

The Pure Lineage

Undoubtedly the family relation with the great personalities is an honor and dignity, especially when such a great personality is the choice of God and the seal of the prophets. Al-'Abbas ibn 'Ali enjoyed a close relation with Prophet Muhammad (S) since he was the son of 'Ali ibn Abi-Talib who was an independent source of honor and dignity.

About 'Ali (a), the Prophet (S) and his family, said:

“My brother 'Ali ibn Abi-Talib enjoys innumerable merits. Neither jinn nor can human beings count them.”

Muhammad ibn Idris ash-Shafii, the founder of the Shafiite school of law answered those who asked him to say his opinion about 'Ali:

“What can we say about a person whose partisans have had to hide his merits because of fear, and enemies have hidden his merits out of envy? Nevertheless between these two, his merits that have become widely known are too numerous to be counted”¹

Ibn Abi'-Hadid, the Mutazilite, says:

“The merits of 'Ali ibn Abi-Talib are too great and familiar to be mentioned or detailed. Even his enemies and rivalries could do nothing but confess the unmatched virtue of this man whose eminence is unconcealed and excellences are unrestrained.

Everybody knows that when the Umayyads held the reins of the Islamic world, they spared no single effort for extinguishing the light of Imam 'Ali and inventing flaws against him. Moreover, they issued the decisions of cursing him openly from the mimbars of their mosques and sentenced to death anyone who would mention any of his incalculable merits. They also prevented people from reporting any narration that might refer to any of his excellences.

Finally, they even prevented people from calling their newborns by his name. Nevertheless, all these endeavours exalted 'Ali's reputation and took him to further elevated levels. He was like musk whose

perfume spreads when it is screened, and like the sun that cannot be screened by one's palm, and like daylight that is seen by many eyes even if one eye is closed against it." 2

Thus was the father of al-'Abbas who had every right to be taken pride in and gain learning from his morals, ethics and excellences.

The Immaculate Womb

From the maternal side, al-'Abbas was the son of a great lady namely Umm-ul-Banin, who enjoyed excellent lineage and personality. In addition to her high moral standards, she was well known for her loyalty to the Ahlul Bayt³ and her devoutness. Therefore, she occupied an elevated position in the sight of the Ahlul Bayt who praised her on many occasions and showed her great respect.

Because of such remarkable care that Umm-ul-Banin took of Imam 'Ali's sons and daughters, God has given her an exclusive position and made her a means to reach Him and a way through which the supplicants' most complex problems are solved.

Umm-ul-Banin was brought up by her noble parents on righteous moralities and the highest ethical standards, so that she became fit to be the wife of Imam 'Ali (a) and a compassionate mother for the chiefs of the youth of Paradise.⁴

This great lady gave birth to four courageous sons, the eldest among whom was Abul-Fadhl al-'Abbas. He, as well as his full brothers, acquired the qualities of courage and bravery from their mother whose ancestors were the most courageous among the Arabs. Umm-ul-Banin then, contributed towards forming the personalities of her four sons who showed unmatched courage on the day of Ashura and sacrificed themselves for their religion and its representative – Imam al-Husayn (a).

Series of Fathers

Ancestry plays a considerable role in the formation of personalities. It has a great influence on self-discipline and behavior. On that account, genealogy, which is the branch of knowledge that deals with the investigation of the details of ancestry, occupies a significant position in the society. It is so because the influence of heredity has been proven through many scientific researches, on the structure of both individuals and communities.

In addition, many Islamic laws have depended mainly on genealogy, especially in fields of inheritance, taxes, regard of relatives, and blood money for unintentional killings etc.

A genealogist, like any other specialist to whom matters relating to his special domain are referred to, enjoys a substantial position in the religious, social, and ethical affairs. 'Aqil ibn Abi-Talib was the most celebrated in this field. In addition to his being the descendant of that unparalleled pedigree, he was the reference to whom people submitted their queries to in fields of genealogy. He could discern the sources

of glory, distinguish the Arab tribes, and tell between the deep-rooted ones and the disreputable.

‘Aqil used to be surrounded by those who were interested in genealogy as well as the history and origins of the Arab tribes in the center of the Prophet’s Masjid⁵; they gathered to listen to him carefully and trust whatever he would tell.

