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BIOGRAPHY OF
IMAM ALI IBN ABI-TALIB
TRANSLATION OF
SIRAT AMIR AL-MU'MININ

BY:
MUFTI JAFAR HUSAYN



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

BIOGRAPHY OF IMAM ALI IBN ABI-TALIB

:Writer

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:Published in print

Ansariyan

:Digital Publisher

Ghaemiyeh center of computerized researches

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BIOGRAPHY OF IMAM `ALĪ IBN ABĪ-TĀLIB

ID Book

BIOGRAPHY OF

IMAM `ALĪ IBN ABĪ-TĀLIB

Translation of SIRAT AMIR AL-MU`MININ

Author: Mufti Ja`far Husayn

Translator: Sayyid Tahir Bilgrami

Publisher: Ansariyan Publications – Qum

First Edition ۱۴۲۷-۱۳۸۵-۲۰۰۶

Thamin Al-a'immah Press

Quantity: ۲۰۰۰

Number of Pages: ۷۲۰

Size: ۱۶۲ X ۲۲۹ mm

ISBN: ۹۶۴-۴۳۸-۷۹۸-۸

Ansariyan Publications

P.O. Box ۱۸۷

Shohada St., Qum ۲۲

Islamic Republic of Iran

Tel: ۰۰۹۸ ۲۵۱ ۷۷۴۱۷۴۴ Fax: ۷۷۴۲۶۴۷

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Foreword

(۱۱)

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

All praise be to Allah alone, and all blessings be upon the Chosen Prophet, Muhammad, and his household whom He has chosen

Amir al-Mu'minin, `Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s), is a great and peerless personality whose qualities have been recognized by friends and foes alike. None could ever deny his sterling qualities. He was born in a distinguished family of the tribe of Quraysh. He had the singular distinction of taking birth in the holy precincts of the Ka`bah. He first opened his eyes in this world to see the radiant visage of the Prophet (a.s). He grew and received upbringing under the tutelage of the Prophet (a.s). Imam `Ali (a.s) followed the footsteps of his mentor and cousin from his very childhood. He was always with the Prophet (a.s) like a shadow and derived felicity from the company. Imam `Ali (a.s) accomplished the various stages of upbringing and training under the fond and watchful eyes of the Prophet (a.s) His head and heart absorbed the actions and the exemplary character of the Prophet (a.s).The purity of thoughts and excellence of upbringing elevated Imam `Ali (a.s) to such heights that the moon and the stars appear to be at lower elevations

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This is a common belief, and true to a certain extent, that the environment plays a major role in shaping the nature and thoughts of persons. But, in this world, there have been august personalities who were not at all affected by the popular beliefs and superstitions. The thinking of these persons has always been different and their actions far apart from those of the populace. `Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s) has been one such noble personality who, rather than falling in line with the mundane thoughts and habits of the people, left his mark on their thoughts and actions. With his vision, power of comprehension and Allah's help he was able to draw a line between right and wrong and, therefore, laid the foundation of a new and unique culture and thought process. Instead of treading the beaten track, he left his own footprints for others to follow. Therefore, in that idolatrous period in the history of Arabia, he never bowed his head to anyone other than the Creator, Allah! He kept his radiant forehead safe from bowing to myriad idols installed in the Ka`bah

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those days. Imam `Ali's thoughts and actions were always in tune with those of the Prophet (a.s). It was the result of this unity of thoughts that no sooner the Prophet (a.s) proclaimed his Message, `Ali (a.s) accepted it and gave the proof of his adherence to the Truth by being the first person to join the Prophet (a.s) in the prayers.

In his early days Imam `Ali (a.s) dedicated himself to the task of propagating Islam as a universal movement. He became a pillar of support for the Prophet (a.s) to confront and fight against the enemies of the Cause. At the Feast of al-`Ashirah when the Quraysh were dumbfounded at the Prophet (a.s)'s Declaration, Imam `Ali (a.s) faced their piercing eyes and stood firmly to witness the Prophet-hood of Muhammad (a.s). He publicly declared his support to the Prophet (a.s) and remained steadfast in his resolve until the end. History bears witness to the fact that when the infidel Quraysh exceeded all bonds of decency in torturing and ridiculing the Prophet (a.s) and his followers, they had to take shelter in a cave. Imam `Ali (a.s) braved all these hardships and never left the side of the Prophet (a.s) for a moment. He faced untold hardships but remained firm in his resolve. He was scared neither of the hardships nor

the blatant threats of the enemies. He bore the difficulties with absolute equanimity. During the days in Medina, when the different tribes in Arabia kept aside their long drawn differences and joined to confront and harm the Prophet (a.s) and his Cause, Imam `Ali (a.s) stood firm as a wall of steel in the battlefield to vanquish and chase them away. He laid to dust the false pride of the infidels of Quraysh, who in the end capitulated to lay down arms and hypocritically professed allegiance to the New
!Creed

The atmosphere was not congenial for Imam `Ali (a.s) after the closing of the eyes of the Prophet (a.s), the greed for power and pelf turned the Divinely commissioned leadership into worldly rule. These circumstances forced him into self-imposed isolation. But whenever the greater interests of Islam were at stake, he came out of his seclusion and gave invaluable advice to the “powers-that-be” in times of important expeditions and economic or religious matters. During these years of seclusion Imam `Ali (a.s) busied himself in study of Islamic tenets and thoughts. He always preferred collective rights to individual desires. When at the ripe old age of fifty-eight he ascended to the worldly caliphate, he found the State in turmoil. With the plunder of the foreign lands there was excess of wealth in the Nation that had changed the very nature of the Arabs for the worst. Instead of the proverbial simplicity, the life style of Arabs turned towards pomp and show of wealth. Although it was not an easy task to mend the fences, Imam `Ali (a.s) faced the intrigue of the adversaries to protect
.Islam and its moral values

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His services in this direction were selfless and his observations are a treasure- house in the annals of Islamic History. In the battlefield and in the halls of debate he represented the cause of Islam with absolute valor and success. Whether it was the Feast of al-`Ashirah or it was the presentation of the Verse of Bara'ah to the infidels of Makkah; whether it was the Capture of Makkah, Purification of the Ka`bah, the expedition of Khandaq or that of Khaybar; Imam `Ali's services to the cause have a unique distinction enjoyed by none else in the comity of the Prophet's companions. His efforts are rated the highest in the protection, welfare, propagation and development
.of the Faith of Islam

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If his contribution is separated from the History of Islam, the history will appear wanting in content. His achievements are a dominant part of the annals of Islamic History. Although in every epoch efforts were made by his adversaries to put curtains of darkness over his achievement, and the establishments of those days were hand in glove with such historians, their enmity and hatred could not succeed in hiding Imam `Ali's great contributions, and he continues to shine on the horizon of Islam like the
!brightest of stars

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s), on the one hand patronized learning and knowledge to take the caravan of humanity forward and on the other he himself set brightest examples of virtuous action that became a beacon of guidance for the populace. It is necessary that people follow and emulate his way of life. They should draw light from his thoughts and beliefs. The norms of action should be devised on his teachings and actions. The society must be built on the foundation of unshakable principles. Then only the individual and collective lives will be compatible with the requirements of the
.Faith and will achieve the moral heights

With this aim impressions of the life and achievements of Imam `Ali (a.s) are being described in this work. Attempt has been made neither to make a colorful presentation nor to exaggerate any facts. We have abstained from the slightest element of bias in this work and all the facts are presented in the light of authentic historical references. They are arranged in such a way that chronologically the presentation has the interest of a biographical work. If any references have been made to the events of difference and controversy in the narrative, we have limited them to mere quotation of the source material without going into a discussion over the matter. We do pray to Allah that this work dispels the clouds of bias and helps people to understand the great personality. "And with none but Allah is the direction of
".my affair to a right issue; on Him do I rely and to Him do I turn

BIRTHPLACE AND ORIGIN

BIRTHPLACE AND ORIGIN

Arabia is situated in the south west of the Continent of Asia. It is the biggest peninsula in the world. In the north, it has Syria; in the west are the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, in the south flow the azure blue waters of the Indian Ocean. The coastal area of the Red Sea is a barren desert. Away from the coast, there are dry mountains, desert dunes and sandy stretches merging into the horizon. This desert land is called the Hijaz. This area has no agriculture whatsoever nor are there any means of irrigation for crops to grow. If there is any rain, the water runs away into the valleys of the barren mountains or it is accumulated in the low-lying ditches. For miles and miles there will be no trace of water in the desert. In such a parched area where there are vast stretches of desert land and barren mountains, the likelihood of commercial activity and habitation are naturally sparse. However on the periphery of Ka`bah the `Amaliqah (the giants) used to live a nomadic life. These nomads had no permanent habitation and the search for sustenance and water used to take them from place to place in the desert. Wherever they found some water and greenery, they would set their camps. When the water and the pasture for their animals were exhausted, they would move in search for new source of water

In the Batha' Valley of this vast desert habitation started with the progeny of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) (a.s). Ibrahim (a.s) was born in Babylon one thousand and eighty one years after the Deluge of Noah (a.s). He lost his father during his early childhood and was brought up by his uncle who was known as Azar. Azar means the chief keeper of the temple. This word was later changed to Azar. Ibrahim (a.s) had his upbringing in an environment where idols were carved and worshipped. They also used to worship the sun, moon and the stars. The statue of the ruler of the time used to be revered and worshipped. In such depraved surroundings, Ibrahim (a.s) never had any wish for idol worship. To the contrary, he was against idol worship from his very childhood. He was very critical of the ways of his people and always invited them to worship one and only God. However, the people never paid any heed to his preaching. They continued thinking that all their affairs were controlled by their

lifeless idols! When Ibrahim (a.s) felt that his people were incorrigibly adamant in their false beliefs, he thought of giving them a proof of the abject helplessness of the idols. For this, he waited for an opportune moment. The opportunity came when the inhabitants assembled in the wilderness for celebration of a festival and there was not a single soul in the town. He headed for the temple and broke the biggest idol and many smaller ones. He left the hatchet used for breaking the idols near the neck of the biggest idol. When the people returned to the town, they found that the temple was in utter disarray and the pieces of the broken idols scattered all around. They looked at each other in disbelief and then said that this would be the doing of Ibrahim (a.s) who always talked against the idols. They called Ibrahim (a.s) aside and asked :him if he had caused the damage? He replied

قَالَ بَلْ فَعَلَهُ كَبِيرُهُمْ هَذَا فَاسْأَلُوهُمْ إِنْ كَانُوا يَنْطِقُونَ

This is the doing of their biggest idol. If they have the power of speech, do ask them!

((٢١:٦٣))

When the people heard Ibrahim (a.s) say the impossible thing, they said, “O Ibrahim (a.s)! Have the idols ever spoken?” He replied, “How could those who cannot even speak and defend themselves be of any help to anyone. You consider them your gods and bow to them!” The belief of the idolatrous people was that the idols bring the rains; they help in growing the crops, and give them the means of sustenance and protect them against calamities. Now they found the very idols helplessly shattered. They brooded over the matter and then presented Ibrahim (a.s) at the court of Nimrod. He asked Ibrahim (a.s),” How you dared to harm the idols? Pride has gone so much to your head that you have challenged my divine authority! “Ibrahim (a.s) replied, “What are your idols? They are the handiwork of human sculptors. They are weaker than the weakest creatures! Then how do you expect me to accept you as a god when you have no authority over your own life and death! “Nimrod was furious hearing these words from Ibrahim (a.s). His own uncle threatened Ibrahim (a.s) to crush him with the stones. Nimrod ordered Ibrahim (a.s) to be burnt on a pyre. For this purpose a big pyre was lighted. When the flames rose high, Ibrahim (a.s) was thrown into the fire. Not a single hair of his was burnt. It was as if the pyre was a blooming garden. Seeing this miracle, Nimrod was dumb-founded! But his flame of revenge was not extinguished. He ordered Ibrahim’s assets to be confiscated and exiled him from the kingdom. When Ibrahim (a.s) heard this decree, he said, “You have no right to confiscate my animals and belongings!” Nimrod said, “You have acquired these things living in my realm!” Ibrahim rejoined, “Then, return to me the years that I have spent living in your city and take my belongings!” Nimrod had no reply for this argument. He ordered that his belongings may not be confiscated but he must be banished forthwith

Ibrahim (a.s) left Babylon along with his spouse Sarah and nephew Lot (a.s)). Passing through Aleppo and Damascus this small group reached Palestine which, in those days, was called Kan`an. In Palestine, his abode was eleven miles away from Jerusalem. The locality is known as Hebron. Ibrahim (a.s) stayed here for sometime and then proceeded to Egypt to preach the people about the Unity of Allah. When the king of Egypt, Raqyūn, saw the pretty Sarah, evil intentions passed through his mind. When he stretched his hand towards her, it instantly was paralyzed. Raqyūn repented his action and begged for Ibrahim's pardon. He gave valuable gifts to the group and presented a slave girl, Hajar, to Ibrahim (a.s). This girl later on became the consort of Ibrahim (a.s). The historian al-tabari writes that Hajar was the daughter of `Alwan ibn Sinan, the Pharaoh of Egypt. Ibrahim (a.s) returned to Hebron to make it his permanent place of residence. He prayed to Allah to give him offspring that could help him advance his Mission. His prayers were answered and, at the age of eighty-six, he was blessed with his first son Isma`il (a.s) through Hajar. After sometime, (Sarah too gave birth to Ishaq (a.s

When Sarah presented a son to Ibrahim (a.s) she insisted that he should move away Hajar and Isma`il (a.s) from Hebron. Ibrahim (a.s) agreed and traveled with Hajar and Isma`il (a.s). With Divine Guidance, they reached a desolate place in the wilderness of Hijaz. Although the place was devoid of any human presence, Allah had earmarked it for the location of the Umm al-Qura—the mother of towns. Therefore, with the hands of Ibrahim (a.s), the foundation of habitation at the Holy Place was laid. He left Isma`il (a.s) and Hajar there. Ibrahim (a.s) had made a promise to Sara, while departing from Hebron, that he would settle Hajar and Isma`il (a.s) at a safe place and return to her. Therefore, he left them in the trust of Allah and started on his return journey with a heavy heart that he was leaving behind his beloved son and the faithful wife. When he reached the Mount Kada at some distance, he glanced back at Hajar and Isma`il (a.s) :and prayed to Allah

رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسِيَّكُنْتُ مِنْ دُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ فَاجْعَلْ أَفْتِدَاءَ مِنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي إِلَيْهِمْ وَارزُقُهُمْ
مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ.

O Sustainer! Near Your Holy Abode, where nothing grows, I have settled my progeny. “
O Our Provider! When my progeny establish Prayer, turn the hearts of people towards
”(them and bestow them with sustenance of fruits that they are grateful to You. (۱۴:۲۷

Although Ibrahim (a.s) had faith in Allah’s Beneficence, this prayer gave satisfaction to his heart. He then took the way back to Hebron. Hajar made a canopy of the sheet of cloth and sat under it with little Isma`il (a.s). Although it was quiet all around, the courageous lady was not scared at all. She had absolute trust in Allah. She had with her only one pitcher of water that was exhausted in a day or two. Now she worried about water. As the sun progressed on its journey, the intensity of thirst increased. She became restless looking at the parched face of the baby. She started searching for water in the environs. She climbed over the peaks of Safa and Marwah and made seven trips between the two peaks. When she came back very exhausted, Hajar noticed water oozing from the pebbles of sand. She removed the pebbles and stones from the spot and a spring of sweet and cool water spurted out. Hajar’s happiness knew no bounds. She uttered, “Zam-Zam!” This word in the Hebrew language means, “Stay put!” This thus has become the name of the spring. Hajar quenched the thirst of her baby and herself with the cool water and then erected a parapet around the place with stones gathered from the surroundings so that it served as a cistern for the water. Looking at the water, birds started hovering around the place. In no time, there
.were signs of life in the desolate wilderness

At that time a caravan of Banū-Jarham of Yemen passed that way, going to Syria. When they noticed groups of birds in the horizon of the valley, they were surprised. They wondered what the birds had to do in the desolate, waterless desert. When the caravan descended from the heights of the mountain, they noticed a lady sitting with her bowed head and having a baby on her lap. Nearby they saw a spring of water. Finding the spring there, they asked the permission of Hajar if they could settle down in the neighborhood. Hajar was agreeable to their inhabiting the area, but she told them that without the consent of Ibrahim (a.s) she had no authority to give such a permission to them. She asked them to wait until Ibrahim (a.s) came back and made a decision about their request. When Ibrahim (a.s) arrived there, as promised, Hajar obtained his consent and allowed Banū-Jarham to make a settlement there. Thus, a small colony of shacks was the first community of inhabitants there

Ibrahim (a.s), with Allah's Wish, commenced construction of the Holy Ka`bah in that wilderness. Isma`il (a.s) helped his father in this work. He carried stones on his shoulders to the site and Ibrahim (a.s) sorted out the stones to erect the walls of the structure. Thus the team of father and son accomplished the construction of the Ka`bah. It was the result of their sincerity and dedication that very soon Ka`bah got the status of the most revered place of pilgrimage in the entire Arabian Peninsula. People started heading for the Ka`bah from all directions. The population of the place thus increased by leaps and bounds. It became a bustling habitation in the heart of Peninsular Arabia and became known by the name of Bakkah. This is its original name and Zabūr (the Psalms of David) too refers to the place as Bakkah. In the Holy Qur'an too, it is termed as Bakkah when the Book mentions about the event of its construction

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ.

The First House that was made for the people is in Bakkah which is felicitous (place)“
”(and a source of inspiration for the worlds. (۳:۹۶)

The other name of Bakkah which is in vogue is Makkah al-Mukarramah (the Honored Makkah). Al-Dahhak says that the ‘ba’ (B letter) of Bakkah has been replaced with ‘mim’ (M letter). He says that both are the names of the same place. Some traditions mention that the place where the Ka`bah is located is Bakkah and the habitation around it is Makkah. There are several versions about the naming of the place but those that have been authenticated by the Infallible Ahl-al-Bayt are that the word Bakkah has its root in the word ‘Buka’ that means lamentation. The reason for giving this name to the place is that whenever the Arabs from all over assembled there, they
:lamented and wailed loudly. Therefore, Imam Ja`far al-Sadiq (a.s) has said

Makkah has been named Bakkah that people used to assemble there and do
[lamenting and wailing.]۱

:Mujahid too had a similar opinion. He says

Makkah was termed as Bakkah because men and women used to assemble there and
[wail.]۲

And Makkah is derived from the word ‘Muka’ that means shouting and whistling.
:Therefore, Imam al-Rida (a.s) says

[Makkah is called Makkah because people there shout and cry.]۳

This shouting and wailing too was considered as a sort of worship by the people there.
:Therefore, Allah says in the Holy Qur’an

(Near the Ka`bah their worship was whistling and clapping of hands. (٨:٣٥)

In the Holy Qur'an the city of Makkah is also mentioned as Umm-al-Qura. The real meaning of the word Umm is origin or foundation. One reason for terming Makkah as Umm-al-Qura is that a spate of human population originated from here and spread far and wide in the world. Therefore, when Isma`il (a.s) married the daughter of Mazzaz ibn `Amr, the chief of the tribe of Banū-Jarham, his progeny prospered and spread soon into Tehama, Najd and Hijaz and as far as Palestine and Yemen. They also established settlements in other parts of the world. This holy land, besides being the foundation of human settlements also is the center for the Faith and Guidance of the humankind. On this very land, the First House of Allah was constructed. The Message of Islam too was first given from these environs. The call for Tawhid (The Unity of Allah) was given from here and the foundation for the Last and Ultimate Faith of Allah has been laid here. The Revelation of the Holy Qur'an too started in Makkah. The Prophet of Islam was born here and his radiance spread far and wide. It is here that `Ali ibn Abi-Talib was born in the Holy precincts of the Ka`bah. In Makkah, he spent his years from childhood to early youth

It is a fact that different places in the world have effect on the life in consonance with the geographic location and the climate. Therefore, what thrives in one place generally does not in another clime. Similarly, the land in the same area has stretches that have different types of soil. Therefore, when something is grown on a fertile soil, it thrives. If the same crop is on an infertile piece of land, it will wither. The plants growing on soft soils are generally weak. The shrubs growing on rocky soils are hardy. The reason for this is that the roots of the plants growing on desert soils have to penetrate deep to draw the moisture from there. Therefore, Nature has provided these

plants the strength to contend with the harsh environment. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) has also made an observation about such desert soils

Remember the timber of the trees in the wilderness is strong and the bark of fresh and fleshy plants is weak and puny. The wood from the trees growing in the wild [burns well and the fire lasts longer].[۴]

Similarly, the soil, the climate and the environment of a place have marked effect on the mental and physical built of the people there. The place of birth influences the character and habits of the people there. When there is a change of environment from the wilderness to urban conglomerates, then they slowly mould themselves towards adoption of the new ways

If we take stock of the inhabitants of the hot desert lands, we find that they are more frugal, chivalrous and hard working than those living in more comfortable and salubrious climes. In the deserts, people have to contend with harsh situations. Therefore, they have the capability to face these difficulties

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) had the faculty of physical strength and equanimity of nature endowed by Allah in abundant measure. Even on human consideration too, the harsh ...desert environment too was responsible for his great faculty of resilience

Footnote

۱. 'Ilal al-Sharā'i [۱]

۲. Al-Durr al-Manthūr Vol ۲, Page ۵۲ [۲]

۳. 'Ilal al-Sharaa'i [۳]

۴. Nahj al-Balāghah [۴]

FAMILY AND PEDIGREE

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It is the law of nature that the traits of the ancestors are transferred to the progeny. Every individual is a reflection and inheritor of the qualities of his forbears. Although uninitiated person may not be able to fathom the subtle transfer of traits from the previous generations to the latter, only a trained physiognomist can do it. By looking at a person and hearing him, they can make an educated guess as to the place of his residence and the tribe he belongs to. Certain tribes in Arabia excelled in their incredible capability of determining the origin of a person by just a cursory look at him. They would say who is the son of which person and belongs to which family not having met him anytime in the past! The author of 'al-Mustatraf' writes about the physiognomic skills of the tribes of Banū-Lahab and Banū-Mudlaj that if there was any doubt about the parentage of a child, it would be presented before any member of these tribes. By looking at the child and the men in the group, he would point out the person who had fathered the baby! Once a trader's son passed through the abode of one of these tribes astride a camel... One person from the tribe looked at the boy and his slave walking in front of the camel and expressed surprise over the resemblance between the two of them. When the boy heard this, doubts entered his mind. When he returned home, he talked to his mother and learned that his natural father was the slave. Once Zayd and his son Usamah were taking rest lying in the al-Masjid al-Nabawi (the Holy Prophet's Mosque) with their faces covered. Majzaz ibn A`war, a person from the tribe of Mudlaj saw their exposed feet and correctly determined as to which were the feet of the father and those that belonged to the son. The person, though, had never met and known either Zayd or Usamah

This natural instinct is not there only in some humans, but it is also evidenced in several fauna and flora. One Australian Pastor, Mendel, conducted trials on animals and plants. He crossed the seeds of long and short growing varieties of peas. The crop that resulted was all of long grown peas. He again sowed the seeds from this crop and the result was that seventy-five percent were long growing and the rest were short growing. Similarly, Mendel made trials by crossing white rooster having black spots with a black hen. When the egg from this mating was hatched, the chick was bluish in color. He again crossed this bluish rooster with another hen. The resultant chicks from the eggs thus laid hatched into two blue chicks, one white with black patches and another black chick. Mendel concluded from these experiments that when certain characteristics recess in the first generation, they come back in the latter generations

These similarities are not only restricted to physical looks but also the character and disposition of the progeny too will be a reflection of the forbears. Therefore, the modern school of genetics has proved that the fetus created by the fusion of the male sperm and the female ovum contain in them the characteristics of the ancestors from both the parents. Each cell of the fetus contains forty six thousand chromosomes that can be seen only through a very sophisticated microscope. Each such chromosome contains at least thirty thousand genes. These genes perform the function of transmitting the characteristics of the forbears to the generation after generation. Therefore, it is the mother's womb where one starts inheriting the traits of the ancestors. When the baby arrives in the world, he will not only have similarities with the parents and grandparents, but will also manifest, progressively, the mental and physical characteristics of the past generations in the family. It must be borne in the minds that the skills that are acquired with personal effort are not generally inherited. These skills are a result of the environment that a person grows in and the type of upbringing he is given. If the environment and the upbringing are not congenial, then the inherited characteristics of the head and heart might be curbed over a period. But .these traits might manifest themselves in the later generations

In accordance with this hypothesis, if a person's ancestors had been persona non grata, then the offspring too is likely to have the undesirable characteristics. To the contrary, if the ancestors were persons of good character, then the offspring too will manifest such qualities. Therefore, to judge a person his family background is a very important yardstick. A person whose ancestral chronology is in the darkness, correct assessment of his character and behavior pattern cannot be pre-determined. This is why it is said, "One who does not know the ancestry of a person, cannot fathom his personality." To comprehend the personality and ancestral greatness of `Ali (a.s), it is important to make a study of his ancestors who have gone by. This will illustrate the nobility and chivalry of character that was transferred to the progeny from generation to generation

Abd-Manaf ibn Qasi`

His real name was Mughirah and the kunyah Abū-`Abd-Shams. Because of his extreme good looks he was called as Qamar al-Batha'. Because of his charitable disposition and reverence he was called al-Sayyid. Although the elder son of Qasi, `Abd al-Dar was the keeper of the keys of the Ka`bah, the leadership of Quraysh was vested in `Abd-Manaf. In fact, because of his wisdom and sagacity, he rose to the leadership of the tribe during the lifetime of his father! Diyarbakri writes

Abd-Manaf rose to the leadership of the tribe during the lifetime of his father. The`
[Quraysh used to abide by all his commands.]^[۳۱]

He followed the ways of his illustrious father and perpetrated the institutions of reform established by him. `Abd-Manaf left behind four sons: Hashim, Muttalib, `Abd-Shams and Nawfal. Hashim and Muttalib are remembered as al-Badran or two moons

Hashim Ibn `Abd-Manaf

His real name was `Amr and because of his imposing personality he was called `Amr al-`Ala'. His kunyah was Abū-Nazlah, his title Sayyid al-Batha' and Abul-Batha'. His mother was `Atikah. Instead of his name and kunyah, he was better known as Hashim. The reason for this name was that once, during a famine, he got large number of breads cooked, loaded them on camels and brought from Syria to Makkah. He got a soup prepared from the meat of the camels, shredded the breads into smaller chunks, doused them in to large bowls of the soup and fed the people and the visitors to Makkah. From that day, people started calling him Hashim that means one who makes shreds

Hashim and `Abd-Shams were born as twins. One was born with his palm attached to the forehead of the other. Both were separated from each other with the blow of a sword. At that time, it was predicted that the progeny of both would fight with each other. Therefore, there was always conflict going on between the two families. These two brothers were the forerunners of the Banū-Hashim and Banū-Umayyah. These two families were poles apart as far as their thoughts and beliefs were concerned. The first conflict came about between Hashim and Umayyah the son of `Abd-Shams. Then there was fight between `Abd al-Muttalib, the son of Hashim, and Harb the son of Umayyah. After Harb, his son, Abū-Sufyan challenged the Prophet of Islam (a.s) and fought many battles against him. After Abū-Sufyan his son, Mu`awiyah fought many gory battles against `Ali (a.s). Thereafter, Yazid, the son of Mu`awiyah, martyred Imam al-Husayn (a.s) and his small group of companions. Thus, the enmity between Banū-Hashim and Banū-Umayyah went on for generation together. Even after embracing Islam, there was no change in the treacherous nature of Banū-Umayyah, and they used all the stratagems to annihilate Banū-Hashim

Hashim and `Abd-Shams, though of the same parentage and grand parentage, they were as different as a flower and a thorn growing on the same plant. Hashim was a person of great character and nobility. There always used to be a group of needy persons surrounding him for help. The economic growth of the Quraysh, to a great extent, was due to the help and assistance of Hashim. He inculcated the idea of trade and commerce in the minds of the Quraysh and put them on the path of progress. Even prior to Hashim, Quraysh had some idea of trade and commerce, but it was restricted to dealing only in local transactions. One reason for calling them as Quraysh is that the word comes from taqrush that means work, trade and commerce. Hashim took his trading activities forward and extended it to the markets of Syria and beyond to Abyssinia. He also encouraged the Quraysh to follow in his footsteps. He organized trading caravans to Abyssinia and Yemen during the winters and to Syria, Gaza and Ankara during the summer months. The Caesar of Rome used to hold him in high respect. With his influence on the Caesar, he obtained a charter from him that the merchandise of the Quraysh would not be charged any taxes in his realm, facilities of travel to be extended to the trading caravans and safety was guaranteed. This .increased the trading activities of the Quraysh by leaps and bounds

It has been mentioned while discussing about Qasi that he had nominated his elder son, Abdul Dar, as the keeper of the Ka`bah, but he was not able to prove himself equal to the task. Nor anyone from his progeny rose to prove their capability. Matters went from bad to worse and When Hashim saw that Banū-`Abd-al-Dar were grossly incapable of delivering the goods, he had a discussion with his brothers Muttalib, Nawfal and `Abd-Shams and they all agreed that the responsibility of the upkeep of the Ka`bah must be taken away from Banū-`Abd-al-Dar. They were certain that as long as the management was not changed, things could not be set right. When Banū-`Abd-al-Dar heard of the plans of their removal, they came up for armed conflict. On the other hand, the progeny of `Abd-Manaf too got ready to fight. The Arab tribes were divided into two groups. Banū-Asad, Banū-Zahrah, Banū-Tamim and Banū-Harith joined the ranks of the progeny of `Abd-Manaf. The other group consisted of Banū-Makhzūm, Banū-Sahm and Banū-`Adi who sided with Banū-`Abd-al-Dar. Banū-`Abd-Manaf and their cohorts were called Mutayyibūn and the group of Banū-

`Abd-al-Dar was called the al-Ahlah. Skirmishes were about to break out between the opposing groups when some well meaning arbiters intervened and suggested that a truce should be struck through negotiations. They felt that the consequences of a battle might be very serious. Thus an agreement was reached that the functions of Siqayah and Rifadah were to be with Banū-`Abd-Manaf and that of Nidwah, Hijab and Liwa' (the standard) to remain in the charge of Banū-`Abd-al-Dar. When this agreement was concluded, Banū-`Abd-Manaf drew lots amongst themselves for the control of the departments of Siqayah and Rifadah. The lottery went in the favor of .Hashim who assumed control of the two departments

Hashim took prompt action to reform the two departments. He improved the arrangements for provision of food and water to the Hajjis. He got two new wells, Sajlah and Budhdhar, dug to increase the availability of water. He perfected the two schemes started by his grandfather, Qasi. Nearer the Hajj season he would assemble the Quraysh near the Ka`bah and give them detailed instructions about providing services to the Hajjis. He would tell them

O group of Quraysh! You are resident in the neighborhood of Allah and live in His House! The time has come that the pilgrims to the House of Allah are about to come to pay their obeisance. They are all the guests of Allah and deserve all the respect and [care from you. Therefore, revere Allah's guests and take good care of them!]

After giving this sermon, he used to organize the funds. He used to raise some contributions from the Quraysh but the major part of the funds used to be from his own pocket. He always took care that the Hajjis coming from far away places received good care. Eating-places were arranged in Makkah and Mina and cool, sweet drinking water was copiously provided in leathern containers

Al-Aswad Ibn Sha`r al-Kalbi had himself witnessed this open house. He writes that when he was the representative of a wealthy lady of his tribe, he used to travel to various places with her merchandise. Once he passed through Mina and `Arafat while the Hajj season was on. It was a dark night. He spent the night at one spot. When he awoke in the morning he noticed tall leather tents of Ta'if hitched at a distance. When he went a little forward, he found large cauldrons placed on smoldering fires. Some animals had already been butchered and some more were about to be cut. Servants were flitting around the place doing their tasks. He was astonished to see the bustle of activity. He felt the urge to meet the chief of the tribe. He went further forward and found a carpeted, tall tent where the chiefs of the Quraysh were seated in a circle. At the center of this group was seated an imposing personality holding a staff in his hand and wearing a black scarf on his head. From the scarf hung long tufts of hair on his shoulders... He was much impressed with the scene. At this moment, he heard someone shouting from an elevated place at some distance, "O visitors to the house of Allah! Do come to have your meals!" From another place two persons were

announcing, “Those who have taken their mid-day meal should come again for their dinner!” al-Aswad says that he had heard from the Jewish Scholars that this was the period when the unlettered Prophet would appear. Observing the grand feast he felt whether the person seated there is himself the prophet? He asked one person about the identity of the chief who sat surrounded by his companions in the tent. The person :said that it was Abū-Nazlah Hashim ibn ` Abd-Manaf. Hearing this al-Aswad said

[By God! This is real grandeur and not the grandeur of Al-Jafnah (the kings of Syria)]^[۳۳]

This generosity of Hashim made him popular throughout the Arab lands. Umayyah ibn `Abd-Shams, who was a person of mean disposition, was jealous of Hashim's popularity. He was working under acute inferiority complex and was blue with envy. He looked forward to every opportunity to lower Hashim in the estimation of the people and somehow occupy his position. With this aim, he used his wealth to throw lavish feasts. However, he lacked the natural instinct of kindness and generosity that Hashim had. The people could read his hypocrisy. He realized that this stratagem of his would not work, and after throwing a couple of parties, he gave up. This proved more humiliating for him. People started ridiculing and making fun of him. Umayyah, meanwhile, was in a frenzy of anger and jealousy. Unable to face the taunts of the people any more, he used unsavory language against Hashim. In accordance with the custom of the time, he threw a challenge of munafarah. Munafarah required an arbiter to decide who was the more eminent of the two contesting parties. Hashim was above all this that he would take recourse to such subterfuges to prove his worth. But the Quraysh persuaded him to accept the challenge. Hashim agreed on the condition that the defeated party must give fifty black-eyed she-camels to the victor and should shun the residence of Makkah for ten years. Umayyah agreed to abide by these conditions. They both agreed to have the Hermit al-Khuza`i as the arbitrator. When both of them presented their case to him, he instantly decided in favor of Hashim confirming his nobility and eminence. Hashim took the fifty camels from Umayyah, got them slaughtered and threw a public feast in Makkah. Umayyah moved away from Makkah to Safūriyah where he spent ten years in exile. This created
:enmity between the two important clans of Arabia. Buladhari writes

This was the first manifestation of hate and enmity that appeared between Hashim
[and Umayyah].[۳۴

Hashim was a great personage of his time whose noble descent, stature and nobility have been highly recognized. Not only in Hijaz, but also in places far away from there, had his name and fame spread. Even the ruling princes of the time used to hold him in high respect. The king of Rome and the Najashi of Abyssinia went to the extent of offering the hands of their daughters in marriage to Hashim. But he decided not to marry out of the Hijaz. He took several Arab wives from different tribes. The most significant, and important, marriage was with a girl from the Banū-al-Najjar branch of the tribe of Khazraj. The progeny from this marriage was the line that was later to bear the Prophet of Islam (a.s). It is said that Hashim dreamed that he must marry Salma bint `Amr who was residing at Yathrib. This was a lady of great character and :nobility. Diyarbakri writes

Salma, in intelligence and sagacity, was of the same caliber in her time, as was
[Khadijah later on].[۳۵

After seeing this dream, Hashim went to al-Madinah with a few relatives and stayed at the place of `Amr ibn Zayd. He treated the guests lavishly and asked about the purpose of their visit. When a proposal was made for the hand of his daughter in marriage to Hashim, he agreed. But he made one condition that if Salma gave birth to a son, he should stay in Yathrib. Hashim agreed to this condition and the marriage was celebrated. After this function, Hashim proceeded to Syria on a business trip. On his return from there, he took Salma to Makkah along with him. After some time, Salma was pregnant. Hashim therefore shifted her to Yathrib and proceeded on another business trip to Syria. This proved the last journey for Hashim. He was seriously ill for a few days, died, and was interred at Gaza, a place about six miles .from `Asqalan

When Hashim's companions from the caravan broke the sad news of his demise in Makkah and Yathrib, there was immense mourning. Every person talked of his generosity, kindness and affectionate disposition. This sad news came to Salma like a thunderbolt. The birth of a posthumous son gave her solace. This son was `Abd al-Muttalib.

Hashim had several sons but two of them had issues. One of them was Asad and the other `Abd al-Muttalib. Asad had one son whose name was Hunayn, who remained issueless. Asad had one daughter, Fatimah, who was married to Abū-Talib and bore `Ali (a.s) and other sons. The other son of Hashim, `Abd-al-Muttalib had sons and the Hashemite progeny progressed through him. Ibn Qutaybah writes about this

[The Hashemite on the face of the earth are all the progeny of `Abd al-Muttalib.]۳۶

Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hashim`

His given name was `Amir and Abul-Harith the kunyah. At birth, he had some gray hair in the middle of his head. In Arabic, graying of hair is called shayb. Therefore, `Abd al-Muttalib was called with the sobriquet of Shaybah and Shaybat-al-Hamd. His father, Hashim, expired while on a journey to Syria. The child was deprived of the paternal love and affection. He grew to the age of seven or eight years in his maternal home in al-Madinah

In Arabia, those days, skill in riding and martial arts like archery and lancing was a necessity. Shaybah too used to practice archery in his childhood. Once he was doing his archery lessons in an open ground at Yathrib along with other children. Whenever he hit the target during the session, he would shout, "I am the son of the chief of Batha'!" A person from the family of Banū-Harith chanced to pass that way. When he heard the child utter these words, he asked about his name and that of his parent. The child said that his name was Shaybat-al-Hamd son of Hashim ibn `Abd-Manaf. The person returned to Makkah and related the entire incident to Shaybah's uncle Muttalib. Muttalib said that it was a grave oversight from him that he did not care for his nephew. Therefore, he instantly proceeded to Yathrib to fetch Shaybah home. He went to the neighborhood of Banū-al-Najjar where he found some children at play in

the street. One of these children was Shaybah. He immediately recognized him. He however asked some men of Banū-al-Najjar about the identity of the child. The men too recognized him as Muttalib, the uncle of Shaybah. They asked him if he wanted to take Shaybah to his rightful home. When he replied in the affirmative, they suggested to him to take him away immediately and that they would not create any hindrance in this matter. They said that if Shaybah's mother came to know about the purpose of his visit and raised any objections, then the Banū-al-Najjar would be forced to prevent him from taking away the child. Muttalib made his camel squat down, and he told Shaybah, "I am your uncle. Come and sit on this camel!" Shaybah complied without any hesitation and Muttalib brought him to Makkah. When they entered the ramparts of Makkah and the Quraysh noticed a child riding the camel with Muttalib, they shouted, "There comes the slave of Muttalib!" Muttalib told them that the child was not a slave and that he was the son of his brother Hashim. But the people started .calling Shaybah by the name of ` Abd al-Muttalib

Those days there was neither a school nor the people were much in the habit of reading and writing. There were not more than three or four literate persons in Makkah. `Abd al-Muttalib, though devoid of parental care, learned to read and write and acquired proficiency in the Arab Martial Skills. Some of his writings go to prove :this point. Ibn al-Nadim writes thus

In the treasury of al-Ma'mūn, there was a leather tablet on which was a document [penned by `Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hashim making a claim with a man from Himyar].[۳۷

In addition to his proficiency in the various martial and other skills, he possessed an ,impressive personality and was tall and strong. Ibn `Abbas says

I have heard my father say that `Abd al-Muttalib was tall, handsome and good [looking. Whoever looked at him started liking him].[۳۸

After Hashim, according to his will, Muttalib was the chief of the Quraysh and held all the positions connected with the Ka`bah. He had a desire to hand over all these responsibilities to `Abd al-Muttalib during his lifetime only. Therefore, when he thought of going to Yemen, he told `Abd al-Muttalib that he was the heir to his father's inheritance and that he was now capable of handling the responsibilities. He then handed over all the affairs to `Abd al-Muttalib and proceeded to Yemen and .expired there at a place called Rawman

Abd al-Muttalib had all the qualities of head and heart to be a good ruler. After` assuming charge, he gave attention to improving the administration of the departments of Siqayah and Rifadah. The Spring of Zamzam, that was buried deep underground for centuries, was restored to its pristine position and yielded plenty of sweet water for the pilgrims. Zamzam had disappeared from the sight of the Arabs that they had started calling it Taktum that means something that is upset and hiding from the view. Therefore, `Allamah Zamakhshari, explaining the reason for the use of ,the term Taktum, says

After Banū-Jarham, the spring of Zamzam was lost deep in the ground until `Abd al-Muttalib could make it re-appear.[۳۹

In brief, when the former rulers of Makkah, Banū-Jarham, were forced to go into exile under the pressure of Banū-Khuza`ah, their chief, `Amr ibn Harith al-Jarhami, buried the two golden antelopes gifted by Isfandiyar ibn Gashtasab, the seven swords that were the offerings for the Ka`bah and the five chains of armor in the Spring of Zamzam and put huge quantities of stones and rubble over it that it was difficult to identify the location of the spring. He then migrated with his tribesmen to Yemen. Much later `Abd al-Muttalib got a vision of its location in his dream. He surveyed the location of the spring according to the indication he had from the vision. After three days of hard labor, they noticed the signs of the spring. At this juncture, he shouted the praises of Almighty Allah. After a little more excavation, the water gushed out from the spring. The treasure buried by Harith too was recovered

The Quraysh, who were lukewarm about this activity so far, gathered around `Abd al-Muttalib, and started claiming that the treasure discovered was the property of their ancestors and that they must be given half of it. `Abd al-Muttalib told them that the discovery was the result of his own hard work and that they had no right over it. Even then, he offered, that if they wished, a decision could be arrived at by drawing lots. The Quraysh agreed to the proposal and the contestants of the lottery were the Ka`bah, the Quraysh and `Abd al-Muttalib. The Golden Antelopes went to the lot of the Ka`bah, and the chains of arm and the swords went to the lot of `Abd al-Muttalib. The Quraysh got but nothing! `Abd al-Muttalib sold the swords and the chains of arm to get a gold studded door made for the Ka`bah. The golden antelopes too were melted for studding the door. Ibn al-Athir writes

[This was the first occasion when the door of Ka`bah was studded with gold.]¹

When the Quraysh failed in acquiring these things, they claimed that they had a proprietary right in the Spring of Zamzam. `Abd al-Muttalib said that the spring was revived with his personal efforts and Allah had granted it only to him. He offered to them that they were free to draw water from it, but there was no question of conceding any property rights to them. But the Quraysh were adamant with their claims. Ultimately it was decided to go to the Hermit of Banū-Sa`d in Syria to resolve this issue. Both the contesting parties were willing to accept her decision. `Abd al-Muttalib agreed to this proposal and along with a few companions and a contingent of the Quraysh proceeded to Syria. They were still on the way when the water containers of `Abd al-Muttalib and his companions ran dry. They asked the Quraysh to give them some water. The Quraysh refused saying that their supply itself was scant. When the thirst became unbearable for `Abd al-Muttalib and his companions, he told his men to dig a grave for every individual so that whoever died, the others bury him. In the end only one person will remain dead without a grave and it would be better than all lying dead, unburied, in the desert. The thirsty group complied, and everyone dug a grave for himself. `Abd al-Muttalib thought that sitting idle without making any effort for water was not right. He asked his men to scatter in different directions and search for water. Saying this he mounted his she-camel. No sooner, the camel lifted its foot, sweet and clear water gushed out from that spot. The companions of `Abd al-Muttalib jumped for joy. They drank their fill and took supplies in their water[۴۰] containers. When the Quraysh witnessed this scene, they said that Allah Himself had resolved their dispute. As he had provided water to `Abd al-Muttalib in the stark desert, He has also given the Spring of Zamzam to him! They said that they no more needed to go to the Hermit for advice. Both the contesting parties, therefore, returned to Makkah from there. Although the Spring of Zamzam had its origins during the times of Isma`il (a.s) its renaissance was during the rule of `Abd al-Muttalib. Other wells too were excavated in Makkah during the period of `Abd al-Muttalib, but the copious yield of water that the spring gave was not matched by any other source. The inhabitants of Makkah and the pilgrims preferred to draw water from it thinking that its use was felicitous. The spring, therefore, is also called

Shuba`ah, that means the quencher! Even now, hundreds of thousands of Hajjis and pilgrims drink this water round the year and take away quantities to their homes. If this spring is a heritage left behind by Isma`il (a.s), this can also be termed a legacy of
!` Abd al-Muttalib

Ibn Wadih and other historians mention a similar event about the well at Ta'if. This well is known as Dhu'l-Hiram and was excavated by `Abd al-Muttalib with great effort. He used to travel to Ta'if occasionally and stay there for a few days. Once he noticed that some persons from Banū-Kalab and Banū-Rabab had pitched their tents and staying near the well. He asked who they were, and why they were halting at that place. They said that they were the owners of the well, Banū-Kalab and Banū-Rabab. `Abd al-Muttalib told them that the well was his and, if they wanted to use it, it could only be with his permission. The men again repeated their proprietary claims over the well. The argument thus prolonged. To cut the matter short, `Abd al-Muttalib proposed that if they wished they could nominate any person to arbitrate. They took the name of Sutayh al-Ghassani for the purpose who was a well-known soothsayer (kahin) of Arabia. They agreed that if the verdict goes against any party, it would give a hundred camels to the winner and twenty camels to Sutayh. Now they all proceeded towards the hermitage of Sutayh. Midway, the water with `Abd al-Muttalib's group were exhausted. He asked the men from the opposite camp to give some water. They said that the bone of contention between them was water only and they will not spare any of it from their stock. `Abd al-Muttalib said that he would not let his companions perish for want of water. He will go and search for water even if he lost his own life during the effort. Saying this he mounted his camel and went in one direction. After some distance, his camel sat down on the desert ground. Looking from the place where the group was halting, the men thought that `Abd al-Muttalib had expired. But his companions said that he had gone for

the noble purpose of searching water for his men and Allah will protect his life in such a situation. When some of the men reached the spot, they noticed that the camel was resting on cool and moist desert sand. And nearby water from a spring was flowing copiously. Banū-Kalab and Banū-Rabab emptied their water containers and wanted to take a refill of cool and fresh water. `Abd al-Muttalib's companions tried to prevent them from taking the water saying that they had refused to give them water when requested earlier. `Abd al-Muttalib asked his companions to allow the men to take the water. He said that nobody could be prevented from drinking the water. The two tribes were much impressed with `Abd al-Muttalib's gesture but still held on to their demand for arbitration regarding the well. On reaching the place of Sutayh they tested the soothsayer in various ways. They asked him to tell them about the matter of dispute between the two contending groups. He said that they were quarreling about the well in Ta'if, by the name of Dhu'l-Hiram, which belongs to `Abd al-Muttalib and Banū-Kalab or Banū-Rabab had no right over it. He asked them to give, as agreed, a hundred camels to `Abd al-Muttalib and twenty to him! They complied and .withdrew their claim over the well

On returning to Makkah, `Abd-al-Muttalib announced that some of the residents had resolved that if he had lost in the arbitration, they would pool camels and settle the fine to be imposed on him. Now he asked the persons to take the number of camels each one has pledged to give from the flock received by him in terms of the arbitration. Persons came forward and took away camels in ones, twos and threes. Even after all this, some camels were left undistributed. `Abd al-Muttalib asked his son Abū-Talib to slaughter the camels and disburse the meat on the peak of Abū-Khamis that the wild animals feasted on it. Abū-Talib complied with his father's :command and uttered the following couplet

