

Chapter 10: The Day of Saqifa

After the death of the Holy Prophet (S) one of the following two paths could be selected by ‘Ammar:

Comfort, wealth and power.

Hardship, suffering and privation.

However, as ‘Ammar was a wise, bold, reflective, and far-sighted person he chose the second path. He was one of the earliest supporters of Islam and had fully imbibed the secrets and mysteries of the reality of this religion, possessed such intelligence and insight that he could select, out of the various ways, the way which was nearest to guidance. Apart from that ‘Ammar was a man who put into practice everything that he knew and was aware of the value of Divine blessings.

Of course, ‘Ammar was a sincere servant of Allah. The power of firmness in truth, walking in the path of truth and defence of truth were inherent in him and he did not mind the hardships which he had to bear in this path. On account of the Holy Prophet's remark about him that "A rebellious group will kill him", ‘Ammar was the pivot on whom the eyes of Muslims were fixed from all directions and angles. It is evident that short-lived comfort and the apparent ease and convenience of the world could not deceive such a devout and farsighted person and could not shake his stand and status.

Was this man not the son of the same parents who had the honour of being the first martyrs of Islam? And was not ‘Ammar the same hero who had suffered all those heart rending pains and sufferings to safeguard the principles?

Obviously such a brave person can never permit that history should write thus about him: "After having acquired faith he became a reactionary and an apostate! And after migration he chose Arabism, and Bedoinism; and having acquired strength and authority he inclined to laxity and weakness; and after acquiring victory and success he adopted the path of abjectness and humiliation."¹

The marks of the torture, which ‘Ammar had to suffer at the hands of Abu Jahl twenty years ago, could still be seen on his back. It had, of course, not been forgotten that ‘Ammar bore heart-rending torture and looked at Abu Jahl with derision and contempt. Yes, it was not more than twenty years ago when that terrible event took place.

In the circumstances could it be imagined that ‘Ammar would exchange all those toils and pains, which even the big mountains, would not be able to bear with acquiring brief comfort for a short period? ‘Ammar could certainly not commit such a mistake and go astray.

However when ‘Ammar became free to choose one of the two paths, he decided that the best thing to do was to join the group which was smaller numerically but bigger spiritually.

In those days the Muhajirs as well as the Ansar had formed parties which were indicative of their differences in conduct and taste. Although these differences and disputes existed, more or less, among the people even during the lifetime of the Prophet (S) they were not as evident and open as in these days.

‘Ammar was fully aware of these differences. He had, however, prepared himself beforehand to bear hardships and privations. He now saw that the people of Madina were divided in four parties. Out of these four parties three were political parties which exist in all ages. The supporters of these three parties are persons who quarrel and dispute with one another as and when their interests so demand, but when their objects are achieved, they reconcile mutually and extend hands of peace to one another.

‘Ammar also knew that the persons belonging to these three political parties had been following a common course since the days of the Holy Prophet (S) and their common interests demanded that they should keep ‘Ali away from his status. He also knew that in spite of all the differences which existed between these three parties most of the members of these parties kept ‘Ali in mind and at the same time there were some persons, who sometimes forsook ‘Ali's support and at other times supported him. However, ‘Ali always followed the path of truth, so that if someone withdrew his support from him he did not worry, and if some persons aligned with him he did not rejoice.

Hence, ‘Ammar had pondered over the programmes of all the four parties and had selected a programme, whose mundane aspect was the weakest. The aspect relating to the hereafter was the strongest.

The first party was that of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar. This party was a spontaneous generation composed of the rejected elements and sundries of Quraysh and persons like Khalid bin Walid, 'Amr bin As, and Abu Ubayda Jarra formed part of it. The leaders of this party were persons who well known for their

harshness and severity.

This group relied and depended on two of the Prophet's wives namely A'isha, daughter of Abu Bakr (who alone was a party by herself) and Hafsa, daughter of 'Umar.

After this party had been formed they gradually invited some Ansars to cooperate with them and in order to find out the weak points of the masses, they commissioned some persons from out of Ansar for spying, so that they might collect information about the affairs of the opposite parties. The persons so commissioned were those like Uwaym bin Sa'ida, and Ma'n bin Addi. These two persons possessed soft and mild political habits and were reckoned to be the people "whose tears are under their control."²

The second party was that of the Ansar. This party was next to the first one from the point of view of strength and influence; notable persons and thinkers of the Ansar were its members, who had made innumerable sacrifices, provided quarter to the Muhajirs, and assisted Islam and enjoyed historical influence in Madina, were owners of lands and property, and had also transferred wealth to this city previously from Yemen. The chief and leader of this party was Sa'ad bin Ubada Khazraji, whereas its spokesman was Manzar bin Hubab bin Jumu. Of course, the weak point of this party was their conflict with Bani Aws and their tribal rivalry.

Relations maintained by this party with the first party were due to their common ways and methods. However, when the hopes of this party to acquire the Caliphate did not materialize, they became the supporters of 'Ali and continued their support to him.

The third party was that of Abu Sufyan. As regards the mysteries and techniques of politics this party was perhaps most competent of all others. However, the defect inherent in this party was the bad record of its leader; and this bad record of his consisted of his violent opposition to Islam since the commencement of the Prophet's mission. And as his continuous hypocrisy and political aspirations were not hidden from anyone the same hampered his success.

For this reason Abu Sufyan had hidden himself behind 'Uthman, who was his cousin, and similarly behind Abdur Rahman bin 'Awf, who was the son-in-law of 'Uthman and the chief of Bani Zohra tribe, and had sent two vipers of his (viz. Mughira bin Sho'ba and Mu'awiya) in the field, who joined hands with those polytheists who had embraced Islam unwillingly and considered it to be the ladder for advancement.

In this way Abu Sufyan availed of the opportunity and became active. Abu Sufyan was not happy on Abu Bakr, becoming the Caliph, because Abu Bakr's family was the smallest amongst the different families of Quraysh. For this reason or apparently for this reason he joined 'Ali, but when 'Ali turned him away from his presence he was obliged to seek the favour of 'Umar by flattering him.

After Abu Sufyan had gained 'Umar's favour, he instigated Mughira bin Sho'ba to do away with 'Umar. Mughira discharged this assignment quite admirably because he instigated his slave Abu Lu'lu to kill 'Umar. Then the blood of 'Umar, which had been shed as a consequence of the plot of Abu Sufyan, became the cause of the Caliphate of 'Uthman.

Abu Sufyan killed 'Umar and got the Caliphate transferred to 'Uthman.

Incidentally it should be remembered that 'Umar was deceived by the flattery of Abu Sufyan, and Abu Sufyan was a man who apparently opposed the opponents of 'Umar but secretly supported them against him.

During the Prophet's lifetime Abu Sufyan, who was a calamity and a genius in the techniques of politics, was the leader and the chief of a party in Madina. However, as the Prophet (S) recognized him fully well, the practical field was not open to him. And as the political activities took place confidentially and secretly, the path of the Holy Prophet's opposition to it was also blocked.

The last party which existed in Madina whose programme was different from that of all other parties was the party of Imam 'Ali, who was supported by Bani Hashim and a few other persons whose number did not exceed seven, namely: Salman Farsi, Abu Dharr, 'Ammar, Miqdad, Khalid bin Sa'id bin As Amavi, Farwa bin 'Umar Ansari, and Zubayr bin 'Awwam.

It should be known that when Abdullah, the son of the last person mentioned above, grew up and came under the influence of his mother, Asma bint Abu Bakr, Zubayr bin Awwam left this party and ceased to be one of the said seven supporters of Imam 'Ali. This party was in minority as compared with other parties.

'Ammar had accepted the membership of this party, because he knew that it enjoyed the support of the Holy Prophet (S) and was also aware that Imam 'Ali, the leader and head of this party, was envied by others on account of the strength and support accorded to him by the Prophet. He also knew that Imam 'Ali possessed various virtues not even one of which was possessed by his rivals and those who were jealous of him.

'Ammar was confident that this was the faithful party which was the source of hope of all pious people. This was the party which did not indulge in deceit and conspiracy. Excellence and virtue were its means of activity. Its conduct was honourable, because its target was nothing but acquisition of virtue. He was also sure that if, in order to achieve its object, this party had a choice either to adopt the path of deviation or to retreat that it would certainly prefer retreat.

The aptitude and competence of 'Ammar in the matter of devotion was one of the biggest factors which separated him from the majority and made him join the minority.

Besides all these things 'Ammar was travelling on a straight path. In it he considered that success, rather the acme of success, lay in spreading and proclaiming Islam. He never attached any importance to his personal status. It is on this account that 'Ammar enjoys a very high position among those persons who have achieved historical successes.

However 'Ammar's joining the small party was not with a view to welcoming misfortune or inclining towards isolation. Rather, the subtleties of his life were the outcome of the severe test which he underwent in support of Prophethood, and this is how his brilliant personality is known. And as he had always enjoyed the favour of the Holy Prophet, his religious fervour had reached its zenith during the last year of the life of the Prophet.

'Ammar was not absent during this year. With his usual quietness, he was imbibing faith, knowledge and wisdom, through the light of Prophethood.

During the last year of his life the Prophet (S) was very anxious and worried about the future of Islam, so much so that he could not sleep, and this sleeplessness tormented him. Another thing, which added to his torment and mental suffering, was the very mischief which appeared before his eyes like dark and gloomy nights. He tried as far as possible to remove these dark clouds, and saw none else after his death, except 'Ali, who could dispel them. Hence, all his efforts were directed towards the achievement of this object and he did his utmost to make 'Ali occupy among these parties, the central place for which he was fully qualified, and thus protect the foundation of the Caliphate as well as Islam.

The tenth year of migration (632 A.D.) was a year of the wonderful victory and success, which had no precedent in the history of human freedom, because Islam had manifested itself with full strength and occupied the seat of honour. To speak more explicitly, in the end of the tenth year of migration the Prophet (S) proceeded from Madina to Makkah to perform the farewell Hajj and 120,000 of his followers, who had come from the north as well as the south of the Arabian Peninsula participated in these ceremonies.

Flags of Islam belonging to the regions of Yemen, Tahama, Hazramoot, Mohra, Yamama, Najd and the entire Hijaz began to fly. The grandeur and the dignity of the caravans were such that it showed that all the Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula had bowed down before the new system and regime.

Islam had attained the superb stage of strength and influence and had cleansed not only the entire Hijaz but also the borders of Hilale Khasib of the pollution of polytheism and trinity. And now the stage was set for establishing a worldwide government, proving the reality of spiritual unity in this planet called 'the

earth', and spreading unity, justice, blessings, brotherhood and all human virtues under the auspices of the guidance of Islam.

In the eyes of the Holy Prophet (S) no delight and blessing was greater than that all the human beings inhabiting the earth should participate in this victory and conquest and the rule and supremacy of Divine Commands should cover the entire world. However, this extreme blessing and success which the Prophet (S) achieved, and which he fully deserved, had become associated with severe grief and sadness which had deprived him of his sleep at night. This continuous worry had transformed bright daylight in his eyes into a dark night and he could not sleep on account of excessive grief. During daytime also as soon as he was free from the administration of public affairs he was faced with this worry and uneasiness and thought of some remedy to overcome that grief.

The enactment of the rules, regulations, orders and laws of Islam had been finalized and piety, contentment and their propagation had reached the final stage.

The only thing which remained was that after him all these realities should be spread and propagated through a Caliph, who should be the custodian and guardian of this sacred organization and having obtained inspiration from the spirit and text of these orders, should convey them to far off regions with perfect honesty. And as this religion is eternal and everlasting, it should be communicated to the further times and ages to ensure the freedom, nobleness, greatness, prosperity and advancement of mankind.

The Holy Prophet was confident that the orders, laws, teachings and morals preached by the religion, and their interpretation and application had been guaranteed by Allah's will, they would safeguard human interests. He was not, therefore, worried on that account. The only fear which troubled him was that Caliphs bearing the title of his successors might be covetous of thrones, crowns and worldly spoils!

In the circumstances he reflected that if he did not appoint an honest and strong Caliph who should have acquired his basic knowledge from the fountainhead of Prophethood and Divine revelation it might be feared that his (i.e. the Holy Prophet's) valuable victory would be converted into mischief, selfishness and self conceit, and the spirit of Islam would be killed before the people began killing one another.

The great power and influence, which Islam had acquired, had become for him a source of happiness on the one hand and a cause of grief and sorrow on the other. This was so because he knew that when a power, that has acquired expansion and development in all respects, falls in the hands of others then, as that power automatically becomes the cause of pride and error and makes eyes and heart lose their faculty, and if it falls in the hands of a deserving person in a pious society whose members are honest and conscientious, it becomes the cause of headache, endurance and hardship for the person wielding authority until he conveys this trust to its final destination; and the position would be most terrible when

such a heavy responsibility falls in the hands of an incompetent person in a society replete with discord, and where the hypocrites wish to take advantage of it.

