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Appendix : The Moral and Intellectual Preparation for 'Ali's Guardianship and Succession

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Introduction

Initiated by the Prophet, the intellectual and moral preparation for 'Ali b. Abi Talib's Guardianship and Succession proceeded along two parallel but complementary lines: the preparation of Ali and of the *Ummah*, both at the same time. While the Prophet, as Leader, was committed to a special intellectual and doctrinal education for `Ali that conformed to a rigorous daily schedule, he also took charge of the Muslim *Ummah's* mental adjustment.

He undertook to educate it intellectually and doctrinally in order firmly to establish `Ali's Guardianship. He wanted to ensure that `Ali was qualified to lead the journey, the whole experience, of Islam immediately after he departs. According to numerous sources, as we shall see, direct Revelation was another interposing factor pointing in this direction.

Invariably, the Qur'an comes down sometimes lauding Ali's virtues and other times pointing to his special qualities. It identifies him as being unique, to the point of making the delivery of God's Message conditional upon the announcement of his Guardianship or its proclamation to the *Ummah*. We shall be seeking to establish this in our appendix to Imam al-Sadr's already deep and original inquiry.

We shall arrange our own study into three discussions. The first discussion will present 'Ali's intellectual and moral preparation for the task of leading after the Prophet. The second will deal with the intellectual and moral preparation of the Muslim *Ummah* for the sake of this task. The third will demonstrate the

pertinence of `Ali's unique and special knowledge of the Qur'an to this task.

In this summary essay, we shall try to shed light on these facts by relying on the accepted rules and principles of scholarly investigation, without exaggeration or artifice. The study will be based on *had'ith* and exegetical works written by scholars, traditionists, renowned researchers and prominent Sunnis. We pray that God may extend His assistance.

The First Discussion

One may, in all certainty, state that `Ali b. Abi Talib's apostolic preparation, both "moral and intellectual," began upon the Prophet's first burst of Divine Revelation. The latter took practical steps in order to reach his intended goal of entrusting `Ali with the task of leading, "socially and politically" immediately after his death. It would appear from the course of events – and from what biographical works, histories and the more reliable transmitters have related – that this was achieved in two ways.

First, as Leader, the Prophet was himself committed to taking `Ali under his tutelage from childhood, taking charge of his moral education, attending to him, doing his utmost never to be separated from him except when necessary.

Second, of all the Companions, `Ali was singled out in terms of status, knowledge and position, which pertained to the very existence and future of Islam.

A. With regard to the first point, biographical works and books in traditions all have endeavoured to illustrate many pertinent details. But the matter of the Prophet taking `Ali under his charge since childhood and educating him in his own house was a conspicuous part of his noble life.¹ It is enough to recall what Imam 'Ali himself has stated in his sermon known as "*al Qasiah*":

You well know my place of close kinship and special standing with God's Messenger. He put me in his lap when I was a child, embraced me close to his heart, offered me shelter at his berth. And there, admitted into physical contact with him, I scented his fragrance. He chewed the food bits to feed me. Never did he find in me a mendacious word, nor a pater's deed. I used to follow him as the weaned young camel does its mother's trail. And every day he would bring up some new teaching in morals, admonishing me to emulate him. Every year he retired to [the Cave of] Hira' where I alone would see him. No single roof then had joined God's Messenger and Khadijah in Islam but that I was its third member. I witnessed the light of the revelation and message, and inhaled the scent of prophethood ...²

The picture related by Imam 'Ali himself regarding the manner in which the Prophet used to treat him reveals the true dimensions of the purpose.

A special training was intended for `Ali. Extraordinary care and effort were taken to ensure that he remain very close to the light of Divine Revelation and exposed to the “fragrance of prophethood”; that he be one of three persons in the Prophet's house at the time of revelation. Occupying such an eminent place, he imbibed his first lessons and instruction directly from the Prophet. All this was reflected in his intellectual and doctrinal make-up, for “Never shall he bow down to any idol.”³ Never at any moment was his mind confounded by idolatry, as his behaviour shows: “Not a mendacious word, nor a patterer's deed”

All this reveals, without the shadow of a doubt, a special moral preparation. What is noteworthy in this respect is that the Prophet's commitment to put `Ali in his special care was not limited to the period of childhood or boyhood. And it did not stop at any specific phase –the Prophet had made sure that `Ali was always at his side, day and night; as when `Ali says, “My visitations to the Prophet were of two kinds: one by night and another by day...”⁴ Indeed, one never finds the Messenger of God ever separated from or leaving behind `Ali, except in the instance where it was necessary to protect the Prophet's life, or to safeguard the Islamic Call against danger. To corroborate, let us mention one example for each occasion.

i) The first context is linked to the protection of the Prophet's life. On the night of his blessed flight to Medina, the Prophet had left `Ali behind to lie in his bed⁵ as a subterfuge against the Meccans lying in wait for him; it allowed him to evade their plot to kill him.⁶ With this, God revealed the following: “And there is he who barter himself to earn the satisfaction of God...” (Qur'an II:207, “*al-Baqarah*”) – as recalled by Fakhr al-Din al-Razi.⁷

ii) The second context is linked to the protection of the Islamic Mission. The Prophet had wished to go on one of his military expeditions called Tabuk. So he left `Ali behind in Medina as his vicegerent (*khalifah*).⁸ Ibn Ubayy b. Salul, who headed the group of “Hypocrites,” had remained in the city, and the situation demanded that the Prophet leave `Ali behind in the hope of forestalling any unexpected development that might threaten the Prophet's reign in Medina. Said al-Tabari:

With the Messenger of God departed [i.e. to Tabuk], among the “Hypocrites” and the irresolute who stayed behind figured `Abd Allah b. Ubayy, who was brother to the Banu `Awf b. al-Khazraj. Abd Allah b. Nabtal was brother to Banu `Amr b. `Awf, and Rifa`ah b. Zayd b. al Tabun to Banu Qaynuqa`. And all – that is all those mentioned – were among the most infamous of the “Hypocrites”; they counted among those who used to conspire against Islam and its people.

He also added: “Ibn Hamid has told us that Salamah related from Ibn Ishaq – who related it from `Umar b. Ubayd, who related it from Hasan al-Basri – that God has brought down [these words: ***Indeed they had plotted sedition before, and upset matters for thee...***” (Qur'an 9:48, “*al-Tawbah*”).

But here, the “Hypocrites” understood that, with `Ali remaining in Medina, the opportunity was lost. “The Hypocrites,” continues al-Tabari, thus started to calumniate about `Ali b. Abi Talib. They claimed that he

was [chosen to be] left behind only because he was a burden to [the Prophet, who wanted only release from him.

When they made these claims, `Ali took his sword and went off to find God's Messenger at Jurf, situated at some distance from Medina, and there told [him]: "Prophet of God! The Hypocrites allege that you have kept me behind; that you find me a burden and that you seek release from me."

