Faithful in achieving his intention to strengthen Islam and its people; humiliating polytheism and its followers.

Let this (message) be known as the decision of the Commander of the Faithful. No one of the infidels is to be employed and let the Dhimmīs take the place which God has chosen for them. Read the letter to your employees and spread the words among them. Be

sure that the Commander of the Faithful will never know that you or anyone of your subordinates is employing or seeking help of anyone of the Dhimmīs in any affairs; peace be upon you.²⁰

The main theme of this letter is to express the caliph's wish to replace Dhimmī officials with Muslims. The citation of the Qur'ānic verses to document the relation between the Muslims and the Dhimmīs would indicate that the dismissal of the Dhimmīs from government services came as a result of al-Mutawakkil's religious zeal. That this attitude ~~which~~ may have led him to dismiss the Dhimmīs from the government is intimated by B. Lewis, in his article "Muslim Civilization in the Abbasid Period" when he says,

The non-Muslims were neutralized in largely self-governing religious communities of their own, whose relations to the ruling umma were settled by treaties that tended to degenerate into unilateral contracts. It was in keeping with this view that the most ostentatiously 'pious' of the Abbasid caliphs, al-Mutawakkil, was also the ruler who attempted most purposefully to depress the position of both Christians and Jews. Freed from military service the non-Muslim, dhimmī, was excluded from sharing in executive power.²¹

The Dhimmīs had already occupied most offices in the Muslim government and the Muslims were ruled by them.²² This idea is reflected in the work of Adam Mez in his book The Renaissance of Islam, saying that "The most amazing feature of the Islamic Government is the number of non-Muslim officers in state service. In his own Empire the Muslim was ruled by Christians. Old is the complaint that the decision over the life and property of Muslims lay in the hand of protected subjects, i.e., the Dhimmīs."²³ Concerning our

period of study he also states that "Against the domination of protected subjects, so galling to true Muslims, were the anti-Christian movements directed. In 235/849 the caliph (al-Mutawakkil) decreed that none but a Muslim was to hold a public office."²⁴

Related to this stand against the Dhimmīs serving in the government is the book al-Radd 'Alā Naṣāra²⁵ in which al-Jāhiz (d. 255/868) pointed out the superior economic situations of the Dhimmīs and he attempted to put the common people against them. This view possibly served the caliph's ambitions, who at the same time was seeking popular support to stand against the Mu'tazila and the increasing power of the Turkish guards. This will appear clearly in later chapters. B. Lewis sets forth this idea, saying that,

The caliph al-Ma'mūn (813-33) and successors attempted to impose one doctrine, that of the Hellenising school known as the Mu'tazila, as the official doctrine of the state, and persecuted followers of other teachings. This attempt failed, and when al-Mutawakkil (847-61) needed popular support against the insubordinate Turkish soldiery, he was compelled to abandon and even to suppress the Mu'tazila and to adopt orthodox views.²⁶

Nevertheless, whatever al-Mutawakkil's attitude may have been, equally important is the fact that these decrees or orders, particularly those which concerned the dismissal of the Dhimmīs from the offices, remained theoretical, because there are certain indications which show that many of the Dhimmīs remained in their offices, either in administrative or professional posts. For

example, Bukhtishu' b. Jibrā'īl (the caliph al-Mutawakkil's doctor) enjoyed the respect of the caliph and continued to hold his own position with full freedom until the year 244/858.²⁷ Moreover, we find some references in Ṭabarī to the fact that certain Dhimmīs' officers kept their offices.²⁸ These names are not only mentioned in single annals but throughout the whole reign of al-Mutawakkil. Examples are the following: Saltama b. Sa'īd al-Naṣrānī, Abū al-'Abbās al-Wāthiq al-Naṣrānī, and Nūh b. 'Īsa b. Ibrāhīm.²⁹ Ṭabarī also recorded that "In 245 (859) al-Mutawakkil placed the construction of his palace in charge of a high Christian officer, i.e., Dulayl b. Ya'qūb al-Naṣrānī."³⁰ Furthermore, this idea is mirrored among recent studies especially E.L. Butcher in his book The Story of the Church of Egypt, stating that "This measure was often adopted in times of persecution but though it entailed a great amount of misery to the individual Christians thus suddenly deprived of employment, it never remained in force many years, for the simple reason that no Moslem Government found itself able to get on without the Christians."³¹

Political circumstances occasionally forced the caliph al-Mutawakkil to take a strong religious stand against the Ahl al-Kitāb either to overcome these circumstances or to prove his religious zeal. That was in 238/852 when the Byzantine army invaded Damietta and plundered it.³² This event seems to have had a bad effect on the caliph for shortly afterwards he took a strong position and ordered (in 239/853)³³ that the Dhimmīs should not ride horses, and were told to wear yellow durrā'ā.³⁴ The caliph's religious zeal may have

led him to the extent that he ordered the demolition of the new synagogues during the same year.³⁵

What was the attitude of the Dhimmīs towards these regulations?

The answer to this question has two aspects: one gleaned from the political events which followed this decree, i.e., in 239/853, while the other can be drawn from a recent study which implies that the Dhimmīs tried to react against these measures.³⁶ In 241/855 people of Ḥims revolted against their governor because of his tyrannical policy towards them.³⁷ Meanwhile, the Dhimmīs utilized the situation and participated with them against the governor.³⁸ This participation refers either to the Dhimmīs' attitude towards the governor's policy or to the general policy of the caliph al-Mutawakkil towards the Ahl al-Kitāb. Since we do not have at our disposal any direct reference to the issue, we can make no judgment. Nevertheless, al-Mutawakkil's attitude can be easily seen from the measures which he adopted against the Christians at the end of this revolt. He issued another decree ordering his governor in Ḥims to exile all the naṣārā from the town; a few churches and monasteries were to be destroyed and others, which were located beside the mosques, were to be changed into mosques. The governor fulfilled what he was ordered to do.³⁹

In summary, al-Mutawakkil's religious policy with the Dhimmīs can be explained at two levels:

1) The caliph's own strict religious view of Islam in general and the Ahl al-Kitāb in particular. This emerges clearly from the documents

translated above which set forth briefly al-Mutawakkil's religious opinions. His purpose should not be viewed in isolation as persecution of any religious groups but rather to practise justice in order to carry out God's will and to gain His rewards. The caliph's religious zeal is reflected in the emphasis he gave to the purity of Islam and its superiority over other religions, namely Christianity and Judaism.

Further evidence of such an attitude is found in 'Alī Ṭabarī's book (al-Dīn wa'l Dawlah), The Book of Religion and Empire, which was issued under the supervision of the caliph al-Mutawakkil himself. Its aim was to prove Islam and the prophecy of Muḥammad to those who denied it, i.e., Christians and Jews, basing its evidences on their Scriptures and the Qur'ānic references. The author states that,

I have aimed at this by the help of the most High God, and have made the meanings of my sentences easy, in order that the reader may understand them, and not be in doubt. I did not leave to the members of the protected cults (Christians and Jews) any argument, any difficulty, any contentious point, that I have not mentioned and then refuted and solved, by the succour assistance of God, and by the blessing of His caliph, the Imām Ja'far al-Mutawakkil 'Ala Allāh, Commander of the Faithful. May God prolong his life, who guided me and made me profit by words heard from him. He is in earnest and eager that such books should be spread and perpetuated in order to strengthen the motives of credibility of the faith, to make its proofs triumph, and to convince of his merit there in those who ignore it, and do not recognize how God has singled out Islam and its followers in his time and renewed for them His benefits; nor how, through the gentleness of his administration, He has made Himself felt by them, in multiplying, increasing, and honouring them.⁴⁰

Here, too, al-Mutawakkil's religious view aimed at putting the Dhimmīs in the position which the Qur'ān defines. The caliph, as we have already mentioned, was re-enacting 'Umar's covenant and following the trend of Hārūn al-Rashīd. By this the caliph al-Mutawakkil aimed to make clear the rights and the duties of both the Muslims and the Ahl al-Kitāb in their inter-relationship in the umma.

2) The caliph wished to put Muslim government in Muslim hands. Apparently, al-Mutawakkil went so far in this regard to the extent that he dismissed in 247/861 the Christian employee who was responsible for the Cairo-Nile-meter and replaced him by a Muslim.⁴¹ But as we have already stated, these decrees remained in theory and most of the Dhimmīs continued to hold their offices and enjoyed the respect of the caliph al-Mutawakkil himself.

It should be noted that even if the caliph al-Mutawakkil had dismissed the Dhimmīs from their posts, it did not imply that he was against the Ahl al-Kitāb. But the caliph intended to put the important and high offices into Muslim hands as a guarantee that the interests of Islam and Muslims would be served. Nevertheless, the caliph's religious policy generally was not directed against the Dhimmīs in particular, but, as we shall see, against the Mu'tazila, under whose persecution the orthodox Muslims had suffered during the Mihna and against the Shī'ites as well. This policy of opposition was joined to the struggle against the Turkish guards,

as it is summarized by E.G. Browne, in his book A Literary History of Persia, stating that,

The reign of the caliph al-Mutawakkil (A.D. 847-861) which is characterized politically by the ascendancy of the Turkish party and the repression of Arabs, and to less extent, of the Persians, and intellectually by the reaction against the liberal Mu'tazilite doctrines and philosophical tendencies of the previous caliphs, and a fanatical hatred of 'Ali and his Shi'a or faction.⁴²

CHAPTER III

Al-Mutawakkil's Attitude towards the Orthodox Muslims

It is important to establish from the beginning what we mean by orthodox Muslims, for the term is subject to two interpretations. On one level it refers simply to the Sunnīs, so called because they follow the sunna (traditions) of the Prophet Muḥammad, in contradistinction to the Shī'īs, who follow the authoritative teaching of the Imams.¹ With the Sunnīs, however, there is also a distinction to be made in terms of orthodoxy, for although the Mu'tazilīs were Sunnīs, i.e., not Shī'īs, they were not orthodox, in the sense that they did not hold the standard beliefs of the majority of the Sunnīs. Henceforth, when we use the term "orthodox Muslims", we shall be referring to Sunnīs of standard, majority views.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain al-Mutawakkil's policy towards the orthodox Muslims. It begins with a summary of the orthodox position during the reigns of the three preceding caliphs and proceeds to a discussion of the motivations for al-Mutawakkil's new policy and its consequences. The caliph al-Ma'mūn, under the influence of Aḥmad b. Abī Du'ād, ordered the establishment of the Miḥna in 218/833 in order to make Mu'tazilism orthodox.² The caliph wrote to Iṣḥāq b. Ibrāhīm, his lieutenant in Baghdad, ordering him to summon all the qāḍīs and traditionalists to his court and to demand from them an answer to the question of the createdness of the Qur'ān.³

In this letter, al-Ma'mūn criticized the qādīs, saying that because of the weakness of their understanding, they had failed to distinguish between God and His creation, and thus (according to al-Ma'mūn) regarded God and the Qur'ān as equal.⁴ The caliph also threatened the 'Ulamā', saying that if they would not agree with the doctrine, they would be deprived of their offices. 'Ulamā' would not be acceptable as witnesses, nor would they be allowed to preach Islām.⁵ The caliph sent another letter to Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm ordering him to send the seven leading traditionalists of Baghdad to Sāmarrā' so that he might test them personally.⁶ These seven persons accepted al-Ma'mūn's ideas under pressure, and having obtained his desire, the caliph sent them back to Baghdad.⁷ The defection of these seven persons from orthodox position was a matter of much grief to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal.⁸

In the caliph's third letter to Ishāq, he mentioned that "Those who did not believe in the created Qur'ān were followers of Christianity, because the Christians believe that Jesus (Christ) is the Word of God, and not created."⁹ The caliph asked Ishāq to read this letter to Ja'far b. 'Īsā and 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Ishāq.¹⁰ Meanwhile, many different kinds of scholars appeared before Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm for questioning.¹¹ Concerning these letters it appears that the persecution of the orthodox began during the last year of al-Ma'mūn's reign, and its first victims were highly educated persons. It seems from the correspondence between the caliph and his lieutenants that al-Ma'mūn threatened to stop the pensions of some

of these educated persons and put heavy pressure on them to accept his theory. However, all those who were requested accepted al-Ma'mūn's doctrine but four: Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Sajjādah, Muḥammad b. Nūḥ al-Madrūb and al-Qawārīrī.¹² Then al-Qawārīrī and Sajjādah accepted the rationalistic theory of Mu'tazila and there remained only Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and Muḥammad b. Nūḥ. Finally the caliph ordered that Ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Nūḥ be brought to him in chains at Tarsūs.¹³ But on their way to Tarsūs they heard the news of al-Ma'mūn's death.¹⁴

However, al-Ma'mūn's successor, al-Mu'taṣim, continued the campaign against Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal to the extent that in 219/834 he was beaten mercilessly because of his own opinions.¹⁵ It is said that al-Mu'taṣim did not have the same desire as al-Ma'mūn, in anti-orthodox ideas, but he continued this anti-orthodox policy in order to maintain the policy of the preceding caliph. Al-Mu'taṣim himself was advised to do so by Aḥmad b. Abī Du'ād.¹⁶ The caliph al-Ma'mūn had himself advised his successor to follow his policy, especially that of the createdness of the Qur'ān.¹⁷ Apparently this advice was followed because it is narrated that many scientists and theologians who did not believe in the anti-orthodox theory were put to death during al-Mu'taṣim's time. Moreover, he ordered the teachers to preach the idea of the created Qur'ān among their students.¹⁸

Although al-Wāthiq continued the anti-orthodox policy of the former two caliphs, he did not oppose Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal who had become a very popular teacher and thus influential with his followers. The

The caliph only asked him to remain isolated from the people and forbade him to express his ideas. Other traditionists and scientists continued to be persecuted and the inquisition included all the theologians who objected to the doctrine of the created Qur'ān.¹⁹ Many theologians, traditionists and scientists were put in prison or put to death: e.g., Aḥmad b. Naṣr al-Khuzā'ī was murdered in 231/846.²⁰ His head was sent to Baghdad and displayed in public until the year 237/852. Meanwhile the caliph put Nu'aym b. Ḥammād²¹ and Abū Ya'qūb²² to the test. They were cast into prison, where they died.²³

The persecution of the orthodox Muslims, however, did not last for a long time, because in a debate on the creation of the Qur'ān between Aḥmad b. Abī Du'ād and another traditionist called Shaykh of Adhana, held in the presence of the caliph al-Wāthiq, Ibn Abī Du'ād failed to prove his point and consequently lost the confidence of the caliph. During the course of discussions the Shaykh proved the unoundness of the arguments of Ibn Abī Du'ād. Al-Wāthiq became angry with Aḥmad b. Abī Du'ād on hearing the discussion and realized his wrong policy towards the Sunnīs. From that time, 231/846, up to the end of his caliphate, there would not be any kind of persecution of the orthodox and no more persons were to be examined.²⁴

This historical outline of the pre-al-Mutawakkil periods sheds light on the position of the orthodox during the reign of the caliphs of the Miḥna. It is evident that the orthodox were treated harshly during that time. This review may help to explain why

al-Mutawakkil favored the orthodox and took a firm position against those who *opposed* them. Since it is obvious that in spite of persecution, the majority of the people at that time remained pro-orthodox and anti-Mu'tazila. This circumstance impelled al-Mutawakkil to adopt such a policy in order to muster orthodox support behind him. Before we go any further, we should observe what al-Mutawakkil did for the orthodox in order to understand the reason for his policy and its outcome. His policy with the Sunnīs can be seen from two directions; his actions and the Sunnīs reactions towards them.

Al-Mutawakkil came to the throne in 232/847; for the first two years of his reign the Mihna remained, but only in theory, for no one was examined at all. Then in 234/849, the caliph put an end to it.²⁵ We shall explain this idea in the next chapter. After al-Mutawakkil had received homage he revealed his sympathies towards the Sunnīs and in 234/849 messages were sent to the various governors carrying the decision of the caliph al-Mutawakkil himself to stop any kind of argumentation dealing with the Qur'ān.²⁶ Meanwhile, the caliph invited the traditionists to his court in Sāmarrā', distributed valuable presents among them and ordered them to preach Islamic doctrine according to the traditions of the Prophet.²⁷ People were very happy because of al-Mutawakkil's action and they praised and glorified him; some even said that the true caliphs were but three: Abū Bakr, because of his firmness against the apostates; 'Umar b. 'Abd

al-ʿAzīz, for relieving his people from tyranny, and al-Mutawakkil, for reviving the Sunna and abandoning rationalism.²⁸ On this occasion the following verses were composed:

Thus the Sunna now became glorified as if it had not known humiliation before.
The Sunna controls and regulates people since its light is raised up while the sources of evil, disputation (Muʿtazila), are put down. Innovators fled to Hell where they fell down with no return.
They (orthodox) were avenged against them (the Muʿtazilīs) through the caliph Jaʿfar (al-Mutawakkil), the vice-regent of God who guards the Sunna. He is God's vice-regent (al-Mutawakkil) and the cousin of His Prophet. And is the best of the ʿAbbāsid caliphs.
He himself united Islam after the separation; crushing the heads of the heretic with the sword. May God keep him for us, free from troubles and continuing his policy without change.
May God grant him Paradise for his support for the religion (sunna), in the gardens of which he will enjoy the company of the best Messenger (Muḥammad).²⁹

ʿAlī b. Jahm, d. A.H. 249, the most respected poet of that time, especially because of his relation with the caliph and his anti-Shīʿa views. He told al-Mutawakkil, concerning his decision towards the Mihna:

Between your Lord-glorious in His name and yourself is no one but the Prophet of Guidance;
You are molding yourself after his Sunna; in it you will find rescue, najāt, from him (i.e., His judgment) tomorrow.³⁰

The poet saw the purpose of this caliph's rule in the fact that God has ordained that He would glorify Islam through his conduct. In another passage he asks:

Do you wish for another witness in your favor besides the Book of God, O Sons of 'Abbas, (to testify) to you praise and glory?

Let it be enough that God has made over to you His command and that He has revealed (auhā) "obey those in command".!

Faith without love of you will not be accepted (as meritorious by God) - does God accept prayer without (previous) purification.³¹

These three poems show clearly the attitudes of the majority of the people, who did not believe in the createdness of the Qur'ān, towards the caliph's decision to abolish the Mihna. Moreover, it implies that people were very much depressed by the rationalists because of their wrong policy and considered the caliph al-Mutawakkil a caliph whom God had sent in order to purify and unify His religion.

The caliph released and clothed those who were put in prison from the various provinces.³² This attitude towards the orthodox had a great influence on the masses of the Muslim community, and particularly on the traditionists because of the severe punishments which they had suffered at the hands of the Mu'tazilīs. The conservatives at that time were very strong, and they sought revenge on their enemies. A popular song among the people went like this:

Obey Him who suspends the heavens without pillars,
in order that (people) may perceive and consider.