The Holy Prophet (S) observed these traits during his own lifetime in many persons, and clearly realized that he was the only barrier in the way of the hypocrites to achieve their nefarious ends. He could also see that they were marking time to fulfil their desire, were awaiting an opportunity, and were hoping every moment that the lamp of Prophethood might be extinguished, and they might achieve their object and satisfy their avarice, and transfer the power of Islam from his house to their own. In the circumstances it was quite natural for him to be worried and anxious.

It is evident that this anxiety arose on account of the doubt which he had about his wives (who were members of the parties). Of course, this doubt was due the activities of those external parties and it is well-known that during this year execution of the orders of the Holy Prophet (S) was opposed on a number of occasions. If he had lived a little longer he might have thought of some solution. However, death did not give him enough time, and on account of the love which he had for Islam he did not wish to make haste in the matter during the last few days of his life.

In any case the Holy Prophet (S) did not fear that the enemies outside the Arabian Peninsula would break up the power and influence of Islam, because he knew that his followers had created in themselves the defenders, who would safeguard the Peninsula from all foreign attacks and no foreigner could entertain the hope of exercising sway and supremacy over the people of the Peninsula.

He was confident that that country and that society would at no time be conquered by the foreigners. He was also not afraid of the domination and influence of the internal princes of Arabia and the people in the street, who were scattered throughout the Arabian Peninsula, because this group of the society were like firm rocks at all stages and all of them rose against the enemies bravely.

However, the Holy Prophet (S) was worried and afraid on account of the parties in the capital and the persons who enjoyed precedence in Islam or those who had provided shelter to the Muslims. He was similarly anxious about those persons who had embraced Islam and were fond of pomp and power.

In any case he was afraid of these persons and also of those who had been with him at home and abroad and during war and peace and had accompanied him while asleep or awake.

He was also afraid that they might not recognize the value of the blessing which they had acquired and abandon the sublime objectives which they had in view and prefer the worldly benefits to the lofty celestial and spiritual objects. But for this anxiety he would certainly have joined the 'Supreme Companion' with a smiling face and a disburdened heart and would have flown away to the eternal world.

As 'Ammar was one of those persons who were aware of the anxiety of the Holy Prophet (S) and could see like others that after the demise of the Prophet (S) the inheritance of Prophethood viz. the message for the communication of which he had borne so many hardships, might be destroyed, he said: "The sleeplessness of the Prophet (S) is not due to the fact that a caliph who should complement the message of his Prophethood is not available; rather he is aware that a person worthy of Caliphate is present and Allah too, has ordered him to introduce that person as the would-be Caliph and declare him to be the ruler and the Imam. However, he is in a state of suspense and perplexity between the Divine Command and the determination of the hypocrites. Although the interests of Islam, and implicitly the interests of the people themselves, demand that the same person should be chosen for the Caliphate but the selfishness of the people and the egotism of self conceited persons prevent this thing being put into practice. For this reason the Holy Prophet (S) has neither slept at night nor rested during daytime."

'Ammar was one of those persons who knew the reason of the Prophet's wakefulness and uneasiness and was also aware that as sleeplessness troubled the Prophet (S) he was obliged to rise from his bed at midnight or at the time of dawn and go to the graveyard and complain to the dead about some of those, who were alive. In other words he carried the complaint of the alive to the souls of the dead which are, in any case, alive.

Abu Muwaibiha, a slave of the Prophet (S) narrates thus: "One night the Holy Prophet (S) was very much disturbed on account of sleeplessness. He got up from his bed and proceeded to the graveyard. He also ordered me to accompany him. Both of us came out of the house and proceeded to Baqi'ul Gharqad, the graveyard of Madina. When we arrived there the Prophet (S) stood in the middle of the graveyard and said: "Peace be upon you O people of the graves! You are lucky for you didn't suffer what the people are suffering now. Troubles have appeared like fragments of a dark night. The latter troubles are subservient to the former ones! And the latter troubles are worse than the former ones!"

It might be asked as, what was the grief which made the Prophet (S) complain? And what sort of complaint was it which was uttered by him alone and not by anyone else? It might also be asked as to the reason for the Prophet's greeting the dead and saying: "You are lucky to have died, for you have escaped these troubles!" And what were the reaction and the apostasy which was treated by the Holy Prophet (S) to be worse than polytheism?

The fact is that no complaint as explicit as the one addressed by the Prophet (S) to the dead has been revealed.

Just imagine that if the Prophet (S) had gone to the graveyard alone to make the complaint before the dead, would he have felt afraid of loneliness? Was it for this reason that he took another man with himself? I don't think that anyone would entertain such a misgiving in his mind. In fact there is no doubt

that the object of the Prophet's taking Abu Mu'awiya to the graveyard with himself was that the matter might spread among the people and be recorded in history and this brilliant picture of the Prophet's talking might be preserved in history as a part of the pictures of his campaigns, and he might proclaim his views about the intentions of the self-seekers and the covetous persons, who had interfered with his sacred legacy and had planned to acquire power because the appearance of this mischief meant apostasy and reaction which was worse than polytheism, and a group of persons had ignored, this legacy, which was more dangerous than the group of Abu Jahl and Abu Sufyan.

One of the greatest distinctions possessed by 'Ammar was that he had been brought up to be a jurist and a scholar The Holy Prophet (S) had trained him in the best manner and had declared him to be the specimen of a 'Qur'anic Muslim'.

On account of these antecedents his faith in Islam was not merely a blind faith. Hence, he possessed a thorough understanding and a careful opinion about the appointment to the Caliphate. And keeping these realities in view he felt that in the capacity of a follower of Islam it was necessary for him to be obedient to the Prophet's speech, actions and thoughts, He also observed that the view of the Prophet (S) in this very important matter was certainly connected with the revelation from Allah and obedience to His Command. And very often he also pondered over other matters from the viewpoint of the Prophet (S) of which he was aware and perhaps thought that if the Prophet (S) did not nominate a successor it would be just like his not having done anything!

'Ammar had not acquired this view from the Prophet, but knew that it was the explanation and interpretation which had been revealed to him explicitly by Allah in the following verse:

O Messenger! Make known that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, for if you don't convey it, you will not have conveyed His message. Allah will protect you from (the mischief of) the people, (Sura al-Ma'idah, 5:67)

After having assessed that Caliphate was a matter expressly mentioned in the text of the Qur'an and dependent on this command and that this reality was the gist of the Book and the Sunna, and having observed that the question of Caliphate was one of the established facts which could not be interfered with or altered even by the Prophet (S) himself 'Ammar realized that the Holy Prophet (S) was conveying this order to the people in the best possible way, and was making such efforts for its enforcement as he had not made in respect of any other order, And it ought to have been so, because the execution of all other orders was related to this command and if perchance any negligence took place in this matter the harmony of all the orders would have been destroyed and the Divine Commands would have been scattered and divided. But from where he could find a friend of Islam, one which is interested, sincere, and devoted and a follower of the commands?

'Ammar could observe that the Prophet (S) was so much enamoured of this subject that he did not mention it only once, in one manner, and at one particular place, and time, but repeated it and conveyed it to the people time and again in very skilful, and most eloquent and persuasive ways. He mentioned this matter to the people from the very commencement of his mission up to the last moment of his life and considered Caliphate to be meant for, 'Ali according to the explicit text of the Qur'an.

The announcement relating to this matter specifically started from the commencement of the Prophethood when Almighty Allah ordered the Prophet (S) to warn his nearest kinsfolk, and lasted up to the last day when the Prophet (S) was in his death-bed, He mentioned this fact in clear terms with regard to 'Ali on innumerable occasions whether he was in the valley of Abu Talib in Makkah when his mission had commenced or was covering the distance between his house and the Masjid in Madina. Furthermore, he specifically stated that the Caliphate and Imamate was to devolve on the descendants of 'Ali and also mentioned their names and particulars.

All these consecutive texts, whether Qur'anic, as mentioned above, or in the form of hadith or the text of Ghadir3 and whether in the shape of speech, like the Qur'anic and the Prophetic texts, or in mute language as at the time of the Prophet's migration from Makkah when he placed at 'Ali's disposal the articles left by the people in his custody, for being returned to them and asked him to sleep in his bed, and also when 'Ali acted as his successor in Madina and looked after public affairs during his absence in connection with the Battle of Tabuk, or when he acted as his special representative and read out Surah Bari'at before the polytheists at Makkah at the time of Hajj, replacing Abu Bakr, or when he was entrusted various other assignments later; all these things indicated clearly that none of the companions, whether he embraced Islam earlier or later, was more suited for Caliphate than 'Ali.

By taking into account all these explicit texts and the clear utterances of the Prophet (S) regarding nomination to the Caliphate, 'Ammar observed that the spirit of these clear texts doubly conformed with the marks of Prophethood and the occult knowledge of Messengership and assessed that the appointment of 'Ali with necessary proof and implied reasons carried explanations much greater than propagation and more ample than clear texts, because the most sublime facility of propagation is 'necessary' proof .

In order to explain what has been mentioned above it may be stated that from the Holy Prophet's prophecy, 'a rebellious group will kill you', 'Ammar had deduced an indirect authority regarding the Caliphate of 'Ali. Rather it may be said that from this indirect text 'Ammar had acquired an analogy regarding the text about Imam 'Ali and had realized that such a statement indicated that the commentators could not interpret and explain the hadith according to their own views and inclinations as opposed to what the Prophet (S) meant.

It may also be said that this indirect text is similar to the one in which the Holy Prophet (S) said to A'isha:

"O Humayra! I Pray to Allah that you may not be that woman." This is a sentence which the Prophet (S) uttered about one of his wives meaning that she would revolt against 'Ali and would do injustice to him, and it refers to the 'Battle of the Camel'.

Furthermore, from this indirect text 'Ammar's attention was drawn to another hadith of the Prophet (S) in which he said to 'Ali at the time of signing the Peace Pact of Hdaybiya: "You too will be faced with a similar circumstance." This happened at the time when the polytheists wanted to conclude a pact with the Prophet (S) and declined to acknowledge his Prophethood.

'Ammar, however, remembered a large number of the hadiths (traditions) of the Prophet, which were indicative of the Prophet's efforts with regard to the future of 'Ali, and such remarks made it more obligatory for the Muslims, as compared with clear texts, to be mindful about the Caliphate of 'Ali, so much so that it may be said that supposing that a clear text on the subject had not been available those hadiths would have been sufficient to serve the purpose.

It goes without saying that on the basis of all these facts 'Ammar was satisfied that the Holy Prophet (S) had nominated his Caliph in such a manner that no one could have the least doubt about it.

'Ammar had been convinced that this nomination had been ordered by such a source that it could not be repudiated by any scholar in the Islamic system and the regime of that government; and time could not make any alteration in it though in later years most of the Muslims disowned it on the pretext of 'realism' and made interpretations which meant denial and deviation.

The Divine Command and the thinking of the Prophet (S) was like this and it is evident that no thinking or view can interfere with it or change it, and if anyone considers any change in it to be permissible he becomes involved in mistake and intellectual deficiency; except when (God forbid) it is proved that the Divine Command and the thinking of the Holy Prophet (S) are wrong and 'realism' is correct.

I do not know if, when 'Ammar was reflecting about these matters, he had a misgiving on the basis of the firm views of the Holy Prophet (S) whether or not the Islamic government had a theocratic aspect.

I am also not aware whether at this moment 'Ammar was thinking about the governmental systems of the Pharaohs of Egypt and the rulers of Athens and Rome, which existed previously, and was assessing the difference between those governments and the pure national celestial government. Of course, I am not aware of it. However, 'Ammar was undoubtedly giving to himself implicit replies to these questions and was assessing and explaining during the course of his thinking the method of the democratic Islamic government arising out of the decisions taken at Saqifa or a better interpretation of that method resulting in the nomination of 'Ali by the Holy Prophet.

The fact is that the object of the Holy Prophet (S) in nominating 'Ali and the shape of the government which he had in view was not understood properly. And there was, of course, no possibility of its being understood in a society which had become very covetous, and in which party spirit had become acute.

It was on this account that these factors created new political difficulties about the type of government and these very political difficulties prompted those parties to think about "the type of government" for which they had endeavoured to find out a way and an excuse, and thus evade the order of the Prophet (S) and the Caliphate of 'Ali.