[The Prophet] replied, "They lie. I left you behind for what [lay in wait behind me. Do you not consent, O 'Ali, to having the same position with respect to me that Aaron did with Moses, save that no Prophet shall ever come after me?" With this, `Ali returned to Medina, and God's Messenger resumed his journey.⁹

Al-Bukhari¹⁰ and Muslim¹¹ have recorded the tradition relating to (`Ali's) "position"(or "station") according to Sa`d b. Abi Waqqis, who said that

The Messenger of God has [chosen] to leave `Ali behind in Medina during one of his expeditions. So `Ali said to him: "O Messenger of God! You have left me behind with the women and the children." I heard God's Messenger reply, "But you consent to be related to me in the same station that Aaron was to Moses, save that there shalt be no prophethood after me."¹²

One striking fact is that the Prophet used to express anxiety and apprehension at `Ali's absence from him; he eagerly awaited him and sought reassurance. Ibn Kathir¹³ related Umm `Atiyyah's statement that "The Prophet sent off fighters, and among them was `Ali. I heard the Prophet say: `O God, do not take my life before you let me see 'Ali again'.¹⁴

Occasionally, it happened that when offered a meal, the Prophet could not bear eating it alone; nor was he satisfied with praying to God that `Ali may join him, but that this be made an opportunity for demonstrating the station and rank of `Ali. It is recorded about Anas b. Malik that he related, "The Prophet had a fowl (in one account a `roasted fowl'¹⁵) and uttered: `O God, bring me this your most beloved person, so he may eat this fowl.'

And God brought him", who then ate it with him..."¹⁶ It is noteworthy that some accounts speak of an attempt, after that appeal, to turn `Ali away upon his arrival at the Prophet's house; but it was thwarted by the Prophet's own intervention, according to what Ibn Kathir has related.¹⁷ However, the apparent sense of the account is that the Prophet meant also to affirm and to establish that `Ali was best loved by God.¹⁸

All this leaves little doubt that our Prophet's special education of `Ali was aimed at preparing and training him for the responsibility of leading the Mission of Islam, and not merely to become part of its political staff or personnel. The Prophet was committed to educating and to training the Companions collectively, but not to the same degree or with the same method and attention as he was with `Ali. This shows that the responsibility 'Ali had been charged with was much weightier than that of the other Companions.

B. The second way alluded to above concerns the fact that 'Ali had been singled out; it concerns his competence in knowledge –particularly Qur'anic – and the positions which were historically decisive to the Prophet and to the Mission. It concerns his firm training in the provisions of the law. There is abundant evidence for this. Anyone who peruses the books on traditions, biography and history would profit immensely in this regard.¹⁹

Let us now cite some examples that support our idea, together with the evidence for them.

The Prophet had undertaken, both on his own and by Divine Command, the task of inculcating `Ali, as he did no one else, in the learned and intellectual knowledge of the Qur'an. He hoped to do it with respect to the root principles and sources of learning, reflective wisdom and its rules, and by instructing him in the provisions of the law, its allowances and prohibitions.

Tradition has it that 'Ali uttered, “The Messenger of God has taught me countless pathways to knowledge, opening for me a thousand others for each one...”²⁰ `Ali himself sometimes used to hasten to the Prophet in quest of knowledge, learning and judgements. At other times, the Prophet himself initiated the instruction: “Whenever I questioned the Prophet, he obliged; when I remained silent, he anticipated me...”²¹ At one time, he declared, “God has given me an inquisitive tongue and a sensible heart.”²² In this connection, Imam 'Ali stated in a lengthy *hadith*,

Every verse that has come down to the Messenger of God he recited or dictated to me, and I wrote it down in my own hand. He taught me its interpretation and explanation, its abrogating and abrogated parts, clear and allegorical verses, particular and general injunctions. He invoked God that He may give me understanding of it and that I may commit it to memory.

So I did not forget a single verse of God's Book, not any knowledge that he transmitted to me. I wrote it down, from the moment of his invocation. The Messenger of God spared no knowledge taught to him by God concerning what is allowed and what prohibited, no command or proscription – now and for ever – but that he taught it to me and that committed to memory. And I have not forgotten one letter of it ...²³

Al-Suyuti asserts that Mu`ammar – as related by Wahb and, after him, Abu al-Tufayl – said the following: “I heard 'Ali giving an address and saying: `Ask me. By God, nothing will ye ask that I shall not discuss. So ask me about the Book of God and, by God, there is not a verse that I shall not know – whether it was revealed at night or in the day, on a mountain or on shore...”²⁴ Al-Suyuti also affirms, “Verily, none of the Companions dared to say, `Ask me,' except `Ali...”²⁵

Everything that 'Ali had talked about, of which history has left reliable record, was attested to by the prominent Companions. The scholars and the most prominent among them own to it. In his *al-Hilyah*, Abu Na'im records that Ibn Mascud had said, “The Qur'an has come down in seven recitals, none of which is without its explicit [*zahir*] and implicit [*batin*] meanings. And `Ali b. Abi Talib [understood] both the explicit and the implicit meanings.”²⁶

It is related that Ibn `Abbas had uttered: `By God, `Ali b. Abi Talib was given nine-tenth of the knowledge.”²⁷ Also quoted from him are the words: “We used to discourse over how the Prophet had assigned `Ali sundry [*lit.*, seventy] responsibilities which he assigned to no one else.”²⁸

In practice, `Ali was the authority for the Companions in respect of every learned or administrative question that occurred to them, every juridical dilemma. It is affirmed of `Umar b. al-Khattab, the Second Caliph, that he said, “Without `Ali, `Umar would have perished,”²⁹ also uttering, “God forbid that there be a problem and no Abu Hasan to [solve] it.”³⁰ He is further said to have declared: “The most decisive [*aqda*] of us is Ali ³¹ where “decisiveness” implied knowledge of all the legal provisions. where “decisiveness” implied knowledge of all the legal provisions. where “decisiveness” implied knowledge of all the legal provisions. where “decisiveness” implied knowledge of all the legal provisions. where “decisiveness” implied knowledge of all the legal provisions.