!We feed others! Even the birds feed on our leftovers

!The hands of persons shiver, who keep their bowls brimming full

It was the practice of `Abd al-Muttalib that whatever food was left over, it was disbursed on the top of the hills to feed the wild birds there. Because of this, he was also known as Mut`im al-tayr (or the Feeder of the Birds). He always considered his moral duty to succor the poor and the needy once some persons from the tribe of Hizam came to Makkah for Hajj. While they were returning after the pilgrimage, one person of their group was murdered. As a ransom, they withheld a compensation for Hudhafah ibn Ghanim al-Adadi. Hudhafah saw `Abd al-Muttalib on the way and appealed to him for help. He inquired about the matter, asked them to release Hudhafah, and promised to give them twenty ounce or five hundred and fifty grams of gold as blood money and ١٠ camels and a horse. He also gave them his personal shawl to be kept as a mortgage until the settlement was made as agreed. They took the shawl and released the captive who rode to Makkah along with `Abd al-Muttalib. Release of Hudhafah on the guarantee of an ordinary shawl was because of the high reputation of `Abd al-Muttalib. The Arabs also considered their honors compromised if they left their mortgaged things unreleased for long spells. Because of this custom amongst the Arabs, Khusrow agreed to keep the bow of Hajib ibn Zurarah as a guarantee for his peaceful conduct. The story goes that with repeated periods of drought, the tribes of Banū-Tamim wanted to go to the pastures of Iraq to graze their camels, Abū-Zurarah went to the court of Khusrow to seek his permission. Khusrow said that they were treacherous people and that they might create some dispute in his realm. Hajib said that he would stand guarantee for the good behavior of his people and offered his own bow as a surety. At this, Khusrow and his courtiers started laughing. But one of the courtiers said that the mortgage of the bow must be accepted because the Arabs consider it a grave dishonor if they are unable to release the goods mortgaged by them. When the period of drought was over, the Arabs decided to return from the pastures in Iraq. In the interregnum, Hajib had already expired. His son, `Utarid, went to Khusrow and told him that his people had fulfilled the requirements of good behavior and if the bow was not returned to him now, he

would face lot of ridicule in the Arab land. Khusrow appreciated this very much and
.returned Hajib's bow to his son `Utarid

In Makkah there was a Jew, Udhaynah, who was an itinerant trader selling his goods in the neighborhood of the town. He sought protection from `Abd al-Muttalib, which was duly promised. Harb ibn Umayyah troubled the Jew and incited some roughs of Quraysh who murdered him and looted his belongings. When `Abd al-Muttalib learned about it, he started investigation into the matter. It was proved that the crime was committed on the instigation of Harb by `Amir ibn `Abd-Manaf ibn `Abd al-Dar and Saqr ibn `Amr and that they were hiding at the place of Harb. He demanded of Harb to hand over the culprits. Harb refused to comply and used harsh language. Rift already existed between the two families, which increased after this episode. Harb challenged `Abd-al-Muttalib for a debate and contest. First `Abd al-Muttalib expressed surprise at this challenge, and then he accepted it. It was decided that the King of Abyssinia would act as the arbiter in this dispute. But the king refused to arbitrate. Then Nufayl ibn `Abd-al-`Uzza was appointed as the arbitrator. He recognized the superiority and esteem of `Abd-al-Muttalib and decided the matter in his favor. Harb was very upset with this decision and used harsh words against Nufayl and stooped down to mean acts against `Abd al-Muttalib. His idea was to divert the attention from the arrest and punishment of the murderers. But `Abd al-Muttalib would not give up easily. He pursued the matter actively and made the criminals give one hundred camels to the successors of the deceased as a compensation for his blood. He also recovered a major portion of the wares of the Jew from the culprits and handed back to his people. Whatever was the shortfall in the value of the goods, he paid to the victims from his own pocket

It was during the time of `Abd al-Muttalib that Najashi, the commander of Abyssinian forces and Abrahah ibn Ashram, the ruler of Yemen attacked Makkah and tried to demolish the Ka`bah. This was a very trying time for the people of Makkah. On the one hand, there were well-organized forces and on the other, there was neither numerical strength nor that of materials. When the Yemeni forces camped outside Makkah, the hearts of the people shivered. The people of Makkah fled towards the hills, ravines and the wildernesses along with their women and children. The sangfroid that `Abd-al-Muttalib showed at this trying moment is proverbial. He was neither scared of the enemy hordes nor did he fly from his home and hearth. Some persons suggested to him to leave Makkah for some days. But he replied with full confidence

Neither shall I leave Allah's Place (the Haram) nor shall I seek help from anyone but
[Allah!]{41}

Around this time, Abrahah sent some of his men into Makkah to plunder. They captured two hundred camels belonging to `Abd al-Muttalib. When he learned about it, he went to Abrahah. Abrahah was much impressed with his personality and received him with respect. He came down from the throne and made `Abd al-Muttalib squat near him. He asked him of the purpose of his visit. `Abd al-Muttalib said that Abrahah's men had taken away his camels that must be returned to him. Abrahah crossed his brow and said that he thought the ostensible purpose of the visit would be to seek the protection of the Ka`bah. To the contrary, he was worried for the safety of a few camels! `Abd al-Muttalib replied

I am the owner of those camels, and I am demanding for them! There is One owner of
[that (August) House who will Himself protect it!]{۴۲

Abraham was much impressed with this bold reply and ordered `Abd al-Muttalib's camels to be returned. `Abd al-Muttalib brought the camels back to Makkah and left them in the precincts of the Ka`bah putting signs on them that they were a trust for the Holy Place! His spirit in doing this was that if the enemy hurt the animals, he would
.suffer the wrath of the Almighty

The courage demonstrated by `Abd-al-Muttalib at that time is a proof of his absolute faith in Allah. He not only reclaimed his animals from the enemy but also expressed his
.Faith in the Almighty's Justice instead of groveling in the presence of the tyrant

After this conversation with `Abd-al-Muttalib, Abraham felt some pangs of fear and he wanted to think twice before attacking the Ka`bah. He had long conclave with his advisers and on their encouragement, hesitantly, moved towards the Ka`bah. On the other side, there was none to confront the enemy. Only `Abd al-Muttalib stood firm at the entrance of the Ka`bah and said, "O Allah! This is Your House and only You are its Protector!" While Abraham moved towards the Ka`bah with his foul intent, dense black clouds rose on the western horizon. When one looked at the sight with intent, it was discovered that a huge school of birds clutched small pebbles in their claws. This armed force of nature challenged the hordes of Abraham. They dropped the pebbles with good care that no innocent was hurt and no enemy of Allah escaped! Neither the iron hood nor the chain mails were of any use against these pebbles. In no time, the entire army was decimated. Abraham escaped with his life but succumbed on the way
.to Yemen

This was the period when the people's hearts were overpowered by the dark clouds of idolatry. They used to call only for their help in times of need. But from his tongue came the name of neither al-Lat nor Hubal nor Manat nor al-`Uzza. But he appealed only to Allah and put his trust in His Succor! It was the effect of `Abd al-Muttalib's courage that during the battle of Hunayn, the Prophet (a.s) remained steadfast despite paucity of men and materials and referring to his descent from `Abd al-Muttalib he said

!I am the Prophet without an iota of falsehood in it

!I am the scion of `Abd-al-Muttalib

The purpose of saying this was that `Abd al-Muttalib remained steadfast when Abrahah attacked Ka`bah with his hordes and in the same manner he, `Abd al-Muttalib's son, would remain steadfast despite the large numbers of the enemy in the battle of Hunayn. This statement of the Prophet (a.s) not only proves the valor and tenacity of `Abd-al-Muttalib, but also certifies the fact that he was a monotheist and believer of Allah! If he were an infidel and polytheist, the Prophet (a.s) would not have referred to and praised him at the time when he was himself confronted with huge numbers of infidels and polytheists in the battle of Hunayn. The pages of history bear evidence that `Abd al-Muttalib, never in his life, worshipped any idol nor ate the meat of animals sacrificed to propitiate the idols. He never adopted polytheist ways in life. He was a monotheist and believed in the Day of Reckoning. Therefore, `Allamah Halabi writes that a tyrant and ferocious person from Syria during the time of `Abd al-Muttalib, had received no punishment for his acts of omission and commission during his life. `Abd al-Muttalib said that a tyrant does not die until he is punished for his :tyranny. He said

By Allah! After this transient world, there is a Hereafter! There the virtuous will be
[rewarded and the evil punished!].[۴۳]

:Al-Mas`ūdi writes

Abd al-Muttalib used to teach his children to be generous. He advised them to be` hospitable with the guests. He advised them to keep an eye on the Hereafter and
[believe in the Day of Judgment].[۴۴]

With his belief in God's creation and the Hereafter, he was a staunch follower of the faith of Ibrahim (a.s) and strictly observed its norms. He used to keep himself occupied in circumambulating the Ka`bah and remembered Allah while alone and in the company of people. In the month of Ramadan he used to go into seclusion in the
:cave of Hira' to spend time in the thought of Almighty Allah! Ibn al-Athir writes

It was he who was the first to spend nights in the cave of Hira' in prayer. At the commencement of the month of Ramadan he climbed the hill of Hira' and used to
[distribute food to the poor every day of the month].[۴۵]

Not only he molded his own life ideally, but also he acted as a reformer for the society and introduced many long lasting reforms. These may be termed as the precursor of
:the later Islamic society. Therefore, `Allamah Halabi writes

He was the initiator of such reforms that many of them have been narrated in the
[Holy Qur'an and many are a part of the Prophet's Traditions].[۴۶]

Allamah Majlisi and other biographers have written that the Prophet (a.s) has said` that `Abd al-Muttalib introduced five practices prior to the advent of Islam that
:continued in thereafter

He declared marrying of father's spouses or widows by sons as taboo. The Holy Qur'an says, "Those whom your fathers and grandfathers had married, you must not marry".

He distributed a fifth of hoards of treasures discovered to the poor and needy. Allah says in the Holy Book, "You should know that a fifth of the wealth that you got as booty is for Allah".

When `Abd al-Muttalib rediscovered and excavated the Spring of Zamzam, he termed it as Siqayat al-Hajj (Water Provision for the Hajjis). The Holy Qur'an has [mentioned this very term].

He fixed a compensation of hundred camels as equivalent to blood money for a murder. Islam continued to maintain this compensation to be made to the successors of a murdered person.

The Quraysh had not fixed the numbers of circumambulations of the Ka`bah during pilgrimage. `Abd al-Muttalib prescribed seven rounds for this purpose, and Islam continued the practice. `Allamah Majlisi writes about the Prophet's saying about this

Either `Abd al-Muttalib introduced these reforms on the basis of a vision or revived the practices that were current in the Ibrahimi Society that the Quraysh had (carelessly) abandoned.

Besides these reforms, `Abd al-Muttalib introduced such laws that their importance cannot be denied. Ibn Wadih Al-Ya`qūbi writes

Abd al-Muttalib promulgated rules for Fulfillment of Offerings, Severing the hand of Thieves, Drawing of Lots, Invocation of God's curse on the false party (Mubahalāh), Entertainment of Guests, Legitimate Livelihood and respect for the Venerable Months of the Calendar. He prohibited slaying of daughters and marriage with certain relations. He banned intoxicants and adultery. He urged the Hajjis to use fair earnings for the purpose of the Hajj. It was the custom of the Arabs that they used to circumambulate the Ka`bah in a naked condition. If the Quraysh gave some clothes

to a person, he would cover his body, or else he would go round with naked body. He banned this bad practice. The same is the Commandment of Islam: "Dress properly at every act of prayer." There was a practice with the Arabs that after the Hajj they used to enter their homes through the back doors. He ordered them to use the front doors
".for this purpose. Islam ordered the same, "Enter your homes through the doors

These are reforms indicative of a person who was fully aware of the teachings of the past Prophets. Although he was himself not a prophet, he is viewed with great reverence for his reforms and achievements. He is remembered as Ibrahim al-Thani
or Ibrahim the Second

He was similar in many aspects to his ancestor, Ibrahim (a.s). The age attained by him and number of children he had were almost the same as Ibrahim (a.s). Ibrahim (a.s) had thirteen sons while `Abd al-Muttalib had ten sons and six daughters. In habits, too they were very similar. Helping the poor and feeding the hungry was their wont. They loved to entertain the guests. This is the reason that Ibrahim (a.s) is remembered as Abū-al-Adyaf and `Abd al-Muttalib is termed as al-Fayyad (Generous) and Mut`im al-tayr (The Feeder of the Birds). As Ibrahim (a.s) had excavated the well, Shaba, on the Egypt-Syria Highway, `Abd-al-Muttalib excavated the Zamzam to its pristine glory. Ibrahim was the first to have congenital gray hair, and was called Shaybah. So was `Abd al-Muttalib. In himself, Ibrahim (a.s) was an Ummah (a whole nation) as Allah says, "Ibrahim alone is one Ummah." Similarly, with his unique personality `Abd-al-Muttalib has been called an Ummah. The Prophet of
Islam (a.s) says

Allah will raise my grandfather, `Abd-al-Muttalib, like the prophets and noble kings
[that he will be individually counted as an Ummah.]^[٤٨]

Both were unique in their disposition. Therefore, the patience and courage displayed by Ibrahim (a.s) in his readiness to sacrifice his beloved son, Isma`il (a.s), and the same determination shown by `Abd al-Muttalib to prepare himself to sacrifice his son
: `Abdullah is proverbial. Therefore, Imam al-Rida (a.s) says

The firm determination with which Ibrahim prepared to sacrifice his son Isma`il, the same determination was manifested by `Abd al-Muttalib in preparing to sacrifice his [son `Abdullah]. [۴۹

The story of this event goes like this. At the time when `Abd al-Muttalib was excavating the Zamzam, he had only one son who helped him with the task. He prayed at that time that if Allah gave him ten sons, he would sacrifice one of them in His way. His prayer was answered and he had ten sons: `Abdullah, al-Zubayr, Abū-Talib, `Abbas, Dirar, Hamzah, Al-Muqawwam, Abū-Lahab, al-Harith and Al-Ghaydaq. Now he wished to fulfill his oath. Therefore, he gathered all his ten sons and told them about his oath. He asked them as to who among them was willing to offer himself for sacrifice. They looked at each other in surprise and then bowed down their heads. They said that whosoever their father chose to sacrifice, they were all willing to abide by his decision. When he was satisfied that his sons were willing for the sacrifice, he went near the Ka`bah and drew a lot putting down the names of all the ten sons. The lot came in the name of his youngest son, `Abdullah. Now `Abd al-Muttalib was ready to sacrifice his beloved son. `Abdullah was the favorite of everyone at home and they objected to this sacrifice. `Abd al-Muttalib said that fulfilling the oath was very important for him although it was not easy to kill his own son with his hands. The sons of `Abd al-Muttalib and the important persons of the Quraysh asked him to draw the lot once again when, perhaps, the name of an elder son might come up. The lot was drawn a second time, and again it was `Abdullah's name. `Ikrimah ibn `Amir said, "O Chief of the Quraysh! If you sacrifice your son now, it might become a custom and practice with the people to sacrifice their sons! You will be known as the originator of this undesirable custom. It will be discreet if you abstain from fulfilling your oath! You might as well consult a kahin in the matter." Everyone agreed with `Ikrimah's suggestion. Therefore, they approached a parson. After hearing the case, she asked as to how much was the blood money for one life in their community. She was told that it was equal to the value of ten camels. She asked them to draw lot in the name of `Abdullah and ten camels. They drew the lot and the result was again for `Abdullah. She asked them to continue to draw the lot repeatedly with ten camels. Even after a hundred camels the lot draws in the name of `Abdullah, he may be sacrificed. When

the quantity of camels reached to a hundred, the draw came out for the animals! All the people were delighted but ` Abd al-Muttalib was not satisfied. He wanted the lot to be drawn again. Even then, the draw was for the sacrifice of the camels. To further confirm the matter, the draw was made a third time and it was again for the sacrifice of the camels. Now, a hundred camels were slaughtered and the meat was distributed to the populace. ` Abd al-Muttalib and his children did not partake of this :meat. Ibn Sa` d writes

[Neither `Abd al-Muttalib nor did any of his sons eat the meat of these camels. [۱۵]

While this sacrifice enhanced the value of human life ten folds, it also was an example of determination, steadfastness, spirit of fulfillment of oath and highest degree of obedience of the parents by the sons. The courage manifested by `Abd al-Muttalib during this episode is unparalleled except for the courage of Ibrahim (a.s) who did not hesitate for a moment in his preparedness to sacrifice his beloved son, Isma`il, in obedience to Allah's Command. The sons too, in both the instances, were more than willing to comply. Isma`il (a.s) was a lad of thirteen years and `Abdullah eleven years when they were asked to make the supreme sacrifice. They were neither afraid of putting their heads under the sharp knives nor were they worried about dying in that manner. Because of this spirit both of them are remembered with the sobriquet of "Dhabih" or those who willingly submitted to be slain with the knife! The Prophet of Allah (a.s) proudly said, "I am the son of the two 'dhabihs'" Here he meant his ancestor, Isma`il (a.s) and his father `Abdullah

Allah gave to `Abdullah that through him was to be born the Chief of the Prophets, Muhammad (a.s). But his son was posthumously born and `Abdullah did not have the good fortune of setting eyes on him. After the event of the Camels, `Abdullah died in al-Madinah while returning from a business trip to Syria. `Abd al-Muttalib was shattered with this loss. But after a while when `Abdullah's son Muhammad (a.s) was born, smiles came back on his face. With great affection, he took a round of the newborn's cradle. He lifted the baby in his arms and brought him near the Ka`bah. He prayed there for the child's happiness and prosperity. On the seventh day of the birth he complied with the custom of `aqiqah (the naming ceremony) and gave the name of Muhammad (a.s) to the child! The child had lost the father before his birth, but his mother too did not live for long. When he was only six years, his mother, Aminah, too passed away. Now `Abdullah's orphan was totally in the care and tutelage of his grandfather, `Abd al-Muttalib. It seems the patriarch dedicated his life for the upbringing of this beloved grandson. He always kept the child with himself. He had made it a practice that unless Muhammad (a.s) joined the spread, none else would start eating nor would he himself touch a morsel

Muhammad's manners and habits were so gentle that people were always attracted towards him and they thought that the child would achieve greatness in his life. The experienced `Abd al-Muttalib too gauged the qualities of head and heart in the child. Sometimes he even expressed these thoughts about the child. One day, as usual, the carpet was spread near the Ka`bah for `Abd al-Muttalib. For some reason he was delayed in arriving there. The chiefs of Quraysh and their sons were already seated around the carpet. Muhammad (a.s), the child, happened to pass that way and, without any hesitation occupied the place of his grandfather. The custom was that even the sons of `Abd al-Muttalib or the chiefs of the tribes were not allowed to take that seat. At that moment `Abd al-Muttalib arrived. Some persons tried to move the ,son of `Abdullah from where he was sitting. `Abd al-Muttalib sharply told them

Let my son sit on my carpet! There is a desire in his heart to rule a great domain! Very [soon, he will attain an elevated position!﴿٥١﴾

The Prophet (a.s) manifested glimpses of spiritual greatness, as well, from his very early days. It was because of these manifestations that `Abd al-Muttalib used to make him pray during the times of calamities and difficulties. He used to pray for rainfall propitiating Allah in the name of Muhammad (a.s). One year there was no rainfall in Makkah and they faced acute drought. People came to `Abd al-Muttalib and beseeched him to pray for rain. `Abd al-Muttalib made Muhammad (a.s), who was seven years old then, climb on his shoulder and climbed on the Mount Qubays to pray for rains. While returning after the prayer, they had hardly reached near the Ka`bah, when dark clouds gathered and rained so copiously that the valleys were overflowing :with water. At that time, Raqiqah bint Sayfi wrote a few couplets, one of which reads

Allah has quenched our town with the prayers of Shaybat-al-Hamd, otherwise we .were parched and rains had not come for a long period

Abd al-Muttalib naturally loved Muhammad (a.s) for being his son's posthumous` offspring, but the real fountainhead of this love was the knowledge acquired from men of learning and religious leaders that the time had come when the last of the line of the Prophets (a.s) would appear. The characteristics of this Prophet he derived from the men of learning they were all manifested by the orphan of `Abdullah. He had arrived at the conviction that Muhammad (a.s) was the Prophet to be annunciated in the near future and was the last of the chain of the Chosen Messengers of Allah. He therefore expressed about this to the king of Yemen, Sayf ibn Dhiyazan. This meeting has been chronicled by almost all the historians of that period. The meeting took place when the King of Yemen delivered his realm from the clutches of the king of Abyssinia. When this news reached Makkah, `Abd al-Muttalib told the chiefs of Quraysh that they must take a delegation to Sayf to felicitate him on his victory. They all agreed and, in the leadership of `Abd al-Muttalib a delegation of twenty-seven members was constituted. In this delegation, the important persons were Umayyah ibn `Abd-Shams, Asad ibn `Abd al-`Uzza, `Abdullah ibn Jad`an, Wahab ibn `Abd-Manaf and Qasi ibn `Abd al-Dar. When this delegation arrived at the Ghamdan Palace of Sayf, `Abd al-Muttalib, as the leader of the delegation, sought permission for presenting an address of felicitation. Sayf said that if he thought that he was of a status to present an address to a king, he had the permission to proceed! `Abd al-Muttalib presented a few words of felicitation and with such good diction and delivery that Sayf was delighted and appreciated his assertive delivery, the Qarashi skill at oratory and Hashemite style of speaking. The king inquired, "Who are you?" He replied, "I am `Abd al-Muttalib, the son of Hashim!" Hearing this, Sayf caught hold of his hand and asked him to ascend the throne and sit beside him. He said, "Then, `Abd al-Muttalib, you are my nephew!" He smiled in the affirmative. The mother of `Abd al-Muttalib was Salma bint `Amr from the family of Qaytan and Sayf too was from the same family. Because of this relationship, Sayf called him his nephew. The Arabs consider all the women of their tribe as sisters and their children as nephews and nieces. Sayf treated `Abd al-Muttalib with utmost courtesy and respect. He accommodated the other members of

the delegation too in his guesthouses for important personages. During his stay in Yemen, Sayf called ` Abd al-Muttalib in private and told him that he had information of such an important thing that it will be a matter of great pride for you and your clan. Therefore, I thought it necessary to inform you about it. He said that in Tihamah a child will be born, or he is already born, who will have the seal of Prophethood on his back between the shoulders. His name and his Faith shall last until the world exists. One of his main characteristics is that he would lose his parents and his grandfather and uncle will give him upbringing. I have a hunch that you are his grandfather! ` Abd al-Muttalib who, through predictions and revealed books, knew about this, hearing the same from Sayf prostrated in thankfulness to Allah. Then he told Sayf that what he had said had confirmed his conviction. He said that the boy mentioned by him was already born and he manifests all the characteristics that he had indicated. He is posthumous born and he lost his mother in early childhood. His grandfather, an uncle and I are his guardians. Sayf said, “Then, he must be guarded against the mischief of
”the Jews who might attempt to kill him

When the time for the return of the delegation came nigh, Sayf presented to everyone with slaves, maids, gold, silver, amber, camels and royal raiment to `Abd al-Muttalib he gave ten times more than the gifts he gave to the others. His companions viewed this with much envy. He said, "O Quraysh! You should not be jealous of the gifts received by me. They are all transitory. There will be reason for you to envy what is in store and will be talked about in all places and the coming generations too will be proud of! When they asked as to what the thing is? He said

[After a while, you will learn about it yourself.]

The physiognomists of Arabia had, after looking at Muhammad's face had informed `Abd al-Muttalib about his great future and the name and fame that he would achieve. Therefore, once, a few persons of Banū-Mudlaj told him

You must take good care of this child because no footprints other than his match exactly with the footprints of Ibrahim at the Maqam Ibrahim (The Place of Ibrahim in the Ka`bah

Hearing these words, `Abd al-Muttalib looked towards Abū-Talib and said, "Hear what they say!" He must have felt the need to draw Abū-Talib's attention because he must have realized that soon this great responsibility of caring for the child would fall on his shoulders

Abd al-Muttalib had seen more than a hundred summers. But even in his old age his face was daunting, his back straight and he used to dye his hair. But in his last days, his vision had gone weak. Despite this, he did not like to carry a staff for moving around. Once while going round the Ka`bah someone dashed into him. He asked who the person was. He was told that it was someone from Banū-Bakr. He said jovially, "I have defective eye-sight! But I am sure he can see properly! Now I might need a staff to balance myself!" Then he added, "If I keep a long staff in my hand, I may find it uneasy to carry. And carrying a short staff would force me to bend down that I would consider demeaning for me!" When his sons heard this, they offered that in future one of them would remain with him and provide him support for going wherever he wished to go. Therefore, he used to move around with his hand on the shoulder of one

.of his sons

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When time weakened his body, he fell ill and was bed-ridden. In this state if he had any care, it was for the Orphan of `Abdullah. He worried about his future upbringing. In his last throes he asked for Abū-Talib. When Abū-Talib came near him, he said, "I make a will to you about the Orphan of `Abdullah. Do not neglect his care and upbringing." Ibn Sa`d writes

When `Abd al-Muttalib's time of death arrived, he advised Abū-Talib about the care [and protection of Muhammad (a.s)].[۵۳]

When he issued instructions to Abū-Talib about the care of the child, he took his last breath and passed away peacefully. With his death gloom descended on Makkah. Naturally, every eye in the place was wet at this great loss, but the Orphan of `Abdullah, who was only eight years old at the time, was extremely sad. He received the love and affection of both his parents only from his grandfather. Seeing him dead, he could not control his emotions. Tears flowed from his eyes. When the dead body was being taken in the bier after giving a bath in water and camphor water and wrapping in Yemeni Linen, he followed crying all the way. He returned home after his beloved grandfather was interred

The people of Makkah were very sad at the demise of their benefactor and chief. The poets penned sad requiems. For many days, trade came to a standstill in Makkah. :` Allamah Halabi writes

There was not such grieving at the death of anyone, as there was on the demise of [`Abd al-Muttalib. For many days, trading was suspended in the bazaar of Makkah.[۵۴]

He died in Makkah at the age of one hundred and twenty years, after eight years of
the Event of the Elephant

The eminence achieved by Hashim and `Abd al-Muttalib in this great lineage, was reached by none else. The headstrong Arab tribes recognized their superiority. The author of al-`Iqd al-Farid writes that once the Prophet (a.s) was traveling with `Ali (a.s) and Abū-Bakr. During their journey, they reached near a hamlet. Abū-Bakr went forward and asked the people about the tribe they belonged to. They said they were from the Tribe of Rabi`ah. Abū-Bakr asked them about the branch of Rabi`ah they were from. They said, "Dhuhā Akbar (the grand)!" He asked, "Was `Awf ibn Muhlim one of you?" They said, "No!" He asked, "Was Jassas ibn Murrah from their tribe?" They replied, "No!" Thus when they replied in negative to many of his queries, Abū-Bakr said that in that event they were not from the Dhuhā Akbar and were Dhuhā Asghar (the minor). Hearing this, a lad from that hamlet, Dhaghfal ibn Hanzalah, stood up and asked Abū-Bakr, "From which tribe do you come?" He replied, "From the Quraysh!" The boy asked, "From which branch?" He replied, "I am the progeny of Taym ibn Murrah." The youth asked, "Was Qasi ibn Kalab, who gathered the scattered lot in Makkah, one of you?" Abū-Bakr replied, "No!" The boy asked, "Was Hashim one
of you about whom the poet Matrūd ibn Ka`b al-Khuza`i has said

The esteemed Hashim put bread in the soup and feasted the people of Makkah on it
when they were starving for food

Abū-Bakr replied, “No!” The youth asked, “Was `Abd al-Muttalib one of you? On his spread, even the birds used to be guests! His visage was shining like a lamp in the nights” Abū-Bakr replied, “No!” He asked, “Are you the progeny of the people who used to quench the thirst of the Hajjis?” He replied, “No!” The youth wanted to question him the more, but Abū-Bakr cut the conversation short and went to the Prophet (a.s) and repeated the conversation to him. The Prophet (a.s) smiled and kept quiet.

This incident proves that the Arab tribes attached a lot of importance to the Hashemite family. A descent through Qasi, Hashim and `Abd al-Muttalib was of prime importance for them. Even those families that had only the name of Qasi in their chronology and not of Hashim and `Abd al-Muttalib were held in lesser esteem. The eminence that Allah had bestowed on the Hashemite and Muttalibite offspring has not been enjoyed by any other Arab family. Theirs is a tree that is free of any chronological pollution. Therefore, the Prophet of Islam (a.s) has said

Allah created Isma`il (a.s) as the progeny of Ibrahim (a.s) and from Isma`il (a.s) Banū-Kinānah and from Banū-Kinānah the Quraysh and from the Quraysh the Banū-Hashim and from them I was selected. [٥٥]

Ali (a.s) too is a part of this eminent group because he and the prophet (a.s) are of the same descent. They have both their descent from Hashim and `Abd al-Muttalib. `Abd al-Muttalib had, from various wives, ten sons. Of these ten brothers, `Abdullah and Abū-Talib were born to the same mother. Their mother was Fatimah bint `Amr al-Makhzūmiyyah. `Abdullah was the father of the Prophet (a.s) and Abū-Talib the father of `Ali (a.s). `Ali's chronology joins with the Prophet (a.s) with their grandfather `Abd al-Muttalib. On account of this, both are Muttalibite and Hashemite and Qarashi by descent.

Therefore, there is the same ancestral eminence in `Ali (a.s) as that of the Prophet .(a.s). Another eminence of `Ali (a.s) is that his father was Shaykh al-Batha', Abū-Talib

The chronological chart

The chronological chart of `Ali (a.s) is `Ali ibn (son of) Abi-Talib ibn `Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hashim ibn `Abd-Manaf ibn Qasi ibn Kalab ibn Murrah ibn Ka`b ibn Lu'ay ibn Ghalib ibn Fihri ibn Malik ibn al-Nadr ibn Kinanah ibn Khuzaymah ibn Mudrak ibn Ilyas .ibn Mudar ibn Nizar ibn Ma`d ibn Adnan

The history of Arabia bears witness that all the personalities of this chronological tree have been distinguished persons of their times. They were the followers of the Abraham Faith, progressive in outlook and possessors of spotless character. During the dark, idolatrous times, they were the torch-bearers of the monotheistic Abraham Faith. They endeavored to uphold justice and human rights. They stood firm against the elements of trouble and promoted brotherhood, humanity and thoughtfulness in people. They encouraged trading activity to promote economic growth. They always took up the cause of the weak and down trodden. They hosted the Hajjis coming from far away places for the annual ritual. These were the traits that made them favorites .of the populace

Brief profiles of these personalities are given here to acquaint the reader with their .greatness

Adnan ibn Adad`

He was an illustrious personality in the progeny of Qaydar the son of Isma`il (a.s). The progeny of Qaydar preferred to stay on in Hijaz. `Adnan too was born in Hijaz. The tribes of Banū-Isma`il trace their ancestry to him. This is the reason they are referred to as the Family of `Adnan or the Family of Mudar. He was a handsome person and from the very childhood, he manifested exemplary character. His face reflected his intelligence and fortitude. His forehead was radiant and the brightness of his face .manifested that Divine Light was to take birth in his progeny

He was the noble leader of men of his time and chivalrous with his sword. He always held important positions in the Arab society. Besides the people of Batha' and Yathrib, the peripatetic Bedouins of the desert too assembled under his standard. To honor the felicity of the Ka`bah he ordered making of a cloth cover for the structure and personally installed it there. The historian, Al-Buladhari, writes

[Adnan was the first to provide a cover to the Ka`bah.]

When the Caledonian monarch, Nebuchadnezzar, proceeded towards the Arab land after capturing Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem), he attacked Hijaz when Adnan resisted his hordes to the best of his capabilities. But his men, who were smaller in number, started fleeing. He could not contend with the enemy all alone or with a few dedicated men. Therefore, he felt it discreet to leave Hijaz and head for Yemen with his son Adnan and settled down in Yemen and died there only. He left behind ten sons. The best known among his sons was Ma`d

Ma`d ibn Adnan

His mother's name was Mehdū bint (daughter of) al-Lahm who was from the tribe of Banū-Jarham. He resided at Yemen with his father and had his upbringing there. When Nebuchadnezzar expired and peace returned to Arabia, the tribes invited Ma`d to return to Hijaz. They deputed one emissary to Yemen particularly to make this request. He proceeded to Hijaz with this person. It has also been recorded that when Nebuchadnezzar established his sway over Arabia, Armiya took Ma`d along to Syria. When unrest subsided after Nebuchadnezzar's death, he returned to Hijaz and assumed the chieftaincy of the Arab State. Al-Ya`qūbi writes from the progeny of Isma`il (a.s) none attained the status reached by Ma`d. He was held in the highest esteem for his forthrightness and excellent character. Like his father, he was chivalrous and an expert in the martial arts of the time. He never showed his back to an adversary in battle and faced the ignominy of defeat. The author of Tarikh al-Khamis writes

[With whomsoever he battled, he was victorious.]۞

He was the first to innovate mounting of a saddle on the camel's back. He also established the boundary of the precincts of the Ka`bah erecting stones there

Ma`d had four sons—Qada`ah, Nizar, Qanas and Iyad. Qada`ah was the eldest son. Ma`d was popularly known as Abū-Qada`ah. Of the four sons, Nizar was endowed with superior qualities

Nizar ibn Ma`d

His mother was Mu`anah bint Jawsham who was from the tribe of Banū-Jarham. The birth of Nizar brought immense happiness to his father Ma`d that he fathomed from the radiant forehead of the baby that this child will be the progenitor of the Prophet of Islam (a.s) and the inheritor of the traditions of Ibrahim (a.s). To celebrate the birth Ma`d slaughtered a thousand camels and feasted the tribes of Arabia on a grand scale. He addressed the child thus

[Looking at your status, I consider this sacrifice too meager.]۞

Because Nizar means 'few' and 'little', the child was named Nizar. He was unique in his good looks and intellect. Diyarbakri writes

He excelled in his good looks, intelligence and wisdom amongst the people of those times

On the death of Ma`d the responsibility of leading the tribes of Arabia shifted to Nizar. He discharged his duties with great sense of responsibility. He was the first to invent the Arabic script. In his last days, he lived with his sons in the wilderness. When he felt that the time for his death was nigh, he moved to Makkah. The author of the Tarikh al-Khamis writes that Nizar was interred at Dhat al-Jaysh, a place near al-Madinah.

.He left behind four sons Rabi`ah, Anmar, Mudar and Iyad

His mother's name was Sawdah. He was attached to the society of Ibrahim and a follower of the Hanafiyyah of Prophet Abraham. He always advised others to follow this faith. The Prophet of Islam (a.s) too confirmed about this in the following words

[Both Rabi` ah and Mudar followed the Faith of Ibrahim (a.s)].[۴

:In another tradition, he said

[Do not talk ill of Mudar, he was Muslim!][۵

Mudar was unique in generosity and sagaciousness. In all respects, he was superior to his brothers. Although all the four sons of Nizar were known for their intelligence, Mudar had special faculties of comprehension, far sightedness and delving into the minds of men. Buladhari writes that when Nizar died, Rabi` ah and Mudar decided to go to the court of the ruler of the time to present their cases to be nominated the chief of the tribe. Mudar was thus preparing for the journey, but Rabi` ah quietly preceded him and reached the court. He took advantage of impressing the ruler and coming into his good books. After some days Mudar too arrived at the court, but on account of his quiet nature he was unable to get closer to the king. When the time for the return of the brothers arrived, the king asked them to request for what they wished to have from him. Mudar had a feeling that Rabi` ah would get a preference over him. He therefore told the king that whatever he gave to him, he should give the twice of that to Rabi` ah because he was the elder of the two brothers. The king agreed to accede to this request. He now asked Mudar to ask what he wanted. Mudar asked the king to remove one of his eyes. The king was initially surprised at this strange request. But after brooding over it for a while, he smiled and said, "You need not worry, I shall give equitable treatment to both of you! I shall not give preference to one brother over the other." This is an example of the wisdom of Mudar that he conveyed his thoughts to the king in his own subtle way! In this manner, he maintained his status and dignity

In addition to his wisdom, Mudar had a sonorous voice and even animals used to be impressed with his good voice. Once he fell down from the back of a camel and his hand was bruised badly. Because of the pain, he cried “Oh! My hand! Oh! My hand!” Hearing this, the camels grazing in the neighborhood gathered around him. While riding on the camels he used to sing. Hearing him sing, the camels used to jog along faster. This promoted the practice of singing of camels, rajz or martial songs among the Arab tribes. The words of the rajz and the jog of the camel are very well coordinated! The faster the rider sings the rajz, the faster the camel will trot

Muhammad ibn `Abdullah al-Arzaqi writes that Mudar reconstructed the Ka`bah following its rebuilding by Banū-Jarham. Mudar made a will and testament to his sons as follows

One who sows the seed of discontent will reap shame and disappointment. Excellent good is one that is done without delay! Encourage your psyche to accept the unpleasant things that might reform you. Reject those pleasurable things that might be the cause of harm to you. Patience and control of desires draw a line between [good and evil].

Ilyas ibn Mudar

His given name was Habib. When he was born, Mudar was old and feeble. Therefore, he started calling the child as Ilyas. His mother’s name was Rabab bint Haydah. After Mudar he became the head of the tribe. He was remembered with the titles of Kabir al-Qawm (the chief of the folk) and Sayyid al-`Ashirah (the master of the clan). He was highly respected in the Ibrahimi Clan and his life was a mirror of the Hanafiyyah of Prophet Abraham. Later on, the Prophet of Islam (a.s) bore witness to his Faith in the following words

[Do not talk ill of Ilyas. He was a possessor of (strong) Faith.]^Y

The popularity that he achieved with his exemplary behavior has no peer in his period.
:Diyarbakri writes about him

The Arabs used to respect Ilyas the same way as they respected Luqman, scholars,
.and intellectuals of that caliber

The Arab tribes had total faith in his sagacity and all the disputes between the tribes were brought to him for arbitration. His greatest achievement is that he revived the fading Ibrahimi Faith and banished the defects that had entered in its practice. He made sincere efforts to make the progeny of Isma`il to follow the Faith of Ibrahim.
:Al-Ya`qūbi writes

Ilyas was the first person to point out that the progeny of Isma`il had abandoned the traditions (Sunnah) of their forbears. He performed such good acts that after Udd none in the Progeny of Isma`il had done. He turned the progeny of Isma`il towards
[the practices of their forbears to an extent that they all revived in totality.]^Λ

Ilyas suffered from the ailment of tuberculosis. His wife, Layla bint Halwan, known as Khandaf, resolved that if Ilyas succumbed to his illness, she would spend the rest of her life in the wilderness and would never sit under a shade. When Ilyas expired, she left to the forest and spent her time crying and wailing for him. Particularly on Thursdays, she used to sing requiems in her husband's memory from sunrise to
.sunset. That was the day when Ilyas had died

Ilyas left behind three sons: `Amr, `Amir and `Umayr. These three sons, in that sequence, were known as Mudrikah, tabaqah and Qamhah respectively. Ilyas' sons and the tribes under them are known as Banū-Khandaf

Mudrikah ibn Ilyas

His real name was `Amr and the patronymic (kunya) was Abul-Hudhayl. His mother's name was Layla bint Halwan al-Qada`iyyah. The reason why Mudrikah was given this name was that once his father Ilyas went with his family into the wilderness. When they halted during the journey, one rabbit came into the midst of the camels. This disturbed the camels `Amr chased the rabbit and caught it. Thus, he was named Mudrikah or the "one who got it". There is another belief that he was given this name because he got all the good characteristics of his forbears. Therefore, :Diyarbakri says

His name is Mudrikah because he acquired all the privileges of his father and [grandfather.]

He was the keeper of the high ideals of his ancestors and the inheritor of their greatness. Thus, he achieved the position of eminence in the Arab society. Al-Ya`qūbi :writes

Mudrikah ibn Ilyas was the leader of the progeny of Nizar and his eminence and [greatness was very much evident.]

.He left behind two sons: Hudhayl and Khuzaymah

Khuzaymah ibn Mudrikah

His kunyah was Abul-Asad and his mother was Salma bint Aslam al-Qada`iyyah. Following the Faith, Hanafiyyah of Prophet Abraham, has all along been the characteristic of this family. Like his ancestors, he too strictly followed the Faith of Ibrahim. In Arab lands, there was the custom of tribal suzerainty. For generations this family held this privilege. Al-Ya`qūbi writes that among the Arab rulers he held a very privileged position. The Arabs acknowledged his eminence. He left behind three sons:

Kinanaḥ ibn Khuzaymah

His kunyah was Abū-Nadr and his mother's name was Awanah bint Sa`d. He became the chief of the tribes of Arabia after Khuzaymah. He was a possessor of sterling qualities of the head and heart. He was so brilliant that it is difficult to assess his capabilities. The Arabs used to hold him in awe and respect because of his sagacity and generosity. `Allamah Halabi writes about him

Kinanaḥ was a revered person of high status and because of his erudition and [knowledge, the Arabs emulated him. [۱۱

The historians record about his generosity that he never ate his food alone. He always made it a point to have one or many guests at every meal. If he chanced to eat alone, he would imagine having a guest with him and after taking every morsel, he would put [another on a stone put near him

:The following are a few of his words of erudition and learning

Many faces create illusion with their outward good looks. Their appearance is something and the reality is something else! Judge the foul acts and do not go by the [deceptive appearance. Keep an eye on the character of persons! [۱۲

Nadr ibn Kinanaḥ

His real name was Qays. But because of his extreme good looks and the radiance of face, he was called Nadr the good looking! His kunyah was Abū-Yakhlud. His mother's name was al-Barra' bint Murr. Some historians are of the view that he was the first to be remembered with the title of Quraysh. They say that it is his progeny that later on came to be called the Quraysh. There are several reasons for remembering him as Quraysh. One reason being the men of his tribe being present at his table for the morning and evening meals. Because of these gatherings, he was given the title of Quraysh, which literally means one who likes to gather people. Another reason attributed to this title is that he had the habit of looking around for needy persons to provide them food and assistance. In the Arabic language Taqrish means to search and provide relief. Another belief is that he was once going by boat to some place. His

companions saw a very large sea animal, called Quraysh. He attacked the animal with his sword and killed it. The companions brought it to

Makkah and put it on the peak of the hill, Abū-Qubays. Whosoever saw this spectacle, he said, “al-Nadr has killed Quraysh!” He was given the title of Quraysh because of this event. A poet says

.Quraysh is an animal that lives in the sea

!Hence Quraysh is named thus after it

Abū-Hanifah al-Daynawari writes in al-Akhbar al-tiwal that when Alexander reached Makkah from Yemen during his campaign of conquests, he met Nizar ibn Kinanah. At that time in history, Banū-Khuza`ah were in control of Makkah. Alexander asked Banū-Khuza`ah to leave Makkah and go elsewhere. He entrusted the care and control of Makkah to Nizar and his brothers. He also gave gifts to the progeny of Ma`d ibn `Adnan

Nizar, on assuming reins, concentrated on moral and economic reforms. He kept a severe watch on lawless acts of people. He punished acts of tyranny on innocent people by men in powerful positions. Some historians record that he enforced a fine of one hundred camels on those who committed murders

He left behind two sons, Malik and Yakhlud. Some historians talk of another son by name Salt

Malik ibn Nadr

His kunyah was Abul-Harith. His mother was `Atikah bint `Adwan. Some historians mention her name as `Ikrishah. Some others have clarified that her given name was `Atikah and `Ikrishah the nickname. Malik, after his father Nizar, is considered the most popular and influential ruler of Arab lands. Diyarbakri writes about him

His name was Malik for the very reason that he was the possessor of influence and [control in Arabia...].[۱۳]

Malik was a follower of the Faith of Ibrahim. He meticulously followed the ways of his ancestors. He had three sons: Harith, Shayban and Fihir

Fihir ibn Malik

His kunyah or filial appellation was Abū-Ghalib and his mother was Jandalah bint Harith al-Jarhami. Some historians say that his given name was Quraysh and his title was Fihir and he only was the forbear of the tribe of Quraysh. Ibn `Abdarah writes

[The tribes of Quraysh trace their origin to Malik and do not go beyond him.]۱۴

He was endowed with great erudition and learning. He had achieved great heights in learning during the lifetime of his father. He succeeded to the position of his father on his demise. He was known for his bravery and valor. During his rule, Hassan ibn `Abd-Kalal of Yemen came with a huge army from Yemeni and Himyar and attacked Makkah. His intention was to demolish the Ka`bah, take its stones to Yemen and reconstruct the Ka`bah there. His plan was to demolish the sanctity of Makkah and make Yemen the place for Hajj Pilgrimage. When Fihir learnt about the intentions of the Yemeni army, he gathered the Arab tribes under his banner and entered the field of battle to confront Hassan's hordes. There was fierce fighting between the two armies. Fihir lost one of his sons, Harith, during this battle. In the end, the Yemenis were comprehensively defeated. Hassan was taken prisoner and was released after three years on paying a huge ransom. On the way to Yemen he died. This was how the Nature destroyed the enemy of Ka`bah and its keeper emerged victorious

Among Malik's words of wisdom, his advice to Ghalib, his son, about adopting frugal ways is worth mentioning

The little wealth that you have in your hands is better than huge hoards that might [reduce your respect (in the society)].[١٥]

.Fihr had four sons: Ghalib, Muharib, Harith and Asad

Ghalib ibn Fihr

His patronymic was Abū-Taym and his mother was Layla bint Harith. He succeeded as ruler of the tribes of Arabia after his father's death. His reign too was highly successful. He had two sons: Taym and Lu'ay

Lu'ay ibn Ghalib

The name Lu'ay is derived from La'y that means radiance and brightness. His kunyah was Abū-Ka`b and his mother was `Atikah bint Yakhlud He became the ruler of Arabia after his father's death. He dug a well outside the Ka`bah that was called Aysarah. The locals and the visitors to Makkah used its water to quench their thirst.