Historians have reported uninterruptedly that Imam ‘Ali (a) summoned his brother ‘Aqil and asked:

*“Choose for me a woman who is the descendant of the Arab heroes so that I will marry her and she will give birth to a horseman.”*⁶

‘Aqil answered his brother:

“Marry Umm-ul-Banin, from the tribe of Kelab, for no Arab individual is more courageous than her fathers and forefathers.”

Fathers

Al-‘Abbas is the son of ‘Ali, son of Abu-Talib, son of Abd-ul- Muttalib, son of Hashim, son of Abd-Menaf, son of Qussay, son of Kelab, son of Murra, son of Kaab, son of Luway, son of Ghalib, son of Fihri, son of Malik, son of an-Nadhr, son of Kenana, son of Khuzayma, son of Mudrika, son of Iliyas, son of Madhar, son of Nizar, son of Maad, son of Adnan...

We have to stop at him (Adnan) because we recite the Prophet’s saying, ‘When you refer to my fathers, you should stop at Adnan’, because of seeming difficulty in pronouncing the names of the other forefathers or because of errors that might occur in the series of their names.

Moreover, it is unacceptable to mistake intentionally the names of those whose descendant was the great Prophet Muhammad (S).

To have little discussion about fathers of the Prophet (S), we may refer, first of all, to the following point:

We believe that all fathers of the Prophet (S) up to Adam are pure in birth and belief. In other words, all ancestors of the Prophet (S) were believers as none of them had ever worshipped an idol or anything other than Almighty God. The holy Qur’an proves this fact by saying:

“And rely on the Mighty, the Merciful who sees you when you stand up and (watched you during) your turning over and over among those (ancestors) who prostrate themselves before Allah. Surely, He is the Hearing, the Knowing”⁷

Any contrary matter that may arise must be interpreted in a way befitting this principle. For instance, the one to whom the Holy Qur’an has referred as being Prophet Abraham’s father was not his father. He was either his uncle or maternal grandfather. All historians have proved that Prophet Abraham’s father

was called ‘Tarikh,’ not ‘Azar’ as the Qur’an says –

“Consider when Abraham asked his father, Azar, Why do you believe idols to be your gods? I find you and your people in absolute error.”⁸

In addition, the Holy Qur’an, in another situation, refers to the uncle as father:

“Were you believers there when death approached Jacob? When he asked his sons, whom will you worship after my death? They replied – we will worship your Lord, the Lord of your fathers, Abraham, Ishmael, and Isaac. He is the only Lord, and to Him we have submitted ourselves.”⁹

Prophet Isaac was the uncle of Jacob, nevertheless, the Lord added him to the names of ‘fathers’.

Prophet Muhammad (S) declared that all his ancestors were not worshippers of anything other than Almighty God, and were not the products of illegitimate copulation:

“When Allah wanted to create us, He made us in a form of a pillar of light in the spine of Adam. Hence, that light was shining in his forehead. That pillar, then, moved to Shith his successor who received the commandment of his father that he must not put that pillar in any place other than wombs of purified women.

*With the moving of this pillar of light, this commandment moved with it. Hence, only the celebrities could carry that pillar of light and only the purified women carried it. When it reached the spine of Abd-ul-Muttalib, that pillar was divided into two parts one went to Abdullah who moved it to the womb of Amina, and the other went to Abu-Talib who moved it to the womb of Fatima bint Asad.”*¹⁰

Let us now refer briefly to the fathers of al-’Abbas:

Adnan

Historical reports have conveyed that Adnan, through many speeches, foretold about the coming of Prophet Muhammad (S) who would be one of his descendants. He also commanded the next generations to follow him.

Maad

Maad, who was following the religion of his forefather Prophet Abraham, was a great warrior. He used to lead campaigns against the Israelites who had abandoned the belief of monotheism.

When Nebuchadnezzar besieged and destroyed Jerusalem, God gave His orders to one of his prophets to carry Maad with him so as to save him from any injury. The Lord also told, by revelation that one of the descendants of Maad would be the seal of the prophets. Hence, Maad was taken to Syria until that campaign ceased.¹¹

Nizar

Historians have also told that Nizar was a famous celebrity from whose forehead the light of prophecy shone.¹²

Madhar

It is related that Prophet Muhammad (S) warned against reviling at Madhar (and Rabī'a) because these were two faithful individuals who believed in Almighty God. Besides Madhar was a wise man some of whose maxims have been recorded in books of history.