Everybody who said the Qur'ān was created is an infidel. But the words of God had descended from Him who created the human beings.³³

Among those released was al-Ḥārith b. Miskīn who had been imprisoned at the time of al-Ma'mūn.³⁴ Al-Ḥārith returned to Egypt (his native land) and al-Mutawakkil later appointed him the

Qādī of Egypt.³⁵

The caliph wrote a letter to his governor in Baghdad, Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm³⁶ ordering him to summon Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. Ibn Ḥanbal, as we know, had been the main figure among those who were persecuted during the Miḥna pre-al-Mutawakkil period. Ishāq received Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and praised him because he knew about the caliph's high esteem for Ibn Ḥanbal. Ibn Ḥanbal left Baghdad for Sāmarrā' on hearing al-Mutawakkil's request.³⁷ It is related that Ibn Ḥanbal was highly respected by the caliph because of his strong belief in the sunna and because of his piety. Al-Mutawakkil tended to discount numerous rumors that he had heard regarding Ibn Ḥanbal's attitude towards him.³⁸ When Ibn Ḥanbal attained the caliph's confidence, al-Mutawakkil himself offered him absolute freedom; he did not care whether Ibn Ḥanbal accepted his presents or not.³⁹ It is recorded that Ibn Ḥanbal always refused the caliph's presents.⁴⁰ Al-Mutawakkil wished Ibn Ḥanbal to give lessons in Ḥadīth to the young princes al-Mu'tazz and al-Muntaṣir. At the same time, it may also be supposed that he had some idea of using the famous theologian for his policy restoring the sunna.⁴¹ It has been said that with the reinstatement of Sunnism by al-Mutawakkil, Ibn Ḥanbal was able to resume teaching. He did not, however, appear among the traditionists appointed by the caliph in 234/849 to oppose the rationalist movement by teaching Islam through the traditions.⁴² His absence may have opened the way to an association between the caliph al-Mutawakkil and Shāfi'ī theologians.⁴³ Nevertheless, it is also

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reported that in 241/856 in Baghdad the rigid and literalist sect of Ḥanābilīs (followers of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal) carried out a house-to-house visitation in the city and dragged out for punishment anyone whom they considered opposed to their views.⁴⁴

We have already mentioned above that in 237/852 Yaḥyā b. Aktham was appointed as the chief Qādī and he himself appointed two Sunnī Qādīs over the two sides of Baghdad replacing the Mu'tazilī Qādīs.⁴⁵ Ibn Kathīr mentioned that the appointment of Yaḥyā b. Aktham as chief Qādī was recommended to the caliph by Ibn Ḥanbal, who was living in Sāmarrā' at that time.⁴⁶ During the celebration of 'Īd al-Fiṭr, in the same year, the caliph al-Mutawakkil ordered the corpse of Aḥmad b. Naṣr al-Khuzā'ī to be taken down and given to his relations.⁴⁷ Al-Mutawakkil had already decided to have it taken down after he stopped the inquisition but delayed because of what he had heard about the crowds who gathered around the body and discussions concerning Aḥmad b. Naṣr's excellent qualities.⁴⁸ When the caliph gave his final decision to take it down, Aḥmad's relatives joined his head (which had been suspended in Baghdad) to the body (which was hanging in Sāmarrā'). However, only a few persons attended his funeral, in compliance with al-Mutawakkil's order.⁴⁹

Even though al-Mutawakkil was, as the sources inform us, a keen supporter of the orthodox, yet this support was not absolute and unconditional. For example, the caliph postponed his intention of giving Aḥmad b. Naṣr's corpse to his relatives because, as we

mentioned in Chapter I, al-Mutawakkil was under the influence of his companions, who held anti-orthodox views on this issue.

Another example as Ibn Jawzī stated when the caliph was informed that one of the 'Alids was hidden in Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's home, the caliph himself ordered a search of Ibn Ḥanbal's home.⁵⁰ This narrative shows that al-Mutawakkil apparently did not have confidence even in the most respected of the religious leaders, although it is narrated that the caliph regretted his action against Ibn Ḥanbal and sent him a valuable present which Ibn Ḥanbal refused to accept.⁵¹

We have already stated that al-Mutawakkil subscribed to the Shāfi'ī doctrine, and it is claimed that he was the first to accept one of the four orthodox religious schools.⁵² But al-Mutawakkil probably adopted this doctrine for political purposes as to win the favor of the majority of the subjects whom the previous three caliphs had offended by their inquisition and policy against the orthodox Muslims by adopting the Mu'tazilī ideology and isolating themselves from the populace. Al-Mutawakkil adopted Shāfi'ī doctrine in order to win the support of the community.

That al-Mutawakkil's support of the orthodox was largely political is also evident if we compare his support of the orthodox with his predecessors' support for the Mu'tazila. Al-Mutawakkil does not seem to be completely committed to the orthodox doctrines or to the orthodox 'ulamā' as his predecessors were towards the Mu'tazila.

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Though personally he was a religious and pious person,⁵³ he did not agree with everything associated with orthodoxy. For instance, he did not favor fanaticism of the Ḥanābila or the superstitions of the common orthodox people.

There were many other reasons, as well, for the caliph al-Mutawakkil to favour orthodoxy. One factor was the hostile policy of the preceding three caliphs towards the orthodox, which prompted al-Mutawakkil to favour the orthodox in order to regain their favor and to use them as a means for his politico-religious goals. In this regard T. Arnold remarks:

This prince (al-Mutawakkil) took advantage of the strong orthodox reaction that had set in Muḥammadan theology against the rationalist and free-thinking tendencies that had had free play under former rulers, and came forward as the champion of the extreme orthodox party, to which the mass of the people as contrasted with the higher classes belonged, and which was eager to exact vengeance for the persecutions it (orthodoxy) had itself suffered in the two preceding reigns; he sought to carry their favour by persecuting the Mu'tazilites, forbidding all further discussions on the Qur'ān and declaring the doctrine that it was created, to be heretical.⁵⁴

Al-Mutawakkil was wise to take this position because the Mu'tazila represented only a minority in the Islamic world, and only among the intellectual class, while the only major group was the orthodox. If a caliph could win the latter to his side, it would be easier for him to confront his enemies. Patton stresses this point saying: "There is no doubt that the Mu'tazilites khalīfahs of the Miḥna

period represented a relatively small minority in the Muslim world of their time and that al-Mutawakkil was wise not to continue his support of their views in the face of an adverse popular sentiment."⁵⁵ Al-Mutawakkil sought the support of the orthodox so that he could confront his enemies, especially the Turkish guards, but he did not succeed in his attempt, just as the preceding three caliphs had failed to impose the Hellenistic ideals in the Muslim world. Bernard Lewis has remarked on this by saying:

The caliph al-Ma'mūn (813-33) and his successors attempted to impose one doctrine, that of the Hellenistic school known as the Mu'tazila, as the official doctrine of the state, and persecuted followers of other teachings... This attempt failed, and when al-Mutawakkil (847-61) needed popular support against the insubordinate Turkish soldiery... Islamic orthodoxy and the Islamic religious institutions were already strong enough to resist and overcome the attempt by the state to impose its will on them in matters of doctrine,⁵⁶ even when the state was that of the orthodox caliph.

This idea is reflected in the most recent study done by S.D. Goitein, but he presents it from a political view involving the viziers and the military power. He states that:

It was quite unusual for a vizier to be charged with a military function. We hear of such a case under the troublesome reign of al-Mutawakkil. When this caliph tried to counterbalance the Turkish guards made too powerful by his father, al-Mu'taṣim, he put some twelve thousand bedouins, desperadoes (Ṣa'ālīk) and other people under the authority of his vizier 'Ubayd Allāh b. Yaḥyā b. Khāqān.⁵⁷

It seems that the position of Ibn Ḥanbal against the idea of createdness of the Qur'ān greatly influenced this policy because he

became a very popular leader. Since the caliph sought popular support against his enemies he adopted a favorable policy towards the orthodox. Montgomery Watt states:

There is no reason to suppose that the stand made by Ibn Ḥanbal on the uncreatedness of the Qur'ān had anything to do with the reverse of government policy. At most it can have shown the government the strength of popular feeling in Baghdad. Ibn Ḥanbal's stand, however, may have focused attention on him within the traditionist movement, so that an important section of what may be called the conservative wing of the movement came to be known as the Ḥanbalites.⁵⁸

The personal conflict between the caliphs may have had its role in leading al-Mutawakkil to adopt such a policy towards the orthodox Muslims. We have already stated in Chapter I that al-Wāthiq harshly treated his brother Ja'far al-Mutawakkil because of al-Mutawakkil's personal conduct and opinions which were contrary to those of al-Wāthiq himself. Ibn al-Athīr recorded that al-Mutawakkil hated the preceding three caliphs because of their pro-Shī'a and anti-orthodox Muslims policy.⁵⁹ Watt observed this point and considered it the main reason for the change of the policy of al-Mutawakkil from that of the preceding three caliphs: "The sunnite religious and political attitude was now supported by a tolerably coherent body of doctrine and was therefore strengthened vis-à-vis its rival. The change of policy that was decided on early in the reign of al-Mutawakkil (847-61) is doubtless somehow linked with the consolidation of sunnism - probably neither simply as cause

nor as effect but by a more complex relationship."⁶⁰ Others have interpreted this policy as to strengthen the caliph's position in controlling the empire and to set right what had gone astray, but he failed because of the authority enjoyed by the Turkish military leaders in the provinces.⁶¹ We should not forget the actions of the Mu'tazila in forcing the people to adopt its doctrine, and the reaction among the mass of the Muslims against the Mu'tazilīs. At the same time, the caliph al-Mutawakkil was not himself inclined towards the rationalism of al-Ma'mūn and his successors; this helped the orthodox to win al-Mutawakkil to their side in order to stand against the Mu'tazila.⁶² Moreover, al-Mutawakkil himself, as we have observed, adopted the Shāfi'ī system which was opposed to that of the Mu'tazila, as the next chapter will explain in detail.

In conclusion, the result of the caliph's pro-orthodox policy helped put an end to the Mu'tazila political activity. We hear of no further significant political activities on the Mu'tazila part after 237/852. This orthodox victory proved that there was no place for such extreme rationalistic views as advocated by the Mu'tazila within the umma of that period, because there was strong support for the Sunna. In the popular view, anyone who tried to diverge from the Sunna was a heretic. From the time of al-Mutawakkil until the end of the 'Abbāsīd regime in 656/1258, orthodoxy was the religion of the state and no caliph tried to displace it, while other theories were kept far away from the court.

On the political level, however, this policy had immediate repercussions. Al-Mutawakkil aimed at putting an end to the rising political power of the Turkish guards, Mu'tazila and Shi'a as well. He could only succeed in wiping out the Mu'tazila from the political field but he failed in eliminating the Turkish guards and the Shi'a. The Turkish guards realized the caliph's hostile policy towards them and associated themselves with the caliph's son al-Muntaşir and murdered al-Mutawakkil in 247/861.⁶³ The institution of the caliphate thereafter fell in the hands of the Turks and less authority remained in the hands of the later caliphs.⁶⁴ We shall discuss al-Mutawakkil's hostile policy towards the Turkish guards in the next chapter.

Finally, this policy was highly favoured by the orthodox Muslims but was bitterly criticized by others. This was the reason that the orthodox exceedingly regretted his murder, because of his support of them and their beliefs.

CHAPTER IV

Al-Mutawakkil's Attitude towards the Mu'tazila

The Mu'tazila, as an Islamic political and theological sect, began like other sects, for both political and religious reasons. The Mu'tazilīs, according to the famous theory of Nyberg, were anti-Umayyad on the one hand and pro-'Alid and pro-'Abbāsīd on the other.¹ It is most practicable to outline the historical development of the Mu'tazila during the early 'Abbāsīd period, and then briefly to observe its political situation during the Mihna. Such a historical survey will help us to understand the Mu'tazilī position during the reign of al-Mutawakkil and his opposition to them.

In the early 'Abbāsīd regime Mu'tazilīs enjoyed the respect of the Caliph al-Manṣūr (d. 158/774)² who was influenced by 'Amr b. 'Ubayd (d. 144/761), the famous Mu'tazilī leader at that time.³ But this atmosphere suddenly changed with al-Mahdī's (d. 167/785) accession to the throne. His opposition to the Zandaqa movement⁴ extended to opposition of the Mu'tazilīs, which happened because of the relation between Ṣālih b. 'Abd al-Quddūs (d. 167/190), who was a well known Zindīq, and Wāṣil b. 'Aṭa' (d. 181/204) and 'Amr b. 'Ubayd.⁵ Moreover, one should not forget the intimate relation between Wāṣil b. 'Aṭa' and Bashshar b. Burd who was accused of being a Zindīq.⁶ Al-Mahdī's successors did not share his intolerant

attitude towards the Mu'tazila. Hārūn al-Rashīd (d. 193/808), even though an orthodox caliph, might not have agreed with Mu'tazilī doctrines, especially on the issue of the creation of the Qur'ān, yet he employed Mu'tazilī qadīs and governors.⁷ Al-Rashīd's ideology appeared vividly by his opposition to Bashr al-Mursī, who had taught that the Qur'ān was created.⁸ During the reign of al-Amīn (d. 198/813), the caliph's religious ideas prevented the Mu'tazila from finding a sympathetic environment.⁹ However, the influence of the Mu'tazila reached its summit at the 'Abbāsīd Court in 218/833, with al-Ma'mūn's adoption of the Mu'tazilī doctrine as official creed under the influence of Aḥmad b. Abī Du'ād.¹⁰

From its very beginning, the main opposition to the Mu'tazila came from the traditionists (Ahl al-Hadīth). The majority of Muslims stood with the Ahl al-Hadīth and opposed the Mu'tazila for several reasons. The Mu'tazila were against the traditions and refuted most of them, while the orthodox Muslims considered traditions as their weapons against their enemies.¹¹ The focus of contention was the question of the createdness of the Qur'ān.¹² Those who did not believe in the createdness of the Qur'ān were put on trial, that is, Inquisition.¹³ As a result of the conflict, between the Ahl al-Hadīth and the Mu'tazila, the Mu'tazila, once they gained power over the empire, used this power against the Ahl al-Hadīth, namely the Ḥanābila,¹⁴ to impose their doctrines and submit those who

opposed them to inquisition.¹⁵ But this inquisition hastened their unpopularity and hence their political decline, as this chapter will explain.

Al-Ma'mūn's chief reason for accepting the Mu'tazilite theory was his desire to gain broader support for his own policies by winning the favour of the moderate Shī'is and by abandoning previous pro-orthodox policies.¹⁶ Furthermore, he was in agreement with Mu'tazila ideas, especially on the idea of the createdness of the Qur'ān.¹⁷

In 218/833, al-Ma'mūn sent three letters to his governor in Baghdad, Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm, concerning the Mihna, and ordering this governor to examine the 'Ulamā', Fuqahā' and traditionists in order to find out whether they believed in the createdness of the Qur'ān.¹⁸ Those who denied the createdness of the Qur'ān would not be allowed to give witness in court.¹⁹ These letters indicate the character of the caliph and the nature of the movement. They are full of remarks against the traditionists and the common people who, according to al-Ma'mūn, do not know the law.²⁰ It also appears from the letters that the caliph even tried force to spread the Mu'tazila theory. But the majority of the Muslim community at that time was not ready to accept such rationalistic theorizing, so the reaction was extremely strong against this new policy.²¹ This idea is reflected in the work of D.B. Macdonald, saying:

It did not matter that he (al-Ma'mūn) ranged himself

on the progressive side; his fatal error was that he invoked the authority of the state in matters of the intellectual and religious life. Thus, by enabling the conservative party to pass as martyrs, he brought the prejudices and passions of the populace still more against the new movement.²²

Al-Mu'taṣim, who was al-Ma'mūn's successor, was inclined to abandon the inquisition but was dissuaded by Aḥmad b. Abī Du'ād, who did his best to get rid of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal.²³ This idea is developed by Patton, who says:

Ibn Abī Dowād and the leaders who were with him did their best, however, to move the Khalif to put Aḥmed (Ibn Hanbal) to death. When bound, Aḥmed complained to the Khalif that the punishment he was inflicting upon him was unlawful according to the declaration of the Prophet... Aḥmed Ibn Abī Dowād, thinking his master inclined to weaken out of admiration for Aḥmed's spirit and courage and from the conviction wrought by his arguments, reminded al-Mu'taṣim that, if he yielded, he would certainly be said to oppose the doctrines of the former Khalif al-Ma'mūn, and men would regard Aḥmed as having obtained a victory over two sovereigns, a result which would stimulate him to assume of the Khalifs.²⁴

It is also recorded that al-Mu'taṣim told Ibn Ḥanbal that if he had not found him in the hands of the preceding caliph he would not have opposed him.²⁵

In Egypt during this period, the governor went even further in persecuting the orthodox viewpoint, but this only brought him trouble. In 227/842 the people rose against the governor's policy; while he was examining some traditionists, a mob burned his home and pillaged his property. They even tried to kill him, but he escaped.²⁶

The caliph al-Wāthiq (227-232; 842-847), rather than following the conduct of al-Ma'mūn, cruelly persecuted all who refused to subscribe to Mu'tazilī opinions.²⁷ Al-Wāthiq, too, had fallen under the influence of the Mu'tazilīs who persuaded the caliph to continue the religious policy of the former caliphs.²⁸ According to Patton, "It is reported of al-Wāthiq in relation to the Miḥna that he did not personally wish it, but that the stimulus applied by his minister did not leave him much opportunity to escape from the work in which the latter was so zealous."²⁹ The idea that Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal had gained the sympathy of the majority of the people, because his position towards the idea of the createdness of the Qur'ān, led the caliph al-Wāthiq to continue the Miḥna. In this regard Patton states, "The greater probability, as far as Aḥmed Ibn Ḥanbal enters into consideration, is that al-Wāthiq, like his predecessor, feared a popular outbreak should anything further be visited upon the Imām."³⁰ Al-Wāthiq told Ibn Ḥanbal not to live in his neighborhood, so the latter disappeared and travelled from place to place, but finally returned home. He stayed secretly at his home until the caliph's death.³¹

It seems that Ibn Abī Du'ād in particular and the Mu'tazilīs in general, had great influence upon the policy of the caliphs, to the extent that when in 231/846 there was an exchange of captives between Muslims and Byzantines, Ibn Abī Du'ād sent orders to his agent informing him that anyone who believed in the created Qur'ān

was to be repatriated and given one dinār, while the rest should remain as captives.³² Al-Wāthiq himself abandoned the inquisition because of a debate between Ibn Abī Du'ād and one of the traditionists who refuted Ibn Abī Du'ād's theory concerning the createdness of the Qur'ān held in the caliph's presence.³³

From this survey, it can be easily seen that although the Mu'tazila doctrine was the official one of the state, the political status of its adherents was not at all stable. This was partly because of the widespread opposition to the Mu'tazila and partly because the caliphs, as it appears from the above survey, though they themselves agreed with the Mu'tazila, could not continue their policy of imposing Mu'tazilite doctrine on the people unwilling to accept it. In this concern D.B. Macdonald states that, "It is true that the Mihna was continued by his successor, al-Mu'tasim, and by his successor, al-Wathiq, but without energy; it was more a handy political weapon than anything else."³⁴ Such a political situation demanded a caliph who was anti-Mu'tazilī in his religious ideals in order to put an end to Mu'tazilī dominance in Islam. This happened when the caliph al-Mutawakkil came to the throne in 232/847. This caliph put an end to the Mu'tazila policy in 234/849 when he issued an order to his lieutenants to stop all discussion concerning the Qur'ān and to end the Mihna.³⁵

The question immediately arises as to why al-Mutawakkil did not abolish the Mihna sooner after his accession. There seems to be no

simple answer but one can only assume that al-Mutawakkil delayed for two years in order to await a suitable occasion to forestall future reactions. On the other hand, one can say that the rationalists were not strong at that time, although their doctrine was still the official one of the state, because they were themselves not united to face the enmity of the orthodox. As we just stated, al-Wāthiq had already suspended the inquisition.³⁶ This leads us to conclude that since the Muʿtazilites held many high posts in the government, some time was needed to replace them with persons who accepted al-Mutawakkil's ideology. However, the events of the time of al-Wāthiq's death and just afterwards may give us some reason to suppose that Aḥmad b. Abī Duʿād's attitude towards al-Mutawakkil, and his efforts in appointing al-Mutawakkil as caliph instead of al-Wāthiq's son, pushed the caliph into delaying his decision.³⁷ It seems that the problem was not confined to the Muʿtazila but that other groups, such as the Shīʿa and Turkish guards, who were favoured by the Muʿtazila policy, were also involved. These other groups probably added to al-Mutawakkil's indecision. Nevertheless, as we have suggested, it seems that the Muʿtazilites were not united to face the new situation because the abolition of the inquisition should not have meant the destruction of their entire policy. On the other hand, at the beginning of al-Mutawakkil's reign we find no indication that the caliph stood strongly against the Muʿtazilites.

