

Caliphate and Imamate

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This full length text presents an historical account of the rulers of the Islamic world from the time of the demise of the Prophet of Islam to the reign of Yazeed bin Mu'awiyah. Special emphasis is paid to the causes of discord among the Muslim community in this period.

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Foreword

Praise be to Allah Who favored the faithful when He raised up among them an Apostle of their own. Peace be upon His Apostle (S.A.W.A.)¹ who possessed a great character and invited to the way of his Lord with wisdom and good advice, and disputed with people in a manner that is best. Allah May bless the Prophet's household whom He purified with a thorough purification, and made the reward of His Apostle's message the love for his relatives. Allah May be pleased with the Prophet's Companions who believed in him, honored him, helped him, and followed the light that was sent with him, and they are felicitous.

A few years ago, I came across a book entitled *Khilafat va intikhab* (Caliphate and Election).² In the dedication of the book he says,

“It was written: for the devotees, who endeavor in search of the truth. And for clergies, scientists, researchers, students; and for the youths who have not relied on the sayings and writings of historians, heretics, and orientalists for cognition and understanding the high position and status of the Prophet's Companions, and who are not caught in the net of hypocrisy nor have they fallen into their deceptive and foul traps.”³

Apart from these rhetorics, every researcher, who wants to know the truth about the past, must consult the sayings and writings of historians, heretics, orientalists, traditionists, interpreters, conformers and opponents, and follow what is the best of them. Supporting their own ideas, or refuting their opponent's creeds, the Sunnite and Shi'ite writers have written many books. Here we are not going to analyze all of them, but we wish to clarify the subject, to the extent that suffices the above-mentioned book, for 'the devotees who endeavor in search of the truth and original ideals of Islam'. We all worship one God, believe in one faith, follow one Prophet, recite one Qur'an and pray towards one Qibla. Small differences in views should not spoil or destroy our unity and Islamic relationship.

Of course, the unity and solidarity does not prevent us to know the truth about our faith or understand the Islamic fundamentals and customs, so we must try to settle the doubts of our brothers. We also hope that the believers, who are searching for the true and original Islam, listen to the words of both sects and follow the best of them.

Before dealing with the issue of caliphate, we will give a summary of the Prophet's life, because it is difficult to discuss about someone's successor without knowing him. This summary is mainly based on Ibn Hisham's *al-Sirat al-nabawiyya*,⁴ unless stated otherwise.

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1. (S.A.W.A.) = Sall Allahu 'alayhi wa alihi.
 2. 'Abd al-Rahman Salimi, *Khilafat va intikhab, 'aqida ahl sunnat piramun khilafat*, Mashhad, 1384, published by the author.
 3. *Ibid*, 1.
 4. Ibn Hisham (d. 218/833), *al-Sirat al-nabawiyya*, ed. Mustafa al-Saqqa, et al. Egypt, 1335/1936; Alfred Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, a translation of [Ibn] Ishaq's *Sirat Rasul Allah*, London, 1955.

A Summary of the Prophet's Life

Muhammad (S.A.W.A.) was born in Mecca, fifty-three years before hijra. His father 'Abd Allah died before his son's birth or a few months after it. The Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) lived with his mother Amina and his grandfather 'Abd al-Muttalib. When he was six years old, he lost his mother. His grandfather now took complete charge of his doubly orphaned grandson, and it soon became obvious that his special love for his deceased son 'Abd Allah had been transferred to 'Abd Allah's son.

Two years after his mother's death, Muhammad was bereaved of his grandfather. Before his death, 'Abd al-Muttalib entrusted his grandson to the care of one his sons, Abu Talib. Abu Talib loved his nephew just as 'Abd al-Muttalib used to do before him. He loved Muhammad (S.A.W.A.) so much that he gave him precedence over his own children. Abu Talib's wife, Fatima bint Asad, did all she could to substitute for the boy's mother.

In his twenties, Muhammad (S.A.W.A.) made a journey in the service of a wealthy widow named Khadijah. So faithfully did he transact Khadijah's business, and so excellent was the report of his behavior that Khadijah soon afterwards married Muhammad (S.A.W.A.). Although Khadijah was fifteen years older than Muhammad (S.A.W.A.), this marriage proved to be a very happy one.

This marriage gave Muhammad (S.A.W.A.) rank among the notables of Mecca while his conduct earned him the surname of *al-Amin*, the 'trustworthy.'

From his early childhood, the light of nobility and grandeur was shining on his face. He never worshipped any idols nor ever told any lies. Before his Mission, he took part in great deeds. He shared in *hifl al-fudhul*.¹ Moreover, in rebuilding of the Ka'ba, he acted as an umpire.

It was his practice to retire for a month every year to the cave of Hira', a desert hill not far from Mecca, for meditation and worshipping the One God. It was in Hira' one night toward the end of his quiet month when the first revelation came to him while he was forty years old. He heard a voice said ﴿Read﴾. He replied, "I cannot read". The voice said again, ﴿**Read**﴾. He replied, "I cannot read." A third time the voice commanded, ﴿**Read**﴾. He said, "What can I read?" The voice said ﴿**Read in the Name of your**

Lord Who created; created man from a clinging mass. Read and your Lord is the most generous, Who taught by the pen. Taught man what he did not know. ﴿2 (Q: 96/ 1–5).

After receiving the revelation that was unprecedented to him, Muhammad (S.A.W.A.) returned home. God favored 'Ali b. Abi Talib for he was brought up in the care of the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) before the advent of Islam. 'Ali was the first man who believed in the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) and prayed with him. Zayd b. Haritha the freedman of the Messenger of God was the first male to accept Islam after 'Ali.

People began to accept Islam, both men and women, in large numbers until its fame spread throughout Mecca. After three years from the time that the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) received his first revelation, God directed him to announce his religion. The Prophet (S.A.W.A.) was commanded in the following words ***So proclaim what you have been commanded, and turn away from the polytheists.*** ﴿ (Q: 15/94).

Again, He revealed the Warning Verse (*aya indhar.*) ***Warn the nearest of your kinsfolk, and lower your wing to the faithful who follow you, but if they disobey you, say 'I am absolved of what you do*** ﴿. (Q: 26/214–216).

'Ali says when these verses came down, the Messenger of God ordered me to get some food ready and he invited his nearest kinsfolk; then he said, "O sons of 'Abd al-Muttalib, I know of no Arab who has come to his people with a nobler message than mine. I have brought you the best of this world and the next. God has ordered me to call you to Him; so which of you will co-operate with me in this matter and become my brother, my executor, and my successor being among you?" The men remained silent and I ('Ali), though the youngest, said, "O Prophet of God, I will be your helper in this matter." He laid his hand on the back of my neck and said, "This is my brother, my executer and my successor among you. Harken to him and obey him."

The Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) continued to disseminate Islam as God ordered him. When Quraysh saw that he would not yield to them, some of their leading men went to Abu Talib and said, "O Abu Talib, either you should stop your nephew or you must let us get at him." Hearing this Abu Talib sent for his nephew and told him what he had heard, but he finally said, "Go and say what you please, for by God, I will never give you up on any account."

When Quraysh perceived that Abu Talib had refused to give up the Prophet, they incited people against the Companions of the Messenger of God who had become Muslims. God protected His Apostle from them through his uncle, Abu Talib, who mentioned the superiority of the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) among them so that they might extend their kindness to him. He called for Banu Hashim and Banu 'Abd al-Muttalib to stand with him in protecting the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.).

Quraysh continued their enmity to those who followed the Prophet (S.A.W.A.); every clan that contained Muslims was attacked, imprisoned, thrashed, exposed to the burning heat of Mecca, their food and water supplies were cut, so that they may leave the new religion of Islam. When the Prophet (S.A.W.A.)

saw the affliction of his Companions, and he could not protect them he said, "It would be better for you, if you were to go to Abyssinia, for the king will not tolerate injustice and it is a friendly country, until such time as Allah shall relieve you from your distress." Thereupon his Companions went to Abyssinia and this was the first hijra in Islam.

Quraysh knew that the Companions of the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) had settled in a land in peace and safety, and Islam had begun to spread among the tribes. They decided among themselves to write a document in which they should put a boycott on Banu Hashim and Banu 'Abd al-Muttalib that they should not marry their women nor give woman to them, and that they should neither buy from them nor sell to them, and when they concurred, they drafted a deed. Then they solemnly agreed on the points and hung the deed up in the middle of Ka'ba. The two clans of Banu Hashim and Banu 'Abd al-Muttalib went to Abu Talib, and entered with him into his *shib* (alley).

Abu Lahab went out from Banu Hashim and helped Quraysh. They remained there for two or three years, until they were exhausted, nothing reaching them except what came from their friends unknown to Quraysh. When a number of goodwill Quraysh took steps to annul the boycott against them, the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) said to Abu Talib, "O uncle verily my Lord Allah has prevailed the termite against Quraysh's deed and it had already eaten it except the words 'In the name of Allah!'" Therefore, Abu Talib went to Quraysh and informed them of what he had heard. He said, "See! In case he is right, annul the deed, and if he is wrong I will get him to you." They agreed on it. When they found it true, some men went up to the document and tore it into pieces.

Abu Talib, a man of faith from Quraysh who concealed his faith and Khadijah died in the same year. Khadijah always strengthened the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.), lightened his burden, proclaimed his truth and belittled men's opposition. With Abu Talib's death, the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) lost a trusted ally in personal life, and in defense and protection against unfriendly tribes. Abu Talib died some years before the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) migrated to Medina, thenceforth Quraysh began to treat him in an offensive way that they would not have dared to demonstrate in his uncle's lifetime.

God wished to display His religion openly, and glorify His Apostle and fulfill His promise to him. The Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) met a number of the Helpers at one of the fairs; and while he was conversing with the Arab tribes, as it was his wont, at al-'Aqaba he met a number of the Khazraj whom God intended to benefit. He invited them to sit with him so that he can recite Qur'an and expound Islam to them. The Khazaraji returned to Medina as believers.

In the following year, twelve Helpers (the Twelve Chiefs)³ attended the fair and met the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.) at al-'Aqaba. This was the first 'Aqaba where they gave the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) 'the pledge of women'. It was before the duty of making war was upon them. The second 'Aqaba contained conditions more than the first one. Now they bound themselves to war against all and sundry for God and His Apostle, while the Apostle promised them for faithful service, thus the reward of Paradise. Afterward, some of his Companions left for Medina, while he stayed in Mecca with 'Ali and

Abu Bakr waiting for God's permission to migrate.

When Quraysh saw that the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) had a party of Companions not of their tribes and outside their territory, they assembled in their council chamber to discuss what they should do in regard to the Prophet (S.A.W.A.), for they were now in fear of him. They finally decided that each clan should provide a young, powerful, well-born aristocrat warrior; and at a given moment, all these chosen men together should fall upon Muhammad, each striking him a mortal blow, so that his blood may be on all the clans. The Banu 'Abd Manaf would not be able to fight all tribes of Quraysh, so they would accept the blood money –which will be offered to them– in place of revenge. Thus, Quraysh would be relieved of the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) and responsibility for his blood would lie on all the clans.

Gabriel now came to the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) and told him what he should do. He told 'Ali about his departure and ordered him to stay behind in Mecca in order to return the goods, which men had deposited with the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) for anyone in Mecca who had a valuable property that he was concerned about would leave it to the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.) because of his well-known honesty and trustworthiness.

The young chosen to kill him agreed to meet outside the Prophet's house after nightfall. While they were waiting, until their numbers were complete, they heard the sound of women's voices coming from the house. They did not like to violate the privacy of women, so they waited until their victim came out. When the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) saw what they were doing, he told 'Ali to lie on his bed and to wrap himself in his green Hadhrami mantle.

Then he began to recite the *Sura Ya Sin*. When he came to the words: **﴿And We have put a barrier before them, and a barrier behind them; then We have blindfolded them, so they do not see.﴾** (Q: 36/9), He went out of the house; and God took away their sight, so that they did not see him. In the morning when 'Ali rose and went to the door, still wrapped in the green Hadhrami mantle, they realized that somehow they have been outwitted.

They waited a little longer, but there was no sign of the Prophet (S.A.W.A.). Meanwhile the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) had returned to Abu Bakr, and losing no time, he picked him up and they proceeded toward the cave of Thaur. Having entered it, by God's order, a tree about the height of a man grew in front of it covering the entrance; a wild pigeon made her nest in the tree and sat on her eggs; and over the gap, left between the tree and the wall of the cave, a spider wove its web.

The young men continued their search. Some of them climbed up to the cave. The voices were not far off –five or six men at least– they were still approaching. Abu Bakr felt grief. The Prophet (S.A.W.A.) looked at him and said, **﴿"Do not grieve; Allah is indeed with us." Then Allah sent down His composure upon him.﴾** (Q: 9/40).⁴

The two of them stayed in the cave for three days. Soon before dawn of the twelfth day after leaving the cave they reached Quba' where most of the Emigrants from Mecca had first stayed and where many of

them still were. They stayed there for three days during which the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) laid the foundations of a mosque. On the Friday morning, he set out from Quba' and at noon, he and his Companions stepped in the valley of Ranuna' to pray, and it was the first Friday prayer in Medina. 'Ali stayed in Mecca for three days and nights until he had returned the deposits, which the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) held. He later joined the Messenger of God in Quba'.

After a few months of his arrival in Medina, the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A) signed a convention between the Muslims and the Medinans, and the Jews, which is called 'the first constitutional law in Islam'. The Prophet (S.A.W.A.) instituted brother-hood between his fellow Emigrants and the Helpers and said, "Let each of you take a brother in God." He himself took 'Ali b. Abi Talib by hand and said, "This is my brother." Therefore, the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) and 'Ali became brothers.

During the second year of hijra, the Battle of Badr took place. The Muslims achieved a decisive victory against the pagans. Abu Jahl and forty-nine of the principals of Quraysh were killed, and seventy of the polytheists were taken prisoners. Some twenty-two of the bravest men of Quraysh including al-'As b. Sa'id, al-Walid b. 'Utba b. Rabi'a and Nawfal b. Khuwaylid were killed by 'Ali b. Abi Talib.⁵ Umar b. al-Khattab killed only one, Abu Bakr killed no one,⁶ and 'Uthman b. 'Affan was not present at Badr.⁷ The unique bravery of 'Ali was one of the crucial factors of the victory.

When the unbelieving Quraysh met disaster at Badr, the survivors returned to Mecca. They incited the tribes to fight the Prophet and get their revenge for those who had lost at Badr. Quraysh mustered their troops with two hundred horses, which they had led along with them; seven hundred men had worn armor and Abu Sufyan supplied them with three thousand camels.

The Prophet (S.A.W.A.) marched towards them with a thousand of his Companions. Before the start of war, 'Abd Allah b. Ubayy withdrew with a third of the troops. The Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) proceeded to Uhud with seven hundred people who had no horses or camels. There were fifty archers among them and the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) put over them 'Abd Allah b. Jubayr. He said to them, "Keep the cavalry away from us with your arrows and let them not come on us from the rear whether the battle goes in our favor or against us; and keep your place so that we cannot be approached from your direction."

The people went on fighting until the battle grew hot. Then God sent down His help to the Muslims and fulfilled His promise. They slew the enemy with the sword until they cut them off from their camp and there was an obvious rout. The archers turned aside to the camp making for the spoil when the enemy had been cut off from it; thus they opened the rear to the cavalry and the Muslims were attacked from behind. Someone called out "Ha! Muhammad has been killed." The Muslims turned back and the enemy turned back on them.

After the Muslims had killed the standard-bearers,⁸ the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) saw a group of Quraysh polytheists. He told 'Ali to attack them. He attacked and scattered their group and killed one of them.

Again, the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) saw a group of them and he ordered 'Ali to attack them. He did so, and scattered their group and killed another one. Gabriel came down and said, "O Apostle of God, this is an example of sacrifice and brotherhood." The Prophet (S.A.W.A.) confirmed the remark of Gabriel and said, "I am from 'Ali and 'Ali is from me."

Gabriel said, "And I am from you two." Then a voice was heard in the battlefield, "There is no sword except *Dhu al-Fiqar* and there is no brave man except 'Ali".⁹ The enemy attacked from behind and slew many Muslims until he made its way to the Prophet (S.A.W.A.). A stone hit the Prophet, he fell on his side, his face scored, his lip injured, and his incisor was broken. The Muslims fled to mountain. Although Prophet cried loudly, "O So-and-sos return. I am the Apostle of God", but they did not pay attention to him and climbed up the mountain.¹⁰

The Prophet (S.A.W.A.) remained firmly and only 'Ali b. Abi Talib, Talha b. 'Ubayd Allah and al-Zubayr b. 'Awwam stood with him and protected him bravely.¹¹ 'Uthman b. 'Affan with two of the Helpers fled until they reached al-Ja'lab, a hill near Medina. They stayed there for three days. Then they returned to the Prophet (S.A.W.A.).¹² God reproached those who fled for running away from their Prophet and paying no attention to him when he called them **﴿When you were fleeing without paying any attention to anyone, while the Messenger of God was calling you from your rear.﴾** (Q: 3/153). Later when they asked 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar about 'Uthman, he answered that he committed a great sin as he fled at Uhud but God forgave him for it.¹³

Quraysh had lost only twenty-two out of three thousand. Then they counted the losses of the Muslims and found about sixty-eight dead. In vain, they searched for the body of the Prophet and while they were doing so Wahshi went back to the body of Hamza, ripped open his belly, cut off his liver and brought it to Hind bint 'Utba (Mu'awiya's mother). She took it from him and bit away a piece of it, chewed it, swallowed a morsel of it in fulfillment of her vow and spat out the rest. She asked him where his body was, and when they reached the body, she cut off his nose and ears and other parts of his flesh. Then she took off her necklaces, pendants and anklets, gave them to Wahshi, and told the women who were with her to mutilate others of the dead.

The pagans returned to Mecca and God scattered their group. The Messenger of God marched out as a demonstration against the enemy to let them know that he was persuading them, so that they might think he was at strength, and that their losses had not weakened them. The Prophet (S.A.W.A.) went as far as Hamra' al-Asad, about eight miles from Medina and stayed there for three days, then, he returned to Medina.¹⁴

The 'Battle of the Trench' took place in A.H. 5. Huyayy b. Akhtab and other Jewish leaders from Khaybar formed a party against the Prophet (S.A.W.A.). Their hope was concentrated on the preparation of Quraysh for a final attack on the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.). They went to Quraysh at Mecca and invited them to join them in an attack on the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) so that they might get rid of him altogether. The Jews undertook to rouse up all the nomads in the plain of Najd. The Banu Asad readily

agreed to help them and so did the Banu Ghatfan. They mustered an army by nearly two thousand men of the Ghatfanite clans. The Jews also succeeded in securing a contingent of seven hundred strong from the Banu Sulaym.

Quraysh themselves and their closest allies were four thousand strong. Together the two armies were estimated to be a total of more than three times the strength of Quraysh at Uhud. Quraysh marched under the leadership of Abu Sufyan b. Harb; and Ghatfan were led by 'Uyayna b. Hisn. When the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) heard their intention, he summoned his followers to a consultation at which many opinions were expressed. Finally Salman rose up and said, "O Apostle of God, in Persia when we feared an attack of horse we would surround ourselves with a trench, so allow us to dig a trench around us now."¹⁵ Everyone agreed to this plan with enthusiasm. Time was short. The Muslims worked hard on the trench and the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) himself worked at it, and encouraged his followers with the reward in heaven.

Scarcely had the trench been finished –it took Muslims six days in all– when news came that the army of Quraysh was approaching. As they drew nearer, they were amazed to see a trench laid between them and the archers. They lined the whole way along it in its further side, but some equestrians of Quraysh, among whom were 'Amr b. 'Abd Wudd, 'Ikrima b. Abi Jahl, Hubayra b. Abi Wahb and Dhirar b. al-Khattab, galloped forward until they stopped at the trench. 'Ikrima suddenly spotted a narrow section of the trench.

He succeeded in making his horse leap the gap, and he was followed by 'Amr b. 'Abd Wudd, Hubayra b. Abi Wahb and Dhirar b. al-Khattab. However, by the time, the fourth man had crossed 'Ali and some other Muslims with him who were guarding the narrow section made it once more impregnable, thereby also cutting off the retreat of the equestrians who were now on their side.

When 'Amr b. 'Abd Wudd issued his challenge for a single combat, 'Ali got up, clad in armor and asked the Prophet's permission to fight him, but the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) told him to sit down, for it was 'Amr. Then 'Amr repeated his challenge saying, "Where is your garden of which you say that those you lose in battle will enter? Can't you send me a man to fight me?" Again, 'Ali asked the Prophet's permission and again the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) told him to sit down. 'Amr called out for the third time and 'Ali asked the Prophet's permission to fight him, even if he was 'Amr, and the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) let him go. 'Amr asked who he was, and 'Ali b. Abi Talib told him his name.

He said, "Let it be one of your uncles who is older than you, my nephew, for I don't want to shed your blood." 'Ali answered, "But I want to shed your blood." He became angry and drew his sword that flashed like fire and advanced in his anger. 'Ali said to him, "How can I fight you when you are on horse? Dismount and be on a level with me." Therefore, he got off his horse and came at him and 'Ali advanced with shield. 'Amr aimed a blow, which cut deeply into the shield so that the sword stuck in it. Nevertheless, 'Ali gave him a blow on the vein at the base of the neck and he fell down to the ground. The dust rose and the Messenger of God heard the cry of '*Allahu Akbar*' and knew that 'Ali had killed

him.

As he came towards the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) smiling with joy, 'Umar asked him if he had stripped him of his armor, for it was the best that could be found among the Arabs. He answered, "When I had struck him down he turned his private parts of his body towards me and I felt ashamed to despoil him, moreover, he had said that he did not want to shed my blood because my father was a friend of his."¹⁶ With 'Amr killed, 'Ikrima b. Abi Jahl and the other two men threw away their spears as they run away from 'Amr.

The Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) and his Companions remained in fear and difficulty when the enemy came from every side. Then Nu'aym b. Mas'ud of the Ghatfan clan came to him saying he had become a Muslim though his people did not know of it and asked the Prophet what he could do for them. The Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) said, "You are only one man among us, so go and awake distrust among the enemy to draw them off from us if you can, for war is deceit."

Thereupon Nu'aym went off to Ghatfan and Quraysh and to the Jews and sowed the seed of distrust among them. God broke up their alliance and sent a bitter cold wind against them in the winter nights, which upset their cooking pots and overthrew their tents.

Quraysh faced a great disaster. Their horses and camels were dying. The Jews had broken their words to Quraysh. The violence of the wind left them with neither cooking pots, nor fire, nor tents to count on. Abu Sufyan told Quraysh to be off, for he was going. Then he went to his camel and mounted it. When Ghatfan heard of what Quraysh had done, they broke up and returned to their country. The siege of Medina was over after fifteen days. In the morning, the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) and the Muslims left the trench and returned to Medina laying their arms aside.

In the year of Hudaibiya, A.H. 6, the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) went out on a little pilgrimage in Dhu al-Qa'da with no intention of making war and took with him seventy camels for sacrifice. There were seven hundred men so that each camel was on the behalf of ten men. The Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) went as far as the pass of al-Murar and when his camel knelt and the men said, "The camel won't get up," he said, "It has not refused and such is not its nature, but the one who restrained the elephant from Mecca is keeping it back. Today whatever condition Quraysh is in, if they ask me to show kindness to kindred I will agree to." Then he told the people to dismount. When the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) had rested, Budayl b. Warqa' Khuza'i came to him with some men of Khuza'a and asked him what he had come for.

He told them that he had not come for war but to go on pilgrimage and venerate the sacred precincts, but Quraysh suspected him and spoke roughly to him, saying, "He may not have come wanting war but by Allah he shall never come in here against our will, nor shall the Arabs ever say that we have allowed it."

The Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) summoned 'Uthman and sent him to Abu Sufyan and the chiefs of

Quraysh to tell them that he had not come for war but merely to visit the House of God and to venerate its sanctity. As 'Uthman entered or was about to enter Mecca Aban b. Sa'id b. al-'As met him and carried 'Uthman in front of him. Then he gave 'Uthman his protection until he could convey the Apostle of God's message to them, but Quraysh kept him a prisoner with them.

The Prophet (S.A.W.A.) and the Muslims were informed that 'Uthman had been killed. When the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) heard that he had been killed he said that they would not leave until they fought the enemy, and summoned the men to give their undertaking. The pledge of *al-ridhwan* took place under a tree. The Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) took their pledge unto death, or rather their undertaking that they would not run away. Not one of the Muslims who were present failed to give his hand except al-Jadd b. Qays.

After a long discussion, peace was made and nothing remained but to write an agreement.

'Umar jumped up and went to Abu Bakr saying, "Is he not God's Apostle and are we not Muslims, and are they not polytheists? Then, why should we agree to what is demeaning for our religion?" He replied, "Stick to what he says, for I testify that he is God's Apostle." The Prophet (S.A.W.A.) summoned 'Ali and told him to write the agreement. When the peace was concluded the Messenger of God slaughtered sacrificial animals, sat down and shaved his head and his Companions did so.

In the seventh year of hijra, the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) marched against the Jews in Khaybar. He conquered their fortresses one by one. As he came to Qamus, the strongest castle, where Marhab lived, the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) gave the standard to Abu Bakr. He fought but returned having suffered losses and not taken it. On the morrow he sent 'Umar and the same thing happened. The Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) said, "If Allah wills, tomorrow I will give the standard to a man who is an assailant not a runaway, he loves Allah and His Apostle; and Allah and His Apostle love him. He will not come back until Allah conquers by his means."

Thus, he called for 'Ali who was suffering from sore eye at the time. The Prophet of God applied his saliva in his eye, saying, "Take this standard and go with it until God gives victory through you." 'Ali went off with it until he reached the fortress. Marhab the Jew came out of Khaybar. He was wearing a hamlet in which a stone had made a hole showing the white of his head. He was reciting:

Khaybar knows that I am Marhab

The carriers of arms; a hero who has been tested.

'Ali answered,

I am the one, whose mother calls him a lion,

Like a lion of the forests, fierce in strength,

With my sword, I will make you weigh the weight of an ear torn off.

They exchanged blows. 'Ali came quickly against him and struck him. He cut through the hole in the hamlet and through his head so that his sword reached his teeth. Marhab fell dead. At Marhab's death,

those who had gone out with him withdrew and barred the gate of the fortress to keep Muslims out. 'Ali advanced against it, pulled out the stone gate of the fortress which was four cubits (*dhira'*) long, two cubits wide, and one cubit thick. He used it as a bridge across the trench so that they might go across and conquer the fortress. The Muslims entered the fortress and seized the booty. 17

Mecca was conquered in A. H. 8. The Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) ordered preparations to be made for a raid. Later he informed the men that he was going to Mecca and ordered to take careful preparations. He said, "O God, take eyes and ears from Quraysh so that we may take them by surprise in their land." The men got themselves ready and the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) went on with 10'000 Muslims. Quraysh were completely ignorant of the fact and did not even know what he was doing until the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) camped at Marr al-Zahran.

'Abbas, the Prophet's uncle, said, "Alas, Quraysh, if the Messenger of God enters Mecca by force before the Quraysh come to ask for protection that will be the end of Quraysh for ever." Therefore, he mounted the Apostle of God's white mule and went out until he came upon Abu Sufyan. He told him that the Messenger of God was there with his army, "If he takes you, he will behead you, so ride on the back of this mule so that I can take you to him and ask for you his protection." When the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) saw him he asked, "Isn't it time that you recognize that there is no god but Allah?" He answered, "You are dearer to me than my father and mother. How great your clemency, honor, and kindness is! By God I thought that had there been another god he would have continued to help me."

The Prophet (S.A.W.A.) said, "Woe to you Abu Sufyan; isn't it time that you recognize that I am God's Apostle?" He answered, "As to that I still have some doubt." 'Abbas said to him, "Submit and testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God before you lose your head." Feeling the sharpness of the sword on the back of his neck, Abu Sufyan pronounced the two testimonies (*shahadatayn*). The Prophet (S.A.W.A.) wished to enter the secure sanctuary of Mecca in peace, therefore, he forgave him and said, "He who enters Abu Sufyan's house is safe, and he who locks his door is safe, and he who enters the mosque is safe."

The Prophet (S.A.W.A.) had instructed to his commanders when they entered Mecca only to fight those who resisted them except a small number who were to be killed even if they were found beneath the curtains of Ka'ba. 18 The Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) ordered Sa'd b. 'Ubada to enter Mecca, carrying the standard. He entered Mecca, shouting, "Today is the day of violating and bloodletting." One of the Emigrants heard him and reported it to the Prophet. He ordered 'Ali to go to Sa'd and take the standard away from him, and told him to be the one who enter Mecca with it. 19

On the day of the conquest the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) entered Mecca, circumambulated the House of God seven times on his camel, touching the Black Stone with a stick he had in his hand. Many idols in the Ka'ba were strengthened with lead. He stood by them with the stick in his hand, saying, ﴿**The truth has come and the falsehood has vanished. Indeed falsehood is bound to vanish.**﴾ (Q: 17/ 81). Then he pointed to them with his stick and they collapsed on their backs one after another.

He stood at the door of Ka'ba and said, "There is no god but Allah alone; He has no associate. He has made good His promise and helped His servant. He has put to flight the confederates alone." Then he added, "O Quraysh! What do you think that I am about to do with you?" They replied, "Good. You are a noble brother, son of a noble brother." He said, "Go your way for you are the freed ones." Thus the Meccans were called *tulaqa'*. The Prophet (S.A.W.A.) stayed in Mecca after he had conquered it for fifteen nights, then he returned to Medina.