Ilias

Ilias ibn Madhar was the chief of his people. He was the first to offer camels as sacrifices to the Holy House of God and the first to recognize the standing place of Abraham after the flood that covered the Holy House in Mecca. Finally, he was faithful monotheist. It is also related that Prophet Muhammad (S) warned against reviling at him.

Mudrika

Mudrika was good-looking, high-ranking celebrity. He acted as the reference of the Arabs who used to visit him for learning from his knowledge and virtue. He also predicted the coming of Prophet Muhammad (S) through many speeches of wisdom that he used to deliver. History has recorded for him many maxims.

An-Nadhr

An-Nadhr is Koreish; hence, his descendants are called the Koreishites. He was also man of wisdom, knowledge, and chieftainship.

Fihr

When Hassan ibn Abd-Kelal invaded the Kaaba¹³ to take its stones for building a similar house in Himyar, Yemen – Fihr, who was monotheist, overcame him in a battle and took him as prisoner. Consequently, the Arabs feared and respected him. He was also eloquent. Historians have recorded some of his maxims.

Kaab

Books of history have mentioned long speeches delivered by Kaab ibn Luway regarding the prediction of the coming of Prophet Muhammad (S) and the commandment to support him. He also composed poetic verses in this regard.¹⁴ Because of his high honor and personality, his people made a new calendar

beginning with the day of his death.

Kelab

Kelab was well known for his courage. His forehead shone with light because of the light of prophecy.

Qussay

Qussay was called chief of the Holy Precinct. He housed his people in Mecca so that the other tribes would fear them. He also constructed the Dar-un-Nidwa, in which people of Koreish used to meet to discuss their affairs. He also founded the custom of serving the pilgrims with food and gained the custody of the Holy House. Historians have recorded many of his words in fields of morals and virtue. One of his speeches proves that he warned his people against drinking wines.

Abd-Menaf

Abd-Menaf was such glorious and honorable personality that he was appointed as chief of his people. Because of his good looks, he was called 'Moon of al-Bat'haa'. He was also well known for munificence and generosity.

Hashim

Following the customs of his fathers, Hashim used to serve the pilgrims with food. His situation in the year of famine is very famous.¹⁵ He also enjoyed all virtues. His speeches are recorded in books of history.

Abd-ul-Muttalib

Abd-ul-Muttalib was called 'Shaibat-ul-Hamd' – personality of praiseworthiness – because people praised him so laudably for his remarkable standing in honor, wisdom, and sagacity. To refer to his rank, it is sufficient to mention the following saying of Prophet Muhammad (S):

“O ‘Ali, in the pre-Islamic era, Abd-ul-Muttalib passed five laws that Allah enacted in Islam. He forbade sons from marrying their fathers’ women, and Allah revealed:

“Do not marry, from now on, the ex-wives of your fathers.”¹⁶

As Abd-ul-Muttalib found a treasure, he gave its one-fifth as alms. Allah revealed:

“Know that whatever property you may gain, one fifth belongs to Allah, the Messenger, the kindred, orphans, the needy and those who need money while on a journey.”¹⁷

When he dug the Zamzam Spring, he called it ‘the watering of the pilgrims’. Allah revealed:

“Do you, because you served water to the pilgrims and constructed the Sacred Mosque, consider yourselves equal to those who have believed in Allah, the Day of Judgment, and have fought for the cause of Allah?”¹⁸

Abd-ul-Muttalib issued the law that one hundred camels should be paid as the blood money of murdering. Allah passed the same in Islam.

For the Koreishites, they did not stop at a limited number of circumambulations around the Kaaba; hence, Abd-ul-Muttalib decided seven circumambulations for them. In Islam, Allah passed this law.

