

# **POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP OF ABBASID CALIPHS WITH SULTAN MOHAMMAD KHARAZMSHAH AND ITS ROLE IN THE OVERTHROWING THE SULTAN**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The relationship between Sultan Mohammad Kharazmshah and Abbasid Caliphs has been one of the basic events of Kharazmshahian Dynasty because many problems occurred with respect to the viewpoints of the caliph to Kharazmshahian dynasty. The first relationship between Abbasid Caliphs and Kharazmshahian started in Atsez's reign and it continued to the end of Kharazmshahian dynasty with the difference that in the initial period of the Kharazmshahian's rule on Kharazm and some parts of Iran, they had friendly relationship with the Abbasid; however from the time of Takesh to the end of this dynasty in Iran, the serious clashes between the two institutes of caliphate and royal court, the relationship became hostile; leaving its unfavorable effects on both caliphate and royal reign. At the end of the reign of Sultan Mohammad Kharazmshah, he decided to overthrow the Abbasid caliph from the caliphate seat. This caused Kharazmshahian's destruction in facing the Mongols' evasions. This paper tries to use sources and study the viewpoints of the caliph, the encounter of the two ruling systems (caliphate and kingdom) and their impacts on the Kharazmshahid dynasty.

## **KEY WORDS**

Relationship, Abbasid caliphate, Kharazmshahian, Sultan Mohammad

## **Introduction**

The Saljuqid succeeded to earn power in Iran as supporters of the Abbasid caliph; however, from the beginning of the sixth lunar Hijra (10-11<sup>th</sup> AD centuries), the Abbasid caliphs took vast actions for regaining political power in different Islamic countries; particularly in Ira and tried to interfere in the political affairs and raising different states against each other to benefit from their enmity in order to regain both religious and political authorities in those regions. Therefore, the several interferences of the caliphs led to many wars between the caliphate rulers and Saljuqid government. This was heated more vigorously after the death of Mohammad Bin Malekshah and the rise of Mahmud Saljuqid. The first war occurred between Mahmud and Motevashed the Abbasid caliph (1118 -1125) (Kulzener 1984: 43). Masjud Saljuqid fought with Alrashed Bellah, the Abbasid Caliph and conquered him and his allies. After the war, his own court people (Mohammad Bin Omrani, 1984: 186-188) murdered the Caliph.

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This situation continued until Kharazmshahian took power. In fact, they continued the same relationship with the Abbasid caliph as their successors, Saljuqid Sultans, had. The relationship between Kharazmshahian and the Abbasid caliphate was in good term to the end of Eil Arsalan; however, after the latter rose to power and by Alnasser Ledinollah, the powerful Abbasid caliph, a shift took place in the mutual relationship and the two ruling institute- caliphate and royal dynasty became oppositions. This contradiction and opposition continued to the end of Kharazmshahi dynasty and left highly bad effects in the relationship between Kharazmshahian and the Moslem countries of the region; for those governments and the Moslem people of Iran still believed Caliph as the superior political and religious authority and thought opposing to him as opposing to God.

**Political relationship of Abbasid Caliphs and Sultan Mohammad Kharazmshah:**

Before discussing the relationship between Sultan Mohammad and the Abbasid caliphate, a brief description should be given on the character of Alnasser Ledinollah, the Abbasid caliph, contemporary to Sultan Mohammad.

His name was Ahmad Bin Almostazi and his family name was Abolabbas. He ruled as a caliph from 1179 to 1225 AD. Most sources introduced him as a very intelligent, politician and smart caliph, his time has been called the era of peace, welfare, and improvement during which, many buildings and public places were built in Baghdad and other regions (Hindu shah Naqjavani, 1965: 319-320, Ebn Taqtaqi, 1988: 432-433, Benakti, 1969: 205-209). With respect to the way the caliph dealt with his enemies, his caliphate period is a chaotic period among the rulers because he made a great effort to rule both this world along with being a religious leader and to do so, he manipulated governments to cause enmities among them and tried to weaken or destroy them to reach his own goal. Some historians; thus, has called him as a deceitful and very cruel caliph while there are some historians who believe during his caliphate, Baghdad and Iran turned to ruins (Ebn Assir, Bitā: 27/6).

Alnasser did anything to reach his goals. He wanted to use the power of Shiie Moslems and therefore, made many plots to attract their attention and went so far that it was believed his mother was a Shiia (Bayani, 2000:128 and Jafarian, 1998:342).