For this reason they raised the questions of consultative council and family government and brought under discussion the right of the nation to make a selection. However, 'Ammar had, with his correct and minute understanding and judgement, understood the views of the Holy Prophet (S) about this unceasing difficulty, and repelled with the same understanding and judgement the misgivings which had arisen about this matter in the people's minds.

'Ammar's implicit reply about the theocratic government – government based on Divine laws was to seek help from Allah in running the government is certainly the best message and the most expressive good tidings, because such a government prefers the interests of the nation to those of the families, and gives the general welfare preference over the welfare of the individuals. However, the people in general are not prepared to realize this meaning so that they may understand the common interests properly.

In fact, the masses are influenced by thousands of internal and external effective factors and these very factors prevent them from realizing and assessing their general interests. Furthermore, the common people not only do not think about general interest and welfare but, as they are busy in the usual conditions in their daily affairs, they are not in a position to realize the situation and take proper decisions when they are faced with critical problems. Moreover, the factor of prejudice prevails over them and individual intellects automatically become subservient to collective intellect, and falsehood manifests itself in an attractive and brilliant shape.

In any case there are many such factors under the influence of which truth cannot be distinguished from falsehood, and if occasionally right prevails over wrong it will be something very rare. For this reason it was decided according to the viewpoint of the Prophet (S) that from the region of Islam there should be a nominated ruler, who should remove the social deficiencies, and it is evident that the appointment of such a person by the Prophet (S) was on account of the distinctions which that person enjoyed in respect of justice, knowledge, prudence, self-sacrifice, chastity and selflessness, although the rule of such a person might manifest itself as rule by an individual. In the circumstances such a person would have the requisite strength to enforce pure Islamic national laws, and to put into practice the programme of Islamic Government which ensures the comfort and welfare of the society.

Now from another side all agreed that 'Ali was the most suitable and important person in the Islamic society, who could look after the common Islamic interests in the best possible manner and was the most capable of all others to give a concrete form to the Islamic spirit theoretically as well as practically. And the Holy Prophet (S) could not also ignore the presence of such a worthy and high-principled person, and delay his nomination, keeping in view the fact that during the period of his Prophethood no Prophet (S) can be influenced by the factors of personal and family inclinations. Hence by taking into account all these realities and keeping in view all these established elements the Prophet (S) nominated 'Ali to the Caliphate.

The Prophet (S) abstained from referring this matter to a consultative body, because he considered reference to consultation to be equivalent to surrendering the question of government to the waves of a roaring sea whose share is not known. He in fact thought that the undulations and fluctuations of this sea would make the matter of government end in despotism and stubbornness and would eventually take it to a far off island and place it in the hands of a ruler who would not have anything in view except his own interest. In that event government will be nominal without anything so named and without any meaning.

After having abstained from consultation the Prophet (S) nominated 'Ali to the Caliphate, because, as admitted by all, 'Ali was superior to all the companions and his characteristic to ignore personal gains was his foremost virtue. He was a man who inherently possessed the qualities of the Holy Prophet. He was a man who could manage to establish the Qur'anic Government and could maintain peace and order and remove the obstacles, discriminations and differences.

The facts were not hidden from the eyes of the people and all the contemporaries of, 'Ammar knew them. However, the parties who entertained pride in their minds neglected to pay heed to this noble object. There were also persons who, on account of their failing to understand Islam properly, were under the erroneous impression that the Prophet (S) was also one like themselves and wanted to promote the interests of his family, and had therefore confined ruler ship to his family!

In any case this was the wrong assessment which created a wide gap between the way of thinking of the Holy Prophet (S) and that of his companions and followers. These people thought or wished to think that the Caliphate was like a kingdom. Hence, on account of the keen interest which they had to achieve this status and their pursuit of personal gains they endeavoured to attain this office. However, the vision of the Prophet (S) was free and extensive, for it worked for general welfare. In order to achieve this object he selected 'Ali who was the hero of Islam. In case, however, Abu Sufyan had also possessed this capability the Prophet (S) would certainly have kept him in view and would not have failed to nominate him.

The clearest proof of the vast difference between the views of this group and those of the Prophet (S) is

that after depriving 'Ali of the Caliphate the leaders of this group said: "The Arabs are not prepared to see the Prophethood and the Caliphate in on and the same family!" Of course, the expression of this view was a sort of apology with which they implicitly showed off the spirit of democracy and pretended that the willingness of the people is a condition precedent. And these were the difficulties and the excuses which brought about a deep split between the viewpoint of the Prophet (S) and that of this group.

The members of this group failed to perceive the viewpoint of the Prophet. Hence, if they had pondered over the essence of Islam and had kept the character of the Holy Prophet (S) in view they would have realized that Islam forbids hero-worship and absolute rule and establishment of a family government. And supposing that the Prophet (S) entertained such an idea he should have nominated his uncle Abbas and would have totally refuted, by this means, the arguments which the opponents put forward to deprive 'Ali of the Caliphate, because Abbas, along with being one of his nearest relatives, was neither young nor had shed the blood of anyone, and these were the two objections which the opponents raised against 'Ali. However as a matter of fact the general welfare was the only motive for the Prophet (S) nominating 'Ali, and the Prophet (S) did not possess any personal choice or authority in the matter of this nomination.

'Ammar was scrutinizing these events step by step, and formed opinions about men and things with special insight. He felt that the most important and the most effective factor which had created deep gap between the views of the Holy Prophet (S) and those of the most of the parties about this critical situation was that a large number of the Muhajirs and the Ansar had newly joined that movement and had hopes and desires in their hearts from the day they embraced Islam and the efforts which they made earlier in this path were to achieve their own aims and objects. Hence, when they saw that Islam had made great achievements they became very much influenced by their old ways and historical traditions. Otherwise why should they have said that 'Ali had killed their fathers and their sons, when all knew that 'Ali never killed anyone to take personal revenge, and had no enmity with anyone, for he was only discharging his duties towards Allah, therefore, the real killer of the persons concerned was Islam.

In any case, it is undeniable that if these persons had embraced Islam in a proper manner, they should not have given vent to their grudge which had been deeply rooted in their hearts.

Evidently in these circumstances the people were not able to understand the secret of the Prophet's nominating 'Ali to the Caliphate and it was natural that the Prophet (S) was accused of personal inclination and special sentiments in this matter.

It was also natural that in such circumstances those persons should have gathered in a meeting so that 'Ali might not assume the office of Caliph, but they should become the rulers in the first instance, and then take revenge, and when they have set 'Ali back and make excuses before the people, saying, "Ali

is young, 'Ali is interested in the family of Abdul Muttalib. 'Ali is the destroyer of the Arabs". Or that they might say: "Ali is a man of faith, knowledge, justice and war and was the foremost in Islam. But he is not a politician".

They were, however, unaware of the fact that by saying these things they were doing harm to themselves, because firstly they were Opposing the Holy Prophet (S) and secondly they were uttering with their own tongues the most correct and the most logical proofs of 'Ali's superiority over them. This is so because faith, knowledge, justice and war are proofs of the superiority of a ruler or a person nominated to ruler ship. But when one surrenders to the defect attributed by them to 'Ali in the matter of politics it should be said: "When the authority and supremacy of the advanced Islamic Government is established all defects can be overcome. However, this group considered government to be only politics and imagined that government meant politics".

Furthermore, when this difficulty arises it should be said: "When the honesty, justice, knowledge and bravery of 'Ali have been admitted how is he deficient in the matter of the politics of truth?"

Of course, 'Ali abstained from falsehood, intrigue and deceit and forsook all these devilish gifts which others were proud to own.

Now it should be asked: "If the other persons enter the field with these weapons and take the government in their hands will it be a proof of their enjoying preference and superiority?"

The fact is that if the opponents had such an object they succeeded in achieving it. However, the point which deserves consideration is that the Holy Prophet (S) nominated 'Ali for the Caliphate because he knew that 'Ali was a person who could save the supporters of such ideas from mistaken pride, and could guide them to the message of reparation and amendment on the basis of faith, knowledge, justice and war, and not to the politics of opportunism, allurements and self-interest.

Perhaps one of the most surprising occasions on which a person resorts to such excuses is that he does not take the trouble of drawing a logical conclusion but submits to accountability.

Furthermore, in the face of the four distinguished qualities mentioned above, not even one of which can be replaced by any virtue, it will be quite easy in the eyes of those who submit to logic to eliminate or remove the defect named 'politics'.

Among the things said on that day perhaps the most adequate logical argument which they put forth was that of consultation. However, the supporters of consultation did not show constancy even in the observance of this principle, because it was proved that basically it was against the need of the time to swear allegiance to Abu Bakr, and they did not think it proper when they did so. And their allegiance to

'Umar, too, was not confirmed by consultation, because it took place as a result of Abu Bakr's will. And what is all the stranger is that a similar will by the Prophet (S) for 'Ali being his Wasi (successor) was rejected by them.

Thereafter allegiance to 'Uthman also took place by means of deceit and ended in the corruption of the theory of election, because this action was taken in a limited gathering and in an atmosphere which was not free.

Later the Roman system of government began to be followed in the matter of Caliphate. Its pivot was family interest and not the welfare of the nation or the advancement of religion. And eventually the factor of consultation ceased to be effective, because, according to the theoretical concept of Islam it was opposed to the view of the Holy Prophet.

'Ammar had not forgotten that the Prophet (S) made efforts in different ways in regards to the appointment of 'Ali to the Caliphate and the obligation of the Muslims in this regard. He made him eligible for succession by all means and did not care for the consequences and difficulties involved in achieving that end.

Hence, in his own turn 'Ammar was also treading the same path and keeping in view the same precedents profited from many realities in this regard and made his best efforts to fulfil his obligations.

'Ammar was particular about the fundamentals of faith and the real principles and bases of Islamic life, and the first reality which dawned upon him on this account was the perception of the spirit of Islam which is based on equality. He paid minute attention to the two elements of decency and good acts which are hidden in the essence of Islamic equality.

The second point with regards to Islamic equality was the subject of eradication of party spirit, and campaign against thinking in terms of tribes, and transforming these two things into Islamic brotherhood and Qur'anic instruction in the most extensive meanings and in the sense of human training, and 'Ammar made serious efforts to enforce this concept.

Of course, if the Muslims had relied on these two basic elements of Islam, and had been steadfast unanimously in the matter of their advancement, they could very easily comply with the objectives of the Holy Prophet (S) about the Caliphate of 'Ali and would have remained immune from the sorrowful mischief which created such evil consequences in the history of Islam that their effects will continue to exist forever.

However, the problem of some of the companions, whether Muhajirs or Ansar, could be solved if they had realized this reality about the appointment of 'Ali to the Caliphate i.e. if they had directed their

attention to the two elements mentioned above just as ‘Ammar had relied on these two strong elements and had fully perceived the Divine aspect in the appointment of ‘Ali.

Apart from this, paying attention to these very two particular elements had provided insight and guidance to ‘Ammar and he had realized that the Islamic system and the Divine regime had not till then made the requisite impression on the hearts of the Muslims, and the old traditions still ruled over them, and every voice which came out of the throats of the conservative people impressed their minds like magic.

‘Ammar had contented himself with the general and intellectual principles on the subject to this extent and incidentally the keenness and efforts of the Prophet (S) during the last year of his life in connection with the appointment of ‘Ali to the Caliphate had also not been forgotten by him.

The Holy Prophet (S) endeavoured to express this view at different stages and by various means and the most patent manifestation of this endeavour was on the day of Ghadir when he was returning from the Farewell Hajj.

The position was similar to that when he had urged the Muslims to prepare themselves for the battle and had entrusted the command of the army, which included distinguished Muhajirs and Ansar, to a young commander named Usama bin Zayd. And the same was the case when he wanted to make a will with regard to the position of ‘Ali and to write something, so that the Muslims might not be misled after his demise.

All these things bear testimony to the intention of the Prophet (S) to nominate ‘Ali to the Caliphate.

As you have observed in this chapter, the day of the Eid (Festival) of Ghadir was closely connected with the importance and greatness of Islam. Although the previous declarations of the Prophet (S) were clear and explicit, and he mentioned this matter to his companions and kinsfolk as and when an opportunity occurred, but on the whole the action of the Prophet (S) on these lines was received in the shape of a formal action so that reference to the office of Caliphate might not be in such a form that it could be explained away and the people should not be in a position to escape it. It was categorical.

The Holy Prophet (S) could hear the humming of the different parties from far and near and was aware that they intended to deny his explicit remarks or wished to deviate from their correct interpretation. He, therefore, decided to proclaim this matter in a formal gathering and to silence these voices. In that event this explicit proclamation would resound throughout the Arabian Peninsula and this voice would reach the farthest Islamic territories.