*O ‘Ali, Abd-ul-Muttalib used to avoid dividing by casting superstitious and gambling arrows, worshipping the idols, and having the flesh of an animal that had been sacrificed on the stone blocks. He used to say: I follow the religion of my father Abraham the prophet (a).*¹⁹

Historians have recorded that Abd-ul-Muttalib was one of the prophets’ successors and had full acquaintance with the heavenly books. He foretold Abu-Talib, his son, about the prophecy of Muhammad (S). In this regard, Abu-Talib was related to have said: “My father had full knowledge of all the heavenly books. He once said: A prophet will be from my offspring. I wish I would catch up with his time to believe in him. Hence, anyone of my sons who will catch up with his time must believe in him.”²⁰

Abu-Talib

Like his father, Abu-Talib was the chief of his people and had knowledge of the Heavenly Books. He kept the commandments of the prophets until he delivered them to Prophet Muhammad (S).²¹

This great personality has become a matter of discussion among historians some of whom, unfortunately, have given credence to the lie that he had departed life before being a Muslim – this fabrication was invented by the pro-Umayyads narrators for no other reason than his being the father of ‘Ali, the first enemy of the Umayyads. Hence, they the Umayyads – and their sycophants wanted to convince people that Abu Sufian, the mortal enemy of Islam and the father of Muawiya, died as Muslim while Abu-Talib was atheist.

Allama al-Mejlisi said, “Unanimously, Shia believe that Abu-Talib had never worshipped an idol. They believe that he was one of the successors of Prophet Abraham (a).”

Through his poetic verses that are related by all historians, people of reason can clearly identify the reality of Abu-Talib. He was the custodian, guardian, and defender of Prophet Muhammad (S) until he, and the Hashemites²² were detained in a col to die there rejecting any submission to the enemies of Islam.²³

Finally, let us refer to the following narration as quoted from Tarikh ut-Tabari, 2/214 and as-Seerat ul-Halabiyya, 1/306:

Abu-Talib, once asked his son 'Ali: "What is this belief you are following?"

'Ali answered, "Father, I have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and have given credence to him, kept to him, and followed him."

Abu-Talib commented, "Certainly, he calls you to nothing but the good. Hence, you must adhere to him."

'Ali

The eloquent are too tongue-tied to describe or count the characteristics of 'Ali ibn Abi-Talib. It is, also, very difficult for any writer to refer to Imam 'Ali's unparalleled personality with any words.

Firstly, 'Ali was the foremost to embrace Islam. He in fact had never embraced any belief other than Islam. Prophet Muhammad (S) has said, "'Ali and I belong to the same tree, while people belong to different trees."²⁴

Since the earliest steps of his divine mission, Prophet Muhammad (S) appointed 'Ali as his representative, successor, and supporter. Prophet Muhammad (S) said:

*"This 'Ali – is my brother, successor, and representative among you. You thus should listen to and obey him."*²⁵

The pillars of Islam have relied on the strokes of 'Ali's sword. Prophet Muhammad (S) said:

*"'Ali's stroke on Amr ibn Abd-Wudd is equal to the worship of both mankind and jinn."*²⁶

He (S) also said before the conquest of Khaybar:

*"I will hand the standard to a man who loves Allah and His Messenger and is loved by Allah and His Messenger. He will come back with conquest."*²⁷

'Ali, finally, was the most knowledgeable, most sagacious, most pious, and most eloquent among all Muslims.

It is because of the aforementioned golden series of fathers of al-'Abbas that he could join the glory to honor and decency. He therefore gained all elements of nobility that resulted in the composition of his matchless personality.

Uncles

Like fathers, uncles play a good role in the structure of personalities. According to the law of heredity, individuals may acquire some characteristics from their paternal uncles. The paternal uncles of al-'Abbas were such unique personalities whose lives and situations have been matters of pride for

humanity in general and Islam in particular.

Hamza

Hamza won the badge of honor from his nephew, the great Prophet Muhammad (S) who named him, Asadullah wa asadu Rasoulih – the Lion of Allah and the Lion of His Messenger, for his unique bravery and courage. He defended Islam fearlessly until he was killed during the battle of Uhud. Hence, the Prophet (S) named him as chief of martyrs.

Moreover, many narrations confirm that Hamza had considerable knowledge and outstanding rank in the eyes of God. Imam ‘Ali, Imam al-Hasan, Imam al-Husayn, Imam Zayn ul-Abidin, and Imam as-Sadiq mentioned Hamza whenever they wanted to take pride in their lineage or whenever they wanted to refer to the foremost Muslims who defended Islam.