In A.H. 9, the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) ordered his Companions to get ready and told them that he was heading for the Byzantines (Tabuk). He went forward energetically with preparations and ordered the men to get ready with all speed. He left 'Ali behind to look after his family. The hypocrites spoke evil of 'Ali, saying that he had been left behind because he was a burden to the Apostle and he wanted to get rid of him.

On hearing this, 'Ali seized his weapons and caught up with the Messenger of God when he was halting in al-Jurf, and repeated to him what the hypocrites were saying. The Prophet (S.A.W.A.) replied, "They lie. I left you behind because of what I had left behind, so go back and represent me in my family and yours. Are you not content, 'Ali, to stand to me as Aaron to Moses, except that there will be no prophet after me?" So 'Ali returned to Medina and the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) went on his way. When the Prophet reached Tabuk, Yuhanna b. Ru'ba governor of Ayla, came and made a treaty with him, and paid him the poll tax. The people of Jarba' and Adhruh came and paid the poll tax. The Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) stayed in Tabuk some ten nights, then, he returned to Medina.²⁰

In the same year, he sent Abu Bakr in command of the pilgrimage to enable Muslims to perform their *haji*. As he had left, the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) summoned 'Ali and ordered him to proclaim the first section of "the Renunciation Chapter" (*Sura al-Bara'a*) to the people on the Day of Sacrifice, when they assemble at Mina. No unbeliever shall enter Paradise and no polytheist shall make pilgrimage after this year, and no naked person shall circumambulate the House [of God]. He who has an agreement with the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) has it for his appointed time.

'Ali went forth on the Apostle of God's camel, *al-'Adhba'*, and overtook Abu Bakr at Dhu al-Hulayfa. When he saw him, Abu Bakr asked whether he was commander or commanded. He said that Abu Bakr was the commanded one. He took "the Renunciation Chapter" from Abu Bakr, and gave him the choice of continuing to ride with him or returning to the Prophet. 'Ali, on the Day of Sacrifice, arose and proclaimed what the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) had ordered him. While Abu Bakr returned and asked the Prophet, "What has come down concerning me?" He answered, "Gabriel came down and said the act of renunciation should not be transmitted from you except by you or a man of your own."²¹

When Islam had spread after the conquest of Mecca and the raids that followed it, delegations began to visit the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.). Among those who came in a delegation to visit him were the Christians of Najran including Abu Haritha the bishop of Najran with thirty of the Christians, who did not

accept the Islamic doctrine about Jesus Christ. They discussed about their beliefs in Jesus and the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) answered them. Nevertheless, they did not agree with him.

God revealed these verses, ﴿**Should anyone argue with you about them, After the knowledge that has come to you, say come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, our souls and your souls, then let us pray earnestly, and call down Allah's curse upon the liars.**﴾ (Q: 3/61).

The Prophet (S.A.W.A.) recited it to the Christians and challenged them to a mutual imprecation (*mubahala*). On the next morning, the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) came with 'Ali, al-Hasan, al-Husayn and Fatima.²² When the bishop saw the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) with those who were with him, he asked about them. They told him, “That is his cousin 'Ali. Those children are al-Hasan and al-Husayn, the sons of his daughter by 'Ali and that is Fatima, the dearest of people to him”. The Christians excused themselves from *mubahala* and agreed to pay the poll tax.

In the tenth year of hijra, the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) prepared to make the pilgrimage. He had already sent 'Ali to Najran and he met him in Mecca when the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) was in pilgrim garb (*ihram*). Then he went to him and reported the result of his journey. The Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) told him to go and circumambulate the House of God and remove the pilgrim garb as the others had done.

He replied, “I said when I put on the pilgrim garb, O God, I will invoke thy name over a sacrificial animal as your Prophet and your slave and your Apostle Muhammad does.” The Prophet (S.A.W.A.) gave him a share of his sacrificial animals, so he retained the pilgrim garb with the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) until both of them had completed the pilgrimage and the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) slaughtered the sacrificial animals on behalf of them both. When 'Ali came from the Yemen to meet the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) in Mecca, he hurried to meet him; and he had left in charge of his army one of his companions who had covered every man in the force with clothes from the linen 'Ali had left.

When the army approached, he went to meet them and found them dressed in the clothes before they came to the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.). He told him to take off the clothes before they came to the Prophet (S.A.W.A.); they did so and put them back to the spoil. When the men complained of 'Ali, the Messenger of God arose to address them and he said, “Do not blame 'Ali for he is too scrupulous in the things of God, or in the way of God, to be blamed.” Then the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) continued the pilgrimage, showed the men the rites and taught them the customs of their *hajj*. It was the farewell pilgrimage.

The Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) had already known through divine revelation that 'Ali was to become his successor or the leader of the Muslim community, but he was waiting for the moment when there should be no more apposition to 'Ali among the Muslims. On his return from the farewell pilgrimage at Ghadir Khumm,²³ on Dhu al-Hijja 18, 10 A.H. (March 20, 632), he received the revelation, ﴿**O Apostle!**

Communicate that which has been sent down to you from your Lord, and if you do not, you will not have communicated His message, and Allah shall protect you from the people. Indeed Allah does not guide the faithless lot. ﴿Q: 5/67).

He stopped at Ghadir Khumm to communicate the revelation to the pilgrims who accompanied him before they dispersed, and as it was very hot, they constructed him a dais shaded with branches. Taking 'Ali by the hand, he asked his faithful followers whether he, (Muhammad), was not closer (*awla*) to the believers than they were to themselves. The crowd cried out, "It is so, O Apostle of God." He then declared the famous sentence, "He of whom I am the master (*mawla*) this man, 'Ali, is also the master (*man kuntu mawlahu fa hadha, 'Aliun mawlahu*)".

He continued, "O God, be the friend of him who is his friend, and be the enemy of him who is his enemy; support whom he supports him and desert whom he deserts him. (*Allahumma wali man walahu wa 'adi man 'adahu wa 'nsur man nsarahu wa 'khdhul man khadhalahu*). Then Gabriel came down and revealed this verse, **Today I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed My blessing upon you, and I have approved Islam as your religion.** ﴿Q: 5/3).

After the communal prayer, he went into his tent and, on his order, 'Ali received in his tent, the congratulations of the Muslim men and women who greeted him with the title of the Commander of the Faithful (*Amir al-Mu'minin*), among them was 'Umar b. al-Khattab.²⁴

He also said, "People, I am a way mark for you. You will come to me at the heavenly waters (*hawdh*). Then indeed I will ask you about two important things (*thaqalayn*) which I have left behind. Take care how you follow me with regard to them, for God has informed me that they will never separate until they meet me. Indeed, I have left among you the Book of God and the offspring of my family (*ahl al-bayt*). Do not try to outdo them, for then you will be destroyed."²⁵

Then the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) returned to Medina and stopped there for Dhu al-Hijja, Muharram and Safar. He ordered to make an expedition to Syria [Palestine] and put over them Usama b. Zayd b. Haritha. He ordered him to lead the cavalry into the territory of the Bulqa' and al-Darum in the land of Palestine. The men got ready and all of the first Emigrants, including 'Umar and Abu Bakr went with him.

When the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) found the people tardy in joining the expedition of Usama, while he was suffering, so he went out with his head bound up until he sat in the pulpit. Addressing the people, who had criticized the leadership of Usama said, "He has put a young man in command of the best of the Emigrants and the Helpers." After praising God as is His due he said, "O men, dispatch Usama's force, for though you criticize his leadership as you criticized the leadership of his father before him, he is as worthy of the command as his father was. Then he said, "May curse upon whom who disobeys the force of Usama."²⁶

While matters were thus, the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) began to suffer from the illness by which

God took him to what honor the Almighty intended for him shortly before the end of Safar. It began when he went to Baqi' al-Gharqad in the middle of the night and prayed for the dead. Then he returned to his family and in the morning, his suffering began. The illness remained with him for several days and grew more serious. Before the dawn prayer, Bilal came when the Messenger of God was overcome by sickness. He asked, "Do I call for the prayer?" The Prophet (S.A.W.A.) gave him permission to make his call, and said, "Let one of the people pray before them, for I am too distracted by the final hours of my life.

"Order Abu Bakr", said 'A'isha.

"Order 'Umar", intervened in Hafsa

When the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) heard their words and the eagerness of each of them to exalt her own father and their discord about that, he said, "Have you put the shroud on the Messenger of God while he is still alive? Indeed you are like the consorts of Joseph." Then he rose hurriedly fearing that one of the two men would go forward to lead the communal prayers. He had ordered them to go with Usama and he had no idea that they would be disobedient. He arose despite the fact that he could barely lift himself off the ground through weakness. 'Ali took his hand and al-Fadhil b. 'Abbas took the other. He leaned on them both and his feet dragged a trail along the ground because of his weakness.

When the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.) came out into the mosque, he found Abu Bakr had already got to the *mihrab*. He indicated with his hand that he should withdraw and Abu Bakr withdrew. The Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) took his place. He said the *takbir* and began the prayer, which Abu Bakr had begun before without taking any account of what he had already performed.²⁷

After he had said the final greeting of the prayer, he returned home and summoned Abu Bakr, 'Umar and a group of the Muslims who had been present at the mosque. He asked them whether he had not ordered them to go with the army of Usama. They answered they had not gone because they did not want to ask the travelers about him.

"Dispatch the army of Usama, dispatch the army of Usama," commanded the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.). He repeated it three times and then he fainted. He remained unconscious for a short time while all people around him were weeping. The Prophet (S.A.W.A.) recovered consciousness and looked at them. Then he said, "Bring me ink and parchment (*qirtas*) to write for you a letter, after which you will never go astray. 'Umar said, "The Messenger of God is overcome by pain. You have the Holy Qur'an; the Book of God is enough for us." The people present started to quarrel, so demanding that the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) should be given chance to write, others sided with 'Umar. As their noise faded, the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) told them to leave him.²⁸ Then the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) passed away while his head was on 'Ali's chest.²⁹

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1. A member of the Yemeni tribes came to Mecca and sold his goods to a member of the Qurayshi tribes. The latter, however, failed to pay for the goods. The public protest of the wronged merchant gave such concern that four (or five) clans gathered in the house of 'Abd Allah b. Jud'an and made a convention in the following terms, "If anyone is wronged in Mecca, we will all take his part against the wrongdoer until he recovers what is owed to him from the one who has wronged him, whether he is noble or humble, one of us or not." Quraysh called it the confederacy of the fudhul or 'hilf al-fudhul.' The Messenger of God said, "I witnessed in the house of 'Abd Allah b. Jud'an, a convention which I would not exchange for any number of fine camels. If I were invited to take part in it during Islam, I should do so." See Ibn Sa'd (d.230/845), *al-Tabaqat al-kubra*, ed. Muhammad 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata, Beirut, 1418/1997, 1: 103.
 2. All the Qur'anic verse translations are based on *The Qur'an with an English Paraphrase*, translated by Sayyid 'Ali Quli Qara'i, Qumm, 2003, but rarely depart from it.
 3. The Twelve Chiefs (Nuqaba' ithna 'ashar) were: Usayd b. al-Hudhayr, Abu al-Haytham b. al-Tayyahan, Sa'd b. Khaythama, As'ad b. Zurara, Sa'd b. al-Rabi', 'Abd Allah b. Rawaha, Sa'd b. 'Ubada, al-Mundhir b. 'Amr, al-Bara' b. Ma'rur, 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr, 'Ubada b. al-Samit and Rafi' b. Malik. See Ibn Sa'd, 3: 452-466.
 4. See Tha'labi (d. 427/1035), *al-Kashf wa al-bayan*, ed. Nazir al-Sa'idi, Beirut, 1422/2002, 5: 46; Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i, (d. 1402/1981), *al-Mizan fi tafsir al-Qur'an*, Beirut, 1391, 9: 211; Martin Lings, *Muhammad, his life based on the earliest sources*, 2nd imp., London, 1986, 116-119.
 5. Waqidi (d. 207/823), *al-Maghazi*, ed. M. Jones, London, 1966, 1: 152.
 6. *Ibid*, 147-152.
 7. *Ibid*, 154.
 8. The one who killed all of them was 'Ali b. Abi Talib.
 9. Tabari (d. 310/923), *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa al-muluk*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, et al. Leiden, 1882-1885, reprint in Tehran, Intisharat Jahan; 3: 1402; Ibn Athir (d. 630/1233), *al-Kamil fi al-ta'rikh*, ed. C.J. Tornberg, Leiden, 1864, 2: 154.
 10. Waqidi, 1: 323.
 11. Ya'qubi (d. 284/897), *Ta'rikh*, Beirut, n. d., 2: 47.
 12. Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, 3: 1411 f.
 13. Waqidi, 1: 279.
 14. Ya'qubi, 2: 48.
 15. Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, 3: 1465; Ibn Athir, 2: 178-9.
 16. Guillaume, 456.
 17. See Ya'qubi, 2: 56 f; Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, 3: 1581; Ibn Athir, 2: 219 f; Ibn Kathir (d. 774/1373), *al-Bidaya wa al-nihaya*, Cairo, 1351-8, 7: 237.
 18. Among them was 'Abd Allah b. Sa'd b. Abi Sarh. The reason he ordered him to be killed was that he had been a Muslim and used to write down revelation; then he apostatized and returned to Quraysh. On the day of the conquest, he fled to 'Uthman b. 'Affan, his foster-brother. The latter hid him until he brought him to the Apostle (S.A.W.A.) after the situation in Mecca was tranquil, and asked that he might be granted immunity. The Apostle of God (S.A.W.A.) remained silent for a long time until finally he said yes. After leaving 'Uthman, he said to his Companions who were sitting around him, "I kept silent so one of you might get up and strike off his head!" One of the Helpers said, "Then why didn't you give me a sign, O Apostle of God?" He answered that a prophet does not kill by pointing. See Ibn Sa'd, 7: 344.
 19. Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, 3: 1636; Ibn Athir, 2: 246.
 20. Ibn Hisham, 4: 190.
 21. See also Ya'qubi, 2: 76.
 22. Ibn Shabba (d. 262/875), *Ta'rikh al-Madina al-munawwara*, ed. Fahim Muhammad Shaltut, Makka al-mkarrama, 1402, 2: 583; Ya'qubi, 2: 82; al-Hakim al-Naysaburi (d. 405/1014), *al-Mustadrak 'ala al-sahihayn*, ed. Yusuf Abd al-Rahman al-Mar'ashli, Dar al-ma'rifa, Beirut, 1406, 3: 163; al-Haskani (d. 490/1097), *Shawahid al-tanzil*, ed. Muhammad Baqir Mahmudi, Tehran, 1411, 1: 154-159.
 23. A pool (or a marsh) situated in an area called Khumm, between Mecca and Medina, about three miles from al-Juhfa. As the place was frequently watered by rain, there were bushes and thorn trees, which provided large shady areas around the pool and the mosque, built in honor of the Prophet between the pond and the spring. See Yaqut (d. 626/1229), *Mu'jam*

al-Buldan, ed. F. Wüstenfeld, Leipzig, 1866–1870, 2: 471.

24. Ya'qubi, 2: 112; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya 7: 349; L. Veccia Vaglieri, "Ghadir Khumm", in Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd edition. Most of the sources, which form the basis of our knowledge about the life of the Prophet (Ibn Hisham, al-Tabari, Ibn Sa'd etc.), pass in silence over the Prophet's stop at Ghadir Khumm, or if they mention it, say nothing of his discourse, evidently fearing to attract the hostility of the Sunnites, who were in power, by providing material for the polemic of the Shi'ites who used these words to support their thesis of 'Ali's right to the caliphate. It is certain that the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) did speak in this place and utter the famous sentence (man kuntu mawlah ...) for the account of this event has been preserved, either in a concise form or in a detail, not only by Ya'qubi, but also in the collections of traditions which are concerned as canonical, especially in the Musnad of Ibn Hanbal; and the hadiths are so numerous and so well attested by different isnads that it does not seem possible to reject them. 'Allama Amini has collected this tradition on the same subject and different wordings with their isnads from 110 of the Prophet's Companions, 84 of the Successors (tabi'in), 360 of the scholars ('Ulama') and so forth in his valuable book al-Ghadir. See 'Abd al-Husayn Amini (d. 1390/1970), al-Ghadir fi al-kitab wa al-sunna wa al-adab, Qumm, n.d.

25. Ya'qubi, 2: 112; al-Shaykh al-Mufid (d. 413/1022), Kitab al-irshad, trans. by I. K. A. Howard, Qumm, n.d. 127.

26. A. Shahrastani (d. 548/1153), al-Milal wa al-nihal, ed. Muhammad Sayyid Kaylani, Beirut, 1381/1961, 1: 22.

27. al-Shaykh al-Mufid (d. 413/1022), Kitab al-irshad, 129–130.

28. 'Abd al-Razzaq b. Hammam San'ani (d. 211/827), al-Musannaf, ed. Iman Nasir al-Din al-Azhari, Dar al-kutub al-'ilmiyya, Beirut, 1421, 5: 438–9; Bukhari (d. 256/870), Sahih, Dar Ihya' al-turath al-'Arabi, Beirut, n.d., 17; Ibn Sa'd, 2: 187.

29. See Nahj al-balagha, ed. al-Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh, Egypt, n.d., 1: 432; Ibn Sa'd, 2: 202

The Succession to the Prophet of God

The Prophet's death was unbelievable for some Muslims. A man arose in the name of Allah; he united the scattered and disunited Arabia, which had never experienced tranquility since then. He made a government based on faith. He abolished the civil war among the tribes of Arabia and succeeded peace for it. How would such a great man die? 'Umar got up among the Muslims assembled at the gate of the mosque and said, "Some of the hypocrites claim that the Apostle is dead, but by God he is not dead. He has gone to his Lord as Moses the son of 'Imran went before, and was hidden from his people for forty days, returning to them after it was said that he had died. But by God the Apostle will return as Moses returned and will cut off the hands and feet of the men who claim that the Apostle is dead."¹

Nevertheless, the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) had departed to the dominion of his Lord, and he was not among his people any more. He was the "Seal of the Prophets" or the "Last of the Prophets" and there was no prophet after him. Who was the leader of the community after him?

The Sunnites believe that,

"Caliphate is offspring of the society and all of the four rightly-guided caliphs came to power by people's votes. Islam has entrusted the election of the caliphs and the control of the community to a

council of the learned and devoted Muslims, thus the Messenger of God did not explicitly appoint his successor. Had he designated one, people would have put in doubt about him, or they might not have accepted him so they would have apostatized. God wanted to prevent people from apostasy; therefore, He did not appoint one (though some became apostatized).

The successor would be the same as a prophet who is raised up by God; however, Muhammad (S.A.W.A.) was the 'Last of the Prophets'. Had he designated a successor, he would have deprived people of their own rights and it would have led to the reign of tyrants and God would have been responsible for it.”²

When Abu Lu'lu'a Fayruz assassinated 'Umar b. al-Khattab and Hafsa heard her father thinking of putting no one as the caliph after his death, she told him, “If you had a shepherd looking after your sheep and if he had left his duty, you would have regarded him as a waster, so consider people becoming worst.”³ While some sheep cannot be left without a shepherd, how could the Messenger of God leave his community without a leader?

We believe that 'Ali b. Abi Talib was the only man among the Prophet's Companions who neither worshipped any idols nor committed any sins in his life during the paganism and Islam. He was the first man who believed in the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) and prayed with him.⁴ From his early childhood, he was continuously with the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) and would follow him “like a young camel following in the footprints of its mother”.⁵

He was the most meritorious, the most pious, the most learned, the noblest, the bravest, and the nearest man and kinsfolk to the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) among his Companions. The Messenger of God took him as his brother and God identified him as the soul of the Prophet.⁶

He was one of the Household of the Prophet (*ahl al-bayt*) whom God purified with a thorough purification, **﴿Indeed Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification.﴾** (Q: 33/33).⁷

Thus, the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) appointed him as his successor and his executor. He proclaimed it explicitly and implicitly in many cases, therefore we believe him as the immediate successor to the Prophet.

God raised the prophets to preach the word of Allah and guide people to the straight path; to establish a government was subordinate. Muhammad (S.A.W.A.) was the Messenger of God whether he was under the pressure and torture of Quraysh in Mecca, or he was the religious and political leader of his community in Medina. Jesus who was wandering in plains and mountains and did not have a permanent residence was a prophet, as Solomon who ruled a vast and unique kingdom was. 'Ali b. Abi Talib was the immediate successor to the Prophet (S.A.W.A.), whether he was in power, or deprived of it.

This is the dispute between the Shi'ite and the Sunnite. Now we need an arbiter to make judgment

between us, an arbiter whom both of us accept and believe in. Moreover, who is better than God and His apostle? God says, ﴿**O You who have faith! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle and those vested with authority among you. In addition, if you dispute concerning anything refer it to Allah and the Apostle, if you have faith in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more favorable in outcome.**﴾ (Q: 4/59).

So, let us consider what God and his Apostle say about the past prophets' successors in general and about Muhammad's successor in particular.⁸

The Holy Qur'an places great emphasis on the duty of all Muslims to maintain the bonds of blood relationship. ﴿**Indeed Allah enjoins justice and kindness, and generosity towards relatives, and He forbids indecency, wrong and aggression. He advises you, so that you may take admonition.**﴾ (Q: 16/90).

It contains specific instructions about the maintenance of kinship ties and inheritance as well as stories and statements about the succession of the past prophets and their families, matters, which cannot be relevant to the succession to the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.)

In the story of the past prophets, as it is related in the Holy Qur'an, their families play a prominent role. The families provide vital assistance to the prophets against the adversaries among their people. After the death of the prophets, their descendants became their spiritual and material heirs. The prophets ask God to grant them the help of members of their family and they pray divine favor for their kin and their offspring.

The prophets of Banu Isra'il were in fact all descendents of a single family from Adam and Noah down to Jesus. ﴿**Indeed Allah chose Adam and Noah, and the progeny of Abraham and the progeny of 'Imran above all the nations; some of them are the descendents of the others, and Allah is All-hearing, All-knowing.**﴾ (Q: 3/33-4).

After narrating the story of Moses, Isma'il and Idris, the Holy Qur'an adds, ﴿**They are the ones whom Allah has blessed. From among the prophets of Adam's progeny, and from [the progeny of] those We carried with Noah, And from among the progeny of Abraham and Israel, and from among those We guided and chose.**﴾ (Q: 19/58).

The chain of the prophets and their families is described with more detail in the following verses. ﴿**And We gave him Isaac and Jacob and guided each of them. And Noah We had guided before, and from his offspring, David and Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses and Aaron -thus do We reward the virtuous- and Zechariah, John, Jesus, and Ilyas, -each of them among the righteous- and Ishmael, Elisha, Jonah and Lot -each We graced over all the nations- and from among their fathers, their descendants and brethren. We chose them and guided them to the right path. That is Allah's guidance: with it, He guides whomever He wishes of His servants. Nevertheless, were they to ascribe any partners [to Allah], what they used to do would not avail them. They are the**﴾

ones whom We gave the Book, the judgment and prophet-hood. So if these disbelieve in them, We will have certainly entrusted them to a people who will never disbelieve in them. ﴿Q: 6/4–89).

Abraham was the patriarch of the prophets of Banu Isra'īl. All later prophets and transmitters of the scripture among them were of his descendants, ﴿**Certainly We sent Noah and Abraham and We ordained among their descendents, Prophet-hood and the Book.**﴾ (Q: 57/26).

In the face of the opposition of Banu Isra'īl, Moses implored his Lord to grant him the help of his brother Aaron, ﴿**Appoint for me a minister from my family, Aaron my brother. Strengthen my back through him, make him my associate in my affair, so that we may glorify You greatly, and remember You greatly.**﴾ (Q: 20/29–34). God responded to his prayer, ﴿**Certainly, We gave Moses the Book and We made Aaron, his brother, accompany him as a minister.**﴾ (Q: 25/35).

When the angels announced to Abraham the imminent birth of his son Isaac and, after him his grandson Jacob, his wife Sarah doubted the good news in view of their advanced age. However, the angels reminded her of her elevated rank as the spouse of Abraham. ﴿**His wife, standing by, laughed as We gave her the good news [the birth] of Isaac, and Jacob after Isaac. She said, 'O, my! Shall I an old woman, bear [children], and [while] the husband of mine is an old man? That is indeed an odd thing!' They said 'Are you amazed at Allah's dispensation? [That is] Allah's mercy and His blessing upon you, Members of the household.'**﴾ (Q: 11/71–73).

Muhammad (S.A.W.A.) was not different from his precedent prophets, ﴿**A precedent of those We have sent from among Our Apostles before you, and you will not find any change in Our precedent.**﴾ (Q: 17/77).

Insofar as the Holy Qur'an expresses the thoughts of the Prophet (S.A.W.A.), it is evident that he could not have considered Abu Bakr his natural successor or have been pleased by his succession. Yet he could not have seen his succession essentially other than in the light of the narrations of the Holy Qur'an about the succession of the earlier prophets, just as he saw his own mission as a prophet, the resistance of his people with which he met, and former prophets as related in the Holy Qur'an.

These earlier prophets considered a supreme divine favor to be succeeded by their offspring, or close kin for which they implored their Lord. The eminent position of the families and the descendents of the past prophets and the parallelism often observed between the history of the former prophets in the Holy Qur'an and that of Muhammad (S.A.W.A.) should arise from expectations of a distinguished place reserved for his family. The kin of the Messenger of God are mentioned in various contexts, sometimes probably in a wider sense than that of his family.

This order is addressed to the Prophet in Warning Verse (*aya indhar*),⁹ and in the following verse, ﴿**Say I do not ask of you any reward for it, except the affection for [my] relatives.**﴾ (Q: 42/23). There is also the verse of the 'mutual imprecation' (*mubahala*) (Q: 3/61). The Prophet (S.A.W.A.) came with 'Ali,

al-Hasan, al-Husayn and Fatima to discuss a delegation of Christians from Najran. In this verse, God identifies 'Ali as the soul of the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.). Moreover, He refers to 'Ali, as the successor to the Prophet, in the Guardian Verse (*aya wilayat*) as follow, **﴿Your guardian is only Allah, His Apostle, and the faithful who maintain the prayer, and give the zakat while bowing down.﴾** (Q: 5/55). 10

The Prophet (S.A.W.A.) usually appointed commanders and ordered them to raid to the polytheist tribes or he sent representatives to the kings and invited them to Islam, but he never sent Abu Bakr for a delegation. He only once entrusted him with the “Renunciation Chapter” to proclaim it to the people in Mecca, while God sent down the Gabriel and ordered the Prophet that he or a man of his own should proclaim it.¹¹

These are the reasons why we believe 'Ali b. Abi Talib is the immediate successor to the Prophet (S.A.W.A.), however, our brother disapproves them.

1. Ibn Hisham, 4, 305; Tabari, Ta'rikh, 4, 1815 f.

2. Salimi, 5–6.

3. Muslim b. Hajjaj (d. 261/875), Sahih, kitab al-imara, bab al-istikhlaf wa tarkuhu, ed. S. 'A. M. Al al-Shaykh, Riyadh, 1419, no 12[4714].

4. See Ibn Hisham, 1: 262; Tabari, Ta'rikh, 3: 1160; Ibn Athir, 2: 57.

5. See Nahj al-balagha, 1: 417.

6. See aya mubahala. (Q: 3/61).

7. See al-Haskani, 2: 18–140 for the isnads the 'People of Household' (ahl al-bayt) referring to Muhammad, 'Ali, Fatima, al-Hasan and al-Husayn; moreover, the pronoun referring to them is the masculine plural (kum), while in the preceding part of the verse the pronoun is the feminine plural (kunna). This change of gender in the last part of the verse from kunna to kum is evidently referring to the five People of the Mantle (ahl al-kisa)': Muhammad, 'Ali, Fatima, al-Hasan and al-Husayn.

8. For writing this part, I owe in large measure to Professor Wilferd Madelung's invaluable work, The succession to Muhammad, A study of the early Caliphate, Cambridge, 1997.

9. See, Q 26: 214–216.

10. For this verse concerning 'Ali, see e.g. Muqatil b. Sulayman (d. 150/767), Tafsir, ed. 'A. M. Shihata, Beirut, 1424, 1: 486; Baladhuri (d. 279/822), (Kitab jumal min) Ansab al-ashraf, ed. S. Zakkar, and R. Zirikli, Beirut, 1417/1996, 2: 381; Tabari (d. 310/923), Tafsir Tabari: Jami' al-bayan 'an ta'wil ay al-Qur'an, Beirut, 1420/1999, 4: 628–9.; Jassas (d. 370/981), Ahkam al-Qur'an, ed. 'Abd al-Salam Muhammad 'Ali Shahin, Beirut, 1415/1994, 2: 557; Suyuti (d. 911/1505), al-Durr al-manthur fi al-tafsir bi al-ma'thur, ed. Muhammad Amin Damaj & Co., Beirut, n.d. 3: 99.

11. See Ibn Hisham, 4: 190; Ya'qubi, 2: 76

Concord and Discord

Originally, we, Shi'ite and Sunnite Muslims, are both from the tribe of Islam and we have many things in common. Our beliefs originate from the Holy Qur'an and the Apostle of God's traditions and customs narrated by his purified household and his trusted Companions, however, we have some divergence of views about interpreting a few verses of the Holy Qur'an and understanding the meaning of some traditions and customs of the Prophet (S.A.W.A). In spite of this divergence, we should not dispute and lose our power; rather we could listen to each other's word and follow what is the best of it.