The caliph's first Mu'tazilī victim was the wazīr Muḥammad al-Zayyāt, whom he sacked in 233/848; although religious views may have played a role in this, the conflict was mainly personal because, as we have already stated, al-Zayyāt, following al-Wāthiq's orders, stood against al-Mutawakkil during the reign of al-Wāthiq.³⁸ In the same year al-Mutawakkil dismissed Aḥmad b. Abī Du'ād, the chief Qādī, when the latter suffered an attack of apoplexy. Furthermore, the caliph handed over Ibn Abī Du'ād's office to his son Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad, who had been his father's nā'ib (representative) since 218/833.³⁹

The last step against the Mu'tazila took place in 237/851-852, when the caliph dismissed Abū al-Walīd and threw him into prison along with his father. All the property of Ibn Abī Du'ād was confiscated. Other Mu'tazilīs were also imprisoned but these were released after a short time, while Ibn Abī Du'ād and his son did not long survive their disgrace.⁴⁰ Yaḥyā b. Akṭham, who had been the chief qādī before 218/833, replaced Ibn Abī Du'ād. He in turn appointed his friends as Qudāt in the provinces.⁴¹ Poets mocked Ibn Abī Du'ād and praised al-Mutawakkil for his acts. For example, one said to Ibn Abī Du'ād:

If in your reasoning you were rightly guided
and if there was truth in your decision;
You would have found in fiqh enough distraction
which, if you had been satisfied with it, would
have prevented you from claiming that God's
book was created.

What came over you when you knew that the principles of religion embrace all (religious sects), but a single one (the Mu'tazila) can only be marked by ignorance and stupidity.⁴²

Another poet recited:

Now the reign of innovators (the Mu'tazila) was ended because they had become weak and collapsed.

The party of the devil was demolished by the end of their collectivity which had been a unit.

Did they ever have in their innovation a jurisconsult or Imām who could be followed,

Like Sufyān the brother of al-Thawrī, who taught subtle points about piety,

Or like Sulaymān the brother of Taym who abandoned sleep for fear of resurrection,

Or like Mālik the jurisconsult of the two Holy places, who was like the great ocean of knowledge,

Or the young hero of Islam -- I mean Aḥmad (Ibn Ḥanbal) who would defeat the attackers if they fought him?

Their whips (of persecution) were not set aside, even though they were frightened; nay, their sword did not (frighten us) when it flashed.⁴³

In the same year, 237/852, the caliph dismissed Muḥammad b. Abī Du'ād for past acts of injustice; he replaced him by Abī al-Rabī' who was orthodox.⁴⁴ Also in the same year, al-Mutawakkil sent orders to his lieutenant in Egypt to persecute the chief Qādī, who was a Mu'tazilī, and to have him lashed. The governor did as he was ordered and replaced the Qādī with al-Ḥārith b. Miskīn, who was a Mālikī.⁴⁵

That the main reason which led al-Mutawakkil to adopt this policy with the Mu'tazila was his orthodox view appears clearly in 234/849, when, shortly after issuing the order concerning the Mihna, he invited some religious men, specifically traditionists, to his court at Sāmarrā'. The caliph's religious zeal appeared vividly

when he advised them, i.e., Ahl al-Hadīth, to deal in their teachings with traditions. They were to regard the traditions as the basic source for their knowledge in order to show their proofs against the Mu'tazilīs.⁴⁶ On the other hand, the abolition of the inquisition had a great influence upon the people; they praised the caliph al-Mutawakkil because the majority of the Muslim community did not accept the rational doctrine.⁴⁷ Moreover, the Caliph's attitude toward Mu'tazila can be seen from his policy towards their officers when he replaced them by orthodox ones. It appears also that the caliph al-Mutawakkil was secure in following this anti-Mu'tazilī policy because of the Mu'tazila's rigorous policy which had failed to win the Muslim society to their side, as we have already discussed, in the chapter concerning al-Mutawakkil's attitude towards the orthodox.

The orthodox considered the Mu'tazilī theologians and their followers to be heretics, because the orthodox believed the only way to practice Islam was to follow the Sunna of the Prophet.⁴⁸ So, according to the Muslim community, the Mu'tazila had introduced innovations into Islam. Nyberg, in his article "Al-Mu'tazila", viewed this stating that "The Mu'tazilīs were in serious disagreement with Ahl al-Hadīth, who soon declared it heretical."⁴⁹

The Mu'tazila, by adopting force as the only means to convert others, became very unpopular and as fanatical as the orthodox. Carl Brockelmann observes this saying:

There used to be an inclination to consider the Mu'tazilites representatives of a liberal theology as against the orthodoxy; on the basis of what has just been set forth there can be no further question of this: they were just as fanatical as the orthodox theologians, from whom they differ not in methods but only in their particular dogmas.⁵⁰

Moreover, the Mu'tazila did not deal with social and economic problems which circumstances demanded, but rather on philosophical matters.⁵¹ This can be considered one of the main reasons for their failure.

We have already stated that the Mu'tazila were opposed to uncritical acceptance of the traditions, Ahādīth, and refuted most of them, while the orthodox Muslims considered the traditions their second source of law after the Qur'ān. The Mu'tazila intended by this to change simple Islamic theory to a philosophical ideology which was difficult for the majority of the people to understand.⁵² The Mu'tazilīs' attitudes towards the companions of the Prophet may have encouraged the orthodox to oppose them as critics of the companions who placed on the same level as other Muslims, while most Muslims put them on a superior level.⁵³

As we shall see, the political situation may have played a role in ending the Mu'tazila, in that al-Mutawakkil needed new sources of support to stand against the increasing power of the Turkish guards and the Shī'ites. During the reign of al-Mutawakkil the Turkish guards became very powerful; their chiefs occupied most high military posts and almost controlled the entire policy of the empire. The caliph was aware of this and tried to eliminate them

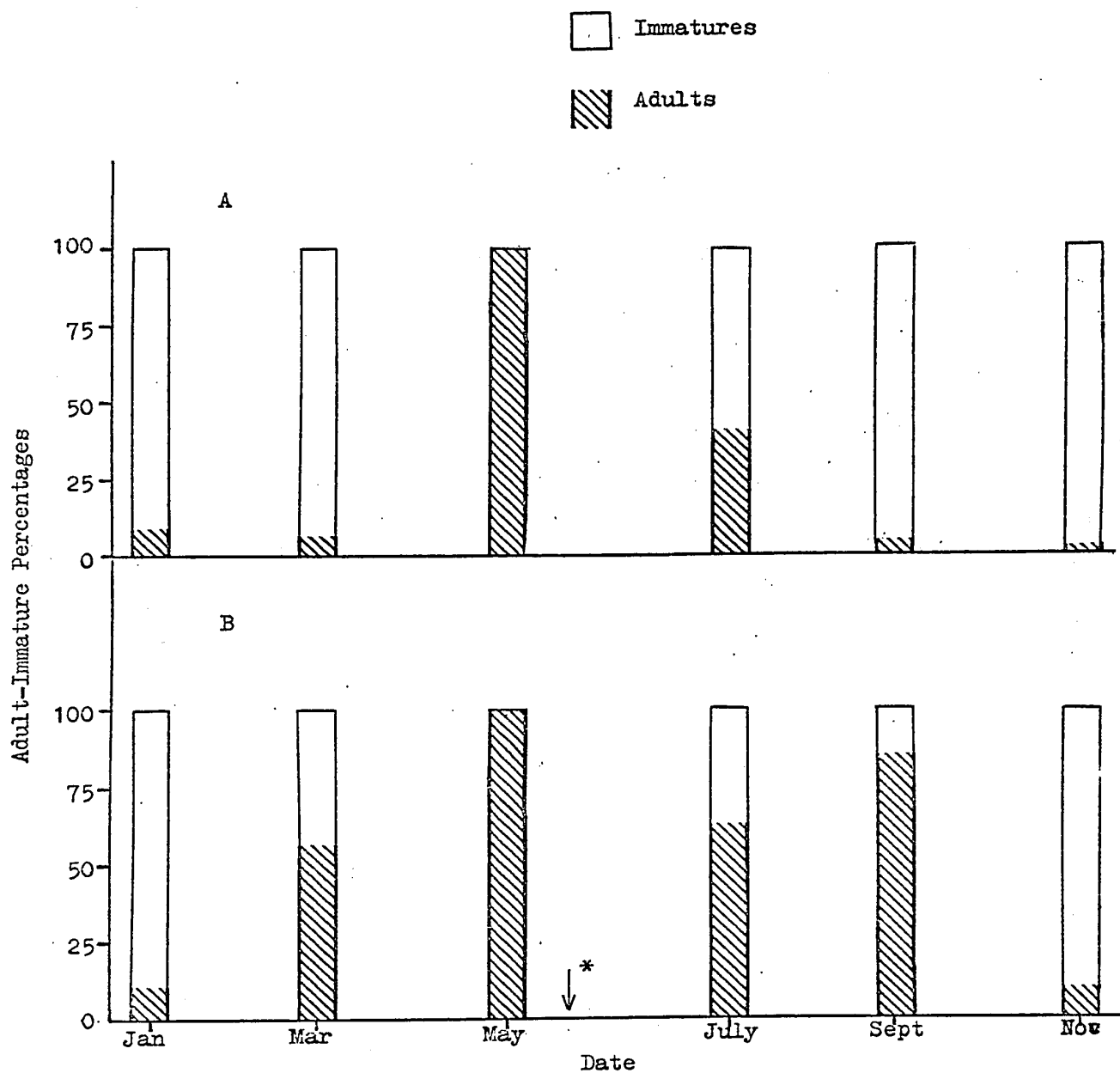


Fig. 6. Sequential Changes in Proportions of Adult to Immature Forms of *H. contortus* (A), and *Ostertagia* spp. (B) in Ewes.

* Flock run on pasture June 4.

that the political circumstances played the main role in the caliph's anti-Mu'tazila policy has been reviewed by Brockelmann, saying that:

The new caliph (al-Mutawakkil) soon attempted to escape from the influence of the king-makers. The wazir Ibn az-Zayyat, who had been working against him, had to atone for this soon after Mutawakkil's accession to the throne three years later; the caliph removed the Turkish general Itakh, who had worked on his behalf together with Wasif. He hoped to find a prop among the orthodox Shafi'ites against the aspirations of the 'Alids which kept continually reappearing.⁵⁹

The traditionists (Ahl al-Hadīth) may have encouraged the caliph to stand against the Mu'tazilīs because the latter had not allowed them to preach their doctrine, thus cutting off the means of their sustenance.⁶⁰ The Mu'tazilīs themselves went further when they started to doubt the sincerity of the orthodox, and called the orthodox Hashawīya.⁶¹ This may have urged the orthodox to oppose the Mu'tazila and to adopt every means towards ending their political and intellectual activity. Fazlur Rahman has observed this idea stating that:

The leaders of Muslim orthodoxy, representing the old tradition, at first suffered at the hands of this rationalist movement which was raised to the position of a state creed during the time of the Caliph al-Ma'mūn but subsequently, by mustering political strength and borrowing the very weapons of Greek dialectic, effectively gained the upper hand. Gradually, the orthodox 'Ulamā' brought almost all education under their control, and worked out and implemented curricula to realize their own intellectual and spiritual ideals.⁶²

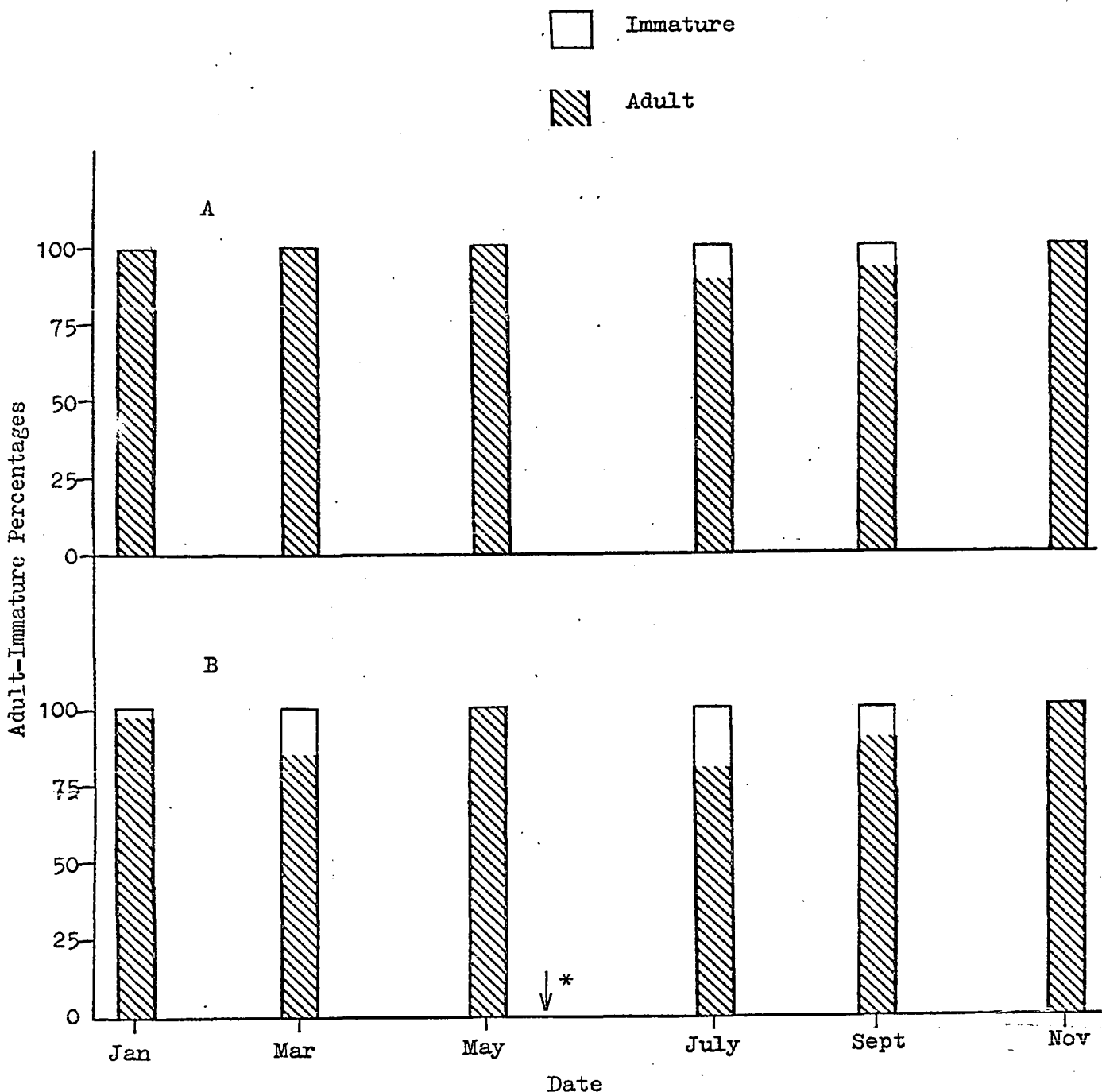


Fig. 7. Sequential Changes in Proportions of Adult to Immature Forms of *T. axei* (A), and *Trichostrongylus* spp. (B) in Ewes.

* Flock run on pasture June 4.

try to dictate doctrine to the Islamic religious institution."⁶⁴

Although the Muʿtazilī political power had ceased, the school was ably represented nearly three centuries later. As E.G. Browne has stated, "The political power of the Muʿtazilites ceased soon after the accession of al-Mutawakkil, the tenth ʿAbbāsīd Caliph (A.D. 847), but the school, as we have seen, was powerfully represented nearly three centuries later by Zamakhsharī, the great commentator of the Qurʾān."⁶⁵ But this chapter is not concerned so much with their intellectual activity as with their political movement. It was this political movement that ended during the reign of the caliph al-Mutawakkil.

CHAPTER V

Al-Mutawakkil's Attitude towards the Shī'a

Shī'a is the general name for a large group of diverse Muslim sects which recognize 'Alī as the legitimate caliph after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad.¹ The term Shī'a is a collective noun meaning "party" or "following", which has been applied to the followers of the family of 'Alī, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet. From the early days of Islam, the full name was Shī'at Ahl al-Bayt, i.e., the followers of the Prophet's kindred.²

Some of the early 'Abbāsīd caliphs, especially al-Ma'mūn, al-Mu'taṣīn and al-Wāthiq, were sympathetic towards the Shī'a. Al-Mutawakkil, however, strongly opposed the Shī'a and adopted various means to silence them. The main purpose of this chapter is to present some of these methods which al-Mutawakkil used against the Shī'a and to discuss briefly the reason which led this caliph to adopt such a policy with the Shī'a. Another purpose will be to consider this policy in connection with his policy towards the Ahl al-Kitāb and the Mu'tazila.

Let us first survey, in chronological order, some of the references in both primary and secondary sources to al-Mutawakkil's relation with the Shī'a.

233/848: There is no reference in our primary sources to any event connected with al-Mutawakkil's anti-Shī'a policy.

However, among the most recent studies we find that 'Abd al-Jawād al-Killidār, in his work Ta'rīkh Karbalā' wa Ḥā'ir al-Ḥusayn, states the following: "Al-Mutawakkil issued an order for the demolition of the tomb of al-Ḥusayn in the year 233 (848) because his concubine had gone on pilgrimage to the Shrine."³ 'Abd al-Jawād based his statement on the authority of Iṣfahanī (d. A.H. 356) in his book Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyīn, but there is nothing in this book which would lead us to accept such an assertion. 'Abd al-Jawād may have misunderstood Iṣfahanī who records that the demolition took place in 236/851.⁴

235/850: Al-Kindī (A.H. 280-350) records that Iṣḥāq b. Yahyā, who was wālī (governor) in Egypt, received a message from the caliph and his son al-Muntaṣir, ordering him to deport the Ṭālibiyīn from Egypt to Iraq. The Ṭālibiyīn were forced to leave Egypt, and Iṣḥāq distributed money among them for their needs during the trip. As soon as they arrived in Iraq, they were forced to leave for Medina. This event took place in Shawwāl A.H. 236.⁵

236/851: Several of the sources mention that al-Mutawakkil ordered the demolition of al-Ḥusayn's tomb and that he had the site flooded with water. The site was ploughed and sown and pilgrimage there was forbidden under heavy penalties.⁶

It is still enigmatic that this incident which apparently could have become a very significant issue to be used against al-Mutawakkil, yet it seems it went unnoticed by the Shī'ī historians.