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1. Ibn Hashim, al-Sirah al-nabawiyah, ed. Mustaa al-Saqqa et al I:246.
 2. Nahj al-balaghah, ed. Dr. Subhi al-Salih, Sermon No. 192, pp. 300-01.
 3. Manaqib Amir al-Mu'min'in II:540, Hadith No. 1045, narrated by Abu Saïd; cf. al-Sa'id cf. al-Sahili, al-Rawd al-ani III: 16, n. 1: “The first person to perform the prayer ritual was `Ali.” He also stated that the same was said by Salman, Khabbab, Jabir, Abu Saïd. This is repeated in Tabarani's work.
 4. Al-Nassa'i, al-Sunan al-kubra, “al-Khasa'is” V: 141, Hadith No. 8502.
 5. Ibn Hisham, Sirah II:95 (Cairo: Matba`ah al-Hijazi, 1937).
 6. Ibid.
 7. Al-Tafsir al-kabir, Third Edition V:204 (Tehran: Dar Nashr al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah).
 8. Sahih al-Tirmidhi, ed. Kamat al-Hut V:596 (Matba`at Dar al-Fikr).
 9. Ta'rikh al-Tabari II: 182-83. Cf. Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wal-nihayah VII:240ff.
 10. Al-Shaykh al-Nasif, al-Tajj al jami lil-usul II:332. It was related by al-Bukhari, Muslim and al-Tirmidhi.
 11. Sahih Muskm IV: 1873.
 12. Sahih al-Tirmidhi V:596.
 13. Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah wal-nihayah VII:357.
 14. Al-Shaykh Mansur `Ali Nasif, al-Tajj al jami lil usul ahadith al-rasul III:334, Third Bamuq edition (Istanbul: Dar Ihya" al-Kutub al-`Arabiyyah, 1961).
 15. al-Tajj al jami VII:351.
 16. al-Tajj al jami III:336.
 17. al-Tajj al jami, pp. 351-52.
 18. Ghayat al-ma'mul, Sharh al jami lil usul, III:336, n. 6, where it is said, “And with this: `Ali was best loved by God.”
 19. Cf Ibn Manzur, MukhtasarTa'rikh Ibn Asakir XVII:356ff and XVIII up to p. 51.
 20. Al-Shaykh al-Mufid, al-Irshad, p. 22, as narrated by `Abd Allhh b. Mas'ud.
 21. al-Tajj al jami lil usul VIII:335; al-Suyuti, Tar'ikh al-khulafa ; p. 170; Ibn Hajar, al Sawaiq al-muhriqah, pp. 126-27.
 22. Al-Suyuti, al-Ittiqan IV:234.
 23. Nahj al balaghah, ed. Dr. Subhi al-Salih, Sermon No. 210, p. 325. See also alMajlisi, Bihar al-anwar 92:99 (Tehran).
 24. al-Ittiqan IV:233; cf. Tabaqat Ibn Sad II:338; Ibn Hajar, al-Sawa'iq al'-muhriqah, p. 127.
 25. Ta'rikh al-khulafa p. 166.
 26. Recorded in Suyuti's al-Ittiqan IV:233.
 27. Al-Qanduzi, Yanail al-mawaddah I:68-9.
 28. Hilyat al-awliya I:68, Fifth Edition (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al Arabiyyah).

29. Ibn Kathir, at-Bidayah wal-nihayah VII:359; cf. al-Suyuti, Tarikh al-Khulafa p. 171

30. Ibid VII:373; Ibn Hajar, al-Sawa`iq al-muhriqah, p. 127.

31. Ibn Sa`d, al-Tabaqat al-kubra III:339, Second Edition (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1408 AH).f

The Second Discussion: The Preparation and Adaptation of the Ummah to 'Ali's Succession

The task of educating the *Ummah* to receive `Ali's Caliphate and direction over the advance of Islam after the Prophet, began early on –when the Prophet was first commanded (by God) to give admonition and to communicate his Message:

“Divulge what ye have been commanded and turn away from the idol-worshippers” (Qur'an 15:94 “al-Hajar”).

According to al-Tabari, `Before this, in the three years prior to his being sent forth and commanded to come out openly with the call to God, he had been concealing his [God-given] command; then this was revealed to him: ***“And admonish thy nearest kinsfolk”*** (Qur'an 26:214 ***“al-Shu'ara”***). In this connection, al-Tabari transmitted `Abd Allah b. Abbas' statement about `Ali b. Abi Talib, who said:

When that verse was revealed to God's Messenger ...he called upon me, saying, “O `Ali God hath commanded me to admonish my nearest kinsfolk. But I am uneasy, for I know: when I divulge this Command, what I shall face from them will be to my utter dismay.

I held my silence on it, until [the Archangel] Gabriel came to me and said: `O Muhammad, if ye do not make good what you have been ordered to do, your Lord shall punish thee.¹ So bring forth a bit of nourishment, add to it a cut of leg, fill our jars with milk and bring together Banu `Abd al-Mutallib that I may speak and convey to them what I have been commanded. With that, I shall have done what He has ordered me to do: to call them to God.¹ On that day they were forty strong, more or less, including his uncles Abu Talib, al-Hamzah, al-`Abbas, Abu Lahab...

So the attempt was made. After they had drunk and eaten, al Tabari goes on,

The Messenger of God spoke: “O Banu `Abd al-Mutallib, I know of no younger man among the Arabs, who has brought his people something better than what I am bringing to you [now]. I come to you with the best of this world and of the next. God has commanded me to call you to Him. And so, which of you will help me with this matter, becoming a brother, caretaker and successor to me.”

[`Ali] explained, “Everyone recoiled from this. Although I was not their equal to age and still the most

bleary-eyed of the lot, I called out: I will, O Prophet of God, I shall be your aid in that. He took me by the nape, declaring, 'This shalt be my brother, caretaker and successor – among ye all. So hearken and obey (' The people, he continued, then took to laughing, saying to Abu T–alibi "He orders you to hearken and to obey, your son!"

This narrative makes it clear that the first act of mental preparation for the acceptance of `Ali, as Guardian and Successor, occurred in a private milieu (that of the nearest kinsfolk). It took place alongside the announcement of Muhammad's calling and the declaration of his prophethood.

However, the preparation of the *Ummah* had another aim. Barely was the Qur'an being gradually revealed, certainly far from complete, when 'Ali began fighting alongside the Prophet. Qur'anic verses were thus revealed which praised 'Ali's excellence and virtues – all in the same vein. Based on al–Suyuti's account, Ibn `Asakir has written that "Nothing has been revealed in God's Book on a person as much as on `Ali..."¹

He cited Ibn `Abbas as saying that "About `Ali there are 300 [Qur'anic] verses."² We shall adduce some of the verses, or ayat (sing., *ayah*), which are noted by more than one person as having been revealed about `Ali. Falling within our purview, they mark the reality of the *Ummah's* preparation and education in this respect.

i) There are these words of God:

"To those who have faith and perform deeds of righteousness the All-Merciful shall bring Love"
(Qur'an 19:96 "Maryam").