The author of the above-mentioned book, *Khilafat va intikhab* (Caliphate and Election), rejects some of Shi'ite views, which we will quote, and then we will answer his objections. He writes:

“The ink and parchment (*qirtas*) tradition which is related in Bukhari's *Sahih* is baseless. Although this ludicrous story is found in many collections of traditions, it seems unreliable and untrue. Some religious sects and nations, which rose up secretly in later times; fabricated it and some naïve and thoughtless Muslims included it in their books. In many occasions the Messenger of God said, “The Book of God and my practice are enough for your guidance and bliss.” Why did he [the Prophet] want to write something contradictory to his previous sayings? **“Heaven be praised, a monstrous calumny!”** The Messenger of God is immune and immaculate from inconsistency.”¹

We say, Many Sunnite and Shi'ite scholars have narrated this tradition in their canonical and historical books: including San'ani in *al-Musannaf*, Bukhari in *Sahih*, Ibn Sa'd in *Tabaqat al-kubra*, al-Mufid in *Kitab al-irshad* and so forth. It is so well attested by different *isnads* that it does not seem possible to reject it; however, our brother devoted seven pages refuting it. He says, “Some of the naïve and thoughtless Muslims included this fabricated tradition in their books.”²

Moreover, he considers that the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) wished to write a will contrary to his previous sayings and customs, God says, **﴿Nor does he speak out of [his own] desire: It is just a revelation that is revealed [to him].﴾** (Q: 53/3–4). In the last hours of his life, the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) wanted to write a document for his people, after which they would never go astray. It is the natural right of every one to make a testament. If he wanted to repeat his former sayings, it was based on God's order, **﴿And admonish, for admonition indeed benefits the faithful.﴾** (Q: 51/55). **﴿So admonish, for admonition is indeed beneficial.﴾** (Q: 87/9).

Concerning the Guardian Verse (*aya wilayat*), he writes, “according to Shi'ite belief, while 'Ali was bowing down in his prayer, a beggar came to the mosque and asked for help. 'Ali gave him his ring for charity; and this verse came down concerning him. They believe that the term 'guardian' (*wali*) in this verse refers to 'leadership' which is exclusive to God, the Messenger of God and the faithful, and the concept of 'while bowing down' is 'Ali, since he gave alms while he was bowing down. Our exegetists and

traditionists have not preserved it. From our (the Sunnite) point of view it is not the case.³

It concerns all the Immigrants and the Helpers, since the pronoun is in the plural form (*alladhina*), figuratively speaking, although we can sometimes use it for singular nouns, there is no reason here to ignore its real meaning. The phrase 'while bowing down' does not have a real and practical meaning, since alms giving during saying one's prayers renders it invalid; its real meaning is ﴿those who are humble﴾.⁴

We say many Sunnite and Shi'ite exegetes and traditionists including, Muqatil b. Sulayman, Baladhuri, Jassas, Tha'alibi,⁵ Suyuti,⁶ as well as all Shi'ite ones have narrated this verse as concerned with 'Ali. Had he consulted the exegetical and traditional literature he would not have said, "Our exegetes and traditionists have not preserved it." The plural pronouns are used for singular nouns on other occasions in the Holy Qur'an.

During the Battle of Dhat al-Riqa', a man of Banu Muharib called Ghaurath (or 'Amr b. Jihash of Banu Nadhir) went to the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) as he was sitting with his sword in his lap, and asked to be allowed to look at it. The Prophet (S.A.W.A.) gave it to Ghaurath (or 'Amr) and he began to brandish it intending to strike him, but God frustrated him. He said, "Aren't you afraid, Muhammad?" "No, why should I be?" "Aren't you afraid of me when I have a sword in my hand?" "No, God will protect me from you. Then he returned the Apostle's sword to him. God sent down, ﴿**O you have faith! Remember Allah's blessing upon you. When a people (qawmun) set out to extend their hands against you, but He withheld their hands from you.**﴾ (Q: 5/11).⁷

In this verse, God uses 'a people' (*qawmun*) for a singular noun, Ghaurath or 'Amr b. Jihash. In another verse, ﴿**Indeed Abraham was a nation (ummatan) obedient to Allah.**﴾ (Q: 16/120). He uses 'a nation' (*umma*) for a singular noun, Abraham. He also, uses a plural pronoun for a singular noun in *aya mubahala* (Q: 3/61), when He speaks of 'our' women; Fatima was the only woman present at *mubahala*.

He writes, "Giving alms during saying one's prayer renders it void and null."

God is Gracious! He knows the Islamic laws and gives decrees what is right and what is wrong but God and His Apostle do not know it!

He says, "leadership (*wilayat*) is not derived from guardian (*wali*), concerning this verse, ﴿**O you who have faith! Do not take those who take your religion in derision and play, from among those who were given the Book before you, and the infidels, as friends (awliya).**﴾ (Q: 5/57)." It means friend, companion, spouse and boss. Here it is impossible that 'guardian' would mean 'leader'; for no believer thinks of making the Jews or Christians 'caliph', but it is probable to make them friends.⁸

Regarding the meaning of the word *wali*, a term may have different meanings in different occasions. For avoiding such a mistake, God has used the exclusive word '**only**' in this verse (Q: 5/55). He says, your guardian is **only** Allah, His Apostle and ..." If it meant companion, friend, spouse and boss, the use of

the word 'only' would be unnecessary. We may have many friends and companions other than Allah and His Apostle.

In the next verse (Q: 5/57), *awliya* means friends, but they are two different verses with different concepts, however, if we accepted it as 'leader' or 'emir' we would not go beyond the expectations. God orders, ﴿**O you who have faith, obey Allah and obey the Apostle, and those who vested with authority among you, and if you dispute concerning anything, refer it to Allah and the Apostle, if you have faith in Allah and the Last Day.**﴾ (Q: 4/59).

﴿**And obey Allah and His Apostle, and do not dispute, or, you will lose heart and your power will be gone.**﴾ (Q: 8/46). Unfortunately, we ignored God's ordinance and began to fight each other. Due to weakness of Muslims, the Europeans could defeat them in Andalusia and uproot Islam in the Iberian Peninsula in Europe. The Jews occupied Palestine and now they govern the Farther Mosque (*Masjid al-Aqsa*) the first Muslim Qibla. They imprison, torture and kill our Muslim brethren and we remain silent. The American Christians have occupied Afghanistan and Iraq, and they rule over the Muslim people in those countries.

He adds, "All the nouns in this verse Q: 5/57 are in the plural form, while 'Ali b. Abi Talib is only one man; it is unreasonable to say a group of people are our enemy and 'Ali alone is our supporter.'"9

Verses Q: 5/55 & 57 are two different ones with two different meanings. Even so, as we said before, we can use plural pronouns for singular nouns.

He continues, "Well, giving alms 'while bowing down' is a story, but how could one say their prayers 'while bowing down'?"10

We think it is a misprint, perhaps he means how one give alms while bowing down.

Again, he says, "Supposing that he gave *zakat*, but he was not a wealthy man and he did not have the definite kinds of properties which *zakat* is levied on. He did not keep more than one meal at home, much less for gold and silver which *zakat* is levied on."11

'Ali b. Abi Talib was a Muslim and the bravest warrior in Islam. His share in spoils of war and public treasury was not less than the one of other Muslims. Moreover, he possessed the fertile estate of Fadak up to the caliphate of Abu Bakr.12 He possessed plant grooves, which he dedicated to his offspring.13 He had also dug several springs from under the ground and brought under cultivation many barren and uncultivated lands. Thereafter he gave up rights over them and dedicated them as trust for the Muslims. When he left the perishing world, he owned nothing. He could earn his living well, but he preferred others to himself. He gave food, for the love of Allah to the needy, the orphan and the prisoner.

The term *zakat* does not mean necessarily a tax, which is levied on definite kinds of property, and it is distributed to eight categories of persons. The giving away of the worldly possessions was regarded as a particularly pious act (see Q 13: 22). The term *zakat* also means virtue in general as well as, with an almost means of perceptible translation of meaning (see Q: 86/14) and pious gift (see Q: 7/75). The

same word, that denotes righteousness and virtue, can therefore also use for benevolence and charitable gifts. 14 Moreover, Qurtubi says, “This verse indicates that, we can use *zakat* for recommended charity, since 'Ali gave his ring while bowing down.” 15

He says, “It is obligatory to give alms to Muslims not to unbelievers. How could the beggar know that he should take the ring? 'Ali could not speak in his prayers.” 16

This verse says nothing about the beggar's creed. Whence does the writer judge that he was an unbeliever? Although 'Ali did not speak to him, the beggar knew (perhaps by sign) that he gifted him the ring and he took it.

He believes that “by accepting this story, it would mean that giving *zakat* is obligatory or at least recommended while bowing down, because God has praised it, however as we know there is not such an obligation in our law.” 17

Only religious jurists (*mujtahids*) can give decrees about religious acts. We cannot judge from the outward of the Holy Qur'an. For example, in the story of Joseph in the Holy Qur'an, we recite, **﴿When Joseph said to his father, 'Father, I saw eleven planets, the sun, and the moon: I saw them prostrating themselves before me.﴾** (Q: 12/4).

Waiting in agony and grief for a long time, Jacob's sons told their father that Joseph is yet alive and he is the governor over all the land of Egypt. Jacob said my son is yet alive. I will go and see him before I die. Jacob and all his seed came to Egypt. Joseph saw them, **﴿And he seated his parents high upon the throne, and they fell down prostrate before him. He said, 'Father, this is the fulfillment of my dream long ago, which, my Lord has made come true.﴾** (Q: 12/100).

Should we prostrate before our sons or our parents when we see them? No, we are not allowed to do so, because, prostration is only for Allah. Then he says, “The phrase 'and gives *zakat* while bowing down' is grammatically in simple present tense and it means that the believers should give *zakat* as far as they are alive, but this event happened only once. Moreover, all the traditionists, including Ibn Hajar and others, believe that it is a weak tradition.” 18

The clause 'that maintains the prayer, and gives *zakat* while bowing down', is an adjective for the noun 'the faithful'. 19 Moreover, there are other verses in the Holy Qur'an in simple present tense, referring to one special occasion, e.g. **﴿And among the people is he, who sells his soul seeking the pleasure of Allah, and Allah is most kind to [His] servants.﴾** (Q: 2/207). God sent down this verse concerning 'Ali, 20 whom the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) put to sleep in his bed on the night of his departure to Mecca.

Another verse is **﴿They fulfill their vows and fear a day whose ill would be widespread. They give food, for the love of Him, to the needy, the orphan, and the prisoner. [Saying] 'We feed you only for the sake of Allah. We do not want any reward from you or any thanks.﴾** (Q: 76/7–9). All these verses are in the simple present tense and all of them concern 'Ali. We explained the traditionists and

the exegetes' views previously.²¹ Ibn Hajar is one traditionist not all of them.

He believes that “accepting this story is belittling 'Ali and the importance of the prayer. It is narrated that they pulled an arrow out of 'Ali's leg while he was saying his prayers and he did not notice it, because he was praying to his God. How could he see a beggar come to the mosque and give him his ring while bowing down?”²²

This event shows 'Ali's maximal love for Allah. While he maintains prayers to Allah, he sees and feels nothing except Him, but when he hears Allah's Name, he can do nothing but gladdening the heart of whom who prays to Allah.

He says, “The exclusive word 'only' is used when someone is in doubt about something, while this verse came down when the Prophet was still alive and there was no disagreement among Muslims. A caliph is a deputy to the Prophet, then, there was no need for a caliph. Here, “your guardian is only...” means “your friend is only...”²³

One should appoint their successor while they are alive, not after their death.

Now Let us come back to the point of issue: that is the succession to the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.). We learned God's attitude toward the last prophets and their successors in general and His attitude toward Muhammad (S.A.W.A.) and his offspring in particular. We also remember the Prophet's emphasis on the Holy Qur'an and on the offspring of his family (*ahl al-bayt*). He also said, “People, I am a way mark for you.

When you come to me at the heavenly waters (*hawdh*), then indeed I will ask you about two important things (*thaqalayn*) which I have left behind. Take care how you follow me with regard to them, for God has informed me that they will never scatter until they meet me. Indeed, I have left among you the Book of God and the offspring of my family (*ahl al-bayt*). Do not try to outdo them, for then you will be destroyed.”²⁴

Let us see what his people did after him. Let us see what his people did after him. Let us see what his people did after him. Let us see what his people did after him. Let us see what his people did after him.

1. Salimi, 63 – 69.

2. He believes that 'Abd al-Razzaq b. Hammam San'ani, Ibn Sa'd, Bukhari, and many other scholars who preserved this tradition were naïve and thoughtless Muslims. We wonder whether he belittles these famous traditionists from his own point of view or from the Sunnite's viewpoints; despite the divergence of views, we respect and honor all the scholars, who endeavored and preserved the traditions of the Messenger of God for Muslims.

3. Salimi, 29.

4. Ibid, 29 f.

5. Tha'alibi, (d. 875/1470), *al-Jawahir al-hisan fi tafir al-Qur'an*, ed. Ali Muhammad Mu'awwadh & Ahmad 'Abd al-Mawjud, Beirut, 1418/1997, 2: 396.

6. For this verse concerning 'Ali, see e.g. Muqatil b. Sulayman, 1: 486; Baladhuri, *Ansab*, 2: 381; Tabari, *Tafsir Tabari*: 4: 628–9.; Jassas, 2: 557; Suyuti *al-Durr al-manthur*, 3: 99.
7. Ibn Hisham, 3: 216.
8. Salimi, 30.
9. *Ibid*, 30 f.
10. *Ibid*, 31.
11. *Ibid*, 32.
12. 'Ali says, "All that we had in our possession under this sky was Fadak, but a group of people felt greedy for it and other party withheld themselves from it. Allah is, after all, the best arbiter." See *Nahj al-balagha*, 2, 73.
13. "This is what the slave of Allah, 'Ali b. Abi Talib, has laid down about his property, in pursuance of seeking Allah's pleasure so that He may by virtue of it give me entry into Paradise and accord me peace. It will be administrated by al-Hasan b. 'Ali. He would take a suitable portion of it for his livelihood and spent it on charity. If something happens to al-Hasan and al-Husayn survives, he will administer it accordingly. In the charitable estate of all the progeny of Fatima have the same rights as the progeny of 'Ali. I have laid down administration on the sons of Fatima in order to seek pleasure of Allah and the nearness to His Apostle in due regard for his honor and consideration of his kinship. It is obligatory on him who administrates it that he retains the estate as it is and spends the usufruct as he has been ordered and instructed. He should not sell the seedlings in the plantations of these villages till the land changes its face by turning them into plants." (See *Nahj al-balagha*, 2: 22–23).
14. A. Zysow, "Zakat", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition.
15. Qurtubi (d. 671/1273), *al-Jami' li-ahkam al-Qur'an*, Dar al-kutub al-'Arabi, Cairo, 1387, 3: 2315.
16. Salimi, 32.
17. *Ibid*, 32 f.
18. *Ibid*, 33.
19. Abu al-Baqā' 'Abd Allah al-'Ukbari (d. 616/1219), *Imla' ma min manna bihi al-Rahman*, ed. Ibrahim 'Utwa 'Iwadh, Egypt 1969, 1: 219.
20. Al-Haskani, 1: 123; al-Razi, Fakhar al-Din (d. 606/1210), *al-Tafsir al-kabir*, ed. M. 'A. M. Mustafa, Cairo, n.d., 5: 223 f.
21. See above, 46, note 1.
22. Salimi, 33.
23. *Ibid*, 34.
24. All Hadith collections have preserved hadith *thaqalayn* (two important things) as 'the Book of God and my offspring' (*ahl al-bayt*), e.g. Ibn Hanbal (d. 241/855), *Musnad*, Dar Sadir, Beirut, n.d., 3: 14, 17; 4: 367; 5: 182; Darimi (d. 255/869), *Sunan*, ed. Dr. Mustafa al-Dhahabi, Dar al-hadith, Cairo, 1420/2000, 2: 432; Muslim b. Hajjaj (d. 261/875), 7: 122 f; Tirmidhi, *al-Jami' al-sahih* (*Sunan*) ed. M. H. Nassar, Beirut, 1421/2000, 5: 662, No. 3786; Tabarani (d. 360/971), *al-Mu'jam al-kabir*, ed. Hamadi 'Abd al-Majid al-Slafi, Dar Ihya' al-turath al-'Arabi, Beirut, & Maktab Ibn Taymiyya, Cairo, 1420/1999, 3: 65 f; al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, 3: 110. Only Malik b. Anas (d. 179/796) in his *Muwatta'* (ed. Muhammad Fu'ad 'Abd al-Baqi, Cairo, 1951) mentions 'the Book of God and the customs of His Apostle'.

Abu Bakr's Caliphate

It was a Monday morning, when the people of Medina heard of the Apostle of God's death. They rushed toward the mosque. 'Umar addressed the Muslims assembled at the gate of the mosque and denied the death of the Prophet. He threatened the hypocrites who claimed that the Messenger of God had died

with punishment after he returned from his temporary absence. 'Abbas, the Prophet's uncle contradicted 'Umar and urged people to proceed with burying the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A) as if it were as they were saying (that the Prophet was not really dead), it would be easy for God to open his tomb and bring him out. 1

Later Abu Bakr arrived, and having looked at the Prophet's body contradicted 'Umar, too and silenced him by reciting this verse, ﴿**Muhammad is but an apostle, apostles have passed before him. If he dies or slain, will you turn back on your heels.**﴾ (Q: 3/144).

The Prophet's close kin: 'Ali, 'Abbas and his two sons Fadhl and Qutham, and two of his clients: Usama and Shuqran took charge of washing the Prophet's body. Aws b. Khawali, a Medinan veteran of the Battle of Badr adjured 'Ali to let him join. He gave him permission to enter. 'Ali drew the Apostle's body on his heart, and 'Abbas and Fadhl poured the water over him. While 'Ali washed him, having drawn him towards his breast and said, "Dearer than my father and my mother, how sweet you are alive and dead!" After they had washed the Prophet's body, they wrapped him in three garments: two of the Suhar made and a stripped mantle wrapped the one over the other.

There were two gravediggers in Medina, the Emigrant, Abu 'Ubayda, who followed the Meccan practice, and the Helper, Abu Talha b. Zayd b. Sahl, who dug according to the Medinan practice, making a niche (*lahd*). 'Abbas called two men and sent one of them to Abu 'Ubayda and the other to Abu Talha. Abu 'Ubayda could not be found, but the one sent to Abu Talha found him and thus he dug the grave with the niche according to the Medinan practice.

Then, the people came to visit the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A), praying over him by companies. No one led the funeral prayers. Had Abu Bakr been present in the funeral, he would have wished to lead the funeral prayers as the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) had done for his martyred Companions, but it is doubtful whether Abu Bakr and 'Umar even went to pay their last respects to the Prophet (S.A.W.A). The washing of the body and digging the grave took place on Monday. His close kin decided to bury him in his house. While they were ready to bury him, the bed was inclined at the foot end and was lowered from there into the grave and buried. 'Ali, 'Abbas, Fadhl, Qutham and Shuqran descended into the grave and buried the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.).2

The Meccan Emigrants ran off busily engaging in their political machinations. Only the Helpers showed some concern, and Aws b. Khawali was allowed to join the kin. The Meccan Abu 'Ubayda could not be found, because he was occupied with Abu Bakr and 'Umar scheming to seize power.

While people had assembled at the gate of the mosque discussing the Prophet's death, someone came to Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and told them that the Helpers with their noble men had assembled at the Saqifa (Hall) of Banu Sa'ida. 'Umar suggested that they go to 'our brethren' the Helpers. On the way there, they met two 'upright' men³ of them who told them about the plotting of the Helpers and advised them to turn back and settle their own affairs, but 'Umar insisted on proceeding. They took Abu

'Ubayda with them. We are not sure whether these three (or four) Emigrants at the Saqifa assembly act spontaneously or according to a concentrated plan.

The fundamental account about the assembly at the Saqifa, in which the succession of Abu Bakr to the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) was decided, goes back to 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas. He narrated that on the last pilgrimage led by 'Umar that is in Dhu al-Hijja 23 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Awf visited 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas at Mina. Moreover, he reported him that a man approached the caliph and addressed him, "What are you going to do about a man who says, 'By God, if 'Umar to die, I would swear allegiance to So-and-so. By God, the oath of the allegiance for Abu Bakr was merely a precipitate deal (*falta*) which then was carried out'."

When they returned to Medina at the end of Dhu al-Hijja on the Friday 'Umar sat on the pulpit and prayed God as was fitting and said, "I am about to say to you something which God has willed that I should say and I do not know whether perhaps it is my last utterance." He continued, "God sent Muhammad and sent down the scripture to him. Part of what He sent down was the passage of stoning; we read it, and we were taught it, and we heeded it.

The Messenger of God (S.A.W.S.)⁴ stoned (adulterers) and we stoned them after him. I fear that in time to come men will say that they find no mention of stoning in God's book and thereby go astray by neglecting an ordinance, which God has sent down. Then we read in what we read from God's book, 'Do not desire to have ancestors other than your own for it is infidelity to do so.' I have heard that someone said, 'If 'Umar were dead I would hail So-and-so. Do not let a man deceive himself by saying that acceptance to Abu Bakr was a precipitate deal which was carried out. Admittedly, it was that, but God averted the evil of it.

He who accepts a man as ruler without consulting the Muslims, such acceptance has no validity for either of them: they are in danger of being killed. What happened was that when God took away His Apostle (S.A.W.S.) the Helpers opposed us and gathered with their chiefs in the Saqifa of Banu Sa'ida; and 'Ali and al-Zubayr and their companions withdrew from us; while the Emigrants gathered to Abu Bakr."

"I told Abu Bakr that we should go to our brothers the Helpers, so we went off to go to them when two honest fellows met us and told us of the conclusion the people had come to. They asked us where we were going, and when we told them, they said that there was no need for us to approach them and we must make our decision. I said, 'By God, we will go to them', and we found them in the Saqifa of Banu Sa'ida. In the middle of them was a man wrapped up. In answer to my inquiries, they said that he was Sa'd b. 'Ubada and that he was ill.

When we sat down their speaker pronounced the *shihada*, and praised God as was fitting and then continued, 'We are God's Helpers and the squadron of Islam. You, O the Emigrants, are a family of ours, and a company of your people has come to settle'. ('Umar) said, 'and lo, they were trying to cut us off

from our origin and wrest authority from us.⁵ When he had finished I wanted to speak, for I had prepared a speech in my mind, which pleased me much. I wanted to produce it before Abu Bakr and I was trying to soften a certain asperity of this; but Abu Bakr said, 'Gently, 'Umar!' I did not like to anger him and so he spoke. He was a man with more knowledge and dignity than I was, and by God, he did not omit a single word, which I had thought of, and he uttered it in his inimitable way better than I could have done.

He (Abu Bakr) said, 'All the good that you said about yourselves is deserved, but the Arabs will recognize authority only in this clan of Quraysh, they being the best of Arabs in blood and country. I offer you one of these two men: accept which you please.' Thus saying he took hold of my hand and that of Abu 'Ubayda who was sitting between us. Nothing he said displeased me more than that. By God, I would rather have come forward and have had my head struck off –if that were no sin– than rule over a people of whom Abu Bakr was one.

One man of the Helpers said, 'I am the rubbing post and the fruitful propped-up palm. Let us have one ruler and you another, O Quraysh.' Altercation waxed hotter and voices were raised until when a complete breach was to be feared. I said, 'Stretch out your hand, Abu Bakr.' He did so and I paid him homage; the Emigrants followed and then the Helpers. (In doing so) we jumped on Sa'd b. 'Ubada and someone said that we had killed him. I said, 'God kill him!'"⁶

'Umar concluded, "By God, we did not find any case stronger than for the oath of allegiance to Abu Bakr. We feared that if we left the people without any pledge of allegiance they might, after our departure, suddenly make a pledge we would then have either to follow them in with which we were not pleased, or to oppose them, and evil would have resulted."⁷

'Umar judged the outcome of the Saqifa assembly to be a precipitate deal (*falta*) because of the absence of most of the prominent Emigrants, including the Prophet's own family and clan, whose participation was vital for any legitimate consultation. That the Emigrants at that time joined Abu Bakr was an obscurity on 'Umar's part. Aside from Abu Bakr, 'Umar and his friend Abu 'Ubayda certainly none of the prominent Meccan Companions was present at the Saqifa meeting.

Another reason for 'Umar to criticize the Saqifa, as a *falta* was its turbulent and undignified end, as he and his followers jumped upon the sick Khazraji leader Sa'd b. 'Ubada in order to teach him a lesson for daring to challenge the sole right of Quraysh to rule! This break-up of the meeting indicates that, the Helpers could not all have been swayed by the wisdom and the eloquence of Abu Bakr's speech and have accepted him as the best choice for the succession. There would have been no sense in beating up the Khazraji chief if every body had come around to swearing allegiance to 'Umar's candidate. Moreover, many of the Helpers failed to pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr at the Saqifa assembly. They shouted, "We will not swear allegiance to any one but 'Ali!"⁸

'Umar's justification of the quick election of Abu Bakr, in what amounted to a *falta*, because of the danger that the Helpers might otherwise have sworn allegiance to someone with whom the Emigrants would not

have been pleased, raises another question. The Helpers might have put forward 'Ali that worried the few Emigrants present at the Saqifa and induced them to act without proposing a broad consultation of all the concerned. Both Abu Bakr and 'Umar were present at Ghadir Khumm and heard the Prophet's will and famous sentence concerning 'Ali, and they greeted him with the title of the Commander of the Faithful (*Amir al-Mum'nin*), nevertheless Abu Bakr in his speech did everything to avoid the case of 'Ali being raised. He based the right of Quraysh to rule, not due their relationship to the Prophet but solely on the claim that all the Arabs would obey them.

Abu Bakr wished to continue the commonwealth founded by the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A) and expand its authority over the Arabs and, as far as possible, beyond Arabs. If it was not to fall apart, the Prophet must have a political successor and he decided to be the man who succeeds the Prophet. He also recognized that he would have to neutralize potentially strong opposition in order to realize his ambition.

Most obviously the Prophet's family (*ahl al-bayt*), who had been accorded a rank above the rest of the Muslims by the Holy Qur'an, would have to be prevented from putting forward their claim. The initiative of the Helpers gave him the opportunity he was looking for. He provoked the *falta* by proposing two candidates for election in a maneuver to have proposed himself. He was well aware that neither of the two candidates had a chance of being accepted. When 'Umar offered Abu Bakr the handshake of allegiance, he did not hesitate a moment to accept. He had what he wanted.

In Medina, 'Umar took charge of securing the pledge of allegiance of all residents. He dominated the streets with the help of the Aslam and then the 'Abd al-Ashhal of Aws who, in contrast to the majority of Khazraj, quickly became vigorous champions of the new regime. Then they rushed towards the house of Fatima, who was bereaved of her father's death, and the Companion al-Zubayr with some of the other Emigrants had assembled there. 'Umar came to the house and told, "By God, I will set the house on fire, unless you come out and swear allegiance to Abu Bakr."⁹ Then he broke into the house. Fatima came out and told them, "By God, you should go out of my house, or I will unveil my hair and bewail before God."¹⁰

Crucial for Abu Bakr was gaining the allegiance of the Meccan Quraysh. With the loyalty of the Helpers in doubt and many of the Arab tribes deserting, only Mecca, the former enemy city, which had submitted to the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) just two years before, could now save the Islamic commonwealth. The Islamic state was henceforth, to be based on the rule of Quraysh over all Arabs. Their right to rule in the name of Islam derived from the claim that the Arabs would not obey anyone else.

The Meccan had thus little reason to question the continuation of the Islamic government in principle or to long for their former state of independence. Abu Bakr had safeguarded their innate right by thwarting the ambitions of the Helpers. The Helpers with whose backing the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A) had been able to humiliate them, would be put to their proper place and become like the rest of Arabs, subject to Quraysh.

The two most powerful clans of Quraysh, Makhzum and 'Abd Shams were given preference. Among Abu Bakr's commanders in the *ridda* wars, were 'Ikrima b. Abi Jahl of Makhzum and Yazid b. Abi Sufyan of Umayyad, sons of the two former leaders of Meccan opposition to the Prophet. Yet their dominant position under Abu Bakr is put in proper relief by the complete exclusion of the Helpers from leadership and the greatly reduced role of the early Emigrants.

When Abu Bakr later laid plans for the conquest of Syria, he appointed Khalid b. Sa'id b. al-'As. The reason for this was that he was an Umayyad. When he was dismissed because of 'Umar's strong representations against him, Abu Bakr replaced him by the Umayyad Yazid b. Abi Sufyan. It is evident that the caliph intended to give the 'Abd Shams a stake in the conquest of Syria. With the Muslim armies mostly under the command of the Meccan aristocracy, Medina was virtually at the mercy of the Prophet's recent enemies.

Abu Bakr's resolute rejection of 'Umar's demands for the dismissal, or at least censure, of Khalid b. Walid for his un-Islamic execution of Malik b. Nuwayra,¹¹ may have been motivated by more than just the recognition of his superior quality as a military leader. Yet Abu Bakr could also be greatly confident that the Meccan leaders would co-operate, realizing that they profit more than any one else from the Quraysh caliphate in the name of Islam.

It was the declared intention of Abu Bakr to follow as caliph the policies and practices of the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A) in every respect, but following the practice and precedents set by the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) in every respect was most difficult to maintain in his treatment to the Prophet's kin, the Banu Hashim.