Hence, he invited the Muslims to undertake the journey for the Farewell Hajj. In response to this special invitation as many as 120,000 persons belonging to different Islamic regions got ready and accompanied

the Prophet.

The Prophet (S) performed the ceremonies of Hajj and, as ordered by the Almighty Allah, kept waiting (for Divine revelation) till the Hajj came to an end.

The pilgrims adopted various routes with the intention of returning to their homes, but the Prophet (S) asked them to come to Ghadir Khumm, so that he might communicate this important matter to the people in a general gathering.

When the people gathered at this point with great eagerness to hear the Divine revelation and were all ears to hear the Prophet's message, he ordered that a pulpit might be prepared for him with the saddles of the camels, Then he mounted the pulpit and spoke briefly about the most important reformatory programmes which he had already executed, and also about the order and discipline which he had established for the security and comfort of the society. He also enumerated one by one the past important events as well as the momentous responsibilities which he had discharged. All those present confirmed that his message was true and he had duly conveyed it to them.

After these preliminaries were over the Prophet (S) held 'Ali with his two hands and raised him so that the blackness under his arms appeared and then confirmed the text which will last forever. He had not yet dismounted the pulpit when the tidings of the celestial revelation about the appointment of 'Ali reached all those who were present there.

At this moment Almighty Allah congratulated all the Muslims for this great celebration by revealing the following sacred mandate:

This day have I perfected your religion and completed My favours to you and have chosen Islam as your religion. (Surah al Ma'idah, 5:3)

If we now cast aside the time factor from the eyes of the spectators, you will see that a large number of persons have encircled 'Ali and have drowned him in greetings and, congratulations; And you will also see that Abu Bakr and 'Umar have placed their hands in the hand of 'Ali and are greeting him, congratulating him for acquiring this office and this Divine robe, promising assistance and saying openly before all those present: "O 'Ali! Accept our greetings and congratulations, for now you have become our master as well as the master of all faithful men and women".

It is evident that the declarations of these two persons do not carry any meaning other than the acknowledgement of 'Ali's Caliphate and, ruler ship and cannot be given any other name.

After the journey in connection with the Farewell Hajj the mobilization of Usama's army was the step

which was aimed at achieving this very object. And if you ask me to provide proof for it, I shall say: "The decision taken by the Holy Prophet (S) to equip the army of Usama, and the steps taken in this behalf, were a reply to the activities of the various parties who were opposed to the declaration of Ghadir and had started dispute with 'Ali. And in any case what stands proved and established is that in his last illness the Prophet (S) did not perform this act for any other purpose but to help 'Ali".

In the circumstances it can be observed that the Prophet (S) did not put in as much effort in any other matter of fundamental importance as he did in this case. And for the achievement of this object he had also in view another important matter that he wished to establish the eligibility of young men to undertake great responsibilities and achieve high positions in the light of their efficiency and competence, and to elevate everyone to a status for which he deemed him fit without taking his age into account.

Hence, the position becomes quite clear and the intention of the Prophet (S) becomes abundantly known when he entrusted the command of the army to young Usama and placed distinguished Muhajirs and Ansar like Abu Bakr , 'Umar, Abu 'Ubayda bin Hajjaj, Abdur Rahmin bin Awf, Talha, Zubayr etc under him. And by appointing Usama, whose father was a slave of Lady Khadija, as commander of the army; the Prophet (S) not only ignored the factor of age, but also disregarded the distinction of class and blood, and treated competence to be the only criterion for entrusting a task to anyone he deemed fit. He thus made it known to all that this and nothing else is the real and fundamental principle of true Islam.

Anyhow, by entrusting the command to Usama the Prophet (S) wished to put this sacred principle into practice openly and to make it known to all that just as the basis and foundation of true Islam is the recognition of suitability and competence, and just as this principle had been observed in appointing Usama a Commander of the army regardless of his age and blood, the same principle had also been kept in view in the appointment of 'Ali to the Caliphate, and the question of his age, or his Qurayshite or Hashimite blood had nothing to do with it, and had not been taken into consideration at all.

Another point which the Prophet (S) had in view in connection with the mobilization of Usama's army was that he wanted to clear the atmosphere of the city of Madina for the Caliphate of 'Ali and to send out of the city his opponents and those persons, who coveted to grab his office and position, so that he might assume authority at the appropriate time, and by the time the army returned from the front, 'Ali should have settled on the seat of Caliphate.

It was for this reason that even when he was on his death-bed he was very keen about the mobilization of the army, and when he regained his senses the first question which he asked was about Usama's army. And when he was told that the army had not moved till then he said: "Usama's army should move immediately. May Allah curse the man who opposed the mobilization of Usama's army." Then he moved with difficulty and, while leaning on Abbas and 'Ali and showing himself to be healthy, mounted the pulpit

and persuaded the people to mobilize Usama's army, and cursed those who declined to join the army.

Notwithstanding this the army did not move. All the elders of the nation violated the orders, declined to serve under the command of Usama and delayed matters till the Holy Prophet (S) breathed his last!

The object of the will which the Prophet (S) wanted to write and seal was that by means of this will he wished to employ his full strength and authority for conveying the Divine message once for all just as he had done it at Ghadir Khumm. In this way he intended to proclaim his views about the Qur'an and his own progeny on these lines: The Holy Qur'an is a Book which comprises the general laws, and the Prophet's progeny are the legal personages and the enforcing authority, and evidently law should be enforced through particular persons. They are the legal personages and the executors of Divine Commands, who can assume responsibility to enforce them and to persuade the people to observe them. And in the eyes of the Prophet (S) the Qur'an and his progeny are two branches which have grown from the same tree and are concomitants. Both of them occupy such a position that none of them is independent of the other, and in Islam they cannot in any way be separated from each other, and they have assumed such a form that their unity cannot be destroyed.

To sum up: whoever holds both the branches achieves guidance and salvation, and whoever contents himself with anyone of them loses everything, because these two objects have joined each other like the components of a single reality. In the case of a chemical composition if one of the various ingredients is eliminated the composition loses its property. Islam too has the same characteristics. If one part of this composition is ignored, its efficacy is gone.

Keeping this fact in view the Holy Prophet (S) felt that his followers needed, more than mere laws, the legal personages i.e. those who were conversant with laws and their becoming enforceable depends on the existence of the people who might put them into force, and so long as they are not made enforceable and do not reach the stage of execution neither can an offender be punished nor can one who does good deeds be recompensed.

Furthermore, the education and training of the people and inculcating the legal material in them is not possible except through capable scholars whose words are heard and whose orders are binding: In the circumstances when the laws are framed and compiled, and sincere and interested persons are not available to execute and enforce them, they automatically remain suspended and deferred. That being so these laws will neither prevent corruption nor check rebellion and crime.

'Ammar, who was a witness to these developments, was taken aback in connection with the document which the Prophet (S) wanted to write as it shows all his efforts in the path of guiding and advising the people. And it was still more surprising to him that he saw the followers of the Prophet (S) declined, as far as possible, to accept his advice.

He also observed that notwithstanding the fact that the Prophet (S) was nearing death he was making his best efforts with firm determination to carry out the Divine Command and although he was grappling with death he was not afraid of it. He was, however, extremely disturbed as he saw that discord and dispute would take place among his followers after his demise, and it was on this account that he was trying during the last moments of his life to guide and counsel the people.

‘Ammar observed that the room of the Prophet (S) was full of the Muhajirs and the Ansar, and his sacred heart was full of worries about the question of Caliphate, the destiny of his progeny, disturbances and destruction of the traces of his message. The efforts and worries of the people with regard to these difficulties were no lesser than the interest and worries of the Prophet; though the worries of the people were on account of different reasons which did not conform with the worries of the Prophet.

This condition of worry and agitation continued for some time till the Prophet, with a red handkerchief tied to his head and a red Hazrami mantle on his shoulder, rose from his bed with the assistance of ‘Ali. Those present protracted their necks, looked intently at the Prophet (S) and became attentive to hear what he was going to say.

In this dilemma there were a number of hearers among those present for whom the words of the Prophet (S) were more indigestible than the news of his death and added to their indignation.

Do you know what the Prophet (S) said at this moment with great kindness and love? He began to speak eloquently and said: "O people! I feel that I shall leave you soon. I offered you an apology previously and told some important things to you. Now be attentive and listen to what I have to say: "I leave the Book of Allah and my progeny among you as a trust."

Then he held the hand of ‘Ali, raised it and said: "This is ‘Ali, who is with the Qur'an, and the Qur'an is with ‘Ali. These two will not separate from each other until they meet me at the bank of the Fountain of Kauthar."

By saying these words and stressing the point the Prophet (S) entrusted all his distinctions and jurisdiction to ‘Ali and made over to him the office of Mastership which includes the Caliphate.

After making this statement the Prophet (S) got tired and reclined. Silence then prevailed over the assembly. Although some of the hearers were agreeable to die before this explanation they became all the more agreeable to die after hearing these words!

How strange! Notwithstanding the fact that these words were full of insight it seemed that they had fallen on deaf ears and had not made any impression on them.

O Allah! How did it happen that these explicit and clear words did not make any impression on their hearts!

‘Ammar says: "These statements, like many of the previous statements of the Holy Prophet, entered the core of my heart; rather they made a deeper impression on me and I was convinced that there is no fault or defect in the voice. If there is any defect, it is in its reflection; because my soul which has always been thirsty of speaking the truth and searching for the truth was greatly moved by the impressive words of the Prophet. These statements came to an end; silence continued to prevail. At that moment the Prophet, who had become silent on account of excessive fatigue and annoyance, reclined, and reinvigorated himself. Then he began speaking again and said: "Bring me an inkpot and a pen so that I may write something for you and by possessing that document you may not go astray after my death."

Strangely enough before anyone out of the assembly got up to bring an inkpot and a pen the silence was broken and a jangle arose in the assembly.

Do you know what the reason for this rude and churlish behaviour was?

Those present were afraid lest the Prophet (S) should reduce to writing what he had said verbally, for in that event it would not have been possible for them to explain away or deny the contents of the document appointing ‘Ali to the Caliphate. They were anxious that such a document would close all paths for them. ‘Umar, who broke the silence of the assembly, said with a loud voice: "Allah's Book is sufficient for us."

The Holy Prophet (S) said: "‘Ali is with the Qur’an and the Qur’an is with ‘Ali." By saying this the Holy Prophet (S) meant that ‘Ali was not separate from the Qur’an and the Qur’an was not separate from ‘Ali.

‘Umar said to those present: "The Prophet (S) is speaking in delirium (talking nonsense)". At that moment tumult and jangle arose in the assembly.

One of those present said: "Bring a pen and an inkpot."

Another said: "What ‘Umar says is correct."

Thereupon the Holy Prophet (S) said: "Get out from here, because it is not right to wrangle and make a noise in the presence of a Prophet."

‘Ammar got up from the assembly and said: "I don't remember that after Abu Jahl any person may have uttered such words against the Holy Prophet." He added: "I never imagined that a nephew might inherit

from his maternal uncle in this manner."

‘Ammar was keenly observing all the events, developments and tribulations related to this matter and even before clarifying his position before the gathering at Saqifa he came into the row of the Shi'a of ‘Ali and joined Salman Farsi, Abu Dharr and Miqdad. And everyone knows how keen the members of this group were about the security of the elements of Islam and how with their Islamic spirit, which they had imbibed, bravely fought for the uplift and security of Islam, so much so that they were recognized to be the pioneers and vanguard of Islam! Anyhow, the Prophet's room was closed. He was lying in his bed while his daughter and wives were weeping and crying and ‘Ali as well as some other members of his family were sitting by his side sorrowful and grief-stricken, and were reciting the Qur'an.

As ‘Ali was very much interested in the safety of the religion he did not pay heed to his proved and undeniable right and endeavoured to remain aloof from the campaign which might end in mischief. He was aware of the activities behind the doors, the grudge which surged up within the parties, the matters which they exchanged with one another, and the things which they coveted. Notwithstanding this he preferred to remain sad and not to rise to claim his right, in order that Islam might remain safe.

Imam ‘Ali relied on Allah and was sure that his proved and undeniable right was safe with all the Muhajirs and the Ansar, as Zubayr bin Bakaar said about him: "What is required is that people respect Divine Command and the wishes of the Holy Prophet (S) and this reality was established in ‘Ali. For he is not a man who would create trouble to achieve this end and become the source of an agitation and revolt which should adversely affect Islam."