According to various chains of transmission (*asanid*), several of those who had memorized the Qur'an stated that these verses were revealed about 'Ali, on the grounds that "there is no Muslim who does not have love for `Ali..."³

It is related that al–Barra' b. `Azib has asserted that the Prophet said to `Ali b. Abi Tahb, "O `Ali, say, 'Grant me, Lord, Thy keep and, in the hearts of the faithful, Love.' And so God revealed, 'Truly, those faithful...' – which is about `Ali."⁴

ii) God says: "These two adversaries quarrel over their Lord..." 'Ali is recorded as saying, "On the day of Resurrection, I shall be the first to fall on my knees before the All-Merciful on account of the disputes." Qay s explains that "About them was revealed 'These two adversaries quarrel over their Lord...', they being those who disputed on the Day of Badr: 'Ali, Hamzah, `Ubaydah, Shaybah b. Rabi'ah..."⁵

iii) God says:

"And God turned back the faithless, for all their rage; they availed themselves of naught. God suffices for the faithful in their fight" (Qur'an 33:25 "*alAhzab*").

More than one authority has related that `Abd Allah b. Mas`ud read `Ali into the phrase “God suffices for the faithful in their fight.”⁶

iv) God says:

“O ye who have faith, heed God and be amongst those who are true” (Qur’an 9:119 “al-Tawbah”).

More than one memorizer and traditionist has related Ibn `Abbas' remark that “that was [a reference] especially to `Ali b. Abi Talib.”⁷

v) God says:

“Those who harm the men and women of faith for no reason are wont to bear with clear calumny and offense” (Qur’an 33:58 “al-Ahzab”).

The view transmitted through various channels is that it has to do with `Ali, as a number of “Hypocrites” used to bring harm to and tell lies about him.⁸

Thus established is that these verses were revealed in order to show the position of `Ali, the greatness of his personality, his large role in the life of the Prophet and of the Mission. The faithful needed to be adverted of these realities and to comply with them. This is confirmed by Prophetic *hadiths* that proffer these senses. The Companion Sa`d b. Abi Waqqas declared,

Mu'awiyah ordered me to curse Abu al-Turab. I replied that so long as I can recall the three things said to him by the Prophet, I shall not curse him. For me to possess just one of them would be dearer than the rarest of cattle: the Prophet had made him vicegerent during one of his expeditions. `Ali said, “O Prophet of God, you have left me behind with the children and the women.”

I heard God's Messenger answer, “But you do consent to be related to me in the same station that Aaron was to Moses, save that there shalt be no prophethood after me.”⁹ I heard him say also on the Day of Khaybar, “Truly, I shall give the standard to a man who loves God and His Messenger, and whom ? d and His Messenger love in return.” We strained toward it then.¹⁰ [And the Messenger] said, “Bring `Ali to me!” [With this] his eyes were sore; so he put spittle in, them and handed the standard over to [`Ali]. God then granted him victory.

Then the following verse was revealed,

If anyone disputes with you over this, now that you have received knowledge, say, “Come, let us call upon all our sons and all your sons, all our women and all your women, ourselves and yourselves; and humbly make our supplication, invoking God's curse upon all those who lie!” (Qur an 3:61 ` Al `Umraan”).

And the Messenger called on `Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husayn, declaring, “Lord, these are my family!”

This is related by Muslim¹¹ and Tirmidhi.¹² In this account given by Sa`d, certain things need to be emphasized:

A) The revelation of the verse called *ayat al-mubahalab* (“Verse of Imprecation”), mentioned in his account above, concerns `Ali, his wife al-Batul, his two sons Hasan and Husayn.

B) These are, exclusively, all the Members of the Household.¹³ Accordingly, it is understood that they are the ones intended by the *ayat al-tathir* (“Verse of Purification”) – namely, where God says:

“And God only wishes to remove all sully from thee, ye Members of the Household, to make thee wholly pure” (Qur’an 33:33 “al-Ahzab”)

And in this verse `Ali's inculpability, trustworthiness, eminence – indeed, impeccancy (*ismah*) – become evident.

Thus begins the question of entitlement, since `Ali occupies the rank of Successor, Guardian and the one who was to steer the course of the community. As al-Raghib al-Isfahani said,

None is more eligible to be God's Vicegerent nor apt to complete his worship of God and clear His land than the pure of spirit, from whom all defilement has vanished. Just like the body, the soul has its defilement; although the former can be directly seen, whereas that of the soul is perceived only through insight. No one is equal to the Caliphate who is not pure of spirit because to be Caliph is to emulate God according to what is humanly possible. As for the impure in both word and deed, every-vessel that carries him leaks...¹⁴

It is evident from this that, after lauding `Ali's excellence and virtues, the Qur'an elevates him to a chastened level of absolute “purification,” and then to a level that is of the greatest consequence, since it likens his soul to that of the Prophet Muhammad, as is clear from the “Verse of Imprecation.” It was on this basis that the Prophet had time and again declared, “Ali is of me and I am of `Ali.”¹⁵

When certain persons tried to complain about `Ali, hoping to upset his station and position, the Prophet returned, “What do you want with `Ali?” repeating this three times; and then, “Ali is of me and I am of him.”¹⁶ In order to thwart those sceptical of the exalted position accorded to `Ali by the Prophet to ensure his *waliyyah* (“guardianship”) and successorship (*khilafah*) in everything of consequence to the Muslims, God declared:

“Your Guardian [wakiyukum] is God, His Messenger and those faithful who establish regular prayer and regular charity – these are wont to bow down [in worship]” (Qur’an 5:58 “al-Ma’idah”).

Al Zamakhshari pointed out that this blessed verse was revealed about `Ali when a beggar gestured the Prophet who, though bent over in prayer, surrendered his ring to him.¹⁷ To remove the ambiguity and to preempt all speculation about what was intended by the term *Waliyy* or was meant to be designated in these texts, the Prophet on more than one occasion stated that “Ali-is of me and I am of `Ali. And after

me, he shall be the Guardian [*wali*] of every believer...”¹⁸

In order to confirm `Ali's Guardianship and momentous role in relation to the Call of Islam, the Prophet stated: “`Ali is of me and I am of `Ali. And no one can carry out my task [that is, in his capacity of messenger and prophet] but myself and `Ali...”¹⁹ This notion was finely established in practice, publicly and in the light of day, in connection with the matter concerning the delivery of “*Surat alBara'ah*,”²⁰ Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal transmits in his *Musnad* from Abu Bakr al-Siddiq. Abd Bakr said that,

the Prophet had sent him with *Surat al Baraa'ah* to the Meccans. He had trecked for three days, when the Prophet told `Ali, “Catch up to him!” `Ali returned Abu Bakr and delivered the *surah* himself. When Abu Bakr arrived before the Messenger, he said, “O Messenger, has anything [unseemly] come to light in me? He answered, “I have seen nothing but goodness from you But I was told that no one but myself or someone of my kin shall ...”²¹

In the *Kashsha*, it is related that after Abu Bakr had travelled part of the way – in order to deliver *Surat al-Bara'ah* – Gabriel descended to say: “O Muhammad, only someone of your kin shall deliver thy Message. So send `Ali.”²²

The Qur'an puts the seal on the vitally important theme of intellectual and moral preparation with this last thing revealed in *ayat al-tabligh* (“Verse of the Delivery”), and again with *ayat al-ikmal* (“Verse of Perfection”), which followed the *haidth* of al-Ghadir. With that, there should be no difficulty.