.Lu'ay had four sons: Ka`b, `Amir, Samah and `Awf

Ka`b ibn Lu'ay

His kunyah was Abū-Musays and his mother was Mawiyah bint Ka`b al-Khuza`iyah. He was known for his exemplary character. He used to provide succor to the oppressed. He was the most respected person of his times. A new calendar was commenced with his death that was current until the Year of the Elephant (am al-fil) came into vogue. This proves the popularity that he had enjoyed. Generally, an Arab calendar originated only when a highly eminent person expired or an event of great importance had taken place. This calendar was current for five hundred and twenty years. This was the intervening period between his death and the Event of the Feel or the Elephant. Prior to Ka`b, the Arabs used to call Friday as Aruba. He proposed calling `Arūbah as Friday (Jumu`ah) and started the practice of Ijtima` or gatherings. In these gatherings, he used to give sermons. It was during these gatherings that he

started the practice of saying “Amma ba`d (and then)” while delivering the sermon. Later on Qass ibn Sa`idah al-Iyadi started using this term in letters. Ka`b was a great orator of his times. Besides his sermons on Fridays, his oratory used to be a very important event during the large gatherings at the time of Hajj. In these sermons he used to talk on topics like sanctity of agreements, protection of rights, norms of good behavior and the respect for the Bayt Allah or Ka`bah. He also used to give the tidings of the arrival of the Messenger the Prophet Muhammad (a.s) in one of his sermons he

:said

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Adopt kindness and be considerate of relationships. Keep your promises and enhance your wealth through trade that will help you maintain thoughtfulness and generosity. Wherever there is need for spending wealth, do not abstain from doing it. Recognize the greatness of the Haram (Holy Precinct--the Ka`bah) and remain attached to it. Soon great news will emanate from it and the last of the Prophets will emerge from [here. This tiding was brought by Mūsa (Prophet Moses) and `Isa (Prophet Jesus)].[۱۶

.Ka`b had three sons: Murrah, `Adi and Husays

Murrah ibn Ka`b

His kunyah was Abū-Yaqzah and his mother was Makhshiyah bint Shayban. Murrah was an Arab leader of much eminence. He excavated a well near `Arafat from which .he used to quench the thirst of the passersby

.He had three sons: Kalab, Yaqzah and Taym

Kalab ibn Murrah

His given name was Hakim and his kunyah was Abū-Zahrah. His mother's name was Hind bint Sarir. He became known as Kalab because he was seen much on expeditions with hunting dogs. In the Arab tribes, his personality was much respected. Both his paternal and maternal ancestors enjoyed much eminence in the society. He was very well-known for his wisdom and sagacity. Arabs generally came to him for arbitration when disputes arose between them. For public welfare he got excavated three wells, Khum, Ram, and Hadar, on the outskirts of Makkah. Kalab had two sons: Zahrah and .Qasi

Qasi ibn Kalab

His real name was Zayd. His kunyah was Abū-Mughirah. His mother was Fatimah bint Sa`d. She married Rabi`ah ibn Haram al-`Udhri after the death of Kalab. She moved to the habitation of Banū-`Adhrah with her new husband. The little Qasi moved to the new place with his mother. Kalab's other son, Zahrah, was a grown youth and stayed back at Makkah. The appellation of Qasi got stuck to Qasi because the word means

‘one who is away’. Qasi received his upbringing with Banū-`Adhrah and he was considered a member of the tribe. Once it chanced that he had an altercation with a man from the tribe of `Udhrah. The person sarcastically said that Qasi was an outsider who had imposed himself on the tribe. Qasi asked him to what tribe he originally belonged. The man said he must go to his mother and ask her. Qasi went to his mother and made inquiries. She replied

My son! In the matter of personal pedigree and your male parentage, you are far superior to the `Udhri. You are the son of Kalab ibn Murrah and your people live in [Makkah near the Ka`bah].[17

When Qasi knew that his origin was Makkah, he decided to go there. Fatimah bint Sa`d said that she did not want to prevent him from going and, to the contrary, her wish was that he went to his ancestral home. But she wanted him to wait for some time. She said that Banū-Quda`ah would shortly leave for Hajj when he could accompany them to Makkah. When Hajj drew near, Qasi along with stepbrother, Zarraj Ibn Rabi`ah joined the caravan of Banū-Khuza`ah and reached Makkah. He stayed with his brother Zahrah Bin Kalab. At that time Makkah was under the control of Banū-Khuza`ah and Halil Ibn Habisah was at the helm of affairs. Qasi asked for the hand of Halil's daughter, Hubba, in marriage. Halil was aware of Qasi's ancestral superiority and he readily agreed to the proposal. Hubba gave Qasi four sons who are known by the names of `Abd-Manaf, `Abd al-`Uzza, `Abd al-Qasi and `Abd al-Dar. When these children grew into youths, Halil said that Qasi's children are his own children and in the future they would be the keepers of the Ka`bah and the :rulers of Makkah. Thus Qasi was nominated Halil's successor. Ibn Sa`d writes

Halil made a will that the upkeep of the Ka`bah and the emirate of Makkah must vest [in Qasi. He also told Qasi that it was his rightful inheritance].[18

In the books of history it is also mentioned that when Halil was breathing his last, he willed that his daughter Hubba would be the keeper of the Ka`bah and Abū-Ghafshan al-Malkani to assist her in the discharge of this duty. Therefore, Abū-Ghafshan used to open the gate of the Ka`bah one day and on behalf of Hubba this duty was performed by Qasi the next day. When this practice continued for some time, Qasi told Hubba that the rightful keepers of the Ka`bah were the progeny of Isma`il and, hence, this task must be entrusted to `Abd al-Dar. Hubba said that `Abd al-Dar was her son and she would have no objection entrusting the task to him. But she also insisted that, according to the will of her father, Abū-Ghafshan had an equal right on the matter as she had. She also doubted if he would concede to the new arrangement. Qasi asked her to leave to him the matter of convincing Abū-Ghafshan. When Hubba agreed to concede the keeping of the Ka`bah in favor of her son, `Abd al-Dar, Qasi proceeded to Ta'if where Abū-Ghafshan was residing. One evening Qasi went to the place of Abū-Ghafshan where a carousel of music, dance and drinking was in full swing. Abū-Ghafshan was high with intoxication. He shook Abū-Ghafshan and struck a bargain for the Ka`bah in return for a she camel and one container of liquor. When Abū-Ghafshan regained his senses, he was very sorry for the deal. Qasi returned to Makkah having achieved success in his task. In front of a large gathering the key of the precincts of Ka`bah were handed over to `Abd al-Dar. When Banū-Khuza`ah and Banū-Bakr realized that Abū-Ghafshan had deprived their tribes of the position of the keepers of the Ka`bah because of his intoxicated and inebriated state of mind, they started to fight to get back their authority. Qasi too was prepared for such an eventuality. The Quraysh and Banū-Kinānah were already with him and Zarraj ibn Rabi`ah, along with his brothers and a strong contingent of Banū-Khuza`ah came in support of Qasi. When many men from both the warring groups died, some well-meaning persons arbitrated. Therefore, Ya`mur ibn `Awf was appointed the referee. He ruled that Qasi had a right to be the keeper of the Ka`bah. The families of the persons from his side who died in the fight must be compensated with blood money. The men who lost their lives from the ranks of Banū-Khuza`ah and Banū-Bakr need not be compensated. This verdict was accepted as final and Qasi was now the sole keeper of the Ka`bah and the ruler of Makkah. Ibn Ishaq writes

Qasi was appointed the keeper of the Ka`bah and the ruler of Makkah. He gathered together people of his tribe from many places and consolidated his power. All people in Makkah submitted to him. Among the progeny of Ka`b, Qasi is the first ruler to whom the entire tribe owed allegiance. The keeping of the keys of Ka`bah, feeding and provision of water to the Hajjis, presiding over the Majlis (the Council) and bearing the standard of the troops were the duties entrusted to him. Thus, all the [prestigious responsibilities were vested in him.]۱۹

The keeping of Ka`bah always rested with Isma`il and his progeny. After Isma`il, his son Thabit performed this duty. But after Thabit this privilege slipped away from the hands of Banū-Isma`il and shifted to Banū-Jarham, the maternal family of Thabit. Banū-Jarham turned towards tyranny and as their power grew stronger they became more tyrannous. In the second century AD when Yemen was struck with a deluge, a person, of name Qada`ah moved from there to Makkah. He assumed control of Makkah and thus commenced the two hundred years' rule of Banū-Khuza`ah. When the authority shifted from Banū-Khuza`ah to Qasi he gathered in Makkah the Banū-Fihr who were scattered in the nearby hills and the wilderness as nomads. Because of this act of consolidation, he was remembered with the title of Majma` or the one who gathered together the people! Therefore, Hudhafah ibn Ghanim says thus in his :poem

Your father, Qasi, is one who is known with the title of Majma` and it was through him that Allah brought together all the branches of Fihr in one place

Because of this gathering together of people Qasi is remembered with the title of Quraysh. The word Quraysh is derived from taqrish that means consolidating or clubbing together. There is, however, a difference of opinion as to who was the first to get the title of Quraysh. Some say that the progeny of Ilyas were the first to be remembered with this title. Another opinion is that the progeny of Mudar are the Quraysh. Some others say that the first to get this title were the progeny of Nizar ibn Kinanah. One group feels that Fihir ibn Malik was the first to be known with this title. But the researchers do believe that Qasi got the title of Quraysh and his progeny are :known as such. Al-tabari writes

When Qasi came to the precincts of the Ka`bah, and assumed control, he performed deeds of virtue; thus he is remembered as Qarashi. He was the first who was known [as Qarashi].[۲۰

Abdul-Malik ibn Marwan enquired of Muhammad ibn Jubayr as to when Quraysh` came to be called thus. He said ever since they came to the Haram of Ka`bah, they are called the Quraysh. They are called thus because the word is derived from ,taqarrush which means gathering or assembling together. ` Abdul-Malik said

I have not heard anything like this. My information is that Qasi was known as Qarashi [and before him none was addressed with this title].[۲۱

:Ibn Sa`d too was of the same opinion. He writes

It is because of Qasi that the Quraysh are called as Quraysh. Prior to him they were [known as Abul-Nadr].[۲۲

By facilitating the settlement of the progeny of Fihr in the environs of the Ka`bah, Qasi revived their past greatness. He helped them achieve high state of civilization. On account of this, the progeny of Fihr held him in great esteem and bowed their heads in acceptance to all his commands, as people would do for the Commandments of their Faith! Buladhari writes

For the Quraysh, every word of Qasi was like a religious Commandment. They followed his commands and never deviated an iota from what he desired them to do.

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In addition to bringing together the progeny of Fihr and settling them, Qasi started the departments of Siqayah (Water Supply) and Rifadah (The Public Mess) for the water and feeding needs of the Hajjis. With the cooperation of the inhabitants of Makkah he used to feed the pilgrims coming from far away places and take care of their comforts. He encouraged the people of Makkah to take interest in this activity.

:He used to say during his sermons

You are the neighbors of Allah and the inhabitants of these Holy Precincts. These Hajjis are the guests of Allah and the pilgrims of this Holy House. They are more esteemed than any other guests. Therefore, you must look after their comforts

[during the period of the Hajj! [۲۴

With his practical and active living Qasi performed highly commendable tasks for the society. He renovated the Ka`bah and thatched its roof with date palm leaves. Between `Arafat and Mina he constructed a building that he named al-Mash`ar al-Haram. During the period of the Hajj lamps used to be lighted in this building to facilitate the pilgrims reaching there without difficulty. Ibn `Abdarah writes

Qasi built al-Mash`ar al-Haram where lamps were lighted during the nights as
[beacons to guide the pilgrims].[۲۵

He arranged lighting of pyres at Muzdalifah to guide the pilgrims coming from `Arafat.
:Ibn al-Athir writes

Qasi was the first to get a pyre lighted at Muzdalifah. Then this practice was revived
[during the time of the Prophet (a.s)].[۲۶

Before the period of Qasi houses were not constructed in the area of Makkah and
people used to live in temporary shacks. He was the first to build a house near the
Ka`bah. The door of this house opened towards Ka`bah. This house became known
:as Dar al-Nidwah. Al-Ya`qūbi writes

Qasi built his house in Makkah. This was the first house that was constructed in
[Makkah and was called Dar al-Nidwah].[۲۷

The Quraysh used to view this house with great respect and veneration. They
considered it very felicitous to celebrate their weddings in these precincts. They used
to assemble there to settle their societal disputes and when going out to battle they
used to raise their standards from there only. Before Qasi arrived at Makkah the
people used to draw water from the well of Lu`ay ibn Ghalib known as Aisarah and the
well of Murrah ibn Ka`b, known as al-Rawwa'. They also drew water from the
stagnated pits near Makkah. Qasi got a well excavated near Makkah to facilitate the
people there. This well was called al-`Ajūl. This well was situated at the place where
the house of Ummu-Hani' bint Abū-Talib was located. The reforms achieved by Qasi
were the renovation of the Ka`bah, constructing other buildings, relocating the
.progeny of Fihri in Makkah and other programs of popular welfare

Besides his reforms, Qasi is remembered for his words of wisdom. Here we quote a few of his wise sayings

One who agreed with the mean thoughts and words of a person, he will himself be a party to the meanness

.One who views evil with approbation will himself be an evil person

One who cannot be reformed with respect, he can be reformed only with insults and harsh treatment

.One who expects more than his worth, he will be deserving of disappointment

[A jealous person is a hidden enemy.] (۲۸)

:During his last moments, Qasi advised his children in the following words

Abstain from intoxicating drinks. Though they might help improve your bodies, they will destroy your senses and wisdom! (۲۹)

He died in ۴۸۰ A.D. At Makkah and is buried at the foot of the Mount Hajūn. The Arabs mourned their great leader and reformer. People used to visit his

(۳۹)

:graveside with much veneration. Buladhari writes

When he died, he was interred at the Mount Hajūn. People visited his grave to pay respects to him and acknowledge his greatness. (۳۰)

Abd–Manaf ibn Qasi`

His real name was Mughirah and the kunyah Abū-`Abd-Shams. Because of his extreme good looks he was called as Qamar al-Batha'. Because of his charitable disposition and reverence he was called al-Sayyid. Although the elder son of Qasi, `Abd al-Dar was the keeper of the keys of the Ka`bah, the leadership of Quraysh was vested in `Abd-Manaf. In fact, because of his wisdom and sagacity, he rose to the

:leadership of the tribe during the lifetime of his father! Diyarbakri writes

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Abd-Manaf rose to the leadership of the tribe during the lifetime of his father. The`
[Quraysh used to abide by all his commands.]۳۱

He followed the ways of his illustrious father and perpetrated the institutions of reform established by him. `Abd-Manaf left behind four sons: Hashim, Muttalib, `Abd-Shams and Nawfal. Hashim and Muttalib are remembered as al-Badran or two
!moons

Hashim Ibn `Abd-Manaf

His real name was `Amr and because of his imposing personality he was called `Amr al-`Ala'. His kunyah was Abū-Nazlah, his title Sayyid al-Batha' and Abul-Batha'. His mother was `Atikah. Instead of his name and kunyah, he was better known as Hashim. The reason for this name was that once, during a famine, he got large number of breads cooked, loaded them on camels and brought from Syria to Makkah. He got a soup prepared from the meat of the camels, shredded the breads into smaller chunks, doused them in to large bowls of the soup and fed the people and the visitors to Makkah. From that day, people started calling him Hashim that means one
.who makes shreds

Hashim and `Abd-Shams were born as twins. One was born with his palm attached to the forehead of the other. Both were separated from each other with the blow of a sword. At that time, it was predicted that the progeny of both would fight with each other. Therefore, there was always conflict going on between the two families. These two brothers were the forerunners of the Banū-Hashim and Banū-Umayyah. These two families were poles apart as far as their thoughts and beliefs were concerned. The first conflict came about between Hashim and Umayyah the son of `Abd-Shams. Then there was fight between `Abd al-Muttalib, the son of Hashim, and Harb the son of Umayyah. After Harb, his son, Abū-Sufyan challenged the Prophet of Islam (a.s) and fought many battles against him. After Abū-Sufyan his son, Mu`awiyah fought many gory battles against `Ali (a.s). Thereafter, Yazid, the son of Mu`awiyah, martyred Imam al-Husayn (a.s) and his small group of companions. Thus, the enmity between Banū-Hashim and Banū-Umayyah went on for generation together. Even

after embracing Islam, there was no change in the treacherous nature of Banū-Umayyah, and they used all the stratagems to annihilate Banū-Hashim

Hashim and `Abd-Shams, though of the same parentage and grand parentage, they were as different as a flower and a thorn growing on the same plant. Hashim was a person of great character and nobility. There always used to be a group of needy persons surrounding him for help. The economic growth of the Quraysh, to a great extent, was due to the help and assistance of Hashim. He inculcated the idea of trade and commerce in the minds of the Quraysh and put them on the path of progress. Even prior to Hashim, Quraysh had some idea of trade and commerce, but it was restricted to dealing only in local transactions. One reason for calling them as Quraysh is that the word comes from taqrush that means work, trade and commerce. Hashim took his trading activities forward and extended it to the markets of Syria and beyond to Abyssinia. He also encouraged the Quraysh to follow in his footsteps. He organized trading caravans to Abyssinia and Yemen during the winters and to Syria, Gaza and Ankara during the summer months. The Caesar of Rome used to hold him in high respect. With his influence on the Caesar, he obtained a charter from him that the merchandise of the Quraysh would not be charged any taxes in his realm, facilities of travel to be extended to the trading caravans and safety was guaranteed. This .increased the trading activities of the Quraysh by leaps and bounds

It has been mentioned while discussing about Qasi that he had nominated his elder son, Abdul Dar, as the keeper of the Ka`bah, but he was not able to prove himself equal to the task. Nor anyone from his progeny rose to prove their capability. Matters went from bad to worse and When Hashim saw that Banū-`Abd-al-Dar were grossly incapable of delivering the goods, he had a discussion with his brothers Muttalib, Nawfal and `Abd-Shams and they all agreed that the responsibility of the upkeep of the Ka`bah must be taken away from Banū-`Abd-al-Dar. They were certain that as long as the management was not changed, things could not be set right. When Banū-`Abd-al-Dar heard of the plans of their removal, they came up for armed conflict. On the other hand, the progeny of `Abd-Manaf too got ready to fight. The Arab tribes were divided into two groups. Banū-Asad, Banū-Zahrah, Banū-Tamim and Banū-Harith joined the ranks of the progeny of `Abd-Manaf. The other group consisted of Banū-Makhzūm, Banū-Sahm and Banū-`Adi who sided with Banū-`Abd-al-Dar. Banū-`Abd-Manaf and their cohorts were called Mutayyibūn and the group of Banū-

`Abd-al-Dar was called the al-Ahlah. Skirmishes were about to break out between the opposing groups when some well meaning arbiters intervened and suggested that a truce should be struck through negotiations. They felt that the consequences of a battle might be very serious. Thus an agreement was reached that the functions of Siqayah and Rifadah were to be with Banū-`Abd-Manaf and that of Nidwah, Hijab and Liwa' (the standard) to remain in the charge of Banū-`Abd-al-Dar. When this agreement was concluded, Banū-`Abd-Manaf drew lots amongst themselves for the control of the departments of Siqayah and Rifadah. The lottery went in the favor of .Hashim who assumed control of the two departments

Hashim took prompt action to reform the two departments. He improved the arrangements for provision of food and water to the Hajjis. He got two new wells, Sajlah and Budhdhar, dug to increase the availability of water. He perfected the two schemes started by his grandfather, Qasi. Nearer the Hajj season he would assemble the Quraysh near the Ka`bah and give them detailed instructions about providing services to the Hajjis. He would tell them

O group of Quraysh! You are resident in the neighborhood of Allah and live in His House! The time has come that the pilgrims to the House of Allah are about to come to pay their obeisance. They are all the guests of Allah and deserve all the respect and [care from you. Therefore, revere Allah's guests and take good care of them!]

After giving this sermon, he used to organize the funds. He used to raise some contributions from the Quraysh but the major part of the funds used to be from his own pocket. He always took care that the Hajjis coming from far away places received good care. Eating-places were arranged in Makkah and Mina and cool, sweet drinking water was copiously provided in leathern containers

Al-Aswad Ibn Sha`r al-Kalbi had himself witnessed this open house. He writes that when he was the representative of a wealthy lady of his tribe, he used to travel to various places with her merchandise. Once he passed through Mina and `Arafat while the Hajj season was on. It was a dark night. He spent the night at one spot. When he awoke in the morning he noticed tall leather tents of Ta'if hitched at a distance. When he went a little forward, he found large cauldrons placed on smoldering fires. Some animals had already been butchered and some more were about to be cut. Servants were flitting around the place doing their tasks. He was astonished to see the bustle of activity. He felt the urge to meet the chief of the tribe. He went further forward and found a carpeted, tall tent where the chiefs of the Quraysh were seated in a circle. At the center of this group was seated an imposing personality holding a staff in his hand and wearing a black scarf on his head. From the scarf hung long tufts of hair on his shoulders... He was much impressed with the scene. At this moment, he heard someone shouting from an elevated place at some distance, "O visitors to the house of Allah! Do come to have your meals!" From another place two persons were

announcing, “Those who have taken their mid-day meal should come again for their dinner!” al-Aswad says that he had heard from the Jewish Scholars that this was the period when the unlettered Prophet would appear. Observing the grand feast he felt whether the person seated there is himself the prophet? He asked one person about the identity of the chief who sat surrounded by his companions in the tent. The person :said that it was Abū-Nazlah Hashim ibn ` Abd-Manaf. Hearing this al-Aswad said

[By God! This is real grandeur and not the grandeur of Al-Jafnah (the kings of Syria)]^[۳۳]

This generosity of Hashim made him popular throughout the Arab lands. Umayyah ibn `Abd-Shams, who was a person of mean disposition, was jealous of Hashim's popularity. He was working under acute inferiority complex and was blue with envy. He looked forward to every opportunity to lower Hashim in the estimation of the people and somehow occupy his position. With this aim, he used his wealth to throw lavish feasts. However, he lacked the natural instinct of kindness and generosity that Hashim had. The people could read his hypocrisy. He realized that this stratagem of his would not work, and after throwing a couple of parties, he gave up. This proved more humiliating for him. People started ridiculing and making fun of him. Umayyah, meanwhile, was in a frenzy of anger and jealousy. Unable to face the taunts of the people any more, he used unsavory language against Hashim. In accordance with the custom of the time, he threw a challenge of munafarah. Munafarah required an arbiter to decide who was the more eminent of the two contesting parties. Hashim was above all this that he would take recourse to such subterfuges to prove his worth. But the Quraysh persuaded him to accept the challenge. Hashim agreed on the condition that the defeated party must give fifty black-eyed she-camels to the victor and should shun the residence of Makkah for ten years. Umayyah agreed to abide by these conditions. They both agreed to have the Hermit al-Khuza`i as the arbitrator. When both of them presented their case to him, he instantly decided in favor of Hashim confirming his nobility and eminence. Hashim took the fifty camels from Umayyah, got them slaughtered and threw a public feast in Makkah. Umayyah moved away from Makkah to Safūriyah where he spent ten years in exile. This created
:enmity between the two important clans of Arabia. Buladhari writes

This was the first manifestation of hate and enmity that appeared between Hashim
[and Umayyah].[۳۴

Hashim was a great personage of his time whose noble descent, stature and nobility have been highly recognized. Not only in Hijaz, but also in places far away from there, had his name and fame spread. Even the ruling princes of the time used to hold him in high respect. The king of Rome and the Najashi of Abyssinia went to the extent of offering the hands of their daughters in marriage to Hashim. But he decided not to marry out of the Hijaz. He took several Arab wives from different tribes. The most significant, and important, marriage was with a girl from the Banū-al-Najjar branch of the tribe of Khazraj. The progeny from this marriage was the line that was later to bear the Prophet of Islam (a.s). It is said that Hashim dreamed that he must marry Salma bint `Amr who was residing at Yathrib. This was a lady of great character and :nobility. Diyarbakri writes

Salma, in intelligence and sagacity, was of the same caliber in her time, as was
[Khadijah later on].[۳۵

After seeing this dream, Hashim went to al-Madinah with a few relatives and stayed at the place of `Amr ibn Zayd. He treated the guests lavishly and asked about the purpose of their visit. When a proposal was made for the hand of his daughter in marriage to Hashim, he agreed. But he made one condition that if Salma gave birth to a son, he should stay in Yathrib. Hashim agreed to this condition and the marriage was celebrated. After this function, Hashim proceeded to Syria on a business trip. On his return from there, he took Salma to Makkah along with him. After some time, Salma was pregnant. Hashim therefore shifted her to Yathrib and proceeded on another business trip to Syria. This proved the last journey for Hashim. He was seriously ill for a few days, died, and was interred at Gaza, a place about six miles .from `Asqalan

When Hashim's companions from the caravan broke the sad news of his demise in Makkah and Yathrib, there was immense mourning. Every person talked of his generosity, kindness and affectionate disposition. This sad news came to Salma like a thunderbolt. The birth of a posthumous son gave her solace. This son was `Abd al-Muttalib.

Hashim had several sons but two of them had issues. One of them was Asad and the other `Abd al-Muttalib. Asad had one son whose name was Hunayn, who remained issueless. Asad had one daughter, Fatimah, who was married to Abū-Talib and bore `Ali (a.s) and other sons. The other son of Hashim, `Abd-al-Muttalib had sons and the Hashemite progeny progressed through him. Ibn Qutaybah writes about this

[The Hashemite on the face of the earth are all the progeny of `Abd al-Muttalib.]۳۶

Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hashim`

His given name was `Amir and Abul-Harith the kunyah. At birth, he had some gray hair in the middle of his head. In Arabic, graying of hair is called shayb. Therefore, `Abd al-Muttalib was called with the sobriquet of Shaybah and Shaybat-al-Hamd. His father, Hashim, expired while on a journey to Syria. The child was deprived of the paternal love and affection. He grew to the age of seven or eight years in his maternal home in al-Madinah

In Arabia, those days, skill in riding and martial arts like archery and lancing was a necessity. Shaybah too used to practice archery in his childhood. Once he was doing his archery lessons in an open ground at Yathrib along with other children. Whenever he hit the target during the session, he would shout, "I am the son of the chief of Batha'!" A person from the family of Banū-Harith chanced to pass that way. When he heard the child utter these words, he asked about his name and that of his parent. The child said that his name was Shaybat-al-Hamd son of Hashim ibn `Abd-Manaf. The person returned to Makkah and related the entire incident to Shaybah's uncle Muttalib. Muttalib said that it was a grave oversight from him that he did not care for his nephew. Therefore, he instantly proceeded to Yathrib to fetch Shaybah home. He went to the neighborhood of Banū-al-Najjar where he found some children at play in

the street. One of these children was Shaybah. He immediately recognized him. He however asked some men of Banū-al-Najjar about the identity of the child. The men too recognized him as Muttalib, the uncle of Shaybah. They asked him if he wanted to take Shaybah to his rightful home. When he replied in the affirmative, they suggested to him to take him away immediately and that they would not create any hindrance in this matter. They said that if Shaybah's mother came to know about the purpose of his visit and raised any objections, then the Banū-al-Najjar would be forced to prevent him from taking away the child. Muttalib made his camel squat down, and he told Shaybah, "I am your uncle. Come and sit on this camel!" Shaybah complied without any hesitation and Muttalib brought him to Makkah. When they entered the ramparts of Makkah and the Quraysh noticed a child riding the camel with Muttalib, they shouted, "There comes the slave of Muttalib!" Muttalib told them that the child was not a slave and that he was the son of his brother Hashim. But the people started .calling Shaybah by the name of ` Abd al-Muttalib

Those days there was neither a school nor the people were much in the habit of reading and writing. There were not more than three or four literate persons in Makkah. `Abd al-Muttalib, though devoid of parental care, learned to read and write and acquired proficiency in the Arab Martial Skills. Some of his writings go to prove :this point. Ibn al-Nadim writes thus

In the treasury of al-Ma'mūn, there was a leather tablet on which was a document [penned by `Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hashim making a claim with a man from Himyar].[۳۷

In addition to his proficiency in the various martial and other skills, he possessed an ,impressive personality and was tall and strong. Ibn `Abbas says

I have heard my father say that `Abd al-Muttalib was tall, handsome and good [looking. Whoever looked at him started liking him].[۳۸

After Hashim, according to his will, Muttalib was the chief of the Quraysh and held all the positions connected with the Ka`bah. He had a desire to hand over all these responsibilities to `Abd al-Muttalib during his lifetime only. Therefore, when he thought of going to Yemen, he told `Abd al-Muttalib that he was the heir to his father's inheritance and that he was now capable of handling the responsibilities. He then handed over all the affairs to `Abd al-Muttalib and proceeded to Yemen and .expired there at a place called Rawman

Abd al-Muttalib had all the qualities of head and heart to be a good ruler. After` assuming charge, he gave attention to improving the administration of the departments of Siqayah and Rifadah. The Spring of Zamzam, that was buried deep underground for centuries, was restored to its pristine position and yielded plenty of sweet water for the pilgrims. Zamzam had disappeared from the sight of the Arabs that they had started calling it Taktum that means something that is upset and hiding from the view. Therefore, `Allamah Zamakhshari, explaining the reason for the use of ,the term Taktum, says

After Banū-Jarham, the spring of Zamzam was lost deep in the ground until `Abd al-Muttalib could make it re-appear.[۳۹

In brief, when the former rulers of Makkah, Banū-Jarham, were forced to go into exile under the pressure of Banū-Khuza`ah, their chief, `Amr ibn Harith al-Jarhami, buried the two golden antelopes gifted by Isfandyar ibn Gashtasab, the seven swords that were the offerings for the Ka`bah and the five chains of armor in the Spring of Zamzam and put huge quantities of stones and rubble over it that it was difficult to identify the location of the spring. He then migrated with his tribesmen to Yemen. Much later `Abd al-Muttalib got a vision of it's location in his dream. He surveyed the location of the spring according to the indication he had from the vision. After three days of hard labor, they noticed the signs of the spring. At this juncture, he shouted the praises of Almighty Allah. After a little more excavation, the water gushed out from the spring. The treasure buried by Harith too was recovered

The Quraysh, who were lukewarm about this activity so far, gathered around `Abd al-Muttalib, and started claiming that the treasure discovered was the property of their ancestors and that they must be given half of it. `Abd al-Muttalib told them that the discovery was the result of his own hard work and that they had no right over it. Even then, he offered, that if they wished, a decision could be arrived at by drawing lots. The Quraysh agreed to the proposal and the contestants of the lottery were the Ka`bah, the Quraysh and `Abd al-Muttalib. The Golden Antelopes went to the lot of the Ka`bah, and the chains of arm and the swords went to the lot of `Abd al-Muttalib. The Quraysh got but nothing! `Abd al-Muttalib sold the swords and the chains of arm to get a gold studded door made for the Ka`bah. The golden antelopes too were melted for studding the door. Ibn al-Athir writes

[This was the first occasion when the door of Ka`bah was studded with gold.]¹

When the Quraysh failed in acquiring these things, they claimed that they had a proprietary right in the Spring of Zamzam. `Abd al-Muttalib said that the spring was revived with his personal efforts and Allah had granted it only to him. He offered to them that they were free to draw water from it, but there was no question of conceding any property rights to them. But the Quraysh were adamant with their claims. Ultimately it was decided to go to the Hermit of Banū-Sa`d in Syria to resolve this issue. Both the contesting parties were willing to accept her decision. `Abd al-Muttalib agreed to this proposal and along with a few companions and a contingent of the Quraysh proceeded to Syria. They were still on the way when the water containers of `Abd al-Muttalib and his companions ran dry. They asked the Quraysh to give them some water. The Quraysh refused saying that their supply itself was scant. When the thirst became unbearable for `Abd al-Muttalib and his companions, he told his men to dig a grave for every individual so that whoever died, the others bury him. In the end only one person will remain dead without a grave and it would be better than all lying dead, unburied, in the desert. The thirsty group complied, and everyone dug a grave for himself. `Abd al-Muttalib thought that sitting idle without making any effort for water was not right. He asked his men to scatter in different directions and search for water. Saying this he mounted his she-camel. No sooner, the camel lifted its foot, sweet and clear water gushed out from that spot. The companions of `Abd al-Muttalib jumped for joy. They drank their fill and took supplies in their water[۴۰] containers. When the Quraysh witnessed this scene, they said that Allah Himself had resolved their dispute. As he had provided water to `Abd al-Muttalib in the stark desert, He has also given the Spring of Zamzam to him! They said that they no more needed to go to the Hermit for advice. Both the contesting parties, therefore, returned to Makkah from there. Although the Spring of Zamzam had its origins during the times of Isma`il (a.s) its renaissance was during the rule of `Abd al-Muttalib. Other wells too were excavated in Makkah during the period of `Abd-al-Muttalib, but the copious yield of water that the spring gave was not matched by any other source. The inhabitants of Makkah and the pilgrims preferred to draw water from it thinking that its use was felicitous. The spring, therefore, is also called

Shuba`ah, that means the quencher! Even now, hundreds of thousands of Hajjis and pilgrims drink this water round the year and take away quantities to their homes. If this spring is a heritage left behind by Isma`il (a.s), this can also be termed a legacy of
!` Abd al-Muttalib

Ibn Wadih and other historians mention a similar event about the well at Ta'if. This well is known as Dhu'l-Hiram and was excavated by `Abd al-Muttalib with great effort. He used to travel to Ta'if occasionally and stay there for a few days. Once he noticed that some persons from Banū-Kalab and Banū-Rabab had pitched their tents and staying near the well. He asked who they were, and why they were halting at that place. They said that they were the owners of the well, Banū-Kalab and Banū-Rabab. `Abd al-Muttalib told them that the well was his and, if they wanted to use it, it could only be with his permission. The men again repeated their proprietary claims over the well. The argument thus prolonged. To cut the matter short, `Abd al-Muttalib proposed that if they wished they could nominate any person to arbitrate. They took the name of Sutayh al-Ghassani for the purpose who was a well-known soothsayer (kahin) of Arabia. They agreed that if the verdict goes against any party, it would give a hundred camels to the winner and twenty camels to Sutayh. Now they all proceeded towards the hermitage of Sutayh. Midway, the water with `Abd al-Muttalib's group were exhausted. He asked the men from the opposite camp to give some water. They said that the bone of contention between them was water only and they will not spare any of it from their stock. `Abd al-Muttalib said that he would not let his companions perish for want of water. He will go and search for water even if he lost his own life during the effort. Saying this he mounted his camel and went in one direction. After some distance, his camel sat down on the desert ground. Looking from the place where the group was halting, the men thought that `Abd al-Muttalib had expired. But his companions said that he had gone for

the noble purpose of searching water for his men and Allah will protect his life in such a situation. When some of the men reached the spot, they noticed that the camel was resting on cool and moist desert sand. And nearby water from a spring was flowing copiously. Banū-Kalab and Banū-Rabab emptied their water containers and wanted to take a refill of cool and fresh water. ` Abd al-Muttalib's companions tried to prevent them from taking the water saying that they had refused to give them water when requested earlier. ` Abd al-Muttalib asked his companions to allow the men to take the water. He said that nobody could be prevented from drinking the water. The two tribes were much impressed with ` Abd al-Muttalib's gesture but still held on to their demand for arbitration regarding the well. On reaching the place of Sutayh they tested the soothsayer in various ways. They asked him to tell them about the matter of dispute between the two contending groups. He said that they were quarreling about the well in Ta'if, by the name of Dhu'l-Hiram, which belongs to ` Abd al-Muttalib and Banū-Kalab or Banū-Rabab had no right over it. He asked them to give, as agreed, a hundred camels to ` Abd al-Muttalib and twenty to him! They complied and .withdrew their claim over the well

On returning to Makkah, ` Abd-al-Muttalib announced that some of the residents had resolved that if he had lost in the arbitration, they would pool camels and settle the fine to be imposed on him. Now he asked the persons to take the number of camels each one has pledged to give from the flock received by him in terms of the arbitration. Persons came forward and took away camels in ones, twos and threes. Even after all this, some camels were left undistributed. ` Abd al-Muttalib asked his son Abū-Talib to slaughter the camels and disburse the meat on the peak of Abū-Khamis that the wild animals feasted on it. Abū-Talib complied with his father's :command and uttered the following couplet

!We feed others! Even the birds feed on our leftovers

!The hands of persons shiver, who keep their bowls brimming full

It was the practice of `Abd al-Muttalib that whatever food was left over, it was disbursed on the top of the hills to feed the wild birds there. Because of this, he was also known as Mut`im al-tayr (or the Feeder of the Birds). He always considered his moral duty to succor the poor and the needy once some persons from the tribe of Hizam came to Makkah for Hajj. While they were returning after the pilgrimage, one person of their group was murdered. As a ransom, they withheld a compensation for Hudhafah ibn Ghanim al-Adadi. Hudhafah saw `Abd al-Muttalib on the way and appealed to him for help. He inquired about the matter, asked them to release Hudhafah, and promised to give them twenty ounce or five hundred and fifty grams of gold as blood money and ١٠ camels and a horse. He also gave them his personal shawl to be kept as a mortgage until the settlement was made as agreed. They took the shawl and released the captive who rode to Makkah along with `Abd al-Muttalib. Release of Hudhafah on the guarantee of an ordinary shawl was because of the high reputation of `Abd al-Muttalib. The Arabs also considered their honors compromised if they left their mortgaged things unreleased for long spells. Because of this custom amongst the Arabs, Khusrow agreed to keep the bow of Hajib ibn Zurarah as a guarantee for his peaceful conduct. The story goes that with repeated periods of drought, the tribes of Banū-Tamim wanted to go to the pastures of Iraq to graze their camels, Abū-Zurarah went to the court of Khusrow to seek his permission. Khusrow said that they were treacherous people and that they might create some dispute in his realm. Hajib said that he would stand guarantee for the good behavior of his people and offered his own bow as a surety. At this, Khusrow and his courtiers started laughing. But one of the courtiers said that the mortgage of the bow must be accepted because the Arabs consider it a grave dishonor if they are unable to release the goods mortgaged by them. When the period of drought was over, the Arabs decided to return from the pastures in Iraq. In the interregnum, Hajib had already expired. His son, `Utarid, went to Khusrow and told him that his people had fulfilled the requirements of good behavior and if the bow was not returned to him now, he

would face lot of ridicule in the Arab land. Khusrow appreciated this very much and
.returned Hajib's bow to his son `Utarid

In Makkah there was a Jew, Udhaynah, who was an itinerant trader selling his goods in the neighborhood of the town. He sought protection from `Abd al-Muttalib, which was duly promised. Harb ibn Umayyah troubled the Jew and incited some roughs of Quraysh who murdered him and looted his belongings. When `Abd al-Muttalib learned about it, he started investigation into the matter. It was proved that the crime was committed on the instigation of Harb by `Amir ibn `Abd-Manaf ibn `Abd al-Dar and Saqr ibn `Amr and that they were hiding at the place of Harb. He demanded of Harb to hand over the culprits. Harb refused to comply and used harsh language. Rift already existed between the two families, which increased after this episode. Harb challenged `Abd-al-Muttalib for a debate and contest. First `Abd al-Muttalib expressed surprise at this challenge, and then he accepted it. It was decided that the King of Abyssinia would act as the arbiter in this dispute. But the king refused to arbitrate. Then Nufayl ibn `Abd-al-`Uzza was appointed as the arbitrator. He recognized the superiority and esteem of `Abd-al-Muttalib and decided the matter in his favor. Harb was very upset with this decision and used harsh words against Nufayl and stooped down to mean acts against `Abd al-Muttalib. His idea was to divert the attention from the arrest and punishment of the murderers. But `Abd al-Muttalib would not give up easily. He pursued the matter actively and made the criminals give one hundred camels to the successors of the deceased as a compensation for his blood. He also recovered a major portion of the wares of the Jew from the culprits and handed back to his people. Whatever was the shortfall in the value of the goods, he paid to the victims from his own pocket

It was during the time of `Abd al-Muttalib that Najashi, the commander of Abyssinian forces and Abrahah ibn Ashram, the ruler of Yemen attacked Makkah and tried to demolish the Ka`bah. This was a very trying time for the people of Makkah. On the one hand, there were well-organized forces and on the other, there was neither numerical strength nor that of materials. When the Yemeni forces camped outside Makkah, the hearts of the people shivered. The people of Makkah fled towards the hills, ravines and the wildernesses along with their women and children. The sangfroid that `Abd-al-Muttalib showed at this trying moment is proverbial. He was neither scared of the enemy hordes nor did he fly from his home and hearth. Some persons suggested to him to leave Makkah for some days. But he replied with full confidence

Neither shall I leave Allah's Place (the Haram) nor shall I seek help from anyone but
[Allah!]{41}

Around this time, Abrahah sent some of his men into Makkah to plunder. They captured two hundred camels belonging to `Abd al-Muttalib. When he learned about it, he went to Abrahah. Abrahah was much impressed with his personality and received him with respect. He came down from the throne and made `Abd al-Muttalib squat near him. He asked him of the purpose of his visit. `Abd al-Muttalib said that Abrahah's men had taken away his camels that must be returned to him. Abrahah crossed his brow and said that he thought the ostensible purpose of the visit would be to seek the protection of the Ka`bah. To the contrary, he was worried for the safety of a few camels! `Abd al-Muttalib replied

I am the owner of those camels, and I am demanding for them! There is One owner of
[that (August) House who will Himself protect it! ﴿٤٢﴾

Abraham was much impressed with this bold reply and ordered `Abd al-Muttalib's camels to be returned. `Abd al-Muttalib brought the camels back to Makkah and left them in the precincts of the Ka`bah putting signs on them that they were a trust for the Holy Place! His spirit in doing this was that if the enemy hurt the animals, he would
.suffer the wrath of the Almighty

The courage demonstrated by `Abd-al-Muttalib at that time is a proof of his absolute faith in Allah. He not only reclaimed his animals from the enemy but also expressed his
.Faith in the Almighty's Justice instead of groveling in the presence of the tyrant

After this conversation with `Abd-al-Muttalib, Abraham felt some pangs of fear and he wanted to think twice before attacking the Ka`bah. He had long conclave with his advisers and on their encouragement, hesitantly, moved towards the Ka`bah. On the other side, there was none to confront the enemy. Only `Abd al-Muttalib stood firm at the entrance of the Ka`bah and said, "O Allah! This is Your House and only You are its Protector!" While Abraham moved towards the Ka`bah with his foul intent, dense black clouds rose on the western horizon. When one looked at the sight with intent, it was discovered that a huge school of birds clutched small pebbles in their claws. This armed force of nature challenged the hordes of Abraham. They dropped the pebbles with good care that no innocent was hurt and no enemy of Allah escaped! Neither the iron hood nor the chain mails were of any use against these pebbles. In no time, the entire army was decimated. Abraham escaped with his life but succumbed on the way
.to Yemen

This was the period when the people's hearts were overpowered by the dark clouds of idolatry. They used to call only for their help in times of need. But from his tongue came the name of neither al-Lat nor Hubal nor Manat nor al-`Uzza. But he appealed only to Allah and put his trust in His Succor! It was the effect of `Abd al-Muttalib's courage that during the battle of Hunayn, the Prophet (a.s) remained steadfast despite paucity of men and materials and referring to his descent from `Abd al-Muttalib he said

!I am the Prophet without an iota of falsehood in it

!I am the scion of `Abd-al-Muttalib

The purpose of saying this was that `Abd al-Muttalib remained steadfast when Abrahah attacked Ka`bah with his hordes and in the same manner he, `Abd al-Muttalib's son, would remain steadfast despite the large numbers of the enemy in the battle of Hunayn. This statement of the Prophet (a.s) not only proves the valor and tenacity of `Abd-al-Muttalib, but also certifies the fact that he was a monotheist and believer of Allah! If he were an infidel and polytheist, the Prophet (a.s) would not have referred to and praised him at the time when he was himself confronted with huge numbers of infidels and polytheists in the battle of Hunayn. The pages of history bear evidence that `Abd al-Muttalib, never in his life, worshipped any idol nor ate the meat of animals sacrificed to propitiate the idols. He never adopted polytheist ways in life. He was a monotheist and believed in the Day of Reckoning. Therefore, `Allamah Halabi writes that a tyrant and ferocious person from Syria during the time of `Abd al-Muttalib, had received no punishment for his acts of omission and commission during his life. `Abd al-Muttalib said that a tyrant does not die until he is punished for his :tyranny. He said

By Allah! After this transient world, there is a Hereafter! There the virtuous will be
[rewarded and the evil punished!].[۴۳]

:Al-Mas`ūdi writes

Abd al-Muttalib used to teach his children to be generous. He advised them to be` hospitable with the guests. He advised them to keep an eye on the Hereafter and
[believe in the Day of Judgment].[۴۴]

With his belief in God's creation and the Hereafter, he was a staunch follower of the faith of Ibrahim (a.s) and strictly observed its norms. He used to keep himself occupied in circumambulating the Ka`bah and remembered Allah while alone and in the company of people. In the month of Ramadan he used to go into seclusion in the :cave of Hira' to spend time in the thought of Almighty Allah! Ibn al-Athir writes

It was he who was the first to spend nights in the cave of Hira' in prayer. At the commencement of the month of Ramadan he climbed the hill of Hira' and used to
[distribute food to the poor every day of the month].[۴۵]

Not only he molded his own life ideally, but also he acted as a reformer for the society and introduced many long lasting reforms. These may be termed as the precursor of :the later Islamic society. Therefore, `Allamah Halabi writes

He was the initiator of such reforms that many of them have been narrated in the
[Holy Qur'an and many are a part of the Prophet's Traditions].[۴۶]

Allamah Majlisi and other biographers have written that the Prophet (a.s) has said` that `Abd al-Muttalib introduced five practices prior to the advent of Islam that :continued in thereafter

He declared marrying of father's spouses or widows by sons as taboo. The Holy Qur'an says, "Those whom your fathers and grandfathers had married, you must not marry".

He distributed a fifth of hoards of treasures discovered to the poor and needy. Allah says in the Holy Book, "You should know that a fifth of the wealth that you got as booty is for Allah".

When `Abd al-Muttalib rediscovered and excavated the Spring of Zamzam, he termed it as Siqayat al-Hajj (Water Provision for the Hajjis). The Holy Qur'an has [mentioned this very term].

He fixed a compensation of hundred camels as equivalent to blood money for a murder. Islam continued to maintain this compensation to be made to the successors of a murdered person.

The Quraysh had not fixed the numbers of circumambulations of the Ka`bah during pilgrimage. `Abd al-Muttalib prescribed seven rounds for this purpose, and Islam continued the practice. `Allamah Majlisi writes about the Prophet's saying about this

Either `Abd al-Muttalib introduced these reforms on the basis of a vision or revived the practices that were current in the Ibrahimi Society that the Quraysh had (carelessly) abandoned.