Talib

Talib ibn Abi-Talib had to conceal his embracement of Islam because he lived in Mecca. During the battle of Badr, the Meccans obliged him as well as others from the Hashemites, to participate with them. The Prophet (S) therefore declared: “There are some individuals who were coerced to participate in this battle against us – hence, you must avoid fighting them if you meet...”²⁸

‘Aqil

‘Aqil was one of the branches of that immaculate tree. He embraced Islam from the beginning therefore, the Prophet (S) had great love for him:

*“I love you twice – once for your being ‘Aqil and the other for Abu-Talib’s love for you.”*²⁹

Historians have evoked circles of suspicion around the personality of ‘Aqil because he joined Muawiya ibn Abu-Suffian. Some claim that he left the wing of his brother Imam ‘Ali, to join Muawiya’s, because his brother deprived him of additional salaries from the public treasury of the Islamic State.

Anyhow, everyone agrees that ‘Aqil, during his stay with Muawiya, did not show any loyalty to him or any disloyalty to the wing of his brother. All indications prove that ‘Aqil had to visit Muawiya who imposed strict blockade against the Hashemites after the death of Imam ‘Ali (a).³⁰

Descendants of ‘Aqil

The righteous progeny glorifies the ascendants. On that account, the descendants of ‘Aqil were high examples of heroism in defense of their belief. Muslim ibn ‘Aqil, for instance, was that glorious personality who fulfilled his mission so completely until he was martyred.

The other sons of ‘Aqil lost themselves defending their leader Imam al-Husayn, during the battle of at-

Taff and provided unprecedented examples of sacrifice for their belief. Moreover, among the descendants of ‘Aqil, there have been numerous personalities with piety, knowledge, and authorship. Their names are well known all over the Islamic world.

Ja’far

Ja’far ibn Abi-Talib was a great personality. The Prophet (S) chose him for the commandment of his army at the campaign of Mu’ta. Ja’far however, was martyred during that campaign and the Prophet (S) conferred upon him with the eternal name ‘At- Tayyar’ when he said after that event during which both the hands of Ja’far were severed:

“Instead of his hands that were cut, Ja’far will have two wings with which he will fly in Paradise wherever he wants.”

The Prophet (S) had also said to him:

“You are my copy in physique and morality.”³¹

1. See al-Anwar ul-Bahiya

2. See Ibn Abi’l-Hadid’s Sharh Nahj ul-Balagha, The Introduction.

3. The Ahlul Bayt (the people of the house), is a term dedicated to the family of Prophet Muhammad (S). Moreover, it is dedicated to certain individuals, namely – ‘Ali ibn Abi-Talib, Fatima az-Zahra (Prophet Muhammad’s daughter and ‘Ali ibn Abi-Talib’s wife), al- Hasan ibn ‘Ali and al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali. The nine sinless Imams (namely- ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn as-Sajjad, Muhammad ibn ‘Ali al-Baqir, Ja’far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq, Musa ibn Ja’far al-Kadhim, ‘Ali ibn Musa ar-Rida, Muhammad ibn ‘Ali al-Jawad, ‘Ali ibn Muhammad al-Hadi, al-Hasan ibn ‘Ali al-Askari and Al-Mahdi the Awaited) are also included within the Ahlul Bayt.

4. Prophet Muhammad (S) said, “Al-Hasan and al-Husayn are the chiefs of the youth of Paradise.” This hadith is unanimously narrated by all historians of the two sects of Islam, Sunni and Shia.

5. Masjid or mosque- is the Muslim place of worship.

6. We – the Shia believe that the Immaculate Imams whose father is ‘Ali ibn Abi-Talib follow the divine directives in all their religious and worldly conducts. We also believe that they carry supernatural knowledge in all fields of life, because they are divinely chosen for a special mission concerning the question of the existence of this cosmos with all that which is in it.