The story of Ghadir handed down by the transmitters, with some differences, is as follows. When the Prophet returned from his Pilgrimage of Farewell, he received this insistent revelation:

“O Messenger, convey what has been revealed unto thee from thy Lord; if not, ye shall fail to deliver His Message. And God will protect thee from men” (Qur'an, 5:70 “al-Ma'idah”)²³

He halted the caravan at Ghadir Khum, gathering the people at midday in the intense heat to address them.

I am about to be summoned [before my Lord], with which I must comply. I leave thee two weighty things one of which is the rater: God's Book and my progeny and (according to Muslim's account, ²⁴“the members of my household!”). Ye behold how you do by them after I am gone! They shall separate not to the day when they will be restored to me at the Basin.

He then uttered, “Truly, God is my Guardian and I am guardian for every believer.” He took `Ali's hand and proclaimed:

The one for whom I have been guardian:²⁵ here is his friend, his guardian. Lord, be the Friend of whomever befriends him, foe to whomever is inimical to him, disappoint the one discontented with him, assist the one who assists him,²⁶ and wherever he roams let Truth roam with him...'²⁷

This important event was followed by one more revelation:

“This day have I perfected for you thy religion, completed my favour upon you and countenanced Islam [‘the Submission to God] as your religion...” (Qur’an 5:4 “al-Ma’idah”).

In some reports, the Prophet's statement after receiving revelation or, that memorable day of Ghadir – namely, the 18 Dhu al-Hujjah²⁸ – was: “God is Greater! Praise be to God that religion has been perfected and His Favour completed.

He has countenanced my mission and the Guardianship of `Ali after me.”²⁹ According to Ahmad's account, “Umar b. al-Khattab met him [i.e. Ali] and, after offering his felicitations, said to him, `You are Guardian to every man and woman of faith, morning and night!”³⁰

What is regrettable is that some people begrudged `Ali for being given such rank and distinction. Some became increasingly clamorous and argumentative when the Prophet singled him out for this honour. The Prophet was, therefore, compelled to remind them that he was a Messenger sent by the Lord of all creation, that he must fulfil what he has been commanded to do –

‘And he does not speak from whim; it is but a revelation revealed” (Qur’an 53:3-4 “al-Najm”).

This is evidenced by what Tirmidhi reported from Jabir b. `Abd Allah: “The Messenger called on `Ali on the Day of Ta'if, and whispered to him in secret. People then said, `His whispering to his uncle's son has lasted long.’ The Prophet said, `It was not I who whispered to him, but God...”³¹

Maymun, based on Zayd b. Arqam, related that a number of the Prophet's Companions had doors leading to the place of worship [*masjid*]. One day, the Messenger barred them, with the exception of `Ali's. He spoke about all these persons; rose, praised and extolled God. “Now, I have been commanded to bar all these doors except `Ali's.” About this he declared `But I say to you, I have neither barred nor gfned anything. I have been commanded something and complied...”³²

In this manner, whenever the Prophet used to single `Ali out for distinction, thereby excluding others, he made it clear to the *Ummah* that it was by God's command. It took place when `Ali was dispatched, in place of Abu Bakr, to deliver *Surat al-Bara'ah*; and again on the “Day of Whispering” at Ta'if, on the “Day of Ghadir,” and so on.

What is noteworthy about the most decisive moments in Islamic history and in the life of the Prophet – insofar as they helped safeguard the Islamic experience and its future – is that the Prophet used to send off and to call for `Ali as he did no other person. He used to do this on account of the critical nature of these situations, in order to ward off unexpected dangers.

This occurred during the great Battle of Badr, while `Ali carried the standard and slew some leading personalities among the Idolaters. It was repeated on the Day of Uhud, when he slew Talhah b. `Utbman, the banner bearer of the Idolaters.

Al-Tabari reported that, after 'Ali b. Abi Talib had slain the banner beaters [i.e. the "brigade commanders"], the Prophet caught sight of a group of Idolaters, and asked 'Ali to move against them. So he did, dispersing them all and killing `Amr al Jamhi. Then [the Prophet] noticed [another] group of Idolaters, and told 'Ali to move against them. He dispersed them and killed Shaybah b. Malik. Thence, Gabriel asked: "This, O Prophet, is consolation"; whereupon the Prophet announced, "He is of me and I am of him." And Gabriel said: "And I am of both of you."

Al-Tabari adds that they then heard a rejoicing voice, "No sword is there like Dhu al-Fiqar, no vigorous youth like `Ali."³³

Based on al-Bukhari and Muslim, it is sufficient just to refer to what Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas has reported concerning the Day of Khaybar."³⁴ Al-Tabarani and Ibn Abi Hatim related about Ibn `Abbas that he uttered: "God censured the Companions of God's Messenger in places but spoke of `Ali only well."³⁵

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1. Tar'ikh al-khulafa, p. 171; al-Sawaiq al-muhriqah by Ibn Hajar, p. 127.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Cf. Ibn Na'im al-Isbahani, Ma nazala min al Qur'an fi Ali, compiled by Shaykh al-Mahmudi, p. 130ff.
 4. al-Haskani, Shawahid al-tanzil I:360-61, First Edition.
 5. al-Tajj al jami lil-usul IV:181. Also related by al-Bukhari and Muslim in Kitab-al tafsir.
 6. Ibn Na'im, Ma nazala min al Qur'an fi Ali, ed. Mahmudi, p. 172.
 7. Abu Na'im, Ma nazala min al Qur'an fi Ali, p. 104. Cf the notes where he relates accounts which have different chains of transmission. See also Ibn Hajar, al-Sawaiq al-muhriqah, p. 152.
 8. Cf. Tafsir al-kashshaf III:559.
 9. Hadith al-Manzilah, already cited above. Cf. al-Tajj al jami lil-usul III:332 (recounted also by al-Bukhari, Muslim and al-Tirmidhi).
 10. Cf. Abu Hurayrah's account, where `Umar says, "I have never desired to command as I did that day, I leapt toward it" (al-Tajj al jami lil-usul III:331; recounted by al-Bukhari and Muslim).
 11. Sahih Muslim, IV: 1873.
 12. Sahih al-Tirmidhi V:596. Cf. Ibn Hajar, al-Sawaiq al-muhriqah, p. 143; cf. the account al-Tajj al jami lil-usul III:333.
 13. al-Tajj al jami lil-usul IV:207. Two narrators, al-Tirmidhi and Muslim, relate that `Umar b. Umm Salamah, the Prophet's stepson, had said,

When the verse on "purificatio" (tathir) was revealed in the house of Umm Salamah the Prophet called on Fatimah, Hasan, Husayn and `Ali He then draped them in a shroud, saying: "Lord these are the members of my household. So remove all sully and wholly purify them." Umm. Salamah asked, "Am I not among them, O Prophet, He answered, "Do not change your place, as you are fortunate."