Besides these reforms, `Abd al-Muttalib introduced such laws that their importance cannot be denied. Ibn Wadih Al-Ya`qūbi writes

Abd al-Muttalib promulgated rules for Fulfillment of Offerings, Severing the hand of Thieves, Drawing of Lots, Invocation of God's curse on the false party (Mubahalāh), Entertainment of Guests, Legitimate Livelihood and respect for the Venerable Months of the Calendar. He prohibited slaying of daughters and marriage with certain relations. He banned intoxicants and adultery. He urged the Hajjis to use fair earnings for the purpose of the Hajj. It was the custom of the Arabs that they used to circumambulate the Ka`bah in a naked condition. If the Quraysh gave some clothes

to a person, he would cover his body, or else he would go round with naked body. He banned this bad practice. The same is the Commandment of Islam: "Dress properly at every act of prayer." There was a practice with the Arabs that after the Hajj they used to enter their homes through the back doors. He ordered them to use the front doors
".for this purpose. Islam ordered the same, "Enter your homes through the doors

These are reforms indicative of a person who was fully aware of the teachings of the past Prophets. Although he was himself not a prophet, he is viewed with great reverence for his reforms and achievements. He is remembered as Ibrahim al-Thani
or Ibrahim the Second

He was similar in many aspects to his ancestor, Ibrahim (a.s). The age attained by him and number of children he had were almost the same as Ibrahim (a.s). Ibrahim (a.s) had thirteen sons while `Abd al-Muttalib had ten sons and six daughters. In habits, too they were very similar. Helping the poor and feeding the hungry was their wont. They loved to entertain the guests. This is the reason that Ibrahim (a.s) is remembered as Abū-al-Adyaf and `Abd al-Muttalib is termed as al-Fayyad (Generous) and Mut`im al-tayr (The Feeder of the Birds). As Ibrahim (a.s) had excavated the well, Shaba, on the Egypt-Syria Highway, `Abd-al-Muttalib excavated the Zamzam to its pristine glory. Ibrahim was the first to have congenital gray hair, and was called Shaybah. So was `Abd al-Muttalib. In himself, Ibrahim (a.s) was an Ummah (a whole nation) as Allah says, "Ibrahim alone is one Ummah." Similarly, with his unique personality `Abd-al-Muttalib has been called an Ummah. The Prophet of
Islam (a.s) says

Allah will raise my grandfather, `Abd-al-Muttalib, like the prophets and noble kings
[that he will be individually counted as an Ummah.]^[٤٨]

Both were unique in their disposition. Therefore, the patience and courage displayed by Ibrahim (a.s) in his readiness to sacrifice his beloved son, Isma`il (a.s), and the same determination shown by `Abd al-Muttalib to prepare himself to sacrifice his son
: `Abdullah is proverbial. Therefore, Imam al-Rida (a.s) says

The firm determination with which Ibrahim prepared to sacrifice his son Isma`il, the same determination was manifested by `Abd al-Muttalib in preparing to sacrifice his [son `Abdullah]. [۴۹

The story of this event goes like this. At the time when `Abd al-Muttalib was excavating the Zamzam, he had only one son who helped him with the task. He prayed at that time that if Allah gave him ten sons, he would sacrifice one of them in His way. His prayer was answered and he had ten sons: `Abdullah, al-Zubayr, Abū-Talib, `Abbas, Dirar, Hamzah, Al-Muqawwam, Abū-Lahab, al-Harith and Al-Ghaydaq. Now he wished to fulfill his oath. Therefore, he gathered all his ten sons and told them about his oath. He asked them as to who among them was willing to offer himself for sacrifice. They looked at each other in surprise and then bowed down their heads. They said that whosoever their father chose to sacrifice, they were all willing to abide by his decision. When he was satisfied that his sons were willing for the sacrifice, he went near the Ka`bah and drew a lot putting down the names of all the ten sons. The lot came in the name of his youngest son, `Abdullah. Now `Abd al-Muttalib was ready to sacrifice his beloved son. `Abdullah was the favorite of everyone at home and they objected to this sacrifice. `Abd al-Muttalib said that fulfilling the oath was very important for him although it was not easy to kill his own son with his hands. The sons of `Abd al-Muttalib and the important persons of the Quraysh asked him to draw the lot once again when, perhaps, the name of an elder son might come up. The lot was drawn a second time, and again it was `Abdullah's name. `Ikrimah ibn `Amir said, "O Chief of the Quraysh! If you sacrifice your son now, it might become a custom and practice with the people to sacrifice their sons! You will be known as the originator of this undesirable custom. It will be discreet if you abstain from fulfilling your oath! You might as well consult a kahin in the matter." Everyone agreed with `Ikrimah's suggestion. Therefore, they approached a parson. After hearing the case, she asked as to how much was the blood money for one life in their community. She was told that it was equal to the value of ten camels. She asked them to draw lot in the name of `Abdullah and ten camels. They drew the lot and the result was again for `Abdullah. She asked them to continue to draw the lot repeatedly with ten camels. Even after a hundred camels the lot draws in the name of `Abdullah, he may be sacrificed. When

the quantity of camels reached to a hundred, the draw came out for the animals! All the people were delighted but ` Abd al-Muttalib was not satisfied. He wanted the lot to be drawn again. Even then, the draw was for the sacrifice of the camels. To further confirm the matter, the draw was made a third time and it was again for the sacrifice of the camels. Now, a hundred camels were slaughtered and the meat was distributed to the populace. ` Abd al-Muttalib and his children did not partake of this :meat. Ibn Sa` d writes

[Neither ` Abd al-Muttalib nor did any of his sons eat the meat of these camels. [۱۵]

While this sacrifice enhanced the value of human life ten folds, it also was an example of determination, steadfastness, spirit of fulfillment of oath and highest degree of obedience of the parents by the sons. The courage manifested by ` Abd al-Muttalib during this episode is unparalleled except for the courage of Ibrahim (a.s) who did not hesitate for a moment in his preparedness to sacrifice his beloved son, Isma` il, in obedience to Allah's Command. The sons too, in both the instances, were more than willing to comply. Isma` il (a.s) was a lad of thirteen years and ` Abdullah eleven years when they were asked to make the supreme sacrifice. They were neither afraid of putting their heads under the sharp knives nor were they worried about dying in that manner. Because of this spirit both of them are remembered with the sobriquet of "Dhabih" or those who willingly submitted to be slain with the knife! The Prophet of Allah (a.s) proudly said, "I am the son of the two 'dhabihs'" Here he meant his ancestor, Isma` il (a.s) and his father ` Abdullah

Allah gave to ` Abdullah that through him was to be born the Chief of the Prophets, Muhammad (a.s). But his son was posthumously born and ` Abdullah did not have the good fortune of setting eyes on him. After the event of the Camels, ` Abdullah died in al-Madinah while returning from a business trip to Syria. ` Abd al-Muttalib was shattered with this loss. But after a while when ` Abdullah's son Muhammad (a.s) was born, smiles came back on his face. With great affection, he took a round of the newborn's cradle. He lifted the baby in his arms and brought him near the Ka` bah. He prayed there for the child's happiness and prosperity. On the seventh day of the birth he complied with the custom of ` aqiqah (the naming ceremony) and gave the name of Muhammad (a.s) to the child! The child had lost the father before his birth, but his mother too did not live for long. When he was only six years, his mother, Aminah, too passed away. Now ` Abdullah's orphan was totally in the care and tutelage of his grandfather, ` Abd al-Muttalib. It seems the patriarch dedicated his life for the upbringing of this beloved grandson. He always kept the child with himself. He had made it a practice that unless Muhammad (a.s) joined the spread, none else would start eating nor would he himself touch a morsel

Muhammad's manners and habits were so gentle that people were always attracted towards him and they thought that the child would achieve greatness in his life. The experienced `Abd al-Muttalib too gauged the qualities of head and heart in the child. Sometimes he even expressed these thoughts about the child. One day, as usual, the carpet was spread near the Ka`bah for `Abd al-Muttalib. For some reason he was delayed in arriving there. The chiefs of Quraysh and their sons were already seated around the carpet. Muhammad (a.s), the child, happened to pass that way and, without any hesitation occupied the place of his grandfather. The custom was that even the sons of `Abd al-Muttalib or the chiefs of the tribes were not allowed to take that seat. At that moment `Abd al-Muttalib arrived. Some persons tried to move the ,son of `Abdullah from where he was sitting. `Abd al-Muttalib sharply told them

Let my son sit on my carpet! There is a desire in his heart to rule a great domain! Very [soon, he will attain an elevated position!﴿٥١﴾

The Prophet (a.s) manifested glimpses of spiritual greatness, as well, from his very early days. It was because of these manifestations that `Abd al-Muttalib used to make him pray during the times of calamities and difficulties. He used to pray for rainfall propitiating Allah in the name of Muhammad (a.s). One year there was no rainfall in Makkah and they faced acute drought. People came to `Abd al-Muttalib and beseeched him to pray for rain. `Abd al-Muttalib made Muhammad (a.s), who was seven years old then, climb on his shoulder and climbed on the Mount Qubays to pray for rains. While returning after the prayer, they had hardly reached near the Ka`bah, when dark clouds gathered and rained so copiously that the valleys were overflowing :with water. At that time, Raqiqah bint Sayfi wrote a few couplets, one of which reads

Allah has quenched our town with the prayers of Shaybat-al-Hamd, otherwise we .were parched and rains had not come for a long period

Abd al-Muttalib naturally loved Muhammad (a.s) for being his son's posthumous` offspring, but the real fountainhead of this love was the knowledge acquired from men of learning and religious leaders that the time had come when the last of the line of the Prophets (a.s) would appear. The characteristics of this Prophet he derived from the men of learning they were all manifested by the orphan of `Abdullah. He had arrived at the conviction that Muhammad (a.s) was the Prophet to be annunciated in the near future and was the last of the chain of the Chosen Messengers of Allah. He therefore expressed about this to the king of Yemen, Sayf ibn Dhiyazan. This meeting has been chronicled by almost all the historians of that period. The meeting took place when the King of Yemen delivered his realm from the clutches of the king of Abyssinia. When this news reached Makkah, `Abd al-Muttalib told the chiefs of Quraysh that they must take a delegation to Sayf to felicitate him on his victory. They all agreed and, in the leadership of `Abd al-Muttalib a delegation of twenty-seven members was constituted. In this delegation, the important persons were Umayyah ibn `Abd-Shams, Asad ibn `Abd al-`Uzza, `Abdullah ibn Jad`an, Wahab ibn `Abd-Manaf and Qasi ibn `Abd al-Dar. When this delegation arrived at the Ghamdan Palace of Sayf, `Abd al-Muttalib, as the leader of the delegation, sought permission for presenting an address of felicitation. Sayf said that if he thought that he was of a status to present an address to a king, he had the permission to proceed! `Abd al-Muttalib presented a few words of felicitation and with such good diction and delivery that Sayf was delighted and appreciated his assertive delivery, the Qarashi skill at oratory and Hashemite style of speaking. The king inquired, "Who are you?" He replied, "I am `Abd al-Muttalib, the son of Hashim!" Hearing this, Sayf caught hold of his hand and asked him to ascend the throne and sit beside him. He said, "Then, `Abd al-Muttalib, you are my nephew!" He smiled in the affirmative. The mother of `Abd al-Muttalib was Salma bint `Amr from the family of Qaytan and Sayf too was from the same family. Because of this relationship, Sayf called him his nephew. The Arabs consider all the women of their tribe as sisters and their children as nephews and nieces. Sayf treated `Abd al-Muttalib with utmost courtesy and respect. He accommodated the other members of

the delegation too in his guesthouses for important personages. During his stay in Yemen, Sayf called ` Abd al-Muttalib in private and told him that he had information of such an important thing that it will be a matter of great pride for you and your clan. Therefore, I thought it necessary to inform you about it. He said that in Tihamah a child will be born, or he is already born, who will have the seal of Prophethood on his back between the shoulders. His name and his Faith shall last until the world exists. One of his main characteristics is that he would lose his parents and his grandfather and uncle will give him upbringing. I have a hunch that you are his grandfather! ` Abd al-Muttalib who, through predictions and revealed books, knew about this, hearing the same from Sayf prostrated in thankfulness to Allah. Then he told Sayf that what he had said had confirmed his conviction. He said that the boy mentioned by him was already born and he manifests all the characteristics that he had indicated. He is posthumous born and he lost his mother in early childhood. His grandfather, an uncle and I are his guardians. Sayf said, “Then, he must be guarded against the mischief of
”the Jews who might attempt to kill him

When the time for the return of the delegation came nigh, Sayf presented to everyone with slaves, maids, gold, silver, amber, camels and royal raiment to `Abd al-Muttalib he gave ten times more than the gifts he gave to the others. His companions viewed this with much envy. He said, "O Quraysh! You should not be jealous of the gifts received by me. They are all transitory. There will be reason for you to envy what is in store and will be talked about in all places and the coming generations too will be proud of! When they asked as to what the thing is? He said

[After a while, you will learn about it yourself.]^[٥٢]

The physiognomists of Arabia had, after looking at Muhammad's face had informed `Abd al-Muttalib about his great future and the name and fame that he would achieve. Therefore, once, a few persons of Banū-Mudlaj told him

You must take good care of this child because no footprints other than his match exactly with the footprints of Ibrahim at the Maqam Ibrahim (The Place of Ibrahim in the Ka`bah

Hearing these words, `Abd al-Muttalib looked towards Abū-Talib and said, "Hear what they say!" He must have felt the need to draw Abū-Talib's attention because he must have realized that soon this great responsibility of caring for the child would fall on his shoulders

Abd al-Muttalib had seen more than a hundred summers. But even in his old age his face was daunting, his back straight and he used to dye his hair. But in his last days, his vision had gone weak. Despite this, he did not like to carry a staff for moving around. Once while going round the Ka`bah someone dashed into him. He asked who the person was. He was told that it was someone from Banū-Bakr. He said jovially, "I have defective eye-sight! But I am sure he can see properly! Now I might need a staff to balance myself!" Then he added, "If I keep a long staff in my hand, I may find it uneasy to carry. And carrying a short staff would force me to bend down that I would consider demeaning for me!" When his sons heard this, they offered that in future one of them would remain with him and provide him support for going wherever he wished to go. Therefore, he used to move around with his hand on the shoulder of one

.of his sons

p: ۸۴

When time weakened his body, he fell ill and was bed-ridden. In this state if he had any care, it was for the Orphan of `Abdullah. He worried about his future upbringing. In his last throes he asked for Abū-Talib. When Abū-Talib came near him, he said, "I make a will to you about the Orphan of `Abdullah. Do not neglect his care and upbringing." Ibn Sa`d writes

When `Abd al-Muttalib's time of death arrived, he advised Abū-Talib about the care [and protection of Muhammad (a.s)].[۵۳]

When he issued instructions to Abū-Talib about the care of the child, he took his last breath and passed away peacefully. With his death gloom descended on Makkah. Naturally, every eye in the place was wet at this great loss, but the Orphan of `Abdullah, who was only eight years old at the time, was extremely sad. He received the love and affection of both his parents only from his grandfather. Seeing him dead, he could not control his emotions. Tears flowed from his eyes. When the dead body was being taken in the bier after giving a bath in water and camphor water and wrapping in Yemeni Linen, he followed crying all the way. He returned home after his beloved grandfather was interred

The people of Makkah were very sad at the demise of their benefactor and chief. The poets penned sad requiems. For many days, trade came to a standstill in Makkah. :` Allamah Halabi writes

There was not such grieving at the death of anyone, as there was on the demise of [`Abd al-Muttalib. For many days, trading was suspended in the bazaar of Makkah.[۵۴]

He died in Makkah at the age of one hundred and twenty years, after eight years of
the Event of the Elephant

The eminence achieved by Hashim and `Abd al-Muttalib in this great lineage, was reached by none else. The headstrong Arab tribes recognized their superiority. The author of al-`Iqd al-Farid writes that once the Prophet (a.s) was traveling with `Ali (a.s) and Abū-Bakr. During their journey, they reached near a hamlet. Abū-Bakr went forward and asked the people about the tribe they belonged to. They said they were from the Tribe of Rabi`ah. Abū-Bakr asked them about the branch of Rabi`ah they were from. They said, "Dhuhā Akbar (the grand)!" He asked, "Was `Awf ibn Muhlim one of you?" They said, "No!" He asked, "Was Jassas ibn Murrah from their tribe?" They replied, "No!" Thus when they replied in negative to many of his queries, Abū-Bakr said that in that event they were not from the Dhuhā Akbar and were Dhuhā Asghar (the minor). Hearing this, a lad from that hamlet, Dhaghfal ibn Hanzalah, stood up and asked Abū-Bakr, "From which tribe do you come?" He replied, "From the Quraysh!" The boy asked, "From which branch?" He replied, "I am the progeny of Taym ibn Murrah." The youth asked, "Was Qasi ibn Kalab, who gathered the scattered lot in Makkah, one of you?" Abū-Bakr replied, "No!" The boy asked, "Was Hashim one
of you about whom the poet Matrūd ibn Ka`b al-Khuza`i has said

The esteemed Hashim put bread in the soup and feasted the people of Makkah on it
when they were starving for food

Abū-Bakr replied, “No!” The youth asked, “Was `Abd al-Muttalib one of you? On his spread, even the birds used to be guests! His visage was shining like a lamp in the nights” Abū-Bakr replied, “No!” He asked, “Are you the progeny of the people who used to quench the thirst of the Hajjis?” He replied, “No!” The youth wanted to question him the more, but Abū-Bakr cut the conversation short and went to the Prophet (a.s) and repeated the conversation to him. The Prophet (a.s) smiled and kept quiet.

This incident proves that the Arab tribes attached a lot of importance to the Hashemite family. A descent through Qasi, Hashim and `Abd al-Muttalib was of prime importance for them. Even those families that had only the name of Qasi in their chronology and not of Hashim and `Abd al-Muttalib were held in lesser esteem. The eminence that Allah had bestowed on the Hashemite and Muttalibite offspring has not been enjoyed by any other Arab family. Theirs is a tree that is free of any chronological pollution. Therefore, the Prophet of Islam (a.s) has said

Allah created Isma`il (a.s) as the progeny of Ibrahim (a.s) and from Isma`il (a.s) Banū-Kinānah and from Banū-Kinānah the Quraysh and from the Quraysh the Banū-Hashim and from them I was selected. [٥٥]

Ali (a.s) too is a part of this eminent group because he and the prophet (a.s) are of the same descent. They have both their descent from Hashim and `Abd al-Muttalib. `Abd al-Muttalib had, from various wives, ten sons. Of these ten brothers, `Abdullah and Abū-Talib were born to the same mother. Their mother was Fatimah bint `Amr al-Makhzūmiyyah. `Abdullah was the father of the Prophet (a.s) and Abū-Talib the father of `Ali (a.s). `Ali's chronology joins with the Prophet (a.s) with their grandfather `Abd al-Muttalib. On account of this, both are Muttalibite and Hashemite and Qarashi by descent.

Therefore, there is the same ancestral eminence in `Ali (a.s) as that of the Prophet (a.s). Another eminence of `Ali (a.s) is that his father was Shaykh al-Batha', Abū-Talib

Footnote

.Ansāb al-Ashrāf, Vol. ١, Page ١٥ [١]

.Tārīkh al-Khamīs Vol. ١, Page ١٤٧ [٢]

.Tārīkh al-Khamīs, Vol. ١, page ١٤٨ [٣]

.Tārīkh al-Ya`qūbī, Vol ١, Page ٢٢٦ [٤]

.Tabaqāt ibn Sa`d, Vol ١, Page ٥٨ [٥]

.Tārīkh al-Ya`qūbī, Vol ١, Page ٢٢٦ [٦]

.Al-Sīrah al-Halabiyyah Vol ١, Page ١٧ [٧]

.Tārīkh al-Ya`qūbī, Vol ١, Page ٢٢٧ [٨]

.Tārīkh al-Khamīs Vol ١, Page ١٥٠ [٩]

.Tārīkh Al-Ya`qūbī Vol ١, Page ٢٢٩ [١٠]

.Al-Sīrah al-Halabiyyah, Vol ١, Page ١٦ [١١]

.Al-Sīrah al-Halabiyyah, Vol ١, Page ١٦ [١٢]

.Tārīkh al-Khamīs, Vol ١, Page ١٦٢ [١٣]

.Al-`Iqd al-Farīd, Vol ١, Page ٢٠٩ [١٤]

.Al-Sīrah al-Halabiyyah, Page ١٦ [١٥]

.Ansāb al-Ashrāf, Vol ١, Page ٤١ [١٦]

.Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٢, Page ١١ [١٧]

- .Tabaqāt, Vol ١, Page ٤٨ [١٨]
- .Tārīkh al-Khamīs, Vol ١, Page ١٥٥ [١٩]
- .Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٢٣ [٢٠]
- .Tabaqāt Ibn Sa`d, Vol ١, Page ٧١ [٢١]
- .Tabaqāt Vol ١, Page ٧١ [٢٢]
- .Ansāb al-Ashrāf, Vol ١, Page ٥٢ [٢٣]
- .Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٢, Page ١٤ [٢٤]
- .Al-`Iqd al-Farīd, Vol ٢, Page ٢٠٩ [٢٥]
- .Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٢, Page ١٨ [٢٦]
- .Tārīkh Al-Ya`qūbī, Vol ١, Page ٢٣٩ [٢٧]
- .Al-Sīrah al-Halabiyyah, Vol ١, page ١٣ [٢٨]
- .Al-Sīrah al-Halabiyyah, Vol ١, Page ١٣ [٢٩]
- .Ansāb al-Ashrāf, Vol ١, Page ١٥٢ [٣٠]
- .Tārīkh al-Khamīs, Vol ١, Page ١٥٤ [٣١]
- .Ansāb al-Ashrāf, Vol ١, Page ٤٠ [٣٢]

.Tārīkh Al-Ya`qūbī, Vol ١, Page ٢٤٣ [٣٣]

.Ansāb al-Ashrāf, Vol ١, Page ٤١ [٣٤]

.Tārīkh al-Khamīs, Vol ١, Page ١٥٨ [٣٥]

.Al-Ma`ārif, Page ٣٣ [٣٦]

.Fihrist Ibn al-Nadīm, Page ١٣ [٣٧]

.Tārīkh al-Islām, Page ٣٧ [٣٨]

.Al-Fā'iq, Vol ١, Page ١٤٤ [٣٩]

.Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٢, Page ٨ [٤٠]

.Tārīkh al-Ya`qūbī, Vol ١, Page ٢٥٢ [٤١]

.Tārīkh Abul-Fidā', Vol ١, Page ١٠٩ [٤٢]

.Al-Sīrah al-Halabiyyah, Vol ١, Page ٧ [٤٣]

.Murūj al-Dhahab, Vol ١, Page ٣١٣ [٤٤]

.Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٢, Page ٩ [٤٥]

.Al-Sīrah al-Halabiyyah, Vol ١, Page ٤ [٤٦]

.See the Holy Qur'ān, ٩:١٩ [٤٧]

.Bihār al-Anwār, Vol ٤, Page ٣٨ []

.Tārīkh al-Ya`qūbī, Vol ٢, Page ١٤ [٤٨]

.Bihār al-Anwār, Vol ٤, Page ٣٩ [٤٩]

.Tabaqāt, Vol ١, Page ٨٩ [٥٠]

.Al-Sīrah al-Halabiyyah, Vol ١, Page ١٢٩ [٥١]

Al-`Iqd al-Farīd, Vol ١, Page ١٧٧ [٥٢]

.Tabaqāt Ibn Saad, Vol ١, Page ١١٨ []

.Tabaqāt, Vol ١, Page ١١٨ [٥٣]

.Al-Sīrah al-Halabiyyah, Vol ١, Page ١٨٤ [٥٤]

.Al-Tirmidhī, Vol ٢, Page ٢٢١ [٥٥]

ABŪ-TALIB IBN `ABD AL-MUTTALIB

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Abū-Talib's real name was the same as that of his ancestor, `Abd-Manaf. Some narrators say that his name was `Imran. All the earlier historians accept his name as Abū-Talib and his kunyah as the same. He was thirty-five years older than the Prophet (a.s). The Prophet (a.s) was born during `am al-fil (The Year of the Elephant) and Abū-Talib was born thirty-five years prior to that year in Makkah. For forty-three years, he remained under the tutelage of his father, `Abd al-Muttalib, and acquired from him his learning in literature, poetry and other disciplines. In his time, he was a well-known poet and littérateur. Besides this, he possessed an impressive and handsome personality. He combined in his person the Hashemite dignity and Qurayshi opulence. When he talked, pearls of knowledge flowed from his tongue. He was the inheritor of the high morals and character of his forbears and in the progeny of `Abd al-Muttalib he was the closest to the traits of his illustrious father

After `Abd al-Muttalib, he inherited the offices of Rifadah and Siqayah. He was remembered with the titles of Shaykh al-Batha', Sayyid al-Batha' and Ra'is Makkah.
:Diyarbakri writes

After Hashim, the duty of feeding the Hajjis was entrusted to `Abd al-Muttalib. After his demise, until the advent of Islam, every year this duty was performed by Abū-
[Talib.[۱]

In this world, wealth is a very powerful tool to achieve positions of strength. But Abū-Talib's leadership, management and planning needed no support of wealth. It was his sense of duty, strength of character and individuality that took him to the pinnacle of
,greatness. `Ali (a.s) says

Despite being impecunious, my father was accepted as the chief. Prior to him, there
[was none who was impecunious and a chief as well.[۲]

Although the monetary status of Abū-Talib was weak, he provided succor to the weak and the poor. For the Hajjis he used to get the food prepared with great care and interest. He used to arrange big containers of water and to render it sweet, he used to mix dates and raisins in the water. One year he was very hard pressed for money and was unable to make the arrangements for the feeding of the Hajjis. He borrowed ten thousand dirhams from his brother `Abbas and spent all that money for the entertainment of the Hajjis. The next year too he faced the same situation. Again he took a loan of fourteen thousand dirhams from `Abbas. `Abbas agreed to this arrangement on the condition that if Abū-Talib was unable to clear all the previous loans, he would have to transfer the office of Siqayah and Rifadah to `Abbas. Since he was not able to meet his commitment even the next year, he handed over the mantle to `Abbas. This kept on transferring to his offspring later on. Abū-Talib conceded the
.authority to his brother, but continued to serve the Hajjis in his personal capacity

Abū-Talib had a very kind heart and was always affected with the hardship and troubles of others. Because of this trait in his nature, there always used to be a number of needy persons calling at his place almost every day. He was always keen to help them. He would also rescue the oppressed and troubled persons from the clutches of the unkind. Therefore, when Abū-Salamah Makhzūmi returned from Abyssinia, Banū-Makhzūm started troubling him on account of his having embraced Islam. Abū-Salamah sought refuge from him. Abū-Talib gave refuge to him and publicly declared that the person was under his protection. He also declared that the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (a.s) too enjoyed his protection. When people from his tribe demanded Abū-Salamah to be handed over to them, Abū-Talib said that he was his nephew (he was al-Barra' bint `Abd al-Muttalib's son and thus his nephew). He told them that he was duty bound to give refuge to the person when he had sought it on account of his relationship with him. If he cannot give protection to his sister's son, how would he be able to give protection to his brother's son? Banū-Makhzūm could not pursue their demand any further

In the Arab social structure when the norms of social veracity were dying, and moral turpitude was at its zenith, he saved himself from such aberrations. Gambling was rampant those days and people in most homes used to consume intoxicants. He neither turned towards gambling nor did he ever drink. Ahmad ibn Zayni Dahlan writes

Abū-Talib, like his father, even in the Days of Ignorance considered intoxicants Haram [(taboo) for himself.]۳

Abū-Talib not only abstained from taboo things himself, he preached with others to the best of his capability to prevent them from the bad habits. He always strived for the reform of the society and the betterment of the country. He encouraged trading and search for fair livelihood. During the renovation of the Ka`bah, it was he who reminded the Quraysh not to involve the ill-gotten wealth for the noble purpose. Prior to the coming of Islam, when floods weakened the walls of the Ka`bah, and the Quraysh contemplated rebuilding the structure, a huge python was noticed near the foundation of the building. People were scared seeing the reptile and the work came :to a standstill. Quraysh were thinking of a way out and Abū-Talib said

This construction has to be done only with pure and legitimately earned funds. Therefore, do not put such money for the work that has been acquired under duress.

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The people followed his advice and put only legitimately earned money for the project. When they came near the Ka`bah they saw that a huge bird appeared and flew away with the python in its talons. The way was now clear for them to renovate .and reconstruct the Ka`bah

Abū-Talib tried to introduce such practices in the society that were based on the norms of equity and justice. He wanted that none should be deprived of his rights. Therefore, with this spirit, he introduced the practice of al-Qassamah in the matter of blood money for the murder of `Amr ibn `Alqamah. Al-Qassamah means that when a person is murdered, and his successors claim that a particular person is the murderer, and are unable to produce two witnesses, although the circumstantial evidence is there to prove the crime, then the aggrieved party has to produce fifty persons to take an oath in the support of the prosecution. If they are short of persons to make up the fifty, then some of the witnesses might take the oath twice. This procedure was put into force to ensure that the blood of the murdered person had not gone in vain.

:Later on Islam too continued with this practice. Ibn Abil-Hadid writes

During the period of ignorance Abū-Talib introduced the practice of al-Qassamah to give justice in the case of the murder of `Amr ibn `Alqamah. Islam too continued with [this practice].[۵

Be it friendship or enmity, Abū-Talib never abandoned justice and fair play in his dealings. He was not only against tyranny during peaceful days, but also during the times of battles and strife, he did not approve unnecessary shedding of human blood. Therefore, during the period of Ignorance a battle was fought between the Quraysh and the tribe of Qays, which is known as The Battle of al-Fajar. In this battle, Banū-Hashim too were on the side of the Quraysh. The Prophet of Islam (a.s) was still a child. He too went to the battlefield along with his uncle, but only a silent observer. The days when Abū-Talib participated in the skirmishes, the Quraysh used to have an upper hand. The Quraysh, considering his presence as a sign of victory, said that whether he actively participated in the battle or not, his presence only would be a source of encouragement for them. Abū-Talib said

,If you abstain from tyranny, injustice and blaming persons unjustly

[I shall not move away from your view!][۶

This was the noble thinking of Abū-Talib that he recognized the difference between the fierceness of the spirit of revenge during the battle and the requirements of defense. He viewed tyranny and torture with displeasure. He tolerated battle only to the extent that it was fought within the established norms of chivalry and fair play

Abū-Talib was moderate in his views, wanted to be just, affable and thoughtful. The wise men of Arabia used to draw benefit from his company. And took lessons from him in norms of morality. Al-Ahnaf ibn Qays, who was a well-known thinker in Arabia, was asked about the person from whom he acquired his affability and good manners. He said that he learned these skills from Qays ibn `Asim al-Minqari. Qays was asked as to where he got his instruction. He said it was Aktham ibn Sayfi who was his :mentor. In the end when Aktham was asked the same question, he said

The chief of the Arabs and the non-Arabs, the paragon of knowledge and learning“
[Abū-Talib ibn `Abd al-Muttalib”[v

In his time, he was a statesman, a thinker, a mentor and a man of wisdom. He was a poet of very high caliber. There is a compendium of poetry, Diwan Shaykh al-Abtah, composed by him and his couplets are spread over many well-known books of history. Although Arabia of those days was a cradle of poetry, most of it was self-praising Qasidah or odes. But his style was different from that of the run of the mill poets then. In his couplets, there was neither the element of self-praise nor the touch of the commonplace. There was a subtle flow and simplicity in his poetry and a lesson for the reader on morals, righteousness and truth. Therefore, `Ali (a.s), terming his :poetry as an educational and moral treasure says

Read his couplet and make your children read them. Because he was on Allah’s Faith“
[and there is a big treasury of knowledge in his poetry.”[^

Besides these merits, his ancestral connections and the unique privilege of being the mentor and the guardian of the Prophet of Islam (a.s) singles him out from all his contemporaries. The Prophet (a.s), posthumous born that he was, grew under his tutelage and spent most of his years with him. When the Prophet (a.s) was six years old, he lost his mother and after another two years, his doting grandfather too expired. The grandfather put the child in the trust of his uncle, Abū-Talib. When Abū-Talib heard his father make his will about the little ward, he said

Father! You need not make a will to me about the care of Muhammad (a.s). He is my [son and nephew!]

Abd al-Muttalib had many children. At the time of his death, all his sons and relations were around him. Every one of them was capable of taking charge of the child. But in his wisdom and farsightedness he entrusted the upbringing and care of Muhammad (a.s) to Abū-Talib. He knew it pretty well that the love and affection that Abū-Talib had for the Orphan of `Abdullah was not manifested by his other uncles. The expectations the patriarch had from Abū-Talib were not unfounded. He must have also had the fact in his mind that Abū-Talib not only had ancestral relationship with Muhammad (a.s) but he was the closest to him through his maternal relationship `Abdullah and Abū-Talib born to the same mother! Perhaps `Abd al-Muttalib had gauged from his reading of the revealed books that Abū-Talib would be the best guardian and mentor for the upbringing of the Prophet (a.s). Some historians have also written that a lot was drawn between Abū-Talib and al-Zubayr ibn `Abd al-Muttalib and it went in the favor of the former. There is another mention that when the lot was to be drawn, the little Muhammad (a.s) caught the lapel of Abū-Talib's cloak and thus expressed his preference. Whatever the basis of this decision, it cannot be denied that Allah wished that His select creature must get the care and support of Abū-Talib during his formative and impressionable childhood! Allah has thus expressed in the Holy Book, "Has he not given you succor finding you orphaned?" All the commentators agree that .in this Verse Abū-Talib's affection and care for the little orphan is mentioned

Thus Abū-Talib honored the will of his departed father and discharged his duty as the guardian of his beloved nephew. Every historian has acknowledged this fact. Ibn Sa`d writes

Abū-Talib loved the Prophet (a.s) very much, even more than his own children. He made him sleep near himself. Whenever he went out, he always took him along. He [valued him more than anything else in the world!]

Abū-Talib had made a deep study of the ways of Muhammad (a.s) from his very childhood. He found him quiet, shy and lonely. He never played or cavorted like any other children would. He had no taste for sight seeing. Neither he was harsh to anyone nor did he ever play any childish pranks. All these observations impressed Abū-Talib so much that he realized that the child was far above the ordinary children of his age. Therefore, besides his familial love for the child, he developed an inexplicable respect for him! This affection and respect was behind his willingness to .make any sacrifices for Muhammad (a.s) as years went by

The manifestations that Abū-Talib observed in the child made him wonder. Whenever Muhammad (a.s) partook food with the family, however sparse the quantity, everyone seemed to have eaten his fill! Therefore, it was a practice in the household that the child had to be around before anyone started eating. Abū-Talib made it a rule that Muhammad (a.s) should take the first morsel before anyone else partook of the food. If someone lifted the bowl of milk to drink, Abū-Talib asked him to wait until Muhammad (a.s) had it. They noticed that when they drank the milk after the child, the quantity in the bowl would suffice for the entire family. Seeing this, Abū-Talib would say to Muhammad (a.s), “You are blessed

Once he was going somewhere with Muhammad (a.s). When they were at a distance of three miles from Mount `Arafah at Dhu'l-Majaz, they felt very thirsty. He asked Muhammad (a.s) if water could be found anywhere near that place. Muhammad (a.s) dismounted from the camel, kicked a boulder and uttered something. Water started flowing near the boulder. He said, "Come uncle! Drink the water!" When they drank the water, he kicked the boulder once again and the flow of the water stopped. Seeing these manifestations, Abū-Talib used to make Muhammad (a.s) the intercessor for his prayers, particularly in times of drought. Therefore, once there was utter panic in Makkah because of no receipt of rains for a very long spell. Some said that they must beg al-Lat and al-`Uzza for help. Others were bowing to Manat. One elderly person :said

Where are you loitering (in the dark) when there is the offspring of Ibrahim (a.s) and“
[the son of Isma`il (a.s) in your midst.”[۱۱

People asked him if he was referring to Abū-Talib? He said "Yes!" Hearing this Abū-Talib was approached by the people complaining of the failure of all cultivation and drought prevailing in the region. He wanted him to pray for rains. Abū-Talib caught hold of the hand of the Orphan of `Abdullah and proceeded to the precincts of the Ka`bah. He made the child squat near the wall of the Ka`bah, raised his finger towards the sky. There were no signs of rain falling. But within moments cool winds started blowing, dense clouds gathered and it started pouring. The parched land .became wet and greenery reappeared in the wilderness

Abū-Talib was a reputed trader of wheat and perfumes in his day. According to the custom of the Quraysh, he used to travel on business to Syria once every year. When the time for one of his journeys approached, he mentioned to Muhammad (a.s) about his plans but did not ask him to join the caravan. At that time, his age was only twelve years and he did not want to expose the youth to the hardships of the travel through the desert. When he knew that his uncle was not taking him along, he embraced him and started insisting on accompanying him. Abū-Talib too had no desire of leaving him behind in Makkah. He agreed to take him along saying

!By God, I shall take him along

[We shall never be separated from each other!]

Abū-Talib took him along and commenced his journey to Syria. When their caravan arrived at al-Basrah in the southern region of Syria, the hermit Jirjis (Georges) ibn Abi-Rabi`ah, who was known with the sobriquet of Bahira, saw Muhammad (a.s) in the caravan and noticed signs in him that he knew were of the Last of the Prophets (a.s). To look at him from close quarters, he invited the entire caravan to his hermitage for a meal. The Quraysh left behind Muhammad (a.s) near the baggage and went along to the hermitage to share Bahira's repast. When he did not find the youth in the group, he asked, "Is anyone left outside that has not entered the hermitage with you?" They informed him that only a child has been left out to take care of their merchandise. Bahira asked them to call him in too. When he came, Bahira looked at Muhammad (a.s) with keen interest from head to toe, removed his cloak from the back and saw the Seal of Prophethood between his shoulders. He also asked him about several things experienced by him during the waking and sleeping hours. Then he asked Abū-Talib about his relationship with the child. Abū-Talib said that it was his son. Bahira said that he could not possibly be his son. He told that he could say with certainty that the child's father was no more. Then Abū-Talib told him that the child was his nephew and was his charge. That he was posthumously born. Bahira said that the child must be taken back home from there only, lest the Jews learn about him and cause him harm. The child is the Messenger of Allah and will be Ordained as Prophet. He added that when the caravan was descending from the hill, he noticed that the trees were

bowing down and wherever the child went a cloud was hovering over his head. Besides these manifestations, he had read about the child in the revealed books of yore wherein his face, the personality and other features have been described. On the strength of these evidences, he stressed that the child was the Prophet whose coming has been forecast

When the Prophet (a.s) attained the age of twenty, he told Abū-Talib that he had seen three radiant bodies in his dream and one of them, pointing towards him, was saying to the other two that this is the one to whose succor you must rise when the time comes. He did not talk anymore than that. Abū-Talib mentioned about this dream to a scholar of Makkah. He looked at Muhammad (a.s) intently and said, “By God! He is the possessor of a pure spirit and is a true prophet!” Abū-Talib asked the person to keep his counsel and not reveal about his finding to anyone. He feared that people of his own tribe become jealous of Muhammad (a.s) and cause harm to him. He told the man :that what he surmised was true and he himself had visions about the phenomenon

My father ` Abd al-Muttalib had told me that he (Muhammad) has been sent as a Prophet by Allah and had instructed me to keep the matter a secret lest the enemies [harm him.]۱۳

These events had paved the way for Abū-Talib to accept the evidence of Muhammad’s Prophethood. He had the conviction that the Orphan of ` Abdullah was the prophet of the near future. Therefore, for his upbringing and education, he felt spiritual elation more than material happiness. He used to hover around him like a worm around the radiance of the light. He took full care of him, day and night. Muhammad (a.s) had entered the state of youth from childhood. Now Abū-Talib started thinking of putting him on the road to earning his livelihood. The economic medium of earning a living in the Qurayshi society was trading. But this definitely needed monetary investment that Muhammad (a.s) lacked. At that time in Makkah there was a wealthy lady, Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, who used to depute her representatives to different cities to trade on her behalf. Abū-Talib suggested to Muhammad (a.s) to offer to manage her business. He himself went to her and requested her to depute Muhammad (a.s) to tour on her behalf for business as is done by others. Khadijah approved of this offer, explained her business terms and issued merchandise to Muhammad (a.s) to proceed on a tour of business. He kept trading on her behalf for some time and achieved much success. Khadijah was much impressed with his business skills, honesty and straightforwardness. Through some source, she sent a proposal of matrimony to Muhammad (a.s). After consulting his uncle, Abū-

Talib, he accepted the proposal. After finalizing the initial procedures Abū-Talib, Hamzah, `Abbas and other persons from Banū-Hashim and important personages from the tribe of Quraysh went to the house of Khadijah. The marriage agreement :was finalized and Abū-Talib recited the Sermon of matrimony

All praise to Allah who created us in the offspring of Ibrahim (a.s) and the progeny of Isma`il (a.s) the children of Ma`d and Mudar; and made us the keepers of His House (the Ka`bah) and made it the Place of Hajj and Peace for us. He made us rulers over men this is my nephew, Muhammad ibn `Abdullah. To whomsoever he is compared, he will emerge superior in nobility And felicity; wisdom and superiority Although he has less of wealth, wealth is like the declining shadow that goes away and is like something that comes to one temporarily and is withdrawn! By Allah! His future is
[great and a great Message will emanate from him!]

Although this sermon is very short, it reflects Abū-Talib's beliefs and thoughts about the Prophet (a.s) He starts the sermon with the praise of Allah that proves his faith in the Unity of Allah. Then he proudly claims his descent from Ibrahim (a.s) and Isma`il (a.s). Then he expresses pride over the privilege his family had of being the keepers of the Holy Ka`bah. This indicates that they were the rulers because of their august descent but also because they were the true practitioners of the Faith of Ibrahim (a.s). Then he praises the wisdom and sagacity of Muhammad (a.s) and describes the transitory nature of wealth in this world. He compares wealth to the declining shadow that vanishes with time. Then with the words of "al-Naba' al-`Azim" he concludes that the Prophet (a.s) had a radiant future in store and predicts that soon he will guide the
.humankind on the Straight Path

When the Prophet (a.s) completed forty years of his life, Allah wanted him to fulfill the purpose for which he had been created. The heavy burden of guiding humankind was placed on his shoulders. He became known the beacons of guidance and removing the darkness of ignorance and polytheism from the society. He stood up to take the Message to every home in every nook and corner of the world. In the early years of al-Bi`thah (the Annunciation) he propagated his creed discreetly and in secret. Only select few persons had embraced Islam and great care was exercised in declaring their faith to others. For offering congregational prayer (salat al-jama`ah) they carefully sought opportunities and venues. Sometimes they used to pray inside the four walls of their homes. At other times he would go with `Ali (a.s) to the crevices of hills around Makkah to offer their prayers. Once Abū-Talib chanced upon the two cousins prostrating in one of these hidden crevices. He called up `Ali (a.s), his son, and asked him about the faith that he was practicing along with his cousin. He replied, “I
”!(have adopted the Faith of Allah and His Prophet, Muhammad (a.s

:Hearing this, Abū-Talib said

[You remain attached to him; he will guide you to the Path of Virtue! [۱۵

If Abū-Talib was an infidel and an enemy of Islam, he would definitely have told the Prophet (a.s) that he had entrusted to him his impressionable young son, `Ali (a.s), with full trust that he would not lead him away from his father’s faith and create rift between father and son doing otherwise. To the contrary, when Abū-Talib noticed `Ali (a.s) offering prayers according to the tenets of Muhammad’s Faith, he encouraged him and told him that by following his cousin he would remain on the right path! This proves that Abū-Talib was not in favor of the ways of the infidels and
.idolaters

Three years went by when the Prophet (a.s) propagated his Faith quietly without making any public announcement. Then came Allah's Command that he should go public in spreading his mission. For this purpose the Prophet (a.s) got together a feast at the home of Abū-Talib where all the relatives and friends were invited to convey the Message of the New Faith to them and ask them to give up idolatry forthwith. Abū-Talib realized from the very looks of the Quraysh that they would not budge from their deeply ingrained beliefs. He knew that they will be forced to rise against the Prophet (a.s). He therefore sounded Muhammad (a.s) to be discreet in propagating his mission. However, he told Muhammad (a.s) that he should not consider himself hapless and alone. He assured him that, as his uncle, his fullest protection was there for him. Impressed by Muhammad's spirit of choosing the Right Path despite all the difficulties, Abū-Talib told him

[By God! Until we have lives in our bodies, we shall protect him from his enemies!]"[۱۶“

When the Prophet's voice went outside the four walls of the home and reverberated in the idolatrous environments of Makkah, then, as a reaction, waves of resistance and opposition rose. Those who were his friends and admirers turned sworn enemies now. Quraysh created hurdles at every step in the way of the missionary activities of the small group. They created every imaginable impediment in the way of propagation of the Faith. But the Prophet (a.s) took all these difficulties in his stride. When the Quraysh saw that he was pursuing his mission with determination, they came to Abū-Talib as a strong and influential delegation to ask him to dissuade Muhammad (a.s) to forthwith terminate his activities. They said that he had flattered some unimportant persons to adopt his Faith. They also said that they wanted to talk with Muhammad (a.s) to refrain from what he was doing. Abū-Talib went inside the house to meet Muhammad (a.s) and apprise him of what the delegates were saying. He asked him to meet them, if he felt it worth doing so. The Prophet (a.s) came out and asked the Quraysh what they wanted to tell him. They said that they wished to bring to his notice that they wanted him not to have anything to do with their idols. They wanted him not to talk ill of the idols and stop attacking their age-old religious practices. They said that if he agreed to abide by this demand, they would not

interfere with his activities. The Prophet (a.s) rejoined saying that his belief was that Allah is one and that they should worship only Him. Other than Him, they should stop worshipping their own fabricated gods. He affirmed that it was his duty to condemn idolatry and promote worship of one and only Allah. The Quraysh said that it was strange that he wanted them to give up the practices of their fathers, grandfathers and the forbears! How, they said, he expected them to abandon their pantheon of gods and accepted to worship only one god, Allah! Saying this, they went away in a .huff

At this juncture, Abū-Talib used his discretion and cool thinking to ensure that the . disturbed feelings of the Quraysh did not go beyond control. If he had taken a tough stand with them, they might have turned aggressive instantly. Besides considering discretion as the better part of valor, Abū-Talib wanted to give some time to the Quraysh to give a serious thought to Muhammad's mission. He wanted them to think over the matter with cool minds to distinguish between the right and the wrong. He told them that they had all along recognized Muhammad's truthfulness and straightforwardness; they should weigh him in this matter with the same yardstick. He wanted them to consider that until the age of forty years they never found him telling a falsehood, then how could they imagine that in the very important matter of Faith he would suddenly tell falsehoods against his very grain! But the Quraysh were very adamant. They would not budge an iota from their stand. They thought that the only solution to the problem lay in silencing the Propagator of the Truth! But Abū-Talib being around, the Quraysh did not have courage to take the extreme step against Muhammad (a.s) They played a trick on Abū-Talib that they brought a handsome lad from the clan of Quraysh to him and suggested that he could adopt him, `Imarah ibn al-Walid, and hand over Muhammad (a.s) to them. When he heard this strange :request, Abū-Talib said

How strange is this justice that you want me to bring up your son and hand over my [own son to you for killing. By God! I shall never do this!"]^[۱۷]

This demand of the Quraysh was contrary to all norms of natural love and affinity, made in utter ignorance or deliberate purpose that they wanted Abū-Talib to hand-over his nephew to their tyranny. Even a person of very ordinary intelligence would not tolerate such a suggestion. Abū-Talib, on the contrary, was a person of great .courage and filial affection

This demand of the Quraysh demonstrates their mean mentalities. They stooped so low in the enmity of Muhammad (a.s) that all thought of virtue had left them. It can well be imagined how difficult it would have been to prevent them from implementing their nefarious plans. Did anyone other than Abū-Talib ever think of removing these hurdles in the way of Muhammad (a.s). History is helpless in indicating any other name than this uncle and protector of the Prophet (a.s). Because of Abū-Talib this stratagem of the Quraysh too was neutralized. Despite all their tyrannies and oppression, the voice of Islam, instead of being suppressed, increased in volume day by day. Now they feared that if the numbers of his followers swelled, then this group might grow in strength to disturb the political balance in Makkah. When they felt that this revolutionary idea might disturb their apple cart, some of the sheiks and elites came once again to Abū-Talib. They said that during their previous visit they had quietly departed after making their case with him. But they stressed that they had now run out of patience and no more willing to consider his seniority and old age. They had thought that the voice advocating for change might die of its own. But, contrary to their expectations, that did not happen. They wanted him to warn his nephew sternly to stop talking about the heavenly things. Otherwise, they wanted him to stay aloof and let them decide the things for themselves! Seeing their changed and stern attitude Abū-Talib went to Muhammad (a.s) and apprised him of the unreasonable attitude of the Shaykhs of Quraysh and advised him to adopt an attitude that they did not kill him with stealth. Abū-Talib also told him that how long he could contend with their crowd all alone. Hearing these words from Abū-Talib, Muhammad's eyes watered. And he said in a shaking voice, "Uncle! I invite them to be virtuous and to worship Allah! This is according to Allah's Commandment to me. Even if the Quraysh put the moon in one hand and the sun in the other, I cannot refrain from doing my duty!" Saying this he walked away from the presence of his uncle. When Abū-Talib

saw Muhammad (a.s) going, he felt a shivering in his old body. He called Muhammad
:(a.s) to come back and impressed with his courage said with full confidence

p: ۱۰۴

O Son of my brother! Go and tell them what you wish to! By Allah! I shall never
[abandon your side!] [۱۸]

Getting this courageous response from Abū-Talib the tears from Muhammad's eyes vanished. The courage of the determined heart increased many fold. The feeling of loneliness and helplessness had gone. After renewing his determination, Abū-Talib :headed towards the Quraysh. He asked them not to linger there any more and added

[By Allah! My nephew's tongue is never accustomed to falsehoods!] [۱۹]

Although these delegations from the Quraysh were making Abū-Talib a medium of communication, he was never seen as siding with them. If he had endorsed their views, he would have asked Muhammad (a.s) to avoid interfering with their religious practices instead of just communicating their messages. He would have asked him not to condemn their idol. He could have also told Muhammad (a.s) that he himself was a follower of their creed. But history fails to make any reference that Abū-Talib ever took that sort of attitude. He was just communicating the message without adding anything to endorse their stand. The Quraysh too had understood that Abū-Talib was in total support of his nephew and that it was not possible to endorse their stand. They now formed a group to oppose Muhammad (a.s) tooth and nail on their own. They sometimes threw stones on him, sometimes the garbage. They called him a magician, a sorcerer and a madcap. Whenever he stood up for offering prayer, they .would try to ridicule him

One day the Prophet (a.s) was busy offering prayer near the Ka`bah. Abū-Jahl spotted some persons sitting nearby and asked them if one of them who could disturb Muhammad's prayer. `Abdullah ibn al-Zuba`ra stood up and brought some dung and gore. He rubbed it on the face of Muhammad (a.s). After completing his prayer the Prophet (a.s) went straight to Abū-Talib who was very upset seeing him in that predicament. He asked the name of the person who did such a mean thing. When he was told that the mischief was done by `Abdullah al-Zuba`ra, he took his sword and .proceeded towards the Ka`bah

As soon as the culprit and his companions saw him coming in a rage, they tried to sneak away from there. Abū-Talib told in a thundering voice that if any one of them moved from his place, he will no more be a living man. They shrank into a huddle at the place they were. Abū-Talib smeared gore and dung on each of their faces and chided them

Once it happened that the Prophet (a.s) did not return home until late in the evening. Abū-Talib was worried that the Quraysh might abduct or even kill him. He searched him in all the possible places but without any success. He called some Hashemite youths and asked them to sit near the Quraysh chiefs hiding poniards inside their sleeves. One of them should go and take a place near Abū-Jahl. If they got wind that Muhammad (a.s) was killed, they should pounce on their individual targets and kill them instantly. The youths took their poniards and sat close to the chiefs as instructed. Abū-Talib redoubled his search now. Near the hill of Safa he found Zayd ibn Harithah coming towards him. He asked him if he had seen Muhammad (a.s). He informed that a few moments ago he was with him at the base of the hill of Safa. Abū-Talib asked him to go and call him immediately. He added that until he found him safe and sound, he would not return home. Zayd informed Muhammad (a.s) the worry of his uncle. He immediately rushed to where his uncle was. Abū-Talib was much relieved to see his nephew. The next day he took Muhammad (a.s) and the Hashemite youths to the chiefs of Quraysh and recounted the previous evening's episode to them. The youths showed the poniards that they were hiding under their sleeves. Abū-Talib told the chiefs that if Muhammad (a.s) had come to any harm at their instance, they would all have been slain. He asked them to view those sharp poniards carefully

By God! If you had killed Muhammad (a.s), not one of you would have lived thereafter.