Al-Ya'qūbī (d. 282/895) does not mention this event,⁷ even though he was well known for his Shī'ī inclinations. Al-Mas'ūdī (d. 341/956), another historian known for his Shī'ī inclination, also did not mention this event in his book, Murūj al-dhahab.⁸ We cannot doubt the historicity of this event because other early historians did mention this. But the fact that these Shī'ī historians did not mention it, either makes the happening doubtful, or it was not that important in their eyes as it was for the later historians.

236/851: Probably al-Mutawakkil again devoted Fadak to its original purpose which Abū Bakr had sanctioned⁹ but which had been distributed among the 'Alid family since A.H. 210.¹⁰

247/861: It is narrated that al-Ḥusayn's tomb remained undisturbed for ten years. But 'Abd al-Jawād mentions an anecdote concerning an 'Alid supporter, one called Yazīd, the crazy, which offers a contrary view. Because of his hostile actions, the caliph asked him what he wanted. Yazīd asked him to rebuild the tomb of al-Ḥusayn and allow visits to it. Al-Mutawakkil agreed, and the news was carried to the people. When the caliph learned that all the inhabitants of Iraq, Kūfa and Karbalā' had decided to go there for pilgrimage, he became angry and sent a military force to demolish the tomb. This order was carried out and the tomb was ploughed under, and people abandoned their visits.¹¹

247/861: Al-Mutawakkil sent orders to his governor in Egypt that no farm lands should be rented to the 'Alids. If anyone laid a charge against them the judgment was to be issued immediately.¹²

To sum up, we can see al-Mutawakkil's attitude towards the Shī'ā as early as his deportation of the 'Alid~~s~~ ~~family~~ from Egypt. Al-Kindī, who is the only historian who has presented this event, does not give any reasons for this persecution. Undoubtedly al-Mutawakkil must have felt that Shī'ī activity in Egypt posed a threat to the stability of this province which, one hundred years later, was, indeed, to become the capital of the Shī'ī world.

The demolition of the tomb of al-Ḥusayn could be considered the most overt expression of this policy. However, not only Shī'īs, but Sunnīs also, regretted what had happened to the shrine of al-Ḥusayn at the hands of al-Mutawakkil. The inhabitants of Baghdad wrote sentences of defamation on walls and mosques against al-Mutawakkil. He was satirized by poets, one of whom wrote:

The Umayyad foully murdered him (al-Ḥusayn),
the son of the Prophet's daughter.
Now the uncle's brood, who came too late
to bear a hand in the slaughter,
Go for his grave, and tear the stones,
so deep they hate his rotting bones.¹³

According to the Shī'ī sources which mention this event the main reasons for the demolition of al-Ḥusayn's tomb was the absence of the caliph's favourite singer.¹⁴ Before he had come to ^{the} throne she had often sent her maid servants to al-Mutawakkil while he was drinking. When he became caliph he asked for her but could obtain no information of her whereabouts. (She had gone to visit al-Ḥusayn's tomb on a pilgrimage, according to the Shī'ī view.) When she heard

that al-Mutawakkil had requested her presence, she returned quickly and sent him one of her maid servants. Al-Mutawakkil asked the girl where she had been and she answered: "My mistress went on a pilgrimage, and she took me with her." Al-Mutawakkil said: "Where did you perform your pilgrimage during Sha'bān?" She replied: "We performed it at al-Ḥusayn's tomb." As soon as he heard this answer, the caliph ordered the imprisonment of her mistress and the confiscation of her property. He sent one of his companions, al-Dayzaj, to demolish al-Ḥusayn's tomb at Karbalā'.¹⁵

Even if we accept the validity of this story, there seems to be no reasonable excuse for the demolition, unless it was from al-Mutawakkil's own religious views. However, our non-Shī'ī primary sources do not give us the reason for this demolition.¹⁶ But it may be that there are other reasons which led al-Mutawakkil to perform such an act which was loathsome to all Muslims, not just to the Shī'īs.

Although Ibn Taghrī Bardī (A.H. 813-874) was not a contemporary historian, he mentions a narrative which is based on an earlier source.¹⁷ Its gist is that al-Mutawakkil had a singer named Umm al-Faḍl, whose company he enjoyed both before and during his caliphate. One day he wanted to see her and sent people to inquire about her whereabouts, but all their efforts were in vain. However, after several days she appeared with her face sunburned.¹⁸ Al-Mutawakkil asked her where she had been and she answered: "I went

to perform my pilgrimage." He said: "This is not a month for pilgrimage." She replied: "I do not mean the pilgrimage to Mecca, but to the tomb of 'Alī." The caliph said: "The Shī'a have reached the point where they put 'Alī's tomb on equal footing with that of Mecca and Medina." As a result of what he had heard, he ordered that there was to be no ḥajj (pilgrimage to Karbalā') but this order did not indicate the name of the caliph 'Alī. Then this event led the conservative Shī'īs to take a rigid position against al-Mutawakkil's order, and they defied him by writing sentences on the walls. The caliph in his turn issued another order in which he prohibited visits to 'Alī's tomb. But this action intensified the anger of the Shī'īs. Eventually this struggle between the conservative Shī'a and the caliph led al-Mutawakkil to order the demolition of the tomb of al-Ḥusayn and the area around it.¹⁹ This narrative seems nearer to the truth, because it gives a reasonable cause for the demolition of the tomb.

The reason for the demolition was neither the absence of a woman nor the struggle between the caliph and the conservative Shī'ī group. In fact it had to do with the caliph's religious outlook. Al-Mutawakkil, as we have already mentioned, was orthodox and according to the orthodox Muslims' view the legal pilgrimage is made only to three places. The orthodox based the validity of their assumption on a tradition narrated by Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (d. 74/693). He had heard God's Messenger say: "Animals are saddled only for prayer in

three mosques: The sacred Mosque, the Aqṣā mosque, and this mosque of mine."²⁰ i.e., the Mosque of Medina. This tradition indicates that it was permissible to perform pilgrimage only to these three mosques, while pilgrimage to other mosques was illegal. In other words, the pilgrimage to al-Ḥusayn's tomb was illicit, so al-Mutawakkil's religious view led him to stop it. Although this tradition is mentioned by all tradition books, it reveals only the orthodox view and is not recognized by the Shī'a. To clarify the point we may agree with this anecdote as to the reason of the demolition of al-Ḥusayn's tomb, because it carries a reasonable cause for the destruction of the tomb and it reflects the struggle for power of that period. Moreover, this tradition underlines again the religious aim of the caliph which was to preserve Islam from heresy and to keep it united.

Finally, it may be suggested that the political circumstances may have urged al-Mutawakkil to destroy al-Ḥusayn's tomb. The political situation can be explained at the level of the intention of the caliph to end the anti-orthodox policy by opposing the Mu'tazila and the Dhimmīs. By doing so, al-Mutawakkil had gained the populace's support and used them to stand against the increasing power of the Turkish guards and the continuation of the Shī'ī revolts. Nevertheless, the tomb of al-Ḥusayn can be considered as a center for all the Shī'a. Going there for pilgrimage means to the Shī'a the chance to meet each other and spread their ideology and

manifest their political stand towards the events, where they could possibly have organized a revolt against the caliph or may have arranged something in order to revolt in one time in the various provinces. For this reason the demolition meant to al-Mutawakkil the great opportunity to prevent disturbances which might be arranged by the Shī'ā.

Al-Mutawakkil's policy with the Shī'ā can also be observed from his regulation concerning the fadāk revenue, as we mentioned above, when he restored it as it was before A.H. 210, i.e., to the same policy of the first orthodox caliph. This attitude conforms with al-Mutawakkil's religious zeal which meant a return to and revival of the policies of early caliphs who were the ideal caliphs for the orthodox.

Al-Mutawakkil's Shī'ī policy can be explained at these levels:

- a) The caliph's persecution of some of the Shī'ī figures. A reference comes in Ṭabarī that Yaḥyā b. 'Umar, a descendant of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and one of the Shī'ī leaders, was presented before al-Mutawakkil in 235 (850) on the allegation that Yaḥyā had gathered his followers and intended to stand against the caliph. Yaḥyā was flogged eighteen times and then put in prison in Baghdad.²¹ This narrative indicates that there was an attempt to revolt against the regime by a Shī'ī group and that the caliph therefore had ample reason to adopt an anti-Shī'ī policy.
- b) The caliph's persecution of those who declared their Shī'ism in public. It is recorded that 'Īsā b. Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. 'Aṣim (the

owner of 'Aṣim's caravansarai at Baghdad) was administered a thousand lashes in 241 (855), because seventeen persons testified that he had reviled Abū Bakr and 'Umar as well as 'A'isha and Ḥafṣa, two wives of the Prophet. When al-Mutawakkil heard the story he sent orders to have 'Īsā beaten to death; his corpse was to be thrown into the river without prayers being said over it.²²

Yazīd b. 'Abdallāh al-Turkī (the governor of Egypt) ordered the beating of one of his soldiers in 242 (856). The soldier swore in front of Yazīd in favor of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (the sons of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib) so that Yazīd would release or forgive him, but Yazīd gave him thirty lashes more. The caliph was informed by the postmaster in Egypt; eventually he sent orders to Yazīd that the soldier should be beaten one hundred times. He was beaten accordingly then transported to Iraq on 8th Shawwāl 243.²³

Al-Mutawakkil killed Abu Yūsuf Ya'qūb b. Ishāq b. al-Sikkīt, who was well known for his great knowledge of language and arts. The fame of his works induced al-Mutawakkil to entrust him with the education of his own sons al-Mu'tazz and al-Mu'ayyid. Then, one day in 244/858 al-Mutawakkil asked Abū Yūsuf "whom do you love more, my sons or al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn?" The answer was in favour of the sons of 'Alī. As soon as he heard this, the caliph gave him to the Turkish bodyguards, who so chastised and manhandled him that Abū Yūsuf died two days later.²⁴

Another anecdote concerns the poet Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥāmid b. Sulaymān b. Ḥafṣ b. 'Abdallāh, also well versed in geneology, who

was in conflict with some orthodox Muslims. On one occasion he mentioned 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and 'Uthmān in a disrespectful manner; this was brought to the attention of al-Mutawakkil. The caliph ordered the governor of Baghdad to give Aḥmad one hundred lashes.²⁵ All these incidents prove that al-Mutawakkil was offended by the expressions of pro-Shī'ī sentiments, in spite of his toleration of the Imām, as we shall discuss in a sequel. It should be mentioned, moreover, that such people as these could be silenced only by an extremely rigid policy.

The caliph was followed in his anti-'Alid policy by his governors too. For example, Yazīd b. 'Abdallāh himself was pursuing the conservative Shī'a in Egypt, interrogating and punishing those he caught. He executed their leaders and sent a group of them to Iraq under terrible conditions. He then turned his attention to the 'Alids in general upon whom he inflicted severe punishments, before expelling them from Egypt.²⁶

Al-Mutawakkil appointed one 'Umar b. Faraj al-Rakhjī, who was among the caliph's intimate friends, as governor of Mecca and Medina. He practiced an extremely repressive policy against the 'Alids. He did not allow them to associate with other people, and he refused permission to the people to be merciful with them. If he received information that someone had offered any 'Alid even a small item, he would punish that one with a heavy indemnity. By this harsh treatment 'Alid families lost even their clothes. They remained in privation

until the accession of al-Muntaṣir who was more benevolent in their regard.²⁷

c) The relation between the caliph al-Mutawakkil and the tenth Shī‘ī Imām, i.e., ‘Alī al-Naqī.²⁸ The caliph became suspicious of the young Imām when he learned in 237 (851) that the Imām ‘Ali al-Naqī had a quantity of arms, books and other objects for the use of his followers, concealed in his house. For this reason, ‘Alī al-Naqī was brought before the caliph and asked: "What does a descendant of your father have to say with regard to al-‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib?" He answered: "What would a descendant of my father say, O Governor of the Faithful, in regard to a man whose sons God has required his people to obey, and who expected his sons to obey God?" The caliph was so pleased with this reply that he commanded that ‘Alī al-Naqī be given one hundred thousand dirhams.²⁹ On this occasion ‘Alī al-Naqī was compelled to compose a verse and to recite it before the caliph. He recited as follows:

They passed the night on the summits of the mountains,
protected by valiant warriors, but their place of
refuge availed them not.

After all their pomp and power they had to descend
from their lofty to the custody of the tomb.

O what a dreadful change: Their graves had already
received them, a voice heard exclaiming: Where are the
thrones and the crowns and the robes of state?

Where are now the faces of the delicate, which
were shaded by veils and protected by the curtains
of the audience hall?

To this demand the tomb gave answer sufficient.
The worms, it said, are now revelling upon these faces.

Long had these men been eating and drinking
but now they are eaten in their turn.³⁰

Al-Mas'ūdī gives full explanation to the circumstances saying:

(As soon as the Imām had finished his verse) every person present was filled with apprehension of Abu'l Hasan's safety ('Alī al-Naqī); they feared that al-Mutawakkil, in the first burst of indignation, would have vented his wrath upon him. But they perceived the caliph weeping bitterly, the tears trickling down his beard, and all the assembly wept with him. Al-Mutawakkil then ordered the wine to be removed, after which he said: 'Tell me, Abu'l-Hasan, are you in debt?' 'Yes', replied the other, 'I owe four thousand dinars.' The caliph ordered the sum to be given to him, and sent him home with marks of highest respect.³¹

From this survey it seems that 'Alī al-Naqī did not recognize al-Mutawakkil as a caliph but as a governor. Through the verse, which he recited before the caliph, he bitterly criticized al-Mutawakkil for his policy towards al-Ḥusayn's tomb in particular, and towards the Shī'a in general. At the same time, he glorified the caliph 'Alī and his descendants. The caliph instead of punishing 'Alī al-Naqī rewarded him; he seemed to be tolerant with the Imām. This toleration proved that his persecution of the Shī'īs was not thorough-going. The toleration may have had something to do with their being related, as cousins, or it may have been for political reasons. Al-Mutawakkil may have aimed to gain the support of the Imām in order to help him to stand against the increasing power of the Turkish guards or the Mu'tazila movement. In addition, with the Imām's help, the caliph would also win the support of the Shī'ī populace because he was their leader and had his own power over them. Furthermore, by being tolerant with the Imām, al-Mutawakkil probably planned to keep the Imām near by so as to keep him under observation. Al-Mutawakkil

must have succeeded because it is said that the caliph summoned 'Alī al-Naqī from Medina and ordered him to live in Sāmarrā'. For two years the Imām was entertained as the guest of the caliph in his place and then his life changed. J.N. Hollister has remarked on this point as follows:

He ('Alī al-Naqī) was assigned poor quarters in the 'slum' section of the city and lived there without complaint. He was always under guard and observation. He was, however, allowed freedom of receiving visitors and of walking or riding out into the city. Reports were frequently made to Khalīfa, and more than once, conditions were privately checked by his orders, but though nothing incriminating was found, the spying continued.³²

For more detail about this relation, see Appendix I.

d) The caliph's personal hatred for the 'Alids, which was reinforced by his companionship with their enemies. Among his intimates was one 'Ubādah al-Mukhannath, who always made fun of 'Alī and his descendants. For example, he tied a pillow around his body beneath his dress and showed his bald head. He danced and said: "The Muslim caliph is coming, he who is bald and has a corpulent body," meaning the caliph 'Alī b. Abī Tālib. The caliph al-Mutawakkil and his companions would laugh with great pleasure at what they heard from 'Udādah.³³ It is said that one day 'Ubādah did the same when the caliph's son al-Munṭaṣir was among the party. Al-Munṭaṣir was shocked by what he heard spoken against 'Alī and he told his father: "O Commander of the Faithful, 'Alī is your cousin. It is better that you eat his meat, i.e., it is better that you insult him if you wish. Do not let this dog ('Udādah) and his companions accuse 'Alī."

But al-Mutawakkil paid no attention and said to his singer:

"The youth (al-Muntaṣir) was jealous for his cousin (ʿAlī) for his mind favours his kinsfold."³⁴

A habitual guest and companion of al-Mutawakkil was the poet ʿAlī b. Jahm who also opposed the Shīʿīs. He once recited:

Look at these Rāfidīs* who believe that there
is a hidden Imām in Shaʿb Raḍwā.* Might he fail to
be an Imām?

The Imām is the one who has twenty thousand
Turkish guards (al-Mutawakkil) with arrows ready.³⁵

However, Marwān b. Abī al-Janūb Abī al-Simt (d. 240/855), reported that one day he sang before the Commander of the Faithful (al-Mutawakkil) a verse which accused the Rāfidīs as wrongdoers. Because of that song the caliph appointed him to be governor of Yamāma and Baḥrayn.³⁶

It can thus be seen that al-Mutawakkil's reign was replete with anti-Shīʿī activity for several reasons. It is well known that during the reign of the preceding three caliphs, the Muʿtazila theory was adopted as a doctrine of the state, and one should not forget the relation between it and the Shīʿa. Al-Mutawakkil's first act was to put an end to the Mihna. His position opposed the Muʿtazilites and the Shīʿa who had supported the Muʿtazilī theologians. Patton has remarked on this point saying:

The Shyites were, in fact, Muʿtazilites in theological opinion, and it is not surprising that the ruler who gave out their tenet teaching the Korān should, at the same time, prefer their great leader before the orthodox Abū Bekr and his successor, even as it is not surprising that the ruler who revoked their tenet

should restore to the orthodox Khalifs their primacy.³⁷

We have already stated that al-Mutawakkil aimed by his religious policy to put an end to the rationalistic movement in Islam. This intention led him to oppose those who were favoured by the Mu'tazila such as Shī'a and Ahl al-Kitab, who found in the reign of al-Mihna their suitable time to practice their religious ideology. Moreover, most of the early Mu'tazilī leaders were among the Shī'a who, perhaps, opposed al-Mutawakkil for this policy towards the Mu'tazila which had its role in adopting this intolerant policy towards the Shī'a.

The caliph's religious ideal may have led him to adopt this intolerant position towards the Shī'a because as it was stated above he was orthodox and aimed to put into practice the content of orthodoxy, i.e., the very revelation of God. D.M. Donaldson has observed this saying: "During the caliphate of Mutawakkil, however, a reaction set in against all freethinking, with systematic persecution of both the Mu'tazilites and the Shi'ites. Only the strictly orthodox sect was exempt."³⁸

Al-Mutawakkil is supposed to have entertained a particular hatred against 'Alī and his descend^dnt. This hatred even led him to hate the preceding three caliphs because of their pro-'Alid policy.³⁹ It pleased him that his court jester ('Ubayd Allāh b. Yahyā b. Khāqān) should pad himself with a great paunch, for 'Alī had grown corpulent in later life, and assume the character of the

Prophet's cousin.⁴⁰ This narrative shows the role of the caliph's companion in this policy towards the Shī'a which may be associated with the caliph's desire too. Also, there were cases, already mentioned of 'Alī b. Jahm and 'Ubādah al-Mukhannath. The caliph's other companions were such men as Abū al-Simṭ, a descendant of a mawlā of the Umayyads, 'Abdallāh b. Muḥammad b. Da'ūd al-Hāshimī known as Ibn Itarjā and 'Umar b. Faraj al-Rakhjī, who was appointed as the governor of Mecca and Medina. It is related that these men were always creating fear in al-Mutawakkil of the 'Alids.⁴¹ They tried to eliminate the 'Alids by advising the caliph to exile them. These friends of al-Mutawakkil continued this way of acting even when the caliph had adopted his severe policy against the 'Alids. The behavior of such people perhaps encouraged the caliph's intention in practicing pro-orthodox Muslim policy. Moreover, the caliph's religious ideas may have influenced his behavior and encouraged him to entertain such anti-Shī'a people.