It was evident that the primary purpose of establishing caliphate rule on a sound basis was inconsistent with maintaining the privileged status of the Prophet's household (*ahl al-bayt*), of applying the Qur'anic rules of inheritance to them, and to continuing to pay their Qur'anic share of the war booty and the *fay'*. Abu Bakr's solution was both radical and ingenious. When Fatima came to claim her inheritance from the Prophet (S.A.W.A), and in particular, his land in Fadak and Khaybar, he told her that he had heard the Prophet say, "We [the prophets] do not leave heirs, whatever we leave is alms (*sadaqa*).

The family of Muhammad can eat from this property." Abu Bakr's initiative reply implied, not only had the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) disinherited his family, he had also specifically affirmed that after his death his family should, if needed, accept alms, which he had strictly forbidden them during his life because of their status of purity. As recipients of alms like ordinary Muslims, there was also no longer any justification for paying them their Qur'anic share of booty and *fay'*.

While the Prophet's daughter and kin were thus disinherited and demoted from their rank of religious purity, his widows were treated comparatively better. To 'A'isha, as Muhammad's wife and daughter of his successor, belonged the first place. Abu Bakr granted her some lands in the 'Aliya quarters of Medina and in Bahrayn.¹² Abu Bakr's policy of isolating the Banu Hashim proved a full success. The

Banu Hashim found them in a situation strangely reminiscent of the boycott that the pagan Meccans organized against them.¹³ Fatima lived a short time after her father: seventy-five or forty days.¹⁴ By the time of Fatima's death, Abu Bakr's victory seemed complete. Yet the news of it and of her secret burial at night, in order to prevent the caliph's attendance, must have shocked him.

The election of Abu Bakr, in the Saqifa, had no foundation in the Holy Qur'an and the practice of the Prophet (S.A.W.A.).

1. The Holy Qur'an implicitly refers to 'Ali b. Abi Talib as the *wali* of the faithful¹⁵ and the Messenger of God explicitly had appointed him as his successor in many occasions,¹⁶ especially in Ghadir Khumm, about two months before his death,¹⁷ therefore Abu Bakr did everything to avoid the case of 'Ali being raised in the Saqifa.

2. Abu Bakr's argument in the Saqifa about the privilege of Quraysh "as they being the best of the Arabs in blood and country"¹⁸ had no basis in the Holy Qur'an and the customs. During the Prophet's mission, the majority of Quraysh were his harshest enemies and the Holy Qur'an obviously condemned polytheists. The Emigrants, those who left their homes to join the Prophet (S.A.W.A) in Medina in support of the cause of Islam, were greatly praised in the Holy Qur'an, given hope for God's mercy. **﴿Indeed those who have become faithful and those who have migrated and waged jihad in the way of Allah, it is they who expect Allah's mercy, Allah is All-forgiving, All-merciful.﴾** (Q: 2/218).

By the Emigrants, the Holy Qur'an meant not only the Meccan Quraysh Emigrants, but also equally Bedouin tribesmen and others who joined the Prophet from all over Arabia. Nowhere in the Holy Qur'an were the Emigrants given a preferred rank over the Helpers. Moreover, God says, **﴿O humankind! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and make nations and tribes that you identify with one another. Indeed the nobler of you in the sight of Allah, is the most God-fearing of you.﴾** (Q: 49/13).

3. It was not based on seniority. Abu Bakr's father, Abu Qahafa, was older than his son was.

4. It was not based on meritocracy; here we refer only to one tradition out of innumerable traditions on 'Ali's merits. While Mu'awiya was in pilgrimage, he saw Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas. He took his hand and said, "O Abu Ishaq! These battles prevented us from the pilgrimage, and we were about to forget its practices (*sunnas*). Now get up and circumambulate so that I can follow you." As Mu'awiya finished circumambulating, he took Sa'd with him to his council chamber, and seated him on his seat.

Then he began speaking evil of 'Ali and cursing him. Sa'd said to him, "Have you brought me to your house and seated me on your seat to speak evil of 'Ali and curse him? By God, he possessed three virtues that if I had one of them it would be worthier to me than all the properties under the sun". During the raid on Tabuk, the Prophet told him, "Are you not content, 'Ali, to stand to me as Aaron to Moses, except that there will be any prophets after me?"

On Khaybar Day, concerning 'Ali, he told, "If Allah wills, tomorrow I will give the standard to a man who is an assailant not a runaway, he loves Allah and His Apostle; and Allah and His Apostle love him. He will not come back until Allah conquers by his means." If it were about me, it was better for me than all that is under the sun. If I were the Prophet's son-in-law and I had children like 'Ali's children, it would be worthier to me than all the things under the sun. I will not enter a house with you from now on. Then he shook his mantle and went out.¹⁹

5. Before his death, Abu Bakr said, "I wish I had not committed three acts. I wish I had not broken into Fatima's house even if it had been closed to us for fighting. I wished I had not burned al-Fuj'at or al-Fujah al-Sullami alive. I wish I had killed him or made him free. I wish, on the Saqifa Day, I had submitted caliphate to 'Umar or Abu 'Ubayda, so as one of them had been emir and I had been his vizier." Then he rose up his hands and said, "I wish I had asked the Prophet about the matter of caliphate; to whom did it belong so as the people did not argue about it?"²⁰

6. The Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) had not appointed Abu Bakr his successor. People first thought that the Prophet had appointed him, but 'Umar said before he died, "If I appoint a successor, one who was better than I [Abu Bakr] did so; and if I leave them, one better than I [the Prophet] did so."²¹ Moreover, in the Saqifa, Abu Bakr himself proposed 'Umar and Abu 'Ubayda as the Prophet's successor.

Thus, what was the reason for Abu Bakr's election?

Abu Bakr was a clever politician, he had decided no doubt well before the Prophet's death to be his successor. It was a close co-operation between Abu Bakr and 'Umar initiated in the lifetime of the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.). Their daughters, 'A'isha and Hafsa were the Prophet's wives and kept their fathers informed about every move and secret thought of their husband, the Prophet. It was 'A'isha and Hafsa, who informed their fathers of the Prophet's serious illness, which kept him away from leading the communal prayer in the mosque.²² Abu Bakr and 'Umar were also aware of Quraysh's enmity towards the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) and 'Ali. The assembly in the Saqifa gave them the opportunity to make their wishes true and seize power. They argued everything in Saqifa, but the God and His Apostle's will about the succession to the Prophet.

The author says,

"It is curious that among one hundred and twenty four thousand [*sic*] people present at the Ghadir Khumm all had become extinct and deceased during this year; even no one existed to mention the story of Ghadir Khumm to the people assembled in the Saqifa."²³

Before answering this question, we would better review these verses from the Holy Qur'an, **﴿He said, "Indeed We tried your people in your absence, and the Samiri²⁴ had led them astray." Thereupon Moses returned to his people, indignant and grieved. He said, "O my people! Did not your Lord give you a true promise? Did the promise [of my absence] seem too long to you? Or did you desire that your Lord's wrath should descend on you, and so you failed your trust with me.﴾** (Q:

20/85–86).

Then, ﴿**He said, “O Aaron! What kept you, when you saw them going astray, from following me? Did you disobey my command?” He said, “O son of my mother! Do not hold my beard! I feared lest you should say, you have caused a rift among the Children of Israel, and did not heed my word”.**﴾ (Q: 20/92– 94).

Therefore, it is not curious. When the Samiri made a golden calf, the Children of Israel turned against God and made for the calf; even no one said, “Our Lord is Allah the All-beneficent.” In the Saqifa the Helpers shouted, “We will not swear allegiance to any one, but 'Ali.”²⁵ Thereupon altercation waxed hotter and voices were raised. They jumped on the Helper's leader, Sa'd b. 'Ubada, and they were about to kill him. They threw the scene into turmoil and no one could express his idea. It was in such a situation that these three Emigrants could forward their plot.

He also says, “If 'Ali had any reason for his caliphate based on the Holy Qur'an or Ghadir tradition or if he thought he was appointed by God or His Apostle, he would not disobey them. He should follow the Prophet who proclaimed his mission by himself, without any fear of the Polytheists. He was as forward-looking as the Messenger of God that he did not find it convenient to draw sword against his enemies. 'Ali always obeys God's orders. 'Ali does not disregard the compulsory duties. 'Ali does not fear the human beings. 'Ali does not ...”²⁶

Yes, brother, you are right, but let us first tell a story from *Sahihayn*: “A wolf abducted two boys, each the son of a different woman, and only one survived the ordeal. The two women then went to Dawud, each claiming the survivor was her son. Dawud was about to award the child without further ado to the older and more insistent of the woman, when Sulayman proposed that the object of the dispute be bisected and one half be awarded to each of the claimants. The suggestion was accepted by the older woman, but rejected by the younger, who renounced her claim rather than seeing harm come to the child. The veracity of her claim and the falsity of her rival's thus became apparent.”²⁷

'Ali's love for Islam was not less than the mother's love for her child. About his background in Islam, he says, “You know my position of close kinship and special relationship with the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A). When I was, only a child he took me over. He used to press me to his chest, lay me beside him in his bed, touch his body with mine and make me smell his sweet smell. He used to chew a thing and then fed me with it. He found no lie in my speaking, nor weakness in my act.

From the time his weaning, Allah had put a great angle with him to take him along the path of high character and good behavior throughout day and night, while I would follow him like a young camel following in the footprints of its mother. Every day he would show me in the form of a banner some of his high traits and commanded me to follow it. Every year he used to go in seclusion to the hill of Hira' where I saw him but no one else saw him. In those days, Islam did not exist in any house except that of the Messenger of God and Khadijah while I was the third after those two.

I used to see and watch the effulgence of divine revelation and message, and smelt the scent of prophet-hood. When the revelation descended on the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.), I heard the moan of Satan. I said, "O Messenger of God what is this moan?" He replied, "This is the moan of Satan who has lost all hopes of being worshipped. O 'Ali you see all that I see and you hear all that I hear, except that you are not a prophet."²⁸

When the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) died, the decisive dangers were threatening Islam. The liars Musaylama al-Hanafī and al-Aswad al-'Ansi claimed to be prophets. The hypocrites inside Medina and the new converted tribes outside Medina were looking for an opportunity to rise up against Islam and annihilate it. 'Ali b. Abi Talib faced with two problems: The problem of losing his legitimate right and the problem of vanishing Islam. He realized that Islam was more important than his right. Therefore, he renounced his claim rather than seeing harm to Islam. He found that endurance thereon was wiser. Therefore, he adopted patience "although there was mote in the eyes and suffocation in the throat".²⁹

1. al-San'ani, 5: 433 – 5; Baladhuri, Ansab, 2: 243.

2. Baladhuri, Ansab, 2: 245.

3. They were 'Uwaym b. Sa'ida and Ma'an b. 'Adi who were opponents to Sa'd b. 'Ubadā and friends to Abu Bakr. See Ibn Abi al-Hadid (d. 656/1258) *Sharh Nahj al-balagha*, ed. Muhammad Abu al-Fadhl Ibrahim, reprint Qumm, 1404. 6: 6.

4. (S.A.W.S.) = Sall Allah 'alayhi wa sallam.

5. The Helpers, unlike many of the Arab tribes involved in ridda, were firm in their Muslim faith; no doubt considered their allegiance to the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) as lapsing on his death. Expecting the political community founded by the Prophet to fall apart, they met to restore their control over their own city. This is why they met without consulting the Emigrants. They assumed that the Emigrants, having no longer any good reason to remain in Medina, would return home to Mecca. Those who might wish to remain would presumably accept the rule of the Helpers. The suggestion that the Helpers and the Emigrants should each choose a leader for themselves was evidently meant as a fair compromise proposal rather than a devious plot to split the Muslim community. See Madelung, 31.

6. Ibn Hisham, 4: 306–310; Guillaume, 683–688.

7. Tabari, Ta'rikh, 4: 1823.

8. Ibid, 4: 1818.

9. Tabari, Ta'rikh, 4: 1818.

10. Ya'qubi, 2: 126.

11. Malik b. Nuwayra was the tax collector of his people. Upon the Prophet's death, he did not hand over to Medina the camels, which he had collected as sadaqa, but instead he gave them back to his fellow-tribesmen. When Abu Bakr learned of Malik's deed he was furious, and had Khalid b. Walid promise before God that he would kill Malik if he could lay hand on him. As Khalid was advancing through the Najd, having conquered some rebellious tribes, one of his detachments came upon a group of Yarbū'is among whom, was Malik b. Nuwayra. The Yarbū'is offered no resistance, declared that they were Muslims, and were taken to Khalid's camp at Butah, where they were executed as rebels. Some of the captors, chiefly the Helper Abu Qatada, tried to prevent the execution by arguing that the captives were inviolable, since they had declared themselves Muslims and performed the ritual prayer. Khalid, however, disregarded these arguments, ordered the execution, and married Malik's widow. When 'Umar learned Khalid's conduct, he pressed Abu Bakr in vain to punish him, or at least to dismiss him. Eventually Abu Bakr openly forgave Khalid after having heard his version of the story. (See Ibn Athir, 2: 358–9; Ella Landau-Tasseron, "Malik b. Nuwayra", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition.)

12. Ibn Shabba, 1: 187

13. Madelung, 44.

14. On Fatima's funeral, 'Ali addressing the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) said, "O the Apostle of God, peace be upon you from me and from your daughter who has come to you and who has hastened to meet you. Certainly, your daughter would apprise you of joining your umma (community) for oppressing her. You ask her in detail and get the news about the position. This has happened when long time had not elapsed and your remembrance had not disappeared. See Nahj al-balagha, 1:443.
15. See above, 46.
16. See above, 11–12, 26, 30.
17. See above, 34.
18. See above, 63.
19. Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, 7: 341.
20. Tabari, Ta'rikh, 4: 2140 – 41.
21. Ibn Athir 3: 65.
22. See above, 37.
23. Salimi, 44.
24. Cf. The Old Testament, Exodus 32.
25. See above, 64.
26. Salimi, 45.
27. Bukhari (d. 256/870), hadith 3427; Muslim b. Hajjaj (d. 261/875), hadith 1720; cf. The Old Testament, I Kings 3: 16–28.
28. Nahj al-balagha, 1: 416– 417.
29. Ibid, 1:33.

'Umar's Caliphate

Abu Bakr did not view the caliphate as an elective office; it is only natural that he appointed 'Umar his successor without prior consultation. Only after he had decided to appoint him, he asked 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Awf and 'Uthman for their opinions. The former expressed 'Umar's well known harshness. 'Uthman more diplomatically answered that 'Umar's inside was better than his outside.¹

Talha protested against the choice of him because of 'Umar's ill treatment of the people even during Abu Bakr's reign. Abu Bakr angrily rejected this criticism, declaring that 'Umar was the best of God's people.² Abu Bakr owed him a considerable debt. 'Umar had made the coup at the Saqifa in his favor possible and had brought Medina firmly under control for him. Above all, in Abu Bakr's behalf he had deprived the Prophet's household (*ahl al-bayt*) of their legitimate rights.

When 'Umar came to power in 13/634, first he dismissed Khalid b. Walid and appointed Abu 'Ubayda as supreme commander of the Muslim armies in Syria. In Iraq, he commissioned Abu 'Ubayda b. Mas'ud Thaqafi with the general command. A year after Abu 'Ubayda b. Mas'ud was killed in battle, the caliph appointed Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas, the early Meccan Companion, as the supreme commander. Under Sa'd, the decisive battle of Qadisiyya was won, Mesopotamia was completely subdued, Kufa was founded and Iran invaded. When Abu 'Ubayda died in the plague of 'Amwas in 18/639, the caliph appointed Yazid b.

Abi Sufyan governor of Damascus, Jordan and Palestine. Shortly afterwards Yazid, too, died of the plague, and 'Umar appointed his brother Mu'awiya b. Abi Sufyan as his successor and governor of Damascus.

'Umar made every effort to bring about the reconciliation with the Banu Hashim without compromising the essential right of all Quraysh to the caliphate. He thus treated 'Ali basically, like the other Companions. He displayed his favor for the Prophet's kin rather in courting 'Abbas who posed no political threat since he did not belong to the early Companions and had no personal ambitions. 'Umar also drew 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas, who was too young to pose a political threat, near to him. Ibn 'Abbas was closely associated with 'Umar from the beginning to the end of his caliphate and he has left the most revealing reports about the caliph's private thoughts.

In a conversation he had with 'Umar early in his reign, he asked Ibn 'Abbas about 'Ali, and if he was still claiming his right for the caliphate. On Ibn 'Abbas's affirmative answer, he asked whether he claimed that the Prophet had designated him. Ibn 'Abbas replied yes, adding that he had asked his father about the truth of this claim, and 'Abbas confirmed it. 'Umar commented that there had been some words of the Prophet in respect to 'Ali. The Prophet had deliberated about this matter for some time, and during his illness, he intended to name him clearly, but he, 'Umar, had restrained. If 'Ali were to assume the caliphate, the Arabs everywhere would revolt against him. The Prophet had understood what these motives were and had therefore kept silent.³

On another occasion, Ibn 'Abbas narrated, 'Umar remarked to him that his companion, 'Ali, was indeed the worthiest (*awla*) of people to rule after the Apostle of God "but we feared him for two reasons". When Ibn 'Abbas asked him eagerly what the reasons were, he mentioned his youth and his love for Banu 'Abd al-Muttalib.⁴ Ibn 'Abbas also narrated that once, 'Umar came, late at night, and told him to go out together and guard over Medina.

He was bare footed and his whip hung down his neck. They went on as far as Baqi' al-Gharqad. There 'Umar fell on his back and sighed deeply. He asked 'Umar, "O, what can worry you, *Amir al-mu'minin*?" He answered, "The cause of God. O the son of 'Abbas." He uttered if he let him, he could tell what was running through his mind. 'Umar accepted and told him to think it over and added what he (Ibn 'Abbas) had said him before had all been right. Ibn 'Abbas told him that he ('Umar) was thinking about his successor.

He named some eminent Companions and asked 'Umar's opinion about them. About 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Awf, he said that he was a parsimonious man, but the office of caliphate needed someone thrifty without miserliness and generous without extravagance. On Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas, he said that he was a valiant fighter on horseback, but unworthy to command. Then he said that Talha b. 'Ubayd Allah was a greedy and vainglorious man; al-Zubayr b. 'Awwam was a battle hero, but occupied himself in haggling in the markets of Medina; 'Uthman b. 'Affan would give the Banu Abi Mu'ayt power over people, the Arabs would certainly disobey him and 'strike his neck'. Then he fell silent.

After a while, he asked Ibn 'Abbas, "Do you think 'Ali b. Abi Talib is worthy of caliphate?" He answered, "On account of his early merits, his knowledge and his close kinship to the Prophet why he should not be worthy of caliphate." 'Umar replied, "By God 'Ali is, as you said, worthy of caliphate, but if he rules he will lead the people on the right path that you know, except that he is lighthearted and young." Ibn 'Abbas said "You did not consider him young on the Day of the Trench. When 'Amr b. 'Abd Wudd came out, panic seized the warriors and the old retreated; and on the Day of Badr while he cut the enemies' heads off and no one advanced him."

'Umar said, "O Ibn 'Abbas it is enough." He fell silent lest he would make the caliph angry. Then 'Umar continued, "O the son of 'Abbas, your cousin ('Ali) is the worthiest of all, but he would lead you on a path, in respect to what is right, which you know. If he does so, his swear of allegiance will be broken and people will fight him."⁵

During the ten years of his reign, 'Umar was anxious to keep most of non-Arab Muslims out of Arabia, in particular Medina. The strong bias against non-Arabs in 'Umar's policies eventually contributed to creating the atmosphere in which Abu Lu'lu'a the Persian slave of Mughira b. Shu'ba was prepared to assassinate him in a suicidal attack⁶ and in which the Caliph's son 'Ubayd Allah was equally prepared to murder any non-Arab whom he could reach.⁷

The Caliph's resolve to leave the choice of his successor to a council (*shura*) among the most eminent early Companions was no doubt firm long before Abu Lu'lu'a mortally wounded him. The electoral council consisted of six members: 'Ali b. Abi Talib, 'Uthman b. 'Affan, 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Awf, al-Zubayr b. 'Awwam, Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas and Talha b. 'Ubayd Allah (who returned to Medina only after the election of 'Uthman, and Sa'd officially acted as his proxy).

'Umar assigned Abu Talha b. Zayd b. Sahl Ansari to supervise the electoral council. 'Umar ordered him in case four of them agreed on one man and two of them disagreed, he should cut off the heads of those two who had disagreed. If three of them agreed and the other three disagreed, he should cut the heads of the three whom 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Awf was not included. If it passed three days and they did not consent to anyone, he should kill all of them.⁸ An important part of the decision in favor of 'Uthman was due to the latter's brother-in-law, 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Awf.⁹

'Umar considered 'Abd al-Rahman, 'Uthman, and 'Ali as serious candidates for caliphate. 'Abd al-Rahman, however, did not aspire to supreme power and took him out of the competition in return for being recognized as the arbiter between the candidates. Since al-Zubayr and Sa'd equally did not press their own or Talha's claim, only 'Uthman and 'Ali were left. 'Ali reminded them his own case as the closest kin to the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) and his early merits in Islam, but the composition of the council was on the behalf of 'Uthman and caliphate suited him down to the ground.

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1. Tabari, Ta'rikh, 4: 2137.
 2. Ibid, 4: 2143.
 3. God almighty! 'Umar is worried about the fate of Islam, but the Prophet, who does not speak out of his desire, is not. It was not the first time that 'Umar opposed the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) In the battle of Hdaybiya when the Messenger of God was going to make peace with the polytheists, 'Umar jumped up, went to the Prophet, and expressed his anger against the Prophet's decision. The Prophet assured him that he was God's slave and His Apostle, and he would not go against His commandment and He would not make him the loser. 'Umar later said what he did that day out of fear; because he hoped that, his plan was better than the Prophet's was. (See Guillaume, 504).
 4. Ibn Abi al-Hadid, 2: 57, 6: 50-51
 5. Ya'qubi, 2: 158.
 6. Tabari, Tarikh, 4: 2722.
 7. Ibid, 2795.
 8. Ya'qubi, 2: 160.
 9. 'Abd al-Rahman was married to 'Uthman's maternal sister Umm Kulthum bint 'Uqba b. Abi Mu'ayt. See Baladhuri, Ansab, 6: 124f.

'Uthman's Caliphate

While 'Uthman was a successful merchant, before his election in 23/644 he had, at no time displayed any qualities of public leadership. Among the six members of the electoral council, he was the only one who had never been entrusted by the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) or the first two caliphs with leading a raid or an army.

Before the election, he had no political ambitions and can hardly even have thought of himself as a potential candidate for supreme reign. Yet he was put forward as the only counter-candidate to 'Ali. As twice the Prophet's son-in-law, he could better rival 'Ali's close kinship ties with the latter than could the rest. Quite unprepared for his office, he ascended the pulpit after his election and apologized, "O people, we have not been orators. If we live, the oration will come to you in proper shape, God willing."¹

During the election, 'Uthman had twice pledged without hesitation that he would follow the Book of God, the *Sunna* of His Prophet, and the practice of Abu Bakr and 'Umar, while 'Ali b. Abi Talib had cautiously stated that he would do so to the limit of his ability.² The unabashed favoritism towards his close kin that he showed from the beginning of his reign stood in marked contrast to this commitment. He granted his cousin Marwan b. al-Hakam³ the war booty (*khums*) of Ifriqia and gave his close relatives money from the treasury. He also took the sums of money and borrowed money from the treasury saying, Abu Bakr and 'Umar left what belonged to them of this money, but I take it and distribute to my kin.⁴

Shortly after his accession, he deposed 'Umayr b. Sa'd al-Ansari, governor of Hims, Qinnasrin and Upper Mesopotamia, at his request and turned these provinces over to Mu'awiya. This meant a

substantial increase in Mu'awiya's power, which enabled him later to challenge and defy 'Ali. 'Uthman also dismissed 'Amr b. al-'As as the governor of Egypt and appointed his own foster-brother 'Abd Allah b. Sa'd b. Abi Sarh.⁵ 'Abd Allah killed seven hundred men for one man, but 'Uthman only dismissed him and did not reproach him.⁶ In 25/695, he replaced Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas, whom he had appointed the previous year, as the governor of Kufa with a transgressor (*fasiq*)⁷ like 'Umayyad al-Walid b. 'Uqbas b. Abi Mu'ayt his maternal brother.

He committed wine drinking. He performed praying out of time and one morning he performed four postures (*rak'as*) in his prayer instead of two and said, "I am drunk, if you wish I can perform more."⁸ When Walid b. 'Uqba had to be disposed because of, misconduct in the year 30/650, 'Uthman replaced him with another Umayyad, Sa'id b. al-'As b. Abi Uhayha.⁹ 'Uthman also granted the estate of Fadak, which the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) had bestowed to his daughter Fatima, and Abu Bakr and 'Umar had confiscated it as a *sadaqa*, as an endowment for the benefit of Muslim community, to Marwan b. al-Hakam his cousin and his son-in-law, as land concession.¹⁰

From 30/650, dissatisfaction and resistance were manifested throughout most of the empire. 'Uthman's generosity was now restricted to his kin, who seemed to dominate him. The prominent Companions of the *shura* more and more lost their influence over him. At the same time, his arrogant mistreatment of several of the earliest Companions, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud and 'Ammar b. Yasir provoked outrage among the pious, as well as among their tribes and clans of Quraysh, to whom they were affiliated and who were liable for their protection.

Among Quraysh 'Amr b. al-'As was the first to agitate in Medina against the caliph after his removal from the governorship of Egypt. Another prominent Companion who fell out with 'Uthman was 'Abd Allah b. al-Arqam al-Zuhri, a former secretary of the Prophet (S.A.W.A.). 'Umar had put him in charge of the public treasury (*bayt al-mal*) and thought highly of him. Under 'Uthman, he continued his office until 'Uthman sent draft and ordered Ibn Arqam to pay 'Abd Allah b. Khalid b. Asid the caliph's nephew and brother-in-law 300'000 *dirhams* and each of his companions 100'000. Ibn Arqam found the amount excessive and returned the draft. When the caliph reprimanded him, calling him "treasurer of us", he answered that he had considered himself treasurer of the Muslims and resigned, suspending the treasury keys on the pulpit.¹¹

Among the electors, the most active was Talha. He wrote letters to the provinces inciting revolt and made common cause with the rebellions during the siege of 'Uthman's palace. When he later came to Basra for revenge for the blood of 'Uthman, 'Abd Allah b. al-Hakim al-Tamimi showed him his earlier letters to him, and he acknowledged having written them.¹² 'A'isha also wrote letters to the provinces stirring up rebellion, although, after the murder of 'Uthman, she denied it.¹³

During the final siege of 'Uthman's palace 'A'isha decided to leave, together with Umm Salama, for pilgrimage. In the hope that her presence in Medina might hold back the rebels, 'Uthman sent Marwan and 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Attab b. Asid to persuade her to stay for the sake of his safety. Having

completed her preparations for the trip she told angrily that she wished 'Uthman were in one of her travel sacks so she could take it along and cast him to the sea. 14

'Ali clashed with 'Uthman in particular on questions of the religious law. As the Prophet's cousin and his son-in-law, he evidently saw himself as responsible for the preservation and execution of the norms of the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet's practice. At the beginning of the 'Uthman's reign, he protested against the pardon of 'Ubayd Allah b. 'Umar for the murder of Jufayna and al-Hurmuzan. He threatened to carry out the legal punishment when he could lay his hands on him. 15

He insisted that the legal punishment for wine drinking be applied to al-Walid b. 'Uqba b. Abi Mu'ayt and when others hesitated to flog the caliph's half-brother, he himself carried out the flogging. 16 The relationship between 'Ali and 'Uthman was, however, not entirely antagonistic. Among the members of the electoral council, 'Ali was 'Uthman's closest kin. His kinship ties made 'Ali a natural mediator between the opposition and 'Uthman. When the general discontent reached dangerous levels in the year 34/659, a group of Meccan and other Companions asked 'Ali to speak to, and admonish 'Uthman. 'Ali thus addressed him, as representative of the people, but 'Uthman was not yet prepared to heed his warnings. 17

A year later, when the Egyptian rebels camped at Dhu Khushub, 'Uthman asked 'Ali to meet them at the head of a delegation of the Emigrants while also sent the Medinan Companion Muhammad b. Maslama at the head of a group of the Helpers. 'Ali b. Abi Talib and Muhammad b. Maslama persuaded the rebels to turn back by promising them, in the name of the caliph, redress of their grievances and agreeing the act as guarantors. 18

He was to see 'Uthman once more as the Egyptian rebels returned to Medina, outraged by 'Uthman's letter ordering the punishment of the rebel leaders. The Egyptians intercepted the letter. 19 'Ali b. Abi Talib and Muhammad b. Maslama as guarantors of 'Uthman's promises felt obliged to intervene and came jointly to see 'Uthman. When 'Ali informed the caliph of the rebels' new grievance, 'Uthman swore that he had no knowledge of the letter. While Muhammad b. Maslama accepted his word, adding that this was the work of Marwan, 'Ali insisted that 'Uthman receive the Egyptians himself and put his excuse to them.