[We would have died and would have killed you all!]

Rivalry already existed between Quraysh and Banū-Hashim. And now it turned into open enmity. The ire of the Quraysh reached such heights that they decided to boycott Banū-Hashim. They forced them, thus, to move away from the town to a ravine of the hill on the outskirts. This place too was not out of the reach of the Quraysh. A danger always lurked that they might attack from any direction any time. In the nights, the danger used to be more. In view of this danger Abū-Talib used to remain awake the whole nights. In the bed of the Prophet (a.s), he used to make one of his sons sleep every

night. It was the time when the Prophet (a.s) had supporters in the entire Arabia who could be counted on the fingers! It was Abū-Talib in these dire circumstances who was like a mountain of support and protection for him. He neither left his side any time, nor did he remove his hand from giving help and protection to his nephew. It was his courage and support that Quraysh could not put into operation their nefarious plans and the Prophet (a.s) remained safe from them. Abū-Talib continued to defend him the way the circumstances demanded every time and rendered the satanic plans of the Quraysh ineffective. If Abū-Talib had not protected his nephew wholeheartedly, the course of history would have been different and the early Muslims, and their Prophet (a.s), would have had to bear untold atrocities at the hands of the cruel Quraysh

Abū-Talib's spirit of sacrifice and dedication and determination in providing help and support to the Prophet (a.s) is a universally acknowledged fact of Islamic History. None could dare to deny this fact. But some people have tried to give another color to this act of support to mar the spirit of the entire act. Therefore, they have been stressing that the help rendered by Abū-Talib was not with any spirit of religious fervor but was sheer filial and tribal consideration that prompted him to do what he did! They say that Arabs come to the help of a person who is related to them by the distance of many generations. In the case of Muhammad (a.s), he was caring for his own brother's son! There is no denying the fact that he was most closely related to Abū-Talib. But one has to consider that the dispute was not over any material things. Muhammad (a.s) had challenged the very fabric of their religion, their idolatry and Abū-Talib was a practitioner of that creed. In the matters of religion persons do not tolerate the deviation of their own sons, here we find him defending a nephew knowing fully well that he had plans to destroy the very creed! Abū-Talib was helping him to strengthen his mission of change. This attitude cannot just be termed as support because of filial attachment only! If the support extended was only because of familial attachment, one has to consider whether the support will be more for one's own sons or a nephew. Abū-Talib, with his unstinted support to Muhammad (a.s) exposing his own sons to the danger of retaliation by the Quraysh and this danger was potent and constant! He went to the extent of asking his sons to sleep in the bed of Muhammad (a.s) to preclude any chance of surprise attack by the enemy in the nights. At what cost? Was it not at the risk to the lives of his own sons? What was the spirit behind these acts? Any father rates the protection of his own son more than that of a nephew. Then why is this phenomenon contrary to human nature? There must have been a stronger and more potent inspiration for Abū-Talib to do what he did! This certainly makes one ponder that the help and support to Muhammad (a.s) had a very strong religious overtone and not only filial attachment of his uncle. Abū-Lahab too was an uncle of the Prophet (a.s). Why did not he come to the rescue of Muhammad (a.s) because of filial attachment! To the contrary, he has gone down into the history as the worst and sworn enemy of the Prophet (a.s) only because he cared only for his ancestral creed and was intolerant to any change even at the hands of his own blood relation! Even Ibrahim (a.s) and Azar were related to each other. Azar too

was an uncle of Ibrahim (a.s). Why did he come to harm his own nephew? Similarly, Noah's own son went in support of the infidels against his father. Why there were dissensions between Noah (a.s), Lot (a.s) and their wives? The differences were because they wished to practice different creeds! On the one hand attributing Abū-Talib's unstinted support only to filial love and on the other hand doubting his Faith
!does not appeal to reason

The way Abū-Talib dedicated himself wholeheartedly to the protection and care of Muhammad (a.s), a rational mind will think that if he was not convinced of the veracity of the Prophet's Mission, he would not have gone to the lengths in his support that he did. He was doing this at the cost of his comfortable life and the eminence that he had in that nomadic society. This is clear evidence that his heart was radiant with the light of Faith and there were the imprints of belief in Allah and His Prophet (a.s) in his :psyche. Therefore, Asaduddin, the judge, has written

In our view, Faith is witnessing (upholding) the things upheld by the Prophet (a.s) and their inclusion in the Shari`ah is proven. This too is the belief of the majority of master [scholars, such as al-Buqlani and Ishaq al-Safara'ini.[۲۱

When the scholars and researchers endorse the witness of the hearts and the batini (intrinsic) belief of a person as Faith, then why one should refute Abū-Talib's Faith. His contributions to the propagation of Islam and support to the Prophet (a.s) are proof of his Faith. In fact, this spirit is not evidenced by many of the persons who publicly accepted Islam. Public acceptance of the creed can also be done by hypocrites! There has not been dearth of such persons in the annals of Islamic History! They made tall claims of support to Islam with their tongues, but when the time came for making sacrifices, they fled from the scene of battle! There are also instances of persons intriguing with the enemies against the interest of the Prophet (a.s) and Islam. True belief in Islam is from the depths of the heart and not mere lip service. Faith is the name of firm belief and conviction and belief not mere utterance of some words from the tongue for the benefit of the hearer! If oral utterance alone were the expression :of Faith, then Allah would not have refuted the Faith of such persons

Some persons say with their tongues that they have Faith in Allah and the Day of Reckoning although they are those who have not adopted the Faith

The Faith that comes from the heart will have no place for hypocrisy and duplicity. Every act of such persons will be a mirror of his Faith and in accord with the requirements of the belief. On the basis of the person's actions, his Faith is identified. Faith means firm belief and conviction. Conviction has its effect on the actions of the person. Viewing the life and actions of Abū-Talib one cannot deny the fact that all his assertions were in the service of strengthening Islam. His contribution can be termed as the foundation stone of the super-structure that arose later on. He bore all sorts of hardships to strengthen and pave the way for the propagation and growth of the Creed. He supported the Prophet (a.s) with absolute dedication and sincerity. He kept himself away from the polytheist practices of the day practiced the Islamic ways. From his life is evident the friendship for Islam and obedience of the Prophet's teachings. Then who has the right to remove him from the sphere of Islam when the Holy Qur'an says that if a person's ways are in accord with Islam and his actions are the same as those of Muslims, then people should not term him an infidel

A person who wishes you peace and presents himself as a Muslim, you must not tell him that he is not a person of the Faith

If it is accepted that Abū-Talib did not profess Islam publicly, the majority of the jurists believe that public profession of Faith is not compulsory when there is a strong reason to keep it in wraps. Therefore, in the initial years after the Annunciation, the invitation to the Creed was done on the quiet and in secret conclaves. The Prophet (a.s) himself used to advise the new entrants to keep their creed secret. This was a wise way of protecting Islam and its proponents. In accordance with this, many prominent Muslims kept their identity secret for many years. They followed the Islamic norms only to the extent it was possible in those difficult days. Even when Islam assumed the status of a group, however small, some Muslims discretely kept away from it for their own reasons. They did this to avoid tensions in the families or the society. History indicates that `Umar's sister, Fatimah, who was the wife of Sa`id ibn Zayd, had already adopted Islam along with her husband. She used to keep her Islam secret. Similarly, Na`im ibn `Abdullah, who belonged to the tribe of Banū-`Adi, was already a Muslim but kept his creed a secret because of the pressures from his tribesmen. After the Migration of the Prophet (a.s), when the Islamic Commonwealth was established in al-Madinah, there was still a group of Muslims in Makkah who continued to keep their Faith a closely guarded secret. The Prophet's own uncle, `Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib, was one of such personages. Therefore, Abū-Rafi`

:writes

I was the slave of `Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib and had already adopted Islam at the homes of the Prophet's relatives. Therefore, Ummul-Fadl—the wife of `Abbas—and I were Muslims. `Abbas was scared of his tribesmen and did not want to invite their ire.

[Hence, he kept his Islam a secret.]^{۲۲}

These persons were serving the cause of Islam in their own way by keeping their Faith a secret. Therefore, these were the persons who kept the Prophet (a.s) informed of the movements of the Quraysh who were planning preemptive attacks on the meager forces of early Islam. Ibn Abd al Bar writes about `Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib

He sent all the reports about the polytheists to the Prophet (a.s) in writing that gave strength (of information) to Muslims. `Abbas desired to join the Prophet (a.s) in al-Madinah. But the Prophet (a.s) wrote to him that his presence at Makkah was better [and beneficial].^{۲۳}

This proves that their keeping the faith as a secret was with the approval of the Prophet (a.s). If keeping one's Faith secret were against the norms of Islam, then the Prophet (a.s) would never have allowed it. It proves conclusively that keeping one's Faith secret is not considered non-Islamic in any way

If affirmation of Faith by a person required oral expression, the condition definitely will be unnecessary that it should be only in prescribed form. When this condition is not necessary, then Abū-Talib's affirmation of the Prophethood of Muhammad (a.s) cannot be denied. The Prophet (a.s) once visited Abū-Talib to inquire about his health :when the patriarch said

O my nephew! Pray to your Sustainer who has made you ordained Prophet that He“
[gives me recovery from illness! [۲۴

The Prophet (a.s) raised his hands in prayer and said, “O Allah! Give recovery to my Uncle.” As a result of this prayer Abū-Talib immediately recovered from the illness and left his bed. If he had not accepted Muhammad (a.s) as Allah’s “Ordained” Prophet, he would not have referred to the Prophethood when he asked him to pray. Is not accepting the Annunciation (al-Bi` thah) acceptance of the Prophethood? And is not instant recovery after the prayer a confirmation that Abū-Talib did have Faith in Muhammad’s Prophethood! Besides this event, many a couplet composed by Abū-Talib is proof that affirms his belief in Muhammad’s Prophethood. These couplets affirm his Faith in the veracity of Islam, the truthfulness of the Faith and the Prophethood of Muhammad (a.s). Such couplets are so many that ShahrAshūb Al-Mazindarani has written in ‘Mutashabihat al-Qur’an’ commenting on the Verse of Sūrah of al-Hajj that the couplets that evidence Abū-Talib’s Faith number more than :three thousand. Ibn Abil-Hadid, after quoting several of his couplets writes

These couplets have been quoted in continuity. Even if the continuity was not there, they are all on the same subject that is common in all the couplets. And that common [factor is affirmation of the truthfulness of Muhammad (a.s). [۲۵

Some of the couplets composed by Abū-Talib are quoted here for the interest of the readers. These couplets fully represent his Faith and Belief and the historians have :quoted them with full proof of authenticity

When the Quraysh infidels accused the Prophet (a.s) of falsehoods, he pointed
:towards the Prophet (a.s) and recited the following couplets

You are custodian (amin) and Allah's custodian in which there is no falsehood! You are
free of cheap talk and are straightforward! You are that Prophet of Allah about whom
[we know! And on you has been Revealed the Qur'an by Allah! [۲۶

When the Quraysh asked him to stop the Prophet (a.s) or else they would be forced to
:become aggressive, Abū-Talib recited the following couplets

,By Allah! Until I am interred in the soil
!The Quraysh hordes dare not come near you
,Recount Allah's Commands without fear
!Happily cool your eyes in this manner
,You have invited me to Islam—I know you as my well wisher
!And then you are amin as well
I am sure Muhammad's Faith is
[Better than all the faiths in the world! [۲۷

When they took shelter in the Shi`b Abū-Talib to protect the Prophet (a.s) from the
Quraysh, Abū-Talib composed an encomium (qasidah) of one hundred and twenty
:couplets. A few of those couplets will be of interest here

By Allah's House! Your thought is wrong that we could be
;(suppressed In the matter of Muhammad (a.s
!And that for his protection we will not use arrows and spears
We shall not surrender him to the enemy

!Until we die in front of them and forget our wife and children

,I have protected him with my heart and my life

!And defended him with my shoulders and the chest

p: ١١٤

!O Sustainer! Help him with Your Succor

!And help the Faith that is the Truth, Pure and free of admixture

Ibn Husham says that one year the people were suffering from acute drought due to scanty rainfall. They went to the Prophet (a.s) and requested him to pray to Allah for rains. He lifted his hands towards the Heaven and offered a prayer. Before he completed the prayer, dark clouds gathered over the horizon and it rained copiously. When he saw the rain falling, the Prophet (a.s) remembered Abū-Talib and said, “If Abū-Talib was alive today, he would be very happy!” One of the companions said, “Perhaps you have remembered a couplet that he had recited about you!” The person then recited it

Intercession is sought of the radiant faced persons while
praying for rains

!Intercession of those who are the support for the orphans and widows
The Prophet (a.s) said, yes! I do remember

The imprint of Abū-Talib’s affection was so deep on the heart of the Prophet (a.s) that he did not forget him for a moment. Al-Buladhari has written that when the Prophet (a.s) was seriously ill, Fatimah said, “By Allah! You are just the way that a poet has said about you

He is so white that waters of clouds are sought by the
intercession of his face

He was the shelter of the orphans and the haven for the widows
Hearing this, the Prophet (a.s) opened his eyes and said

[This is the saying of my uncle, Abū-Talib.]

Abū-Talib's couplets were indicative of his deep Faith, acceptance of the truth and unfathomable love for Islam and its founder. Every couplet of his is the proof of his profound Faith. If people shun their bias, there is no reason they should harbor any doubts about his true Faith. Please do consider with justice if a few of his couplets, even one of them, was traced to any other person, they would have produced it as an evidence of the deep Faith of the person! For what sin people are maligning the Faith of the Prophet's beloved uncle who was ready to sacrifice everything for the nephew and his Faith. Was it for the sin of giving upbringing to the Orphan of `Abdullah who was destined to be the Last and the Most Perfect of the Prophets (a.s)? Was it for the sin of protecting and preserving him in the face of the enmity and the onslaught of the Quraysh? Was it for his fighting against the machinations of the polytheists to harm the Prophet (a.s)? Was it for propagating the creed of Muhammad (a.s) to every nook and corner of Arabia through his impeccable poetry eulogizing Muhammad (a.s) and his creed? The truth is that the only crime of Abū-Talib in the eyes of those biased critics is that he was the beloved father of `Ali (a.s)! These persons are those who are in total darkness and have no mind to catch a ray of the radiance! Abū-Talib's Faith and belief is a radiant Truth that will be denied by only those who refuse to accept the whiteness of the dawn and the radiance of the stars. Ibn Abil-Hadid has said so
:wonderfully

The futile talk of an ignorant person and the deliberate silence of the learned would not diminish Abū-Talib's greatness and status! It will be like pretending that the daylight is stark darkness, though this thought will not affect the brightness of the day

The proof of Abū-Talib's Faith does not lie only in his poetry. More than these are thoughts and utterances that the Prophet (a.s) and the Infallible Ahl al-Bayt have made about him from time to time. These sayings are important from two points. One is that the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt are all from his progeny and every person's life will be like an open book in front of the members of his family. He cannot keep his Faith, acts and habits hidden from them. There the witness of the members of a family will be the most reliable. The second point is that, from the juridical point of view his sayings are a proof positive of his Faith. After seeing these proofs, one can term it neither the familial bias nor as any type of partiality. Therefore, commenting on the Prophet's saying, "...If you adhere to him, you shall never be misled", al-Muhaddith al-Dahlawi writes

Akhaz' means that one should remain attached to the love of the Ahl al-Bayt; one should hold them in respect, act on their sayings (and exhortations) and have [complete faith on their utterances. [۲۹

From the Ahl al-Bayt none have ever expressed any doubt whatsoever about the Faith of Abū-Talib. To the contrary, all of them have, at some time or other, expressed their high opinions about his staunch Faith in the Prophet (a.s) and Islam. This unanimity of opinion of the Ahl al-Bayt about Abū-Talib is accepted by all the erudite scholars of Islam. Therefore, Abul-Kiram ` Abd al-Salam ibn Muhammad says

The Imams of Ahl al-Bayt are unanimous on the fact that Abū-Talib died a Muslim.

[Whatever is contrary to the belief of the Ahl al-Bayt is never dependable.]^[۳۰]

:Allamah al-tabarsi, of the Shi`ah School of Thought writes`

Unanimity of the Ahl al-Bayt on the Faith of Abū-Talib is proven, and their unanimity is

[final and binding.]^[۳۱]

Below are some of the sayings of the Prophet (a.s) and the Infallible Imams (a.s)

which are the clear proof that they were all unanimous about the Faith of Abū-Talib

.and his Deliverance on the Day of Reckoning

Abbas ibn ` Abd al-Muttalib asked the Prophet (a.s) if he expected the Deliverance of`

[Abū-Talib? He said, 'For him (Abū-Talib) I expect every good from Allah!']^[۳۲]

:Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s) said`

Abū-Talib did not die until he was sure that the Prophet (a.s) was completely happy

[and satisfied with him.]^[۳۳]

:Imam Zayn al-` Abidin (a.s) was asked about the faith of Abū-Talib, and he said

It is surprising that Allah had ordered the Prophet (a.s) that no Muslim woman be

allowed to remain married to an infidel, and Fatimah bint Asad who was one of the

[first ladies to embrace Islam was Abū-Talib's spouse until her death.]^[۳۴]

At this stage, this fact must be borne in minds that Fatimah bint Asad embraced Islam

during the early days of al-Bi` thah (Annunciation) of the Prophet (a.s), remained alive

and the spouse of Abū-Talib for ten years thereafter until her death. If they both

belonged to different creeds, the natural consequence would have been religious

dispute and separation. But no book of history makes even a passing reference about

.this

:Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s) has said

[Abū-Talib ibn ` Abd al-Muttalib left this world as believers (mu'min).]"[۳۵“

Imam Ja`far al-Sadiq (a.s) was told by a person that some persons were of the
:opinion that Abū-Talib died an infidel. The Imam (a.s) said

They are liars. Witnessing the prophethood of Muhammad (a.s), Abū-Talib has said,
“Do not you know that we found Muhammad (a.s) a Prophet the same way as Mūsa
[(a.s) whose references are there in the Earlier Books. [۳۶

Imam Mūsa al-Kazim (a.s) was asked by Durust ibn Mansūr about the Faith of Abū-
:Talib. The Imam (a.s) replied

[He witnessed about the Prophet (a.s) and everything that he (a.s) brought! [۳۷

:Imam al-Rida (a.s) wrote in a reply to a letter from Aban ibn Mahmūd

If you do not accept the Faith of Abū-Talib, your Journey will be in the direction of the
[Hell. [۳۸

:Imam al-Hasan al-` Askari (a.s) has said

Abū-Talib was like the mu'min of the Family of Pharaoh who kept their Faith a closely
[guarded secret. [۳۹

In the early days after the Annunciation of the Prophet (a.s), Abū-Talib keeping his Faith secret and not openly expounding his beliefs before the infidels of the Quraysh was an act of extreme discretion. If, immediately after the announcement of Muhammad's Prophethood, he had declared his conversion to Islam, the infidels would have opened their skirmishes on two fronts. He would not have been able to help the Prophet (a.s) by inviting the enmity of the Quraysh against himself as well. Although it was not a secret to the infidels of the Quraysh that at every occasion Abū-Talib came to the rescue of the Prophet (a.s). Thus, the voice of Islam was spreading and its circle was spreading. But they had no direct cause to find fault with Abū-Talib and antagonize him. The statesmanlike attitude of Abū-Talib provided him the

opportunity to keep a sort of touch with the infidels and convey to them, in a subtle manner, the merits of Islam as a Faith. If Abū-Talib had not adopted this attitude, the superior numbers of the Quraysh at the time would have proved a more formidable foe for the fledgling group of Muhammad (a.s) and his companions. Whatever opportunities the Prophet (a.s) has to propagate his Faith was, to a great extent, due also to the covert and overt support of Abū-Talib. If he were not there, the prevailing environment at Makkah would have rendered Muhammad's missionary work very slow. The well-known scholar, Ibn Abil-Hadid who belonged to the Mu` tazilah Sect, :acknowledged the contribution of Abū-Talib to the spread of Islam thus

If Abū-Talib and his son, `Ali (a.s) were not there, Islam would never have stood on its feet, one of them gave his support and help in Makkah, and the other put his own life .in jeopardy in al-Madinah

This is a matter of great surprise that on the one hand it is acknowledged that Abū-Talib's sacrifices and practical support helped the spread of Islam, and on the other they blatantly accuse him of infidelity. This opposition is from those who were willing to accept the weakest indications as evidence of Faith and ardently supported certain persons who had a flip-flop attitude of many a time thinking whether Muhammad (a.s) was really a prophet or not! As opposed to this, they unreasonably count those persons out of Islam who valiantly supported the cause of Islam in its formative days. Abū-Talib's discreet silence at times and valiant support to his nephew at others was a great asset for the propagation of Islam. His practical life was molded in the way of Islam. Every act of his was mirror of the Prophet's teachings and living proof of the veracity of Islam. He supported Islam, in word and in deed, with such zeal that was not possible for any person who was opposed to the creed that Muhammad (a.s) was .propagating

Even if all these proofs and evidences are kept aside, no one can deny the profound love that Abū-Talib had for the Prophet (a.s). This great love for the Prophet (a.s) itself is a strong proof of his acceptance of the creed. In the wildest imagination, one cannot think that the love for the Prophet (a.s) and the hate for his Creed could exist together in one person! If there is love for the Prophet (a.s) in one's heart, then !naturally it cannot be devoid of love for Islam

There does exist a group people who are mentally not prepared to endorse the infidelity of Abū-Talib, but baseless, and false, traditions that have been surreptitiously introduced into the books of history cause them confusion. These traditions however do not qualify for veracity on the established yardstick for judging their correctness. They are the fabrications of the minions of the Umayyad Court! Their attempt is to cover the services of Abū-Talib to Muhammad (a.s) and Islam because of their enmity with `Ali (a.s).It is necessary to make an overview of the traditions concocted by them and people with vision can themselves read between the lines

The first tradition says that when Abū-Talib was on his deathbed, the Prophet (a.s) came near him. At that time Abū-Jahl and `Abdullah ibn Umayyah were there. The Prophet (a.s) said, “Uncle! Say, ‘There is no god save Allah’ so that I be witness of your Faith in Islam!” Abū-Jahl and `Abdullah chided Abū-Talib saying that if he did this, he would become an outcast from the tribe of `Abd al-Muttalib. Abū-Talib now said

”I am from the Tribe of `Abd al-Muttalib“

,He thus refused to say it. The Prophet (a.s) then said

If I am not ordered (by Allah) to do otherwise, I shall continue to pray for your“
”!Deliverance

:At this juncture, the following Verse was revealed

The Prophet and the Believers must ensure that they do not pray for the Deliverance of polytheists, even if they are their near ones, when it is evident to them that their destiny is the Hell

:Now, the tradition quoted above is our subject of discussion on various counts

Firstly, the narrator of this tradition is Musayyab. Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani writes in Tahdhib al-Tahdhib that Musayyab is among the narrators who quote mainly from Abū-Sufyan ibn Harb and his own father Harb, and he is quoted only by his son, Sa`id. It is evident therefore that neither his narrations were given any importance those days nor was he trusted by any one. There is another reason that he converted to Islam only at the time of the fall of Makkah At the time of the demise of Abū-Talib neither was he present at his bedside nor had he access to any person of importance at the time. If he had heard of the incident from someone, the identity of the person was not established. Therefore, the tradition is very weak and unacceptable. Besides this, there was an element of bias in his reporting. The person's son, Sa`id, sub-narrator, was a sworn enemy of `Ali (a.s). Therefore, Ibn Abil-Hadid has written

[Sa`id ibn Musayyab was against `Ali (a.s) and opposed him.]۴۰

His enmity for the Ahl al-Bayt is evident from the event of the demise of Imam Zayn al-`Abidin (a.s) when his bier was brought to the Prophet's Mosque in al-Madinah and all the concourse of the town joined the Funeral Prayers, Sa`id continued to sit alone in the mosque and did not join the congregation. When asked why he did not join the prayer for that noble soul, he said

At this place of sanctity, I prefer to offer two genuflections of prayer instead of joining
[the congregation for the Funeral Prayer for that noble soul!]{٤١

He surpassed all limits of enmity that he blatantly refused to participate in the last prayers for the revered personage, remaining in the same surroundings all the while! Can the narration of such an inimical person be trusted to decide whether Abū-Talib was an infidel or not? His hatred for the progeny of Abū-Talib has been proved
.without any element of doubt

Secondly, this tradition is a contradiction of the tradition that Abū-Talib, in the throes of death, moved his lips and was reciting the kalmia of the Unity of Allah! This tradition has been quoted by many reputed historians in their books. Therefore, Abul-Fida' :writes

When Abū-Talib's time of death approached, he moved his lips. Al-`Abbas moved toward him, and then said to the Prophet, 'O Son of my brother! Abū-Talib has recited the kalimah (i.e. shahadah) that you wanted him to recite.' The prophet said: Thanks
[to Allah for He guided you.]{٤٢

This tradition has been quoted here just to illustrate the futility of Musayyab's narrative. What is the meaning of asking one to say the kalimah who had all along been the ardent supporter of the Prophet (a.s) and the Mission of Islam? Even if we accept that the Prophet wanted Abū-Talib to say the kalimah in his last moments, it does not mean that by this insistence he was being converted to Islam bearing witness to the Faith! The established practice is that every Muslim, when he dies, is
!helped to say the kalimah in his last moments

Thirdly, it appears from the tradition that the subject Verse was revealed immediately after the demise of Abū-Talib. But in fact it is from the Sūrah of Bara'ah which was revealed at the time of capture of Makkah, much later than the demise of Abū-Talib, that happened three years prior to the Migration (The Hegira). The Verse, therefore, was revealed almost ten years after the demise of Abū-Talib! Every intelligent person can deduce from this that how remote is the possibility of connecting the revelation of the Verse to the demise of Abū-Talib. It clearly shows that the unscrupulous narrator had concocted the story to discredit Abū-Talib. Even if we agree that the Verse was revealed concerning Abū-Talib, then how is it that the Prophet (a.s) continued to pray for the Deliverance of (the infidel) Abū-Talib for ten years and Allah did not feel the necessity to warn him against this act for such a long while! Can a belief be based on such a preposterous and concocted tradition and make a decision about the
?faithfulness or otherwise of a person of the caliber of Abū-Talib

Fourthly, prior to the revelation of the subject Verse, several verses were revealed that prohibited Muslims praying for the deliverance of hypocrites and infidels. For
:example, the Verse quoted below, and several others of the same nature

Whether you pray for their deliverance or not, it is all the same for them! Allah will
!never pardon them

This is a verse from Sūrah of al-munafiqūn which was revealed before the Sūrah of Bara'ah. Therefore, when The Prophet (a.s) was forewarned of not praying for an infidel, how did he, according to the tradition, decide to pray for Abū-Talib with the ostensible knowledge that he was an infidel? Can we imagine the Prophet (a.s) defying the injunction of the Holy Book? If the Prophet did pray for the Deliverance of Abū-Talib, he was confident of his fidelity, and there cannot be firmer proof of his
!Faith in Allah than this

Fifthly, Al-Tirmidhi, in his Sahih, writes in the Bab al-Tafsir that `Ali (a.s) heard a person praying for the deliverance of his infidel parents and asked him why he was praying for the parents who, he knew, were infidel? He said, 'Did Ibrahim (a.s) not pray for his uncle Azar who was an idolater?' `Ali (a.s) mentioned this matter to the Prophet (a.s). At that moment, the subject Verse was revealed and the Muslims were ordered not to pray for the deliverance of the infidels

:There are several other points that need consideration about this tradition

The first point is that if `Ali (a.s) was sure that it was permissible to pray for infidel relatives, he would not have raised objection with the person. His surprise at the person praying is sufficient proof that a Muslim should not pray for a dead-infidel-relative

The second point is that in support of his act, the person quoted about the prayer of Ibrahim (a.s) for the deliverance of his uncle, Azar. He need not have gone so far back in history. He could have referred to the prayer of the Prophet (a.s) for his uncle Abū-Talib. This is a proof that the person never thought that Abū-Talib could be an infidel knowing fully well his contribution to the cause of Islam and the Prophet (a.s)! In that period, none in the populace ever thought that he was an infidel

The third point is that the person brought forward the example of Ibrahim (a.s) praying for Azar in support of his own prayer for his infidel parents. The truth is that Ibrahim (a.s) did not pray for Azar as is evidenced from the following Verse of the Qur'an

Ibrahim praying for his father (Azar)'s deliverance was on the basis of his promise to him. But when it dawned on him that he was an enemy of God, he expressed his .abhorrence

Ibrahim's prayer was just to seek guidance and he wanted that he (Azar) received guidance to become eligible for pardon in the Hereafter. Therefore, however much a person is involved in infidelity and vice; we should not think that he could not be reformed. An expectation can always be there that he will emerge from his ways of infidelity and vice and tread the way of Faith and Virtue. After death, certainly, a person will not have any opportunity to get guidance for reform. Therefore, this prayer of Ibrahim (a.s) does not provide any justification of persons praying for the Deliverance of infidels and polytheists. The fact emerges from these evidences that the command for not praying for deliverance of infidels came before the revelation of this Verse. Therefore, there is neither justification nor permission to pray for deliverance of an infidel. Then how could one imagine that the Prophet (a.s), despite Abū-Talib being an infidel, told him near his death that, "If asked not to pray, I shall continue to pray for your deliverance." The prayer for Deliverance depends on the hope for forgiveness. How could one hope for forgiveness for the sin of infidelity. It is established that Allah has decided that those who die in infidelity will certainly go to Hell. Therefore, there is a certainty that the Prophet (a.s) was praying for the deliverance of Abū-Talib with the knowledge that he was a mu'min and believer. And after this, there is no reason why anyone should nurse a suspicion that he was an infidel; while there cannot be a stronger evidence of his Fidelity than the Prophet (a.s) himself praying for his deliverance

The sixth point about the purpose for the revelation of this Verse is that it is referred with regard to many and varying traditions. The variance of the traditions renders them doubtful. And they do not remain fit to be accepted or rejected. In this regard, one tradition can be quoted. When the Prophet (a.s) passed near his mother's grave, he sought permission from Allah to visit the grave and to pray for her deliverance. Allah permitted him to visit the grave and stopped him from praying for her deliverance in view of this Verse of the Qur'an. There is another tradition that says that the Prophet (a.s) wanted to pray for the deliverance of his father. This Verse was revealed to stop him from doing so. There is one more tradition. Some Muslims approached the Prophet (a.s) to seek his permission to pray for the deliverance of their infidel forbears. This verse was revealed at that time prohibiting them from doing so. Some say that the Verse was revealed at the time of offering prayer for deliverance of Abū-Talib, the other traditions say that it was revealed concerning the other events mentioned above

Another tradition records that when the time for the death of Abū-Talib drew nigh, the Prophet (a.s) said, "Uncle! Recite the kalimah that I might give evidence before Allah about your Faith." Abū-Talib refused to say the kalimah saying, "If I had not the fear of the taunts of the Quraysh, I would have done it!" At that time, the following Verse was revealed

.Those who you befriend, you do not guide. But Allah guides those He wishes to guide

.This tradition too does not deserve to be accepted for several reasons

Firstly, the tradition is reported by Abū-Hurayrah al-Dūsi, ` Abd al-Quddūs al-Shami, Abū-Sahl al-Sayri through Muhammad ibn ` Abbad, ibn Abi-` Umar, etc... originating from Ibn ` Umar and Ibn ` Abbas. The tradition is not dependable that the narrator, Abū-Hurayrah, was in his home town of Yemen at the time of Abū-Talib's demise and almost ten years had passed since this event when Abū-Hurayrah embraced Islam in 7 A.H. Therefore, the question of his being present at the time of the death of Abū-Talib does not arise. Hence he was not an eyewitness to the event who could certify having seen the Prophet (a.s) advising Abū-Talib to say the kalimah and he refusing to comply. If someone did hear this exchange, why has not he revealed the names when the event happened during his days of ignorance and he was personally not present in Makkah? There is another reason for the unreliability of his narrations about Abū-Talib is that he was among the close courtiers and retainers of Mu`awiyah which is a strong evidence of his enmity for `Ali (a.s), because that was one very important qualification for admittance to the Dardar al-Sham! Ibn Abil-Hadid writes about this enmity and hate that when Mu`awiyah visited al-Kūfah, Abū-Hurayrah was in the team. He used to sit near Bab-Kindah in the nights and people used to surround him out of curiosity. One night al-Asbagh ibn Nubatah too went and joined the group He :asked Abū-Hurayrah if he had heard the saying of the Prophet (a.s) about `Ali (a.s

O Allah! Befriend him, who befriends `Ali (a.s), and, hold him an enemy who is `Ali's
!foe

Abū-Hurayrah affirmed that he was aware of the saying! Al-Asbagh rejoined at this
:juncture

Then with Allah's witness, I say that you have established friendship with his enemies
[and you are inimical with his friends].[۴۳

It was the fruit of this enmity that Mu`awiyah gave to Abū-Hurayrah the governorate
of al-Madinah and showered many favors on him. He gave special privileges to his
children after his death. When he received the news of his death, Mu`awiyah wrote to
:his representative al-Walid ibn `Uqbah

Search for his successors, give them ten thousand dirhams, and treat them with
kindness. He was among those who helped `Uthman during his incarceration and
[remained at his House].[۴۴

Connection with Mu`awiyah and attachment to the clan of Banū-Umayyah was there
and, in addition, Abū-Hurayrah was known for narrating more tradition than any other
person of his time narrates, although he had privilege of being with the Prophet (a.s)
for a very short while. He narrated more traditions than the persons who had spent
the maximum time of their lives with the Prophet (a.s). This excess of narration by him
rendered his narratives rather doubtful. `Umar, feeling the effect of excessive
:narration by Abū-Hurayrah, has chided him and said

Stop narrating traditions. If you do not comply with my instruction, I shall pack you
[away to the region of the Tribe of Dūs].[۴۵

It was the time when Abū-Hurayrah was of the opinion that his mind was a
:storehouse of traditions and it was withheld as "unworthy" of narration

Whatever I know of, if I start telling to people, they will start throwing crocks on me
[and say that Abū-Hurayrah is mad!][۴۶

Ali (a.s) too was not convinced of his honesty and straightforwardness in narrating`
:the traditions. He therefore said

[Abū-Hurayrah said lot of falsehoods about the Prophet (a.s).][۴۷

Similarly the presence of Ibn `Umar at the time of Abū-Talib's demise does not sound probable because he was born three years after the al-Bi`thah (the Annunciation). This means that at the time of Abū-Talib's death his age was around seven years, and the presence of so young a child at such a somber occasion is not possible in the midst of the chiefs of Banū-Hashim and the elite of Quraysh! Even if he were present there by any chance, how would it be possible for a small child to hear the whispers of the Prophet (a.s) and Abū-Talib and recount the exchange. Ibn `Umar, therefore, cannot be accepted as a witness to the event. And as long as it cannot be established as to the person, from whom he heard of the event, his narration would have no weight. Added to this fact, Ibn `Umar was among the persons who, after the third Caliph, had refused to owe allegiance to `Ali (a.s). He always remained angry with `Ali (a.s) as far as Ibn `Abbas was concerned, he was born three years prior to the Hegira (The Migration) at Shi`b Abū-Talib and the same year Abū-Talib had expired. Hence, there is no question of his presence during the event and capability to report anything about what happened at the time of Abū-Talib's death. Who could imagine that a baby in arms could hear and recount anything! If he had heard about the episode from some eyewitness, he never mentioned any name to establish the veracity of the narration. It appears that some interested parties had concocted the story and attributed it to Ibn `Abbas thinking that the hearers might get impressed with his family background .and give some credence to the narration

Further, the other persons in Abū-Hurayrah's narration, Muhammad ibn `Abbad, Ibn Abū-`Umar or Ibn Kaysan are all insignificant and not dependable as witness to the event. In the narration of Ibn `Umar or Ibn `Abbas, the two persons named, `Abd al-Quddūs al-Shami and Abū-Sahl al-Sayri, are liars and undependable according to the .experts in `Ilm al-Rijal

Secondly, when the Prophet of Islam (a.s) was warned through the verse of the ,Qur'an

وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ

,"Warn your near ones"

and particularly asked him to invite his kin to Islam. After the revelation of this Verse, The Prophet (a.s) started his missionary activities from the very abode of Abū-Talib. Then, it does not stand to reason that he was inviting other kinsmen to join the fold and left Abū-Talib alone and had no idea until his end to ask him to recite the kalimah! Did the Prophet (a.s) not feel the necessity of inviting Abū-Talib to embrace Islam for ten long years sharing the same roof with him. Was he under the impression that if he insisted on Abū-Talib changing his beliefs, he might turn hostile and stop giving support that was very vital for the Mission at that critical time! In the first case, it means that the Prophet (a.s) did not care to convert Abū-Talib to his Faith. In the second case, there will be an element of self-interest that cannot be expected from as august a personage as him. The only other alternative is that, from the very beginning, and which is very likely, that the Prophet (a.s) was convinced of the Faith of Abū-Talib and, therefore, he concentrated with his mission in other places! Then what is the question of his insisting on Abū-Talib to say the kalimah when he was in the throes of death

Thirdly, there are several versions about the purpose of the revelation of this verse. One tradition concerning it is that during the Battle of Uhud the Prophet's tooth was broken. At that moment, he raised his hands and prayed, "O Allah! Guide these ignorant people!" At that time the Verse was revealed. There is another tradition that this Verse was revealed when the Prophet wanted Harith ibn al-Nu`man to embrace Islam and he remained hesitant to accept the new creed. `A'ishah says

:The Verse

إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ...

Surely, you cannot guide whom you love... (٢٨/٥٦)' was revealed when I was with the) [Prophet (a.s) under the comforter].[٤٨

There are many such traditions that are contradictory to one another. Considering the contradictions, the correctness of the tradition under review is questionable. Another valid reason is that the narrators too are not dependable. From the first tradition it appears that the Verse was revealed six years after the demise of Abū-Talib, because the Battle of Uhud was fought in the year ٣ H. And he had expired three years prior to the Hegira. `A'ishah's version suggests that the Verse was revealed around three to four years after the death of Abū-Talib because she was married in ١H which was the period about three or four years after the demise of Abū-Talib. In this event the Verse cannot concern Abū-Talib since, at the time of its revelation, he was no more in the world. And, after a person's death, neither there is need of guidance for him nor any reason for his refusing to take advice! And, if it is presumed that the Verse was revealed on many occasions, it cannot be accepted until there is a positive proof of .the events

Fourthly, even if the Verse is accepted to have been revealed concerning Abū-Talib, no doubt can be cast as to his Faith because the manner is the same as the Verse “O Prophet! When you threw the arrow, it was not you, but Allah has thrown it...” In this verse, there is contradiction of ramy with the words ma ramayta and with idh ramayta, there is affirmation. Affirmation because the event was performed at the hands of the Prophet (a.s) and contradiction because in fact the act emanated from Allah. Therefore, in the Verse there is affirmation of the guidance and contradiction as well. It means that apparently, the guidance was through the Prophet’s preaching and instructions, but in reality, it was the result of Allah’s help and support. The reason is that Allah is the fountainhead of Guidance. If His consent is not available, none can achieve the state of guidance! The Prophet, in this process of guidance is only the medium. Now, the Verse does not mean that the Prophet (a.s) cannot guide those whom he considers his friends, or he cannot influence them with his guidance. The meaning is that those whom the Prophet holds friends too are guided by Allah to the path of Faith. This view is supported by other verses of the Holy Qur’an, like

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدَاهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ.

O Prophet! Responsibility of guiding these people is not on you; Allah gives guidance (to those He wants to). (۲:۲۷۲)

This illustrates that the guidance of Abū-Talib to the path of Virtue was not only because of The Prophet’s guidance, but Allah’s Wish was there. This Verse adds confirmation to Abū-Talib’s Faith rather than contradicting it. The services that he rendered to Islam are a positive proof of his Faith, and Allah’s Wish has been his motivating factor in all these efforts

The fifth point is that if the Verse is accepted to have been revealed concerning Abū-Talib, then it is confirmed that The Prophet (a.s) held him in great regard as a friend, which fact is a part of history. The Prophet (a.s) expressed affection for `Aqil ibn Abi-Talib because of the love for his father

I consider you a friend on two counts: firstly, because of my relationship with you, and [secondly because of the love for Abū-Talib who had affection for you.]^[٤٩]

This love for Abū-Talib is a positive proof of his Faith because the Prophet (a.s) could not possibly have befriended or loved any infidel or hypocrite

:Therefore, Allah says

لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ.

Those who believe in Allah and the Day of Judgment, you will not find them befriending the enemies of Allah and His Prophet, even if they are their fathers, sons, (brothers or men of their tribe. (٢٢:٥٨)

When Muslims are asked not to befriend the infidels and polytheists, even when they are their own kin, how is it possible that the Prophet (a.s) kept extremely friendly and affectionate relations with Abū-Talib! An infidel and polytheist is an enemy of Allah. How could an enemy of Allah be a friend of the Prophet (a.s), whom Allah Himself has called a Habib or Dear Friend! When the love and affection between the Prophet (a.s) and Abū-Talib is irrefutable, there remains no doubt about the Faith of the latter

Sixthly, it does not stand to reason, according to the discipline of higher knowledge, how could a person be an infidel who, all his life, stood like a wall in the support of the Prophet (a.s), openly supported the cause of Islam, announced in crowds of the Quraysh that Muhammad's Faith was the best, acknowledged Muhammad (a.s) like the prophets of yore and was never intimidated by any force while taking sides with
(the Prophet (a.s

The third tradition in this series is that a person heard Ibn `Abbas say that the Verse, "And they prohibit (others) from it and go far away from it, (٤:٢٤)" is revealed about Abū-Talib, and to ascribe it to him the meaning of the Verse is taken that "although he prevented the Prophet (a.s) from the infidels harming him, he himself maintained a distance from the prophet (a.s)" In his view the condition of Abū-Talib with regard to the Prophet (a.s) was the same that he did protect Muhammad(a.s) from his enemies, .did not profess the Faith himself! This tradition too is weak and not worth acceptance

First of all, there is no continuity of the narrators of this tradition. The name of the person who was the medium between Ibn `Abbas and the narrator Habib ibn Abi-Thabit has not been mentioned. When the narrator himself had not heard it directly from Ibn `Abbas, nor has he mentioned the name of the first person who had heard and communicated to him, how could the narrative be accepted as concerning Abū-Talib. The narrative is doubtful because the narrator, Habib ibn Thabit, is a cheat and exaggerator according to scholars of `Ilm al-Rijal. Secondly, the place and time of revelation of the Verse is indicative that it is about a group of infidels and polytheists that attributed the Qur'an to "Stories of people of Old Times" Therefore the author of "al-Kashshaf" and `Allamah al-Baydawi have written that Abū-Sufyan, al-Walid, `Utbah, Shaybah, Abū-Jahl, al-Nadr Ibn Harith and some other persons heard the Prophet (a.s) recite the verses of the Qur'an, they asked al-Nadr ibn Harith as to what Muhammad was reciting? He replied that it was stories of old times. This is mentioned
,in the first part of the Verse

...يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِن هَذَا إِلَّا أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

(The infidels say that these are stories of people gone by and nothing else. (6:25)

In the last part of the verse, it is mentioned that they will be destroyed because of their waywardness and misdeeds: “they expose themselves to destruction and have no sense.” Between these two parts of the verse there is “And they prohibit (others) from it and go far away from it.” If the meaning of the first part of this verse is taken as ‘they prevent the Prophet (a.s) from harms way,’ the entire verse becomes disconnected and its continuity becomes disturbed. The verse talks about shameful things and deserving of condemnation and because of them their destruction is definite. But protecting the Prophet (a.s) from harm is a virtuous act and has no connection with the first and last parts of the Verse, Therefore, the meaning of “they prevent people from following the Prophet (a.s) and listening to the recitation of the Qur’an” will be correct and meaningfully coordinated with the first and last part of the .verse

Therefore Ibn Kathir and Fakhr al-Din al-Razi have preferred the same meaning of the Verse and have written that this Verse is revealed about the polytheists who used to stop people following the Prophet (a.s) and obstruct them from hearing the recitation of the Qur’an. Therefore, as long as it is not confirmed that Abū-Talib came in the way of people following the teachings of the Prophet (a.s) and hearing the readings of the Qur’an, his being the subject of the Verse cannot be established. The fact has been accepted by all, friend and foe, that Abū-Talib had never asked anyone not to listen to the recitation of the Book nor even suggested to the people not to follow the Prophet’s teachings. In fact, he never differed with the ideas and teachings of Muhammad (a.s) He spent his entire life in the protection and promotion of the Prophet’s Creed. In view of this, they will be dishonest, who do Misinterpret the Meaning of the verse to discredit Abū-Talib. They try to break the earlier and latter part of the Verse and make a futile effort to try to prove that Abū-Talib was an infidel and that he strived to maintain a distance from the Prophet. When did Abū-Talib ever ?turn away from the Prophet (a.s) and abstain from helping and defending him

The fourth tradition is the one that is narrated by `Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib. He told the Prophet (a.s) that Abū-Talib was busy in supporting and helping him. Will he get any reward for these efforts or all his troubles would go in vain? The Prophet (a.s) said that Abū-Talib is up to his knees in the Hell and that if he (the Prophet (a.s) had not interceded; he would be in the lower echelons of the Hell

.This tradition too is concocted and false

Firstly this tradition is attributed to `Abbas, who is also credited with the tradition that Abū-Talib, at the instance of The Prophet (a.s) recited the kalimah of Unity of Allah and departed from this world. Will there be any weight in the traditions of contradictory nature narrated by one person and concerning only one individual

Further, there is a marked difference in the meaning of this and other traditions of this general. In one tradition it is said that intercession has been made by the Prophet (a.s) on behalf of Abū-Talib and he is in the upper echelon of the Hell and in another tradition it is said that intercession will be made on the Day of Reckoning and in yet another tradition it is recorded that there is diminution of retribution but there is no mention of the Prophet's intercession. With this handling of the traditions, they become doubtful and unacceptable

Thirdly, the narrators of these traditions were liars, unreliable and scheming. Therefore, al-Dhahbi writes in Mizan al-I`tidal about the narrators, and says about Sufyan that he copies traditions from liars. He writes about `Abdul-Malik ibn `Umayr that his memory is not good. Similarly, he makes such negative remarks on some other narrators who are unknown and not dependable according to experts. Depending on such narrators, neither can one draw any conclusion about the Faith or infidelity of any person, nor can a surmise be made whether the person will be Hell-bound or deserve the Reward of the Heaven

Fourthly, this tradition mentions that in view of Abū-Talib's unstinted support to the cause of Islam the Prophet (a.s) made intercession on his behalf and his retribution was reduced, while in regard to the infidels and polytheists there is no question of ,either any intercession or reduction of retribution! Therefore

:Allah says

وَنَسُوقُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ وِرْدًا. لَا يَمْلِكُونَ الشَّفَاعَةَ إِلَّا مَنِ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ عَهْدًا.