Furthermore, he was the Wasi of the Prophet (S) who had advised him to observe patience, forbearance and self-sacrifice and to safeguard the higher interests of Islam. For this reason ‘Ali remained patient, showed forbearance, awaited the development, and did not make haste in inviting the people to take oath of allegiance to him, And notwithstanding the great sadness which he felt for his having been separated from the Prophet, he on account of his sincerity of faith, did not take steps to claim his established right. He was also sure that people would not ignore his right, although certain parties might endeavour to tarnish it. Of course, Abbas wished to take a forward step in this regard. He, therefore, stretched out his hand so that he might take the oath and the members of his family should follow suit and the matter might be settled. But, ‘Ali declined to accept the oath of allegiance of his uncle and said to him: "Who other than us will rise in such a matter?"

The door of the Holy Prophet's room was closed, although ‘Ali and the members of his family were there round the Prophet's body. A large number of the people had gathered outside the room and while crying and lamenting, were aghast and stupefied on account of the tragedy, because they saw that the pulse of truth and the heart of reality had ceased to work. The people were puzzled and bewildered on account of the terrible disaster, the seriousness of the loss, and fear of the future events, and were at their wit's

end.

‘Umar was running in the midst of this gathering in confusion and was shouting. It seemed that he was afraid lest the matters should take an undesired turn and people should take oath of allegiance to ‘Ali. Abu Bakr was absent at this juncture and was spending his time with one of his wives in Sanah, and ‘Umar did not know what the end of it was going to be.

It, however, occurred to him that he should raise a hue and cry and keep the people occupied, so that they might not take an oath of allegiance to ‘Ali and in the meantime Abu Bakr should arrive and they should chalk out a programme as to what they should do. Although just as it appeared difficult for ‘Umar to achieve his object, it also seemed difficult for Abu Bakr to attain such a high position, still ‘Umar did not abandon pursuing his plan. He, therefore, continued shouting and running about hither and thither. All those present were out of their wits. In such circumstances every society is rendered inactive and powerless and in such an uproar it becomes possible for a leader to strike the sensitive chord of the people, take the authority of the society in his own hands and relieve it of irresponsibility.

The people could see that a close companion of the Holy Prophet (S) was raising a hue and cry and saying loudly: "Some hypocrites have spread the news that the Prophet (S) of Allah is dead, whereas I swear by Allah that he is not dead; he has gone to meet his Lord, just as (Prophet) Musa bin Imran went to see his Lord and remained away from his people for forty nights and then, while it was said that he had died, he returned and joined them. In the circumstances I swear by Allah that the Prophet (S) will return just as Musa had returned. "O people! Know and beware that when the Prophet (S) returns he will cut off the hands and feet of those who talk nonsense and say that he is dead. If I hear anyone saying that the Prophet of Allah is dead I shall chop off his head with this sword."

It may now be asked: In such an uproar what should be the condition of the people, who are perplexed and stupefied and are hearing the words of a close companion like ‘Umar, who threatens with death in a severe religious tone, those, who confirm the Prophet's demise and assures them of his return, and at the same time hearing from the Prophet's house the cries and wailings of women? Evidently nothing except perplexity, irresponsibility, doubt and denial would prevail over these people, and it need hardly be said that ‘Umar, too, wanted this and nothing else.

‘Umar claimed that the Prophet (S) had disappeared from amidst the people and proceeded on a heavenly journey. Hence, the cry of ‘Umar and his threats contradicted the cries and wailings of the afflicted ones, which could be heard by the people, and he claimed that spreading the news of the Prophet's death was vain and futile hypocrisy and amounted to one's denying the miracle of Prophethood and insulting the Messenger of Allah!

These preliminaries and scenes, which were created, threw the people into a terrible religious blind alley.

All of them were terrified and threatened with death and were required to admit that what had happened was only an outward appearance. They were also given to understand that the hypocrites had surrounded the Holy Prophet. In the circumstances why should they not have confirmed what a close companion was saying and disbelieved that the Prophet (S) would return soon? In any case, if, in such circumstances and situation, the people had not confirmed what 'Umar was saying then, besides the fact that they were threatened with death, it would have amounted to their denying a miracle of the Prophet.

The fact is that 'Umar, who was quite shrewd, availed of the opportunity, and by means of the talent, which he possessed for subjugating the minds, he took over the reins of the thinking of the astonished people, imposed his will on those, who had lost their intelligence, and began walking between them and speaking vociferously and continuously. Eventually Abu Bakr came back from Sanah and saw 'Umar in the same condition, but did not object to him. Rather he went straight to the Prophet's house with perfect dignity, and entered it after having obtained permission to do so. He pulled aside the sheet which had been drawn on the Prophet's sacred face and kissed the face. Then he again drew the sheet on the Prophet's face, left the house and joined others. He made a sign to 'Umar to remain quiet, but he continued to shout. Then he said to him explicitly: "O 'Umar! Be patient." However, when he observed that 'Umar was not becoming silent he began speaking himself.

At this moment the people turned to Abu Bakr and began listening attentively to what he said. At the very outset Abu Bakr refuted the viewpoint of his friend and said: "O people! Whoever worshipped Muhammad should know that Muhammad is dead and whoever is a worshipper of Allah should know that Allah is alive and shall never die."

Then he recited the following verse of the Qur'an:

Muhammad is but a messenger, many other messengers have passed away before him. Will it be that, when he dies or is slain, you will turn back to your pre-Islamic behaviour? He who turns back does no harm to Allah, and Allah will reward the thankful. (Surah Ale Imran, 3: 144)

Abu Bakr's statement was logical and accorded with the factual position and the people wondered as to why they had not paid heed to this established fact earlier and had not uttered such remarks themselves.

Abu Bakr's words were also accepted by the people as they were sound, and especially because they were uttered after 'Umar's having put forward his view so vehemently, and relieved them of astonishment and anxiety.

Furthermore, the situation created by 'Umar was such that it had dissuaded the people from thinking about a calamity like the demise of their Prophet (S) and they had no opportunity to think about the

losses which they had suffered on this account and the evils which were to attend on them in future.

We are not aware of the cause which prompted 'Umar to create this anxiety. Possibly what 'Umar desired was that the people should be dissuaded from thinking that such a calamity had occurred. Or perhaps he and others wished to delay the people taking oath of allegiance to 'Ali and check such an oath. Their aim, therefore, was that the people should remain in a state of nonalignment and their senses should be off the track.

In any case what is an undeniable fact is that Abu Bakr's success in controlling the situation was the result of the conditions created by 'Umar. It was in this sense that if 'Umar had not created a doubt in the minds of the people regarding divulging the news of the Prophet's demise in such a rude and immodest manner, and had not divested them of their perception and true judgement, and had not created such a strange atmosphere, the situation would not have permitted Abu Bakr to speak on the subject and relieve the people of consternation and astonishment and be introduced as the man of the day.

Disregarding the confused and critical situation created by 'Umar it should be remembered that the words uttered by Abu Bakr were not new for the people and every one of them could understand the reality, particularly because everyone was convinced that the Prophet (S) had died, and none treated him as an idol. Rather, every one of them possessed as much knowledge of the tenets of Islam as Abu Bakr did, and they knew that he was a human being with the distinction of Prophethood. They were grieved on account of having been separated from him. They were grief-stricken and that was all. They did not think of any reaction or reversion to the ways of their forefathers.

But 'Umar came and created this doubt. He called the Holy Prophet's death a mere rumour and brought about such an atmosphere to play with the thinking of the nation, keep the people away from taking oath of allegiance to 'Ali and incidentally to attract their attention to the personality of Abu Bakr.

It must be admitted that like every experienced politician who is a scholar of two schools of politics and society- 'Umar took the maximum advantage of the situation and applied all the techniques and rules related to these two sciences to the events of that day. It might possibly be said that: it is not improbable that the spirit of dispute and challenge prevailed in the situation.

It is true that during the days of the Holy Prophet (S) some parties had plans to keep 'Ali away from the office of the Caliphate. But, the oath of allegiance to 'Ali taken on the day of Ghadir, and the steps taken by the Prophet (S) to stabilize and strengthen the position of his successor by various orders and regulations were difficult to be defied and it was in view of these antecedents and on this very account that 'Ali said to his uncle in connection with the oath of allegiance: "Who other than us is there to pursue this matter?"

Of course, 'Ali was aware that many persons were desirous of occupying this position. However, as his position had been recognized officially and this office had been confirmed for him, he very well knew that it would be very difficult for others to achieve their purpose.

It may be said in this connection that the step taken by 'Umar in the matter was a bold and enterprising one, and he acquitted himself well in this behalf, and performed this dangerous act in a masterly manner and paved the way for Abu Bakr on that great day, so that he was recognized as the 'champion' or 'the man of the day' in modern terminology, and could enter the field from the nearest place and the easiest path.

The skill and competence of Abu Bakr which made him command the respect of the people was not dependent upon his rational and correct statement, but the sensitiveness of the situation and time and a greater part to play in introducing him as the 'man of the day'. For this very reason he contented himself with a brief statement and left the gathering. His entire distinction lay in the fact that he relieved the people of astonishment and perplexity and then left them alone, so that they might remain occupied with themselves. It may also be said that the victory and dexterity of Abu Bakr mostly arose from the fact that he left the people to themselves, so that he might dominate them at the appropriate time. It was for this reason that he left them soon although the people expected that he would stay on with them for a longer time and remove the last shadows of their astonishment.

However, Abu Bakr did not want this, but desired that the signs of astonishment should continue to exist for a longer time, so that he might establish his position as a moderate, influential and dignified person possessing true Islamic distinction. It would appear that after having acquired so much success and advancement Abu Bakr held the hand of 'Umar and left the gathering fearing that the adventurous behaviour and boldness of 'Umar might affect his success, upset his design and deprive him of his decisive delicate attainment.

After having acquired his position among the people, as mentioned above, Abu Bakr, accompanied by 'Umar, proceeded towards the Muhajirs and the Ansar who were sitting in front of the Prophet's Masjid. He was awaiting further developments and incidentally pretended that he was waiting for 'Ali to come out of the house, so that he might take oath of allegiance to him ('Ali).

At this moment the spy of Abu Sufyan viz. Mughira bin Sho'ba came to collect information. The object of Mughira at this time was also to read the people's mind, and to create mischief in the interests of his party, so that they might dominate the situation. Immediately on his arrival Mughira stood behind Abu Bakr and 'Umar, who were sitting side by side and said to them: "What are you two sitting here for?"

Abu Bakr, who was aware of the satanic intentions of the Umayyads and especially the evil designs of this malicious person, knew that he was a spy of the Umayyads, said to him in reply: "We two are

awaiting 'Ali to come out, so that we may take oath of allegiance to him.”

Mughira, who was in fact aware of the intentions of Abu Bakr and 'Umar said to them: "Do you wish to give the snare of this prey in the hands of this family? It will be better if you expand it so that it may find place in the hands of Quraysh.” 4

As the situation was delicate, the opportunity was narrow and the shape of the society was very intricate, Abu Bakr and 'Umar did not give any reply to Mughira, fearing that they might commit some mistake. At the same time, however, they kept the point in view that possibly the parties might be united in their views and might be thinking alike to deprive 'Ali of the Caliphate, but, on account of their mutual rivalries they could not agree upon a particular person.

Hence, prudence and care demanded that these two persons should keep their views concealed, especially because if they made their views known, it was possible that the factor of quarrel and dispute might perforce make some parties join 'Ali and become his supporters in oppositions to other parties. And then it was also known that on that occasion none of the Ansar was present, and obviously the absence of the chiefs of the party of Ansar was also a source of anxiety to some extent. However, as Abu Bakr had already appointed spies on them to inform him of the developments he was satisfied on this account. He was also convinced that on account of their mutual disputes it would not be possible for them to arrive at a decision and eventually he himself would go and meet them.

In any case every thing was clear to Abu Bakr except that he did not know from which path to enter the field. Of course, it was possible for Abu Bakr to open a path for himself, but there was a danger of the path thus opened leading to his defeat. Furthermore, he did not want to open a path lest the others should also enter the arena from the same path. Eventually Abu Bakr came to the conclusion that if he postponed action and decision, it would be possible for him to gain from the mistakes of others.

However, events took place as anticipated by him, because two of his agents named 'Uwaym bin Sa'ida and Ma'n bin Adyy came up to him and whispered: "If you are desirous of Caliphate take necessary steps, because Sa'd bin Ubada is in the Saqifa of Bani Sa'ida and is about to assume ruler ship.” On receiving this report Abu Bakr proceeded to the Saqifa and 'Umar followed him. Abu Ubayda bin Jarra was also walking behind them.

When they reached the Saqifa they saw that Sa'ad had concealed his face under his cloak in such a way that his voice could not be heard, and his son Qays, who was a tall man, was standing behind him, and they were conversing with each other. All the Ansar were also present. However, those among them, who were faithful and sincere and were aware of the correctness of the claim of 'Ali to the Caliphate, were anxious and perturbed although their attachment with 'Ali was necessarily to the disadvantage of the Ansar.