Reminding him of his kinship ties, the caliph pleaded with him to go out to speak to them. The Egyptians were admitted and they stated their grievances. 'Uthman again denied any knowledge of the letter and both 'Ali b. Abi Talib and Muhammad b. Maslama attested that he was speaking the truth. The Egyptians now demanded that he resign if an official letter with his seal could be sent without his knowledge, but the caliph affirmed that he would not take off a garment with which God had clad him. As the turmoil broke out, 'Ali stood up and left, followed by Muhammad b. Maslama. The Egyptians also left and continued their siege. 20

Talha was the one toughest against 'Uthman during the siege. 21 When Talha prevented the delivery of

drinking water to the besieged caliph, 'Ali became angry. He talked to Talha and saw it that water was delivered.²² Looking down from his balcony 'Uthman greeted a group of the rebels among whom he saw Talha. As they failed to return the greeting, he addressed Talha and told him that he did not think he would live to see the day when he should greet Talha and he did not return the greeting.²³

On Thursday, Dhu al-Hijja 17, the peace was broken. The act of aggression, opening the civil war, came from the palace. Among the rebels on that day was Niyar b. 'iyadh Aslami, an aged Companion of the Prophet, who called for 'Uthman and, when the caliph looked down from his balcony, lectured him demanding his abdication.²⁴ Abu Hafsa al-Yamani, an Arab freedman of Marwan dropped a rock on him, killing him instantly. The rebels sent to 'Uthman demanding the surrender of the murderer. The caliph once more protected Marwan, asserting that he did not know the killer.

The next day, Friday Dhu al-Hijja 18, 35/ June 17, 656, was 'the battle-day of the palace' (*yawm al-dar*), and 'Uthman was slain.

Deserted by all but his wife, Na'ila, he faced the inevitable end at peace with himself. Yet he must have felt he himself had to bear a large share of the blame for the disaster. The cancer in the body of the caliphate, which he had nurtured and proved unable to excise because of his doting love for a corrupt and rapacious kin, destroyed him. It was to continue to grow and to sweep away the Islamic meritocracy. 'Uthman's successor, Mu'awiya, turned it, as predicated by a well-known prophecy ascribed to the Prophet (S.A.W.A.), into traditional despotic kingdom.

1. Ibn Shabba, 3: 957-8; Baladhuri, Ansab, 6: 130.

2. Ibid, 128; Tabari, Ta'rikh, 5: 2793.

3. Marwan b. al-Hakam b. Abi al-'As was 'Uthman's cousin. Hakam b. Abi al-'As accepted Islam on the day of the conquest of Mecca. He used to walk after the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) and make faces at him. The Prophet had exiled him from Medina to Ta'if and Marwan was born there. 'Umar and Abu Bakr did not let them to come to Medina and stay there, but 'Uthman returned them to Medina. (See Baladhuri, Ansab, 6: 255f; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr al-Qurtubi (d. 463/1071) *al-Isti'ab fi ma'rifat al-ashab*, ed. al-Shaykh Muhammad 'Ali Muhammad Mufawwadh, Beirut, 2002, 1: 414f).

4. Ibn Sa'd, 3: 47.

5. 'Abd Allah b. Sa'd b. Abi Sarh first accepted Islam and he was a secretary to Muhammad (S.A.W.A.) The Prophet dictated "al-kafirin" to him, but he changed it to "al-zalimin", he dictated "azizun hakim", he wrote "alimun hakim" and so on. Then he apostatized and fled to Quraysh. He claimed that he could say what Muhammad could. The verse ﴿Who is a greater wrongdoer than he is who fabricates a lie against Allah, or says, it has been revealed to me while nothing was revealed to him.﴾ (Q: 6/93) came down about him. At the conquest of Mecca, the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) had ordered him to be killed even if he was found beneath the curtains of Ka'ba, but 'Uthman, his foster brother, asked the Prophet to grant him immunity, and he was saved. (See above 28, note 1; Baladhuri, Ansab, 1: 454).

6. al-Maqdisi, Mutahhar b. Tahir (writing in 355/966), *Kitab al-bad' wa al-ta'rikh*, ed. Clement Huart, Paris, 1916, 5: 201.

7. In the verse ﴿Is someone who is faithful (mu'min) like someone who is transgressor (fasiq)? They are not equal.﴾ (Q: 32/18), the faithful refers to 'Ali and the transgressor refers to Walid b. 'Uqba. See Haskani, 1: 572.

8. Ibn Athir, 3: 107.

9. Ibid, 105-7.

10. Ibn Qutayba Dinawari (d. 276/889), *al-Ma'arif*, ed. Tharwat 'Ukasha, Cairo, 1960, 195.
11. Baladhuri, *Ansab*, 6: 173.
12. *Ibid*, 3: 28.
13. *Ibid*, 6: 224.
14. *Ibid*, 192 f.
15. Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, 5: 2796 f.
16. Baladhuri, *Ansab*, 6: 145.
17. Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, 6: 2937.
18. *Ibid*, 6: 2969–71.
19. *Ibid*, 6: 2992.
20. *Ibid*, 6: 2992–5.
21. Baladhuri, *Ansab*, 6: 125.
22. Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, 6: 2979; Baladhuri, *Ansab*, 6: 188.
23. *Ibid*, 6: 195.
24. Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, 6: 3004.

'Ali's Caliphate

'Ali b. Abi Talib was in the mosque when he received the news of 'Uthman's murder. He soon left for home, where he was pressed by Companions visiting him to accept the pledge of allegiance.¹ At first he refused, and then insisted that any pledge should be made in public in the mosque.² Talha and al-Zubayr were of the first prominent Companions who pledged allegiance.³

'Ali personally abstained from putting pressure upon anyone to do homage. When Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas was brought, and asked to pledge of allegiance, he answered that he would not do so before the people had given their pledge, but assured 'Ali that he had nothing to fear from him. 'Ali gave orders to let him go.⁴ Then 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar was brought. He also said that he would pledge allegiance only after the people were united behind him. 'Ali asked him to provide a guarantor that he would not abscond; Ibn 'Umar refused. Now Malik b. al-Ashtar [al-Nakha'i] said to 'Ali, "This man is safe from your whip and sword. Let me deal with him." 'Ali answered, "Leave him, I will be his guarantor. By God I have never known him other than ill-natured, as a child and as an adult."

Ibn 'Umar's stand was, however, hostile to 'Ali. He left for Mecca to join the opposition.⁵ 'Ali also invited Usama b. Zayd to pledge allegiance, but Usama, while assuring 'Ali that he was the dearest person to him, excused him on grounds of the commitment he had made to the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) never to fight anyone confessing, "There is no god but Allah". When 'Ali asked Muhammad b. Maslama to pledge allegiance he, too, excused himself stating that the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) had ordered him, if there was conflict among the people, to break his sword and stay at home.⁶

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1. See Nahj al-balagha, 1: 40 (At that moment the crowd frightened me. It advanced towards me from every side like the mane of a hyena so much so that al-Hasan and al-Husayn were being crushed and both of the ends of my shoulder garment were torn).
 2. Tabari, Ta'rikh, 6: 3066.
 3. Ibid, 3068.
 4. Ibid, 3068.
 5. Baladhuri, Ansab, 3: 8
 6. Ibid, 3: 9.

Rebellion against the Central Caliphate (al-Jamal)

'A'isha had left Mecca after her pilgrimage happy in her belief that Talha had succeeded 'Uthman. When she reached Sarif, she met 'Ubayd b. Maslama Laythi who informed her of the succession the Prophet's cousin, 'Ali. She immediately turned back, curtained herself in the Sanctuary, accused 'Ali of jumping upon 'Uthman and murdering him, while a single finger of 'Uthman was better than the whole of 'Ali.¹

Whereas 'A'isha remained in Mecca, Umm Salama the Prophet's Makhzumite widow who had performed the pilgrimage with her, after vainly warning her against joining the rebel campaign returned to Medina and gave 'Ali her backing.²

Mecca became the natural center of Quraysh opposition. 'A'isha raised the flag of revenge for 'Uthman. Talha and al-Zubayr, seeing that others had successfully resisted pledging allegiance to 'Ali quickly broke their own oaths and left without leave to join 'A'isha.

'Ali deposed 'Uthman's governor, 'Abd Allah b. 'Amir b. Kurayz, and appointed 'Uthman b. Hunayf, whom 'Umar had entrusted with the land survey of the *sawad*, for the government of Basra. For Egypt, 'Ali chose Qays b. Sa'd b. 'Ubada. He proposed to Qays b. Sa'd that he chooses a military guard in Medina to accompany him, but Qays declined stating that if he could enter Egypt only with a military escort he would rather never enter the country. In the Yemen, 'Ali appointed Hashimite 'Ubayd Allah b. 'Abbas governor of San'a' and Sa'id b. Sa'd b. 'Ubada, the brother of Qays, governor of Janad.

'Uthman's governors, Ya'la b. Umayya (Munya) in San'a' and 'Abd Allah b. Abi Rabi'a in Janad arrived in Mecca with much money, and Ya'la brought a large number of camels, which he had gathered in the

Yemen. When Ibn Abi Rabi'a arrived in Mecca, he found 'A'isha summoning the people to revolt in order to seek revenge for the blood of 'Uthman. He ordered a seat to be placed for him in the mosque and proclaimed that he would equip whoever came forth to avenge the caliph's murder.³

Mecca was now in open rebellion against Medina. 'A'isha having given the lead, the Meccan Quraysh pinned the guilt for the murder of 'Uthman on 'Ali. Safwan b. Umayya b. Khalaf al-Juhmi, accused all Hashimite of the murder of 'Uthman. He was one of the grand old aristocrats of Quraysh and a leading enemy of the Prophet, who had fled at the time of the conquest of Mecca rather than accept Islam and eventually the Messenger of God permitted him to stay in Mecca rather than move to Medina.⁴ He saw a chance of getting back at the old enemy allied with the Medinan.

In the war council, which was held in 'A'isha's home, it was first suggested that they attack 'Ali in Medina. The decision to move to Basra and mobilize Basran support for the claim of revenge was influenced by the argument of 'Abd Allah b. 'Amir that he could count on strong support there and by the material means he was willing to provide.⁵ Ya'la b. Munya contributed from the funds he had carried off from the Yemen. He gave 400'000 *dirhams* and provided the beasts of burden for 70 men of Quraysh. He paid eighty *dinars* for 'A'isha's famous camel 'Asker.⁶

The rebels, taking 'A'isha with them, set off for Basra. As soon as they reached al-Haw'ab, 'A'isha heard dogs barking. She asked where it was. When she knew that it was al-Haw'ab, she sighed, "Indeed we belong to Allah, and to Him we intend to return: Now I find myself the addressee to this tradition." She added, "Once the Prophet addressing us asked which of you would go with an army to the South, and the dogs of al-Haw'ab would bark at them." She wanted to return, but 'Abd Allah b. al-Zubayr made fifty men of Banu 'Amir swear that it was not al-Haw'ab.⁷

When the rebels approached Basra, 'Uthman b. Hunayf sent Abu Nujayd 'Imran b. Husayn al-Khuza'i and Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali as envoys to enquire about their intention. They met 'A'isha and her companions at Hafar Abu Musa, a watering station on the road from Mecca to Basra. Moreover, they were told that they had come to claim revenge for the blood of 'Uthman and to see that an electoral council was set up to decide on the succession.⁹

Abu al-Aswad told 'A'isha that the Messenger of God had confined her for protection (*habis*). He had ordered her to stay at home and now she had come knocking the people against each other. She answered, "Is there anyone then who would fight me or say anything different from this?"¹⁰

The Basran were preparing to fight, but the night separated them. Next morning the governor moved to attack them, and there was fierce, but inconclusive, fighting in which many was killed.¹¹

The agreement to wait for 'Ali's arrival was clearly unfavorable to the rebels, and Talha persuaded al-Zubayr to break it and take 'Uthman b. Hunayf by surprise. On a windy and dark night, they attacked and seized him as he was leading the evening prayer in the mosque.¹²

'A'isha first advised them to kill 'Uthman b. Hunayf, but a woman reminded her of Ibn Hunayf's Companionship with the Prophet, she changed her mind and ordered them to imprison him. Now a Basran advised the captors to beat him and pluck his beard. Thus, they gave him forty lashes, plucked out the hair of his head, his eyebrows and eyelashes, and put him to prison.¹³

On the next morning, there was disagreement between Talha and al-Zubayr about who should now lead the prayer. Al-Zubayr as the older man was then given precedence, and thereafter the leadership was alternated between them day by day.¹⁴ At dawn on this morning, 'Abd Allah b. al-Zubayr with a group of men went to the treasury, which was guarded by forty (or four hundred) Sayabija, the former slaves from Sind converted to Islam. Since they resisted, they killed all of them, including their leader, Abu Salama Zutti, a pious man.¹⁵

The general command of the Basran army was given to al-Zubayr. 'A'isha insisted that he should be acclaimed merely emir, not caliph. A decision on the caliphate would be made after the victory.¹⁶

In the exchanges before the battle, 'Ali b. Abi Talib took off his armor; approached al-Zubayr and reminded him of an incident in their childhood when the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) predicted that al-Zubayr would unjustly fight 'Ali. Remembering the incident, al-Zubayr swore that he would never fight 'Ali.¹⁷ His son 'Abd Allah, however, accused him of cowardice. Al-Zubayr changed his mind again and on 'Abd Allah's advice, freed a slave in atonement for his broken oath.¹⁸

Al-Zubayr became frightened when he learned that 'Ammar b. Yasir was participating on the side of 'Ali. He remembered the famous *hadith* ascribed to the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) stating that 'Ammar was of the righteous and predicting that the rebel party would kill him.¹⁹ He might have recognized that he was merely being used as a pawn for the ambitions of 'A'isha and Talha, who were clearly guiltier of inciting the rebellions against 'Uthman than was 'Ali. To fight a bloody battle against the Prophet's cousin, pitting Muslims against Muslims, under such circumstances must have seemed both foolish and immoral to him. His son 'Abd Allah, in contrast, stood much closer to his aunt 'A'isha and was determined to fight 'Ali in revenge for the blood of 'Uthman.

There was obviously no room for negotiation and compromise. While 'A'isha and her partisans accused 'Ali of being morally responsible for the violent death of 'Uthman, 'Ali charged Talha and 'A'isha with it. 'Ali ordered a young man of 'Abd al-Qays to raise a copy of the Holy Qur'an between the battle lines and to appeal for adherence to its rules for concord. When this man was hit by arrows and then killed, 'Ali gave the order to advance and fight.²⁰

Al-Zubayr left the battlefield quiet early, and immediately set out on the route to the Hijaz. He first went to the mosque of Banu Mujashi' asking for 'Iyadh b. Hammad to seek his protection. He was told that 'Iyadh was in Wadi al-Siba', and he went there in search of him.²¹ Ahnaf b. Qays was already alerted that al-Zubayr was passing by. He remarked that al-Zubayr had led the Muslims to fight each other with the sword and now he was running away home. Three men followed al-Zubayr, and 'Amr b. Jurmuz al-

Mujashi'i killed him in Wadi al-Siba'. Ibn Jurmuz, sent by Ahnaf b. Qays with al-Zubayr's sword and head, was received by 'Ali, who questioned him about the circumstances under which he had killed him. 'Ali then unsheathed and looked at al-Zubayr's sword and commented that he knew it well; al-Zubayr had many a time fought in front of the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) but had come to an evil end.²²

Talha was mortally wounded not much later. Marwan hit him from behind with an arrow, which pierced his sciatic vein near the knee. The wound kept bleeding profusely. Attempts to stop bleeding failed, and Talha died lying under a tree. Then Marwan turned towards Aban b. 'Uthman and told him, "We have taken care of one of the murderers of your father." [159]²³

With the two leaders killed, the defeat was sealed and the armed conflict could have been halted. The presence of 'A'isha in her camel litter spurred the army on to a supreme, though senseless, effort to defend her. Ferocious fighting centered now around her camel and litter, which were protected by the armored plate, and continued for many hours. The men holding the camel's halter were killed one after the other.

The slaughter came to a sudden halt when 'Ali called for someone to hamstring the camel. As the animal dropped with its load, 'Ali and his close companions were able to approach. 'A'isha's brother Muhammad, on 'Ali's order, cut the straps fastening the litter to the animal's body and with some helpers, carried it off. The litter looked like the spikes of a hedgehog from arrows. 'Ali banged at the litter and said, "Surely, this Humayra of Iram wanted to kill me as she killed 'Uthman b. 'Affan." Then her brother Muhammad asked her, "Has anything hit you?" She said, "An arrow in the upper arm." He drew her towards himself and pulled it out.²⁴

When 'Ali faced 'A'isha, he severely reproached her for the ruins she had brought to the Muslims. It was now her turn to sue humbly for peace. "You have won the reign, Ibn Abi Talib, so pardon with goodness.²⁵ 'Ali ordered her brother Muhammad to escort her to the town then she was lodged in the house of Safiyya bint al-Harith b. Talha b. Abi Talha of 'Abd al-Dar. There she stayed for a few days. 'A'isha requested a delay, and she was granted, but after a few days, she left for Medina accompanied by a group of Basran women and some men of her choice.²⁶

'A'isha's defeat in the Battle of Camel put an end to her political career. The memory of the horrible bloodshed taking place around her litter in which so many men close to her lost their own lives and driving Muslims to kill Muslims must have disturbed her. Remembering this terrible event, she often told, "I wish I had died years before this."²⁷

The losses were substantial on both sides, though more grievous in 'A'isha's camp. Quraysh paid a heavy toll, affecting most of its clans. The lowest figures of all the dead, given are 2'500 for 'A'isha's army and 400 or 500 for 'Ali's.²⁸

Fighting Muslims opponents in a regular battle was a new experience in Islam, which the rebels initiated it. 'Ali could have treated his opponents like Abu Bakr as apostates and infidels and thus applied the

common rules of warfare to them, but he ordered at the beginning of the battle that wounded and captured enemies should not be killed, those throwing away their arms should not be fought, and those fleeing from the battleground should not be pursued. After the battle, he ordered that no war prisoners, women or children, were given to be enslaved and that the property of slain enemies was to go to their legal Muslim heirs.²⁹

Here we are not going to review the history of the early caliphate, but we hope we can explain some important events that our brother ignores them. To justify the rebellion against the Muslim community, he says that Talha and al-Zubayr were among 'the Ten Companions to whom the Prophet promised the Paradise', and they would go to the Paradise.³⁰

Considering the verse **﴿Allah was certainly pleased with the faithful when they swore allegiance to you under the tree.﴾** (Q: 48/18), he thinks there were only ten Companions to whom the Prophet promised the Paradise and Allah was only pleased with them. Allah revealed this verse in Hudaibiya, in A.H. 6. There were seven hundred [not ten] men with the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.A.). Not one of the Muslims who were present failed to swear allegiance except al-Jadd b. Qays. On this occasion, the verse of *ridhwan* (Q: 48/18) came down to the Prophet.³¹

Of course, we are neither the porters of the paradise nor the keepers of the hell. **﴿To Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He punishes whomever He wishes, and forgives whomever He wishes.﴾** (Q: 5/40). Our brothers know well the verses **﴿And obey Allah and His Apostle, and do not dispute, or you will lose heart and your power will be gone, and be patient, indeed Allah is with the patients.﴾** (Q: 8/46) and **﴿O you who have faith! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle, and do not render your works void.﴾** (Q: 47/33).

'Ali b. Abi Talib was the Prophet's successor, his brother,³² son-in-law and the second in rank to him.³³ Does our brother not think fighting the right Imam and the second rank to the Prophet may renders the works void? Moreover, God has not imposed holy war (*jihad*) on women. 'A'isha, who claimed revenge for the blood of 'Uthman, was neither an Islamic judge nor one of the 'Uthman's children or clan, the Apostle of Allah had confined her for protection (*habis*) and Allah had ordered her to stay in her house.³⁴

1. Ibid, 3: 18.

2. Tabari, Ta'rikh, 6: 3101

3. Ibid, 3102.

4. Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani (d. 852/1449), al-Isaba fi tamyiz al-sahaba, ed. 'A. M. al-Bajawi, Cairo, 1970-2, 3: 187.

5. Baladhuri, Ansab, 3: 19, 22; Tabari, Ta'rikh, 6: 3100.

6. Baladhuri, Ansab, 3: 22 - 23; Tabari, Ta'rikh, 6: 3102.

7. Baladhuri, Ansab, 3: 24; Maqdisi, 5: 211- 212.

8. A Companion joining Islam early or in the time of Khaybar, he had carried the banner of Khuza'a at the conquest of Mecca. 'Umar sent him to Basra to teach the people Islam (Ibn Hajar, 3: 26).

9. Baladhuri, Ansab, 3: 26.
10. Ibid, 24.
11. Ibid, 26.
12. Ibid, 26.
13. Tabari, Ta'rikh, 6: 3126.
14. Baladhuri, Ansab, 3: 27–28.
15. Baladhuri (d. 279/822), Futuh al-buldan, ed. Ridhwan Muhammad Ridhwan, Dar al-kutub 'ilmiyya, Beirut, reprint Qumm, 1404, 369.
16. Baladhuri, Ansab, 3: 59.
17. Ibid, 50.
18. Baladhuri, Ansab, 3: 52; Tabari, Ta'rikh, 6: 3185.
19. Ibn Sa'd, 3: 190.
20. Baladhuri, Ansab, 3: 37.
21. Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani (d. 356/967), al-Aghani, ed. Muhammad Abu al-Fadhal Ibrahim, Beirut, 1390/1970, 18: 55.
22. Ibn Sa'd, 3: 83; al-Shaykh al-Mufid, al-Jamal wa al-nusra li-sayyid al-'itra fi harb al-Basra, ed. 'Ali Mir Sharifi, Qumm, 1413, 388–9.
23. Baladhuri, Ansab, 3: 43; see ibid, 6: 257.
24. Ibid, 3: 46.
25. Ibid; Tabari, Ta'rikh, 6: 3186.
26. Baladhuri, Ansab, 3: 45.
27. Ibid, 3: 45–46.
28. Ibid, 3: 45; Tabari, Ta'rikh, 6: 3232.
29. Baladhuri, Ansab, 3: 57.
30. Salimi, 27 – 28.
31. See above, 25; Ibn Hisham, 3: 330; Tabari, Ta'rikh, 3: 1543
32. Salimi, 17.
33. See Q 3: 61.
34. See Q 33: 33.

The Aftermath of the Rebellion

Raising the flag of opposition against the then caliph the first civil war practically initiated in Islam. 'The one community¹ of Islam divided into different sects. The enmity between the Muslim sects, which began during the early caliphate, has continued up to now. Muslims kill their Muslim brethren and ignore their non-Muslim enemies. The rebellion made the cursed tree in the Holy Qur'an, which the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) saw in his vision, increase.

'Ali's victory at Basra spurred Mu'awiya to action. Soon after his arrival in Kufa, 'Ali sent Jarir b. 'Abd Allah al-Bajali, the former governor of 'Uthman in Hamadan, as an envoy to Mu'awiya with instructions to convey his letter to him and to ask him only for the reply, while indicate him to understand that 'Ali would not accept him as a governor.²

Mu'awiya dilatorily responded, "Let us consider, and I will explore the view of the people of Syria." He immediately wrote to 'Amr b. al-'As the primary accused in 'Uthman's murder. 'Amr followed the invitation. He was sure that he could now strike a bargain, which would satisfy his own wishes. It would be Egypt for life or no deal. 'Amr swore allegiance to Mu'awiya on the basis that he would back the Umayyad in their fight against 'Ali, while Mu'awiya would help him regain Egypt and guarantee him lifetime possession.³

The alliance between Mu'awiya and 'Amr b. al-'As constituted a formidable political force. 'Amr was a master of planning, and playing on political scenarios. Mu'awiya needed him. He knew he could trust 'Amr at this stage since 'Ali would never make a deal with him at Mu'awiya's expense.

Having gained broad allegiance in Syria, Mu'awiya hoped to draw some of the religious aristocracy in the holy cities to his side by a campaign of letters. 'Amr advised him against it but he insisted. Mu'awiya, however, could get the backing of a member of 'Umar's family without having to deceive him with false promises. 'Ubayd Allah b. 'Umar the threefold murderer, had been after his pardon, granted an estate near Kufa by 'Uthman. When 'Ali came to Kufa, 'Ubayd Allah discretely asked him for amnesty through some mediators, but 'Ali opposed his pardon.

Malik b. al-Ashtar, one of the mediators, informed 'Ubayd Allah, and he promptly fled to Mu'awiya.⁴ He tried to induce him to accuse and denigrate 'Ali in public, but 'Ubayd Allah would not do so.⁵ He, however, participated as one of the leaders of Mu'awiya's army in the battle of Siffin. A client warned him that Mu'awiya was intentionally exposing him to mortal danger. If he were to win, Mu'awiya would get the rule, and if he were killed, he would get rid of him. His wife, Bahriyya, also told him that he would certainly be killed and this is what Mu'awiya wanted. 'Ubayd Allah insisted on obeying his emir; and he was killed.⁶

The Kufans were less united in their support of war. When 'Ali appealed to them, "March against the enemies of God, march against the remnants of the confederates (*Ahزاب*), the murderers of Immigrants and the Helpers, Arbad b. Rabi'a stood up and shouted, "Do you want to make us march against our Syrian brothers and kill them for you? By God, we shall not do that."⁷ 'Adi b. Hatim al-Ta'i advised 'Ali to give another chance to letters and messengers before marching.⁸

Others were urging 'Ali to speed up his campaign before the enemy was fully prepared. 'Abd Allah b. Budayl b. Warqa' representing the Prophet's Companions, turning to people, asked, "How could Mu'awiya pledge allegiance to 'Ali when 'Ali has killed Mu'awiya's brother, Hanzala, his maternal uncle, al-Walid and his grandfather, 'Utba in a single stand?"⁹ In Syria, the preparations for war also went ahead. Abu Muslim al-Khawalani took the bloody shirt of 'Uthman which Umm Habiba, Mu'awiya's sister had sent from Medina and toured the garrison towns in Syria with it, inciting the people to revenge.¹⁰

'Ali set out from Nukhayla probably early in Dhu al-Hijja 36/657. When his army put up their camp, they found the watering place at the Euphrates occupied by Abu al-A'war and the Syrians, who prevented

them from reaching the water. They looked for another watering place nearby but could not find one. As they complained to 'Ali, he sent Sa'sa'a b. Suhan to tell Mu'awiya that he had come not wishing to fight him before proper warning, summons and argument; Mu'awiya's cavalry and foot soldiers had, however, started to fight them and now they were preventing his men from obtaining water.

He asked Mu'awiya to order his companions to give them access to the water until they had fully considered their conflict. However, if it pleased Mu'awiya, he could let his men fight it out about the water rather than the matter for which they had come. Mu'awiya consulted his advisers, and al-Walid b. 'Uqba urged him to deprive the enemy of water as they had done with 'Uthman. Al-Walid claimed that 'Uthman had been kept without cold water and food for forty days.¹¹

'Ali did not have to rouse his men into action. After they had been without water for a day and night, al-Ash'ath b. Qays came to him asking for permission to attack and requesting that 'Ali order Malik b. al-Ashtar to join him with his equestrians. 'Ammar b. Yasir got up and shouted among the people. A great number of men came to him. Then he said, "By God, even if they defeat us and chase us as far as the palm trees of Hajar¹² again we are right and they are wrong."¹³

Twelve thousand men volunteered, and they swooped down on Abu al-A'war and his men. Malik b. al-Ashtar had personally killed seven and al-Ash'ath five.¹⁴ At first, they said they would not allow the Syrians to get water. 'Ali ordered them, however, to take their needful and return to their camp.¹⁵

For two days, the armies stayed facing each other. Then 'Ali called for Abu 'Amra and some other of his companions and told them to argue with Mu'awiya and discover his view. Abu 'Amra appealed to him not to split the unity of this community and not to shed their blood in common strife. Mu'awiya interrupted his discourse. "Why don't you recommend that to your master?" Abu 'Amra replied, "My master is not like you. My master is the one most entitled among the creation to this matter by his excellence, religion, early merit in Islam, and close kinship with the Apostle of God." Mu'awiya asked, "What does he say then?" Abu 'Amra replied, "He orders you to fear God and to respond to the summons of your cousin to what is right. That is soundest for you in your worldly affairs and best for your end." Mu'awiya, "Shall we allow 'Uthman's blood to be spilled for nothing? No, by God, I shall never do that."¹⁶

There was now daily skirmishing until the end of Dhu al-Hijja. At the beginning of Muharram 37 a truce was agreed for the month in the hope that a peaceful settlement might be reached. Again, envoys went back and forth between the two camps. The discussion did not go any better than the previous time. As the sun set on the last day of Muharram, 'Ali ordered Marthad b. al-Harith to proclaim to the Syrians that they had failed to respond to his summons to the Book of God and persisted in their falsehood. The time for the battle had arrived.¹⁷

During the first seven days of Safar, prominent leaders on both sides were dispatched to fight each day, with only small retinue, as in a tournament. The all-out battle of Siffin began on Wednesday, Safar 8. The day had evidently gone well for Mu'awiya. The princes of the Umayyad family preferred to let others

do the fighting in revenge for their relative. Mu'awiya asked 'Ubayd Allah b. 'Umar to take the command of his heavily armed elite, the *shahba'* and to lead the attack. 'Ubayd Allah b. 'Umar, surprised that he was chosen for the task, felt that some member of the Umayyad family, who were the prime claimants for revenge, would have been more appropriate.