We shall chase the sinners to the Hell like the thirsty animals And seeking“ intercession at that time will not be in their Choice but of those who have borne (witness to Allah's Unity (Tawhid). (١٩:٨٦)

:At another place, Allah says

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ لَا يُقْضَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ فَيَمُوتُوا وَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِهَا.

Those who became infidels, for them there is Hellfire. They will neither end nor will“ (they die. There will not be any diminution in their Retribution. (٣٥:٣٦)

:Ibn al-Athir writes

Fayyad, the judge, says that there is ijma` (Unanimity of Opinion) that the infidels will“ not benefit from their good deeds. Neither will they get bounties as Reward nor there ”.diminution of their Retribution

When this tradition does not weigh on the yardstick of the Qur'anic texts and consensus, even if its narrators were truthful and just (decent), it is not acceptable in .any condition. In this instance, the narrator is neither nor decent

The fifth point is that the Prophet (a.s) who was a paragon of kindness could only bring Abū-Talib out of the depths of the Hell, but could not help him to get total relief from the Hellfire in the top layer of the Hell! For his selfless and unstinted services to Islam, if not getting him assigned to the Heaven, at least he could have been settled in its suburbs! When these type of concessions have been given to Anūshirwan despite his infidelity for his sense of justice! Hatam enjoys this concession for his generosity!

Even for the sworn enemy of Islam, Abū-Lahab, concessions have been recommended. Therefore, the well-known ahl al-hadith, Wahid al-Zaman, in his book Lughat al-Hadith, Bab al-Zad, page ١٢, narrates a tradition that one person dreamt of Abū-Lahab saying that he got some water on Mondays. This, he said, was the reward for freeing tūbya, his slave girl, to celebrate the birth of the Prophet (a.s).[٥٠] There is another tradition of similar type. The Prophet (a.s) saw Abū-Lahab in his dream that he was restless with thirst, and he did have something to quench his thirst. The Prophet (a.s) asked, “What is it that you have to quench your thirst?” Abū-Lahab replied, “tūbya fed you the milk and I had released her from slavery. I have been [rewarded for that.”[٥١]

How strange it is the Abū-Lahab is rewarded for his small gesture of releasing a slave girl. Abū-Lahab, no doubt, was a sworn enemy of the Prophet (a.s) and in the forefront of the persons ridiculing and insulting him. He remained stubbornly infidel until his last breath. And Abū-Talib, who dedicated his entire life to the care and service of the Prophet (a.s) there is no acknowledgement of his effort in bringing up the Prophet (a.s) and providing support and protection all along to his mission. In some other traditions it is also said that although Abū-Talib will be in the upper echelon of the Hell; his brain would melt and fall near his feet because of the excessive heat of the Hellfire. Can it be imagined that this Retribution will be despite the intercession of the Prophet (a.s). In return for his sterling services, there is reduction in his Retribution as described above. But please think over what the Prophet (a.s) has to pray for Abū-Hurayrah's
:mother

:Shah Waliyyullah writes

The Prophet (a.s) prayed for the conversion of Abū-Hurayrah's mother, and she“
[became a Muslim the same day!”[۵۲

How could it be imagined that his prayer for the deliverance of Abū-Hurayrah's mother was accepted and his prayer was not answered when he prayed for Abū-Talib, although he was a staunch supporter of the Prophet's Cause. Can Umm Abū-Hurayrah's being a mother of Abū-Hurayrah be a cause of her deliverance Even if we overlook the services of Abū-Talib to the cause of the Prophet's Creed, should not his efforts in the bringing up of Muhammad (a.s) and protecting him against all odds be sufficient for his deliverance! Who was Umm Abū-Hurayrah? Just the mother of Abū-Hurayrah who died an infidel

,The fifth justification they advance is through the tradition, which says

.Two different creeds cannot share inheritance

Therefore, they say that a Muslim cannot inherit the assets of an infidel and an infidel likewise cannot be an inheritor of a Muslim. They say that if Abū-Talib was a Muslim, `Ali (a.s) and Ja`far, who were Muslim, would not have refused to accept Abū-Talib's inheritance. They also say that `Aqil and Talib, who had not embraced Islam until the .time of Abū-Talib's death, inherited his assets

This justification they proffer is a mere exaggeration. First of all they refer to an inconclusive and undependable tradition that `Ali (a.s) and Ja`far had refused to accept the inheritance of their father. Then they refer to another tradition to support their contention that the refusal was because their father died an infidel. The truth is that neither the meaning of the tradition is what they try to give it, nor the two sons ever refused to accept the inheritance. The meaning of this tradition is taken that if the inheritor and the forbear were not of the same Faith, then the inheritance becomes void. The contention is that if the father was a Muslim and the son an infidel, the son would not get the inheritance. Similarly, if the son is a Muslim and his father was an infidel, he would not accept the inheritance. The inheritance would go void wherever the inheritor and the forbear professed different creeds. In the view of Shi`ah Jurists a Muslim can inherit the assets of his infidel parent, while an infidel is entitled only to the assets of his infidel parent. He does not get anything from the effects of his father if he was a Muslim. This is with a view to maintain the ascendance of Islam. This is also supported by the tradition

.Islam has ascendance over every thing and nothing has ascendance over Islam

Therefore, even if Abū-Talib is presumed not a follower of Islam, his Muslim sons cannot be disinherited. If the Islamic law required the Muslim sons of infidel parents to be disinherited, most of the early companions of the Prophet (a.s) qualify for this treatment. The history, however, has not been able to throw one example of a companion being disinherited on the demise of his infidel father! Does this not indicate that, perhaps this law was only for the nearest kin of the Prophet (a.s)? Besides, if `Ali (a.s) had not accepted anything from the estate of his father, is it not possible that he might have done it for some other reason than that draconian law of inheritance! Perhaps he avoided taking any part of the inheritance because of his frugal nature and left everything for his brother `Aqil. Or it was also possible that `Aqil had usurped the entire estate of his father. History too supports this possibility. The historians have written that when the Prophet (a.s) migrated from Makkah to al-Madinah, `Aqil took advantage of the absence of the Prophet (a.s) and he sold the house of Khadijah and two houses of `Abd al-Muttalib, inherited by Abū-Talib, to Abū-Sufyan when neither the Prophet (a.s), `Ali or Ja`far were present in Makkah to prevent him from striking that deal without their consent. When, after the fall of Makkah, the time for asking `Aqil about his unfair transaction, they forgave him. This forgiveness cannot be termed as `Aqil's right of inheritance, because all the three had their right according to the Islamic Law of Inheritance! Therefore, Ibn Shihab says

The truth is that `Aqil occupied the Houses of `Abd al-Muttalib after the Migration of“ the Prophet (a.s) the same way as the infidels of Quraysh occupied the houses of the other migrants. After the conquest of Makkah, neither the Prophet (a.s) nor the migrants demanded the return of their properties. If `Aqil had a right over the property according to the Law of Inheritance, then under what law he sold the house [of Khadijah bint Khuwaylid.”[۵۳

The sixth argument they proffer is that through the weakest tradition it does not emerge that Abū-Talib ever prayed alone or in the company of the Prophet (a.s) although he lived for ten long years after the Annunciation of the Prophet (a.s). If he was a Muslim, he would certainly have been seen praying sometime or other, .because offering of prayer is an important pillar of Islam

This argument too does not hold water. In a situation where traditions are concocted to prove his infidelity, it is not a matter of surprise if there is no tradition to support the claim that Abū-Talib did, if ever, offer prayers. But none can deny the fact that, in early days after the al-Bi`thah, Abū-Talib once found his son, `Ali (a.s) offering prayer with the Prophet (a.s), and expressed his appreciation and support for his act. He termed this way of offering the prayer as an act of virtue and exhorted `Ali (a.s) to remain attached to the Prophet (a.s). Once he chanced to see `Ali (a.s) standing :behind the Prophet (a.s) on the right side. He told his other son Ja`far

”You too should stand on the left side behind your uncle and offer prayer“

Even if he had not participated in the prayers, it must have been to protect the Prophet (a.s) from the mischief and machinations of the Quraysh. Then, during his lifetime, prayer was still not declared mandatory nor was it given a prescribed form. The prayers offered those days were only optional. Therefore, Abū-Talib not praying was not a proof of his not having embraced Islam

The seventh argument proffered against Abū-Talib is that if he were a Muslim, then how is it that the Prophet (a.s) did not offer the Funeral Prayer for him. This was done, despite the instructions to offer the prayer before any dead Muslim is interred

This argument is baseless because the command for the Funeral Prayer came much after Abū-Talib’s death. This prayer was not offered for any Muslim who died in that period. After a short time of the death of Abū-Talib, Umm al-Mu’minin (The Mother of the Believers) Khadijah died and the prayer was not offered for her too. This was despite the fact that she was the first lady to ever have embraced the Creed of Islam.

:Al-Buladhari writes

The Prophet (a.s) entered the grave prior to interment of Khadijah. Until that time,“ [there was no order for offering the Funeral Prayer.”[۵۴

This is the list of baseless doubts that people have concocted to prove the infidelity of Abū-Talib. The faith of Abū-Talib is supported with the sayings of the Prophet (a.s) and the consensus of the Infallible Imams (a.s). Every right thinking person can read the bias of the critics of Abū-Talib and see through the thin veneer of doubts they try to create in the minds of people

Abū-Talib was the protector of the Creed and the supporter of the Faith of Islam. He was like a protective rampart for the Prophet (a.s) and an invincible fort. He confronted severe difficulties with courage and at no moment, he raised the slightest objection for coming to the help of Muhammad (a.s) and his Divine Mission. He acted with the same zeal, during his long association with the Prophet, when he was young and when he was a grand old man! Even on his deathbed, his mind was occupied with the thoughts of protecting Islam and its founder! Therefore, facing the difficulties at Shi` b Abū-Talib, his health deteriorated beyond repair. He called up the Shaykhs and elite of Quraysh and advised them to be trustworthy, truthful, generous, and charitable to the poor, to respect the Ka` bah and to protect and help the Prophet (a.s).He said

I make a will that you do good to Muhammad (a.s). He is a custodian (amin) in the Tribe of Quraysh and a siddiq (truthful person) for the Arabs. He has all the qualities, which I have willed you to cultivate. He has brought a Thing about which the hearts are convinced and the tongues are silent because of fear of enmity. By Allah! I am visualizing the scene when the poor of Arabia and the Bedouin of the neighborhood and the weak saying “labbayka (Here I am)” to his call! Muhammad (a.s) has entered the whirlpool with them and the elite of Quraysh have been belittled, the chiefs ridiculed and their homes rendered desolate. The poor and the weak have come to the positions of power and the elite are subjugated to them. Those who are far away are drawing benefits. The Arabs have turned his sincere friends and with purity of hearts have become his well-wishers. They have entrusted to him their leadership. O group of Quraysh: You should also become the friends and supporters of Muhammad (a.s). By Allah! Whoever treads the path shown by him, he will get the Guidance and whoever follows his ways, will be felicitous. If I had some more life in me and there was some delay in my inevitable death, I would shield him from the attacks of his [enemies and protect him against difficulties!”[۱۵۵

:After this general advice, he turned to the Progeny of ` Abd al-Muttalib and said

As long as you keep paying heed To Muhammad's words, and follow his precepts, "Felicity and benefit will come to you. Follow him and give him a helping hand, you will remain on the path of guidance

Eulogizing about the truthfulness and the trustworthiness of the Prophet (a.s), during his last moments, Abū-Talib advised his family to seek knowledge and guidance following him. If a person does not acknowledge and bear witness to the Prophethood of Muhammad (a.s), then there is no use of his existence. Are these words of wisdom and enlightenment not the proof of his Faith in Islam

When he was through with his will to all concerned, the signs of impending death emerged on his face. The color of his face changed and his forehead developed the pearls of sweat. The biggest supporter and protector of the Prophet (a.s) breathed his last. His passing away cascaded an avalanche of sorrow on the Prophet (a.s). Tears welled in his eyes and in a hoarse voice, he told ` Ali (a.s

Go, wash his body, wrap him in the shroud and make arrangements for his interment. " [May Allah give him forgiveness (and absolution) and keep him in His Blessing." [۵۶

The Prophet (a.s) nominated ` Ali (a.s) to the task of preparing his father for the last rites, although he was the youngest of his brothers. The only reason for this change from the normal social custom of assigning such duties to the eldest brother was that ` Aqil and Talib had not embraced Islam until their father had passed away and Ja` far, although in the fold of Islam, was away in Abyssinia. This act too throws light on the Faith of Abū-Talib. If he were an infidel, there would be justification for entrusting this duty to one of his sons who was still living in infidelity. Thus, after all the preparations, the Prophet (a.s) looked at his beloved uncle in his shroud, cried and said

O uncle! You have brought me up in my childhood; you gave an orphan, your“ profound love, and me and maintained me. On my growing up you gave me support.

[May Allah give you Good Reward on my behalf!”[٥٧

When people started carrying the bier, the Prophet (a.s) supported it with his shoulder from start of the journey until it reached the graveside. He participated in the .interment of the mountain of patience and courage at the foot of the Mount Hajūn

For the Prophet (a.s) the passing away of Abū-Talib was a big calamity. He was his biggest supporter and promoter. The Prophet (a.s) was now left in the midst of sworn enemies to contend with them. Although statistically Muslims were a sizeable group now, there was none of the caliber and position of Abū-Talib who could confront the tyranny of the Quraysh with some degree of success. It was logical that the nefarious :activities of the Quraysh increased with the death of Abū-Talib. Ibn Husham writes

When Abū-Talib died, the Quraysh gave so much trouble to the Prophet (a.s) that“ during the living days of his uncle, they could not have had desire of putting him [through such hardship.”[٥٨

The sadness of Abū-Talib’s death was still fresh when, after a month and five days of his demise, Khadijah passed away. This tragedy too had a profound saddening effect on the Prophet. He was so much affected with these two deaths that he named that :year as the Year of Sorrow! He said

Those days, two calamities struck the Ummah. I cannot say which one is the greater“
[cause of Sorrow for me!][٥٩

The Prophet (a.s) termed the passing away of Abū-Talib and Khadijah as great calamities for the Ummah. The reason was that in the early days of his ordainment as the Prophet (a.s) the two stood with him as strong pillars of support. Khadijah sacrificed her entire wealth for the Mission of the Prophet (a.s) and Abū-Talib stood like a rock between him and the forces of tyranny. These two deaths, which were a calamity for the person of the Prophet (a.s), were certainly calamitous for the Ummah
[as well

The people of Makkah mourned the passing away of the chief of the Quraysh, the scion of ` Abd al-Muttalib, the Ra'is Batha', Abū-Talib. ` Ali (a.s) penned elegies on the
.death of his beloved father. A few couplets of one of the elegies are given here

O Abū-Talib! You are the Place of Peace for those seeking refuge Rain bearing cloud “
in drought and a light in the darkness! On your death, the people with modesty are saddened. May Allah shower His Bounties on you. May Allah’s Beneficence be on you.
[You were the best (beloved) Uncle of the Prophet (a.s)]”[٦٠

Fatimah bint Asad

Fatimah bint Asad was the mother of ` Ali (a.s). Asad was the son of Hashim born to al-Qayla' bint ` Amir. Because of this relationship, she was a grand daughter of Hashim and an aunt of The Prophet (a.s). When the Prophet (a.s) came under the guardianship of Abū-Talib it was Fatimah bint Asad who was providing to him the maternal care and love that is very essential for the upbringing of any child. If Abū-Talib gave to Muhammad (a.s) the paternal affection, she was deputizing as the foster mother. She used to care for him more than she did for her own children and at times, she would not bother about her own children if Muhammad (a.s) required attention. She loved him so much that during the season of the ripening of the dates, she would get up early in the morning, pick the choicest fruits and reserve them for Muhammad (a.s). Before serving the food, she would reserve small quantities for him just in case he felt
.hungry before the next meal

The Prophet (a.s) loved her as he would his own mother. Acknowledging her love and affection, he once said

[After Abū-Talib, there was none more affectionate and kind to me than her.] [٤١]

The Prophet (a.s) was so much influenced by her love and affection that he invariably took out time from his busy schedule to call on her and pay his respects. Ibn Sa`d writes

[The Prophet (a.s) used to visit her and generally had his siesta at her place.] [٤٢]

Fatimah Bint Asad mothered seven children of Abū-Talib. She had three daughters (Ritah, Jumanah and Fakhitah who was known as Ummu-Hani') and four sons (Talib, `Aqil, Ja`far and `Ali). Talib was ten years older than `Aqil, `Aqil was ten years older than Ja`far, Ja`far was ten years senior to `Ali (a.s). These children had the unique privilege that both their parents were of Hashemite Descent. They were the first to have such a distinction. Ibn Qutaybah writes

Fatimah bint Asad was the first Hashemite lady who gave birth to Hashemite“ [offspring!] [٤٣]

Fatimah bint Asad was from the Hashemite clan that was known for its high character, life style, culture and was different from the other rustic tribes of Arabia. She was perfect in the manners and etiquette for which her family was well-known. She was a follower of the Faith of Ibrahim (a.s) like her ancestors did and was free from the aberration of idolatry and polytheism. Therefore, the Prophet (a.s) has talked : (about his relation of descent and ancestry with `Ali (a.s

Allah has created us from the seed of Adam (a.s), transferred through pure loins and“ pure wombs. `Ali had his descent from the same loins as did I, until Allah gave me [birth through Aminah’s womb and `Ali through Fatimah bint Asad.”[٤٤

Fatimah bint Asad not only was privileged in her descent, but she was among the first ladies to embrace Islam and to migrate to al-Madinah when the Prophet (a.s) decided :to migrate. Ibn al-Sabbagh al-Maliki writes

Fatimah bint Asad embraced Islam and migrated with the Prophet (a.s); and she was“ [one of the earliest converts to Islam.”[٤٥

:Abul-Faraj al-Isfahani writes

al-Zubayr ibn al-`Awwam says that when the verse ‘O Prophet! when believing“ women come to you (٤٠:١٢)’ was revealed, I heard the Prophet (a.s) inviting the women to join the Fold and Fatimah bint Asad was the first lady who responded to the [call and swore allegiance to the Prophet (a.s)”[٤٦

She was one of the ladies in the Battle of Badr who were serving water to the troops and taking care of the injured. She was an organized housekeeper as should be a lady with Islamic spirit and took care of all the household affairs efficiently. But when Fatimah al-Zahra’ came to her home as a bride, the duties of the household were divided. All the tasks indoors were assigned to Fatimah al-Zahra’ and the outdoor tasks connected with the home were done by Fatimah bint Asad. Therefore, `Ali (a.s) :said to her

Fatimah, daughter of the Messenger, will relieve you of grinding and kneading and“ [going Out to fetch water and other outdoor Tasks will remain with you.”[٤٧

They also had a slave girl to assist in the indoor and outdoor tasks of the home. But Fatimah bint Asad wished to relieve her of the chains of slavery. Therefore, she told the Prophet (a.s) one day that she wanted to free the girl. The Prophet (a.s) said

”!If you free her, Allah will protect every part of your body from the Hellfire“

When she was about to declare the girl free, she fell seriously ill. She wanted to make a will to the Prophet (a.s) about freeing of the girl, but was unable to modulate the words on account of the effect of the illness. She made gestures to the Prophet (a.s) about it and he affirmed that he would comply with her wish

She was a person of high piety. Whenever she heard of the Pressure in the Grave and the Day of Reckoning, she used to shake with fear of Allah. Once she heard from the Prophet (a.s) that people will be raised on the Day of Judgment in naked state. She expressed that it would be a matter to be ashamed of. The Prophet (a.s) said that he would pray to Allah that she was not raised naked. Once when she heard about the Pressure in the Grave, she expressed how she would be able to bear that pressure when her body was so weak. The Prophet (a.s) said

”!I shall plead with Allah that He relieved you of the Pressure in the Grave“

When Fatimah bint Asad expired, `Ali (a.s) went crying to the Prophet (a.s) and gave him the sad tidings. The Prophet (a.s), seeing tears in the eyes of `Ali (a.s), asked, “Why are you crying?” He replied, “Just now my mother passed away!” The Prophet’s eyes watered and he said

”!By Allah! She was my mother too“

He got up immediately and all the companions too rose to follow him. When he ,reached her house, the Prophet (a.s) removed his cloak and said

”!It should be used as the shroud for her interment“

When the bier emerged out after the last bath and shrouding of the body, he gave his shoulder for carrying it to the graveside. Sometimes he was carrying the bier from the front and at others, he would move to the back. He thus walked barefoot to, Jannat al-Baqi` , the graveyard. He had briefed some men for the digging of the grave. When digging was done, he entered the pit. He widened its sides with his own hands and removed the excess soil that fell into it from the sides. He lay down in the grave for a while and glanced to the right and the left. Then he came out of the pit, and said
:crying

[O revered mother! May Allah bless you. You were the best of mothers!]“[٤٨

Noticing this preferential treatment, some of the companions asked the Prophet (a.s) that they had never seen him give such importance to any other person. He replied that, after his uncle, Abū-Talib, she was the kindest person to him. She used to remain hungry and feed him properly. She used old clothes and always provided him good raiment. She took more care of him than of her own children. He had given his cloak as a shroud so that she was

raised clad in it on the Day of Reckoning. He said that he lay down in her grave for a while that she did not experience the Pressure in the Grave. A scholar of Ahl al-Sunnah, Shaykh `Ali al-Marzūqi writes

The Prophet (a.s) himself interred Fatimah bint Asad and gave his own dress as a shroud. At the moment He was heard saying, ‘Your son!’ When she was asked about her God, she said: ‘Allah!’ When asked about her Prophet she replied correctly. When asked about her Imam, words failed her. At this moment the Prophet prompted her: [‘Your son!’][٤٩

She died in ٤ A.H. And has been buried at Jannat al-Baqi`. But the compound wall of Jannat al-Baqi` has been raised and the grave is now in a neglected passage out side .the wall. When the Hajjis pass that way, they recite Sūrah of al-Fatihah for her soul

Footnote

.Tārīkh al-Khamīs , Vol ١, Page ١٥٧ [١]

.Tārīkh Al-Ya` qūbī, Vol ٢, Page ١٤ [٢]

.Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyah, Page ٨٠ [٣]

.Tārīkh al-Ya` qūbī, Vol ٢, Page ١٩ [٤]

.Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by Ibn Abi'l-Hadīd, Vol ٣, Page ٤٦١ [٥]

.Tārīkh al-Ya` qūbī, Vol ٢, Page ١٦ [٦]

.Hadiyyat al-Ahbāb, Page ٢٥٢ [٧]

.Bihār al-Anwār, Vol ٩, Page ٢٤ [٨]

.Manāqib, Vol ١, Page ٣ [٩]

.Tabaqāt, Vol ١, Page ١١٩ [١٠]

.Tārīkh al-Islām, Page ٣٦ [١١]

.Tārīkh al-Khamīs, Vol ١, Page ٢٥٧ [١٢]

.Tārīkh al-Ya`qūbī, Vol ٢, Page ١٤ [١٣]

.Al-Sīrah al-Halabiyyah, Vol ١, Page ١٣٩ [١٤]

.Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٥٨ [١٥]

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- .Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ١, Page ٤١ [١٤]
- .Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٢, Page ٤٢ [١٧]
- .Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٤٧ [١٨]
- .Al-Isābah, Vol ٤, Page ١١٤ [١٩]
- .Tabaqāt Ibn Sa`d, Vol ١, Page ٢٠٣ [٢٠]
- .Sharh al-Muwaffaq, Page ٧١٨ [٢١]
- .Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ١٥٩ [٢٢]
- .Al-Istī`āb, Vol ٢, Page ٤٨٥ [٢٣]
- .Al-Isābah, Vol ٤, Page ١١٤ [٢٤]
- .Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by Ibn Abi'l-Hadīd, Vol ٣, Page ٣١٥ [٢٥]
- .Manāqib Ibn Shahrāshūb, Vol ١, Page ٣٩ [٢٦]
- .Tārīkh Ibn Kathīr, Vol ٣, Page ٤٢ [٢٧]
- .Ansāb al-Ashrāf, Vol ١, Page ٥٥٣ [٢٨]
- .The footnote on Mishkāt, Page ٥٦٩ [٢٩]
- .Arjah al-Matālib, Page ٢٤٨ [٣٠]
- .Majma` al-Bayān, Vol ٢, Page ٢٨٧ [٣١]
- .Tabaqāt Ibn Sa`d, Vol ١, Page ١٢٤ [٣٢]
- .Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by Ibn Abi'l-Hadīd, Vol ٢, Page ٣١٢ [٣٣]
- .Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by Ibn Abi'l-Hadīd, Vol ٢, Page ٣١٢ [٣٤]
- .Al-Hujjah, ibn Sa`d, Page ٢٧ [٣٥]

.Usūl al-Kāfī, Page ٢٤٤ [٣٦]

.Usūl al-Kāfī, Page ٢٤٢ [٣٧]

.Mir'āt al-'Uqūl, Vol ٢, Page ٢٦٤ [٣٨]

.Al-Hujjah, Ibn Sa`d, Page ١١٥ [٣٩]

.Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by Ibn Abi'l-Hadīd, Vol. ١, Page ٢٧٠ [٤٠]

.Tabaqāt Ibn Sa`d, Vol ٥, Page ٢٢٢ [٤١]

.Tārīkh Abul-Fidā, Vol ١, Page ١٢٠ [٤٢]

.Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by Ibn Abi'l-Hadīd, Vol ١, Page ٣٦٠ [٤٣]

.Tabaqāt ibn Sa`d, Vol ٢, Page ٣٤٠ [٤٤]

.Siyar A`lām al-Nubalā', Page ٤٢٤ [٤٥]

.Tabaqāt Ibn Sa`d, Vol ٤, Page ٣٢١ [٤٦]

.Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by Ibn Abi'l-Hadīd, Vol ١, Page ٣٦٠ [٤٧]

.Al-Tirmidhī, footnote, Vol ٢, Page ٩٦ [٤٨]

.Tārīkh al-Islam by al-Dhahbi, Vol ٢, Page ٢٣٣ [٤٩]

.Lughat al-Hadith, Bāb al-Dād, Page ١٢ [٥٠]

.Tārīkh al-Ya`qūbī, Vol ٢, Page ٩ [٥١]

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Ansāb al Sharaf, Vol ١, Page ٤٠٦ [٥٤]

Thamarat al-Awrāq, Vol ٢, Page ١٣ [٥٥]

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Sīrat Ibn Hushām, Vol ٢, Page ٥٨ [٥٨]

Tārīkh al-Ya`qūbī, Vol ٢, Page ٢٦ [٥٩]

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Tārīkh al-Khamīs , Vol ٢, Page ٥٢٦ [٦٨]

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THE FELICITOUS BIRTH

THE FELICITOUS BIRTH

The Ka`bah is a very ancient structure. Its foundation was laid by Adam (a.s) and the walls were raised by Ibrahim (a.s) and Isma`il (a.s). Although this building is devoid of any designs and embellishments, made out of lime and stones, every stone is the fountainhead of felicity. The Holy Qur'an says about it

”Allah has rated Ka`bah as an honorable abode“

This eminence of the Ka`bah is permanent and eternal. From the day of the laying of its foundation, it has the same eminence, and shall be there forever. This is expressed through various acts of worship in Islam. Therefore, every Muslim, be the person an Arab, a non-Arab, a Westerner or an Oriental, will face towards the Ka`bah when standing up to pray! When they circumambulate the building, they exercise care to see that their shoulders do not move away from it. This circumambulation is a very important pillar of the performance of the Hajj

Ali (a.s) was born at this felicitous place on the thirteenth of Rajab, Friday, thirty` years after `am al-fil. This privilege of taking birth in the holy place went to none before him and anyone after him! The chroniclers of the traditions and the biographers of Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) have recorded this as a very important event in his life. Therefore, al-Hakim al-Nayshabūri writes

It is proved from continuous narrations that Amir al-Mu`minin was born at the center“ [of Ka` bah from the womb of Fatimah bint Asad.”[۱]

:Shah Waliyyullah too reports about this birth with some detail

Reports in continuity prove that Amir al-Mu`minin `Ali (a.s) was born on Friday, the thirtieth of Rajab, thirty years after `am al-fil at the center of Ka` bah. Besides him, [none was ever born there, before or after him.[۲]

The modern time scholar `Abbas Mahmūd al-`Aqqad has termed this felicitous birth as the renaissance of the felicity of the Ka` bah and the forerunner of the worship of, :one and only, Allah there

Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s) was born inside the Ka` bah and Allah kept his face away from ` bowing to the idols there. His birth there was the beginning of the new era of worship [of one and only Allah.”[۳]

Similarly, every historian and biographer has mentioned about this fact. However, some, accepting the birth of `Ali (a.s) in the Ka` bah have tried to lessen the importance of the event. Sometimes they express a view that taking birth inside the Ka` bah is not of any importance, particularly when it was used as a place for installation of idols. The reply to them is that if a mosque is converted into a temple, a church or any other place of worship, it will remain a mosque. Its sanctity will not diminish because of the change. Similarly, if idols were installed in the Ka` bah, its sanctity remained unchanged. Even when Ka` bah was declared as the Kiblah[۴] it continued to have the idols until Makkah was conquered and the idols removed from there. Sometimes they say that Fakhitah bint Zuhayr gave birth to Hakim ibn Hizam inside the Ka` bah thirteen years before the `am al-fil. They say that there is no

.sanctity of being born inside the Ka` bah when even an infidel was born there

p: ۱۵۵

This attitude is contrary to the position taken by the historians and biographers who have admitted in clear terms that besides `Ali (a.s), no one else was born inside the Ka`bah prior to or after him. Besides this, it can be sanctimonious only for a Muslim to have taken birth inside that holy precinct. For an infidel, it is immaterial where he is born! The event of an infidel taking birth inside the Ka`bah will not be of any significance to him like meeting the Prophet (a.s) or even visiting the precincts of the Ka`bah. However, a person in the Faith of Islam will consider it a good fortune to have seen the Prophet (a.s) or he had the opportunity to visit the Holy Place. It cannot be said about `Ali ibn Abi-Talib that he was ever under the influence of infidelity or that he was born an infidel. Therefore, it is mentioned in the books of Ahl al-Sunnah that when `Ali (a.s) was in his mother's womb, and she wanted to bow in front of the idols, he used to turn inside in such a way that it became impossible for her to bow! Although this narrative is not acceptable according to the Shi`ah belief, it is a positive proof that `Ali (a.s), from the womb of his mother to his grave, was never in the influence of infidelity. And those who have written about the birth of Ibn Hizam have termed it as an accidental birth. But `Ali's birth there was according to the wish of Allah. Therefore, `Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib says that he and Yazid ibn tannab and some persons of Banū-Hashim and Banū-al-`Uzza were sitting near the Ka`bah when Fatimah bint Asad came and stood near the Ka`bah for a while. Hardly any time elapsed when there appeared signs of concern on her face. She lifted her shaking hands towards the sky and prayed

O my Sustainer! I have faith in You, Your Prophets and the Books Revealed to them. “Ease my difficulty for the sake of this very House, its Builder and the one who is in my womb! Make the birth of the child I am carrying easy for me! I am confident that he is
”!one of the radiant signs of Your Greatness and Your Majesty

Abbas says that when Fatimah bint Asad finished the prayer, they saw the rear wall of the Ka`bah go asunder and she entered through that opening without any hesitation. Then immediately the opening closed and the wall was the same way as it
.was earlier

The veracity of this narrative has been accepted by the scholars of both the schools of thought. Therefore, from among the erudite Shi`ah scholars, `Allamah Abū-Ja`far al-tūsi in al-Amali, `Allamah Majlisi in Bihar al-Anwar and from the scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah, Mir-Salih al-Kashshafi in al-Manaqib and Mawlawi Muhammad Mubin in Wasilat al-Najat have recorded this event. This tradition highlights the fact that this event did not happen all of a sudden as an accident. The miracle is that the wall of the Ka`bah went asunder and Fatimah Bint Asad went boldly in and the wall came back to its original position. It was a manifestation of the Divine Power of Allah. Fatimah bint Asad emerged from the Ka`bah three days after the birth of `Ali (a.s) with the baby in
.her arms

The Prophet (a.s), who was waiting eagerly outside, went forward and took the son of his beloved uncle in his arms. The baby opened his eyes and the first person on whose face he set his eyes was the Prophet (a.s). The Prophet (a.s) put his tongue in the mouth of the newborn and, they say, he transferred the Divine Prophetic Knowledge to him. Witnessing this event, the Prophet (a.s) has said, “He chose me for the first
”.glimpse and I selected him for the knowledge

Ali (a.s) has several relationships with the Ka`bah. The Prophet (a.s) has termed him` 'like the Ka`bah', that his own forbears had constructed it and were the protectors and keepers of the edifice. Hassan ibn Kalal attempted to demolish it when Fihri ibn Malik defeated and imprisoned him. Abrahah ibn Ashram attacked with a fleet of elephants when `Abd al-Muttalib steadfastly stood at the entrance to the Ka`bah. If the idolaters had converted it into a storehouse of idols, it was `Ali (a.s) who, astride the shoulders of the Prophet (a.s), demolished the idols and threw them out.

.Therefore, his birth was the prelude of the purification of the Ka`bah

While `Ali (a.s) had the singular privilege of being born in the holy precincts of the Ka`bah, the timing of his birth was very felicitous that he was born in the month of Rajab which is one of the sanctimonious months in the Islamic Calendar. On the twenty-seventh of this month, the Annunciation of the Prophet (a.s) took place and commenced the invitation for the people to embrace Islam. This also is an indication of the nearness and affinity that `Ali (a.s) had for Islam! `Ali's life had been a mirror of Islamic teachings and character. Islam and `Ali (a.s) grew under the tutelage of the
.(Prophet (a.s

Footnote

Mustadrak, Vol ۳, Page ۴۸۳ [۱]

Izālat al-Khafā, Page ۲۵۱ [۲]

Al-`Abqariyyah al-Islāmiyyah, Page ۸۶۳ [۳]

.Direction in which Muslims turn to pray [۴]

NAME, APPELLATION AND FILIAL APPELLATION

NAME, APPELLATION AND FILIAL APPELLATION

Abū-Talib named him Zayd after his ancestor, Qasi ibn Kalab. Fatimah bint Asad named him Haydar after her father Asad. Asad and Haydar both the words mean a tiger. Therefore, in the battle of Khaybar, while reciting the martial poetry combating ,with Marhab, he said

”I am that whose mother has named him Hayder“

The Prophet (a.s), under divine inspiration called him with the name of `Ali (a.s). There is another opinion that Abū-Talib himself gave him the name of `Ali (a.s). As a proof, :they present the following couplet of Abū-Talib

I have given him the name of `Ali that eminence and success always follow him.“

”.Respectability is the only wealth that remains forever

This name, literally meaning greatness and high status, proved most appropriate for `Ali (a.s). Although the Umayyads tried their level best to play down his name and the kunyah, they could not succeed in doing it. Therefore, Abū-Na`im al-Isfahani writes in Hilyat al-Awliya’ that the son of `Abdullah ibn `Abbas was `Ali and kunyah Abul-Hasan. One day `Ali ibn `Abdullah went to Abd al Malik who said that he could not tolerate his name and kunyah. He did not change his name but changed his kunyah to Abū-Muhammad! With this bent of mind, for centuries no Muslim ruler by the name `Ali was there. But today, in the Muslim population anywhere, after Muhammad, the most popular name is `Ali. Despite centuries of suppression and oppression, the !name (`Ali) spread all over the world with the spread of Islam

He has several titles that signify his various qualities. The most popular are al-Murtada, al-Wasi and Amir al-Mu'minin. His first kunyah is Abul-Hasan. Another well-known kunyah is Abū-Turab. Generally, Arabs keep the kunyah on the name of the first son. For instance, Abū-Talib adopted the kunyah as Abū-Talib when his first son Talib was born. `Abd al-Muttalib had his kunyah based on the name of his first-born son as Abū-Harith. The second kunyah of `Ali (a.s) was on the suggestion of the Prophet (a.s). It is written in Sirat Ibn

Husham that during the battle of al-`Ashirah, `Ali (a.s) and `Ammar ibn Yasir went towards the lake of Banū-Mudlaj and lay down under the shade of a tree on green grass. Hardly any time passed when the prophet (a.s) too arrived there, and seeing `Ali's dusty clothes he said

”!O Abū-Turab, in what condition are you“

:From that day, `Ali's kunyah became Abū-Turab. `Allamah Halabi has written

In the battle of al-`Ashirah the Prophet (a.s) had given to `Ali (a.s) the kunyah of Abū-“Turab when he found him and `Ammar ibn Yasir sleeping and `Ali (a.s) was covered in [dust”[۱

In the beginning this kunyah was suggested for `Ali only. Prior to him, none had this :kunyah. Therefore, Shaykh Aluddin writes

For the first time ever, `Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s) was addressed with the kunyah of Abū-“ [Turab.”[۲

Al-Bukhari has included this incident in his Sahih that the Prophet (a.s) once came to the residence of Fatimah al-Zahra' (a.s) and not finding `Ali (a.s) at home he enquired about him. Fatimah (a.s) said that they had some difference of opinion and that in a state of anger he went out. The Prophet (a.s) asked one person to go and look for `Ali (a.s).The person noticed `Ali (a.s) lying on the floor of the mosque. He returned and informed his whereabouts to the Prophet (a.s). The Prophet (a.s) then went to the ,mosque and noticed `Ali (a.s) covered all over in dust. He dusted his clothes and said

”!Get up, Abū-Turab“

.After this event he was known with the kunyah of Abū-Turab

This narration, when compared with the earlier tradition sounds different and is not plausible according to the norms of Dirayah. The reason for the non-plausibility is that during the entire married life of Fatimah and Al (a.s) there is no instance of ever being any differences between them. Their lives have been examples of most cordial marital relationship. From the tradition where `Ammar ibn Yasir was also there, it appears that the Prophet (a.s) had suggested the kunyah of Abū-Turab in Jumada II, ۲ A.H., because the Battle of al-`Ashirah was fought in that period. Fatimah al-Zahra' (a.s) was married to `Ali (a.s) on the first of Dhul-Hijjah ۲ A.H. that is, six months after the proposal of this kunyah. In that event, there is no chance of any difference of opinion between the two and the need to go away from home in anger. Because at that time, Lady Fatimah was not married to `Ali (a.s). It appears that the tradition has been concocted to please the Umayyad rulers who used to address `Ali (a.s) with this kunyah while they carried out their campaign of vilification against him. A name that is associated with an unpleasant memory would never be a popular name. Although this :kunyah of `Ali (a.s) is the most likeable of this titles Therefore, Sahl ibn Sa`d says

[Ali liked Abū-Turab more than all his names.] [۳] “

Footnote

Vol ۲, Page ۱۴۲ [۱]

p: ۱۶۱

APPEARANCE, BEARING AND LOOKS

The study of human appearance and bearing is an important branch of psychology. This is based on innumerable studies and experiments. These psychologists study the eyes, nose, forehead and other parts of the body and arrive at a conclusion about the person's nature and temperament. According to these experts, a bulging forehead is a sign of intelligence and cleverness. When the arms of a person are firm and wide, he has the qualities of a leader of men. The hardness of hair, according to them, is a sign of valor and big eyes indicate a person who is quick of nature. One who has a short neck might be tricky and querulous. When a person has fleshy calves is generally foolish. One who has small and sunken eyes is tricky and treacherous. One who has weak and thin shoulders is apt to be poor in thinking. Although these are hypothetical assessments, at best, they give a fair idea about the persons under study

According to the books of history and biography, the appearance of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) can be described as given here

His body was heavy, his complexion light whitish, his appearance and bearing were very attractive, and his visage was smiling and shiny like the full moon. Abul-Hajjaj Mudrak says

”He was more handsome and attractive than others“

,He had a wide forehead. Ibn ` Abbas says

”(I have not seen temples better looking than those of ` Ali (a.s“

On his forehead, calluses had developed on account of excessive prostration in prayer. He had a delicate and pointed nose and eyes big and dark that reflected determination and boldness. Abul-Hajjaj says that he had seen traces of collyrium in `Ali's eyes. His eyes were bright, eye brows were bow shaped, eyelashes long, teeth properly spaced and shining. Zurarah ibn Samarah says

”!When he smiled the teeth shone like strings of pearls“

His neck was muscular and long. His chest was wide and hairy. His biceps were well formed. His wrists were strong and firm and finding the joint

(۱۲۲)

between the wrists and the arms was difficult. His collarbones were wide and strong. His palms were hard and the knees were neither weak nor fleshy. His tummy was rather bulgy. His beard was dense and wide. The hair of his head was grey. Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah says

”Ali (a.s) once dyed his hair with henna once, and then abstained from doing it` “

Because of excessive use of the armor, the hair on his forehead had fallen. His height is slightly more than the average. `Ali (a.s) himself said

Allah has bestowed on me a modest body and height When my adversary is short, I strike on his head to cut him into two pieces and if he is tall I cut him horizontally into two.

His voice was clear and loud, his style and speed of walking was like that of the Prophet (a.s), elegant and slightly drooping to the front. When he advanced to face an adversary in battle, he used to walk briskly and his eyes used to get reddish

,Ibn Qutaybah writes in al-Ma`arif that a woman saw `Ali (a.s) and said

”!As if he had been broken and he was then rejoined“

People thought that it means that his body was asymmetrical. In fact, what the woman said was an Arabic idiom and its allegorical meaning is different from its apparent meaning. Therefore, Sayyid Muhsin al-`Amili writes in A`yan al-Shi`ah and `Umar Abul-Nasr in al-Zahrah also writes the saying of Ibn `A`ishah that the quoted sentence is for the person whose arms are muscular and his eyes piercing the ground and not a person who is asymmetrical of body

HABITS AND TEMPERAMENT

HABITS AND TEMPERAMENT

Amir al-Mu`minin had a smiling face, was good-natured and a paragon of sincerity. He was kind to the poor and always took care of the orphans. He was an exact replica of the manners and character of the Prophet (a.s). He met the elite and the ordinary persons with the same affability. He used to treat the slaves with the same consideration as he would treat his own relatives. To servants he always gave help in sharing their heavy burdens. He hated self-praise. He lived a very simple and frugal life. Like the ordinary folk, he ate simple food and wore inexpensive clothes. Most of the chores he preferred to perform with his own hands. He used to repair his own footwear, stitch his torn cloaks and always went to the bazaar to buy the grocery. He used to work as a farm laborer. He used to excavate ponds with his own hands, plant trees and water them. Instead of amassing wealth, he preferred to distribute it to the poor and impecunious. He did not like distinction based on color and descent. He used to treat the guests with great honor. He never sent back any needy person empty handed. He never let the feelings of hate; rancor and revenge come near him. He exercised forbearance and forgiveness to a surprising extent. He was strict in the matter of Faith and always fulfilled the requirements of justice and fairplay. He used to tread on the path of truth and fairness and never was partial to anyone in these matters. He never used methods of stealth and cunning even with his sworn enemies. He spent the nights in prayer and supplication. After the Morning Prayers he used to

give instruction to people in matters of the Qur'an and Fiqh (Muslim jurisprudence).
With the fear of Allah, he used to shiver. He used to cry so much while supplicating to
.Allah that his beard used to get wet with the tears

Once Dirar ibn Samarah al-Dhuba'i visited the court of Mu`awiyah. Mu`awiyah asked him to tell something about `Ali (a.s) because he had the privilege of spending lot of time with him. In the beginning Dirar was reluctant, but on insistence of Mu`awiyah :he said

By Allah! His aims were high and physique strong! He always talked with determination and acted with justice and fairness. The streams of learning used to flow from him and his words were like songs of erudition and wisdom. He was not attracted to the false glitter of the world. He used to take solace in the loneliness of dark nights. Tears used to flow from his eyes and he used to be immersed in thoughts. He preferred dress that was modest and liked simple food. He lived with us like an ordinary person. Whenever we asked anything, he would reply with patience. By Allah! Despite all the nearness, we used to hold him in awe before we opened our mouths to speak with him. He respected men of learning and gave the poor the privilege of his company. The powerful could never expect his support in their waywardness and the weak was never disappointed with his justice. Allah is witness that I have seen him, in dark nights, restlessly holding his beard and wincing as would a person bitten by a snake and saying "O world! Go and deceive someone else! Do not come to flatter me. How is possible for me to reconcile with you that I have already divorced you thrice! You are transient and your importance is but little! It is a pity that the provision for the [journey is meager, the destination is distant and the way frightening!"]

This was the Voice of Truth that reverberated in the Dardar al-Sham, a court where sycophants were gathered to flatter the tyrant. None could dare there to speak out the truth. This was a unique situation that a person of courage did speak! The books of history record that the courtiers cried copiously hearing the talk of Dirar and even the eyes of Mu`awiyah watered. This was the magnetic effect of the high morality and veracity of actions that even the hearts of enemies melted like wax. Amir al-Mu`minin was an ideal mixture of awe and dignity, kindness and compassion. He was as hard as a mountain and as soft as the cloud in flight. One of the companions of `Ali (a.s), Sa`sa`ah ibn Sawhan, has said

Imam) `Ali used to live amongst us as an ordinary person. Despite his humility and softness, we used to be hesitant and subdued in his presence, like the prisoner who [had a sword of the executioner over his head!"]