Abū al-Fidā' in his Ta'rīkh mentions that al-Mutawakkil himself hated 'Alī and his family. Abū al-Fidā' stated that "Al-Mutawakkil's bad attitude towards the Shī'a led him to choose his companions from among the common people who hated the 'Alids too."⁴² E.G. Browne also has remarked on this with connection to al-Mutawakkil's policy towards Ahl al-Kitāb and the Turkish guards. He stated: "His (al-Mutawakkil's) religious bigotry, which was especially directed against the Shī'a, but directed against the Jews and Christians, was,

indeed, in complete keeping with his Turkish proclivities, and makes us liken him rather to a gloomy and fanatical ottoman sultan than to the heir of al-Mansūr and al-Ma'mūn."⁴³ Browne has viewed this policy as a result of the caliph's bigoted religious policy only, while R. Levy considered his policy with the 'Alids as a result of al-Mutawakkil's religious zeal and his personal hatred of the 'Alids: "In the next year (236/850) Mutawakkil carried his zeal for orthodoxy and his hatred for the 'Alids so far as to destroy the tomb of the Prophet's martyred grandson Husain son of 'Alī, at Karbela, which had by that time become a place of pilgrimage."⁴⁴ Von Grunebaum viewed this policy with the Shī'a for political reasons. He mentioned that "As early as 850 or 851, the caliph Mutawakkil found it politically necessary to level Husain's tomb and to prohibit pilgrimage to Kerbela."⁴⁵

The reason for al-Mutawakkil's policy with the Shī'a is neither purely religious zeal nor personal hatred on one hand, nor political only on the other hand, but it is rather a combination of these. The result of this policy can be summarized as follows: It can be said that the orthodox who had gained the caliph's support encouraged the caliph to eliminate the Shī'a, while the latter in their turn tried with increasing effort to dispose of al-Mutawakkil. The Shī'a had no leader strong enough to unite them and stand up to the caliph's persecution, so they looked for some means of getting rid of al-Mutawakkil. They were able to use one of his sons, al-Muntaṣir,

who was sympathetic. When al-Muntaṣir began to dispute with his father, the Shī'īs supported him and he succeeded in putting an end to his father's life.⁴⁶ D. Sourdél has presented this event as follows:

Da déjà rapproché cette anecdote d'une information provenant cette fois de la chronique d'al-Ṭabarī et relatant l'initiative d'al-Muntaṣir qui aurait décrit à un groupe de jurists (fuqahā') les habitudes (maḍāhib) de son père et révélé à son sujet des choses épouvantables (umūr qabīḥa) que l'on ne pouvait reproduire par écrit; il aurait alors, selon cette tradition, reçu d'eux le conseil de le tuer. Qu'un historien aussi peu favorable à la politique d'al-Mutawakkil ait transmis pareille information, destinée à justifier un acte que beaucoup réprouvèrent, ne saurait surprendre, nombreux sont en effet les chroniqueurs de diverses tendances qui se font l'écho de l'opinion selon laquelle al-Muntaṣir, meurtrier de son père, ne méritait pas de lui survivre longtemps. Mais les faits rapportés, dont il n'est aucune raison de suspecter l'exactitude semblent prouver également qu'une réelle opposition politique existait sans al-Mutawakkil, groupée vraisemblablement derrière al-Muntaṣir. Il est d'ailleurs curieux de relever qu'al-Mutawakkil, le dernier vendredi de ramadān, avait évité de diriger la prière en raison de l'arrivée à Samarra de nombreux Hāsimides venus de Bagdad pour lui présenter des revendications: s'il ne s'était agi que de requêtes personnelles, les aurait-il craints de la sorte? En divers milieux l'attitude rigoriste et brutale du califā devait donc avoir suscité un réel malaise.⁴⁷

The sympathetic attitude of al-Muntaṣir toward the Shī'ites appeared vividly from his actions as soon as he acceded to the throne.

D. Sourdél also stated that:

It is, in any case, certain that al-Muntaṣir, once he was on the throne, took several measures which amounted to new policy. As soon as he mounted the throne, he replaced a governor of Medina with a

certain 'Ali b. al-Ḥusayn b. Ismā'īl who promised to treat well the 'Alids residing in that city. He restored to the 'Alid their properties which had been put in waqf, and particularly to the descendant of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn. He returned their lands of fak̄ which had been taken away by al-Mutawakkil after they had been returned by al-Ma'mūn.⁴⁸

It has been suggested that al-Mutawakkil's policy against the Shī'a was the main reason for his murder.⁴⁹ According to the Shī'ī view, no one regretted the caliph's death, but nobody seemed happy with the new reign, since the change was the end of persecution.⁵⁰ It is obvious that al-Mutawakkil aimed by his policy to silence the 'Alids on one hand and to favour the orthodox on the other. Al-Mutawakkil in some extent succeeded in silencing the Shī'īs.

J.J. Saunders has observed this point saying:

Mutawakkil, a dour bigot, was bitterly hostile to Alid pretensions, and in 851 the shrine of Husain at Karbala was destroyed at his orders, the site ploughed up, and pilgrimages to the place forbidden. For a time the Alid movement died down, only to burst afresh in a more furious form in the Isma'īlian uprising at the close of the century.⁵¹

The conflict between the conservative Sunnīs and the Shī'īs reached a very crucial state, and in time the gap between them widened. Each side held strictly to its own view; this may have led to the cause of many conflicts, especially in the later 'Abbāsīd period. It can be assumed, from this survey, that from the period of our concern the conflict became not exclusively between the government and the Shī'a as had been the case before the caliphate of al-Mutawakkil, but also it involved the conservative

Sunnī populace and the Shī'īs.

To sum up, al-Mutawakkil's religious policy against the Shī'a came as a result of his political-religious policy. This policy in association with other reasons, led to his murder by his son. This event left no room in the hearts of the Turkish guards for respect for the caliphs, and the caliphs became a tool in the hands of the Turks, used for their own political purposes. Moreover, the Turkish guards attained such power that they could nominate or depose any person they wanted for the caliphate. On the other hand this policy wiped out all the caliph's best deeds. Ibn al-Athīr stated that this undesirable quality of al-Mutawakkil (his religious policy towards the 'Alids) wiped out all his excellent qualities. He was considered the best (caliph) in his conduct by abolishing the idea of createdness of the Qur'ān and had in his favour, good actions other than this.⁵² A later historian, Ibn al-Wardī, mentions the same things but adds the following verses:

How many times the excellent deeds were removed
by the evil act. Such as the removal of (the whole)
conduct of al-Mutawakkil by his hatred for 'Alī
(Ibn 'Abī Tālib).

Though very just, his hatred towards 'Alī lowered
him in the eyes of the people.⁵³

CHAPTER VI

Al-Mutawakkil's Attitude towards the Ṣūfīs

Ṣūfīsm became a very popular religious movement during the third century of Hīgrah, as a result partly of ascetic strains present in Islam from the beginning and partly in reaction to the worldliness of Islamic civilization of the time. H.A.R. Gibb characterizes this development as follows:

At first (the beginning of Ṣūfīsm) the leaders were themselves of the class of ulamā, or orthodox religious teachers. But in the course of the third century their place was taken by men who had not been brought for the most part to the lower middle or artisan classes of the towns, especially from the mixed half-Persian, half-Aramized Arab population of Baghdad. At the same time, too, certain implications of a social character began to enter into what had been hitherto exclusively - and still remained primarily - a religious movement.¹

There is very little material in the sources on this subject, and most of it concerns the relation between al-Mutawakkil and the most famous Ṣūfī figures of his time, namely Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d. 245/859)² and al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/865).³

a) We shall attempt to discourse the attitude of al-Mutawakkil towards the Ṣūfīs by examining his encounters with these figures, and we shall begin with Dhū al-Nūn because of his direct relation with the caliph.

During al-Mutawakkil's reign Dhū al-Nūn was accused of being a zindīq because he invented a science (ʿilm) which none of the companions

of the Prophet had ever discussed.⁴ Dhū al-Nūn was summoned before the caliph in Sāmarrā' and asked to describe the saints. Dhū al-Nūn, in words of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdadī (A.H. 392-460), said the following:

O Commander of the Faithful, they are those whom God invested with the radiance of His love and adorned with the fair mantle of His grace, upon whose heads He set the crown of His joy, and He put love towards them into the hearts of His creatures. Then He brought them forth, having entrusted to their hearts the treasures of the Invisible, which depend upon union with the Beloved, and their hearts are turned towards Him and their eyes behold the greatness of His Majesty. Then He set them on the thrones of the search for a remedy, and He gave them knowledge of the places where the means of healing are to be found, and He caused their disciples to be abstinent and God-fearing, and to them He gave assurance of an answer to their prayers, and He said; 'O My saints, if there come to you one sick through separation from Me, heal him; or a fugitive from Me, seek him out ... O My saints, I have reasoned with you, and to you I have addressed Myself, towards you has been My desire and from you have I sought the fulfilment (of My will), for upon you has My choice been laid, and you have I predestined for My work. You have I appointed for My service, and you have I chosen and made to be Mine elect. Not those who are proud do I seek to be My servants, nor do I desire the service of the covetous. To you have I given the most precious of rewards, the fairest of gifts, the greatest of graces. I am the Searcher of hearts, He who knows the mysteries of the Invisible ... He who has shown you enmity is My enemy, and to him who was friendly towards you have I shown friendship. Ye are My saints, and ye are My beloved. Ye are Mine and I am yours.⁵

The people expected Dhū al-Nūn to be punished for his heretical ideas. But al-Mutawakkil instead of punishing him listened to his speech and asked him to stay in Sāmarrā' for a while, which he did.

Then he returned to Baghdad and later left Baghdad for Egypt.⁶ During the course of the discussion al-Mutawakkil wept as he was listening to Dhū al-Nūn. The caliph may have gotten the impression from Dhū al-Nūn's speech that those people who claimed Dhū al-Nūn was a Zindiq had not yet reached a sufficient level of education to help them understand what he meant by his discussion. From that time until the end of his reign, whenever someone mentioned pious men, al-Mutawakkil would start weeping and say, "Speaking of pious men, let me have Dhū al-Nūn."⁷

It is recorded that al-Mutawakkil put Dhū al-Nūn in a private house during his stay in Sāmarrā' and appointed one of his chiefs to be in charge of him. When he was presented before the caliph, al-Mutawakkil asked him: "Are you the ascetic of Egypt?" Dhū al-Nūn answered: "So they say." The man who was looking after Dhū al-Nūn said: "The Commander of the Faithful wants to hear the speech of the ascetics." Dhū al-Nūn, after a short silence, said:

O Commander of the Faithful truly ignorance has attached itself to the stale understanding of the learned men. O you Commander of the Faithful, God has servants who worship Him in complete secrecy. He honored them by His absolute mercy. They are those who like the angels have clean records devoid of any (sin). When these records come to God, He fills them with some of the secrets which they told Him. Their bodies are worldly yet their hearts are heavenly, which continue the knowledge of His knowledge as if they were worshipping Him along with the angels who are located in the spaces and different ranks of the skies. They have not been involved with the regions of sin, nor have they enjoyed the pleasure of sins. They released God from seeing them establishing

anything which He hates because they fear Him, and they glorify Him by replacing their moral characteristics by something which is eternal, and by rejecting any pleasure of life ... God's mercy has facilitated or simplified every accident which occurred during the meeting with the Beloved. The Ṣūfīs' bodily organs continued to be in contact with the Beloved, and the organs became accustomed to that contentedness... their souls are calm; they are satisfied with poverty and misery. Their corporal organs are controlled by continuous obedience to God. Their souls are diverted from the pleasure of food and drink; they are involved in God's love through meditation ... They (Ṣūfīs) have no desire for the way of life of other people, and they have neither pleasure nor familiarity except through their conversation with God. They are truthful, shy and pious. They are believers, gnostics and religious. They cross the valleys (gaps) without passing through any hills. They fulfill their faithfulness by being patient in adhering to God; and they seek God's help to defeat falsity; and God clarifies His proof for them. He indicates for them the way of gnosis. They have rejected the path of trouble and followed the best path.

These are the pillars of the mythical path through which the gifts are given and through which the doors are opened, the clouds made and the punishments removed. Through these holy men other people seek tranquility and God's mercy. May God give us and those His mercy.⁹

In these two narratives Dhū al-Nūn explained briefly the path of mystical ideas to the caliph and his companions. He described in detail the rights and duties of the Ṣūfīs towards God. Then he concluded by mentioning the honorable position of the Ṣūfīs in society with reference to their importance in the community as intermediates between God and His people. Dhū al-Nūn's description of Ṣūfīs as pious men no doubt helps explain al-Mutawakkil's friendly

attitude towards the Ṣūfīs.

b) The relation between Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and certain Ṣūfī figures. Unlike Dhū al-Nūn, al-Muḥāsibī, as the primary sources tell us, did not have any direct confrontation with al-Mutawakkil, but there was a conflict between al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal on theological matters.¹⁰ It meant that Ibn Ḥanbal's attitude towards non-orthodox groups would be in many ways representative of al-Mutawakkil's attitude. Because after the Miḥna period Ibn Ḥanbal had almost become the spokesman for the orthodox and enjoyed the caliph al-Mutawakkil's respect and supported him in his actions against anti-orthodox people. Therefore, the disagreement between Ibn Ḥanbal and al-Muḥāsibī led to discomfiture for the latter, because the former was more powerful than he.

Al-Sha'ṛānī records that Ibn Ḥanbal was told that al-Muḥāsibī was an adherent of Ṣūfī doctrines and constantly argued in favor of Sufism by reference to Qur'ānic verses and tradition. Ibn Ḥanbal was asked if he liked to listen to his speech secretly, and he answered "Yes". Then Ibn Ḥanbal went to al-Muḥāsibī's assembly and stayed all night listening. Afterwards, when he was asked to comment he could not deny the sincerity of al-Muḥāsibī's states (Aḥwāl) and those of his companions.¹¹

There are several accounts given of this incident. We shall present here what al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī has mentioned. Ibn Ḥanbal said to Ismā'īl b. Ishāq al-Sarrāj, one of al-Muḥāsibī's disciples,

I have heard that Ḥārith, i.e., al-Muḥāsibī, comes frequently to your house; could you not send for him to come to you, and give me a seat which would not be seen by Ḥārith, but which would give me a view of him and enable me to hear his discourse? Ismāʿīl b. Ishāq willingly agreed, for this initiative on the part of Ibn Ḥanbal pleased him, and he went forthwith to seek out al-Muḥāsibī... Ismāʿīl did as he was bidden, and went off to tell Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. The latter came after sunset, and seated himself in an upper chamber, where he occupied himself with the recitation of the Qurʾān till he had finished what was incumbent upon him.

Meanwhile Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī came with his disciples, and they ate their meal and then stood for the prayer of nightfall, after which they sat down around Ḥārith and were silent; not one of them spoke until nearly midnight. Then one of them began and asked Ḥārith a question, and he began to speak, and his companions listened, remaining motionless; then some began to weep and others to cry out, while al-Muḥāsibī continued to speak ... Ismāʿīl asked Ibn Ḥanbal what he thought of these men, and he replied, 'I do not know that I have ever seen any men like these, nor have I heard the like of this man's words concerning mystical theology (ʿilm al-Ḥaqāʾiq).' ¹² But in spite of what Ibn Ḥanbal had seen and heard, he warned Ismāʿīl b. Ishāq against associating with such people, and rose up and departed. ¹³

The influential Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal blamed al-Muḥāsibī, claiming that in recognizing the method of the Muʿtazila he directly acknowledged the Muʿtazila itself; Ibn Ḥanbal discredited his attitude as heresy. Ibn Ḥanbal had proceeded against opponents in this way on several occasions; he excommunicated al-Muḥāsibī according to the manner of the Ahl al-Hadīth by calling a Muḥtadīʿ (innovator) and forbidding his followers to visit him. ¹⁴

Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī reports that Ibn Ḥanbal carried his persecution of al-Muḥāsibī to the point of banning his writings and banishing him. ¹⁵

Subkī mentions that Ibn Ḥanbal disapproved of al-Muḥāsibī's talking about Kalām without logical arguments instead of keeping silent about it, since this talk tended to create dissensions.¹⁶

The conflict between Ibn Ḥanbal and al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī was an ideological one, based on their differing views. It may have begun when al-Muḥāsibī had gone to Kūfa to copy traditions, and declared that he repented of all that Ibn Ḥanbal disapproved of in him. Ibn Ḥanbal declared there was no penitence on the part of al-Ḥārith. When evidence was brought against him on some count, he denied it; repentance was only on the part of him who acknowledged his errors, but one who was accused and denied his fault was not repentant.¹⁷ Therefore, when Ibn Ḥanbal decided authoritatively against the rational theologians, the position of al-Muḥāsibī was deeply affected. Al-Muḥāsibī was compelled to give up his public teaching and hide himself because of the fanaticism of the Sunnī Muslims at that time. He was supposed to have lived at Kūfa in retirement, but returned to Baghdad where he died in 243/857.¹⁸ Ibn Khallikān recorded that "owing to the hostility of the Ḥanbalīs, only four persons attended the funeral of al-Muḥāsibī to offer the ritual prayers over his body."¹⁹

The conflict between Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and al-Muḥāsibī in particular or between the Ḥanbalīs and Ṣūfīs in general, appears to have had no effect on the court. Because of the caliph's respect of Ibn Ḥanbal, the latter was able to wield his considerable authority against al-Muḥāsibī. Moreover, most of the sources seem

to indicate that al-Mutawakkil did not interfere in this conflict. On the other hand, among the recent works there is a contrary reference by H.A.R. Gibb, who states that: "He (al-Mutawakkil) silenced al-Muḥāsibī, the most prominent Ṣūfī teacher in Baghdad."²⁰ If this is true we can easily assume that this conflict may have affected the throne's policy. It seems certain that Ibn Ḥanbal's authority alone would have been insufficient to create a fear which resulted in the boycott of al-Muḥāsibī's funeral. Even if we admitted that this conflict influenced the policy of the court, it was only on the individual level, i.e., only against al-Muḥāsibī, not all the Ṣūfīs. The relation between the caliph al-Mutawakkil and Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī proved this point.

Since the conservative Sunnīs were anti-Ṣūfī,²¹ they may have persuaded the caliph to stand against al-Muḥāsibī and support their stand. In addition, the similarity between Ṣūfīsm and Shī'ism, i.e., the Ṣūfī use of the Shī'ite principle of allegorical interpretation (ta'wīl) and their favorable attitude towards 'Alī b. Abi Tālib and his family, may have given further cause for the orthodox Muslims to stand rigidly against them.²² In order to gain the orthodox Muslims' support, al-Mutawakkil may have been obliged to support the orthodox position against the individual Ṣūfīs.

As was the case with al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī there is an indication referring to a conflict between Ibn Ḥanbal and Sarī al-Saqāṭī.²³ This reference does not come to us in primary sources

except that Ibn Jawzī mentions it in Talbīs Iblīs. Attention has been drawn in a single recent study and is contradicted by what we have found in this non-Ṣūfī text which this recent work used as the basis of its assumption.²⁴ For this reason we shall not discuss this point of view here.