Greedy and ambitious persons supported Sa'd, and believed that with Sa'd becoming the ruler the superiority of Aws over Khazraj would become an established fact, though the Ansar might be the losers on account of this superiority. Although Sa'd cooperated with other parties explicitly or implicitly in the matter of depriving 'Ali of the Caliphate he became anxious when he came to know about the arrival of Abu Bakr along with his two companions.

Sa'd had co-operated with others to forestall them and by stealing a march on others in the formation of the committee, he thought that by taking this step he could prevail over other claimants of the Caliphate and overcome 'Ali. However, the events made him desperate.

Abu Bakr arrived at a moment which was most opportune from the viewpoint of his interests, but was detrimental to Sa'd's interests in all respects.

Sa'd continued talking with the Ansar and wished that they might take oath of allegiance to him. The condition of Sa'd was such that if Abu Bakr had arrived a little later the ambitious Sa'd would have achieved his object and compromise would have taken place between him and the people of the suburbs. However, his bad luck or male violence (or both) snatched away the opportunity from him and Abu Bakr got the upper hand of the situation. At this moment the matter in dispute between Abu Bakr and Sa'd was that of obtaining the Caliphate.

Sa'd was in a position in which he imagined himself to be entitled to priority because of his having taken the lead and making haste in the matter, and he considered the strength of the Ansar, to whom the Saqifa belonged, to be sufficient to achieve his purpose.

Abu Bakr too, was not a person who might be regarded to be cowardly or thoughtless. However, as the unconscious mind of Sa'd believed in the entitlement of 'Ali to the Caliphate⁵ the same instability of mind and lack of decisiveness became the cause of his defeat. This condition was indicative of a hidden factor and an internal motive which was not evident from his ambitious countenance, and had no effect on the course of events, and his discussions, and he himself too could not return from the gulf in which he was plunged and from the path of usurpation of the right which he intended to acquire, and was obliged to own the consequences, whatever they might be.

On hearing these words from Sa'd, his son Qays said to him: "Did you hear these words from the Prophet (S) and still ignored to follow 'Ali? By Allah, so long as I am alive I will not talk to you." And he continued this quarrel.

Another factor which brought about the defeat of Sa'd was the envy of his tribes men and fellow-citizens and the avarice of the intruders. In any case all these factors combined and resulted in his defeat.

It was in such a favourable atmosphere that Abu Bakr and his two companions found their way and made efforts with perfect care and determination to achieve their object. 'Umar wanted to speak but Abu Bakr stopped him, saying in a dictatorial tone: "Remain silent."

'Umar, therefore, kept quiet and did not say anything. Then Abu Bakr began speaking, and confirmed the superiority of the Ansar on account of their having provided asylum to the Muslims and assisting the Muhajirs. As regards the right of ruler ship, however, he considered it to be one of the special rights of Quraysh on the ground that they were the kinsmen of the Holy Prophet (S) and were the first to assist him. During the course of his speech Abu Bakr promised the Ansar that they could partake in government as ministers.

Abu Bakr was a very mild person and spoke with leniency and gentleness. However, the way of his speaking and the leniency and gentleness which he displayed was of the type which a powerful ruler shows to his companions and subordinates. Sa'd did not say anything in reply to the remarks of Abu Bakr but Manzar bin Hubab spoke with great vehemence on behalf of Sa'd. He addressed the Ansar and ordered them in a dictatorial manner to oppose Abu Bakr and his two companions and incidentally reminded them of the superiority of the Ansar on account of their rendering assistance to the Holy Prophet, providing asylum to the Muhajirs. At the same time he showed superiority on account of the wealth, numbers, equipment and nobleness of the Ansar and later transgressed this limit and explicitly threatened them saying, "Don't listen to this man and his companions. By Allah you are superior to them in this matter. There were many who didn't embrace Islam except at the point of the sword. I am the haven and the place of safety for all, and the root and origin of all powers. By Allah, none can dare oppose me and if anyone opposes me shall cut off his nose with this sword."

After these disputes and exchange of words, 'Umar began speaking, and after him Abu Ubayda delivered a speech, and repeated similar arguments. Now the Ansar put forward the question of share in the government and said: "There should be one ruler from amongst us and another from amongst Quraysh". They were of the view that such a government would automatically be more suitable to ensure justice. And the basic condition therefore was that a guarantee should be obtained from Quraysh, who had shed their blood in the path of the advancement of Islam, because the Ansar were afraid that the sense of revenge might stir in the hearts of Quraysh and they might control the means of livelihood of the Ansar and subject them to financial distress.⁶

'Umar rejected this suggestion and said: "Two swords cannot be put into one sheath."

However, the dispute revolved round one pivot and was sometimes violent and sometimes mud and gentle.

Abu Bakr was afraid lest the matter should end in a quarrel and the opportunity might be lost, and this dispute might end in the same way in which all disputes of Byzantium end. He, therefore, began speaking himself. After praising the Ansar, he mentioned the question of succession to the Holy Prophet (S) and reminded them of the authority enjoyed by the Prophet, and said that his inheritance belonged to Quraysh and none else. He also threatened the Ansar incidentally lest, as a result of usurping the authority and inheritance, they should lose the spiritual reward for the services rendered by them, and become apostates as a consequence of their violating the authority and inheritance of the Prophet.

Abu Bakr expressed this view and did not wait for a reply, but said in a decisive manner, pointing towards 'Umar and Abu Ubayda: "I have chosen these two persons for you"; and then added: "You may select anyone of them." By expressing this view Abu Bakr overpowered the meeting and put an end to all noise and contention.

Evidently the object of Abu Bakr in proposing these two persons and asking the people to take oath of allegiance to them was that the oath should be taken to him, and the same thing happened, because 'Umar stretched his hand to Abu Bakr at once, and took the oath to him. After 'Umar the oath was taken by Bashir bin Sa'd Khazraji and then by Usayd bin Khuzayr Uwaysi who were friends of Abu Bakr in the army of Usama. These two persons had previously been rivals of Sa'd bin Ubada and had been envious of him. As a result of the oath taken by these two persons the front of the Ansar sustained defeat and none out of them was left there except Hubab who drew his sword and intended to attack. However, the people overpowered and disarmed him. After having been overpowered Hubab took, off his garment and struck with that very garment on the heads and faces of those who had taken the oath of allegiance, and abused them.

In the meantime Sa'd said to Abu Bakr: "I swear by Allah that if I had possessed strength you would have seen that I would have acted in such a way that you and your friends would have been turned out of this place, and you would have gone to the place where you would have been a subordinate as before, and not a leader, and would have lived in obscurity and not as a respected and honoured person." Then he was led out of the meeting and other Ansar began taking oath of allegiance.

At this moment Hubab struck on the faces of others with the same garment which he held in his hand and abused them. After this boisterous quarrel, however, he could not do anything.

A noise was heard from the masjid resembling that of the celebration of a marriage. 'Ali who was sitting by the side of the sacred body of the Prophet, drowned in grief, was surprised to hear this jubilation and asked: "Has the Holy Prophet (S) returned and we are not aware of it or have the people resorted to merry-making on account of this sad occurrence?"

The reply given to 'Ali was to this effect: Contention took place in Saqifa between the Ansar and the

Muhajirs in the matter of Caliphate and Abu Bakr was the winner. For this reason Abu Bakr is being carried on the shoulders of the lackeys, and every passer by is being persuaded to take oath of allegiance to him. The hand of Abu Bakr is being brought in contact with the hands of others as a token of acceptance of the oath, and this process has deprived the people of security.

If it is imagined that it may be possible for a person in the most critical circumstances to give a smile mingled with grief it may be supposed that on hearing this news 'Ali gave such a smile or a scornful laugh and that too coupled with the peace of mind and dignity indicative of supreme degree of magnanimity.

Notwithstanding the fact that 'Ali did not favour anything other than truth and reality he asked again quite impartially, like a just arbiter: "What did the Ansar say?" He was informed that they said: "One ruler should be from amongst you and another from amongst us."

Then 'Ali said: "Was no argument put forward against them and was it not said that the Holy Prophet (S) had willed that favour should be done to those who are good and their sinners should be excused?"

'Ali was asked: "What proof can be adduced from this point?" He replied: "If the Imamate and ruler ship had fallen in their hands they would not have needed an explanation." Then he asked: "What did Quraysh say?" He was informed that the argument of Quraysh was that they were the "tree" of the Holy Prophet. Commenting on this argument 'Ali said: "They argued with regard to the tree of Prophethood but wasted its fruit!"

With this brief statement which is replete with knowledge, wisdom and magnanimity 'Ali manifested the reality about this matter and then continued reciting the Holy Qur'an along with his kinsmen and followers.

'Ammar too was a member of this gathering and all those present had a feeling of excessive remorse and surprise on account of this occurrence. They were extremely annoyed and while their eyes were fixed on 'Ali's face were awaiting his permission to move and rise. They did not, however, perceive an inclination from his side for any such action and he was busy reciting the Qur'an as usual with deep grief and without paying any heed to what others were thinking.

Of course, in these new circumstances there were persons belonging to far and near places, who picked up courage to approach him and keeping in view their own strength for fighting of which they were conscious, they sought his permission to initiate action and predicted their sure victory, but Imam 'Ali silenced them with perfect prudence and composure and said: "It is sufficient for us that religion remains intact."

Possibly 'Ali was aware of his own strength to face the campaign, but he possessed much deeper insight to discern the great responsibility which devolved upon him, and the results of the campaign which was being suggested to him, and could assess its outcome much better than others. It was for this reason that he said briefly: "It is sufficient for us that religion remains intact."

In any case keenness to delude the people, quickness in acquiring ruler ship and depriving Bani Hashim of the Caliphate was not peculiar to Quraysh, for the current feeling was that most of the deprived people were trying through intimidation and threats to take the reins of government in their own hands. Furthermore there were persons even amongst Quraysh who, after depriving 'Ali from the Caliphate, considered themselves superior to Abu Bakr for that office.

In short the thinking which prevailed over the people in those days was merely that of families and tribes, because the old rivalries were revived among them. 'Ali was very much grieved and anxious on this account and was obliged to make self-sacrifice and stay at home. None was more aware of this nature and habit of 'Ali than Abu Bakr and 'Umar and they, therefore, took maximum advantage of his leniency, gentleness and coolness.

The Umayyad party, which played a major role in depriving 'Ali of the Caliphate than any other party, hoped that one day they would get an opportunity and install 'Uthman or Abdur Rahman bin 'Awf the ruler. In the same way the Ansar too eagerly desired to attain ruler ship.

Abu Sufyan was active at the back of the Umayyad party and was working for the benefit of 'Uthman and Abdur Rahman bin 'Awf. He imagined that the contention between the Ansar and Abu Bakr, who attacked and counter attacked each other, would continue, and the field of strife would extend, and consequently the two families of Taym and Adyy, who were the largest amongst Quraysh, would come at the helm of affairs.

Of course, in the activities and efforts conducted by the Umayyad party Islam was of no consequence; for their platform was founded on party-spirit and their object was to make mischief.

For this reason, just as before the advent of Islam, Quraysh used to sit in groups round the Ka'ba and arranged their assemblies; the Umayyad party now sat in the Prophet's Masjid by the side of 'Uthman and Banu Zohra, and surrounded Abdur Rahman.

In the meantime Abu Sufyan went round the streets of Madina and propagated in favour of 'Ali. However, the people were waiting for 'Ali to take his stand, so that they might not be deceived by another person who misused his name. Incidentally, people stood forewarned and were careful on account of the fact that previously 'Umar had threatened them and prevented them from taking any action, and had promised the return of the Holy Prophet. However, Abu Sufyan who had intruded

everywhere reached the door of a house in which 'Ali was present. He then recited the following couplet:

"O Bani Hashim! Do not invite the people, especially Taymbin Murra or Adyy to partake in government, because none except you are fit for ruler ship and this office is specially meant for Abul Hasan ('Ali).

O Abul Hasan! Take this office firmly in your hands with great prudence and care, because for this object of desire (on which all have fixed their eyes) your suitability and fitness is established and confirmed."

Then Abu Sufyan entered the house and said: "O Abul Hasan! Stretch your hand so that I may take oath of allegiance to you. By Allah, if you so desire I shall fill the city of Madina with mounted soldiers and infantry men and shall use them against your opponents."

However, 'Ali declined to stretch his hand and keeping in view the protection of the basic ideas and principles he ignored his personal interest and said: "I don't stand in need of your oath of allegiance; your purpose is to create disturbance and mischief. Previously you used to create troubles for Islam. Now I must ask you if you want to create similar trouble in Islam as you created during the time of ignorance!"