In view of these characteristics of `Ali (a.s), Mulla `Ali al-Adhrabayjan has something wonderful to say

He used to challenge the enemy and attack him like Allah's Tiger! And while doing charity and good deeds he looked like the parent of the orphans

Footnote

Al-Istī`āb, Vol ۲, Page ۴۶۳ [۱]

Preface Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by Ibn Abi'l-Hadīd [۲]

HIS SARTORIAL HABITS

HIS SARTORIAL HABITS

Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) used to wear simple and inexpensive dress, the type of dress generally worn by the poor and middle class Arabs of those days. Sometimes he wore dress of a quality even poorer than that! His intention always was to cover the body and not to show off grandeur of the dress! He sometimes wore summer apparel during winters and wore the winter apparels during the summers. In time of need, he would patch up his dresses with the bark of the date or pieces of leather. He never felt

belittled wearing such clothes. Once he was wearing a cloak, which was having
,several patches. Some persons made remarks about this. He said

Wearing such tatters, it creates a feeling of humility in the heart and the people of“
”the Faith will try to emulate me when they see me in such humble apparel

Al-Mas`ūdi writes that during the period of his Caliphate, he never wore a new dress!
His normal dress consisted of a loincloth, cloak and a scarf. He preferred to wear the
:turban on his head. He used to say

[The turban is the crown of the Arabs.”[۱“

Statements of some persons are given here who saw Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) on
.different occasions and had recorded about the type of dress he wore

Jabir al-Ju`fi says that he saw Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) wearing a black headgear on his
.head. One end of the turban was hanging on his chest and the other on his back

Amr ibn Marwan says that his father had told him that he saw `Ali (a.s) wearing a `
.black turban on his head and both its ends were hanging at his back

Yazid ibn Harith al-Fazari says that he saw the Imam (a.s) was wearing a white
.Egyptian turban on his head

.(Abū-Hayyan says that he saw a thin cotton cap on the head of the Imam (a.s

Ayyūb ibn Dinar says that his father told him that he had seen `Ali (a.s) wearing a
loincloth and a scarf on his shoulders. On another occasion, he saw him wearing two
.scarves made in Najran

Abhur ibn Harmūz says that his father saw the Imam (a.s) coming out of the Mosque
at al-Kūfah wearing a loincloth half way between his feet and knees and was wearing
.a scarf on his shoulders

In those days, generally this was the dress of the people. Therefore, at the Ghadir Khumm when the Prophet (a.s) raised `Ali (a.s) on his hands, the tradition says, that it was raised so much that the whiteness of the armpit was visible. The reason was that the Prophet (a.s) was wearing only a chador on his shoulders, which moved away .(while he raised `Ali (a.s

Nawf al-Baqali says that he saw `Ali (a.s) wearing a shirt and wore a footwear made .of the bark of date palm

Ibn `Abbas says that he saw a torn footwear in the feet of `Ali (a.s) that he had also .seen him repair

.Ata Abū-Muhammad says that he saw the Imam (a.s) wearing a cloak of rough cloth`

.Khalid Abū-Umayyah says that that the Imam's loincloth was up to his knees

Abdullah ibn Abi-Hudhayl says that he saw on his shoulders a cloak made of rough` .cloth. The sleeves of the cloak were touching the tips of his fingers

Abd al-Jabbar ibn Mughirah says that Ummu-Kathirah told him that she had seen ` `Ali (a.s) that his loincloth was of coarse cloth and he wore a cloak of coarse cloth as .well. Over the cloak, he wore a scarf

Abul-`Ala' the manumitted slave of Aslam says that he saw that `Ali (a.s) tied his .loincloth above the umbilical region

Abū-Malikah says that he once went to the presence of the Imam (a.s) and saw that he had tied his cloak like the loincloth around his waist. Over the cloak, he had tied a .rope to keep it in place

Qudamah Ibn `Attab says that he saw the Imam (a.s) wearing a white woolen cloak and had wrapped around his shoulders red striped shawls of Qatari origin. He wore a headgear of fine cloth

Abū-ʿabīyan says that he saw `Ali (a.s) wearing a yellow loincloth and was covering his shoulders with a flowery black shawl

Zayd ibn Wahab says that he saw the Imam (a.s) emerging out of his house and his loincloth was having several patches

, Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Rahman says

[Ali (a.s) wore his ring on the right hand.] [۲] “

Ali (a.s) used to wear either ruby or turquoise on his rings. He also used Chinese Gold and sometimes cornelian for his rings. On the cornelian, there used to be the engraving, “almulku lillah (Kingdom is Allah’s)”. In some traditions, it is said that the engraving used to be, “lillahi almulku.” He used to keep a whip in his hand. While delivering a sermon he used to take the support of a bow or a sword

Footnote

Sīrat Ibn Hushām, Vol ۲, Page ۲۸۶ [۱]

.Kifāyat al-Tālib, Page ۲۵ [۲]

FOOD HABITS

FOOD HABITS

Ali’s food habits too were very moderate and frugal. Generally, he took bread made out of unsieved barley flour and a sweet beverage prepared from parched barley meal. The accompaniment for the bread generally was a little salt; sometimes he took a little vinegar, and sometimes, green vegetables and at times milk. He ate very little meat. Ibn Abil-Hadid says

If he used anything with the bread, it used to be the salt or vinegar. Sometimes he ate greens. He rarely took camel's milk with his food. He seldom ate meat and used to say that people should not make their tummies the Grave yard of animals

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s) says that `Ali (a.s) served meat and bread to his guests and he himself ate his bread with vinegar or olive oil

He used to keep bread and Sattu in a sealed bag. Someone said that he was living in Iraq, a land of plenty, and what was the need to seal his supply of food? The Imam (a.s) replied that he did not seal his stock of food for the reason of scarcity and the real reason was

[I do not like to fill my tummy with a thing I do not know about!]"[`

Amr Harith says that once at noon time he had the privilege of visiting the Imam ` (a.s). He saw a sealed bag was placed in front of him. He took out a dried piece of bread from it, soaked in water, sprinkled a little salt over it and ate. Seeing the dry pieces of bread ` Amr asked Fiddah at least she should sieve the flour and remove the chaff before kneading it for making the bread. Fiddah said that once she sieved the flour and the Imam (a.s) asked her not to do it again. Once she had put in the bag other eatables besides the dry bread, the Imam (a.s) started sealing the bag to avoid anyone putting other things in the bag

Adi ibn Hatam says that once he saw dry pieces of barley bread, salt and a pitcher of water in front of `Ali (a.s), He said

You are busy with jihad during the days and occupied with prayers in the nights. Is “the food you are taking sufficient for your nutritive maintenance

The Imam (a.s) looked at `Adi and said, “The psyche has to be trained for Mystic Exercise that it does not become rebellious.” Then he recited the following couplet

Make your psyche accustomed to contentment otherwise, it will have excessive desires!

Suwayd ibn Ghafalah says that he went to the Imam (a.s) and saw that he had a bowl of sour yogurt in front of him and barley bread in his hand, which had flakes of barley chaff all over. He was breaking the bread, sometimes with his hand and others by putting it on his knee. Once he went to greet the Imam on `Id. He saw that `Ali (a.s) had bread and Khatifah. Suwayd asked the Imam (a.s), “Even on a festive occasion ,you eat such frugal food?” The Imam (a.s) replied

[Id is for those whom Allah has pardoned!” “

The Imam (a.s) never ate two types of food at one time. If, at any time, various dishes were placed in front of him, he would mix and make them one. Therefore, at the time of a festival, several dishes were placed before him. He mixed portions of the different foods and made it one. Once he got food that had meat in it but not any oil.

,Someone suggested if some oil could be added to it. The Imam (a.s) replied

[We do not eat two things at one time!]"[۴“

The Imam (a.s) always ensured this. During his last days, once his daughter Ummu-Kulthūm placed barley bread, salt and milk in front of him. He asked her to take away
.the bowl of milk and ate the bread with salt

In emulation of the Prophet (a.s), he abstained from things that Muhammad (a.s) avoided eating. Therefore, `Adi ibn Thabit says that once `Ali (a.s) was served a drink
:prepared from sieved flummery. He refused to take it; and said

”!A thing that the Prophet (a.s) has not taken, I do not like to take“

While `Ali (a.s) avoided eating delicacies, never ate even the frugal fare to the fill. Ibn
:Abil-Hadid writes

[He never ate to satiation of the appetite]"[۵“

While Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) emulated the Prophet (a.s) in other matters, he was meticulous in following his food habits as well. He took care of the minutest details of seating at the meals, the way of taking the morsels and the style of eating. Imam
:Ja`far al-Sadiq (a.s) says

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was much like the Prophet (a.s) in his food habits and style of
”.eating

He used to wash his hands before and after eating. He used to say that hands became clean of oily deposit if they were washed. And the eyes become bright He used to sit on his knees with folded legs. He disapproved of putting one leg over the other and sitting cross-legged. He used to say bismillahi before starting to take food. He also said that if someone missed reciting this before starting to eat, he could do so in the midst of the meal as well. He used to commence the meal with a little salt. He used to wait for the food to cool down if it was served hot. He used all the five fingers of the right hand for eating. He always picked his morsel from the front instead of taking the hand to different sides of the platter. He never picked up Tharid (the pieces of bread soaked in gravy) from the center of the service and always took his share from the

periphery. Of all the beverages, he preferred water and particularly the rainwater. He said that the rainwater wards away diseases and cleansed the digestive system. Instead of throwing away the crumbs of bread from the spread, he used to pick and eat them. He said that this practice cured illness. He never drank from the mouth of the pitcher nor from the broken side of any container. He did not like blowing over foods and drinks. Once he asked his servant, Muslim, to fetch a tumbler of water. When he came in front of the Imam (a.s), he blew over the water because there was some particle floating on the surface. The Imam (a.s) said, “Now! You drink this water”!and bring another tumbler for me

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh [١]

Manāqib ibn Shahrāshūb [٢]

.An Arab food that is prepared by boiling flour in milk [٣]

Kifāyat al-Tālib [٤]

.Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah, the Introduction [٥]

CHILDHOOD

CHILDHOOD

There are three phases in every human being's life: childhood, youth and old age. There are different requirements in every phase of ones life. Childhood is for play. In this phase, the individual does not have full sense of things. The childish activities prove this. They cannot distinguish between right and wrong while at play

The aptitude of Abū-Talib's son was different from the other children. He was never seen at childish games and play. He was away from other activities that children enjoy indulging in. His looks indicated courage, determination, and his actions dignity. His physical and mental activities were different from those of other children. The development of his physical identity was faster than that of the children of his age. He grew in a day as much as another child in a month. Therefore, his body was strong and the sense of comprehension far advanced. The author of Arja al-Matalib, Najmuddin Fakhr al-Islam Abū-Bakr ibn Muhammad al-Marandi writes in Manaqib al-Ashab about the reason for giving the name Haydar to `Ali (a.s) that while he was still a baby in arms, his mother once left him alone at home. The house was at the foot of a hill. A snake came down from the hill, came near the baby and started hissing. The baby caught the snake in one hand and pressed it until it died. When his mother came back, she noted the dead reptile in the hand of the baby and said

”!O my tiger! May Allah keep you alive“

When he grew up and started walking around, he used to lift heavy stones with ease and bring them down from the top of the hills. He was fond of breaking the idols

According to the norms of Arab upbringing, Abū-Talib trained his children in archery, horse riding and wrestling. He used to gather his sons and nephews together and arrange their matches in these disciplines and taught them the finer points of the martial arts. `Ali (a.s), though he was the youngest of all, was never subdued by the others. He used to defeat all his brothers and cousins without any difficulty. This was a Divine Gift to him. Ibn Qutaybah writes

[With whomsoever he wrestled, he defeated him!]

Besides this physical strength, `Ali (a.s) was far advanced in the development of his mental capabilities. He had a great sense of distinguishing between the right and wrong from his very childhood. He recognized the Real Creator (Allah) as soon as he opened his eyes. Living in the environment of idolatry, he never thought the idols fit for worship! When people were hesitant to accept Islam for long after the Prophet declared his Annunciation, he had understood its importance prior to this declaration.

:Therefore, he himself has said

I see the light of Revelation and Prophethood and get the Fragrance of“
[Prophethood,“]

His high vision saw the light of Prophethood and smelled its fragrance. Even before the Annunciation of the Prophet (a.s), he made him his role model. Therefore, `Ali’s childhood, like his youth and old age, was a mountain of greatness. Viewing the period of his childhood, one understands that a great personality was in the making. This greatness was a gift from the Almighty Allah

EDUCATION AND UPBRINGING

EDUCATION AND UPBRINGING

The ideal environment that `Ali ibn Abi-Talib had was his singular privilege. He opened his eyes in the lap of the Prophet of Islam (a.s), had his upbringing under his tutelage and spent his youth in his august company. He benefited from the Prophet's fountainhead of learning and grew up under his care as Fatimah bint Asad says

When `Ali (a.s) was born, the Prophet (a.s) Gave him this name and made him suck his tongue. He dropped his saliva in the mouth of the baby and put his tongue in his mouth. Sucking the tongue, the baby slept. On the second day we searched for a foster mother, but `Ali (a.s) took away his mouth from the bosom of the women. We thought of Muhammad (a.s). He put his tongue in the mouth of the baby who then [slept soundly. This went on until Allah desired it to be so.]"[١]

Although during the period of fosterage `Ali (a.s) had his mother's care, but after weaning the Prophet (a.s) took up the responsibility. He used to give him the bath and spend hours taking him round in his arms. While awake, he used to sing lullabies to him. He took more care than the parents did in the upbringing of `Ali (a.s). At the age of six years `Ali (a.s) formally came under the care of the Prophet (a.s).The parents were relieved of his responsibility. The apparent reason of his coming totally under the tutelage of the Prophet (a.s) was that Makkah was passing through one of its worst droughts and Abū-Talib had difficulty of maintaining his large family. The Prophet (a.s), realizing his uncle's straitened financial position, felt that he needed to be helped. He discussed the matter with his other uncle, `Abbas. He told him that Abū-Talib will not express about the difficulties himself. He said that Allah had endowed `Abbas with wealth and he could provide his brother some relief by sharing the burden along with the others in the family. `Abbas agreed with the suggestion

and both of them went to Abū-Talib for a discussion. They suggested to him that they came to him with a proposal that they would share the burden of maintaining some of his children. In the beginning, he was hesitant, but in the end, he yielded. They decided that `Aqil would remain with Abū-Talib, and said that `Abbas was free to take other sons with him. Therefore, `Abbas took charge of Talib, Hamzah agreed to take up guardianship of Ja`far and the Prophet (a.s) himself requested his uncle to allow him to take the responsibility of `Ali (a.s). The fact is that from the Day of Creation `Ali (a.s) had been earmarked for him

The drought came as a blessing in disguise for `Ali (a.s) that he came under the direct :tutelage of the Prophet (a.s). Ibn Jarir al-tabari writes

It was Allah’s Blessing for `Ali (a.s) that the Quraysh suffered one of the worst“ droughts at the time. This way Allah accomplished what He had planned for `Ali [(a.s)]”[۲

It is natural that children do not want to be separated from their parents. But the Prophet’s love and affection did not let `Ali (a.s) feel much for the separation from his father and mother. He found his father’s affection in the affectionate looks of the Prophet (a.s). He received a wealth of joy and happiness under his loving care. The Prophet (a.s) used to feed the child with his own hands, made him sleep near himself. He took care of the child day and night and attended to all his needs himself. `Ali (a.s) :himself says about his upbringing

I was still a child that the Prophet (a.s) took the responsibility of my upbringing. He“ used to keep me close to his chest. He made me sleep near him and made me smell [his fragrance. He used to chew some food and then feed it to me.[۳

This was an example of `Ali’s physical upbringing. But since the Prophet (a.s) was created by Allah for the moral uplift of the entire world, one can imagine the attention and training that he would provide to the one who has been specifically earmarked for his personal tutelage! On the one hand he was `Ali’s benefactor and on the other he was the Mentor for the Entire World. In these circumstances, definitely `Ali (a.s) would receive the best of training and upbringing imaginable! Therefore, the prophet (a.s) paid utmost attention to the development of the intellectual and moral development :of his ward. `Ali (a.s) says about his moral training thus

I used to trail the Prophet (a.s) the way a she-camel's little one trails it! Every day he“
[used to raise the flags of good morals for me and used to order me to follow them!”[۴

This upbringing played such a role in the development of his personality that he was a replica of the Prophet (a.s) in morals, knowledge and action and was recognized as the reflection of his mentor's qualities and excellence. Therefore, because of Divine Blessing and the august company of the Prophet (a.s), `Ali (a.s) was endowed with
.extraordinary qualities

:In his own words, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) has described thus

”!In my chest is the knowledge that has been fed to me as bird feeds its little ones“

This allegory of `Ali (a.s) has lot of meaning and delicacy in it. As a bird, feeds the food stored in its beak to its off spring, the Prophet (a.s) transmitted all the knowledge, be it on Shari`ah, wisdom, Qur'an, Sunnah, Morals and statesmanship, evident and hidden, ,current or past, to `Ali's chest. After completion of this training the Prophet (a.s) said

”!I am the city of Knowledge and `Ali is its Gate“

The Prophet (a.s) very clearly indicated now that anyone desirous of acquiring his knowledge had compulsorily to go through `Ali (a.s). Is not it a fact that entry to any city has to be made through its gate! `Ali (a.s) is a personality whose knowledge is directly acquired from his mentor, the Prophet (a.s), and the Prophet's knowledge is
!the direct Endowment from Allah

Al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyah, Dahlān, Page ١٧٦ [١]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٥٧ [٢]

Nahj al-Balāghah [٣]

Nahj al-Balāghah [٤]

THE FIRST TO ACCEPT THE FAITH OF ISLAM

THE FIRST TO ACCEPT THE FAITH OF ISLAM

Islam is a discipline of life, which is in consonance with the human nature, and the temperament of the Universe. It does not neglect the requirements of nature at any stage. The aims of Islam and the Nature are identical and their destination is the same! Therefore, in the Holy Qur'an "Din-Religion" is also called Islam

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ.

(The Religion for Allah is only Islam. (٣:١٩)

.It is described as Nature too

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا.

Turn your face from everything else and turn towards 'Din'. This is the 'Nature' of Allah on which men are created. (٣٠:٣٠)

:The Prophet of Islam (a.s) says

[Every child is born on 'Nature'.][١]

,Imam Ja`far al-Sadiq (a.s) was asked, "What is 'Nature'? He replied

"!It is only Islam"

When Islam is Nature and Nature is Islam, then being born on 'nature' will mean that

every child, whether he is born to Muslim parents or not, is a Muslim at birth. When he comes under the influence of the non-Muslim parents, and their society, he picks up thoughts and ways of that environment. He moves away from the way of 'Nature' and adopts the way of his 'parents' and starts practicing their faith. If a child gets the right environment after birth, he will then, having taken birth on 'Nature' will be attached to .Islam internally and externally

Ali (a.s) was born on the Din al-Fitrah and received his upbringing in such a congenial`
:environment that in accordance wit his own words

I was born on the Din al-Fitrah and therefore I had precedence In Faith and“
[Hegira.”[ʻ

From his early days `Ali (a.s) was with the Prophet (a.s). He received his upbringing
under the watchful eyes of the Prophet (a.s) and followed his thoughts and beliefs. He
never had anything to do with infidelity and idolatery. Therefore, Ahmad ibn Zainy
:Dahlan writes

Ali was never under the influence of polytheism because he was under the care and` “
[supervision of the Prophet (a.s) like his own son. He emulated him in all matters.”[ʻ

Once Sa`id ibn Musayyab asked Imam Zayn al-`Abidin (a.s) at what age `Ali (a.s)
,embraced Islam? The Imam (a.s) replied

Was he ever an infidel that you ask such a question? However, when Allah had
Ordained Muhammad (a.s) the Prophet, `Ali (a.s) was ten years old and he was not an
[infidel then!”[ʻ

This question can be asked only about the persons who were infidels and polytheists
and had embraced Islam leaving behind their evil ways. If `Ali (a.s) is recognized as
the first to embrace Islam, and the earliest Muslim, it is because when the Prophet
(a.s) was Ordained in to the Faith, he was the first to endorse his allegiance. Even
otherwise `Ali (a.s) was on the same Faith as was the Prophet (a.s) prior to his
!Annunciation

After the Annunciation, the Prophet (a.s) started his campaign of propagation of the
Faith from his home only. It is quite natural that the best persons to vouch for the
honesty and integrity are the immediate members of his family. Therefore, when the
Voice of Islam had not yet left the four walls of the Prophet’s home Khadijah and `Ali
(a.s), who was eagerly waiting the felicitous moment, embraced Islam. Neither `Ali
(a.s) doubted the veracity of the claims of the Prophet (a.s), as some others did later

on, nor did he express surprise over his claims. These two personalities were the closest to the Prophet (a.s) and had precedence over all the others in embracing the :True Faith! Amir al-Mu'minin says

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At that time Islam was not there in any place outside the four walls of the Prophet“
[(a.s) And Khadijah’s home. However the third Person in their group was I.”[۵

Besides this precedence in embracing Islam, these two had the privilege of being the first to offer the Islamic Prayer along with the Prophet (a.s). For a long time after the Annunciation, these were the only two who were seen praying along with the Prophet (a.s). Therefore, Isma`il ibn Iyas says that his grandfather, `Afif, narrated that he used to visit Makkah for trading and used to be the guest of `Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib. Once, near the Ka`bah he spotted a handsome, young person looking towards the sun and then facing the Ka`bah, saying “allahu-akbar”. In a while, a child came and stood on the right behind the young person. Then a lady came and stood behind both of them. The young person did a genuflection and both the persons behind him followed suit. When he raised his head, they did the same. Then he prostrated and the two behind him prostrated too. `Afif was much impressed with this way of offering prayer. He asked `Abbas, who those three persons were? He informed, “The youth is my nephew Muhammad (a.s) ibn `Abdullah, the child is another nephew of mine, `Ali (a.s) ibn Abi-Talib and the lady is the wife of Muhammad (a.s), Khadijah bint Khuwaylid. Muhammad (a.s) has advised me that this method of :prayer was communicated to him by Allah!” He added

By Allah! I do not know if there is another person, besides these three, on the face of“
[the earth who is a follower of this Faith.”[٤

:When ` Afif became a Muslim later on, he used to say with great craving

How I wish I had embraced Islam on that Day to be the third person to join the“
[Fold.”[٥

Afif had witnessed the scene when on the land, and under the sky, there were only ` three persons praying to Allah and he always nursed the feeling of regret that if he had received the Guidance, he would have become the fourth person in the Faith and his name would have gone down in the roster of Muslims after ` Ali (a.s) and Khadijah (a.s). If someone else had embraced Islam in that period, his name too would have appeared in these narrations. ` Abbas too mentioned only the names of these in his narration. Precedence in Islam of Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) has been recognized by
:almost all the historians and biographers. Therefore, Ibn Husham says

Amongst men the first person to embrace Islam, to join him in his prayer and witness“
what all Allah sent through the Prophet (a.s) was ` Ali (a.s). At that time his age was ten
[years.”[٦

In this regard, the evidences of certain important companions of the Prophet (a.s) too
:are mentioned here

:The Prophet (a.s) himself said

[The first Muslim amongst you is ` Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s)”[٧“

:Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) says

[I was the first to embrace Islam on the call of the Prophet (a.s).”[٨“

:Abdullah ibn `Abbas says`

[First of all `Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s) embraced Islam.”[١١“

:Abū-Dharr al-Ghifari says

I have heard the Prophet (a.s) say to `Ali (a.s), ‘You were the first to accept the Faith“
[and bear my witness.”[١٢

:Salman al-Farisi says

In this Ummah the first to reach near the Prophet (a.s) at the Cistern of Kawthar and“
[the first to embrace Islam is `Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s)”[١٣

:Abū-Ayyūb al-Ansari says

[The first person to profess Faith on the Prophet (a.s) was `Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s)”[١٤“

:Zayd ibn Arqam says

[The first to witness faith on the Prophet (a.s) was `Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s).”[١٥“

Besides precedence in embracing Islam, the first to join the Prophet (a.s) in his prayers were only `Ali (a.s) and Khadijah (a.s). Besides these two, during the early days of Islam no third name is mentioned having joined the prayer. If anyone else had joined the ranks of Muslims in that period, why the history is silent about their joining or not joining the prayers with the Prophet (a.s)? For the first seven years, these were the only two who used to join the Prophet (a.s) at the prayers. Therefore, `Ali (a.s)
,says

[I prayed with the Prophet (a.s) seven years prior to the others.”[١٦“

:To strengthen this claim, some more sayings are recorded here

:Anas ibn Malik says

The Prophet (a.s) was Annunciated on Monday and on Tuesday `Ali (a.s) offered his“

[prayer.”[۱۷

:Buraydah al-Aslami says

[The Revelation came on Monday and on Tuesday `Ali (a.s) offered the prayer.”[۱۸“

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:Jabir ibn `Abdullah al-Ansari says

On Monday the Prophet (a.s) was ordained the prophet and on Tuesday `Ali (a.s)“
[offered the Prayer.”[۱۹

:Mujahid says

[Ali (a.s) was the first to offer prayer, and his age at the time was ten years.”[۲۰,`“

After all these evidences, there should not be any doubt about the precedence of `Ali (a.s) in embracing Islam and offering the Islamic prayers. But some persons have invented lame excuses to categorize precedence according to age of the persons who had embraced Islam in that period. Therefore, they say that Abū-Bakr was the first to embrace Islam amongst men, Khadijah among the ladies and `Ali (a.s) among the children and Zayd ibn Harithah among the slaves! This procedure, instead of establishing the true precedence, makes it

confused and blurred! The only purpose behind this categorization seems that they want to deny `Ali (a.s) the privilege of being the first to embrace Islam! But this procedure itself is a proof of the futility of their claim. If some other person, of their choice had preceded in embracing Islam, there would not have been the need for them to take shelter behind flimsy categorization. This claim is also not proved through the statements of the contemporary persons who have all talked about `Ali's precedence in Islam and have made no other reference which can be extended in support of the ostensible categorization. When they claim that `Ali (a.s) was the first to embrace Islam in the category of children, can they produce a roster of other children who embraced Islam then? Those early days, when the adults, including the big names of later days, were shying away, what was the question of children coming into the fold of Islam! If it is accepted that Abū-Bakr was the first among the men who were major to accept Islam, how could it be proved that he embraced Islam prior to `Ali (a.s)? To cover this inability to prove his precedence, they are inventing the theory of categorization to withhold their futile claims of precedence. All their claims cannot prove that Abū-Bakr joined the fold before `Ali (a.s) There is no proof, even of the fact, whether Abū-Bakr had precedence over other major males in embracing Islam!

In fact, history points out that a good number of males had embraced Islam prior to him. Therefore, Muhammad ibn Sa`d inquired from his father Sa`d ibn Abi-Waqqas

Did Abū-Bakr have precedence over you people in embracing Islam? He said, ‘No!’“

[More than Fifty persons had embraced Islam before him!”[۲۱]

Sa`d ibn Abi-Waqqas is counted as a major companion and one of the al-`asharah al-mubashsharah (The Ten about whom the Prophet (a.s) has Guaranteed the Heaven!). It is proper to make flimsy claims of categorization of precedence in Islam in opposition to the claims of such an eminent Companion of the Prophet (a.s)! Another reason to turn down these claims is that around the Annunciation of the Prophet (a.s), Abū-Bakr was not there in Makkah. He was away in Yemen and learned about the :developments only after his return from there. Therefore, Ibn al-Athir writes

Abū-Bakr says that when he returned to Makkah, the Prophet (a.s) had already been“ ordained. `Uqbah ibn Abi-Mu`it, Shaybah, Rabi`ah, Abū-Jahl, Abul-Bukhtari and the chiefs of Quraysh came to me. I asked them if any calamity had struck them. Or there had been any severe accident? They said, ‘O Abū-Bakr! The biggest saddening news [is that the Orphan of `Abdullah has claimed that he is Allah’s Ordained Prophet!”[۲۲]

Therefore, when he was not present in Makkah at the time of the Annunciation of the Prophet (a.s), then no question arises on his precedence over `Ali (a.s) in embracing Islam. The sayings of the Companions prove, and the historians agree, that `Ali (a.s), on the day following the Annunciation was seen praying near the Ka`bah along with the Prophet (a.s). This proves that he had embraced Islam on either the Day of !Annunciation or the next day when he was seen at prayer

Considering these evidences, it is imperative to accept that `Ali (a.s) had precedence over others in embracing Islam. If there was the slightest chance of disproving it, people would not have brought up the flimsy excuse of his being a child and a minor at the time of his entering the fold of Islam. They add another excuse saying that perhaps `Ali (a.s) accepted Islam only to please his benefactor, the Prophet (a.s). They say that even if there is precedence in embracing Islam, it is not valid because of his being a minor. They say that those who embrace Islam at the age of majority do so with full conviction and understanding and that their Faith is valid. A minor can accept a Faith in emulation of his elders, while a major person accepts only if he is convinced. These people do not know that wisdom and conviction not always come with age. Sometimes minors are more wise and intelligent than the older persons. Allah says
:(about Yahya (Prophet John

”He was still a child when We made him an arbiter, intelligent and affable“

:Isa (a.s) has said from his cradle`

”.I am Allah’s creature. He gave me the Book and made me a Prophet“

In both instances the capability appears at its zenith although the state of ‘maturity’ is far away! Although `Ali (a.s), at the time of his embracing Islam, was still a minor, he had never worshipped any idols throughout his childhood. He manifested all the signs
:of wisdom and intelligence at that age. `Allamah al-Suyūti writes

[Ali never worshipped idols even in his childhood.] ۲۳ “

It is a fact that grown up and matured persons of those days showed their ignorance by prostrating to the idols and seeking boons from them. If with age, they had intelligence and wisdom, they would not have indulged in worship of inanimate idols

This group of persons was on one side, on the other was another group of persons like Abū-`Uthman al-Jahiz and Ibn Taymiyah who went to the length of saying that the embracing of Islam by a minor is not valid. Therefore, despite declaring oneself a Muslim, a minor is not a Muslim in true sense. This sort of belief is possible only from a person who is in the ranks of Nawasib (Those incurring the hostility of the Prophet's Household and their followers). The question is whether `Ali (a.s) embraced Islam on his own or was invited to do so by the Prophet (a.s). If he did it, on his own, how did he know that he must respond to the call of the Prophet (a.s) and decided that declaring Faith in him is binding? If the Prophet (a.s) had invited him to embrace Islam, then he must have thought it valid to induct a minor to its fold. If the acceptance of `Ali as a minor into the fold was invalid, then the Prophet (a.s) should have regularized the process sometime in the future after `Ali (a.s) attained majority. But nowhere in the history, there is any reference of such event. This would mean that `Ali (a.s) was not in the fold of Islam. This sort of canard can be expected only from those who themselves have nothing to do with Islam. The fact is that when some people realized about the precedence of `Ali (a.s) embracing Islam, they came up with the talk of his faith as the Islam of Emulation and, as such, was invalid. They closed their eyes to the fact that at that time the condition of the age of maturity for application of Shari`ah was not in force, nor for acceptance of the Faith. It only depended on one's understanding and intelligence. Therefore, `Allamah Halabi writes

Alī's Islam was valid on this count, although all agree that at that time he was still a `minor. His own saying is that he was still a child and had not reached maturity when he had precedence over others in embracing Islam. The reason was that even children were eligible then and their eligibility was withdrawn in the year of Khaybar. Al-Bayhaqi says that this eligibility became invalid in the year of al-Khandaq and the condition of majority was introduced. Another version is that the condition of the age of maturity was introduced in the year of Hdaybiyah. Prior to that it depended on the [intelligence and understanding of the person.] [۲۴

At the time of the Annunciation of the Prophet (a.s), `Ali's age was about ten to twelve years when a person is sufficiently knowledgeable, intelligent and capable of understanding things. When his Islam was valid in terms of the norms of Shari`ah at that time, attempts to term it invalid reflects the thinking of the persons who do it

Footnote

Al-Wāfī [۱]

Nahj al-Balāghah [۲]

Al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyyah, Page ۱۷۷ [۳]

Al-Wāfī [۴]

Nahj al-Balāghah [۵]

Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۶۵ [۶]

Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۶۵ [۷]

Sīrat Ibn Hushām, Vol ۱, Page ۲۶۲ [۸]

Al-Istī`āb, Vol ۲, Page ۴۵۷ [۹]

Tārīkh Baghdād, Vol ۴, Page ۲۳۳ [۱۰]

Al-Istī`āb, Vol ۲, Page ۴۵۸ [۱۱]

Al-Istī`āb, Vol ۲, Page ۲۰۸ [۱۲]

Al Al-Istī`āb, Vol ۲, Page ۴۵۷ [۱۳]

Sharh al-Taqrīb, Vol ۱, Page ۸۵ [۱۴]

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Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٢, Page ٣٧ [١٤]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٢, Page ٢١٤ [١٧]

Mustadrak Hakim, vol ٣, Page ١١٢ [١٨]

Tārīkh al-Kāmil, Vol ٢, Page ٢٢ [١٩]

Tabaqāt Ibn Sa`d, Vol ٣, Page ٣٣ [٢٠]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٤٠ [٢١]

Usd al-Ghābah, Vol ٣, Page ٢٠٨ [٢٢]

Tārīkh al-Khafā, Page ١٧٧ [٢٣]

Al-Sīrah al-Halabiyyah, Vol ١, Page ٢٤٩ [٢٤]

THE FEAST OF `ASHIRAH

THE FEAST OF `ASHIRAH

The Prophet (a.s), as soon as he was Ordained as the Messenger, he silently commenced his mission. When he entered the fourth year of this activity, he received a Commandment from Allah to openly propagate the Faith

وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ.

”!Preach your nearest relations“

On the Revelation of this Verse, the Prophet (a.s) made Abū-Talib’s residence the head quarters of his Mission. He asked `Ali (a.s) to make arrangements for a meal to be served to the progeny of `Abd al-Muttalib and to invite them to join the feast. `Ali (a.s) procured one shank of meat, one measure of milk and about three seers of wheat flour. Then he went round inviting people. At the appointed time about forty persons assembled at the house of Abū-Talib. Among the guests were Abū-Talib, Hamzah ibn `Abbas and Abū-Lahab. Although the number of guests was high considering the quantity of food, Allah made it sufficient for all the guests and some

quantity was left over. When the guests finished the meal, the Prophet (a.s) rose from his place and tried to make the announcement of his Prophethood and to invite them to the Right Path. Abū-Lahab interrupted at this point and said, “Muhammad wants to lead you away from the faith of your ancestors. Do not give ear to his suggestions lest you get affected with his magical spell!” As a result of the outburst of Abū-Lahab the group got restive. Some stood up to depart and others followed them. The Prophet (a.s) could not communicate what he had planned to say. The second day, the Prophet (a.s) extended invitation to the same group through `Ali (a.s). They again assembled for the meal. After the meal, the Prophet (a.s) rose to give a talk. Abū-Lahab once again tried to interrupt. But Abū-Talib chided him and asked him to sit quietly. Abū-
:Talib told him

”?O unfortunate person! What have you to do with these things“

Hearing this, Abū-Lahab had no courage to interrupt any further and sat quietly putting his head on his knees. Abū-Talib addressed the gathering and asked them to sit comfortably in their places. He asked the Prophet (a.s) to tell what he wished to say. He said that the people would listen to him with attention and act on what he had to say. The Prophet (a.s) got encouragement from these words of support and
:addressed the gathering

O progeny of ` Abd al-Muttalib! By Allah! No youth in Arabia has brought any thing“ better than what I have brought for you. I have brought for you the welfare of this world and the Hereafter. Allah has commanded me to invite you towards this welfare! Who is the person amongst you willing to become my associate and helper? I assure
[you that he will be my Brother, My Vicegerent and my Successor!”[1

Barring three or four persons, none of the gathering was happy over the statement and none had the courage to extend his hand in support. Everyone sat quietly with
:bowed heads. Suddenly, in that quiet environment ` Ali’s voice broke the silence

Although I am young, definitely younger than all of them, I shall be your associate,“ helper and protector! If someone cast an evil eye on you, I shall break that eye! If
:someone created turmoil, I shall strike him

:The Prophet (a.s) said

!O ` Ali! Wait for a while! Perhaps someone from the grown ups might come forward“

When after making the call thrice no one came forward, the Prophet (a.s) called `Ali (a.s) close to himself, put his hand on his head and said

Certainly! This is my Brother, My Associate and My Vicegerent. It is binding on all of you to listen to him and obey him!”[۲]

When the Quraysh heard this statement, they had a sarcastic smile on their faces. They stole glances at each other, joked with each other and some braves told Abū-Talib, “Now you will have to listen to and obey your son!” Although the gathering took `Ali’s words lightly, later on it was proved that the promise that the small boy made in the gathering of the Quraysh was kept in letter and spirit. In the most difficult situations, he shielded the Prophet (a.s) from the assaults of the enemies. He proved to the world that there was none more deserving of the brotherhood, support and the position of the successor of the Prophet than he was

In recognition of the selfless services of Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s), the Prophet (a.s) was bound to make a public announcement of his Succession and Vicegerency! While returning from the Farewell Pilgrimage, at a place called Ghadir Khumm, the Prophet (a.s) delivered a Sermon wherein he said

”!Ali is the master of him, whose master I am ` “

Saying this, the Prophet (a.s) proclaimed the Succession and the Vicegerency of `Ali (a.s). This was an echo of the promise made at the Feast of al-`Ashirah and the recognition of the fulfillment of `Ali’s Resolution to act as the support and bulwark for (the Prophet of Islam (a.s

The da`wat al-`Ashirah also throws light on the Vicegerency or Caliphate of `Ali (a.s) :that the Prophet (a.s) had declared only three things at the Feast .(Tawhid or Unity of Allah, Prophethood and Succession or caliphate of `Ali (a.s

Along with the announcement about Tawhid and Prophethood, the mention of caliphate illustrates its importance in the consideration of the Prophet! This proves that if Tawhid and Prophethood are the main pillars of Islam, the caliphate (of `Ali (a.s) too is of prime importance. As the acceptance of Tawhid and Prophethood is imperative for a Muslim, the acceptance of `Ali's Succession and Vicegerency too is .necessary

Footnote

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۶۳ [۱]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۶۳ [۲]

HELP AND ASSISTANCE TO THE PROPHET COMMENCES

HELP AND ASSISTANCE TO THE PROPHET COMMENCES

When the Prophet of Islam (a.s) started open propagation of the Faith, the Quraysh, because of their respect and consideration for Abū-Talib, did not directly attack the Prophet (a.s) but they set urchins to trouble him and throw stones and brickbats on him. They thought that this way they could force the Prophet (a.s) to abruptly discontinue his mission. Therefore, whenever he came out of his house, the youths of the Quraysh used to follow him, shouting invectives and throwing stones and garbage at him. The Prophet (a.s) was much disturbed and saddened with this treatment, but he never uttered a word against the culprits. He knew that arguing with the children and youth was not of any use. Once `Ali (a.s) saw the marks of injury on the Prophet's body and asked him about the cause of the injuries. The Prophet (a.s) explained to him that the Quraysh themselves do not come out openly against him but send out their children to cause him harm. Whenever he came out, they came together, followed him and threw stones and pebbles on him. `Ali (a.s) was very disturbed to hear this

and said, "O Prophet of Allah (a.s)! In the future, you should not go out alone. I shall be with you. If they throw brickbats on you, I will hurl stones at them. Then they will not have courage to do such nasty things again!" The next day `Ali (a.s) was with the Prophet (a.s) when he stirred out of their home. The Quraysh youths, as usual tried to crowd the Prophet (a.s). They noticed that `Ali (a.s) was standing in front of the Prophet (a.s). The youths were almost of the same age as `Ali (a.s) but first they hesitated seeing his angry face and then advanced sheepishly. `Ali (a.s) rolled up his sleeves and sprang on them like an angry tiger. He broke the limb of one attacker, struck the head of another and threw another down! The crowd of youth, getting a good beating from a youth of their own age fled defeated! They ran to their elders and complained, "`Ali (a.s) has beaten us!" But the elders could not gather any courage to confront `Ali (a.s) because the youths were doing the mischief at their instance only. From that day, the youth of Quraysh stopped misbehaving. Whenever they saw `Ali (a.s) with the Prophet (a.s), they would try to crouch themselves in some corners to hide from their view! They did not dare any time in the future to trouble the

.(Prophet (a.s

After this incident, `Ali (a.s) was remembered with the title of al-Qadim that means a person who breaks the bones and the ribs! Therefore, during the Battle of Uhud when he came out to fight Talhah ibn Abi-Talhah, Talhah asked who was coming to fight. He said, "I am `Ali Ibn Abi-Talib!" When he knew that it was `Ali (a.s) that was against him, he said

[O al-Qadim! I think none other than you can dare to come and fight with me!]"[۱]

Talhah remembered him with the title they gave him in their youth

Footnote

A`yān al-Shī`ah [۱]

THE QURAYSH BOYCOTT

THE QURAYSH BOYCOTT

When the Quraysh failed in crushing the Islamic Movement and suppress the voice of the Prophet (a.s), and lost all hope of bringing him to their thinking, they came to a conclusion that unless Muhammad (a.s) was not handed over them, they would terminate all relations with Banū-Hashim and declare an economic boycott against them. They decided to neither sell anything to them nor establish any matrimonial relationship with the family. To give authenticity to this agreement, Mansūr ibn `Ikrimah al-`Abdari drafted a document with mutual consent on which eighty chiefs of Quraysh put their seal of approval. This document was given in the safekeeping of Abū-Jahl's aunt Ummul-Jallas who was warned to keep it safe as a valuable document.

When Banū-Hashim heard of this agreement, they felt it difficult to live at Makkah any more. They shifted to a cave at a distance from Makkah. This cave was known as Shi`b Abū-Talib. Now they were cut away from the people of Makkah, and people of Makkah from them. The boycott agreement of the Quraysh affected other tribes as well. None had the courage to interact or transact with Banū-Hashim. However, Abul-`as ibn Rabi`ah, Hakim ibn Hizam and Husham ibn `Amr sometimes used to load

camels with provisions and push them stealthily towards Shi`b Abū-Talib. Banū-Hashim also managed to buy some provisions at high prices during the Hajj periods. Because of buying things at exorbitant prices, and because of no occupation, they ran out of funds and ultimately they reached the stage of starvation. The predicament was such that sometimes they had to chew the leaves of trees. The elders were demonstrating forbearance, but the children used to cry inconsolably. Others used to hear of their tribulation, but none took pity on them. The Quraysh, instead of commiserating with them, took sadistic pleasure in their plight! It was quite natural considering the temperament of the Quraysh. But the surprising thing was that there still existed a group of Muslims in Makkah who were rich and persons of means! But history fails to suggest if they ever attempted to come to the rescue of their brethren during the long period of suffering. Some humanitarian persons, who had not embraced Islam until then, used to provide some succor to Banū-Hashim

Those who made claims of friendship and love during the days of comfort turned their
eyes away in times of difficulty

Quraysh were convinced that Banū-Hashim would not be able to bear the travails of the boycott and abandon the prophet (a.s). They thought that when he was rendered friendless, they would subdue him easily. But the Banū-Hashim never left the side of the Prophet (a.s) for a moment and faced the difficulty with indomitable courage. In this context the courage of Abū-Talib assumed proverbial proportions. The only worry he had those days was to ensure the safety of Muhammad (a.s). He worried that the enemy might make a preemptive, surprise attack to kill him. In the nights, he used to keep a vigil around the place where the Prophet (a.s) slept, or even he would shift him from one place to the other in the dead of the nights. One of his sons would sleep in the place where the Prophet (a.s) was moved. This he was doing with the fear that the enemy agents might have seen the place where the Prophet (a.s) had retired for the night and might plan to attack him unawares. In most of these shifting, `Ali (a.s) used to substitute for the Prophet (a.s) in the place where he first slept. `Allamah Halabi
:writes

Abū-Talib used to tell the Prophet (a.s) every night to retire to his bed and sleep.“
When all others slept, he used to awaken the Prophet (a.s) and ask one of his sons or nephews to substitute him in his bed. This he was doing for the fear that the enemy
[might get intelligence of his place of rest and attack to kill him.]”

:This duty was generally entrusted to `Ali (a.s). Ibn Abil-Hadid writes

When others learnt about the place of rest Of the Prophet (a.s), Abū-Talib used to “feel the danger to his life. He used to awaken him in the dead of night and substitute [his son, `Ali (a.s), to sleep in his place.”[۲

This period of tribulation commenced in the seventh year after the Annunciation from the first of Muharram and ended in the tenth year. For full three years the Banū-Hashim had to bear the extreme hardships. Now some people started feeling the cruelty of the Quraysh and the sufferings of Banū-Hashim. They tried to intervene and get the agreement of boycott abrogated to enable the Prophet (a.s) and others to return home. Therefore, one influential

person from Makkah, Husham ibn `Amr, tried to move in the matter and talked to Zuhayr ibn `Abdullah Makhzūmi and told him that his mother, `Atikah, was the daughter of `Abd al-Muttalib. He asked him how he could silently watch the sufferings of the children of `Abd al-Muttalib. Zuhayr said that he was very concerned with the happenings, but he was helpless being all alone. Husham told him that he was not alone and offered to join in trying to solve the problem. They also thought of recruiting support from more persons. They felt that Mut`im ibn `Adi too looked amenable to joining the team. When they talked to him, he willingly agreed to join. Now Abul-Bukhtari, Ibn Husham and Zum`ah ibn Abi-al-Aswad too volunteered. All these five persons came to the saloon of the chiefs of Quraysh and said, “O chiefs! We have come to you with the purpose of pleading with you for the freedom of Banū-Hashim. It is a grave injustice that we live comfortably and `Abd al-Muttalib’s progeny live in penury and starvation. We shall not take rest until the document of boycott is abrogated and settle the Banū-Hashim in their homes.” Abū-Jahl crossed his brows and said, “We shall never permit that they ever return to their homes! On them the doors of Makkah are closed forever and ever!” The delegates too replied to him tersely. Quraysh were adamantly sticking to their stand and refused to lift the boycott. It was almost reaching the point of conflict between the two groups when Abū-Talib was spotted approaching the place. This unexpected arrival gave Abū-Jahl the thought that Abū-Talib was coming to surrender Muhammad (a.s) to them because of

the unbearable sufferings of Banū-Hashim. When Abū-Talib reached there, the
:Quraysh asked him about the reason of his coming. He replied

My nephew has informed me, and I never heard him tell lies, that the Document (of“ Boycott) has been infested with mites and except the name of Allah on the top, the entire matter concerning tyranny and injustice has been eaten by the mites if he is proved right, you must retract from your wrong attitude, and if he has lied, I shall [hand him over to you. It will be your choice whether you kill him or leave him!”]