We can conclude from this brief survey that al-Mutawakkil's attitude towards the Ṣūfīs was better than his attitude towards others whose ideals were contrary to the orthodox theory, whether they were Muslims or non-Muslims. Moreover, there is no evidence other than the statement of Gibb to prove that al-Mutawakkil interfered in the Ṣūfīs religious activities. The most prominent Ṣūfī leader at that time was Dhū al-Nūn, who was highly respected by the caliph himself. This sympathetic attitude towards this Ṣūfī figure may have come as a result of al-Mutawakkil's admiration for a pious man. Or it may have returned to the attitude of Dhū al-Nūn towards the Mu'tazila because Dhū al-Nūn met with hostility from the Mu'tazila, for his adherence to the uncreatedness of the Qur'ān.²⁵

CONCLUSION

Al-Mutawakkil's religious policy cannot be fully understood from a one-sided point of view, but should be seen in terms of religio-political as well as other aspects. Al-Mutawakkil was neither a bigot nor a fanatic, but was a pious man who desired in his religious policy to put into practice the true revelation of God, i.e., orthodox Islamic principles.

Those like J.J. Saunders, Muir, Reuben Levy and Syeed Ameer 'Alī who viewed al-Mutawakkil's policy as a reflection of a personality steeped in bigotry were mostly those who did not understand the real policy of this caliph and underestimated his efforts to unify Islam and the society of his time. They are themselves fanatic ⁱⁿ their own opinions, and their views reveal their enmity to al-Mutawakkil.

Those like von Grunebaum, Nabia Abbott, W. Montgomery Watt and A.S. Tritton, who claimed this policy did so because they thought it purely political and they ignored the religious ideals of the caliph. To these people we can easily say that the main reason for al-Mutawakkil's policy was his religious zeal. This religious zeal was so firmly combined with political reasons that it is difficult to isolate the two elements.

In accordance with his religious point of view, al-Mutawakkil intended to put Dhimmīs in the position which God had specified for them. Al-Mutawakkil desired to put into practice 'Umar's covenant which rigorously defines the position that the Ahl al-Kitāb were

assigned. Even though al-Mutawakkil appeared to be an antagonistic to the Dhimmīs, in practice he allowed them to hold their offices in which capacity they enjoyed his respect. The caliph was not blindly prejudiced against the Ahl al-Kitāb but rather wanted to assign them their legal status in the Islamic community.

Al-Mutawakkil was orthodox; he was not content to follow the acknowledged orthodox leaders of his time, but tried to control the behaviour of the orthodox, in spite of the fact that his religious policy demanded their support against his enemies. The caliph sometimes did not have confidence even in the most respectable Sunnī leaders at court, i.e., Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, even though al-Mutawakkil used to consult him about certain problems and invited him to his court at Sāmarrā'. The Sunnīs in their turn regarded al-Mutawakkil as one of the three true caliphs in Islam, and highly praised his character and especially his role in abolishing the Miḥna. The caliph intended by his pro-orthodox policy to wipe out the discrimination which permeated Islam through the policy of the Mu'tazila. Al-Mutawakkil succeeded in returning the court policy of the pre-Miḥna period and put an end to any attempt which may have aimed to introduce other than orthodox ideas to the 'Abbāsīd court.

Although al-Mutawakkil succeeded on a religious level in restoring the court doctrine as it was before the Miḥna, he did not succeed on a political level in restoring the real authority of the caliphs. In other words, he failed to wipe out the Turkish

power which can be considered as one of the subsidiary goals of his religious policy.

And yet he did succeed in eliminating the Mu'tazila from the political theatre, which was a wise political move because the Mu'tazila represented only a minority in the society at that time, while the majority were orthodox. Moreover, this minority was confined to the intellectual class because the Muslim community was not at the level to understand the philosophical ideology of the Mu'tazila and considered it heretical. Furthermore, it was regarded as a foreign theory which tried to demolish the simple Islamic doctrine and changed it into a philosophical one. The Mu'tazilīs, in their turn, failed to persuade the masses of the people or to bring them to their side. The Mu'tazila by relying on the force as the only means to preach their doctrine hastened their end and became very unpopular. Force could never succeed in preaching any type of ideology and the Mu'tazila by doing so created many enemies around them, especially among the traditionists by whom the orthodox Muslims were supported. But al-Mutawakkil did not subject the Mu'tazilīs to a Mihna but simply dismissed them from their offices. If he had been a bigot, as some historians claim, he would have established another Mihna and would have treated them in the same way that they have done to the orthodox leaders.

Al-Mutawakkil was a sincere religious caliph who desired to practice justice by putting an end to the persecution of orthodox

Muslims and restoring the policy of the pre-Miḥna period.

Al-Mutawakkil's policy with the Mu'tazila led him to oppose those who were favoured by the caliphs of the Miḥna, especially the Shī'a. His negative attitude towards the Shī'a came as a result of his religious zeal because the Shī'a introduced some religious functions which were completely unknown to the Sunnī Muslims. By adopting such attitudes with the Shī'a, the caliph wished to unite Islam and remove hereſy. On a political level the main reason for this anti-Shī'ī policy was to put an end to the continuous Shī'ī revolts against the 'Abbāsid regime. The caliph, at least, succeeded in silencing the Shī'a for a while, and was thus able to control their activity. But, on the other hand, the Shī'a associated with the caliph's other enemies, especially the Turkish guards and his son al-Muntaſir, who was pro-'Alid. This association ended in the murder of al-Mutawakkil by his son.

Because of al-Mutawakkil's policy towards the Shī'a, which was not favoured by the people, the caliph came to be considered bigoted and tyrannical. We can say, however, in his attitude towards the Shī'a the caliph did not commit any sin according to his own religious principles. Moreover, by his tolerant attitude towards the Imām 'Alī al-Naqī, he showed his respect for pious men, whatever their creed, as also in the case with Dhū al-Nūn al-Miſrī.

Al-Mutawakkil's attitude towards the Ŝūfī figures such as Dhū al-Nūn proved again the caliph's religious view and his desire

to be near the pious men. The caliph was impressed by Dhū al-Nūn's speech and highly respected him among the pious men. On the other hand, the conservative orthodox Muslims were anti-Ṣūfī because of the relation between Ṣūfīsm and Shī'īsm, and the favoritism of the Ṣūfīs for Alī b. 'Abī Tālib. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, who was a spokesman for the Sunnīs at that time, was in conflict with al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī. This conflict between the two leading figures did not affect the court and did not extend to conflict with other Ṣūfī figures. In other words, Ṣūfīs in general were in a better position than any other non-orthodox group.

In summary, it can be said that al-Mutawakkil desired above all to practice justice and to put an end to the persecution of the orthodox Muslims by abolishing the Mihna. Furthermore, he wished to be close to the pious men, either because of his admiration for them and, perhaps, to use them with the collaboration of their followers' support as a means of reaching his political goals. The caliph intended to wipe out heresy from the Islamic doctrine and to unify Islam. Combined with these goals was his ambition to restore the caliph's power which had been weakened since the time when the Turkish elements were introduced into the army. In general al-Mutawakkil tried to reinforce the Arab elements in the army in order to control the other foreign elements and to hold their power in their hands.

Ultimately al-Mutawakkil fell victim to his policy and was bitterly criticized by Muslim historians as well as modern scholars.

His fault was that he desired to make the doctrines in which he so zealously believed triumph over any other beliefs. The victory of his beliefs demanded the opposition of the others, especially those of the Mu'tazillīs and Shī'īs. Ironically, though al-Mutawakkil was bitterly criticized for his policy, no historian, scholar or writer has written a single sentence against the caliphs of the Mihna for their religious policy which resulted in the persecution of the majority of the community. Al-Mutawakkil, who intended to practice the sunnah of the Prophet has come to be considered the most fanatic caliph, while the caliphs of the Mihna, who tried to inflict their own doctrine on the people and adopted various harsh means to enforce it, were considered the best rulers.

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INTRODUCTION:

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²Ibid., p. 17.

³Ibid.

⁴D. Sourdel, "La politique des successeurs d'al-Mutawakkil", Studia Islamica, XIII (Paris), 1960, p. 6.

⁵Muir, The Caliphate: Its Rise, Decline and Fall, Edinburgh, 1915, p. 530.

⁶J.J. Saunders, A History of Medieval Islam, London, 1966, p. 120.

⁷Syed Ameer 'Alī, The Spirit of Islam, London, 1965, p. 439.

⁸Reuben Levy, A Baghdad Chronicle, Cambridge, 1929, p. 104.

⁹R.D. Osborn, Islam under the Khalifs of Baghdad, London, (n.d.), p. 266.

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¹³A.S. Tritton, The Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim Subjects, London, 1930, p. 231.

¹⁴Muṣṭafā Shākīr, Fī al-Ta`rīkh al-`Abbāsī, Dīmashq 1376-1957, p. 321.

¹⁵von Grun**eb**baum, op. cit., pp. 40-41.

¹⁶W. Montgomery Watt, op. cit., p. 241.

¹⁷Lewis, "Abbāsids", E.I., 2nd. ed., vol. I, p. 18.

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¹⁹Carl Brokelmann, History of the Islamic Peoples, New York, 1960, p. 132.

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²²Ya`qūbī, Ta`rīkh al-Ya`qūbī, vol. III, Najaf, 1358 A.H., pp. 208 ff.

²³Ṭabarī, Annales at-Ṭabarī, series 3, vol. III, ed. M.J. deGoeje, E.J. Brill, 1964, pp. 1368 ff.

²⁴Ibn Kathīr, Al-Bidāyā wa al-Nihāyā fī al-Ta`rīkh, vol. X, Cairo, 1351-1932, pp. 310 ff.

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²⁶Suyūṭī, Taʿrīkh al-Khulafāʾ, Cairo, 1378-1959, pp. 346 ff.

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²⁸Ibn Ṭaqṭaqā, Al-fakhrī fī al-Ādāb al-sultānīyah, Cairo, 1345-1927, p. 177.

²⁹Abū al-Fidāʾ, Taʿrīkh Abū al-Fidāʾ, vol. 2, p. 40.

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CHAPTER I:

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- ²Ṭabarī, op. cit., p. 1368.
- ³Ibid., pp. 1370-1376.
- ⁴Suyūṭī, op. cit., p. 346; Subkī Taj al-Dīn, (d. 771 A.H.) Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfīʿīyah al-Kubrā, vol. I, Miṣr (n.d.), pp. 215-216.
- ⁵Ṭabarī, op. cit., pp. 1389-1394; Suyūṭī, op. cit., p. 347.
- ⁶Ibn al-Athīr, al-Kamīl fī al-Taʿrīkh, vol. 5, p. 283; Ṭabarī, op. cit., pp. 1384-1387.
- ⁷Ṭabarī, op. cit., pp. 1394 ff.; Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit., p. 284.
- ⁸Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit., p/ 287.
- ⁹Suyūṭī, op. cit., p. 347.
- ¹⁰Subkī, op. cit., p. 126.
- ¹¹Ṭabarī, op. cit., p. 1410.
- ¹²Ibid., pp. 1412-1414.
- ¹³Ibid., pp/ 1417-18; Suyūṭī, op. cit., pp. 347-348.
- ¹⁴Ṭabarī, op. cit., p. 1419.
- ¹⁵Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit., pp. 294-95.
- ¹⁶Ṭabarī, op. cit., p/ 1456.
- ¹⁷Ibid., pp. 1456-1460; for detail, the same source, pp. 1452-1465.

¹⁸Mas'ūdī, Abu al-Ḥasan (d. 346/956), Murūj al-Dhahab,
vol. VII, ed. by C. Barbier ~~de~~ Meynard, Paris, 1873, pp. 276-77.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 289.

²⁰Suyuṭī, op. cit., p. 352.

CHAPTER II:

¹G. Vajda, "Ahl al-Kitāb", E.I. 2, I, 264-66.

God said, "And argue not with the people of the Book except by what is best, save such of them as act unjustly. But say: we believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you, and our God and your God is one, and to Him we submit." (XXIX.46)

²W. Montgomery Watt, Muhammad at Medina, Oxford, 1966, pp. 221-260.

³Ibn 'Asākir (d. A.H. 579), Ta'rīkh Madīnat Dimashq, vol. I, ed. by S. Munajjid, Damascus (n.d.), p. 563.

Jizya. The poll-tax which in traditional Muslim law, is levied on non-Muslims in Muslim states. It is taken from adults only while children, women, old men, sick people and religious class are exempted from it. It is collected on different levels: 4, 2, 1 dinar.

Abū Yūsuf (d. 182/798), Kitāb al-Kharāj, Būlaq, 1302, pp. 122-127;

Claude Cahen, "Djizya," E.I. 2, II, 559-62.

⁴We shall not deal with the prophet's period because it is fully studied by such Orientalists as W. Montgomery Watt, op. cit., pp. 221-26, and R. Levy, The Social Structure of Islam, Cambridge, 1965, pp. 272-75. Moreover, we are not concerned with Muhammad's period; our concern is to present to the reader the way in which caliphs interpreted the Qur'ānic verses and used them to prove their religious-political stand.

⁵Ibn 'Asākir, who presented this covenant, attributed it to 'Umar b. Khaṭṭāb while some Orientalists, like P.K. Hitti, The Arabs in History; Antoine Fattal, Le Statut légal des non-Musulmans en pays d'Islam, claimed that this covenant belongs to 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz.

⁶Ibn 'Asākir, op. cit., pp. 563-564, tr. by A.S. Tritton, The Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim Subjects, pp. 5-6.

⁷Abū Yūsuf, op. cit., p. 127.

⁸Ibn Qayyīm al-Jawzīyah (A.H. 691-751), Aḥkām Ahl al-Dhimmah fī al-Islām, Vol. I, ed. by Ṣubḥī al-Sāliḥ, Damascus, 1381/1961, p. 213.

⁹Abū Yūsuf, op. cit., p. 127.

¹⁰Muḥammad al-Kindī, Kitāb al-Wulāt wa Kitāb al-Qudāt, Baghdad, n.d., p. 155.

¹¹T. Arnold, The Preaching of Islam, London, 1913, p. 76.

¹²F. Omar, "Hārūn al-Rashīd", E.I.2, III, 233.

The political situation forced al-Rashīd to hold this kind of policy towards the Dhimmīs; this political element can be explained by his desire to overcome the Shī'ites' power (or certain Persian families) and to wage war against the Byzantines, especially when Muslims considered the Ahl al-Kitāb as foreigners and spies for the Muslims' foreign enemies.

F. Omar, op. cit., pp. 232-234.

The assumption that religious-political elements forced the caliph to adopt such stands against the Dhimmīs is well presented by

H.A.R. Gibb, The Fiscal Rescript of Umar II: "He ('Umar II) was, therefore primarily interested in the religious aspects of reform, but these were bound up with the political effort to prevent the imminent breakdown of the Islamic state by (i) maintaining the unity of the Arabs; (ii) removing the grievances of the mawālī; and (iii) reconciling political life with the claims of religion." p. 1

¹³Ibn... Ibrī Ghūrghūrīyūs, Ta`rīkh Mukhtasir al-Duwal, Beirut, 1958, pp. 136-38; Ibn Abī Uṣaybi ah, Uyūn al-anbā' fī Ṭabaqat al-aṭibba', Beirut, A.D. 1965, p. 189; T.J. deBoer, The History of Philosophy in Islam, New York, 1967, pp. 11-30; Fazlur Rahman, Islam, London, 1966, p. 4; De Lacy O'Leary, How Greek Science Passed to the Arabs, London, 1951, pp. 155-175.

Moreover, De Lacy O'Leary stated, "According to the historians he (al-Ma`mūn) was endowed with every grace and favour of an ideal prince. Educated in Maru in a neo-Hellenistic atmosphere, he applied philosophical principles to Muslim doctrines." p. 162.

¹⁴E.G. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, I, Cambridge, 1951, p. 343.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 290.

¹⁶Tabari, op. cit., pp. 1389-90.

*Lighting a fire in the street for cooking purposes was a common practice among the poorer classes of the east. E.L. Butcher, The Story of the Church of Egypt, I, London, 1897, p. 450.

¹⁷Tabari, op. cit., pp. 1390-93.

¹⁸In this letter the caliph did not mention the employment and the dismissal of the Dhimmīs from the government services.

¹⁹Ṭabarī, op. cit., p. 1393.

²⁰Ibn Qayyim, op. cit., pp. 222-24.

²¹B. Lewis, "Muslim Civilization under the Abbasid period", Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. IV, Cambridge, 1966-67, p. 666.

²²Ibn Qutaybah, ʿUyūn al-Akḥbār, Berlin, 1900, p. 62; Ibn Qayyim, op. cit., pp. 220-221.

²³Adam Mez, The Renaissance of Islam, London, 1937, p. 51.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵G. von Grunebaum, Ḥadārat al-Islām, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Tawfīq, Cairo, n.d., pp. 234-35.

²⁶B. Lewis, "Government, Society and Economic Life under the Abbasids and Fatimids", Cambridge Medieval History, IV, p. 642.

²⁷Ibn ʿIbrī, op. cit., pp. 143-44; Ibn Abī ʿUṣaybiʿah, op. cit., p. 207; It is recorded that "Bukhtishuʿ b. Jibrāʿīl stood high in the caliph's favour to the extent that he had clothes, respect, wealth, horses, slaves and slave girls as the caliph himself." Ibid.

Ṭabarī recorded that Bukhtishuʿ was exiled in 294/858 to Bahroy and his property was confiscated. p. 1437.

²⁸Ṭabarī, op. cit., pp. 1438, 1463; Ibn Qayyim, op. cit., p. 221.

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²⁷Ibn ʿIbrī, op. cit., pp. 143-44; Ibn Abī ʿUṣaybiʿah, op. cit., p. 207; It is recorded that "Bukhtishuʿ b. Jibrāʿīl stood high in the caliph's favour to the extent that he had clothes, respect, wealth, horses, slaves and slave girls as the caliph himself." Ibid.

Ṭabarī recorded that Bukhtishuʿ was exiled in 294/858 to Bahroy and his property was confiscated. p. 1437.

²⁸Ṭabarī, op. cit., pp. 1438, 1463; Ibn Qayyim, op. cit., p. 221.

The names are those of Salama b. Sa'īd, Dulayl b. Ya'qūb al-Naṣrānī (these were secretaries of the court), Sa'īd b. Awn al-Naṣrānī (governor of Damascus), and Nuḥ b. 'Īsā b. Ibrāhīm (the registrar of al-faṭḥ b. Khāqān, the Caliph al-Mutawakkil's wazīr).

²⁹Tabarī, op. cit., pp. 1415, 1438, 1463.

³⁰Ibid., p. 1438.

³¹E.L. Butcher, The History of the Church of Egypt, I, pp. 450-51.

³²Tabarī, op. cit., p. 1417.

³³A. De Merigny, The History of the Arabian Caliphs, III, London, 1758, pp. 199-200.

³⁴Tabarī, op. cit., p. 1419; Maqrīzī, al-Khitāt al-Maqrīzīyah, II, Cairo, p. 494.

³⁵Tabarī, op. cit., p. 1419; Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit., V, pp. 293.

³⁶E.L. Butcher, op. cit., p. 450.

³⁷Tabarī, op. cit., p. 1421.

³⁸Ibid., p. 1422; Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit., p. 299; Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., X, p. 323.

³⁹Tabarī, op. cit., p. 1422; Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., p. 323.

⁴⁰Alī al-Tabarī, al-Dīn wa al-Dawlah, tr. A. Mingara, The Book of Religion and Empire, London, 1922, p. 4.

⁴¹Kindī, op. cit., pp. 507-08.

⁴²E.G. Browne, op. cit., I, p. 341 ff.