Although Abu Sufyan had been disappointed so far as 'Ali was concerned, but he had not lost hope about the achievement of his object and approached everyone in that behalf; and notwithstanding the fact that he knew that Abbas considered ruler ship and chiefdom to be the right of his nephew 'Ali and respected him, he went up to him to achieve his end through him.

When Abu Sufyan reached in the presence of Abbas and offered to take oath of allegiance to him, Abbas said:

"O Abu Sufyan! May Allah reform you? Don't you know that my nephew is my chief? Approach him to take oath of allegiance. I shall follow you." He said: "I approached 'Ali but he rejected my offer."

Abbas laughed and said: "I proposed to take oath of allegiance to him earlier than you did, but he didn't accept my offer, because the Prophet (S) ordered him to observe patience, and he is steadfast with regard to the promise made by him to the Prophet (S) and is prepared to sacrifice his office and position for the sake of Islam, so that Islam may remain safe. Moreover, 'Ali is a person whose principles and intellectual elements conform to the teachings of Islam. In the circumstances Abbas too is not a person who may seek something which is avoided by 'Ali."

Abu Sufyan had realized that in those days there was no chance for anyone except 'Ali to be victorious. Hence, it was natural that after having lost hope of taking oath of allegiance to 'Ali he should have returned to his party, busied himself in chalking out new plans, and spent his time in his nest till he found a favourable opportunity.

At that very moment 'Umar arrived in the masjid, contacted these two circles and persuaded them to take oath of allegiance to Abu Bakr.

The members of this circle also took the oath knowing that 'Ali's refusal to accept the oath of allegiance was considered to be the strongest basis for taking such an oath to Abu Bakr and it is possible that these persons were not unaware that the reason for 'Ali's confining himself to his house was his keen desire that all should be united against the reactionary tendency and apostasy of the Arabs which had been formed outside Madina. And if 'Ali had risen it would have been necessary for him to fight against this strong party and there is no doubt that such an action would have benefited the reactionaries and apostates outside Madina: and the light of Islam would have been extinguished.

However, as in the eyes of 'Ali the interests of Islam enjoyed priority over his own right, the disturbed and confused conditions of these environments obliged him to confine himself to his house and to ignore his right.

Anyhow, the body of the Prophet (S) had been lying on his bed for two days and the people contended with one another about his inheritance and argued against and flogged one another in his name while he himself was resting in the midst of his real successors; The women of the Prophet's family were wailing and crying whereas the men were busy praying to Allah and reciting the Qur'an.

After the people had become free from their work 'Ali got up to bathe the body of the Prophet. He was accompanied by his uncle Abbas and the two sons of his uncle named Fazal and Qashm, and Usama bin Zayd and Shaqran, the slave of the Prophet.

'Ali personally bathed the body of the Prophet (S) and asked Usama and Shaqran to pour water.

'Ali did not remove the Prophet's shirt from his body and after having bathed him offered his funeral prayers. Then the corpse was taken into the chamber and the Muslims, including men, women and children, went there in groups to bid him farewell.

After the farewell ceremonies, the Holy Prophet (S) was buried during the night of Wednesday, the fourteenth of Rabi al-awwal, at the place where he had been lying on his bed.

On the following day the city of Madina was faced with a tragedy which made the people forget the demise of the Prophet.

It was seen that the threshold of the house of Fatima, the dearest daughter of the Prophet (S) and the chief of women in both the worlds, was set on fire. The people saw that a police party headed by 'Umar

bin Khattab had surrounded this sacred house. They also saw that Fatima had been besieged within the door and the four walls of the house, and the sword belt or turban of 'Ali had been tied round his neck and he was being dragged!

Most of these actions were intolerable, but what could be done? These were the general orders and in modern term the orders of the military government.

The details of the incident are as follows: On the day following the burial of the Prophet (S) , 'Umar bin Khattab went to see Abu Bakr and said that Khalid bin Walid from amongst Quraysh and Usayd bin Khuzayr from amongst the Ansar, and some others attached to the new government were present, and were talking about the position of the important and influential personalities and the leaders of those, who had declined to take the oath of allegiance, and the discussion mostly related to 'Ali and Sa'd bin Ubada.

'Umar was of the view that severest action might be taken against these two persons and they might be summoned and beheaded in case they declined to take the oath of allegiance:

One of those present was of the view that Sa'd might be excused, because after the Ansar had taken the oath, his refusal to do it did not entail any danger and taking severe action against him would be something dangerous. He added that while Sa'd was not prepared to take the oath, he could not be killed unless his sons were killed first, and his sons could not be killed unless the members of Khazraj tribe were killed, and even if they (Khazrajites) were killed, the new government and its supporters would not be safe from the tribe of Bani 'Aws.

The same speaker adding fuel to the flames further said: "And besides all this Sa'd is waiting for someone to molest him, so that he may make it an excuse for declaring war. However, suppose 'Ali had been furious, the situation would have been more dangerous.

But the fact is that his knowledge, forbearance and wisdom, and his love for, public welfare, restrain him from showing his indignation in this house and taking a severe action. The same motives which prevented him from inviting the people to his side for his personal interest will also not permit him to rise or create disturbance. For this very reason it will be better if you first obtain oath of allegiance from him, and you should rest assured that you will remain safe from his wrath. And after he has taken the oath the refusal by Sa'd and others like him will be of no consequence and the oath by 'Ali will be equivalent to oath by all the Muslims."

Consequent upon these discussions Abu Bakr sent some one to 'Ali and called him, but 'Ali declined to go and said to the messenger: "Tell Abu Bakr that I am collecting and compiling the Holy Qur'an and am endeavouring to complete this task before any changes are made in it, or the lapse of time allows any

encroachment on this Holy Book. And I have decided not to go out of my house until I have collected and compiled the Qur'an, nor to place a cloak on my shoulder till that time." Abu Bakr again sent some one to summon 'Ali, but this time also 'Ali declined to go and remained in his house.

At this juncture 'Umar volunteered to bring 'Ali by force. Abu Bakr ordered Khalid bin Walid, Usayd and some policemen to accompany 'Umar.

Anyhow this open and undisguised attack was conducted under the command of Abu Hafs. While some persons were walking behind 'Umar and others in front of him they proceeded to the house of 'Ali in a threatening and intimidating manner. Some slaves like the former slaves of Abu Jahl were walking in front of them with sticks and burning fire, and vulgar persons of various kinds like the vulgar persons of Harth bin Nusayr also set moving, When the invaders reached the door of the house of 'Ali and kindled a fire there it was said to 'Umar:

"O Abu Hafs! What are you doing?"

'Umar replied: "By Allah! If he doesn't come out of the house and doesn't take the oath of allegiance I shall set the house on fire,"

At this moment 'Umar was reminded: "But Fatima is in this house.'

'Umar said: "In spite of this fact, I will do that".

In any case 'Umar succeeded in bringing 'Ali out of the house and managed to take him to the masjid.

Although this action had assumed an indecent and sad plight but the forbearance of 'Ali prevented him from showing any reaction. And no doubt the regulations of the military government also demanded this.

Notwithstanding all this 'Umar did not succeed in obtaining the oath from 'Ali. It was however decided that the ceremony of taking oath of allegiance from 'Ali might be deferred to a later day when more persons were present in the masjid. On that day 'Ali was to come along with Fatima and these two persons might express their views (which were like the views of the Holy Prophet) and were equivalent to the views of thousands of those persons who were disturbed on account of this tragic event and were spending their days restlessly under its pressure.

The appointed day arrived and in this new atmosphere 'Ali got an opportunity to put forward his case. Just as Abu Bakr had advanced arguments before the Ansar, he too should place before Abu Bakr and others present in the masjid, his own arguments which were based on truth, knowledge, logic and moderateness, which were not denied by anyone of those present.

This very favourable atmosphere was found by lady Fatima Zahra also in this manner that a curtain was hanged between her and the people, and she narrated the story of Islam word for word and stage by stage, and explained all its secrets and mysteries till the matter ended with the problem of the day, and the new ruler was identified to be a usurper and the general public was also reckoned to be reactionaries and apostates. She adduced abundant arguments to prove this and made the following declaration in the light of these decisive arguments: "My father didn't die on the day on which his soul left his body. Rather he died on the day on which another person sat on this pulpit, and that person is not fit to acquire this position and no right or rule entitles such a person to occupy this position."

Then Fatima Zahra begin reproving and blaming the Ansar, and condemned the general public, who refrained from supporting the right of her husband and feigned ignorance of the appointment of which they were aware.

In the end she spoke thus regarding honouring truth and expressing respect for right and reality: "O people! Keeping in view the knowledge and information of, and perfect acquaintance with, the conditions which I possess, and taking into account the weakness of spirit and faith which has overtaken you, I can very well perceive in what disgrace, hardship, abjectness, and shame you have become involved. I have said what I ought to have said, and I say again; now it may be so that you may assume control over this mount (caliphate and ruler ship) and put on its back whatever you possess.

However, you should know that it is a camel whose back is wounded and whose feet are smashed, and it is a weary mount. This mount will always bear the scars of shame and disgrace and the sign of infamy! And it is this very mount which will carry you towards the glowing Divine fire, which blazes up in the hearts. However, if you and all other human beings in the world become infidels it does not matter, because Allah is free from want and is Praiseworthy."

The voice which was reverberated in this manner was a reaction to the rudeness and harsh action of 'Umar. And in case the wisdom, forbearance and self-control of 'Ali had not been at work the history of Madina would certainly have run into another channel at this critical moment and the conditions and circumstances of this city would decidedly have assumed a different shape.

Of course, the fact is that 'Umar's action in committing this error on that particular inauspicious day in the shape of breaking the rib of Zahra and pulling 'Ali to the masjid in that rude manner, and kindling fire in front of their house, was like a very heavy burden, which was being placed on the intellects and thinking of the people, and the people did not possess patience to bear it, because 'Ali was Sayfullah (the Sword of Allah) and deputy, and Fatima was the dearest daughter of the Holy Prophet (S) and chief of the women in both the worlds, and the house of this couple was the central point of the hopes of the people and focus of the love and attachment of all the believers.

Obviously the occurrence of every one of these tragic events and calamities which the Muslims observed with their own eyes shook the people in such a way that it might be said that their entire thoughts and intellects were faced with a severe earthquake.

What factor could be stronger and what event could be stranger for shaking the Islamic belief of the people of that time than that a person like 'Umar should attack the house of 'Ali with such violence, when from every reckoning and in every respect there was a world of difference between these two personalities. And it was 'Umar who had mentioned this great difference between his own personality and that of 'Ali in these words: "During the days of the Holy Prophet (S) we looked at 'Ali in a way as if we were looking at a star at its zenith. And again in those very days also the position of 'Ali in the eyes of the people vis-à-vis 'Umar, apart from his proximity and blood relationship with the Prophet (S) and other things common with him, shone like a star over the head of 'Umar in the sky of dignity from the point of view of precedence, jihad, self-sacrifice, knowledge and justice, and all classes of people, whether the Muhajirs or the Ansar, whether the strong or the weak, whether the Muslims or the non Muslims and whether the true believers or the hypocrites, acknowledged these special features of 'Ali. In the circumstances it would not be something strange if treating 'Ali with such insolence might have created doubts in the minds of the people of Madina and affected their intellects.

'Ammar investigated into all the stages in the light of the Holy Prophet's remarks and came to the conclusion that according to all those versions 'Ali is the leader and the ruler; and when he studied the conditions of the political parties he saw that all the parties had assumed a political bias, except the pious party whose members had brotherly relations with 'Ali. For this reason 'Ammar preferred this party to others and joined it.

Before joining this party he took all eventualities into consideration and became ready to make sacrifices for the achievement of the objects of this party. He also prepared himself for the hardships which he was likely to suffer by treading on this path.

However, it had not occurred to him at any time that immediately after participation in the mourning of the Prophet, 'Ali and Zahra would be faced with such a calamity and trouble and the sky would not fall on the earth, the earth and the stars would not be shattered and would not fling the inhabitants of this globe to an unknown point in the infinite space. Or that a storm like that in the days of the people of 'Ad' would not come, and violent wind would not begin blowing and destroy all the people!

When 'Ali was arrested, 'Ammar was watching the people and the conditions very carefully, and when 'Umar approached there, he ('Ammar) also followed other persons who had risen in support of 'Ali, and wished to cooperate with them. However, when he looked at 'Ali's face intently he felt that 'Ali did not approve of the rising of the people, and although he was being dragged to the masjid he was going there

and was not in any way resisting his enemies.