He went ahead, however, in spite of warnings from his client and his wife and he was killed. The tide turned, and the Syrians were pushed back to their camp. Mu'awiya fled from his pavilion and sheltered in one of the tents of his army.¹⁸ Elsewhere on the battlefield, that day 'Ammar b. Yasir, who was above ninety years old, was killed fighting for 'Ali. People cried the Companion of the Prophet was killed. The Messenger of God had predicted that 'Ammar would be killed by the rebel group.¹⁹

An appeal by Mu'awiya that one of his relatives seeks a duel among the Quraysh of Iraq was also met with derision by al-Walid b. 'Uqba and Marwan. Mu'awiya's brother 'Utba b. Abi Sufyan, however, proposed a duel with Ja'da b. Hubayra. 'Utba went out in the morning and called for Ja'da to come forward. They were both ready to fight. 'Utba gathered all his men and horses and came forward with a retinue of Sakun, Azd, and Sadif. Ja'da prepared with every means at his disposal. They met, and for a while, the men stood firm. Ja'da himself fought that day, but 'Utba became frightened, abandoned his equestrians, and fled speedily to Mu'awiya.²⁰

After a crucial, but indecisive battle, fighting continued through the night, which was remembered as the night of the rumble (*laylat al-harir*). The fighting was now mostly by sword, and the number of dead mounted. 'Ali won the battle at that night and recovered many of the dead from his army.²¹ When the morning came, the balance seemed to be moving in 'Ali's favor. Toward noon, some of the Syrians facing the center of 'Ali's army raised the copies of the Holy Qur'an tied to the heads of their lances.²²

The fighting stopped. 'Ali exhorted his men to continue fighting. He told them that Mu'awiya, 'Amr and their chief supporters were not men of religion and the Qur'an, but were raising it for deception and fraud. From many of the Qur'an readers view, however, the appeal to the Holy Qur'an proved irresistible.²³ Facing open mutiny, 'Ali gave in to their demand that he recall Malik b. al-Ashtar, who had advanced far towards the Syrian camp and sensed victory nearby. Malik b. al-Ashtar refused at first to respond and had to be warned that the army would abandon him.

His reproaches to the men that they were relinquishing the battle as he was hoping for victory and allowing themselves to be deputed for worldly motives were answered with curses. 'Ali had to restore order by affirming that he had accepted that the Holy Qur'an be made the judge between the two parties.²⁴

As the implication of Mu'awiya's proposal became evident, however, a substantial minority dissented. A group of about four thousand of men of insight and pious worshippers objected to the principle of arbitration. They evidently realized that Mu'awiya was not sincerely submitting to the Holy Qur'an but intended a game of political wheeling and dealing between two representatives of the opposing parties,

which would allow him to hold on to power.

Another, smaller, group abstained from either backing or opposing the proposal. The group opposed to the arbitration came to 'Ali and demanded that he resume the war. 'Ali was in favor of this. Those in favor of arbitration, however, insisted that the proposal was only right, fair and just. The opponents of the arbitration (the Kharijites) went away in anger. Some left for Kufa before the agreement was signed. Others stayed on, saying, "Perhaps he will repent and turn back."²⁵

The radical opponents of the arbitration decided to choose a leader among them. They pledged allegiance to 'Abd Allah b. Wahb al-Rasibi, known as Dhu al-Thafanat, on Shawwal 10, 37. They went to Jisr al-Nahrawan, east of the Tigris and invited the Basran to meet them there. After the Kharijites left Kufa, 'Ali's followers offered him a renewed oath of allegiance on the basis that they would be friends of those he befriended and enemies for those he took as enemies.²⁶

'Ali stipulated adherence to the Book of God and the *Sunna* of the Prophet in the oath. Rabi'a b. Shaddad al-Khath'ami, who had fought for him in the Battle of Camel and Siffin suggested, "On the *Sunna* of Abu Bakr and 'Umar." 'Ali objected that if Abu Bakr and 'Umar had been acting on anything but the Book of God and the *Sunna* of His Messenger, they would have been remote from the truth. The formula of the new oath of allegiance for 'Ali matched the invocation that the Prophet (S.A.W.A) made for him at Ghadir Khumm: "O God! Be the friend of him who is his friend, and be the enemy of him who is his enemy."²⁷

It was about this time that 'Ali had the *hadith* of Ghadir Khumm proclaimed in public. He appealed to the crowd assembled on the square (*rahba*) in front of the mosque of Kufa asking those who had heard the words the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) at Ghadir Khumm. Thirteen Companions came forward and witnessed that they had heard the Prophet say, "O God! Be the friend of him who is his friend, and be the enemy of him who is his enemy."²⁸

'Ali was eager to set out on the campaign as quickly as possible, before Mu'awiya could gather all his forces. He moved north via Shahi and Dabaha to the east bank of the Euphrates and al-Anbar. He had received disturbing news about the murder of 'Abd Allah b. Khabbab b. al-Aratt, his pregnant wife and Umm Sinan al-Saydawiyya by the Kharijites. His men turned to him, pleading that they could not leave their families and property behind at the mercy of such people and they urged him to fight them first. 'Ali sent to the Kharijites demanding the surrender of the murderers. If they did so he would leave them alone until he had fought the Syrians in the hope that they would change their minds in the meantime and return to the course of right.

They answered defiantly that all of them had killed these people and all considered the shedding the blood of 'Abd Allah b. Khabbab and his wife and that of any of 'Ali's partisans as licit. 'Ali asked them by what right they considered it licit for them to leave their community, to draw their swords against their own people, to investigate their views, and to spill their blood. He gave Abu Ayyub al-Ansari a banner of

safe conduct for anyone wishing to surrender. Some went to 'Ali and some left the battlefield. Others insisted on their beliefs and were ready to fight 'Ali. He gave the order to let the Kharijites attack first.

Many of the Kharijite leaders were killed. Four hundred wounded were found among the dead in the battlefield. 'Ali ordered them to be handed to their tribes for medical care. On 'Ali's side, only ten or less men were killed. 'Ali wanted to proceed immediately from al-Nahrawan to Syria. His men complained that their arrows were used up, their swords dulled, their spearheads had fallen off their lances, and urged him to return to Kufa so that they might restore their equipment and replenish their forces. Within days, his armies melted away, leaving but a few of the leaders with him. 'Ali realized that he had lost control over them and entered Kufa, abandoning the campaign.²⁹

Mu'awiya was pleased, when they informed him that 'Ali had turned off his route to Syria in order to subdue the rebels in his own rank, and was pleased and waited for further development. He called al-Dhahhak b. Qays and instructed him to attack the Bedouin Arabs loyal to 'Ali. Al-Dhahhak crossed the desert and attacked the pilgrims returning from Mecca, and robbed them of their belongings. 'Ali appealed to the Kufans to avenge the blood of their compatriots. Hujr b. 'Adi caught with al-Dhahhak near Tadmur. They fought for a while, and nineteen Syrians were killed as against two men of Hujr. In the cover of the night, the Syrians fled.³⁰ This type of ordinary attack, highway robbery, and murder now became a regular feature of the raids that Mu'awiya dispatched into 'Ali's territories, marking a new low in the character of inter-Muslim warfare.

Mu'awiya chose Busr b. Abi Artat al-'Amiri to lead a new raid into Arabia. Moving towards Medina, Busr stopped at every watering place to seize the camels belonging to the local tribes and had his men raid them while spearing their horses, along which they led. When they reached the next watering place, they would release the camels which they had and seize the fresh ones available there. As Busr entered Medina, he delivered a blistering sermon of vituperation and menaces to the Helpers, threatening them all.

From Medina, he moved on to Mecca, killing and looting on the way. While passing through the territory of the Banu Kinana, Busr chanced upon the two minor sons of 'Ubayd Allah b. 'Abbas, 'Abd al-Rahman and Qutham. He had entrusted his two sons to a man of Kinana so that they would experience life in the desert in accordance with custom among the noble families of Quraysh. When Busr seized the two boys and threatened to kill them, their Kinani guardian took his sword and went out to face Busr. Mu'awiya's general angrily questioned him, "We did not want to kill you, so why do you expose yourself to being killed?"

The man answered, "Yes, I shall be killed in protection of my guest. That will pardon me better before God and the people." Then he struck at the captors with his sword until he was killed. Busr had the two boys led before him and slaughtered them with a knife. A group of the women of Kinana came, and one of them told the savage, "You kill the men, but what for do you kill the children? By God, it was not the practice for them to be killed either in the Time of Ignorance or in Islam. By God, surely a regime which

can find strength by only killing the meek, the humble, and the tottering old, by denying mercy and cutting the bonds of kinship is a regime of evil.” Busr shouted, “By God, I wish to put the sword among you.” Though challenged by the women to do so, he refrained, recalling that his master had declared Kinana off limits for him.³¹

Reports of brutal savagery of Mu'awiya's general now forced 'Ali to act. Jaria b. Qudama set out from Kufa with a thousand men and recruited another thousand in Basra. Afterwards 'Ali sent another two thousand men under Wahb b. Mas'ud al-Khath'ami to join Jaria in Hijaz. 'Ali gave restrict instructions not to harm Muslims or non-Muslims protected by treaty, not to confiscate property or riding animals even if their own mounts were worn out and they were forced to continue on foot, and to perform their prayers regularly. Jaria moved quickly through the Hijaz to Yemen passing by the towns, the fortified places and stopping nowhere. He pressed on the Hadhramawt in pursuit of Busr b. Abi Artat. On his pursuit, Busr immediately fled leaving Hijaz.³²

The outrages committed by Busr in his raids of Arabia produced shock in Kufa and aided 'Ali in his efforts to mount a new offensive against Mu'awiya. The Kufans blamed each other for their past inaction. A group of the nobles came to see 'Ali and urged him for the campaign to Syria. In preparation for his campaign, 'Ali had written to Qays b. Sa'd b. 'Ubada, now governor of Azarbayjan to proceed speedily to Kufa. A large number of Muslims assembled there now submitting to his command and ready to move against the mutineer the son of the mutineer (*'asi b. 'asi*). 'Ali was delaying departure merely in expectation of Qays' arrival.³³

On Ramadhan 19, 40/January 26, 661, as he entered the mosque of Kufa to perform the Morning Prayer, 'Ali was met by 'Abd al-Rahman b. Muljam Muradi, a Kharijite from Egypt with the words, “The judgment belongs to God, 'Ali, not to you.” 'Ali b. Abi Talib was struck on the head with a poisoned sword.³⁴

Alas, 'Ali was assassinated at a time when his fortune, after lengthy crisis following Siffin, the failed arbitration and al-Nahrwan, seemed on the ascendant. The mood in Kufa and Basra had changed in his favor as Mu'awiya's vicious conduct of war, especially in Busr's Arabian campaign, had revealed the true nature of his reign. Experience had so far shown that whenever Syrians and Iraqis met in a battle in roughly equal terms, the Syrians usually gave way, first. The Iraqis, resuming the war with the bitter resolve of outwitted political underdogs, might well have triumphed militarily this time.

The loyalist believed that he was the best of Muslims after the Prophet and the only one entitled to rule them. He died on Ramadhan 21, 40. Before his death, he advised the faithful and his sons, “O sons of 'Abd al-Muttalib, you should not shed blood of Muslims shouting the Commander of the Faithful (*Amir al-Mu'minin*) has been killed. Beware; do not kill because of me except my killer. See, if I die with this stroke, then strike him one stroke for his stroke and do not mutilate the man, for I have heard the Messenger of God say, 'Avoid dismembering even though it may be a rabid dog'.”³⁵

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1. The Messenger of God saw in his vision that Abu Sufyan's sons or the sons of Hakam b. Abi al-'As go up his pulpit like the monkeys. He was much annoyed and God revealed this verse ﴿We did not appoint the vision that we showed you except as a test for the people and the tree cursed in the Qur'an. We deterred them, but it only increases them in great rebellion.﴾ (Q: 17/60). For more details about the Umayyads or the Hakamids as the cursed tree, see Ibn Abi al-Hadid, 9: 220; Ibn Kathir (d. 774/1373), *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'azim*, ed. Muhammad Husayn Shams al-Din, Dar al-kutub 'ilmiyya, Beirut, 1419/1998, 5: 85; Suyuti, *al-Durr al-manthur*, 4: 191.
 2. Nasr b. Muzahim Minqari (d. 212/827), *Waq'at siffin*, ed. 'Abd Al-Salam Muhammad Harun, Cairo, 1382, reprint in Qumm, 1403, 29 – 30.
 3. *Ibid*, 39–40; Baladhuri, *Ansab*, 3: 71.
 4. *Ibid*, 79.
 5. Minqari, 82 – 3.
 6. Ibn Sa'd, 5: 12.
 7. Minqari, 95; Baladhuri, *Ansab*, 3: 77.
 8. Minqari, 98.
 9. *Ibid*, 102.
 10. Baladhuri, *Ansab*, 3: 76.
 11. Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, 6: 3264–68; Minqari, 160–2.
 12. A village near Medina or a town in the Yemen. See Yaqut, 4: 953–4.
 13. Ya'qubi, 2: 189.
 14. Minqari, 174.
 15. Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, 6: 3269; Minqari, 162.
 16. Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, 6: 3270–2; Minqari 186–8.
 17. Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, 6: 3277–9; Minqari, 200–2.
 18. *Ibid*, 306–7.
 19. Ibn Sa'd, 3: 190; Ya'qubi, 2: 188; Baladhuri, *Ansab*, 3: 92; Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, 6: 3321.
 20. Minqari, 462–4.
 21. Minqari, 369.
 22. Baladhuri, *Ansab*, 3: 98.
 23. Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, 6: 3329; Baladhuri, *Ansab*, 3: 99.
 24. Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, 6: 3329–3332.
 25. Baladhuri, *Ansab*, 3: 112.
 26. Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, 6: 3367.
 27. See above, 34.
 28. Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, 4: 370.
 29. Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, 6: 3385–6.
 30. Abu Ishaq Ibrahim Thaqafi (d. 283/896), *al-Gharat*, ed. Mir Jalal al-Din Husayni (Muhaddith) Urmawi, Tehran, 1395, 2: 416–26; Baladhuri, *Ansab*, 3: 197–9.
 31. Thaqafi, 2: 614 – 16.
 32. *Ibid*, 2: 621 – 633.
 33. Baladhuri, *Ansab*, 3: 238.
 34. Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani (d. 356/967), *Maqatil al-Talibiyyin*, ed. Sayyid Ahmad Saqar, Dar al ma'rifa, Beirut, n.d., 41; al-Mufid, *Kitab al-irshad*, 12.
 35. *Nahj al-Balagha*, 2: 80.

Mu'awiya's Reign (The Collapse of Caliphate)

A few months after 'Ali's assassination, al-Hasan b. 'Ali, because of the disloyalty of his men, had to make peace with Mu'awiya to avoid further bloodshed. He surrendered reign over to him on the basis that he act in it according the Book of God, the *Sunna* of his Prophet and the conduct of the righteous caliphs. He stipulated that Mu'awiya should not be entitled to appoint his successor but there should be an electoral council; the people would be safe, wherever they were, with respect to their person, their property and their offspring; Mu'awiya would not seek any wrong against al-Hasan b. 'Ali secretly or openly, and would not intimate any of his companions. 'Abd Allah b. al-Harith and 'Amr b. Salima witnessed the letter and conveyed it to Mu'awiya to take cognizance of its contents and to attest his acceptance. ¹

Mu'awiya now moved with his army from Maskin to Kufa, where he first camped between al-Nukhayla and the storehouse for provisions. In his speech to the Kufans at al-Nukhayla, he laid out his vision of proper government. He reminded them that he had stipulated conditions, made promises to them to cut short the war, to persuade the people and calm them. He stated that his promises to al-Hasan b. 'Ali and anyone else were but dirt under his feet, which would not be kept. ²

While still camping outside Kufa, he faced a Kharijite rebellion led by Farwa b. Nawfal al-Ashja'i. Al-Hasan had already left for Medina together with his brother al-Husayn and his cousin 'Abd Allah b. Ja'far, accompanied by Mu'awiya as far as Qantarat al-Hira. The caliph now returned to the Kufans threatening them that if they would not take care of their turbulent brethren, he would withdraw his pardon of them. He told them that he had not fought them that they might pray, fast, perform the pilgrimage, and give alms, since they were doing that already. Rather, he fought them in order to command them as their emir, and God had granted him that against their will. ³

The year 41 came to be known as the year of the community (*'am al-jama'a*). The inter-Muslim war was over, and the unity of the community under a single caliph was restored. Yet it was not the old community that was resurrected; the universal brotherhood of Islam, the respect the sanctity of Muslim blood legislated by the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) would not return. Umayyad government, whose legitimacy founded on the claim of revenge for the caliph 'Uthman, kept pitting Muslims against Muslims, inciting suspicion, mistrust, hatred and constant strife.

The caliphate itself was transformed. No longer was the principle of early merit (*sabiqa*) and service in the cause of Islam, acknowledged. Instead, swords and soldiers, boots, the natural prop of despotism, determined thenceforth the identity of the vicegerent of God on earth! The caliph became counterpart of and successor to the Roman-Byzantine emperor. He ruled Muslims as his subjects, absolute lord over their life and death. He poisoned al-Hasan the grandson of the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) to remove a hurdle

to his appointment of his son Yazid to his succession. Many of the disaffected, smarting under the divisive Umayyad despotism, had not forgotten Mu'awiya's recognition of al-Hasan as his legitimate successor and al-Hasan's stipulation of electoral council.

Having acquired the sole role over the world of Islam, Mu'awiya carried on successfully bribing, cheating, extorting, intimidating, and murdering his way through his reign in order to consolidate his grip on money and power and to secure the succession of his unattractive son. Lacking Islamic legitimacy, his reign required the claim of revenge for the wronged caliph as a permanent legitimizing seal.

After the year of the community (*'am al-jama'a*), Mu'awiya wrote a letter to his tax collectors in which he said, "Let the conquered people refrain from mentioning any merit to Abu Turab or his kinsmen." So in every village and on every pulpit preachers stood up cursing 'Ali, disowning him, disparaging him and his house. In another letter he wrote, "Make search for those you can find who were partisans of 'Uthman and those who supported his rule and those who uphold his merits and qualities. Seek their company, gain access to them and honor them. Write down for me what everybody relates, as well as his name, that of his father and clan." Thus, they did until they had increased the number of merits and qualities of 'Uthman. In exchange he sent them presents, garments, gifts and [documents of] pieces of land. This was showered over Arabs *mawali* alike and it occurred on a large scale in every city, the people competing in ranks and worldly honors. Every lowly individual who went to any governors of Mu'awiya and related about 'Uthman a merit or a virtue was received kindly, his name was taken down and he was given preferential treatment.⁴

Regular public cursing of 'Ali, identified as the soul of the Prophet,⁵ in the congregational prayers thus remained a vital institution, which was not abolished until sixty years later by 'Umar II ('Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz). Marwan clearly recognized the importance of the cursing as a tool of government. He told 'Ali b. al-Husayn "No one was more temperate (*akaff*) towards our master than your master." 'Ali b. al-Husayn asked him, "Why do you curse him then from the pulpits?" He answered, "Our reign would not be sound without that." (*La yastaqimu lana hadha illa bi hadha*).⁶

Particularly useful for Mu'awiya's purposes was the public cursing of 'Ali in Kufa where, he hoped, it would bring out into the open the latent opposition to Umayyad rule, thus facilitating his measures of repression. When he appointed al-Mughira b. Shu'ba governor of Kufa, he instructed him, "Never desist from abusing and censuring 'Ali, from praying for God's mercy and forgiveness for 'Uthman, from disgracing the followers of 'Ali, from removing them and refusing to listen to them. Moreover, never cease praising the partisans of 'Uthman, bringing them close to you, and listening to them."⁷

Hujr b. 'Adi acted as the representative for the partisans of 'Ali. Whenever he heard that the government abusing 'Ali and praying for 'Uthman in the mosque, he stood up, quoting ﴿**O you who have faith, be maintainers of justice and witnesses for the sake of Allah.**﴾ (Q: 4/135). Then he gave witness that the one whom they censured and blamed was more worthy of excellence and the one whom they vindicated and extolled was more worthy of censure. Al-Mughira would warn him of the wrath of the

ruler but then left him alone. He did not wish to lose the other world by shedding the blood of the best men of the city for the sake securing Mu'awiya's power in this world.⁸

Al-Mughira vainly attempted to persuade Mu'awiya to change his policy. He pleaded that the caliph had now reached an advanced age. If he were to make a show of justice and spread goodness by displaying concern for his Hashimite kin and by strengthening his bonds with them, since he had no longer anything to fear from them, he would gain from that lasting fame and reward. Mu'awiya answered, "Far from it, would it be so. What fame can I hope for that would last? The brother of Taym [Abu Bakr] reigned, acted justly, and did what he did. As soon as he perished, his fame perished, except for someone occasionally saying, Abu Bakr. Then the brother of 'Adi ['Umar] reigned, strove, and put his shoulder to the wheel for ten years, but as soon as he perished, his fame perished, except for someone occasionally mentioning, 'Umar. Yet Ibn Abi Kabsha [Muhammad] is loudly advertised every day five times, 'I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of God.' What work could endure and what fame could last after that? No by God, there is nothing but burying, burying."⁹

Al-Mughira's successor was Ziyad b. Abih, now recognized, as Mu'awiya's illegitimate brother, who had already held the governorship of Basra for some time. He was determined to restore law, order, and ready to kill in order to make his point. The partisans of 'Ali b. Abi Talib with whom he wanted to deal now were, though loudly criticizing the caliph, neither engaged in armed rebellion, nor endangered the life of any Muslim. Ziyad thus had to provoke an incident to justify bloody repression. Pebbles thrown at his deputy in the mosque provided the occasion. He came hurriedly from Basra and delivered a sermon threatening Hujr with exemplary punishment.

Then he sent his police chief to summon him to the governor. Hujr escaped and for a while found shelter moving from one tribal quarter to another. Then he surrendered voluntarily after he had obtained a guarantee of safety from Ziyad with the condition that he would send him to Mu'awiya for judgment. When he appeared before the governor, Ziyad told him that he could not expect pardon after God had placed him in his power. He imprisoned him and swore that he would have killed him immediately were it not for his guarantee. Then he had Abu Burda b. Abu Musa al-Ash'ari draw up a letter of accusation. He testified, "Hujr b. 'Adi has renounced obedience, departed from the community, cursed the caliph, and incited to war and rebellion, gathered the masses to himself summoning them to break their oaths of allegiance and to overthrow the Commander of the Faithful Mu'awiya. He has committed a manifest act of infidelity towards God."

He summoned the tribal chiefs to do their duty and thus gathered seventy signatures. The witness of al-Sari b. Waqqas al-Harithi was written down although he was absent in his tax distraction. Shurayh b. Hani' al-Harithi, who did not testify, learned that his testimony had been recorded. He came forward denying it and denouncing the forgery. The Qadhi Shurayh b. al-Harith, whose testimony would evidently have been most useful for the governor, testified that Hujr had been most continuously fasting and praying. Ziyad added his name anyway among the witnesses. The Qadhi Shurayh now wrote to

Mu'awiya that his testimony recorded by Ziyad was false and that he testified that Hujr was one of those who perform the prayer, give alms, frequent the pilgrimage and *'umra*, command what is right and forbid what is wrong. His blood and property was inviolable.¹⁰ The caliph ignored this testimony and went back to his business.

Hujr wrote to him from prison assuring him that he and his companions stood by their pledge of allegiance to him and that only their enemies had testified against them. The caliph ruled that the testimony of Ziyad b. Abih was truthful. In the end, he released six of the fourteen accused because their Syrian relatives asked for their pardon. He refused the request of Malik b. Hubyra for the life of Hujr. The eight men were offered pardon if they would declare their dissociation from 'Ali and curse him; they refused; six were executed. The remaining two now asked the executioners to send them to the caliph, promising to say about 'Ali whatever the caliph said.

Led before Mu'awiya, Karim b. 'Afif appealed to him, "Fear God Mu'awiya, you will be transferred from this passing abode to the other, permanent abode and will then be asked what you desired by killing us and why you shed our blood." Mu'awiya, "What do you say about 'Ali?" He answered, "I say about him what you say. I dissociate from the religion of 'Ali with which he professed obedience to God." Mu'awiya did not want to release him, but Shamir b. 'Abd Allah asked him for the life of his relatives. Mu'awiya released him on the condition that he would not enter Kufa during his reign. When 'Abd al-Rahman b. Hayyan, the other surviving convict was led before the caliph, Mu'awiya asked him, "What do you say about 'Ali?" He replied, "Leave me and do not ask me, for that is better for you."

Mu'awiya, "By God I shall not leave you until you tell me about him." He said, "I witness that he was of those who mention of God often [*al-dhakirin Allah kathiran*], who command what is right [*al-amirin bi al-haqq*], who act with justice [*al-qa'imin bi al-qest*] and forgive the people [*al-'afin 'an al-nas*]." Mu'awiya, "What do you say about 'Uthman?" He answered, "He was the first one to open the gate of oppression and bolted the doors of the right [*awwal man fataha bab al-zulm wa 'rtaja abwab al-haqq*]." Mu'awiya now sent him to Ziyad and wrote to him, "This is the worst one you have sent to me. Kill him in the worst fashion." Ziyad sent him to Quss al-Natif, where he was buried alive.¹¹ For Mu'awiya the principle that the ruler must have authority to kill and pardon his subjects at his own judgment without being subject to the divine law was a vital tool of government. He had been waiting long for an occasion to establish it. Roman state ideology and tyranny triumphed thus over Islam and Arab tribal laws.

The shock was inevitably profound. Mu'awiya found it again convenient to resort the ruler's privilege of putting the blame on his underlings and subjects. Even 'A'isha, in spite of her aversion to 'Ali and his partisans, sent a noble Makhzumite to Mu'awiya to intercede for Hujr and his companions, but he arrived only after the execution.¹² The Basran 'Uthmanid al-Hasan al-Basri counted the killing of Hujr as one the four pernicious crimes (*mubiqa*) committed by Mu'awiya.¹³

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1. Baladhuri, Ansab, 3: 287.
 2. Abu al-Faraj, Maqatil al-Talibiyin, 69; Baladhuri, Ansab, 3: 291.
 3. Ibn Abi al-Hadid, 16: 14–15; Abu al-Faraj, Maqatil, 70.
 4. Ibn Abi al-Hadid, 11: 44.
 5. See Q 3: 61.
 6. Baladhuri, Ansab, 2: 407.
 7. Tabari, Ta'rikh, 7: 112.
 8. Ibid, 113–114.
 9. Ibn Abi al-Hadid, 5: 129–130.
 10. Baladhuri, Ansab, 5: 264; Tabari, Ta'rikh, 7: 134.
 11. Baladhuri, Ansab, 5: 266; Tabari, Ta'rikh, 7: 111–143.
 12. Tabari, Ta'rikh, 145.
 13. Tabari, Ta'rikh, 146.

Yazid's Reign and the Martyrdom of al-Husayn

b. 'Ali

Mu'awiya died in Rajab 60/680, while his son Yazid was in Hawran, on a hunting trip. Yazid wrote a letter to al-Walid b. 'Utba, the governor of Medina, asking him to take the allegiance of the people of Medina by force if necessary. He added, "Take the allegiance of 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar, 'Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Bakr, 'Abd Allah b. al-Zubayr and al-Husayn b. 'Ali, allowing them no excuses, if anyone of them refuses, have him beheaded and send me his head."

When al-Walid received the letter, he called for Marwan b. al-Hakam to consult with him concerning al-Husayn and Ibn al-Zubayr. Marwan advised him to send immediately for them and ask them to give their allegiance at once, if they refused, he should murder them before the news of Mu'awiya's death spread in the city. Late in afternoon, he called for al-Husayn and Ibn al-Zubayr. He read Yazid's letter to al-Husayn b. 'Ali reporting the death of Mu'awiya and asking the people of Medina to acknowledge him as his father's successor.

Al-Husayn answered that the governor would surely prefer to have him give his allegiance not in secret but rather openly with the rest of the people the following morning. Al-Walid agreed that al-Husayn should come with the rest of the people, but Marwan advised that he should imprison al-Husayn either until he would agree, or be executed. Al-Husayn, however, confronted Marwan with angry threats and left the governor's house.

That same night Ibn al-Zubayr fled secretly to Mecca, taking by-roads in order to avoid the pursuing forces. Al-Husayn headed towards Mecca by night, accompanied by his sons, his brother's (al-Hasan's)

sons, and his brothers, except for Muhammad b. Hanafiyya, two days before the end of Rajab. Unlike Ibn al-Zubayr, however, he followed the main road refusing to hide his intentions of opposition and revolt. Al-Husayn left Medina repeating the Qur'anic verse, **﴿So he left the city, fearful and vigilant. He said, 'My Lord, deliver me from the wrongdoing lot.﴾** (Q: 28/21). As he arrived in Mecca, he recited this verse, **﴿And when he turned his face toward Median, he said, 'May be my Lord will show me the right way'.﴾** (Q: 28/22).¹

Before his departure, al-Husayn wrote his final will and entrusted it to his brother Muhammad b. Hanafiyya at their last meeting. This contained another statement of the motives al-Husayn in championing the revolt against the Umayyad ruler. He wrote, "I have not risen up in revolt out of evil intent or greed, neither to perpetuate corruption nor wrongdoing. Rather I did so in quest of establishing right orders in the community of my grandfather. I wish to command right and forbid wrong and follow the example of my grandfather and my father 'Ali b. Abi Talib. If men would accept me in truth, it is to God that they would render acceptance, for He is worthy of truth. However, if they reject me I would bear it with patience and submit to God's judgment between the people, and me for He is the best judge."²

He stayed in Mecca for about two months. In the meantime, he received many letters and emissaries from Kufa calling him to lead the opposition against Yazid, and pledging their absolute support. In their letters, the Kufans insisted that they had no *imam*, and thus they urged al-Husayn to come to them that God may bring them together with him to the path of truth and divine guidance.³

He sent his cousin, Muslim b. 'Aqil, to Kufa to see if the people were united, and had committed themselves to an agreement, he should speedily inform him of that. Muslim at first stayed in the house of al-Mukhtar b. 'Ubayd Allah al-Thaqafi when he arrived in Kufa. Ibn Ziyad, the governor of Kufa, began to spread informers to find out the location of Muslim, forcing the latter to shift his base of operations to the house of Hani b. 'Urwa al-Muradi. When Ibn Ziyad finally learned of Muslim's hiding place he sent for Hani, whom he beat severely and finally executed.

