



## Baramkids..

# Offspring of Saden the Magi who incited the people of Balkh to break their covenant with the Muslims

The history of the Barmakids' ancestors was linked to their religious activity in the city of "Balkh", which is one of the most famous cities of Persian Khorasan that was, at that time, a sacred city that neighboring peoples visited annually to offer sacrifices. Barmakids' ancestors were the custodian of the known as "Nubhar" temple, where their grandfather, Barmak al-Majusi, was the custodian of the Temple of Fire. Barmak and his sons were famous for their custodianship, which gave them great value and appreciation.

The Barmakids retained religion until the end of the Umayyad dynasty in 90 AH / 708 AC. Their grandfather, Barmak, was one of the instigators in Balkh to break the peace with the Muslims. Information is ambiguous about the life of Khaled al-Barmaki or even his Islamic upbringing. Some historians believe that he grew up on the Magi religion, the religion of his ancestors, and that his political activity began with the Abbasid call. Then, with the passage of time and the establishment of the Abbasid state, as Al-Isfahani says about the increasing influence of the Barmakids and their control over matters in the state: "That in the state of al-Rashid, there was another state ruled by the Barmakids". Yahya ibn Khalid al-Barmaki was the owner of the supreme word in the affairs of the state. He has the ministry of delegation and all offices. Yahya was granted serious privileges. He was the first empowered minister who was exclusively in-charge of writing to the governors, where such correspondences were issued only by the caliph himself in the past. Yahya had seized all political, administrative and economic powers.

Khaled took over and advanced in the Abbasid state and took over the ministry for Abu Abbas after Abu Salama Hafs Al-Khalal. Al-Masoudi said about him in his Mourouj Al-Thahab: "None of his sons reached the level of Khaled ibn Barmak in his generosity, opinion, strength, knowledge and all his trait. Yahia was not in his wisdom and abundance of mind, Al-Fadl ibn Yahya was not in his generosity and integrity, Jaafar ibn Yahya was not in his written and oral eloquence, Mohammad ibn Yahya was not in his agility and determination and nor Musa ibn Yahya was not in his courage and valor".

Yahya Al-Barmaki first emerged during the period when his father Khaled assumed positions in the reign of Abbasid caliph Abu Jaafar Al-Mansur and during the short reign of caliph Al-Hadi. Yahya Al-Barmaki replaced his father in the leadership of the Barmakids. During that important historical period, Harun Al-Rashid, the crown prince and brother of the caliph, was closely associated to Yahia, who was in charge of writing for Al-Rashid. Historical sources also refer to the role played by Yahya al-Barmaki in supporting Harun al-Rashid as the person entitled to assume the prince position. When Caliph al-Hadi wanted to give his young son that mandate, instead of his brother Al-Rashid, Yahya refused and said to Al-Hadi: "Do you think that the people will hand over the caliphate to Jaafar while he is still a child and will accept his as their caliph?"

The increasing influence of the Barmakids during the reign of Harun al-Rashid impacted the situation within the Abbasid court to the extent that some of the caliph's entourage were fed up with the Barmakids' evil. Conflict raged between the Barmakids and their opponents until the latter were able to convince the caliph that the Barmakids are an evil spreading in the state and that he must be rid of them. The Barmakids had previously poisoned Musa ibn Jaafar al-Kazim after a trip to Harun al-Rashid, when they accused Musa that he wanted to overthrow him. Harun wept over his cousin and knew the Barmakids' plot. He was smart and aware of the Barmakids' influence in the state. He realized that getting rid of them was not an easy matter, yet he decided to arrest all the Barmakids, confiscate their money and property, displace some of them and kill some others, while many of them were prisoned. This, the legend of the Barmakids ended and their authority within the Abbasid state ended within few hours. Al-Rashid battle against them was called as the Barmakids' Disaster".

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 After Harun al-Rashid,  
 the Persians almost  
 divided the Abbasid  
 state between eastern  
 and western states

Barmakids' disaster is caused by the hidden struggle waged by the Persians against the Arabs, which continued after that during the reign of Al-Amin and Al-Ma'mun. That conflict appeared clearly during the era of Al-Rashid when he entrusted his son Al-Amin with the mandate of the Covenant after him in the year (175 AH) under Arab influence, represented in his wife Zubaydah bint Jaafar and his chamberlain Al-Fadl ibn Al-Rabea. Al-Amin was then five years old, indicating that the intent was only to guarantee succession to the Arabs. The Persian side, headed by the Barmakids, was not satisfied with that situation, so they tried with Al-Rashid until they convinced him to entrust his son Al-Ma'mun with the mandate of the Covenant after Al-Amin in the year (182 AH), provided that Al-Ma'mun shall assume the mandate of the East after the death of his father. In other words, the succession of Al-Amin after the death of his father on the east shall be only a camouflage. It is known that Al-Ma'mun was from a Persian mother and that is why he was supported by the Barmakids. In the year (186 A.H.), Al-Rashid performed Hajj with his two sons, Al-Amin and Al-Ma'mun. In the Sacred House of Allah, he took their vows to be loyal to each other and that Al-Amin shall leave to Al-Ma'mun the mandate on the east states, with all their frontiers, villages, soldiers, taxes, money houses, alms, tithes and mail. Al-Rashid recorded those covenants are in the form of decrees and hanged them in the Kaaba to increase their sanctity and confirm their implementation. He also circulated that meaning, in writing, to all states. Thus, the Arabs guaranteed the succession to a person with Arab lineage, while the non-Arabs, under the leadership of the Barmakids, guaranteed the east to a man who they were his maternal uncles.

## References:

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