In these circumstances 'Ammar said to himself: "Woe be to 'Ammar! If 'Ali is the Imam, and undoubtedly and in fact 'Ali and none else is the Imam, why should I not defend the Imam? If 'Ali is really the Imam; undoubtedly it is only he who is the Imam. So why does Allah not become angry and kill these persons who are oppressing him? Why does Allah not order me to rise along with all godly persons and resort to fighting? If 'Ali is really the Imam, the guide and the ruler when in fact he is, then why are these persons putting up an affected look at him, and why are they sparingly looking at him. And if 'Ali is really the Imam, and in fact he is the Imam, then what is the meaning of Islam in these present circumstances. By what means should we interpret the words of the Holy Prophet (S) with regard to 'Ali and how should we understand his interest in considering 'Ali preferable to and better than others?"

Then 'Ammar questioned himself and said: "Am I alone a believer and are all other people's atheists and strangers to faith? Or is it so that faith is an easy, simple, soft and mild thing which is being taken and interpreted by the people according to their own interests? So how is our adversity and temptation being determined and why are we courting death in this manner?"

'Ammar knew the replies to these questions very well since olden times and they were not new for him. When he was only twenty he knew these matters and had discussions with his father about them, for he saw that the Holy Prophet (S) was in danger, but in spite of that he did not defend himself, and Allah, too, was not angry with his enemies and did not destroy them. Fearing trouble, the Prophet (S) neither planned defence for himself, nor permitted his companions to defend him. He also saw that the Prophet (S) and his companions were in the minority and their enemies were in the majority. And similarly 'Ammar knew very well that Islam accorded precedence to 'Ali whereas the parties had pushed him back.

He also knew that 'Ali's being pushed back by the parties in spite of his having been accorded precedence by

Islam did no harm either to 'Ali or to the spirit of Islam and his pushing back would result in loss to the parties themselves. Besides this 'Ammar knew already, and had no doubt about it, that if the believers being small in number was not a proof of the correctness of the faith it was also not a proof of its falsity, and how much so ever hypocrisy might prevail and the number of the hypocrites might increase, even if they do not acknowledge the abomination and indecency of hypocrisy, it would never be a proof of its correctness.

'Ammar had full knowledge of all these questions and replies and had already learnt all these matters by experience. However, this tragedy had placed a heavy burden on his heart which he was unable to bear. The world had become dark in his eyes, as if it was going to perish.

This condition of perplexity and astonishment was not peculiar to ‘Ammar, because Salman Farsi, with all his deep knowledge and learning of the books of faith and wisdom, was also faced with the same mental torture. Salman, along with his other brothers-in-faith turned his face to their chief and looked intently at his face, He saw that, although Imam ‘Ali had been arrested and made a prisoner, he did not favour the gathering and rising of his supporters and did not permit that they should contend with his enemies.

From the very beginning Salman was very much disturbed on account of the deep sorrow and regret which he felt for the people. For this very reason, with these conditions in view he sadly said: "They became Muslims, but did not become Muslims." 7

Then he looked at the face of his chief very care fully and found that his countenance was open, clear and bright. He was then surprised to see the appearance of ‘Ali, so much so that he lost his power of speech. At this moment ‘Ammar let out a painful sigh and said: "O Lord! What am I seeing? If this man resolves he can bring down the sky on the earth."

‘Ammar did not exaggerate when he was uttering these words. Rather his expression was indicative of the power of ‘Ali that is, if he had not been afraid that disturbance would take place he would have staged a rising.

At the end of this discourse ‘Ammar explained his aim in these words: "Woe be to these people! If they had sworn allegiance to him there would not have been even two persons who might have differences with each other."

Salman recovered from the condition of perplexity and amazement which had overtaken him, and felt that if his power of speech had not been taken away he too would have uttered the same words.

Miqdad was also astonished and perplexed along with his two brothers. He went up to ‘Ali in the same condition and realized that his bright features did not permit formation of factions and resistance. He again looked at the face of his chief anxiously hoping that he might possibly grant permission for contention and resistance, but did not gain any such impression from Imam ‘Ali.

This condition of perplexity and amazement was not peculiar to a few persons only; there were others also who were similarly perplexed and amazed.⁸

The Umayyad party, which had strong persons in it, made the same assessment on some other grounds, and even the Ansar, who had taken oath of allegiance to Abu Bakr, were in the same state of mind, and said: "If ‘Ali had been present in Saqifa and had stood by the side of Abu Bakr there would not

have been two persons who might have differed with each other about him.”

This was also the opinion of all the inhabitants of Madina. They believed that if ‘Ali had moved in time this conspiracy against his established right would not have taken place, and this tragedy, which had shaken the thoughts and beliefs and did not possess a rational aspect, would not have occurred. However, notwithstanding the extreme aversion which the people had with regard to the said incident, the action of the conspirators silenced all of them, at this moment, and the thing which became the cause of the silence of the people all the more was no doubt the wonderful sense of self-sacrifice displayed by ‘Ali. Apart from this it is also a fact that otherwise the opponents would have been threatened with annihilation.

Furthermore, this state of perplexity and amazement was not peculiar to ‘Ammar, Miqdad, Salman and other supporters of ‘Ali, for all the people of Madina were faced with it, and the political blunder committed by ‘Umar in taking steps to obtain oath of allegiance from ‘Ali had added to their amazement and astonishment, although, from the political point of view, the first step taken by ‘Umar after the demise of the Prophet (S) was also similar to this.

‘Umar wanted to persuade ‘Ali to take the oath of allegiance. However, the refusal of ‘Ali became the cause of the fact that most of the people could see this ugly state of affairs and became the witnesses of the hatred of ‘Ali.

‘Umar wanted to show that the presence of all those persons who were witnessing this incident should be recognized as the proof of the strength of the new government, whereas, by this demonstration, ‘Ali wanted to show the cruelty and injustice of that period and an attempt by the new government to measure its strength.

‘Umar wanted to diminish the prestige of ‘Ali but, in spite of his (‘Umar's) intentions, all these actions culminated in ‘Ali's benefit and added to his greatness, dignity and reverence.

Again, ‘Umar wanted to confirm ‘Ali's conviction on account of his refusal to take the oath of allegiance to Abu Bakr and this period did not last for more than two and a half months, because Zahra, his beloved wife lived only till that time after her father's death, and because the person of Zahra, who did not agree to the oath of allegiance, was the real factor for this refusal.

Nevertheless, this was the most critical period for the new government and it is not known whether or not Abu Bakr's government would have been destabilized if Zahra had lived longer!

In any case ‘Ali remained angry with Abu Bakr and ‘Umar even after the death of Zahra and although he declined to take the oath of allegiance he did not contend with the government of the time but the refusal

by 'Ali and his kinsmen and companions to take the oath had endangered the oath taken by others and had affected its legal aspect throughout the world of Islam.

'Umar's stern attitude and errors were not confined to these actions, but were increasing day after day, because within other parties and groups which did not possess a firm footing and programme there appeared other parties and groups which became active.

Would that these activities and movements had resulted in the betterment of the government of the time so that 'Umar might have been successful. However, as his mistakes mostly sprang from hot temper and stern decision coupled with superficial heroism, they provided an opportunity and liberty of action to the destructive parties who were acting deceitfully to harm Islam and were endeavouring to earn benefits for the parties and the individuals. And eventually one of the results of these mistakes was that 'Umar involved himself in another difficulty. It was in this sense, that owing to the quarrel and dispute which had spread, 'Umar was obliged to seek the cooperation of other parties and individuals who had no contacts with him and whose way of thinking, methods and principles were different from his.

The object of 'Umar in extending these invitations for cooperation was to create a balance between the two sides or to strengthen Abu Bakr's ruling party for fighting against the party of 'Ali. At last this very error put him on the path of dictatorial government which was and still is quite different from the spirit of Islamic Government. As a result of this very action he continued to adopt the dictatorial policy when he assumed the reins of government till it ended in his assassination. And it is an established fact that the plot for 'Umar's murder was engineered by those persons who were previously his associates!

Of course, it is undeniable that if 'Umar had not caused delay in the departure of Usama's army, and if he had not exploited the diversion of the people to the wars which took place later, and if 'Ali had not cooperated with the public in the higher interests of the society, others would have killed him before Abu Lu'lu' did so. And again what is undeniable is that if 'Umar had not succumbed to the injuries sustained by him at the hands of Abu Lu'lu and had lived a little longer, and continued to rule, he would have seen that the people were different from the earlier ones, and he would have become involved in a greater calamity at their hands. At that time he would have felt and realized better that the source of his pain, suffering and hardship was his very first error which had created that situation!

However, the circumstances became favourable for him, because the people got engaged in wars and conquests. Then he was killed at the hands of the said person.

Now that the incident has taken place and what has been done cannot be undone, if it be permissible and it is not considered a crime that someone should like this occurrence and consider it to the advantage of 'Umar, it may be said that: This very undesirable occurrence relieved Abu Hafs from other more unwholesome and dreadful events which were lying in ambush for him, for if those events and

dangers had made their appearance 'Umar's awe would not have been able to prevent them, and his destiny would have been more tragic.

Although in the early days this mistake of 'Umar resulted in his advantage from the point of view of strengthening the foundation of the government of Abu Bakr, but Abu Bakr himself was not oblivious of it and 'Umar's error was not hidden from him. For, soon afterwards the results of these repugnant actions and formation of factions appeared in the shape of rising and apostasy of the Muslims and a group of believers who were firm in their Islamic faith declined to pay zakat and to fill the public treasury for the benefit of the new government on the ground that they did not consider the oath of allegiance to Abu Bakr to be lawful. Even some residents of the city of Madina declined to pay zakat on the same ground. They believed that payment of zakat and taxes to the government of the time was tantamount to payment of bribes, and Islam does not allow bribery.

The error, which had been committed by 'Umar, was the cause of Abu Bakr's regret and always kept him terribly uneasy. Before his death Abu Bakr wished that his life had been immune from two things i.e. two embarrassments viz. besieging the house of 'Ali and acceptance of the responsibilities of government on the day of Saqifa.

'Ammar accompanied by Salman, Miqdad and Zubayr returned from the masjid along with Bani Hashim who were walking behind 'Ali and Zahra. Although he was absolutely quiet, he was reflecting over the conditions and circumstances in the light of complete knowledge of the Islamic affairs possessed by him. This small group of the companions of 'Ali who from that day became known as the Shi'a were preparing themselves for continuous service in the path of Islam.

In case 'Ammar desired wealth, comfort and high status he should have joined the other row. But he was an adherent of truth and justice and everyone knows that truth and justice must be purchased at a high price. And 'Ammar, from the day he had become a Muslim, had been paying this price, in instalments, by way of continuous jihad, which proved to be very dear to him.

It may be asked: Can such a person refrain from service in the path of truth at such a sensitive moment when, if he does so, it would amount to rendering all his sacrifices null and void, and losing that great spiritual wealth, which is not possessed by any except a few like him?

'Ammar who possessed correct judgement, enlightened mind, moral soundness and virtue, and was always keen on refining his soul, reflected on these matters and asked himself questions about these matters.

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1. A part of a sermon of 'Ali where in he has reproached those persons who committed such mistakes after the demise of the Holy Prophet.
 2. The Holy Prophet (S) said: "When the hypocrisy of a person reaches its peak he can exercise control on the tears of his two eyes".
 3. Refer to Allama Amini's book 'al-Ghadir'.
 4. The evil spirit of deviation, corruption and instigation is quite apparent from this remark. The speaker means to say that if Caliphate is left to 'Ali the descendants of Fatima and Bani Hashim would become the rulers and Quraysh would be deprived of it.
 5. After Abu Bakr's victory in the struggle for Caliphate Sa'd said to his friends: "I bear witness to the fact that I heard the Prophet (S) saying that he had made a covenant with 'Ali in the matter of Caliphate".
 6. As the Ansar had anticipated, the role and sovereignty of Quraysh assumed an aspect of revenge when it fell in the hands of Bani Umayya, because Bani Umayya treated every unlawful thing to be lawful except when some person took refuge with them.
 7. It has also been reported that he uttered a sentence in Persian which means: "They did and they didn't".
 8. During these days Abu Dharr Ghifari was not in Madina. When he returned to the city and became aware of the state of affairs, he also spoke like Salman and expressed regret on the indecent intervention by the people; their forsaking 'Ali, their disobeying the orders of the Holy Prophet (S) and the consequent loss which they suffered. (For further details, refer "Abu Dharr", Islamic Seminary Publications, 1984 also available on line at:
<http://www.al-islam.org/abu-dharr-the-great-companion-of-the-prophet> [1]).

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