CHAPTER III:

¹W.M. Patton, "Sunnites", Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, VII, p. 116.

²W.M. Patton, Aḥmad Ibn Hanbal and the Miḥna, p. 55.

³Ṭabari, op. cit., series 3, II, 1112; Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit., p. 222.

⁴Ṭabarī, op. cit., pp. 1112-1116.

⁵Ibid., p. 1116.

⁶The seven persons are as follows: Muḥammad b. Sa'd (secretary of al-Wāqidī); Abu Muslim; Yaḥyā b. Mu'iyūn; Yazīd b. Hārūn; Zuhīr b. Ḥarb Abu Khīthamah; Ismā'īl b. Dāwd; Ismā'īl b. Abī Mas'ūd; and Aḥmad b. al-Dduraqī. Ṭabarī, op. cit., p. 1116.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Patton, Aḥmad Ibn Hanbal and the Miḥna, pp. 64-65.

⁹Ṭabarī, op. cit., p. 1118.

¹⁰Ṭabarī, op. cit., p. 1120. These two persons were the qādīs of Baghdad. It was recommended to Ishāq to examine them in order to find out their own ideas concerning the createdness of the Qur'ān on one hand and to inform them that the Commander of the Faithful did not seek support in any object of his empire except from those who were trustworthy, i.e., those who believed in the createdness of the Qur'ān. Ṭabarī, op. cit., p. 1120.

¹¹They were traditionists, fuqḥā' and judges, such as:

Abu al-Ḥasan al-Zyādī; Bashir b. al-Walīd al-Kindī; 'Alī b. Abī Muqātil; Faḍil b. Ghānim; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal; Qutaybah b. Sa'īd; Saḍawiyah al-Wāṣṭī; 'Alī b. al-Ja'd; Ishāq b. Abī Isrā'īl; Ibn al-Harash; Ibn 'Ulīyah al-Akbar; Yaḥyā b. 'Abd al-Rahmān al-'Amrī; another Shāykh from the progeny of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (he had been a Qadī of Raqqah); Abu Naṣir al-Tammār; Abu Mu'amr al-qāṭiy'ī; Muḥammad b. Ḥātm b. Maymūn; Muḥammad b. Nūh b. al-Madrūb; Ibn al-Farrukhān and a group among them: al-Nadīr b. Shumayd; Ibn 'Alī b. 'Aṣim; Abu al-'Awān al-Bazzāz; Ibn Shujā'; and Abd al-Rahmān b. Ishāq. Tabarī, op. cit., p. 1121; Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit., V, p. 224.

¹²Tabarī, op. cit., p. 1131; Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit., p. 225.

¹³Tarsūs: a town on the frontier between Asia minor and Syria, the birthplace of the apostle Paul. It lies in a very fertile plain through which flows a river (Cydnos, later Nahr Baradīn). It is situated at the junction of several important roads and not far from the sea. During the Islamic period many battles took place near Tarsūs between Muslims and Byzantines. The caliph al-Ma'mun in 215/830 undertook a campaign against the 'Awāsim, which brought Tarsūs and Mopsuestia east of it into his power. Al-Ma'mun himself died there. The town is still famous because it is a place for pious people who come from different districts of the Islamic empire. Yāqūt, Mu'jam al-Buldān, IV, pp. 28-29. Buhl, "Tarsūs", E.I., IV:2, p. 679.

¹⁴Tabarī, op. cit., p. 1132; Abū Nu‘aym Isfahanī (d. A.H. 430), Ḥilyat al-Awliyā‘ wa Ṭabaqāt al-Asfiyā‘, Cairo, 1357/1938, vol. 9, pp. 196-97.

¹⁵Ibn Jawzī, Manāqib Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, op. cit., pp. 319-30; Patton, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and the Miḥna, pp. 108-110.

¹⁶Maqdsī, op. cit., VI, p. 112; Patton, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and the Miḥna, p. 115; also there is an indication in Manāqib Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal by Ibn Jawzī that Ibn Abī Du‘ād encouraged al-Mu‘taṣim to beat Ibn Ḥanbal because the former proclaimed that Ibn Ḥanbal went astray. p. 341.

¹⁷Tabarī, op. cit., p. 1137; Ibn al-Athir, op. cit., V, pp. 226-27.

¹⁸Suyūṭī, op. cit., p. 335.

¹⁹Patton, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and the Miḥna, pp. 114-15.

²⁰Aḥmad b. Naṣr b. Mālik b. al-Haytham al-Khuzā‘ī, from the city of Meru. His grandfather was among the most respected men in the early ‘Abbasid period. Aḥmad was a pupil of Malik b. Anas (d. A.H. 179), the famous orthodox jurist who had his own school of law. Aḥmad b. Nasr objected to the idea of the createdness of the Qur‘ān. He hated the caliph and his vizier, Aḥmad b. Abī Du‘ād. The story concerning his political activity against the rationalistic movement and its representatives reaches us in different forms. Our purpose is not to deal with such problems, but his position against

the Mu'tazila had led to his murder. Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., vol. X, pp. 1303-06; Khayr al-bīm Zirīklī, Al-A'lam, I, Beirut, 1373/1954, p. 250.

²¹Nu'aym b. Ḥammād b. Mu'awiyah b. al-Ḥārith al-Khuza'ī (d. 228/843). He was born in Merv. He stayed for a short time in Iraq and Ḥujāz to seek and collect traditions. After that he left for Egypt and stayed there until he was carried to Baghdad during the reign of al-Mu'taṣim. There he was examined and refused to say the Qur'ān was created; he was imprisoned and remained there until his death in 238/843. Khayr ... Dīn Zirīklī, op. cit., vol. IX, p. 14.

²²Abū Ya'qūb al-Buwayṭī, Yusūf b. Yaḥyā al-Buwayṭī. He was the pupil of the Imām al-Shafī'ī (d. A.H. 204) to whom he entrusted his circle of scholars at his death. He was imprisoned for his own opinion concerning the createdness of the Qur'ān when he refused to acknowledge that idea. He died in prison in 232/847. Patton, op. cit., p. 119.

²³Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., vol. X, pp. 303-306.

²⁴Suyūṭī, op. cit., pp. 341-43; Ibn Jawzī, op. cit., pp. 350-56.

²⁵Suyūṭī, op. cit., p. 346; Ibn Taghrī Bardī, op. cit., vol. II, p. 259; Subkī, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 215-16.

²⁶Suyūṭī, op. cit., p. 346

²⁷As a result of this invitation Abu Bakr b. Abī Shaybah (one of the traditionists) sat in al-Rusāfah mosque preaching the Sunna in front of more than thirty thousand inhabitants. At the same time his brother, ʿUthmān followed the same course in the al-Manṣūr mosque with the same number of people sitting around him. Ibn Shakir, Fawāt al-wafayāt, vol. I, p. 133; Subkī, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 216-17.

²⁸Ibn Jawzī, op. cit., p. 356; Ibn Taghrī Bardī, op. cit., vol. II, p. 275; Suyūṭī, op. cit., p. 346.

²⁹Suyūṭī, op. cit., p. 346; Ibn Jawzī, op. cit., p. 432.

³⁰G.E. von Grunebaum, Islam, New York, 1961, pp. 37-38.

³¹Ibid.

³²Yaʿqūbī, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 209.

³³Jār-Allāh Zuhdī, al-Muʿtazila, Cairo, 1366/1947, p. 185; based on Nafh al-Tiyib, vol. III, p. 158.

³⁴al-Ḥārith b. Miškīn b. Muḥammad al-Amawī, 154-250/771-864. He was a Qādī and faqīh was subscribed to the Malikī's school of law. Khayr al-Dīn Zirīklī, op. cit., vol. II, p. 16.

³⁵Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Taʾrīkh Baghdad, vol. IX, p. 216; al-Kindī, Wulāt wa al-Qudāt, op. cit., pp. 367-68.

³⁶Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm was the same governor who al-Maʿmūn sent his messages concerning the Mihna. Ishāq remained in his office in

Baghdad until his death in 235/850, except for undertaking special tasks. For example, in 218/833 the caliph al-Mu'taṣim sent him as the head of an army against Bābik. Khayr al-Dīn Ziriklī, op. cit., vol. I, p. 283.

³⁷Ibn Jawzī, op. cit., pp. 358-59; Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., vol. X, p. 337.

³⁸Ibn Jawzī, op. cit., p. 369.

³⁹Ibid., p. 384.

⁴⁰Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., vol. X, pp. 337-40; Ibn Jawzī, op. cit., pp. 375-80.

⁴¹H. Laoust, "Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal", E.I. 2, vol. I, p. 273; Ibn Jawzī, op. cit., p. 385.

⁴²The persons are: Maṣ'ūb al-Zubayrī, Ishāq b. Isrā'īl, Ibrāhīm b. 'Abdallāh al-Harawī, 'Abdallāh and Ibrāhīm (sons of Abī Shiybah) Ibn Jawzī, p. 357.

⁴³Laoust, op. cit., p. 290.

⁴⁴Ṭabarī, op. cit., vol. III, pp. 1424-26; R. Levy, A Baghdad Chronicle, Cambridge, 1929, p. 106.

⁴⁵The two Sunnī Qādīs were Ḥasan b. Qays and Siwārbb. 'Abdallāh. Ṭabarī, op. cit., vol. III, pp. 1411-12; Maqdsī, op. cit., vol. VI, p. 122.

⁴⁶Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., vol. X, p. 316; Laoust, op. cit., p. 273.

⁴⁷Ṭabarī, op. cit., vol. III, p. 1412.

⁴⁸Ibid.; Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., vol. X, p. 316.

⁴⁹Tabarī, op. cit., vol. III, pp. 1413-14; Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit., vol. V, p. 291; Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., vol. X, p. 316; Ibn Taghrī Bardī, op. cit., vol. II, p. 291.

⁵⁰Ibn Jawzī, op. cit., pp. 359-61; Abu Nu'aym, op. cit., vol. X, pp. 206-07; Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., vol. X, pp. 337-38.

⁵¹Abu Nu'aym, op. cit., vol. X, p. 208.

⁵²Suyūṭī, op. cit., p. 352.

⁵³Ibn Ḥayyān, Akhbār al-Qūdat, vol. II, p. 180. Ibn Ḥayyān narrated that the piety of the caliph reached the point that once when someone caught a fish and put it on the fire and it moaned, al-Mutawakkil saw it and sent a messenger to ask the 'Ulamā' whether the Sharī'a permitted the eating of such a fish. p. 180.

E.G. Browne stated something which contradicted this view. He stated: "Mutawakkil was orthodox; what matter then if he was a drunkard, a voluptuary, a perfidious scoundrel, a monster of cruelty? But he was even more than orthodox; animated by a burning zeal for the purity of doctrine, he applied himself to the persecution of all those who thought otherwise, torturing and exterminating them as far as possible here." Vol. I, p. 290.

It appears that there is some exaggeration here. Moreover, Browne's statement reveals his own enmity for the caliph al-Mutawakkil personally on one hand and his religious policy on the other. It is important to consider the opinion of the orthodox concerning

al-Mutawakkil's character and conduct. It is obvious from the statement mentioned above that the orthodox considered al-Mutawakkil a very pious person. Moreover, it is clear, as we have already stated, that some historians considered there to have been only three true caliphs, of whom al-Mutawakkil was one. It is evident, too, that some poets believed that God had sent al-Mutawakkil in order to purify his religion from the heretical ideas.

⁵⁴Arnold, op. cit., pp. 76-77.

⁵⁵Patton, "Sunnite", op. cit., vol. XII, p. 116.

⁵⁶Lewis, "Government, Society and Economic Life under the Abbasids and Fatimids", op. cit., p. 642.

⁵⁷S.D. Goiten, Studies in Islamic History and Institutions, Leiden, 1966, p. 188.

⁵⁸W. Montgomery Watt, Islamic Philosophy and Theology, Edinburgh, 1962, p. 77.

⁵⁹Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit., vol. V, p. 287.

⁶⁰Watt, op. cit., p. 52.

⁶¹Ḥasan Aḥmad Maḥmūd, op. cit., pp. 331-32.

⁶²Ibn 'Ibrī, op. cit., p. 143.

⁶³See note, no. 17, Chapter I.

⁶⁴Ḥasan Aḥmad Maḥmūd, op. cit., pp. 332-33.

CHAPTER IV:

¹H.S. Nyberg, "Al-Muʿtazila", Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, pp. 421-27.

²Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, Al-ʿIqd al-farīd, II, Cairo, 1379/1960, p. 274; Aḥmad b. al-Murtadī, Ṭabaqāt al-Muʿtazila, ed. S.D. Wilzer, Beirut, 1380/1961, p. 40; Ṭabarī, op. cit., series 3, I, p. 517.

³Ibn al-ʿImād, (d. A.H. 1028), Shadharāt al-bḥāb, I, Cairo, A.H. 1351, p. 211.

⁴Yaʿqūbī, op. cit., III, p. 133;

Zindiq (the movement Zandaqa): The term is used in Muslim criminal law to describe the heretic whose teaching becomes a danger to the state. The term was borrowed in Iraq from the Iranian vocabulary of the Sāsānian administration. The term appears in Iraq for the first time in 125/742, in connection with the execution of Jaʿd b. Dirham. Then from 167/783 to 170/786 as an official inquisition was instituted by the ʿAbbāsīd caliph; it was then that Bashshār b. Burd and Ṣāliḥ b. ʿAbd al-Quddūs were executed.

L. Massignon, "Zindik", Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, p. 659;

Ibn al-Nadīm, al-Fihrist, Beirut, p. 338.

⁵H.S. Nyberg, "Al-Muʿtazila", Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, p. 424.

⁶Al-Jāḥīz, al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn, I, Cairo, 1351/1932, p. 27. Iṣfahānī, Kitāb al-Aghānī, III, Beirut, 1374/1955, pp. 239-40.

Ibn Khallikān, I, op. cit., pp. 247-48; Aḥmad al-Murtaḍī, op. cit., p. 30.

⁷Al-Dhahabī, Mīzān al-i'tdāl, III, p. 285; al-Bayhaqī, Al-Maḥāsin wa al-Masāwa', Cairo, 1376/1956, p. 555; Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, op. cit., VII, p. 145.

⁸Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, op. cit., VII, p. 64.

⁹Tabarī, op. cit., series 3, II, p. 962; Ibn Qayyim, Mukhtaṣar al-Sawā'iq al-Mursalāh, I, Cairo, n.d., p. 148.

¹⁰Subkī (d. A.H. 771), Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'īyah al-Kubrā, I, Cairo, n.d., p. 209.

Aḥmad b. Abī Du'ād al-Iyādī, Abū 'Abd Allāh, Mu'tazilite Qaḍī, was born at Baṣra about 160/776. Through his own merit and also, it is said, through the good office of Yaḥyā b. Aktham, who introduced him to the caliph al-Ma'mūn shortly before his death, the caliph recommended his brother and successor al-Mu'taṣim to admit Aḥmad, a fervent follower of the Mu'tazilite doctrine, to the circle of his advisers. As a result, al-Mu'taṣim, after his accession in 218/833, made him his chief qaḍī. At the death of the caliph al-Wāthiq, several high officials and officers wished to place his son, a minor, on the throne, but at the insistence of the commander of the Turkish wasīf, the brother of the late caliph, Ja'far, was proclaimed caliph, and Aḥmad himself gave him the title of al-Mutawakkil. Sunnī writers naturally pass a severe judgment on Aḥmad b. Abī Du'ād and, in the

religious sphere, do not conceal their hostility towards him, but all recognize his great learning and magnanimity.

Ṭabarī, op. cit., III, p. 1113 ff; Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, op. cit., IV, p. 141 ff; Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., X, p. 319 ff; Ibn Kallikān, op. cit., I, p. 63 ff; Ya'qūbī, op. cit., III, p. 204; K.V. Zettersteen, "Aḥmad b. Abī Du'ād", E.I. 2, I, p. 271.

¹¹Aḥmad Amīn, Fajr al-Islām, Cairo, 1374/1955, p. 298.

¹²Ṭabarī, op. cit., series 3, II, p. 1113; Suyūṭī, op. cit., p. 308.

W. Montgomery Watt elaborated on this idea saying that:

"This discussion of the attributes seems to have developed out of the discussion about the Qur'ān. These may have begun before 750, but it is more likely that the Qur'ān only became a subject of vigorous argument towards the end of that century. The Muslims had always believed both that the Qur'ān was the Word of God and that it had appeared at a particular point in time, namely, when it was revealed to Muḥammad ... The question at issue was doubtless its status - was it the Word of God or not? ... These have already been indicated in what was said about the "Inquisition" begun by al-Ma'mūn. A governmental attempt to reduce the status of the Qur'ān would be met by the insistence that it was the speech of God and therefore eternal." Islamic Philosophy and Theology, op. cit., p. 64.

¹³Ṭabarī, op. cit., series 3, II, p. 1113 ff; Ya'qūbī, op. cit., III, p. 194; Ṭayfūr (d. A.H. 280), Baghdād, Cairo, 1378/1949,

p. 181 ff.

¹⁴Ibn Jawzī, op. cit., pp. 393-410.

¹⁵Ṭabarī, op. cit., II, p. 113 ff.; Ṭayfūr, op. cit., pp. 182-83; Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., X, pp. 272-73; Ibn Abī Yaʿlī, Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah, I, Cairo, 1371/1952, p. 4 ff; Aḥmad Amīn, op. cit., p. 298.

¹⁶W. Montgomery Watt, op. cit., p. 63.

¹⁷Ibn Qayyīm, Mukhtaṣar al-Ṣawāʿiq al-Mursalāh, vol. I, p. 148; Fazlur Rahman elaborated this idea saying: "They (ʿAbbāsids) hastened the process of the intellectual awaking of Islam by officially patronizing wholesale translations of Greek philosophy, medicine and science into Arabic and al-Maʿmūn set up an academy known as the Hall of Wisdom for this very purpose. The pure intellectualism that resulted from this activity reacted on the religion of Islam and produced the famous rationalist religious movement of the Muʿtazila." Op. cit., p. 4; Ṭayfūr, op. cit., p. 181;

¹⁸Ṭabarī, op. cit., series 3, II, p. 1113 ff.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 1115-16.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 1128-29; Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit., V, pp. 222-23.

²¹Suyutī, op. cit., p. 308; Abbe de Marigny, op. cit., p. 153.

²²D.B. Macdonald, Development of Muslim Theology, New York, 1903, p. 154.

²³Ibn Jawzī, op. cit., p. 319; Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., X, pp. 333-35; Ibn Khallikān, op. cit., I, p. 67.

²⁴W.M. Patton, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and the Miḥna, Leiden, 1897, p. 114.

²⁵Ibn Jawzī, Manāqib Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal, p. 321.

²⁶Ibn Hayyān, Akhbār al-Qudāt, 3, Cairo, 1366/1947, p. 227.

²⁷Al-Masʿūdī, Al-Tanbīh wa al-ishrāf, Beirut, 1965, p. 361.

²⁸Ibn Ṭāhir al-Baghdādī, al-Farq bayn al-firaq, Cairo, n.d., p. 157; Ibn Jawzī, Manāqib Ahmad Ibn Ḥanbal, Cairo, n.d., p. 348.

²⁹W.M. Patton, op. cit., p. 115.

³⁰Ibid.,

³¹Ibn Jawzī, op. cit., p. 348.

³²Ibn Taghrī Bardī, Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa al-Qāhirah, II, Cairo, 1349/1930, p. 259.

³³Ibid., pp. 266-69; Suyūṭī, op. cit., p. 342; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, op. cit., pp. 151-57.