Nevertheless, the Imams as well as the prophets, peace be upon them all, are required to behave as naturally as possible and to follow the natural laws of this existence. Hence, we notice that the Prophets and Imams (a) used their supernatural energies in very limited situations according to the divine instructions. In this regard, we believe that Imam ‘Ali (a) was more knowledgeable than his brother ‘Aqil in the field of genealogy, but he sought his advice when he wanted to choose a wife that gave birth to heroes – according to the law of heredity, just to indicate natural laws that necessitate following the instructions of the specialists in their fields of specialization.

To prove this matter we may cite as examples the many reports that conveyed to us that Prophet Muhammad (S), though he was divinely directed, used to consult his companions in many affairs and follow their opinions after receiving a signal of acceptance from the Heavens. In this regard, God instructs:

“Only through the Divine Mercy have you (Muhammad) been able to deal with your followers so gently. If you had been stern and hard-hearted, they would all have deserted you a long time ago. Forgive them and ask Allah to forgive (their sins)

and consult with them in certain matters. But, when you reach a decision, trust Allah. Allah loves those who trust Him.”
(3:159)

Following the Prophet (S), all the Sinless Imams (a) had similar situations.

It has to be added that because the Prophet and Imams have been the examples for people, they had to behave completely naturally so that people would follow their examples. Hence, Imam ‘Ali, in this interchange with ‘Aqil, wanted to guide people to choose women of honorable lineages for marriage and to avoid the inglorious, because mothers play great roles in the natural and educational development of their sons.

7. The Holy Qur’an, Surah ash-Shuaraa (26), Verses 217–20
8. The Holy Qur’an; Sura of al-An’aam, Verse 74
9. The Holy Qur’an; Sura of al-Baqara, Verse 133
10. Abdullah ibn Abd-ul-Muttalib and Amina (bint Wahab) are the parents of Prophet Muhammad, and Abu-Talib and Fatima bint Asad are the parents of Imam ‘Ali.
11. See as-Sirat ul-Halabiyya; part 1 page 20
12. See ar-Rawdh ul-Anif; part 1 page 8
13. Kaaba is the square-shaped building in the center of the Great Mosque in Mecca, in the direction of which Muslims must face in offering the obligatory prayer.
14. See Subh ul-Aasha, part 1 page 211
15. See as-Sirat ul-Halabiyya
16. The Holy Qur’an; Sura of An-Nisaa (4), Verse 22
17. The Holy Qur’an; Sura of Al-Anfaal (8), Verse 41
18. The Holy Qur’an; Sura of At-Tawba (9), Verse 19
19. See Sheikh as-Saduqís al-Mawaaizh
20. Refer to Bihar ul-Anwar; 9/31
21. See Mir’aat ul-Uqoul, 1/326
22. The Hashemites are sons and descendants of Hashim ibn Abd- Menaf
23. To know more about the poetry of Abu-Talib in defence and support of the Prophet, refer to al-Baghdadi, Khuzanat ul-Adab 1/261, al-Hujjatu-ela ath-Thahib 45, and Ibn Abi’l- Hadid, Sharhu Nahj il-Balagha 3/313
24. Refer to Abd-ul-Husayn Sharafuddin, Al-Muraja’aat
25. The whole narration is as follows: At-Tabari, in his book of history, records that Ibn ‘Abbas narrated that ‘Ali bin Abi-Talib (a) said after the revelation of the Verse:

“And warn your nearest relations”

– the Prophet (S) summoned me and said: “‘Ali, Allah had ordered me to warn my near relatives, but I was unable to bear this order because I knew that they would show me detestable things if I would approach such a matter with them. I therefore kept it secret until Archangel Gabriel came to me and said that my Lord would punish me if I would shun that order. Now, I want you to make some food with meat of a ewe and bring a jar of milk for us, then gather the sons of Abd-ul-Muttalib so that I will speak to them and convey the matter that I have been ordered to convey.”

I did as he asked me and invited them. They were about forty men among whom there were his uncles – Abu-Talib, Hamza, al- ‘Abbas, and Abu-Lahab. When they all attended, he asked me to fetch that food and I did. When I put it before them, the Prophet (S) took a piece of the meat, tore it with his teeth, threw its pieces around the bowl, and then said: “Here you are, by the Name of Allah.”