When Muslim heard of the death of Hani, he went out with his supporters to invade the palace and kill Ibn Ziyad. The latter, however, using threats and bribes, told the notables of Kufa to talk to the mob outside and persuade them to desert Muslim. At last, they left Muslim alone; after a bitter struggle, they captured and brought him before Ibn Ziyad. After a long exchange of harsh words between the two men, Muslim was taken up to the roof of the palace and martyred, his head and corpse thrown down into the marker-place below in order to threaten the masses. He was killed on Dhu al-Hijja 9, 60/680.

News of Muslim's disaster had not yet reached al-Husayn because it had only happened on the day he set out. He knew that he had only two alternatives: to give allegiance to Yazid, and thus disobey a divine command and live the life of a coward and a traitor, or to resist and be killed if necessary. He left Mecca before completing his pilgrimage rites. Just outside Mecca, he met the famous poet, al-Farazdaq, who, with great surprise, inquired why he had left Mecca before completing his pilgrimage. Al-Husayn

answered, "Have I not left in haste I would have been arrested."⁴

To another man who asked the same question, al-Husayn gave a revealing answer. "The Umayyad usurped my possessions, and I bore that patiently; they reviled my honor and I bore that patiently too. Then they sought my life, and so I left."⁵

Al-Husayn pressed on swiftly and directly toward Iraq. He sent Qays b. Mushir al-Saydawi (or 'Abd Allah b. Yaqtur his foster brother) to Kufa. The envoy of al-Husayn b. 'Ali was arrested and sent to Ibn Ziyad. He ordered him to go up the pulpit and curse al-Husayn. Qays b. Mushir al-Saydawi went up the pulpit, praised, and glorified God. Then he said, "People, this man, al-Husayn b. 'Ali, the best of God's creatures, the son of Fatima, the daughter of Messenger of God is nearby. I am his messenger to you, answer him." Ibn Ziyad ordered to have him thrown from the top of the palace. They threw him and he was smashed to pieces.⁶

Al-Husayn and his companions were proceeding towards Kufa, when they came across a man from Kufa, he told them that he had only left Kufa after Muslim and Hani had been killed, and he had seen them being dragged by their legs into the market place. News of Qays b. Mushir al-Saydawi (or 'Abd Allah b. Yaqtur) also reached him. He gathered his men and took out a written statement to the people and read it to them,

"In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. News of the dreadful murder of Muslim b. 'Aqil, Hani b. 'Urwa, and 'Abd Allah b. Yaqtur has reached us. Our Shi'ite have deserted us. Those who would prefer to leave us may leave freely without guilt."

Most of those who attached themselves to al-Husayn, thinking him to be a victorious conqueror and hoping for much booty, began to disperse from him to right and left until there were only left with him those followers who had come with him from Medina, and a small group of those who had joined him.⁷

Ibn Ziyad sent al-Hurr b. Yazid al-Riyahi with a thousand equestrians to intercept al-Husayn and bring him captive to Kufa. He met al-Husayn near al-Qadisiyya, not far from Karbala'. The men and horses of al-Hurr were exhausted from the heat of the desert sun and al-Husayn ordered his men to give both men and animals water to drink. Al-Hurr again told al-Husayn of the situation in Kufa, and warned him of the dangers that lay ahead. When the time for afternoon prayers came, al-Husayn led the prayers of both camps. After the prayers, he delivered a short sermon in which he reminded the men of their letters to him.

He also reminded them of his status as the grandson of the Prophet (S.A.W.A.), that he was more worthy of their allegiance and leadership of the community than the Umayyad rulers were. Nevertheless, if they were now displeased with his coming, he indicated that he would return to the place from which he had come.

He spoke more specifically, of why he was taking such a risk, putting in danger his life and that of his

family and friends,

“O people, the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A) said during his life. “He who sees an oppressive ruler violating the sanctions of God, revoking the covenant, opposing the *Sunna* of Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.), dealing with the servants of God sinfully and cruelly; and does not show zeal against him in word or deed, God would surely cause him to enter his abode in the fire.”

Then he described the Umayyad rulers in the light of this prophetic *hadith*,

“These men have verily abided by the obedience of Satan and abandoned the obedience of the Merciful. They have displayed all corruption: annulling the limits of God, usurping the people's wealth, allowing what God had prohibited and prohibiting what He had sanctioned.”⁸

Al-Husayn declared that he was most worthy to be zealous in the cause of the divine law and *Sunna* of the Prophet. If those listening would join him in holy struggle, it would be for their good, if not, they would reject their share of reward for such an act of faith in the world to come. They protested that they were not among those who wrote to him. He brought out two saddlebags full of their letters, and put before them, and many were ashamed to see their names among those who had written.

On Muharram the second, 61/680 al-Husayn arrived in Karbala'. The next day a courier came from Ibn Ziyad and ordered al-Hurr to keep al-Husayn away from the water of the Euphrates, to deprive him of shelter and a place of refuge. He sent 'Umar b. Sa'd with four thousand men to Karbala'. There came a letter from Ibn Ziyad in which he ordered 'Umar b. Sa'd, “Prevent al-Husayn and his followers from getting water. Do not let them taste a drop of it just as was done with 'Uthman.” 'Umar b. Sa'd sent five hundred men as guards over the banks of the Euphrates, on the seventh of Muharram.

Ibn Ziyad, then, sent Shamir with a letter to 'Umar b. Sa'd ordering him to demand the unconditional submission of al-Husayn or, failing that, to kill him and his followers. Shamir carried Ibn Ziyad's message to 'Umar b. Sa'd on the ninth of Muharram. In the late afternoon 'Umar b., Sa'd gathered his forces and marched towards al-Husayn's tents. Al-Husayn was sitting by his tent, leaning on his sword and dozing. His sister, Zaynab bint 'Ali, heard the scream of men and horses and ran up to alert him. He woke up, startled and related a dream that he had just had of the Prophet, who told him, “O Husayn my beloved, you shall be coming to us soon.”⁹

Al-Husayn sent his brother 'Abbas to ask 'Umar b. Sa'd to postpone the confrontation until morning so that they could pray to God and seek His forgiveness. Al-Husayn went to his followers and relatives and told them, “I permit you to leave me. All of you can go away with the absolution of your oath, for there will be no obligation on you from me. All of them answered that they would not leave him to live after him. Al-Husayn and his followers spent the night before their death in prayers and recitation of the Holy Qur'an, so that their voices could be heard like the buzzing of bees.¹⁰

In the morning, he mobilized his followers after the Morning Prayer. He had with him thirty-two equestrians and forty foot-soldiers. When he confronted the enemy, he called people to listen to his

words; he praised and glorified God, and mentioned to what God is entitled. He called for blessings on the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) and on the angles and other prophets. Then he continued,

“Trace my lineage and consider who I am. Then look back at yourselves and remonstrate with yourselves. Consider whether it is right for you to kill me and to violate the honor of my womenfolk. Am I not the son of the daughter of your Prophet, of his trustee and his cousin, the first of the believers in God and the man who first believed in what His Apostle (S.A.W.A.) brought from his Lord? Was Hamza not, the lord of martyrs, my uncle? Was Ja'far not, the one who flies in Heaven, my uncle? Have you not heard the words of the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A) concerning my brother and me, 'These are the two lords of the youths of the inhabitants of Heaven?' There are among you, those, who if you asked them would tell you. Is this not sufficient to prevent you from shedding my blood?”

They answered him, “Submit to the authority of your kinsmen, the Umayyad, they have never treated you with anything, but what you liked.” Al-Husayn replied, “By God, I will never give you my hand like a man who has been humiliated; nor will I flee like a slave.” Then he called out **﴿I seek the protection of my Lord and your Lord, lest you should stone me.﴾** (Q: 44/ 20), **﴿Indeed I seek the protection of my Lord and your Lord from any arrogant one, who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning.﴾** (Q: 40/27.)¹¹

When al-Hurr heard al-Husayn's words and saw the uncompromising attitude of 'Umar b. Sa'd and his army, he defected to al-Husayn's camp with deep remorse and repentance. He stood facing to 'Umar's men and reproached them for killing al-Husayn. It was then that 'Umar himself drew an arrow, and shooting it at the direction of al-Husayn's camp. He said, “Bear witness for me before emir that I was the first to shoot an arrow.”¹²

They attacked al-Husayn and his followers on every side, but al-Husayn's followers fought fiercely. Then the cavalry attacked them and even though they were only thirty-two equestrians, they did not attack any side of the Kufan cavalry without putting it to flight. One of the Kufan commanders sent words to 'Umar b. Sa'd, “Don't you see what my cavalry is receiving today from this small number? Send the foot-soldiers and archers against them.” Al-Husayn's followers continued to fight fiercely against the enemy until midday. The number of killed and wounded among the followers of al-Husayn continued to grow until the sun began to decline. The men in al-Husayn's camp were so few that their losses stood out much more clearly than those of 'Umar b. Sa'd.

By early afternoon, about half men were killed. Al-Husayn led the few that remained in the prayer of fear (*salat al-khawf*). One of his followers stood before him to shield him from the arrows of the enemy, but he was shot with arrows, and fell dead.¹³ When nobody except a group of three members of his family was left al-Husayn moved against the people, until all the three were killed, and he was left alone. Then al-Husayn sat in front of the tent. He brought his son, 'Abd Allah b. al-Husayn ['Ali al-Asghar], who was just a baby and sat him on his knee. However, one the Banu Asad shot an arrow, which slaughtered the child.¹⁴

Despite being weighed down by wounds in his head and body, al-Husayn began to strike against the enemy with his sword and they scattered, to right and left, away from him. When Shamir b. Dhu al-Jawshan realized the position, he called for the cavalry and they came up at the rear of the foot soldiers. He ordered the archers to shoot and they showered al-Husayn with arrows until he became as a hedgehog is with the spikes.¹⁵

As al-Husayn was swaying back and forth, unable to move, Shamir spurred the equestrians on, saying, "What are you waiting for?" One man ran and dealt him a blow with his sword, which severed his left shoulder. Another stabbed him in the back and he fell on his face. Shamir bent down and cut off his head. Then they began to plunder al-Husayn. They even took the veils and garments of the women. They did not leave one of his women or daughters or the women of his family who did not have her clothes ripped from her back, taken away and removed from her forcibly.

Then 'Umar b. Sa'd called out his followers, "Who will volunteer to make his horse trample on al-Husayn's body?" Ten men volunteered and trampled on the body of al-Husayn with their horses until they had broken and bruised his back.¹⁶ As the women were carried away to Kufa, and passed by the corpses and dead still lying on the sand, Zaynab bint 'Ali b. Abi Talib cried out in lamentation,

"O Muhammad, on you the angels of heaven prayed. Behold al-Husayn naked under the sky, soiled with his blood and dismembered. O my Muhammad, your daughters are captives, and your male descendants lying dead blown about by the wind."¹⁷

When the captive with the heads of the martyrs arrived in Kufa, Ibn Ziyad had given the people a general summons and had ordered them to be present to see the heads. He sat before the people, and put the severed head of al-Husayn before him. He began to poke at the teeth with a cane. Zayd b. Arqam, a Companion of the Prophet, saw him poking the teeth with the cane, said, "Take your cane away from those two lips, for by God I have seen the Messenger of God touch these lips countless times."

The next morning Ibn Ziyad sent the head of al-Husayn to Yazid, after it had been taken through all the streets and tribes of Kufa. He ordered the women and the young boys to be made ready for traveling. He ordered 'Ali b. al-Husayn to be chained with a chain around his neck. Then he dispatched them, to follow the heads, with Shamir, the heads being put in front of him.¹⁸

When the heads were put in front of Yazid and among them was the head of al-Husayn he proudly gazed at the head before him and wished his ancestors of Badr were present before him to see how he had amply revenged them.

He continued,

Forsooth the sons of Hashim played with power, for neither a word came [from God] nor was a revelation sent. I would not therefore be a true descendant of Khindaf [his ancestral tribe] if I would not take revenge on the house of Ahmad [Muhammad] for all he had done.¹⁹

Yazid's desire for drinking wine, singing girls, playing lute, and hunting, playing with his tame monkey, licentiousness and incestuous marriage (*yashrabu al-khamr wa yankihu al-huram*) showed him as a frivolous libertine.²⁰

In the first year of his short reign of a little over three years, he martyred al-Husayn b. 'Ali. In the second year, he had his army pillage Medina. He summoned Muslim b. 'Uqba al-Murri, an old soldier who was deeply devoted to Umayyad. Since he was of great age and his infirmities had grown worse during the preparations for expeditionary force, Muslim set off in a litter. The army had been very well equipped, in anticipation of a difficult and detested campaign. Each soldier received a bonus of 100 *dinars*, in addition to his ordinary full pay. Reaching the oasis of Medina, Muslim went to pitch his camp on the Harra.

The Medinans had had time to dig and fortify a trench, on the vulnerable side of the town and it was there that a savage battle took place. At first, the battle went in the favor of the Medinan rebels, but it ended in the defeat of them, when Marwan obtained permission from the Banu Haritha to pass through their quarter with a detachment of cavalry and took the defenders the trench from the rear. The Medinans fled like ostriches. The Qurayshis were the first to take the flight and seek refuge in Mecca. Ibn Hanzala resisted bravely and fell with his eight sons (or most of them) and a number of men as resolute as himself.

The Syrians abandoned themselves to an appalling pillage that continued for three days. The soldiers took the opportunity to riot. The number of the victims differs from 4'000 to 10'000. They made the sacred district of the Prophet permissible for three days. They plundered the houses, killed the men and raped the women.

Many virgin girls were pregnant and gave birth to children with unknown fathers. Muslim compelled the defeated to renew their oath of loyalty to Yazid and demanded that they should recognize themselves to be the slaves of the caliph, who was thus free to sell them and their possession alike. Some individuals who refused to submit to this demand or who stipulated as a condition for their *bay'a*, that Yazid should undertake to follow the Holy Qur'an and the *Sunna* of the Prophet were executed.²¹ Muslim b. 'Uqba was then given the nickname Musrif b. 'Uqba (prodigal of human blood) because of the massacre of al-Harra.

In the third year of Yazid's reign, after a short stay in Medina, Musrif b. 'Uqba continued his way to Mecca where he had to fight 'Abd Allah b. al-Zubayr. Ka'ba was set on fire in the war against Ibn al-Zubayr. The town was bombarded with catapults (*manjaniqs*). They fought in the secure sanctuary of Mecca.²² Fighting continued until Yazid's death. He died in Hawwarin in 64/684. Ibn 'Arrada a minor Khurarsanian poet described the end of the kingdom of Umayyad as,
The body of Yazid laying in his pleasure palace at Hawwarin, with a cup next to his pillow and a wine skin whose nose was still bleeding.²³

Our Sunnite brother believes that, having elected [Abu Bakr in the Saqifa], the Muslim got rid of a

hereditary government based on ancestry and blood. If one Hashimite, who was of course worthy for this task, had been elected at the first stage, both the worldly government, and religious and spiritual leadership would have been stabilized and limited to Banu Hashim. It would have led to a theocracy and priesthood ecclesiasticism, which now exists among the Christians.

Moreover, the same deviation that arose among the Christian, Magus and Buddhist priests would occur in the Muslim community, and the followers of this faith. The leadership of the community, the right to vote, and economical interest would be excluded to one family. During ages, a special group of people would be privileged to all other men. Abu Bakr's election was neither a precipitate and ill-considered deal, nor a predetermined plan, which came true. It was a divine arrangement that God the Powerful, His decree and His will wanted to make Islam prevail over all religions and to keep the unity of word.²⁴

We believe that if 'Ali, a Hashimite, who was of course worthy for this task, had been elected at the first stage, the blessed tree (*ahl al-bayt*)²⁵ would govern Islam, and the cursed tree (U26 mayyad) would not grow. God explicitly and implicitly had introduced the Prophet's successor and the elevated position of the Apostle of God's family above the rest of the faithful. Certainly, if 'Ali, the Hashimite, had been elected, the Prophet would not witness people rush towards the house of Fatima, who was still bereaved of her father's death.

He would not view the martyrdom of his grandson al-Husayn and his naked body under the sky soiled with his blood and dismembered, his body trampled on with horses, broken and bruised back. He would not observe his daughters and his grandson 'Ali b. al-Husayn be captives and fastened with chains around their necks; his male descendants lie dead blown about by the wind and the severed head of al-Husayn be poked at the teeth with a cane. He would not see the Umayyad and the 'Abbasid be his successor and his progeny, the citadels of the pious and the repositories of knowledge, be removed from their office.

He would not examine the sacred district of Medina be permissible for three days. The houses in Medina be plundered. the men would be killed and the women be raped; many virgin girls be pregnant and give birth to children with unknown fathers and Muslims recognize themselves as the slaves of the caliph, who was thus free to sell them and their possession alike; Ka'ba be set on fire and the town be bombarded with catapults (*manjaniqs*).

We saw that a few years after the Prophet's death, the Umayyad collapsed the caliphate. The caliphate itself was transformed. No longer was the principle of early merit (*sabiqa*) and service in the cause of Islam, acknowledged. Instead, swords and soldiers, boots, the natural prop of despotism, determined thenceforth the identity of the vicegerent of God on earth! The caliph became counterpart of, and successor to the Roman-Byzantine emperor. He ruled Muslims as his subjects, absolute lord over their life and death.

Mu'awiya carried on successfully bribing, cheating, extorting, threatening, and murdering his way through

his reign in order to consolidate his grip on money and power and to secure the succession of his unattractive son Yazid. Lacking Islamic legitimacy, his reign required the claim of revenge for the wronged caliph as a permanent legitimizing seal. This was the product of the Saqifa. The cursed tree succeeded the blessed tree.

'Umar b. al-Khattab says, "By God, the oath of the allegiance for Abu Bakr was merely a precipitate deal (*falta*) which then was carried out."²⁷ However, our brother says, "Abu Bakr's election was neither a precipitate and ill-considered deal, nor a predetermined plan, which came true." We wonder which of them is right.

The unity of word and the privilege of Islam over all religions was an ideal that never came true. God says **﴿And obey Allah and His Apostle, and do not dispute, or you will lose heart and your power will be gone; and be patient, indeed Allah is with the patient.﴾** (Q: 8/46).

When the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) passed away, 'Ali was faced with two problems: The problem of losing his legitimate right and the problem of vanishing Islam. He realized that Islam was more important than his right. Nevertheless, he did not split the unity of the Muslim community.

He renounced his claim rather than seeing harm to Islam. He found that endurance thereon was wiser. Therefore, he adopted patience "although there was mote in the eyes and suffocation in the throat".²⁸ However, his enemies ignored Allah and His Apostle's ordinance and a few years after the Prophet's departure, they initiated the first civil war in Islam.²⁹

They revolted against the central caliphate and their then Imam and divided the community of Islam into two enemy groups. The gap between Muslim parties was deeper, the enmity between Muslims became severer during the Umayyad reign, and beyond, which has continued up to now. There is only one God, one Prophet, one Holy Qur'an and one Qibla, but there are some Islamic sects, which excommunicate other Muslims and kill each other.

The Muslim caliphs and emperors conquered many countries, but the Islamic virtues could not prevail over all territories. The Mongol emperors occupied more lands than that of the Muslims, but we do not appreciate them for their conquests. The ideal of Islam was to preach moral characteristics and prominent virtues. Many Muslim countries are now subjected to Christian or Jew governors. The Zionists govern Palestine and the Farther Mosque (*masjid al-aqsa*). The Americans occupied Afghanistan and Iraq. They imprison and kill Muslims, exploit their natural sources and rule over their people.

1. Tabari, Ta'rikh, 7: 216-222.

2. Mulla Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (d. 1110/1699), Bihar al-anwar, al-Maktaba al-Islamiyya, Tehran, 1384, 44: 329.

3. Tabari, Ta'rikh, 7: 234.

4. Ibid, 278.
5. Ibn Tawus al-Baghdadi (664/1266), al-Luhuf 'ala qatla al-tufuf, 2nd edition, al-'Irfan, Sayda, 1347/1929, 39.
6. al-Mufid, Kitab al-irshad, 327–330.
7. Ibid, 333–334.
8. Tabari, Ta'rikh, 7: 300.
9. Tabari, Ta'rikh, 7: 307–318.
10. Tabari, Ta'rikh, 324–325.
11. Tabari, Ta'rikh, 330.
12. Ibid, 330.
13. al-Mufid, Kitab al-irshad, 357.
14. Ibid, 360.
15. Ibid, 362.
16. Ibid, 365.
17. Tabari, Ta'rikh, 7: 370.
18. al-Mufid, Kitab al-irshad, 368.
19. Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani, Maqatil, 120.
20. Ibn Sa'd, 4: 212; Baladhuri, Ansab, 5: 229.
21. Tabari, Ta'rikh, 7: 421.
22. Ya'qubi, 2: 250–252.
23. Tabari, Ta'rikh, 7: 488.
24. Salimi, 8–9.
25. See Haskani, 1: 406–409.
26. For more details about the Umayyads or the Hakamids as the cursed tree, see Q 17: 60; Ibn Abi al-Hadid, 9: 220; Ibn Kathir, Tafsir, 5: 85; Suyuti, al-Durr al-Manthur, 4: 191.
27. See above 60 f.
28. See above 76.
29. See above 95.

The Merits of the Companions

The author of the above-mentioned book has attributed some merits to the Companions and has devoted a chapter to “Abu Bakr in the shade of the Qur'an”¹, another one to “Proof of Abu Bakr's caliphate in traditions and narrations”² which we review them as follow:

He narrates the verse ***﴿If you do not help him, then Allah has already helped him when the faithless expelled him, and one of the two when the two of them were in the cave, he said to his companion, do not grieve; Allah is indeed with us. Then Allah sent down His composure upon him.﴾*** (Q: 9/40), and mentions that God has honored Abu Bakr in this verse.³

We should say that this verse is not an admiration, but rather a narration. It refers to the emigration of the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) when he had left his house for Medina, he returned to Abu Bakr, he

picked him up and they proceeded towards the cave of Thaur. Those who were looking for the Prophet climbed up to the cave. The voices were not far off; they were still approaching the cave. Abu Bakr felt grief. The Prophet (S.A.W.A.) looked at him and said, ﴿**Do not grieve; Allah is indeed with us.**﴾ Then **Allah sent down His composure upon him.**﴾ (Q: 9/40). The two of them stayed in the cave for three days. Then they left for Quba' near Medina.⁴

Of course, accompanying the Prophet is a great merit and honor, but more meritorious than he, is 'Ali who was continuously with the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) from his early childhood, and would follow him “like a young camel following in the footprints of its mother”.⁵

He believes the verses ﴿**The God-fearing shall be spared it. He, who gives his wealth to purify himself,**﴾ (Q: 92/17–18) refer to Abu Bakr.⁶ Quoting the verse ﴿**Indeed the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most God-fearing among you.**﴾ (Q: 49/13) he concludes that Abu Bakr is the most God-fearing among the Companions.⁷

Abu Bakr himself confessed before his death, “I wish I had not committed three acts. I wish I had not broken into Fatima's house even if it had been closed to us for fighting. I wished I had not burned al-Fuj'at (al-Fujah) al-Sullami alive. I wish I had killed him or made him free. I wish, on the Saqifa day, I had submitted caliphate to 'Umar or Abu 'Ubayda, so as one of them had been emir and I had been his vizier.” Then he added, “I wish I had asked the Prophet (S.A.W.S.) about the matter of caliphate; to whom did it belong so as the people did not argue about it?”⁸

He ignored the great sin of his commander, Khalid b. Walid, when he ordered the execution of a Muslim, Malik b. Nuwayra, and married his widow at the same night.⁹ We wonder how such a man could be more God-fearing than one who never worshipped any god but the One God and never committed any sins, neither in the Time of Ignorance nor after the advent of Islam.

Quoting the verse ﴿**Allah was certainly pleased with the faithful when they swore allegiance under the tree.**﴾ (Q: 48/18); he says that Abu Bakr was among those who swore allegiance under the tree.¹⁰

The pledge of Good Pleasure (*al-ridhwan*) took place under a tree in Hudaybiya; there were at least seven hundred men present there;¹¹ and Abu Bakr was one of them. God says ﴿**O you who have faith! Obey Allah and obey the Apostle, and do not render your works void.**﴾ (Q: 47/33).

Elsewhere He says ﴿**Say, I do not ask of you any reward for it except the affection for [my] relatives.**﴾ (Q: 42/23). May God be pleased with whom His Apostle's daughter, Fatima is displeased?¹² God knows best.

He says the verse ﴿**Let the well off and the opulent among you not fail to give the relatives and the needy, and to those who have emigrated in the way of Allah.**﴾ (Q: 24/22) refer to Abu Bakr.

It is true. This verse refers to Abu Bakr and his nephew, Mistah b. Uthatha b. al-Muttalib b. 'Abd Manaf.

The latter had been among those who cast doubt on the fidelity of 'A'isha during the affair of her absence from the camp of Muslims. Abu Bakr, deeply offended by his conduct, vowed that he would no longer provide him as he had done in the past, even after Mistah formally repented of his mistake. The Holy Qur'an, however, commanded him not to neglect his duty towards his needy nephew and to pardon him. It is a reminder, not an approval.

He believes the verse ﴿**O you who have faith! Should any of you desert his religion, Allah will soon bring a people whom He loves and who loves Him, [who will be] humble towards the faithful stern towards the faithless.**﴾ (Q: 5/54) is concerned with Abu Bakr.

As we saw above¹³ it was 'Ali b. Abi Talib about whom, in the battle of Khaybar, the Prophet said, "If Allah wills, tomorrow I will give the standard to a man who is an assailant not a runaway, he loves Allah and His Apostle; and Allah and His Apostle love him. He will not come back until Allah conquers by his means".

He says the verse ﴿**Will you kill a man for saying, "My Lord is Allah."**﴾ (Q: 40/28) refers to Abu Bakr.¹⁴

The whole story is ﴿**And Pharaoh said, 'Let me slay Moses, and let him invoke his Lord. Indeed I fear he will change your religion, or bring forth corruption in the land.' Moses said, 'Indeed I seek the protection of my Lord and your Lord from every arrogant one who does not believe in the day of Reckoning'. Said a man of faith from Pharaoh's clan, who concealed his faith, will you kill a man for saying, "My Lord is Allah" while he certainly brings you manifest proofs from your Lord.**﴾ (Q: 40/26–28).

The text clearly implies that these verses are about Moses and Pharaoh, not about Muhammad (S.A.W.A.). Moreover, Abu Bakr never concealed his faith. When he became a Muslim, he showed his faith openly and called others to God and to His Apostle.¹⁵ The only man among Quraysh who concealed his faith and never showed it openly was Abu Talib, but it is not concerning him, either.

The author relates some traditions concerning the merits of Abu Bakr and 'Umar.

Before discussing the proof of Abu Bakr's caliphate in traditions and narrations, it is necessary to say that fabricating traditions began even during the Prophet's life. 'Ali b. Abi Talib says, "Certainly what is current among the people is right and wrong, true and false, repealing and repealed, general and particular, definite and indefinite, exact and surmised. Even during the Prophet's days false saying had been attributed to him so much so that he had to say in his sermon that, 'whoever attributes falsehood to me makes his abode in Hell'."¹⁶

After the year of the community (*'am al-jama'a*),¹⁷ at the end of his letter Mu'awiya wrote to his tax collectors. "When this letter from me reaches you, summon the people to relate the merits of the Companions and the first caliphs. Do not let any Muslim relate anything about 'Ali b. Abi Talib without

bringing something that contradicts this about the Companions. This I like better and it pleases me more, it invalidates Abu Turab's claim and those of his Shi'ite in a more definitive way and it is for them more difficult to bear than the virtues and merits of 'Uthman.”

Mu'awiya's letters were read out to the people, and many fabricated reports concerning the merits of the Companions without any grain of truth were related. The people went out of their way in relating reports in this vein until they spoke thereof in glowing terms from the pulpits. The teachers in the schools were instructed to teach their young pupils in a vast quantity of these until they related them and studied them just as they studied the Qur'an, and until they taught these to their daughters, wives and servants. God knows how long they persisted to this activity. 18

'A'isha, as it is well known, championed her father's right to the succession of the Prophet and backed the caliphate of his appointed successor, 'Umar. In the election of the *shura* after the murder of 'Umar, she clearly preferred 'Uthman to 'Ali. She soon became, however, a vocal critic of 'Uthman's conduct as caliph and her agitation against him contributed to the outbreak of open rebellion. When 'Uthman was murdered by the rebels and they raised 'Ali to the caliphate, she immediately turned against him, claiming the revenge for the dead caliph.