He used the nobility and honor code (Fotovat group) which was very followers in the world of Islam in order to expand his power and penetration. In 1182, he officially dressed as Fotovat group (Saravil) and became the chief of that group (Onsorol Ma'ali Keykavus 1966:246 – Vaez Kashefi Sabzevari, 1971: 31-32). Many court people, nobles and rulers changed into Fotovat codes among them one may call Abubakr bin Ayub, known as Malekol Aadel, the ruler of Egypt and his sons, Almalekol Moazam, Almalekol Kamel, Almalekol Ashraf, the ruler of Khelat and the island and the Saljuqid ruler of Rum (Turkey-Syria zones), Ezeddin Abolmozafar Keykavus Bin Keykhosro

and Shahabeddin Quri... (Ebn Taqtaqi, 1988: 432 and Ebn Bibi, 1971: 45). He succeeded to control the power of this group and use their military forces and popular supports to reinforce Abbasid caliphate in Islam and in his own favor.

When Allaeddin Mohammad Kharazmshah rose to power after his father, Takesh, he faced many local and foreign problems. One of the problems he had to deal with was the political greed of the Abbasid caliph that aimed at rule the world of Islam, especially Iran. As a result, disputes and oppositions grew between him and Mohammad Kharazmshah who was perusing his precedents to gain power and precede the Saljuqid Sultans in Iran. The enmity and hatred between the two powers continued to the death of Alnasser, the Abbasid caliph.

In the early years of his rule, Allaeddin Mohammad Kharazmshah faced many problems and spent most his time to reinforce his power and reclaiming the territory of his father, Takesh. During this time, Atabak Abubakr gave Hamadan to Atabak Uzbek, headed to Isfahan, and occupied that city. In 1203, Shamseddin Idqamesh, one of the slaves of Atabak Jahan Pahlavan took over the power and summoned people in the occupied lands under the flag of the caliph; however, he was killed by Nassereddin Mangoli, another slave of Jahan Pahlavan. The latter succeeded Idqamesh and even invaded Mazandaran (Qafas Oqli, 1988: 246).

One of the important events of this time was change in the Assassins' religion. In 1211, Hassan the third decided to return to Sunni Moslem religion due to ideological problems among the Assassins (resurrection...) that had caused hopelessness and pessimism among the followers. Although, Basurt believes that it was Alnasser, the Abbasid caliph who encouraged Hassan the third to convert into Sunni religion (Basurt, 1970: 196). He (Hassan) sent delegates to Baghdad to receive the Caliph's fitva concerning his being Moslem. Alnaser who was seeking a powerful ally warmly accepted the delegates and called Hassan newly Moslem (Luis 1984: 324-325 and Boel 2002: 5/167). The relationship between the two rulers were very good so far that a number of committed Assassins were serving Caliph and the latter used them to destroy his enemies. Caliph succeeded in destroying Mangoli who had gained high power in a battle between Mangoli and the Caliph's allies; Atabak Uzbek, Jalaleddin Hassan and the Assassins' ruler (for Mangoli had attacked the Assassins' castles) and thus, the territory of the defeated Mangoli was divided among the alleys (Rashededdin, 1995: 1/349). A major part of the territories became the share of Atabak Uzbek and he in turn assigned Seyfeddin Idqamesh to administer those regions. According to Joveyni and Ebn Assir, Qqlamesh was one of the proponents of Sultan Mohammad Kharazmshah (Joveyni, 1996: 2/12, Ebn Assir, Bitā: 25/26). For this reason, after occupying the entire region, he at once summoned people under the name of Sultan and announced himself as the Sultan's follower. In this way, he extended the power and authority of Sultan to Baghdad. The Abbasid

caliph did not accept such proceed and tried to delete Qqlamesh. To do so, he used the Assassins who were serving him and they assassinated Idqamesh when he was greeting the pilgrims (Qafas Oqli, 1988: 248). The murder of Idqamesh and the clashes between Sultan and Kuchlak gave Atabak Uzbek the opportunity to occupy Isfahan. On the other hand, Atabak Sa'd, the ruler of Fars, occupied Rey, Qazvin and Semnan and Sultan was forced to send troops to those regions for reclaiming the territory. He defeated Atabak Sa'd and captured him but, he freed Atabak with the condition of his summoning under the name of Sultan, give shares to the trusted servants of Kharazmshah in his government and send one fourth of Fars yields to him as the tribute (Joveyni, 1996: 2/97-98, Ebn Assir, *Bitā*, 26/28-29 and Jozjani, 1984: 1/271-272). After this victory, Atabak Uzbek; too, declared obedience, summoned in the Sultan's name, coined in his name and sent many gifts for Sultan. In turn, Sultan forgave him and put Azarbaijan under his rule. However, Joveyni and Rashideddin Fazlollah believe that the sultan's act and defeat of Atabak Sa'd and Atabak Uzbek occurred when Sultan was heading to Baghdad with his troop to fight against the caliph (Joveyni, *ibid*, Rashideddin, 1995: 1/341). After the Sultan's victories, he asked Majireddin Sa'd Kharazmi to act as an intermediate and suggest that Abbasid Caliph put the Sultan's name in the summons like Saljuqid and also, to give him the same privileges that Saljuqid had in Baghdad. Caliph, on the other hand, did not accept the offer and stated that if the previous caliphs had given privileges to the Saljuqid or other dynasties was because they had no other ways and it was only due to the necessity while then, the caliph did not face such necessities and if God forbidden, that day came, he would give Sultan Mohammad the same privileges his predecessors had given to the Saljuqid kings. The caliph then sent Sheikh Shahabeddin Sohrevari to Sultan as his ambassador. In his meeting with Sultan, Sheikh narrated a tradition of Prophet of Islam concerning withdrawal from disturbing the sons of Abbas. Sultan answered that he had disturbed none of the Abbas and it was the caliph himself whose prisons were filled with the offspring of Abbas as far as even prisoners' children are born there, he then suggested Sheikh to read those traditions for the Amirolmomenin (the caliph) instead (Nasavi, 1986: 20-22, Mirkhand, 1960: 4/399-400 and Ebn Qaldun, 1989: 4/188). Thus, the negotiations ended without any positive results.