14. Ibn al-Mufaddal al-Raghib al-Isfahani, al-Dhariah ila makarim al-Shariah, First Edition, edited and annotated by Taha `Abd al-Ra'uf Sad (Cairo: Maktabat al Kulliyah al-Azhariyyah, 1393 Al-1), p. 29. For the meaning of al-`ismah ("impeccancy"), see Muhammad Taqi al-Hakim, al-sul al-`Aammah lil-fiqh al-muqarin, p. 174.
15. Nasif, al-Tajj al jami lil-usul, III:334; see also al-Suyuti's Tarikh al-khulafa ; p. 169.
16. Sahih al-Tirmidhi V:594.
17. Al-Kashshaf I:649, where al-Zamakhshari says in a note on the history of the hadith, "It was recounted by Ibn Abi Hatim through Salamah b. Kahil, who said, `He gave me his ring in alms while bent over [in prayer], and it was revealed" – i.e. the Qur'anic verse; similarly related by Ibn Mardawayh, through Sufyan al-Thawri through Ibn Sunan, through al-

- Dahhak, through Ibn 'Abbas. Cf. also *Asbab al-nuzul*, p. 134, where al-Wahidi says it was revealed about 'Ali
18. *Sahih al-Tirmidhi*, Ch. "Fada'il al-Imam Ali"; cf. *al-Tajj al jami lil-usul* III:335.
 19. *Ibid*.
 20. The ninth surat, otherwise called Surat al-Tawbah.
 21. *Musnad al-Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal* I:3 (Dar nadir); *Tafsir al-Kashshaf al-Zamakhshari* II:243; also the account given in *Sahih al-Tirmidhi* V:594.
 22. *Al-Kashshaf*
 23. Al-Wahidi stated that the verse came down at Ghadir Khum (*Asbab al nuzul*, p. 135).
 24. *Sahih Muslim* IV:1874.
 25. *al-Tajj al jami lil-usul*, III:333. This is reported by Zay d b. Arqam about the Prophet, and is also found in *Sahih al-Tirmidhi* (V:591).
 26. *Musnad al-Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal*, IV:271, 368 (Dar Sadir). Cf, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* I:22; "Introduction," *Sunan Ibn Majah* I, Ch. 11. See also the full and satisfactory investigations in *Asanid al-Hadith al-Ghadir* by al-Allamah al-Amini; and also *Ibn Kathirs al-Bidayah wa al-nihayah* VII:360-61, where it is reported through several lines of transmission.
 27. *al-Tajj al jami lil-usul* III:337. It is separated reported here: "May God have mercy on 'Ali. Wherever he roams let Truth roam with him..."
 28. On the report concerning the revelation of the Verse of Ghadir and the fact that it was on 18 Dhu al-Hujjah, see al-Suyuti, *al-Ittikan* I:75. Cf. also al-Wahidi, *Asbab al nuzul*, p. 135.
 29. *Mananaqib Amir al-muminin* I:119, by al-Hafiz Muhammad b. Salman al-Kufi alQadi (one of the eminent figures of the third century), edited by al-Shaykh al Mahmudi. *Majma` ihya' al-thaqafah al-istamiyyah* (Qum, 1412 A H).
 30. *Musnad al-Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal* IV:281. When 'Ali called for witnesses from the crowd, thirty persons attested that they heard this utterance from the Prophet. *Ibn Kathir*, *al-Bidayah wa al-nihayah* VII:360.
 31. Cf. *Sahih al-Tirmidhi*, p. V:597. See also *Ibn Kathir*, *al-Bidayah wa al-nihayah* VII:369; *al-Tajj al jami lil-usul* , III:336.
 32. *Musnad al-Imam Ahmad* IV:369; cf. *Ta'rikh Ibn Kathir* VII:355.
 33. *Ta'rikh al-Tabari* II:25, 65-6 (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-'ilmiyyah).
 34. Sa'd's account as given by al-Bukhari and Muslim - see ns. 54 and 55 .
 35. Al-Suyuti, *Ta'rikh al-khulafa*; p. 171.

The Third Discussion: The Pertinence of 'Ali's Proficient Knowledge of the Qur'an to His Preparation for Succession

In the foregoing, we have noticed a special kind of relationship between 'Ali and the Qur'an. It emerged and developed to a point where, in the Prophet's own words,

The *Qur'an* is with 'Ali; and 'Ali is with the Qur'an. They shall gseparate not to the day when they will be restored to me at the Basin. 1

Moreover, if it grew and developed to a point where 'Ali had had to do battle over the Qur'an's interpretation, just as he did over its revelation,² what then are its repercussions for the intellectual and

moral preparation for his succession?

One can assert, first of all, that the Prophet had himself sought to nurture and to entrench this sort of relation – by the Command of God, as he was wont to say. It appears that there was an important objective for whose realization just such theoretical and practical steps or procedures were needed. One can equally demonstrate this objective in the light of the following observations:

(i) The logic of the *Shariah* (Islamic Law), complete and eternal, must guarantee that the Qur'an is understood – insofar as it is the fundamental source³ of this eternal law – along with its interpretation and provisions. To make the Qur'an the arbitrator among worshippers and nations is precisely what God has commanded us to do, as when He says:

“Do they then seek a judgement from the [Time of Pagan] Ignorance [al jahiliyyah]? Who is better in judgement than God for a people convinced?” (Qur'an 5:53 “al-Ma'idah”).

Consequently, we must rely on the Qur'an for everything small and big, but disavow the judgements of the days of Ignorance, which are those of impulse. Likewise, God has forbidden us to appeal to a false god, for He asks:

“Do you not see how those who claim to have faith in what has been revealed to you and what has been revealed before you want to appeal to a false god. They have been commanded to disavow it. But Satan wishes to lead them far astray” (Qur'an 4:60 “al-Nisa”).

Here, the Qur'an has rendered the choice of appealing to anything other than what God has brought down, or anyone other than the Prophet, as being one for the arbitration of Satan,⁴ who will lead them inexorably astray. The Qur'an affirms that appealing to anything else than what God has revealed is sinful, iniquitous and constitutes unbelief.

“The ones who judge not by what God has brought down, these are the sinful” (Qur'an 5:50 “al-Ma'idah”);

“The ones who judge not by what God has brought down, these are the iniquitous” (Qur'an 5:48 “al-Ma'idah”);

“The ones who judge not by what God has brought down, these are the unbelievers” (Qur'an 5:47 “al-Ma'idah”).