Each one of them took it to his sufficiency completely and I could see only the places of their hands. I swear by Allah, each one of them ate from the quantity that I served to all of them. The Prophet (S) then asked me to serve milk to them. I fetched that jar and they all drank from it. By Allah I swear, each one of them drank from the quantity that I served to all of them.

When the Prophet (S) tried to speak, Abu-Lahab overtook and prevented him from speaking. He said: "This man has bewitched you." Hence, they left without letting the Prophet (S) speak to them.

On the next day, he said to me: "Ali, that man overtook me and said the statement that you had heard. They left before I could speak to them. Make for us food like that which you did yesterday then gather them to me."

I did and invited them all. He then asked me to serve them the food. I served it for them and he repeated the same thing he had done the previous day. Each one had to his sufficiency completely. He then asked me to serve them with milk. I fetched the same jar and they all drank from it to their sufficiency.

Then, the Prophet (S) spoke: "Sons of Abdul-Muttalib, I do not know any young Arab man who has brought to his people a thing better than that which I have brought to you. I have brought to you the goodness of this world as well as the world to come. Allah, Exalted is He, has ordered me to call you to accept this matter. Which one of you will support me in this regard and he will be my brother, successor, and representative?"

They all kept silent except me. I said, while I was the youngest, "Prophet of Allah, I will be your supporter in this matter." I repeated this statement three times. The Prophet (S) then took me from the neck and said: "This is my brother, successor, and representative among you. You thus should listen to and obey him."

They left him laughing and saying to Abu-Talib: "He has ordered you to listen to and obey your son!"

This narration is recorded in many reference books such as: At-Tabari's At-Tarikh 2:319-21; Ibn ul-Athir's Al-Kamil fit Tarikh 2:22; As-Seerat un-Nabawiyya; Al-Halabi (the Shafiite) 1:311-2; Kenz ul-Ummahl; al-Muttaqi (the Hanafite), Mustadrak us-Sahihayn; Al-Hakim an-Nisapuri (the Shafiite) 3:133; Ad-Durr ul-Manthour; As-Suyoutti (the Shafiite) 5:79; Al-Musnad; Ahmed ibn Hanbal (the founder of Hanbalism) 1:111, Al-Bidaya wan-Nihaya; Ibn Kuthair 3:39; Tarikh; Abu'l-Fidaa 1:119; Shawahid ut-Tanzil; Al-Hasakani 1:485 H.514 and 580; Tarikh Dimashq: the life account of Imam 'Ali ibn Abi-Talib; Ibn Asakir (the Shafiite) 1:97-105 H.133-40 and Sharhu Nahj ul-Balagha; Ibn Abi-al-Hadid (the Mutazilite) 13:210 and 244.

26. After the polytheist Meccans having defeated the undisciplined Muslim forces at Uhud near Medina, they persuaded a number of Bedouin tribes to join their cause. The Meccans brought a force of 10,000 men against Medina again. Prophet Muhammad (S) then resorted to tactics - he had a ditch dug around Medina. The Meccan horsemen were disconcerted and soon got bored, and the coalition of Bedouin tribes started breaking up.

After an unsuccessful siege, the Meccans dispersed. Amr ibn Abd-Wudd was the strongest horseman among the army of the Meccans. He could cross over that ditch to challenge Muslims. Facing this horrible situation that warned the ultimate defeat of Muslims, Prophet Muhammad (S) declared: "I guarantee Paradise for him who will face Amr." None of Muslims responded to the Prophet's call except 'Ali ibn Abi-Talib who faced and could kill Amr by one stroke about which the Prophet (S) said that statement.

27. Two campaigns led by Abu-Bakr and Omar against the Jews of Khaybar failed. Therefore, Prophet Muhammad (S) declared that he would give the standard of leadership to a man who loves Allah etc. Next day, the Prophet (S) summoned 'Ali to give him that standard, and 'Ali did attack and came back with victory.

28. See at-Tabari, at-Tarikh, 2/282.

29. See Nukat ul-Hayman, 200; As-Sirat ul-Halabiyya, 1/304; Tathkirat ul-Khawaas, 7; and Al-Khissal, 1/38.

30. See Ibn Abi'l-Hadid's Sharhu Nahj il-Balagha, 3/82

31. See al-Bukhari, as-Sahih, 3/50; al-Hakim, al-Mustadrak, 3/220