After the defeat of her Umayyad alliance in the Battle of Camel, she withdrew from active politics. However, she never criticized Mu'awiya for the public cursing of 'Ali b. Abi Talib in the congregational prayers. She ignored Mu'awiya's bribing, cheating, bribing extorting, frightening, and murdering his way through his reign and appointing his impious son Yazid to his succession. When they killed her brother Muhammad b. Abi Bakr, put him inside the carcass of a donkey, and burned, she only cursed Mu'awiya and 'Amr b. al-'As in the *qunut* of her prayers and she did not criticize them openly. 19

The burial of al-Hasan b. 'Ali in Medina provoked fighting between the Hashimite and the Umayyad. Al-Hasan had instructed his family before his death to bury him with his grandfather if they did not fear evil. When they proposed interring him next to the Prophet, Marwan interfered, declaring, "Uthman will not be buried in Hashsh Kawkab and al-Hasan here." The Banu Hashim and Bau Umayya assembled, each group with their supporters, brandishing their weapons. Abu Hurayra, this time taking the side of the Prophet's family, asked Marwan, "Will you prevent al-Hasan b. 'Ali from being buried in this place when I have heard the Messenger of God say about him and his brother al-Husayn b. 'Ali that they are the two lords of the youth of the inmates of Paradise?"

Marwan told him, "Leave us alone. The *hadith* of the Prophet would be lost if nobody but you and Abu Sa'id Khudri had preserved it. You have become a Muslim only at the siege of Khaybar." Abu Hurayra protested that he had indeed accepted Islam in Khaybar, but from then on, he stayed constantly with the Prophet and knew everyone whom he loved and whom he hated, for whom he prayed and whom he cursed. However, 'A'isha taking the side of Bau Umayya, said, "The apartment is mine. I shall not permit anyone to be buried in it." Al-Hasan b. 'Ali then was buried in Baqi' al-Gharqad. 20

On fabricating traditions, it is worth narrating the following anecdote from Ibn Hibban: Yahya b. Ma'in and Ahmad b. Hanbal once came together in the mosque of al-Rusafa, where a storyteller (*qass*) preached to the people. He used to say, "Ahmad b. Hanbal and Yahya b. Ma'in once related to me, on the authority of 'Abd al-Razzaq, from Ma'mar, from Qatada, from Anas. That the Messenger of God is reported to have said, "He who says *la ilah illa Allah* causes a bird to be created from every word; its beak is made of gold and its plumage of pearls." Ahmad and Yahya looked at one another and asked each other, "Did you really transmit this tradition?" They both swore that, they had never heard it until that moment. They waited until the storyteller had finished and collected his money.

Then Yahya beckoned to him and asked him to draw nearer. Thinking that another coin would come his way, he did so and Yahya asked him, "Who related this tradition to you?" Yahya b. Ma'in and Ahmad b. Hanbal was the answer. Then he said, "But I am Yahya b. Ma'in and this man is Ahmad b. Hanbal and we have never heard this mentioned as a prophetic tradition. If you have to tell obvious lies, do not bother us with them."

"Are you really Yahya b. Ma'in?" the storyteller asked. "Yes." "I have always heard that Yahya b. Ma'in is stupid," the man proceeded, "and I have never set eyes on him until this moment." Yahya said, "But how do you know I am stupid?" The storyteller replied, "As if there were in the whole world no other Yahyas or Ahmads except you two! I have written down from seventeen different people called Ahmad b. Hanbal apart from this man here." Then Ahmad b. Hanbal wrapped his face in the sleeve of his cloak and said "Let him be." With wicked glee, the storyteller watched them go.²¹

Regarding this preliminary, we will discuss the merits of the Companions.

1. Hudhayfa said, that the Messenger of God had said, "I do not know how long I will live among you, so you should follow Abu Bakr and 'Umar after me."²²

The Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.), from the beginning of his mission to the end of his life continuously appointed 'Ali b. Abi Talib to his succession.

a) When the Warning Verse (Q: 26/214) came down, he invited his nearest kinsfolk and called them to God. The men remained silent and 'Ali, though the youngest, said, "O Prophet of God, I will be your helper in this matter." The Messenger of God (S.A.W.A) laid his hand on the back of 'Ali's neck and said, "This is my brother, my executer and my successor among you. Hearken to him and obey him."²³

b) In A.H. 9, while the Messenger of God with his Companions was making for the Byzantines (Tabuk), he left 'Ali behind to look after his family. The hypocrites spoke evil of him, saying that he had been left behind because he was a burden to the Prophet and he wanted to get rid of him. On hearing this, 'Ali seized his weapons and caught up with the Messenger of God when he was halting in al-Jurf, and repeated to him what the hypocrites were saying. The Prophet (S.A.W.A) replied, "They lie. I left you behind because of what I had left behind, so go back and represent me in my family and yours. Are you not content, 'Ali, to stand to me as Aaron to Moses, except that there will be any prophets after me?"²⁴

c) On his return from the Farewell Pilgrimage, he stopped at Ghadir Khumm to communicate God's revelation (Q: 5/67) to the pilgrims who accompanied him before they dispersed. Taking 'Ali by the hand, he declared, "He of whom I am the master (*mawla*) this man, 'Ali, is also the master." He pleaded, "O God, Be the friend of him who is his friend, and be the enemy of him who is his enemy; support whom he supports him and desert whom he deserts. Then Gabriel came down and revealed this verse,

﴿**Today the faithless have despaired of your religion. So do not fear them, but fear Me. Today I have perfected your religion for you, I have completed My blessing upon you, and I have approved Islam as your religion.**﴾ (Q: 5/3.).

Then 'Ali received in his tent, the congratulations of the Muslim men and women who greeted him with the title of the Commander of the Faithful (*Amir al-Mu'minin*), among them was 'Umar b. al-Khattab.²⁵

2. Qays b. 'Ubada said that 'Ali b. Abi Talib had said, "Once the Messenger of God was ill for some days and nights. At the time of the call to prayer, he told me to say Abu Bakr to lead the prayers. When he (S.A.W.A.) died, we considered the prayer is the standard of Islam and the pillar of the faith. Therefore, we were pleased for our world with someone whom the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) was pleased for our faith. And we pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr."²⁶

While the Prophet's illness began and grew more serious, despite the fact that he could barely lift himself off the ground through weakness, he arose and decided to go to the mosque. 'Ali took his hand and al-Fadhl took the other. He leaned on them both and his feet dragged a trail along the ground because of his weakness. When he came out into the mosque, he found Abu Bakr had already got to the *mihrab*. He indicated with his hand that he should withdraw and Abu Bakr withdrew. The Messenger of God took his place. He said the *takbir* and began the prayer, which Abu Bakr had begun before without taking any account of what he had already performed.²⁷

The Prophet (S.A.W.A) did not let Abu Bakr continue leading the communal prayers. How did he tell 'Ali to say Abu Bakr to lead the prayers at this time?

In the Guardian Verse (Q: 5/55), God implicitly refers to 'Ali b. Abi Talib as the successor to the Prophet.²⁸ The Prophet does not speak out of his own desire and it is not reasonable to, contrary to his previous will, say, "You should follow Abu Bakr and 'Umar after me." Moreover, 'Ali b. Abi Talib and Banu Hashim did not swear allegiance to Abu Bakr after the Prophet's death. 'Umar and his companions took charge of securing the pledge of allegiance of all residents in Medina.

They rushed towards the house of Fatima, who was bereaved of her father's death, and the Companion al-Zubayr with some of the other Emigrants had assembled there. 'Umar came to the house and told, "By God, I will set the house on fire, unless you come out and swear allegiance to Abu Bakr." Then he broke into the house. Fatima came out and told them, "By God, you should go out of my house, or I will unveil my hair and bewail before God."²⁹

Fatima lived a short time after her father: seventy-five or forty days. She made a will to be buried

secretly at night, in order to prevent her enemies' attendance.³⁰ If 'Ali b. Abi Talib had sworn allegiance to Abu Bakr his house would not have been rushed and set on fire.

3. Jubayr b. Mut'im said that, "Once a woman came to the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) and consulted him about a business. He told her to come later. She asked, 'If I come and cannot see you (if you were dead), whom may I confer with then?' He said, 'If you cannot find me, then discuss with Abu Bakr'."³¹

This tradition and the preceding ones are contrary to the previous statements of the Messenger of God who appointed 'Ali b. Abi Talib as his successor.³²

4. 'Ali b. Abi Talib said that, the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) had said, "Abu Bakr and 'Umar are the two lords of the old of the inmates of Paradise, except the prophets and the messengers."³³

The author himself knows that the Paradise inmates are the young and the old will become young while in the Paradise.³⁴ This is an inexpertly fabricated tradition, imitating the famous one; al-Hasan and al-Husayn are the two lords of the youth of the inmates of Paradise.³⁵

5. 'Ali b. Abi Talib said that, "The best of the community after its Prophet are Abu Bakr and then 'Umar."³⁶

'Ali b. Abi Talib openly criticizes the caliphs before him. In *Shiqshiqiyya* Sermon³⁷ he says, "By Allah so and so [the son of Abi Qahafa] dressed himself with it [the caliphate] and he certainly knew that my position in relation to it was the same of as the position of the axis in relation to the hand-mill. The floodwater flows down from me and the bird cannot fly up to me. I put a curtain against the caliphate and kept myself detached from it.

Then I began to think whether I should assault or endure calmly the blinding darkness of tribulations wherein the grown up are feeble and the young grew old and the true believer acts under strain until he meets Allah. I found that endurance thereon was wiser. Therefore, I adopted patience although there was mote in the eye and suffocation in the throat". He never believed in them. During the election (*shura*), 'Uthman had twice pledged without hesitation that he would follow the Book of God, the *Sunna* of His Prophet, and the practice of Abu Bakr and 'Umar, while 'Ali had cautiously stated that he would do so to the limit of his ability.³⁸

After the Kharijites left Kufa, 'Ali's followers offered him a renewed oath of allegiance on the basis that they would be friends of those he befriended and enemies for those he took as enemies. 'Ali b. Abi Talib stipulated adherence to the Book of God and the *Sunna* of the Prophet in the oath. Rabi'a b. Shaddad al-Khath'ami suggested, "On the *Sunna* of Abu Bakr and 'Umar." 'Ali b. Abi Talib objected that if Abu Bakr and 'Umar had been acting on anything but the Book of God and the *Sunna* of His Messenger, they would have been remote from the truth.³⁹

If 'Ali b. Abi Talib believed that Abu Bakr and 'Umar were the best of the community after its Prophet, during the election (*shura*), he could pledge that he would follow the practice of Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and

he would not lose his chance for caliphate. In addition, he would not object Rabi'a b. Shaddad al-Khath'ami, who had suggested, "On the *Sunna* of Abu Bakr and 'Umar". The Prophet (S.A.W.A.) addressing Abu Bakr said, "You are my Companion in the cave and on the *hawdh* (Heavenly Water)."

This is another imitation of *thaqalayn* tradition: "Indeed, I have left among you the Book of God and the offspring of my family (*ahl al-bayt*). Do not try to outdo them, for then you will be destroyed." 40

6. Abu Sa'id Khudri said that he had heard the Messenger of God say, "Certainly the most benevolent to me in actions and wealth is Abu Bakr. If I were to take a friend (*khalil*), I would take Abu Bakr as my friend. All the doors leading to the Mosque should be blocked except for Abu Bakr's."41

When the Messenger of God instituted brother-hood between his fellow Emigrants and the Helpers in Medina he said, "Let each of you take a brother in God." He himself took 'Ali by hand and said, "This is my brother." Therefore, the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) and 'Ali became brother.42

a) It is interesting that the Prophet could choose a brother, but he could not choose a friend.

b) The Prophet ordered that all private doors leading to the mosque be blocked except for 'Ali. He said, "O 'Ali, no one is allowed to enter the mosque while he is impure (*junub*) except me and you."43 There are many other traditions in this effect.44

Therefore, it is a more reasonable version, and it is confirmed by the verses, **﴿Indeed Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification.﴾** (Q: 33/33).

And **﴿Should anyone argue with you about them, after the knowledge that has come to you, say come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, our souls and your souls, then let us pray earnestly, and call down Allah's curse upon the liars.﴾** (Q: 3/61). Here, God considers 'Ali b. Abi Talib as the soul of the Prophet.

7. 'A'isha said that she had heard the Messenger of God say, "It does not behoove a community to lead their prayers anyone else while Abu Bakr is among them."45

See on Abu Bakr leading communal prayers, above, (page 37).

8. Anas b. Malik said that the Messenger of God had said, "The kindest to my community among them is Abu Bakr."46

Abu Bakr would have been the kindest to the community among them, if he had not broken into Fatima's house.47 If he had not disinherited the Prophet's daughter from her father's inheritance.48 If Fatima had been happy with him when she died.49 If he had not made Khalid b. Walid murder Malik b. Nuwayra, and he had punished Khalid who married Malik's widow at the same night he killed her husband. If he had not burned al-Fuj'at (or Fajah) al-Sullami alive;50 and if....

9. 'Abd Khayr said that he had heard 'Ali say (while he was preaching) on the pulpit, “Would you like to inform you of the best man of the community after its Prophet?” Then 'Ali named Abu Bakr. Again, he said, “Would you like to inform you of the second?” This time, he named 'Umar.⁵¹ We discussed 'Ali's attitude towards the caliphs before him (page 159).

10. 'A'isha said, “The Messenger of God told me during his illness, 'call your father and your brother to me so that I may write a letter. For I fear that someone will have wishful fancies and someone will say, I am more worthy, but God and the faithful refuse anyone but Abu Bakr'.”⁵²

If Abu Bakr had had such a letter it would have shown it to the people in Saqifa, and he would not have offered people to accept 'Umar or Abu 'Ubayda as the caliph.⁵³ Moreover, he did not wish he had asked the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) about the matter of caliphate: to whom had it belonged, as the people had not argued about it.⁵⁴

11. The Messenger of God said, “Regard for my Tradition (*Sunna*) and the Traditions of the divinely and rightly-guided caliphs, take the Traditions and hold on to them with your wisdom teeth.”⁵⁵

The man who fabricated this tradition did not know that the term 'the divinely and rightly guided caliphs' had not been used during the Prophet's life. It was initiated later during the Umayyad or 'Abbasid caliphs to distinguish them from the first four ones; moreover the Prophet (S.A.W.A) said, “When you come to me at the heavenly waters (*hawdh*), then indeed I will ask you about two important things (*thaqalayn*) which I have left behind. Take care how you follow me with regard to the Book of God and the offspring of my family (*ahl al-bayt*). Do not try to outdo them, for then you will be destroyed.”⁵⁶

11. The Messenger of God said, “Abu Bakr is blessed, 'Umar is blessed, 'Uthman is blessed, 'Ali is blessed, Talha is blessed, Zubayr is blessed, 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Awf is blessed, Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas is blessed, Sa'id b. Zayd is blessed and Abu 'Ubayda b. al-Jarrah is blessed.”⁵⁷

As we discussed before, the pledge of Good Pleasure (*al-ridhwan*) took place under a tree in Hudaibiya; there were at least seven hundred men present there not only ten.⁵⁸

1. Salimi, 18–21.

2. Ibid, 22–28.

3. Ibid, 18.

4. See above, 16f.

5. See Nahj al-balagha, 1: 417.

6. Salimi, 18.

7. Ibid, 19.

8. See above, 72.

9. See above, 67, note 1.

10. Salimi, 19.

11. See above, 25.
12. See al-Maqdisi, 5: 20.
13. See above, 26.
14. Salimi, 21.
15. Ibn Hisham, 1: 266.
16. Nahj al-balagha, 1: 449.
17. See above, 120.
18. Ibn Abi al-Hadid, 11: 45.
19. Tabari, Ta'rikh, 6: 3406.
20. Baladhuri, Ansab, 3: 297–8.
21. Ibn Hibban al-Busti (d. 354/965), Kitab al-majruhin, ed. Mahmud Ibrahim Zayid, Beirut, n.d., 1, 85.
22. Salimi, 22.
23. See above, 11 f.
24. See above, 30.
25. See above, 34 f.
26. Salimi, 23.
27. See above, 37.
28. See above, 46, note 1.
29. See above, 65 f.
30. See above, 69.
31. Salimi 23.
32. See Q 5: 55 and 46, note 1.
33. Salimi, 24.
34. Ibid, 24.
35. See above 151 f.
36. Salimi, 24.
37. Nahj al-balagha, 1: 34.
38. See above, 83.
39. See above, 111.
40. See above, 35.
41. Salimi, 25.
42. See above, 17.
43. Sibṭ b. al-Jawzi (d. 654/127), Tadhkira al-khawass, ed. al-Sayyid Muhammad Sadiq Bahr al-'Ulum, Beirut, 1401/1981, 46–47.
44. See e.g. Tirmidhi, 4: 471, no. 3732; Qadhi Nur Allah Shushtari, Ihqaq al-haqq wa izhaq al-batil, ed. Sayyid Mahmud Mar'ashi, Qumm, n.d. 5: 540–584.
45. Salimi, 25.
46. Ibid, 26.
47. See above, 66.
48. See above, 68 f.
49. See above, 69.
50. See above, 72.
51. Salimi 26.
52. Ibid, 26.
53. See above, 63.
54. See above, 72.
55. Salimi, 27.
56. See above, 35.

57. Salimi, 27.

58. See above, 25.

The Extremists and Misinterpretation of the Holy Qur'an

The above-mentioned writer says,

“A group of the extremists (*ghulat*) believe that the Holy Qur'an is misrepresented. Some chapters and verses on 'Ali's guardianship and succession have been left out. They do not believe in the Holy Qur'an compiled by 'Uthman and say that he changed and misrepresented it according to his wish. For example, they say the Confederates Chapter (*Sura al-Ahzab*) which contains 73 verses now had 286 verses before compiling. The Hijr Chapter (*Sura al-Hijr*) which has 99 verses now contained 190 verses before. All the missing verses are those concerning 'Ali's guardianship (*wilayat*).

An unidentified Holy Qur'an has been found in India that contains a Chapter of Light (*Sura al-Nur*) other than this Chapter of Light (*Sura al-Nur*). It has seven verses and they think it is the Chapter of guardianship of 'Ali b. Abi Talib and the Imams after him. The extremists say that the Prophet gave the perfect and reliable written text, which was written by 'Ali b. Abi Talib himself, to Fatima. It was three times greater in extent than the ordinary Holy Qur'an. This is the same copy, which inherits one Imam to the other one. Finally it reaches *al-hujja* (the Hidden Imam) and he will interpret it for the people of the end of the time.”¹

Ghulat [extremist] are those who exaggerate or go beyond all bounds, particularly in reverence for certain individuals notably 'Ali b. Abi Talib and the 'Alids and consider them incarnation of the Deity. What heads of the sects are to be called *ghulat* [extremists] depends on the point of view of the writer, but as a rule, those who adopted such notions originally foreign to Islam as incarnation (*hulul*), metempsychosis (*tanasukh*) etc., are considered *ghulat*.²

We (Shi'ite) say that our belief concerning those who exceed the bonds of belief (*ghulat*), and those who believe in delegation (*mufawwadha*) is that they are deniers (*kuffar*) of Allah, Glory be to His name. They are wickeder the Jews, the Christians, the Fire-Worshippers, the Qadarites or the Kharijites (*Haruriya*), or the heretics (*ahl al-bid'a*) or those who hold views, which lead astray (*al-ahwa al-madhilla*).³

Imam 'Ali b. Musa al-Ridha, the eighth Imam, says that the Prophet said, “Do not exalt me to a higher rank than I deserve, since Allah, Glory be to His name, made me His servant before he made me His Messenger.”

He narrates it through his father, Musa b. Ja'far al-Kazim, from his father, Ja'far b. Muhammad al-Sadiq, from his father, Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Baqir from his father, 'Ali b. al-Husayn, from his father, Husayn b. 'Ali, from his father, 'Ali b. Abi Talib, from the Messenger of God (S.A.W.A.) narrated. He, Glory be to His name, says in His Book,

﴿It does not behoove any human that Allah should give him the Book, judgment and prophet-hood and then he should say to the people, 'Be my servant instead of Allah.' Rather [he would say], 'Be a godly people, because of your teaching the Book and because of your studying it.' And he would not command you to take the angels and the prophets for lords. Would he call you to unfaith after you have been Muslims.﴾ (Q: 3/79-80).

'Ali b. Abi Talib says, "Two groups have corrupted themselves concerning me: the extremist friends and the negligent enemies. I seek absolution to Allah in respect of exceeding and exalting our position higher than we are, an absolution similar to that of Jesus, the son of Mary, from the Christians, as Allah, Glory be to His name, says,

﴿And when Allah said, "O Jesus son of Mary! Were it you who said to the people, 'Take me and my mother for gods besides Allah'?" He said, "Immaculate are you! It does not behoove me to say what I have no right to say. Had I said it, You would certainly have known it. You know whatever is in my self, and I do not know what is in Your Self. Indeed, You are Knower of all that is Unseen. I did not say to them anything except what You had commanded me to say, 'Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.' Moreover, I was a witness to them so long as I was among them. But when You had taken me away, You Yourself were watchful over them, and witness to all things.﴾ (Q: 5/116-117).

Allah also says, **﴿The Messiah son of Mary, is but an apostle. Certainly, other apostles have passed before him, and his mother was a truthful one. Both of them would eat food.﴾** (Q: 5/75).

That is they eat and they excrete like ordinary people. Thus, whoever claims deity for the prophets; or claims divinity or prophet-hood for Imams or Imamate for non-Imams, we disown them in this world and in the Hereafter.⁴

It is related from Zurara that he said, "I said to Imam Musa b. Ja'far al-Kazim that a man from among the descendents of 'Abd Allah b. Saba' is a believer in the doctrine of delegation (*tafwidh*), and Imam said, 'What is delegation (*tafwidh*)?' I said according to him (the man from among the descendents of 'Abd Allah b. Saba') Allah, the Mighty and Glorious, created Muhammad and 'Ali b. Abi Talib and then delegated the matter of (creation) to them, and these two created and gave sustenance, and caused life and death." The Imam said, "He, the enemy of Allah, has lied. When you return to him recite him the verse of the Thunder Chapter (*Sura al-Ra'd*) **﴿Have they set up for Allah partners who have created like His creation, so that the creations seemed confusable to them. Say Allah is the creator of all things, and He is the One, the All-paramount.﴾** (Q: 13/16).

Concerning the delegators (*al-mufawwidha*), the extremists (*ghulat*) and their like Imam said, “O God! Do not include us among them who curse them.”⁵

Concerning the extent of the Holy Qur'an, our belief is that the Holy Qur'an, which Allah revealed to His Prophet Muhammad, is the same as the one between the two boards (*daffatayn*), but it is the same extent in the hands of people.⁶

The Shi'ite belief concerning the perverting or misinterpretation of the Holy Qur'an –that is omitting part or parts of it– is that it has never occurred. The Holy Qur'an, which now is in the hands of Muslims, is just the same as revealed to Prophet (S.A.W.A). Most of the Shi'ite scholars has stipulated it including: Ibn Babawayh in his *I'tiqadat al-Imamiyya*, Tabrisi in *Majma' al-bayan*, Shaykh Ja'far Kashif al-Ghita' in his *Kashf al-ghita*, 'Allama al-Shahshahani in his *al-'Urwa al-wuthqa*, and al-Mawla Muhsin[Faydh] al-Qasani in his two books (*al-Wafi* and *Ilm al-yaqin*).⁷

Some Scholars have attributed the notion of not perverting the Holy Qur'an to great Shi'ite '*Ulama'* and experts like al-Shaykh al-Mufid, al-Shaykh al-Biha'i and Qadhi Nur Allah Shushtari and others. Generally, we say no Shi'ite expert, who has written a book on Imamate, has stipulated perverting the Holy Qur'an.⁸

However, our Sunnite brethren have a different view. 'Umar says, “Part of what He sent down was the passage of stoning; we read it, and we were taught it, and we needed it. The Messenger of God (S.A.W.S.) stoned (adulterers) and we stoned them after him. I fear that in time to come men will say that they find no mention of stoning in God's book and thereby go astray by neglecting an ordinance, which God has sent down. Then we read in what we read from God's book, 'Do not desire to have ancestors other than your own for it is infidelity to do so.'⁹

However, we see neither 'the stoning passage', nor 'the ancestors' verse in the Holy Qur'an. Ibn Abi Maryam narrated from Ibn Abi Luhay'a from Ibn Abi al-Aswad, from 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr from 'A'isha who said, “*Sura al-Ahzab* (confederates) was read 200 verses during the Prophet's time, but when 'Uthman was collecting the Book, he could not find more than we are reading now.” Isma'il b. Ja'far also narrated from al-Mubarak b. Fudhala, from 'Asim b. Abi al-Nujud, from Ziz b. Hubaysh who said that 'Ubayy b. Ka'b had asked him, “How many verses are there in *Sura al-Ahzab*?” He answered 72 or 73 verses. 'Ubayy said it was the same extent as *Sura al-Baqara*, in which the 'stoning passage' was read.¹⁰

The baseless calumnies, which the Sunnite ascribes to the Shi'ite, are countless. Among those who have judged the Shi'ite creeds without studying and knowledge, are Fakhr al-Din al-Razi. Commenting the verse ﴿**Allah effaces and confirms whatever He wishes.**﴾ (Q: 13/39), he says the *Rafidhis* (the Shi'ite) say that *al-bada'* (emergence of new circumstances which cause a change in an earlier ruling) for God is permitted and *bada'* means that God ordains something, but something else happens, that is against His knowledge.”¹¹ O! Allah You are Immaculate. This is nothing, but a fabrication.¹² Alusi,

commenting the verse ﴿eat and drink until the white streak becomes manifest to you from the dark streak at the crack of dawn.﴾ (Q: 2/187) says, “The Shi’ite permit themselves to begin their [Ramadhan] fast from the sunset.”¹³

I wonder whence Alusi has gotten this fascinating information and knowledge, and for this argument to what document, he has attested. He lived in Baghdad, the Shi’ite settlement from the old times up to now, and the Holy Shrines are near Baghdad, there are few people who cannot find the Shi’ite there; he could get true information from them. Truly, it is surprising that a learned man like Alusi cast baseless accusation on the Shi’ite. By God, this accusation and the likes are but division between Muslims, which only their enemies exploit it and govern them.¹⁴

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1. Salimi, 58–60.
 2. See Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Krammers (eds.), 3rd impression, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1991, 110.
 3. Ibn Babawayh al–Qummi, known as al–Shaykh al–Saduq (d. 381/991), I’tiqadat al–Imamiyya (A Shi’ite creed), trans. Asaf A.A. Fyzee., revised edition, Tehran, 1404/1982, 87–88.
 4. Ibn Babawayh al–Qummi, known as al–Shaykh al–Saduq (d. 381/991), 'Uyun akhbar al–Ridha, ed. Sayyid Mahdi al–Husayni al–Lajwardi, Qumm, 1378, 200–201.
 5. Ibn Babawayh al–Qummi, I’tiqadat, 90–92.
 6. Ibid, 77.
 7. al–Sayyid Abu al–Qasim al– Musawi al–Khu’i, al–Bayan fi tafsir al–Qur’an, Qumm, 5th edition, 1394/1974, 218–219.
 8. Ibid, 219.
 9. See above, 61.
 10. al–Suyuti, Jalal al–Din Abd al–Rahman (d. 911/1105), al–Itqan fi 'Ulum al–Qur’an, ed., Muhammad Abu al–FadhI Ibrahim, 2nd edition, Cairo, 1387/1967, 1: 234.
 11. al–Razi, 19: 66.
 12. al–Khu’i, 548.
 13. al–Alusi, 2: 67.
 14. Ibid, 559–560.

Conclusion

We Muslims, Shi’ite and Sunnite, are both from the tribe of Islam. We all worship the one God, believe in one faith, follow one Prophet, recite one Holy Qur’an and pray towards one Qibla. Small different views should not spoil or destroy our unity or correlation. We should co–operate and be united to regain our lost grandeur, not cast baseless accusation and dispute to lose our power. Allah says ﴿**And obey Allah and His Apostle, and do not dispute, or you will lose heart and your power will be gone.**

And be patient indeed Allah is with the patient. ﴿Q: 8/46).

Here is an example of the disgraceful behavior of Christians towards Muslims in the former Andalusia.

At Gandía, where the movement (of mob violence towards the Muslims of a Moorish quarter in Andalusia) began, it would seem Christians took broom and branches, dipped them into irrigation channels and by general desire converted the Mudejars¹ into Christians at a stroke. Such new Christians could perhaps count themselves lucky. In Polop, the Mudejars took refuge in a castle and held out there for a few days. They finally agreed to surrender and accept baptism, and in return, the Christian rebels promised to leave them alone.

When the baptism was complete, 600 of those who had been in the castle were put to death, a procedure that the rebels were pleased to point out, “More souls in heaven and more money in our pockets.” (No doubt from the valuables, which they stripped from the corpses). Nobody could imagine that the conversions effected during this terrifying outbreak of intercommunal violence were voluntary. Those Mudejars who had asserted that they had not of their own free will become Christians, and who had accordingly returned to their Islamic faith, were told that if they did not return to Church the penalty for apostasy was death and the confiscation of their property

. From this time onwards, from 931/ 1525 or 932/1526, nobody could openly live as a Muslim in any part of the Iberian Peninsula. Mudejar Spain ended in 906/1501–907/1502. Islam certainly continued to exist, but it was an underground faith.²

Today many Muslim countries are subjected to Christian or Jew governors. The Zionists govern Palestine and the Farther Mosque (*masjid al-aqsa*). The Americans have occupied Afghanistan and Iraq. They imprison and kill Muslims, exploit their natural sources and rule over their people. Is it not time yet for those who have faith that their hearts should be humbled for Allah's remembrance and hearken to Allah, Who says, ***Indeed this community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord, so be wary Me.*** ﴿Q: 23/52).

1. Muslims living permanently as a subject of one of the Christian kingdom of the Iberian Peninsula.

2. L. P. Harvey, “The political, social and cultural history of the Moriscos”, in Salma Khadra Jayyusi (ed.), *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, Leiden, 1992, 221–222.

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