Our Prophet Muhammad was called on to turn the leaf on sinfulness, iniquity and unbelief.

Therefore, in the logic of the Qur'an, the failure to refer to its provisions brought down by God means appealing to a false god.⁵ If referring to the provisions of the Qur'an has been Divinely ordained, being the Will of the Lord; if this demands obtaining God's judgement as revealed in the Qur'an; then there must presumably be a person both qualified and fully prepared to carry out this Divine Command. There

can be no one else but the Prophet, or someone “of him” to discharge and to impart it in his place⁶ – someone qualified like himself and prepared for the task.

(ii) Strong, longstanding disagreement has existed among scholars –especially in areas that are of importance to people and to their lives – for no other reason than a lack of grasp of the Qur'an. Imam `Ali referred to this issue when he disparaged similar disagreement while the Qur'an was there in their midst:

A case goes before one of them for judgement; so he passes judgement based on his opinion. The very same case goes before another, who judges differently from the first. Thereupon the judges gather before the leader who appointed them He approves all of their options – although their Lord is One and their Prophet is One and their Book is One!

Has God really commanded them thus to disagree, and so they merely obey? or did He command them against it, and they now disobey? Has God revealed a deficient religion for whose perfection He seeks their assistance? Are they His partners, that they need only pronounce themselves and He to give His consent? Or has God brought down a perfect religion, but the Prophet failed to convey or to achieve it? Yet God says:

“...nothing have we omitted from the Book” (Qur'an 6:38 “al-An`am”)...

We have sent down the Book to you explaining every manner of thing – a Guidance and a Mercy...” (Qur'an 16:89 “al-Nahl”)

He also recalls that each part of the Book confirms the other, that the Qur'an has no discrepancies;

“Were it from anyone but God, they would surely have found many discrepancies” (Qur'an 4:82 “al-Nisa”).

The Qur'an is clear and comely.⁷

Accordingly, the preparation of someone qualified for expounding the Qur'an must be assumed.

(iii) `Ali's expertise in the Qur'anic sciences; his knowledge of the Qur'an itself in its explicit and implicit aspects, the clear and the allegorical verses, the general and the particular; his unique ability to understand its verses and to discern its provisions – all of these were recognized by learned Companions, as we have indicated.⁸

Prophetic traditions support and help establish them. The latter are also supported by what the exegetes and specialists in traditions on `Ali, in particular, have recorded, among other sources. The Prophet has said, “O `Ali, God Almighty and Sublime has commanded me to draw you closer to me and to teach you that you may become mindful. And so, this verse has been revealed:

`and for retentive ears to retain it' [Qur'an 69:12 `al-Haqah`].

You are an ear retaining my knowledge...”⁹

Reported also is the following statement by `Ali.

This is the Qur'an. Ask it to speak, but it will not. Rather, I apprise you of it. Verily, it contains knowledge of what is to come, discourse on what is bygone medicament for your illness and the ordering of your affairs...¹⁰

Thus Imam `Ali established that this Qur'an contains much that is weighty and of profound meaning; it contains cures for bodily ills and a regular code for every aspect of life – all of which no one but `Ali – or the emulator of `Ali – can either procure or grasp. Therefore, it becomes clear that besides him no one, without exception, was more qualified to understand the Qur'an, as obligated to realizing the Divine Command and to executing the Will of the Lord in order to end iniquity, sinfulness and unbelief – according to the texts and the facts than he.

This is a most logical, most sound assumption, one that explains the intellectual and practical measures taken by the Prophet to give `Ali a singular knowledge of the Qur'an, its sciences and judgements – as the most reliable traditions make clear.

Finally, the context requires us to deal with the inevitable question, and that is the following. If every such measure, every intellectual and practical step was taken for the sake of `Ali b. Abi Talib's succession to the Prophet, why then is there not a covenant written in definitive and satisfactory form that neither gives pretext to its detractors nor elicits speculation?¹¹

The answer to this is that the texts and all the interconnected narratives adduced here – announcing the Prophet's promulgation of `Ali's Guardianship, Assistantship, Succession and Command after his own death – relate to situations and occasions too numerous to list.

But one matter of singular religious and worldly importance to the Prophet brought him finally to make an official public announcement on the Day of Ghadir, which he repeated several times, as we saw in this Appendix and as we found out from Imam al-Sadr's study. This barely touches on what is determinable through the natural logic of events and the eternal, final law of God. But it is sufficient to anyone who deigns to hear out what he sees.

The Prophet, nevertheless, wanted to diminish the *Ummah's* pains. He honoured the *Ummah* with the Lord's gracious care, keeping it from stumbling and falling astray. He proclaimed on his deathbed, in the very last hour of his noble life, “Come! let me write you an epistle by which you will never go astray...”¹²

Around him were gathered some eminent Companions. He wanted it indeed to be a written covenant witnessed by the gathering. However, “what a calamity” occurred (in the words of Ibn `Abbas) when something abruptly came between the Prophet and the writing of the epistle, according to al-Bukhari, who related the following:

When the Prophet's pain worsened, he called out, "Bring me material on which I can write you my epistle; after this you shall never stray." Umar then said, "The Prophet is overcome with pain, but we [still] have the Qur'an. We count on God's Book." They agreed and became more clamorous. The Prophet said, "Leave! Quarreling in my house is inappropriate." Ibn Abbas then left saying, "What a calamity has come between the Prophet and his epistle..."¹⁴

It may be appropriate here to recall a dialogue, related by Ibn Abbas, between Umar b. al-Khattab (earlier during his Caliphate) and himself. Its gist is as follows. Umar asks him,

"O Abd Allah, you will pay in blood, if you keep silent ... Does Ali have any outstanding issue concerning the Caliphate?" "Yes," I replied. So Umar said, "There was only convulsed speech, which cannot establish an argument nor dispel a difficulty ... In his state of illness, [the Prophet] wanted to announce [Ali's] name, but I prevented that out of pity and concern for Islam. Messenger of God knew what was in my mind and abstained ..."¹⁵

Whether this is true or not, Caliph Umar's effort was subsequently confirmed on more than one occasion. It transpired that at one time as related by al-Tabari addressing Ibn Abbas, he said "My people are loathe to have Prophethood and the Caliphate joined in thee..."¹⁶

It appears that the Prophet's abandonment of the idea of writing and making out a covenant had two aspects to it. The first is that of the disagreement, quarreling and clamour that took place in his house just when he intended to write the covenant. This aspect was argued to the point where he was accused of blathering deliriously (in one version), or of being overcome with pain (in another version¹⁷). This is quite serious, since it touches the root of prophethood and the veracity of the Message. Yet the matter had been repeatedly clarified by the Prophet, as we saw. So, let the issue be examined on its own merits and let us make our choice.