³⁴D.B. Macdonald, op. cit., p. 157.

³⁵Suyūṭī, op. cit., p. 346; Ibn Taghrī Bardī, op. cit., p. 259; Subkī, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 215-16.

³⁶See note (33).

³⁷Ṭabarī, op. cit., series 3, III, p. 1369; see note (10).

- ³⁸Tabarī, op. cit., p. 1369; Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., X, p. 311; Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit., V, p. 279.
- ³⁹Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, op. cit., I, p. 298.
- ⁴⁰Tabarī, op. cit., pp. 1410-11.
- ⁴¹Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit., V, p. 289.
- ⁴²Tabarī, op. cit., p. 1411; Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., X, p. 316.
- ⁴³Ibn Jawzī, op. cit., p. 358.
- ⁴⁴Tabarī, op. cit., p. 1410.
- ⁴⁵Suyūṭī, op. cit., p. 347.
- ⁴⁶Ibn Jawzī, op. cit., pp. 357-58.
- ⁴⁷Suyūṭī, op. cit., p. 346.
- ⁴⁸Al-Khayyāṭ, Abu al-Ḥusayn, Kitāb al-Intiṣār, Cairo, 1344/1925, pp. 62&68; Ibn 'Imād, op. cit., I, p. 211.
- ⁴⁹H.S. Nyberg, "Al-Mu'tazila", Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, p. 424.
- ⁵⁰Carl Brockelmann, op. cit., p. 129.
- ⁵¹Aḥmad Amīn, op. cit., p. 301.
- ⁵²Ibid.
- ⁵³Ibid.
- ⁵⁴Ya'qūbī, op. cit., III, p. 210.

⁵⁵Al-Mas'ūdī, Tanbīh wa al-ishrāf, pp. 360-61.

⁵⁶Ya'qūbī, op. cit., III, pp. 215-16.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 216.

⁵⁸B. Lewis, "Government, Society and Economic Life under the Abbasids and Fatimids", The Cambridge Medieval History of Islam, IV, p. 642.

⁵⁹Carl Brockelmann, op. cit., p. 132.

⁶⁰Jār Allāh Zuhdī Hasan, al-Mu'tazila, p. 189.

⁶¹Ibn 'Imād, op. cit., I, p. 211.

Ḥashwīya also Ḥashawīya or Ahl al-Ḥashw, is a contemptuous term for those among men of tradition Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth who recognized the coarsely anthropomorphic traditions as genuine, without criticism. E.I. 1, vol. II, p. 287.

⁶²Fazlur Rahmān, op. cit., p. 5.

⁶³H.A.R. Gibb, Studies on the Civilization of Islam, London, 1962, pp. 11-12.

⁶⁴B. Lewis, op. cit., p. 642.

⁶⁵E.G. Browne, op. cit., p. 289.

CHAPTER V:

¹R. Strothman, "Shī'ā", E.I. 1, IV:1, p. 350.

²W.M. Patton, "Shī'āhs", Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, XI, p. 453.

³Abd al-Jawād al-Killīdār, Ta'rīkh Karbalā' wa Ha'ir al-Husayn, Najaf, 1387/1967, p. 203.

⁴Iṣfahānī, (A.H. 288-365), Maqātil al-Tālibiyīn, Cairo, 1368/1949) pp. 597-98.

⁵Al-Kindī, Al-Wulāt wa al-Qudāt, op. cit., p. 198; and Wulāt Misr, Beirut, 1379/1959, pp. 223-24.

⁶Ṭabarī, op. cit., p. 1407; Iṣfahānī, op. cit., pp. 597-98; Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit., V, p. 287; Suyūṭī, op. cit., p. 347.

⁷Ya'qūbī, op. cit., III, pp. 208 ff.

⁸Al-Mas'ūdī, op. cit., VII, pp. 189 ff.

⁹Fadak: an ancient small town in the northern Ḥidjāz, near Khaybar and, according to Yāqūt, two or three days journey from Medina. It was inhabited by Jews. Fadak owes its fame in the history of Islam to the fact that it was the object of an agreement and particular decision by the Prophet, and that it gave rise to disagreement between Fāṭima and the caliph Abu Bakr, the consequences of which were to last more than two centuries. In 210/826 al-Ma'mūn consented that fadak should be granted to Fāṭima's

descendants who had come to make this request in the name of the family; he even caused his decree to be recorded in his dīwāns. L.V. Vaglieril, "Fadak", E.I. 2, II, pp. 725-27; J. Schleifer, "Fadak", E.I. 1, II:1, p. 35.

¹⁰Di'bil al-Khzā'i, Dīwān Di'bil, Najaf, 1382/1962, pp. 177-78.

¹¹Abd al-Jawād, op. cit., pp. 210-11; based on Ta'rīkh al-Tawārīkh, vol. VI, p. 438; Tudlim al-Zahrā', p. 218; Nuzhat Ahl al-Haramiyn, p. 18.

¹²Muhammad al-Tawīl, Ta'rīkh al-'Alawīyīn, Beirut, 1386/1966, p. 188.

¹³Suyūṭī, op. cit., p. 347; Qarimānī, op. cit., p. 159; Ibn Shākir, ʿAwāṭ al-Wafayat, vol. I, Būlāq, A.H. 1283, pp. 133-34; The verse was translated into English by Eric Schroeder, Muhammad's People, Wheel Wright Company, 1955, p. 402.

¹⁴Iṣfahānī, op. cit., pp. 597-598.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Tabari, op. cit., p. 1407; Suyūṭī, op. cit., p. 347; Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., X,

¹⁷Ibn Taghrī Bardī, op. cit., II, p. 284; based on Ta'rīkh al-As'ardī.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰A.J. Wensinck, Concordance et Indices de la tradition Musulmane, Tome II, p. 234; Tabrīzī, Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh, ed. by James Robson, stated in the footnote that "These are the only mosques to which long journey may be made purely for the purpose of praying in them." p. 141.

²¹Tabarī, op. cit., pp. 1403-04; Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit., V, pp. 286-87.

²²Tabarī, op. cit., pp. 1424-26; Ibn Taghrī Bardī, op. cit., II, p. 304; Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., X, pp. 323-24.

²³Al-Kindī, Al-wulāt wa al-Qudāt, p. 203; Muhammad al-Tawīl, op. cit., p. 187.

²⁴Suyūṭī, op. cit., pp. 348-49; Abū al-Fidā', op. cit., II, p. 43; Ibn Taghrī Bardī, op. cit., II, p. 285.

²⁵Yaqūt, Dictionary of Learned Men, II, ed. D.S. Margolouth, ErJ. Wit Gibb Memorial, 1925, p. 30.

²⁶Ibn Taghrī Bardī, op. cit., II, p. 309.

²⁷Iṣfahānī, op. cit., p. 599.

²⁸Alī al-Naqī, Abu al-Ḥasan 'Alī al-'Askarī, his surname is al-Hadī (the director) Ibn Muḥammad al-Jawād b. 'Alī. He was born at Medina, A.H. 214 and was the tenth Shī'ī Imām, according to Imāmate Shī'a sect. He was presented to Sāmarrā' under the request of

the caliph al-Mutawakkil. Then the Imām died in A.H. 254.

Ibn Khallikān, op. cit., II, pp. 434-35; Muḥsin al-Amīn, A'yān al-Shī'a, IV, Beirut, 1960, pp. 172-73; Ibn Ṭūlūn, al-A'imma al-ith Nā'ashir, Beirut, 1377/1958, pp. 107-09.

²⁹Al-Mas'ūdī, op. cit., VII, pp. 206-07.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 208-09; Ibn Khallikān, op. cit., II, p. 435;

D.M. Donaldson, The Shiite Religion, London, 1933, p. 210.

³¹Al-Mas'ūdī, op. cit., VII, p. 209; D.M. Donaldson, op. cit., p. 210.

³²J.N. Hollister, The Shī'a of India, London, 1953, p. 88.

³³Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit., V, p. 287; Abū al-Fidā', op. cit., II, p. 40.

³⁴Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit., V, p. 287; Abū al-fidā', op. cit., II, pp. 40-41; Ibn al-Wardī, op. cit., I, p. 225.

*Rāfidites, in Arabic al-Rāfīda, or al-Rawāfīd, is one of the names given to the Shī'a. They were those who rejected the Imamate of Abu Bakr and 'Umar. The writer gives different definitions for them, concluding that "Rafida was a general abusive name for people considered as Shī'ites and never was applied exclusively to any special subdivision of the Shī'a."

J.H. Kramers: "Rāfidites", Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, p. 466.

*This is a name of a mountain situated between Mecca and

Medina. According to one of the Shī'ah sect the Imām Muḥammad
b. al-Ḥanafiyah is hiding there.

Al-Nawbakhtī, Furūq al-Shī'ah, Istanbul, 1931, p. 26.

³⁵ Abū al-Fidā', op. cit., II, p. 41.

³⁶ Tabarī, op. cit., pp. 1465-66.

³⁷ W.M. Patton, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and the Miḥna, op. cit., p. 54.

³⁸ D.M. Donaldson, op. cit., p. 210.

³⁹ Ibn Al-Athīr, op. cit., p. 287.

⁴⁰ Iṣfahānī, op. cit., p. 597.

⁴¹ Ibn al-Athīr, op. cit., V, pp. 287-88.

⁴² Abū al-Fidā', op. cit., II, p. 40; Ibn Ṭaqṭaqā',

Al-Fakhrī al-Adāb al-Sultānīyah, Beirut, 1386/1966, p. 237.

⁴³ E.G. Browne, op. cit., I, pp. 342-43.

⁴⁴ R. Levy, A Baghdad Chronicle, op. cit., p. 105.

⁴⁵ von Grunebaum, Muḥammadan Festivals, New York, 1951, p. 86.

⁴⁶ Ibn Ṭaqṭaqā', op. cit., p. 237.

⁴⁷ D. Sourdel, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 9.

⁴⁹ Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shabībī, Mu'arrikh al-Irāq b. al-fawṭī,

vol. I, Baghdad, 1370/1950, p. 43.

⁵⁰Maqdsī, op. cit., VI, p. 133.

⁵¹J.J. Saunders, op. cit., pp. 112-113.

⁵²Ibn Al-Athīr, op. cit., V, p. 288.

⁵³Ibn al-Wardī, op. cit., I, p. 225.

CHAPTER VI:

¹H.A.R. Gibb, Mohammedanism, New York, 1962, p. 134.

²Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī, Abū al-Fayḍ Thawabān b. Ibrāhīm.

He was born about 180/996. His father was a Nubian and Dhū al-Nūn was said to have been a freed man. Dhū al-Nūn was the first to teach the true nature of gnosis (maʿrifa). He met with hostility from the Muʿtazila because he upheld the orthodox view that the Qurʾān was created.

M. Smith, "Dhu'l-Nūn", E.I. 2, II, p. 242; Abū Nuʿaym, op. cit., IX, p. 331 ff.; al-Sulamī, Ṭabaqāt al-Sūfiyya, Cairo, 1372/1953, pp. 15-26; Ibn Khallikān, op. cit., I, pp. 280-82.

³Al-Muḥāsibī, Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Ḥārith b. Asad al-ʿAnazī,

called Muḥāsibī, i.e., he who examines his conscience. He was born in Baṣra and died in Baghdad. He was a theologian who advocated the use of reason (ʿakl), using the dialectic vocabulary of the Muʿtazilīs, which he was the first to turn against them.

L. Massignon, "Al-Muḥāsibī", E.I. 1, II:2, p. 699; al-Sulamī, op. cit., pp. 56-60; Qūshayrī, Al-Risālah al-Qūshayrīya, Cairo, A.H. 1330, p. 12; Ibn Khallikān, op. cit., I, pp. 348-49; Shaʿrānī, Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, I, Cairo, A.H. 1316, p. 60.

⁴Ibn ʿImād, op. cit., II, p. 108.

⁵Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, op. cit., VIII, pp. 394-96;

M. Smith, An Early Mystic of Baghdad, London, 1935, pp. 81-82. This

event is also recorded by Abu Nu'aym, see pp. 80-81.

⁶Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, op. cit., p. 393.

⁷Ibn Khallikān, op. cit., I, pp. 280-81; Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., X, 347; Suyūṭī, op. cit., p. 350.

⁸Abu Nu'aym, op. cit., IX, p. 335.

⁹Ibid., pp. 335-36.

¹⁰Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzalī, Munqidh min al-dalāl, Damascus, 1379/1960, p. 89.

¹¹Sha'rānī, op. cit., I, p. 60; M. Smith, op. cit., p. 14.

¹²Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, op. cit., VIII, pp. 214-15.

¹³Ibid.; Dhahabī, op. cit., I, p. 200.

¹⁴J. Van Ess, Die Gedankenwelt des Ḥarīṭ al-Muhāsibī, Bonn, 1961, p. 9.

¹⁵Ibn Khallikān, op. cit., I, p. 349.

¹⁶Subkī, op. cit., II, p. 39.

¹⁷M. Smith, op. cit., pp. 15-16; based on Dhahabī, Ta'rīkh al-Islam, I, p. 36.

¹⁸Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, op. cit., p. 216; Ibn Jawzī, Tablīs Iblīs, Cairo, n.d., p. 162.

¹⁹Ibn Khallikān, op. cit., p. 349; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, op. cit., p. 216.

²⁰H.A.R. Gibb, Arabic Literature, Oxford, 1963, pp. 68-9;
J. Van Ess, op. cit., p. 25.

²¹L. Massignon, "Tasawwūf", E.I. 1, IV:2, p. 682.

²²R. Nicholson, "Sufis", Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics,
XII, p. 12.

²³Sarī al-Saqaṭī, Abu al-Ḥasan Sarī b. Muḡhallis, al-Saqaṭī,
was a Sunnī mystic. He was a pupil of al-Muḡāsibī and a teacher of
al-Junayd, Nūrī al-Kharrāz and Khayr al-Nassāj. Sarī insisted on the
reality of reciprocal love uniting God to man (shawk). Regarding our
study, it is said that: "Sarī was attacked by Ibn Ḥanbal for having
admitted that the letters of the text of the Qur'ān were created and
for having neglected asceticism in the matter of food."

L. Massignon, "Sarī al-Saqaṭī", E.I. 1, IV:1, p. 171.

When we investigated our Ṣūfī primary sources, we did not
find any support for this statement. What we did find is something
different from this statement, in a non-Ṣūfī text. Ibn Jawzī
states that: "Ibn Ḥanbal had claimed that Sarī was famous because of
the purity of his food. And it was said to Ibn Ḥanbal that Sarī
said 'when God created the letters, the letter B (ب) prayed to Him',
Ibn Ḥanbal replied, 'Turn away the people from him'."
Ibn Jawzī, Talbīs Iblīs, p. 163.

This statement, and particularly the first part of it, goes
in alliance with the Ṣūfī sources which deal with Sarī, such as:
Qushayrī, op. cit., pp. 10-11; Sulamī, op. cit., pp. 48-50;

Shaḥrānī, op. cit., I, pp. 59-60.

Therefore there is no validity to deal with Sarī within the pattern of our study.

²⁴L. Massignon, "Sarī Saḥatī", E.I. 1, IV:1, p. 171.

²⁵M. Smith, "Dhū al-Nūn", E.I. 2, II, p. 242.

APPENDIX I:

Secret information having been given to al-Mutawakkil that the Imam had a quantity of arms, books, and other objects for the use of his followers concealed in his house, and being induced by malicious reports to believe that he aspired to the empire, one night he sent some soldiers of the Turkish guard to break in on him when he least expected such a visit. They found him quite alone and locked up in his room, clothed in a hair shirt, his head covered with a woollen cloak, and turned with his face in the direction of Mecca, chanting, in this attitude, some verses of the Koran expressive of God's promises and threats, and having no other carpet between him and the earth than sand and gravel. He was carried off in that attire, and brought, in the depth of night, before al-Mutawakkil, who was then engaged in drinking wine. On seeing him the Caliph received him with respect, and being informed that nothing had been found in his house to justify the suspicions cast upon him, he seated him by his side and offered him the goblet which he held in his hand. 'Commander of the Faithful', said Abu'l Hasan, 'a liquor such as that was never yet combined with my flesh and blood; dispense me therefore from taking it.' The Caliph acceded to his request and asked him to repeat some verses which might amuse him. Abu'l Hasan replied that he knew very little poetry by heart, but al-Mutawakkil having insisted, he recited some verses.¹

We have already stated them in the context with the rest of his anecdote.

On another occasion, Yaḥyā b. Harthama, the captain of the guard, is reported to have related his experiences as follows:

The Caliph Mutawakkil sent me to Medina with orders to bring Alī ibn Muḥammad to answer certain accusations that had been made against him. When I arrived, his household made such wailing and lamentation as I had never heard. I tried to quiet them and assured them that I had received no orders to do him any harm. And when I searched the house where he lived, I found only a Koran, books of prayer and such things. So while I took him away, I offered him my services and showed him very high respect.

But one day on the journey, when the sky was clear and the sun just rising, Ali put on a cloak when he mounted his horse and knotted the animal's tail. I was surprised at this, but it was only a little while afterwards that a cloud came up and there was a regular torrent of rain. Then Ali turned to me and said, 'I know that you did not understand what you saw me do, and that you imagine that I have some unusual knowledge of this affair. It is not, however, as you supposed, but as I was brought up in a desert, I know the winds that come before rain. This morning the wind blew which does not deceive, and I noticed the odour of rain and so prepared for it.'

On our arrival in Baghdad, our first visit was to Ishak ibn Ibrahim, of the family of Tahir, who was the governor of the city. He said to me, 'O you Yahya, this man (Ali) is a descendant of the Apostle of God. You know Mutawakkil and have influence with him, but if you urge him to kill this man, the Prophet himself will be your enemy.' I replied that I saw nothing in the conduct of Ali except what was altogether praiseworthy. I went to Samarra, where I met Wasif, the Turk, for I was one of his intimate friends. 'I swear before God', he said to me, 'if a single hair of the head of this man falls, I will myself demand satisfaction.' I was somewhat surprised at the attitude taken by these men, and when I informed Mutawakkil of what I had heard in praise of the Imam, he gave him a handsome present and treated him with all sorts of honour.²

Later on al-Mutawakkil gave orders for his execution. It has been narrated that:

In open durbar he ordered his chamberlain to bring the Imam to his presence, and summoned four servants with naked swords to stand ready when the order was given to slay him. When the Imam left the hall of audience, the four servants stood by the door with drawn swords, but instead of striking him they threw away the swords, and fell at his feet and humbly saluted him. Mutawakkil inquired about the cause of such strange conduct. They said that they saw near the Imam a person with a drawn sword who said: 'If you give any trouble to the Imam I will slay you all', so they dared not obey the Caliph's order to slay him. Hence it is said that by divine aid the life of the Imam was saved.³

These three narratives shed light on the relationship between the Imām and the caliph on one hand and show the important role of the Imām among the Shī‘a on the other. The caliph in all these aspects seems to be silent and submissive to the supernatural power of the Imām. These three anecdotes are mentioned by Shī‘ī writers only. When we investigated our main primary sources we found no trace of such narratives, especially in Ya‘qūbī's and Ṭabarī's works.

¹Al-Mas‘ūdī, op. cit., VII, pp. 207-08; Ibn Khallikān, op. cit., IV, p. 435; D.M. Donaldson, op. cit., pp. 211-12.

²Al-Mas‘ūdī, op. cit., VII, pp. 379-82; D.M. Donaldson, op. cit., pp. 212-13.

³D.M. Donaldson, op. cit., p. 215.

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