To show the unreliability of Abbasid government, Sultan Mohammad held a meeting attended by great Olama and asked for their Fitva against the Caliph with the excuse that the caliph has kept silent against the unbelievers, did not call for jihad against the crusades, made conspiracy against those who worked hard for propagating religion of Islam such as Sultan Mohammad and incited different sultans and rulers such as Quryan and Qarakhtayan against him, the assassination of the ruler of Mecca by command of the Caliph and by the hands of the Assassins that broke the respect of God's house and the murder of Oqmalesh, the substitute of Sultan in central and western Iran.

Thus, the religious leaders issued the Fitva that the Abbasid are not qualified to be caliph and it was only the Imam Hossein's descendents that shall rule as caliph Amirolmomenin (Jobeyi, 1996: 2/121-122, Rashideddin, 1995: 1/340-341, Khandmir, 1974: 2/646). The Sultan then introduced Alamalek Tarmazi, one of the descendents of Hussini Sadat as the caliph of the Moslems and announced that even in his own troops there were at least one hundred men who were more qualified to become caliph than the Abbasid caliph (Ebn Assir, Bita: 26/97-98 and 27). He then became ready to fight with the Abbasid Caliph and headed to Baghdad.

Sultan Mohammad moved to Baghdad with his troops in 1217. In Hamadan, he sent one of his generals with a group of troops and sent supplementary forces after them. When the troops reached Asadabad strait, a great storm and snowfall stopped them. Many horses and a number of soldiers of Kharazmshah were wasted and the Kurds and the Turks killed the rest (Ebn Assir, Bita: 26/30). The remaining troops withdrew back with many losses. By hearing the news and the invasion of Mongols to the eastern regions of Iran, Sultan immediately headed from Hamadan to Khorasan. People believed that his defeat was the punishment God sent to him for disrespecting the Caliph (Nasavi, 1986: 32, Ebn Assir, Bita, 26/32). The Sultan's defeat had tragic consequences because it was not merely a military defeat; but he lost both in religious and spiritual terms and his creditability among Moslems faded away. In fact, Sultan's defeat was caused by his own mistakes because he started war in Fall and when winter season was in the way. This stopped his troops and since the number of troops was too large, they could not pass straits easily and suffered many losses. When he returned to Hamadan, he immediately omitted the name of Caliph and there were only Samarqand, Heart and some of the Kharazm cities who summoned in public prayers in the name of Caliph of Baghdad (Ebn Assir, Bita: 26/31).

At this time, Sultan became preoccupied by the Mongol's attacks. Some historians believe that the reason Changiz attacked Iran was the letters sent by the Abbasid Caliph and his persuasion to invade Sultan's territory in order to save his own territory. He even agreed with Changiz that the Mongols should only take over Kharazmshahian territory and do not invade the Caliph's territory (ibid, 26/157, Mirkhand, 1960: 5/77, Dastqeyb, 1988:230, Spuler, 1997: 24).

#### **Conclusion:**

The relationship between the Abbasid Caliph, Alnasser Ledinollah and Sultan Mohammad Kharazmshahi entered into a new phase in this ear because despite the differences between the two institutes of Caliphate and Kingdom in previous ear, Kharazmshahian showed obedience to the Abbasid Caliphate in many instances; however, Sultan Mohammad Kharazmshah who had succeeded to possess great power, tried to give power to the Shiite, realize their rights and fight against the inhuman and unreligious acts of the caliph, but he did not succeed and in addition to losing his men and army, he suffered

spiritual defeat. This enmity caused that neither Moslems nor the caliph did not help him when he needed the help and this ruined the Kharazmshahian.

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