Secondly, the Prophet had taken his precautions against just such an eventuality. He prepared the battalion headed by Usamah b. Zayd, and ordered its deployment, whatever the circumstances. So anxious was he to have it deployed, that by some accounts nothing could deflect his attention from it, not even the severity of his illness.¹⁸

Let us relate an account found in Ibn Sa'd's *al-Tabaqat* corroborating this. After mentioning the battalion's preparations, Ibn Sa'd relates how the illness struck the Prophet on a Wednesday, causing him to become feverish; when he awoke Thursday morning he gave the standard to Usamah and told him, "Go into battle in the Name of God and in His Path. Fight those who deny Him." So [the latter] went out standard in hand, under pledge, and gave it to Buraydah b. al-Hasib al-Aslami.

He then camped at al-Jurf, a place only three miles from Medina. Some *Muhajirin* and *Ansar* were with him, including Abu Bakr, Umar and Abu Ubaydah. But people were asking, "Is he [i.e. the Prophet] installing this youth above the First *Muhajirin*?" This greatly angered the Prophet, who put a headcloth around his head and climbed the pulpit.

Now then, O People! What is this talk surrounding my appointment of Usamah as commander. You contest his appointment now just as you did previously his father's. But by God, the latter was as fit to command then as his son surely is now! For me, he was one of the most beloved. Both are deserving of every kindness. So, make a point of showing kindness to him, for he is one of the best among you.

The Prophet then went to his house, on Saturday, 10 Rabi' al-Awwal, with the illness growing worse. He gave order to "Carry out Usamah's deployment!"¹⁹

From all these situations, words and course of events it appears the Prophet intended the following:

- 1) To adapt the intellectual and psychological climate by appointing Usamah as commander over the *Muhajiran* and the *Ansar*. The latter's acceptance of him marked a precedent for 'Ali's own accession to the position of Guardian and Caliph. In this manner, no one would object to his being younger than most.
- 2) To adapt the political and security climate by preempting likely elements of opposition,²⁰ in order for 'Ali to acceded to the position of Caliph. This goal the Prophet was committed to and had planned with vigilance in the hope of bring it to fruition, as we have shown.

However, a different turn of events took place than the one intended. And so, he wished to lessen the *Ummah's* pains, to avoid the vagaries of trial and error. He wished for the *Ummah* to hold fast to the Holy Book and to the Immaculate Family in order to be saved from the wilderness and from perdition. Hence his abandonment of the idea of an absolute, definitively written covenant: so the *Ummah* may continue to be tested, which is the way of God. For God asks,

"Do men think they will be left alone on saying, 'We have faith,' without being tested? Those before them we have tested, and God shall know who believes, just as He shall know who denies" (Qur'an 29: 1-3 "al-Ankabut").

God has willed all this, just as surely the Prophet had wished for the faithful to believe firmly in the one he appointed over them as his successor. Moreover, he intended their belief to be a reflective one and for their Shi'ism to be sincere – so as to continue to carry out the Divine Will under the latter's blessed leadership. The object is to remove iniquity, sinfulness and unbelief from existence:

God hath promised those of you who have faith and work rightful deeds that they will be made heirs on earth just as surely as those before them were made heirs; that He will consolidate the religion He countenanced for them; that He will surely change them after their fear – secure in [their] worship of Me, and without associating anything with Me. If any deny after this, they are the sinful. (Qur'an 24:55 "al-Nur")

Muharram 1414 AH

Dr. 'Abd al-Jabbar Sharrarah

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1. Ibn Hajar, al-Sawaiq al-muhriqah, p. 123. See also al-Suyuti, Ta'rikh al-khulafa; p. 173.
 2. Al-Qanduzi al-Balkhi al-Hanafi, Yanabi al-mawaddah, First Edition II:58 (Beirut: Manshurat al-A'lami). Cf. Ibn Hajar, al-Sawaiq al-muhriqah, p. 127.
 3. That the Qur'an is the first and fundamental source for religious law is a matter of consensus for the Islamic community. See `Allamah Muhammad Taqi al-Hakim, al-Usul al-ammah lil fiqh al-muqaran, p. 101.
 4. Al-Zamakhshari, al-Kashshaf I:525.
 5. The term taghut applies to any person in charge who strays, and everything worshipped besides God. It is also applied to the unbeliever, Satan and idols (al Tarihi, Majma` al-Bahra yn I:276).
 6. See how "Surrat al-bara'ah" was delivered, in Musnad al-Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal I:3 (Dar Sadir). Also, the text of the hadith in Ibn Hajar's al-Sawa`iq al-muhriqah, p. 122.
 7. See the text in Sermon No. 18, Nahj al-Balaghah, ed. Dr. Subhi al-Salih, p. 60-1. Cf. as Sawa`iq al-muhriqah, p. 152, where the words of Imam Zayn al `Abidin are recorded in a supplication:
To whom shall those who succeed this Ummah turn, once this community's beacons have been extinguished. The Ummah draws closer to disunion and mutual disagreement. But God says: "Be not like those who became disunited and who disagreed after there came to them the proofs." And so, only those are to be relied on to convey the proof and to expound the judgement who are the children of the Imams of True Guidance – candlelights in the gloom whom God offered as proof to His servants. God does not vainly leave His creation without a proof. Do you know or have ever found them to be anything but the branches of the Blessed Tree, the special elect from whom God has removed all defilement and truly purified. He has absolved them of evil and set forth their love for the Book...
 8. See p. 113 Appendix (print).
 9. Abu Naim, Manazala min al Quran fi Ali, ed. al-Mahmudi, p. 266. The editor mentions the chains of authorities in the notes. Cf. al-Suyuti, al-Dar al-manthur VI:260 (Manshurat al-Mar`ashi).
 10. Nahj al-balaghah, Sermon No. 158, p. 223.
 11. This question is raised in al-Murajaat between `Allamah Sharaf al-Din and Shaykh Salim al-Bashri (of Azhar Mosque).
 12. Cf. Ibn Sa`d, al-Tabaqat al-kubra II:242-44 (Beirut: Tab`at Beirut lil-Tiba`ah, 1985).
 13. Translator's emphasis.
 14. Sahih al-Bukhari I:37 (q.v. "Kitab al ilm," Ch. "Kitab al al-ilm"; Cf. "Kitab al-l'tisam" lithographed copy of printing by Dir al-`Amirah, Istanbul; Beirut. Dar al-Fikr).
 15. Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-balaghah III:97 (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al`Arabiyyah al-Kubra).
 16. Ta'rikh al-Tabari II:577 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah).
 17. Ibn Athir, al-Nahayah fi gharib al-hadith wal-athar; ed. al-Tanahi V:246 (q.v "Hajar")
 18. Ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil fi tarikh II:218 (Dar Sadir).
 19. Al-Tabaqat al-kubra II:248-50.
 20. `Allamah `Abd Sharaf al-Din, al-Muraja`at, p. 472.

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