The Quraysh accepted this just offer from Abū-Talib, and sent a messenger to fetch the document. They were surprised to see that, as told by the Prophet (a.s), the entire document was eaten by the mites except the words “In the name of Allah” Now the Quraysh were very confused and started making excuses. Abū-Jahl said until the end that they would not terminate the pact of boycott. But Husham ibn `Amr, and his companions, forced them to agree to the abrogation of the boycott. The Banū-Hashim could alas get back to their homes

For Banū-Hashim, the period of boycott was a period of great trials and tribulation. On the one side were the Quraysh with all their stratagems of tyranny and on the other were the hapless and suffering families of the Banū-Hashim. The children were scared and the elders worried. Every moment they had the fear of the enemy’s attack. In these trying circumstances the sangfroid of Abū-Talib and his spirit of sacrifice had been proverbial. Every other day he substituted the Prophet (a.s) with his son in the bed with the fear that the enemy might attack in the dead of the night and kill the person in the Prophet’s bed. If some well-wishers had not raised their voice against the boycott and miraculously the mites had not eaten away the boycott document, there was no way for them but to perish in the bargain

For Quraysh it was an opportunity to see the Right Path! Even after seeing a Divine Miracle, their eyes were closed. When they found the information given by the Prophet (a.s) veracious to the last word, they should have forsaken their unfair stand. And perceived the beacon towards the Right Path. There was no reason for them to think that the Prophet (a.s) had made a guess about the mites attacking the document. Generally, mites attack things in moist and salubrious climates. Makkah is a place with high temperatures and mites cannot thrive there. And if it was a mere coincidence, then how is it that the mites ate away every word of the document except the name of Allah about which the Prophet (a.s) had said. Although the Quraysh stuck to their inimical stand despite this miracle, some good persons did respond positively. Ibn Wadih al-Ya`qūbi writes that some people embraced Islam after this event. When persons, seeing the mite eaten document embraced Islam, how is it possible that Abū-Talib who vouched for the veracity of the Prophet's statement about the condition of the document without even seeing it, could be termed an infidel

Footnote

Al-Sīrah al-Halabiyyah, Vol ١, Page ٣٤٢ [١]

Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by Ibn Abi'l-Hadīd, Vol ٣, Page ٣١٠ [٢]

Tabaqāt Ibn Sa`d, Vol ١, Page ٢٠٩ [٣]

MIGRATION TO AL-MADINAH

MIGRATION TO AL-MADINAH

On release from the virtual incarceration at Shi`b Abū-Talib, of Banū-Hashim, the enthusiasm of the Quraysh in pestering them cooled down. Although, in their hearts, they had the same hatred for the Prophet (a.s), his family and companions, as erstwhile. They had some consideration and awe of the personality of Abū-Talib that kept them in a degree of check. Abū-Talib had now grown old and the troubles of exile had not done any good to his health. He deceased a short while after his return from Shi`b Abū-Talib. Now the people of Makkah got total freedom to trouble the Prophet

(a.s) and the new converts to Islam the way they wished. None had the courage to stop them from their nefarious activities. Every day the troublesome activities of .Quraysh increased

When the tyranny of the Quraysh became unbearable, the Prophet (a.s) went to Ta'if from Makkah. Ta'if is at a distance of sixty miles from Makkah and has a salubrious climate. According to a narrative of Abul-Hasan al-Mada'ini, `Ali (a.s) and Zayd ibn Harithah accompanied the Prophet (a.s) on this journey. The purpose of the Prophet (a.s) behind this trip was to invite the people of Ta'if to the fold of Islam. But the people there were worse than those in Makkah were. They did not agree to listen to the Prophet (a.s) and set wayward urchins and vagabonds to throw stones at the visiting party. With difficulty the Prophet (a.s) spent a month at Ta'if and, literally, the vagabonds chased the party away from there. The only way left for them was to head back to Makkah. They came to the outskirts of the town and camped at the Cave of Hira'. It was risky for them to enter the precincts of the town without some plausible support. He sent word to Mut'im ibn `Adi through a person seeking his protection. When he pledged his support, the Prophet (a.s) entered the town. Here he faced the same difficulties and hurdles as he faced at Ta'if. But, despite all the difficulties, he continued his Mission. He visited the nearby hamlets and propagated the Message of Islam. The Quraysh too shadowed him during these trips and used to interrupt the meetings calling him a madcap. The Prophet (a.s) however maintained his calm and .composure. He never reacted angrily and thus continued his mission

It was the practice of the Prophet (a.s) that during the Hajj, he used to meet the persons coming from far away places to give them the Message of Islam. Those pilgrims, who were of receptive nature, embraced Islam. It was the Hajj on the tenth year after the Annunciation when a group from Yathrib visited Makkah. When the Prophet (a.s) during a trip of propagation reached Mina, he came across six persons near `Uqbah. He went near them and asked about the tribe to which they belonged. They said that they were from Yathrib and they belonged to the Tribe of Khazraj. The Prophet (a.s) sat down with that group and recited to them some Verses from the Holy Qur'an and invited them to embrace Islam. They were much influenced by the Islamic Principles and they readily embraced it. Now, this was the beginning of the spread of Islam in Yathrib. During the next Hajj, twelve persons came from Yathrib and embraced Islam. The following year a contingent of seventy-three persons arrived and embraced Islam at the hands of the Prophet (a.s) these persons said that it was their desire that the Prophet (a.s) changed his residence to Yathrib and made it the head quarters for his Mission. They promised him all cooperation and protection. In Makkah, there were many hurdles in the way of propagating the Faith. He informed to the Muslims that he intended to migrate to al-Madinah. The Muslims were already fed up of the ill treatment meted out to them by the Quraysh. When they found a place of peace, they started migrating one after another. When the Quraysh saw that the Muslims have gained support and protection of the people of Yathrib, they feared that if the Prophet (a.s) too migrated, his disturbed group might consolidate and rise against them. Therefore, the Quraysh started creating hurdles in the way of those migrating to al-Madinah. They withheld the families and children of some migrants, snatched away the money from some and threatened some others. But all these schemes of the Quraysh were of no avail and barring a few persons all the intended migrants succeeded in changing their residence

When the Quraysh failed in their efforts to curb the migration, they called together a council in which all the major families excepting the Banū-Hashim participated. From Banū-`Abd-Shams, `Utbah, Shaybah and Abū-Sufyan, from Banū-Nawfal, Taymah ibn `Adi, Jubayr ibn Mut`im and al-Harith ibn `Amir, from Banū-`Abd-al-Dar, Nizar ibn Harith, from Banū-Asad, Abul-Bukhtari ibn Husham, Zum`ah ibn al-Aswad and Hakim ibn Hizam, from Banū-Makhzūm, Abū-Jahl ibn Husham, from Banū-Sahm, Nabih and Munabbih, sons of al-Hajjaj, from Banū-Haja, Umayyah ibn Khalaf were at the conclave. In addition to these dignitaries, some other people too attended the meeting. It happened that one aged person from Najd attended this meeting. One person who started the proceedings of the meeting said that the

Muslims have struck an alliance with people from outside and they can acquire a position of strength at any time in the future. The meeting must seriously deliberate the matter. If this movement is not curbed, there was a lurking danger of their rising under the leadership of Muhammad (a.s) and attacking the Quraysh! There was the need for devising a way to nip Islam in the bud and to give such punishment to Muhammad (a.s) that, in future, none else raises his head. Al-`as ibn Wa'il, Umayyah ibn Khalaf and Ubay ibn Khalaf said that Muhammad (a.s) must be chained and incarcerated in a dungeon until he died with hunger and thirst. The Najdi old man said that the suggestion was not good. If such a step was taken, the people of Muhammad's tribe might fight and get him released. `Utbah, Shaybah and Abū-Sufyan said that he must be exiled so that they do not hear any word against their idols in the future. The Najdi opposed this proposal too saying that wherever he went, he will gather people around him with his sweet talk and make them rise against the Quraysh. Then none will be able to curb his onslaught. Abū-Jahl said that strong youths should be selected from every tribe and they should all, in unison, attack Muhammad (a.s) and kill him. In such an event any one tribe cannot be blamed individually for the killing and it will be beyond the strength of Banū-Hashim to avenge the killing. Therefore, they will be forced to accept the blood money instead of demanding with retaliation! He added that they would together contribute to pay the amount of the blood money. This suggestion was accepted by everyone and the Najdi too endorsed it. To implement the project it was decided to post a vigil near the

Prophet's residence around dusk to keep a keen eye on the movements there lest he escaped getting wind of their plan. In the darkness of the night, the youths would then barge into his house and kill him. Here the conclave against him was in progress, and on the other side, Allah had forewarned the Prophet (a.s) of the impending danger.

:Therefore, Allah has said in the Qur'an

وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ

Remember the time when the infidels were scheming against you to incarcerate you“ at some place or to kill you or to banish you. They were planning their stratagem and
”!Allah had his own plan. Allah is a better Planner

,To implement Allah’s Plan, the Prophet (a.s) called `Ali (a.s) and said

O `Ali! Quraysh have decided that they would assassinate me tonight. But Allah has“ ordered me to leave Makkah and make you sleep in my bed! It is very disturbing for me to leave you

behind surrounded with enemies, but this is the command of Allah, therefore: You must cover yourself with my green Hadramite shawl and sleep in my bed and no harm [will come your way from them.”[١]

Ali (a.s) did not raise a word of dissent or objection against the Prophet’s instruction. ` He was concerned only of the safety of the Prophet (a.s). The Prophet (a.s) assured him that he would be able to safely escape from the clutches of the enemies. Hearing :this, `Ali (a.s) made a prostration of thanksgiving to Allah! Ibn ShahrAshūb writes

Ali (a.s) was the first to Make a prostration of Thanksgiving and the first to keep his ` “ [face on the dust after prostration”[٢]

After raising his head from the prostration, `Ali (a.s) asked the Prophet (a.s) to go peacefully and that he would sleep in his bed as instructed. The Prophet (a.s) could elude the infidels and proceeded towards the Mount tūr and `Ali (a.s) fearlessly covered himself with the Prophet’s shawl and peacefully slept in his bed. `Allamah :Diyarbakri writes

On the night of the Migration when `Ali (a.s) slept on the bed of the Prophet (a.s),“ Allah Revealed to Archangel Gabriel and Archangel Michael, saying: I have established a relationship of brotherhood between you two and Have made the life of one more than that of the other. Who is the one between you who can sacrifice his life for the other?’ They both opted for their individual life only! Then Allah Revealed to them why they were not like `Ali (a.s)! ‘I made him Muhammad’s brother. At the cost of his life, he is sleeping on the bed of Muhammad (a.s). Descend both of you, to the earth and guard him from his enemies!’ Therefore, Archangel Gabriel stood at the head and Archangel Michael stood at the foot of the bed and started saying: ‘Felicitations! O son of Abū-Talib! Who is like you that Allah prides on the angels because of you’ and then Allah Revealed the Verse: ‘There are also people who stake their lives in the way of [Allah, and Allah is very kind on His Creatures”][۳

After the Prophet (a.s) went away, Abū-Bakr came to his house. Not finding him there, he asked `Ali (a.s), “Where is the Prophet (a.s)? On being told that he had gone towards the Mount tūr, Abū-Bakr too proceeded in that direction. The historian al-
:tabari writes

When the Prophet (a.s) heard the sounds of the steps of Abū-Bakr in the darkness of“ the night, he thought that one of the infidels was following him. He increased the speed of walking. The strap of his sandal gave way and one of his toes was injured. [This caused him bleeding. However he kept on walking fast!”][۴

Abū-Bakr felt that he was the cause of inconvenience to the Prophet (a.s) and therefore he called him aloud and identified himself. Recognizing his voice, the Prophet (a.s) stopped. Around dawn both reached the Mount tūr and took shelter in a .cave

The vigil of the infidels continued at the house of the Prophet (a.s). Whenever they peeped inside, they found the Prophet (a.s) deep in his sleep covered in his shawl! Near the dawn, they unsheathed their swords and rushed into the house. Hearing the slight commotion, `Ali (a.s) removed the shawl from his face. When they saw `Ali (a.s) in the bed of the Prophet (a.s) their faces went pale! Surprised they asked where Muhammad (a.s) had gone. `Ali (a.s) asked them, "Did you entrust him to me that you are asking me about him? Allah knows where he is!" At this reply, the infidels were much upset. They were facing defeat in their designs. They thought of avenging the failure against `Ali (a.s) but ultimately left him unharmed and went with crestfallen .(faces to go in the pursuit of the Prophet (a.s

The infidels of Quraysh so far had the satisfaction that although most of the Muslims had migrated from Makkah, Muhammad (a.s) was still there for them to wreak their revenge against him. Even if the Muslims acquired strength at Yathrib, they dare not attack Makkah for the fear of the Prophet's safety. Now that the Prophet (a.s) had escaped, the situation had drastically changed. They made men run in all directions to search for the Prophet (a.s). Some men reached near the Mount tūr in their search. Outside the cave, there was neither any mark of footsteps nor any signs of someone entering it. At the entrance, spiders had knit their web and some pigeons had made their nest. The men returned from there disappointed. Abū-Jahl announced that whoever brought back the Prophet (a.s), he will be gifted a hundred camels. Suraqah ibn Malik, in the greed of the gift, went in search of the Prophet (a.s). He even spotted him. But the person was awed with the majesty of the Prophet (a.s). He quietly returned. The Prophet (a.s) stayed in the cave for three days and nights. On the fifth of Rabi` I, he started traveling towards al-Madinah. After traversing the distance of three miles he halted with Banū-`Amr ibn `Awf at the place called Qaba. He halted .there until `Ali (a.s) joined him

After the departure of the Prophet (a.s), `Ali (a.s) stayed at Makkah for three days. He returned the things in the trust of the Prophet (a.s) to their owners. On the fourth day he seated Fatimah bint Muhammad, Fatimah bint al-Zubayr and Fatimah bint Asad in litters on the camel backs and proceeded towards al-Madinah. When Quraysh learned that even `Ali (a.s) had left for al-Madinah, they felt deeply insulted and sent a contingent of eight men mounted on camels in his pursuit. When `Ali (a.s), and his retinue, was around twenty-five miles from Makkah near the hill of Dajnan, the men too reached there. Seeing them, he dismounted the ladies, made them stay at the foot of the hill in a safe place, and confronted the men. The men tried to surround and ambush him and addressed in a harsh tone asking him to return to Makkah with them. They also said that if he did not yield, they would take him there forcibly. `Ali (a.s) did not pay any heed to what they said and breaking the circle he moved forward. The slave of Harb ibn Umayyah, Janah, unsheathed his sword and stood in his way. A change came on the face of `Ali (a.s), he put his hand on the scabbard of his sword and moved forward. Janah attacked but missed the mark. `Ali (a.s) moved his sword and the slave was cut into two. When the other men saw this scene, they fled in fear! `Ali spent the night at the foot of the hill of Dajnan and early morning moved towards al-Madinah. It was summer time and hot winds were blowing. Walking on the hot sand, the soles of his feet developed calluses. It was only his spirit that kept him moving forward. Alas, the small entourage reached Qaba where they joined with the Prophet (a.s). The Prophet (a.s) came forward and embraced him affectionately. His eyes watered and he removed the dust from `Ali's cloak with his own hands. They .now traveled safely to al-Madinah

The courage demonstrated by `Ali (a.s) sleeping in the bed of the Prophet (a.s) has no parallel in the history. He had learned from the Prophet (a.s) about the plans of the Quraysh to assassinate him in the bed that night. The ease with which he slept in that bed demonstrates his courage and the profound love and care that he had for the safety of the Prophet (a.s). He knew that he was exposing his own life to jeopardy. But !for him, no sacrifice was big enough in the cause of the Faith and the Prophet (a.s

If `Ali (a.s) had not slept in the bed, or even moved away from it after some time out of fear, it would have warned the vigilantes and they could have easily pursued and caught up with the Prophet (a.s) and the result could have been either the loss of the life of the Prophet (a.s) or his incarceration at Makkah to prevent his migration to al-Madinah. Both ways it would have been detrimental to the propagation and the progress of the Faith. It was `Ali's courageous act that ensured the safety of the !Prophet (a.s) and the victory of Islam over infidelity

Footnote

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٢, Page ٧٢ [١]

Manāqib, Vol ١, Page ١٢٧ [٢]

Tārīkh al-Khamīs , Vol ١, Page ٣٢٥ [٣]

Tārīkh Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ١٠٠ [٤]

THE EVENT OF BROTHERHOOD

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After migrating to al-Madinah the Muhajirūn (the Migrants) and the Ansar (The Local Helpers) became so friendly with one another as if there was no difference of the tribe or the place of origin between them. It appeared that all of them belonged to one large family. They treated their properties as common, their honor and respect as common, and shared their happiness and sorrows together. This was a true example of unity and integrity. To make these bonds stronger, the Prophet (a.s) repeated the establishment of brotherhood between individuals of the two groups as he had done

with the persons at Makkah. This created closer bonds between individuals and they forgot the difference of origin and the tribal affiliations

p: ٢٠٤

In the view of experts, brotherhood can be strong only between individuals of the same nature. If the natures are different, and the individuals come together for whatever reason, the togetherness will be temporary. The Prophet (a.s) kept this factor in mind when he established brotherhood between individuals from the two groups. He closely studied the natures of the individuals before declaring them brothers. When he saw that any two persons had a lot in common, he named them brothers. Therefore, in Makkah, Abū-Bakr and `Umar were named brothers, `Uthman and `Abd al-Rahman ibn `Awf, Talhah and al-Zubayr ibn al-`Awwam were made brothers. Their brotherhood is evident from the events of the caliphate, Shūrah and the Battle of the Camel! Similarly in al-Madinah keeping in mind the natures of the individuals Abū-Bakr was created the brother of Kharijah ibn Zayd, `Umar of `Utban ibn Malik, `Uthman of Aws ibn Thabit, Abū-`Ubaydah of Sa`d ibn Mu`adh, `Abd al-Rahman ibn `Awf of Sa`d ibn Rabi`ah, al-Zubayr of Salamah ibn Salamah, Talhah of Ka`b ibn Malik, `Ammar ibn Yasir of Qays ibn Thabit, Salman al-Farisi the brother of Abul-Darda'. Thus, whoever appeared of a similar nature to that of another person was declared brothers. It was also borne in the mind that the two persons were of the same level of capability and intelligence. On this occasion the Prophet (a.s) named about forty-five or fifty Muhajirūn and an equal number of Ansar as brothers and tied them in the bonds of brotherhood. But he did not find any one who could be declared a brother to `Ali (a.s). Perhaps it was not possible too, because at the Feast of al-`Ashirah, It was already declared that `Ali (a.s) was the brother of the Prophet (a.s). But to renew the bond, in al-Madinah too, the Prophet (a.s) declared `Ali (a.s) his brother! Therefore, Ibn `Abd al-Barr writes

Once the prophet (a.s) established brotherhood between the Muhajirūn, and at another time between the Muhajirūn and the Ansar. On both these occasions he told [`Ali (a.s) he was his brother in this world and in the Hereafter!"]^[1]

This brotherhood does not mean the common Islamic brotherhood that, according to the Verse

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ.

”(The Believers are all brothers, (49:10)“

This brotherhood is of a higher level and a reflection of nearness and attachment between the two persons. If this was the common bond of friendship, then `Ali (a.s) already enjoyed it because of being a Muslim and of the same descent as the Prophet (a.s). Then what was the need of public declaration of their brotherhood? Then there was no reason that when he was not included in the roster of brotherhood at the beginning for him to complain about it! When the Prophet (a.s) created the companions as brothers and did not mention `Ali (a.s) at that time, he approached the Prophet (a.s) with tears in his eyes and said, “O Prophet (a.s)! You have named the Muhajirūn and Ansar as brothers, but you did not think me deserving of this honor!”

:The Prophet (a.s) embraced `Ali (a.s) and said

[O `Ali! You are my brother in this world and in the Hereafter.”]^[2]“

This brotherhood not only brightened the ancestral brotherhood between the two, but also proved the superiority of `Ali (a.s) over the Muhajirūn and Ansar. It also highlighted the similarity between the superior character and nature of `Ali (a.s) as that of the Prophet (a.s). When `Ali (a.s) has been declared by the Prophet (a.s) as his brother, it proved that he was the only person amongst the Muslims deserving of that position! This choice is not because of the ancestral affinity but it is on the basis of identical qualities of the two persons. `Ali therefore considered this brotherhood with the Prophet (a.s) as a great privilege and when he was holding the reins of government, he once went up the pulpit and said

[I am Allah’s creature and the brother of His Prophet (a.s)]”[۳“

Footnote

Al-Istī`āb, Vol ۲, Page ۲۷۳ [۱]

Al-Tirmidhī, Vol ۲, Page ۱۴۳ [۲]

Tārīkh Abul-Fidā, Vol ۱, Page ۱۲۷ [۳]

THE MATRIMONY

THE MATRIMONY

Fatimah al-Zahra’ (a.s) was born to Khadijah al-Kubra and was the dearest daughter of the Prophet (a.s). Her birth took place at Makkah in the fifth year of the Annunciation of the Prophet (a.s). When she was only five years old her beloved mother, Khadijah, died. The entire responsibility of her upbringing became the responsibility of the Prophet (a.s). Despite his very busy schedule, he gave good attention to her education and training. His attention and her personal innate capability resulted in her accomplishments that became an example for the womenfolk of the world. While she was a replica of the Prophet (a.s) in her looks and personality, she was also a reflection of his qualities of head and heart. When she walked, it felt as if the Prophet (a.s) was walking. When she spoke, she modulated the words the same way as her father did. She achieved such heights in learning that the Prophet (a.s) gave her the titles of `adilat maryam (the equivalent of Mary) and sayyidat nisa’ al-`alamin (the Doyenne of the women of the world). Whenever she came to the presence of the Prophet (a.s), he used to stand up in respect. `A’ishah

:says

Whenever Fatimah came to The Prophet (a.s), he used to stand up, kiss her, welcome“
[her and guide her with his own hands to sit on his carpet.”[۱

After arrival in al-Madinah, Lady Fatimah attained the age of maturity. At this time, the elite of Quraysh and other important persons sent in proposals for her hand in marriage. One person was very proud of his wealth. He offered excessive dowry if the Prophet (a.s) acceded to his request for marriage with his daughter. The Prophet (a.s) turned away his face when this proposal was mooted before him. He told some other persons, "Fatimah's matter is in the hands of Allah! He will fix a match for her!" When none of the proposals received the assent of the Prophet (a.s), some of the Companions asked `Ali (a.s) to stake his claim. They said that there is no reason that he proposed and got a refusal from the Prophet (a.s). He said that he felt shy to make the proposal to the Prophet (a.s). When those persons insisted, he promised to moot the subject with the Prophet (a.s) at an appropriate time. Therefore, one day after completing the important tasks, he went to the presence of the Prophet (a.s) and sat quietly in a corner. When he saw him sitting quietly, the Prophet (a.s) understood that he wished to make some important request. He said, "`Ali! Do you wish to say something?" He replied, "Yes!" The Prophet (a.s) asked, "Then! Tell me!" A blush crossed the face of `Ali (a.s). He kept his eyes down and said in low tone, "O Prophet of Allah (a.s)! You have brought me up from my childhood. And your kindnesses on me were more than those of my own parents! Now I am approaching you for more kindnesses!" The Prophet (a.s) understood the intent of `Ali (a.s) and happiness reflected from his face. He asked `Ali (a.s) to wait for sometime and went to the inner chamber of his house. He asked Fatimah al-Zahra', "My daughter! `Ali (a.s) has made a proposal for your hand. What is your opinion about it?" Fatimah al-Zahra' sat with her head bowed down and did not reply. The Prophet (a.s) said, "Quietness is acceptance!" he came out with a smiling face and told `Ali (a.s) that the proposal for marriage with his daughter was accepted. He asked `Ali (a.s) to arrange money for the dowry. `Ali (a.s) said, "O Prophet of Allah (a.s)! Except for armor, a sword, and a camel, I have nothing else!" The Prophet (a.s) said, "Keep the camel and the sword with you and sell the armor to raise the money for dowry and other expenses." `Ali (a.s) sold the armor to `Uthman for a consideration of four hundred and eighty dirhams and presented it to the Prophet as the dowry. He gave some dirhams from that money to Abū-Bakr and asked `Ammar ibn Yasir and some other companions to accompany him and buy the household utensils etc from the bazaar. He gave some

.dirhams to Bilal to buy perfumes etc

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It was the month of Dhul-Qa`dah of ʿ A.H. In the al-Masjid al-Nabawi (the Holy Prophet's Mosque) the group to witness the Marriage Covenant between the bride (Fatimah al-Zahra') and the groom (`Ali) had assembled. The Companions of the Prophet (a.s) were there in numbers. The Prophet (a.s) delivered the Sermon. It was a speech of erudition and knowledge. The covenanting parties gave their assent. Then this happy occasion was concluded with a prayer by the Prophet (a.s) for the couples' happiness and prosperity. In the month of Dhul-Hijjah ʿ A.H., the bride shifted to the residence of the groom. The Prophet (a.s) got together the Wedding Reception

He ordered meat and bread and the groom, `Ali (a.s), arranged for cooking oil and dates. The reception was an open house for all the inhabitants in al-Madinah. All the Muhajirūn and the Ansar attended the reception. All the guests ate to their fill. After service of the dinner, lot of food remained. One portion of the food was reserved for `Ali (a.s) and Fatimah. Food was also sent to the homes of the Prophet's wives

The dowry that was given to the daughter of the Prophet (a.s) and the richest lady of Arabia, Khadijah, consisted of the following

One dress

One Scarf

One Black Headgear from Khaybar

One cot knit with date fiber

Two mattresses—one filled with wool and the other with date fiber

Four pillows made of Ta'if Leather

One mat

One curtain of silk and cotton waste

One millstone

One small pitcher of bronze

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One big water-skin

One pot

One big tumbler

One spouted Jug

Some small earthen bowls

.The approximate total cost of all these things was about eighty dirhams

When the Prophet (a.s) saw his daughter's dowry, he had tears in his eyes. He looked
:at the materials, lifted his head towards the sky and said

”O Allah! Give them prosperity whose utensils are mostly earthen“

When dusk was around, and the shadows darkened, the Prophet (a.s) helped Lady Fatimah (a.s) mount the mule, al-shahba', and the atmosphere of al-Madinah reverberated with the calls of "allahu-akbar". From every side came sounds of prayers. The women of Ansar and Muhajirun accompanied the wedding procession singing. Salman al-Farisi was holding the reins of the mule and walked in front of it. The Prophet (a.s) and all the men of Banu-Hashim carried unsheathed swords in their hands. The procession went round the Prophet's Mosque and reached its destination. The Prophet (a.s) took the hand of his daughter in his hand and put it in the hand of
:the groom, `Ali (a.s) and said

”!Ali! May the daughter of the Prophet (a.s) be auspicious for you ` “

The Prophet (a.s) then called for a tumbler of water, took a mouthful of the water in his mouth, put it back in the tumbler and then sprinkled the water from the tumbler on
:the chests of `Ali (a.s) and Fatimah. Then he said

[O Allah! Give prosperity to both of them! Give prosperity to their progeny as well!]

After giving his blessings, when the Prophet (a.s) entered the home of `Ali (a.s) and

Fatimah, he again prayed for their happiness and prosperity! Seeing the daughter of
!Khadijah settle in her new home, the Prophet (a.s) returned home happily

Mustadrak, Hakim, Vol ۳, Page ۱۶۰ [۱]

Al-Isābah, Vol ۴, Page ۳۶۶ [۲]

THE SONS OF THE PROPHET

THE SONS OF THE PROPHET

This alliance was of great importance that on the one hand, it was the origin of the progeny of the Prophet (a.s) and on the other, the enemies of Islam were quietened who were blaming him of being issueless. Although the Prophet (a.s) male issues did not survive, Hasan (a.s) and Husayn (a.s) on account of being the sons of his daughter, Fatimah al-Zahra', were accepted as his sons and through them his progeny prospered and spread throughout the world. Therefore, the Prophet (a.s) said

Allah has put the progeny of all other prophets in their backbones and my progeny in "the backbone of `Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s)" [۱]

Whether the offspring is from the daughter or from the son, it is certainly the offspring of the parents! Not considering the children of daughters as the offspring of the father was the practice of the Days of Ignorance. In those days, some persons considered it a shame to give a daughter in marriage to another family. They used to think that they were sending the daughter as a slave to the other house. In some tribes, they considered a great honor to bury the newborn daughters alive. When these daughters somehow survived and were married, their children were looked down upon as outcasts. Therefore, an Arab poet of those days has very nicely described this tendency

!Our sons' sons are our sons. Our daughters' sons are but strangers

The Prophet of Islam (a.s) termed the daughters' offspring as the fathers' offspring and abolished the practice of the Days of Ignorance that only the sons' offspring deserve to be accepted as the offspring of a family. Therefore, whenever he mentioned about the sons of Fatimah al-Zahra', he called them his own sons. Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn (a.s) too addressed him as father. They addressed `Ali (a.s) as Abul-Hasan. But after the expiry of the Prophet (a.s), Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn (a.s) started calling `Ali (a.s) as father. `Ali (a.s) too considered them as the sons of the Prophet (a.s) on account of being Fatimah al-Zahra's sons. Therefore, at the Battle of Siffin, when Imam al-Hasan (a.s) went forward to combat, , `Ali (a.s) said

Stop this youth from going to combat! His death will make me weak and shattered“ because I am shy of putting these two youths (Hasan and Husayn) in the mouth of [death lest the progeny of the Prophet (a.s) is extinguished!”[Y

Once, Abul-Jarūd told Imam al-Baqir (a.s) that when the verse of Mubalahah, “...our sons and your sons” was presented as proof of Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn (a.s) being the sons of the Prophet (a.s), some people said, “Of course, the daughters' children are the progeny but are not born from the backbone of the father!” The :Imam (a.s) said that Allah says in the Holy Qur'an about taboo women

And the wives of your sons born from your backbone are taboo (haram) for you (to .(marry

The Imam (a.s) told Abul-Jarūd to ask the objectors whether it was permissible for the Prophet (a.s) to marry the spouses of Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn (a.s). If they said in the affirmative, they will be wrong. If they say that he cannot marry them, the only reason for it being taboo is that they were the wives of the Prophet's born of .(his backbone (sulb

Ibn Babawayh al-Qummi has written that when Imam Mūsa al-Kazim (a.s) was called to the court of Harūn al-Rashid, the ruler asked him why he was called the progeny of the Prophet (a.s) although you are the progeny of `Ali (a.s) and the lineage descends from the father. The Imam (a.s) said, "If the Prophet (a.s) came back to the world and claims matrimonial relationship with you, will you accept it?" Harūn replied, "Most willingly! This relationship for us is the matter of great pride!" Hearing this, the Imam : (a.s) said

But he cannot claim to establish matrimonial relationship with us and nor can we give“ [him our relationship because we are his progeny and you are not!”[۳

Muhammad ibn Talhah al-Shafi`i writes in Matalib al-Sa`ul that al-Hajjaj ibn Yūsuf al-Thaqafi that whenever al-Shi`bi mentioned the names of Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn (a.s) he mentioned about them as the sons of the Prophet (a.s). Al-Hajjaj got furious over it and called him to reprimand. When al-Shi`bi reached the court, he found a group of scholars of al-Kūfah sitting there. Al-Hajjaj asked him, "I have heard that you call Hasan and Husayn the sons of the Prophet although they were not his sons but the sons of his daughter Fatimah, and the progeny is not identified through the mothers!" Al-Shi`bi remained quiet for some moments and then recited the :following verse from the Holy Qur'an

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ كُلًّا هَدَيْنَا وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَى وَهَارُونَ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ وَزَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَى وَعِيسَى وَإِيلَىاسَ كُلٌّ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

And from the progeny of Ibrahim, Dawūd, Sulayman, Ayyūb, Yūsuf, Mūsa, and Harūn“ were the guided ones; thus, We reward the righteous. And Zakariyya, Yahya, `Isa
”(and Ilyas were Guided. They were all of Allah’s virtuous creatures. (٦:٨٤-٨٥

After reciting this verse, al-Shi`bi said that `Isa -Jesus- (a.s) too has been included in the Progeny of Ibrahim (a.s) definitely because he descended Ibrahim (a.s) through his mother Maryam. When we treat `Isa (a.s) as the progeny of Ibrahim (a.s) through his mother Maryam bint `Imran, then why Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn (a.s) cannot be termed the progeny of Muhammad (a.s) through his daughter Fatimah al-Zahra’, their mother! In the case of `Isa (a.s) there was a difference of several generations between his ancestor, Ibrahim (a.s) and himself. But in the case of Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn (a.s), they were the next of kin to the Prophet (a.s)!
.Hearing this al-Hajjaj kept quiet

Once `Amr ibn al-`As criticized `Ali (a.s) for calling Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn (a.s) as the sons of the Prophet (a.s). When the Imam (a.s) heard this he asked the informer to tell the enemy of Allah (`Amr) that if they are not his sons, then the Prophet (a.s) would be termed abtar (issueless) as his father al-`As ibn Wa’il used to call the Prophet (a.s). The truth is that Allah has termed the enemies of the Prophet
!(a.s) abtar instead of him

Mu`awiyah's slave Dhakwan says that once Mu`awiyah said that instead of calling Hasan and Husayn (a.s) as the sons of the Prophet (a.s) they should be called the sons of `Ali (a.s) because they are not from the backbone of the Prophet (a.s)

Dhakwan says further that Mu`awiyah instructed him to prepare a list of his progeny. He prepared a roster of his sons and the grand children and presented to his master. Mu`awiyah asked him why he did not add the names of his grand children through his daughters. Dhakwan said how they could come in the roster of your progeny when they are the children of your daughters. Mu`awiyah understood his point and said that every word is said according to the situation

It is surprising that Mu`awiyah accepted even the illegitimate son of his father, Ziyad ibn Sumayyah, as the son of Abū-Sufyan against the norms of Islam. But those whom Allah and His Prophet (a.s) themselves recognized as the sons of the Prophet (a.s) he blatantly refused to accept them as such

About Abū-Jahl's Daughter

Ali (a.s) neither married a second wife during the lifetime of Fatimah al-Zahra' (a.s) nor he ever thought of another marriage while she was alive. But some inimical narrators have concocted stories to malign him. The story is that `Ali (a.s) wanted to marry Abū-Jahl's daughter by name Juwayriyyah or Jamilah. When the Prophet (a.s) heard about this, he was very upset and opposed the idea. Therefore, Musawwir ibn Makhramah says that `Ali (a.s) wished to marry the daughter of Abū-Jahl and when Fatimah heard about it, she complained to the Prophet (a.s) and said that the people of his clan have started saying that he had not the slightest care for his daughters and that `Ali (a.s) was bringing another woman home in the person of Abū-Jahl's daughter! When the Prophet (a.s) heard this, he was very upset, went to the pulpit and said

I do not make the legitimate (halal) as illegitimate (haram) and legitimate as“ illegitimate, but By Allah! The Prophet’s daughter and the daughter of Allah’s enemy [cannot be united in matrimony with one person!”[۴

Another narration in this connection is that Musawwir ibn Makhramah heard the Prophet (a.s) say from the pulpit that Banū-Husham ibn Mughirah had sought his :permission to give their daughter in marriage to `Ali (a.s). He replied

I do not permit! I do not permit! I do not permit! But if the son of Abū-Talib gives “ [divorce to my daughter, he can enter into matrimony with that girl!”[۵

This and many such narratives are attributed to Musawwir ibn Makhramah. This person was the nephew of `Abd al-Rahman ibn `Awf and was born two years after the Migration in Makkah and moved to al-Madinah in ۸ A.H. Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani :writes about him

Two years after the Hegira he was born in Makkah. He came to al-Madinah at the “ [end of Dhul-Hijjah, ۸ A.H.”[۶

:The author of al-Isabah writes

He was born two years after the Hegira and after the conquest of Makkah, Dhul-“ [Hijjah ۸ A.H. he came to al-Madinah when his age was six years.”[۷

Makkah was captured in ۸ A. H. and the concocted story too was dated around the same period. Until that time Abū-Jahl’s children had not embraced Islam. Therefore, on the day of the capture of Makkah, Bilal had sounded the adhan standing near the Ka`bah, the same Juwayriyyah bint Abū-Jahl demonstrated her infidelity when she :said

[God has kept my father safe from hearing the crude voice of Bilal!]"[A“

There is no question of matrimony with an infidel like this. The surprising thing is that the old companions are quiet and a child of six years becomes a narrator! And the bigger surprise is that the erudite scholars who reject the evidence of Ibn `Abbas regarding the event of Qirtas saying that the small child cannot be trusted to report correctly, accept and quote the story concocted by Musawwir ibn Makhramah. If there were any truth in these stories, the governor of Syria would be the first to make all possible use of them. Even Umm al-Mu`minin `A`ishah would be too pleased to talk about these things. But the silence of these two persons proves beyond doubts that .they too believed that the stories are concocted

Also considering `Ali`s nature one cannot imagine his doing anything without consulting and seeking the permission of the Prophet (a.s) or to think of doing anything that might have hurt or disturbed him. There are several points to ponder :while rejecting these stories outright

How can we imagine that `Ali (a.s) could quietly plan matrimony with Abū-Jahl`s daughter and she seeks the permission of the Prophet (a.s) for such an alliance. Is such a thing possible from a person who never took a step without the consent of the !Prophet (a.s

How is it possible that the Prophet (a.s) would term legitimate as illegitimate in ire, even if it is for his personal consideration. While the Prophet (a.s) is known for his strict observance of the norms of Shari`ah, how can one imagine his anger even if his daughter was faced with the prospect of the second woman to share her home and hearth! We can therefore conclude that the narrations quoted are sheer concocted .stories

Here it is of interest to quote an incident about al-Ma'mūn, the `Abbasid ruler. Al-Ma'mūn gave his daughter Umm al-Fadl in marriage to Imam Muhammad al-Taqi (a.s). The Imam (a.s) took her along to al-Madinah. From al-Madinah she wrote to her father that Imam Muhammad al-Taqi (a.s) had some slave girls at his home. Al-Ma'mūn wrote to her angrily

We have not married you to him to make whatever is legitimate for him illegitimate.“
[Do not ever repeat such complaints again!]"[۹

When a worldly ruler like al-Ma'mūn was so particular about things termed legitimate by the Shari`ah, even though the interest of his own daughter was involved, then how could one imagine that the Prophet (a.s) would wave aside the norms of Shari`ah to side with his daughter. Can we imagine the Prophet (a.s) going to the pulpit to air his ire? Can we imagine `Ali (a.s) defying the Prophet (a.s) if he asked him to desist from doing certain things? The story does not hold water when it says that the Prophet (a.s) angrily said that the daughter of the Prophet (a.s) and an infidel enemy of Allah's daughter could not be under one roof. When it is well-known that Ummu-Habibah bint Abū-Sufyan, Safiyyah bint Huyay, his own spouses, were the daughters of known infidels and the enemies of Allah

The truth behind all this concoction is that when the enemies of `Ali (a.s) did not get anything against him, they went around spinning such yarn and canard. The cunning adopted by them is that they want to show the nobility of Fatimah and her importance in the eyes of the Prophet (a.s), but their main aim is to belittle `Ali (a.s) in the consideration of the common Muslims by spreading such stories

Al-Sawā`iq al-Muhriqah, Page ١٥٤ [١]

Nahj al-Balāghah [٢]

Uyūn al-Akhhbār` [٣]

Tārīkh al-Khamīs, Vol ١, Page ٤١٢ [٤]

Tārīkh al-Khamīs , Vol ١, Page ٤١٢ [٥]

Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, Vol ١٠, Page ١٥١ [٦]

Al-Isābah, Vol ٣, Page ٣٩٩ [٧]

Tārīkh Abul-Fidā, Page ١٤٥ [٨]

Al-Sawā`iq al-Muhriqah, Page ١٢٣ [٩]

WIVES AND CHILDREN

In deference and consideration for Fatimah al-Zahra' (a.s), Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) did not think of another marriage during her lifetime. But after she passed away, he married ladies from different tribes at different times and had several issues through them. The particulars of `Ali's spouses and their children are given here

'Fatimah al-Zahra

She gave birth to Imam al-Hasan (a.s) on the fifteenth of Ramadan, ٣ A.H. and to Imam al-Husayn (a.s) on the fifth of Sha`ban, ٤ A.H. History mentions about another son, Muhsin, who died in early childhood. Some say that he died before birth in an accidental miscarriage. This was a tragedy in the History of Islam that happened within about a year of the passing away of the Prophet (a.s). She gave birth to two daughters. The elder was Zaynab al-Kubra whose title was al-`Aqilah. The second daughter was Zaynab al-Sughra whose kunyah was Ummu-Kulthūm. Zaynab al-Kubra was married to `Abdullah ibn Ja`far and Ummu-Kulthūm was married to

.Muhammad ibn Ja`far

Umamah bint Abil-`as

In deference to the will of Fatimah al-Zahra', `Ali (a.s) married her. She gave birth to
.Muhammad al-Awsat who was martyred in the Battlefield of Karbala

p: ۲۱۹

Ummul-Banin bint Hizam al-Kalabiyyah

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) asked his brother `Aqil, who was an expert at Arab genealogy, to select a lady from any tribe that is known for its exceptional valor so that she gave birth to valorous sons. `Aqil suggested to him to marry Ummul-Banin al-Kalabiyyah whose tribe was famous in Arabia for their exploits of chivalry and bravery. `Ali (a.s) married her. She gave birth to four sons: `Abbas, `Abdullah, `Uthman and Ja`far. `Abbas was born in ۲۶ A. H and was the eldest of the four brothers. Then `Abdullah, `Uthman and Ja`far were born in that order. All the four brothers fought valiantly and were martyred by the troops of Yazid in the battle of Karbala

Layla bint Mas`ūd al-Darimiyyah

Ibn al-Athir writes in al-Kamil and Ibn Sa`d in al-tabaqat that two sons were born to her. They were Abū-Bakr and `Abdullah. Some historians are of opinion that both the names were of the same person. Shaykh `Abbas Qummi writes in Muntaha al-Amal that she gave birth to Muhammad al-Asghar and Abū-Bakr. Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin writes in A`yan al-Shi`ah that apparently the two names were that of one person. Muhammad al-Asghar is the name and Abū-Bakr is the kunyah. Shaykh al-Mufid too considered Abū-Bakr as the kunyah. He too was martyred in Karbala

Asma' bint `Umays al-Khath`amiyyah

Ibn al-Athir writes in al-Kamil that Muhammad al-Asghar was born to her. Ibn Sa`d writes in al-tabaqat that she gave birth to Yahya and `Awn. Yahya died while `Ali (a.s) was alive and `Awn died in the battle of Karbala

Ummu-Habib al-Sahba' bint Rabi'ah al-Taghlabiyyah

She gave birth to one son, `Umar al-Atraf and one daughter Ruqayyah al-Kubra.
.They were both born as twins. Ruqayyah al-Kubra was married to Muslim ibn `Aqil

Khawlah bint Ja`far al-Hanafiyyah

She gave birth to Muhammad who was well-known with the title of Ibn al-Hanafiyyah.
.His kunyah was Abul-Qasim. He died at al-Ta'if in ۸۱ A.H

Umm-Sa'id bint `Urwah al-Thaqafiyyah

Ibn ShahrAshūb writes that she gave birth to Nafisah, Zaynab al-Sughra and Ruqayyah al-Sughra. Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin writes that she gave birth to Umm al-Hasan and Ummu-Kulthūm al-Sughra. Some chroniclers write that Ummu-Kulthūm
.was Nafisah's kunyah

Ummu-Shu`ayb al-Makhzūmiyyah

Ibn ShahrAshūb writes that Umm al-Hasan and Ramlah, two daughters were born to
.her

Mukhabba`ah bint Imru' al-Qays

.She gave birth to one daughter who died in her childhood

Besides these wives, Amir al-Mu'minin had several slave girls whom he had married. The daughters born through these alliances were Ummu-Hani', Maymūnah, Zaynab al-Sughra, Ramlah al-Sughra, Fatimah Umamah, Khadijah, Ummul-Kiram, Ummu-Salamah, Ummu-Ja`far, Jumanah and Nafisah

At the time of the death of `Ali (a.s) the surviving wives were Umamah, Asma' bint `Umays and Ummul-Banin besides the eighteen slave girls. His progeny continued with Imam al-Hasan (a.s), Imam al-Husayn (a.s), Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah, `Abbas and `Umar al-Atraf. Some chroniclers say that the total number of children he had was twenty-five, some others say that it was twenty-eight and others say they

were thirty-three or thirty-five. The reason for this difference is perhaps some of them had counted the name and the kunyah as separate persons. Some have counted Muhsin in the list of children and others have not

CONSTRUCTION OF THE MOSQUE AND SEALING OF THE DOORS

CONSTRUCTION OF THE MOSQUE AND SEALING OF THE DOORS

The Prophet (a.s), until after six months after his arrival in al-Madinah, stayed at the home of Abū-Ayyūb al-Ansari. During this period neither there was any specific place for congregational prayers nor a permanent place of residence for him. He felt it necessary to construct the mosque along with a house for the family. There was a vacant piece of land near the house of Abū-Ayyūb al-Ansari where some animals used to be penned. The Prophet (a.s) liked this land for building the mosque. The land belonged to the people of Banū-al-Najjar from which family `Abd al-Muttalib's mother came. The Prophet (a.s) wanted to buy away the land but the owners refused to accept any money for it and said that instead of material value they would prefer to get Reward from Allah. The Prophet (a.s) did not like to take the land without cost because it belonged to two orphans whose names were Sahl and Suhayl and were under the guardianship of Asad ibn Zurarah. The Prophet (a.s) bought the land through Asad, got it leveled and started the construction of the mosque on it, which was ready in the shape of a four walled enclosure in a few days. Then, putting on wooden pillars and thatch, one part of the enclosure was covered to provide shade from the sun. On one side of the mosque, rooms were built for the ladies, which were increased later on as the need arose. In the middle of these rooms the house of `Ali (a.s) was constructed. The Muhajirūn coming from Makkah too started building their quarters on the other periphery of the mosque. They had doors opening towards the mosque and they used to enter the precincts through these doors. The Prophet (a.s) thought that this arrangement was not proper for the sanctity of the mosque and ordered that the doors opening into the mosque be sealed and the houses to have doors at the back. He wanted them to enter the mosque only through the main door. He permitted only the door of `Ali's house to open towards the mosque. Al-Tirmidhi
:writes

The Prophet (a.s) ordered that except the door of `Ali's house all other doors to be“
[sealed.”[1]

Some persons did not like this arrangement. Certain brows frowned, some mouths opened and the gossip mill started working. The Prophet (a.s) heard about the
:feelings of the companions. He therefore gathered them and said

Neither have I neither sealed your door nor Have allowed `Ali's door to Remain open.“
[It is Allah Who has Ordered sealing of your doors and Leaving `Ali's door open.”[2]

Certain relatives of the Prophet (a.s) too wished that the doors of their homes opened towards the mosque, therefore they complained that showing partiality towards `Ali
:(a.s) he had allowed him this privilege and refused them the facility. He said

Neither have I sent you out nor did I allow `Ali (a.s) to stay. It is Allah who has kept“
[you out and `Ali (a.s) to stay in.”[3]

:Umar too considered this a singular privilege for `Ali (a.s) and used to say`

Ali ibn Abi-Talib enjoyed three such special privileges that if I got even one, it would `“
have meant to me more than owning red haired camels.” When asked what these
privileges were, He said: “The first was that he was married to Fatimah bint
Muhammad (a.s); secondly, he had the honor of residing inside the mosque with the
Prophet (a.s), and thus the matters that were legitimate for the Prophet (a.s) became
[legitimate for him, and Thirdly, He was given the Standard on The Day of Khaybar!”[4]

Ibrahim al-Hamawayni writes in Fara'id al-Simtayn that at least thirty companions have talked about the tradition of Fath al-Bab (The Opening of the Door) and termed it as a singular privilege for Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). In the school of Ahl al-Sunnah, while this tradition is certainly quoted, they also mention that the Prophet (a.s) had said

Barring the window of the house of Abū-Bakr, no other window was open towards“
”the mosque

When there was no chance of refuting the first narration, they tried to connect the two versions saying that the first event happened in the first year of Hegira and the second happened during the last days of the Prophet (a.s) This means that when the Prophet (a.s) ordered the sealing of the doors all openings were sealed except that of `Ali's house. But when the time for the departure of the Prophet (a.s) was nigh, he ordered Abū-Bakr's window to remain open towards the mosque and ordered all other windows sealed. This way they thought that a similarity had been established between the two events. But the effectiveness of the similarities of events will be in the event of their weight on the scale of dirayah. The second narration is weak according to dirayah because Abū-Bakr's house was not on the periphery of the mosque since after migration he first lived with Banū-Abd `Awf and then he built his house outside al-Madinah in a village, Sakh, about a mile from the mosque. He used to visit the Prophet (a.s) during his illness from there only. Therefore, the historian al-tabari has written that on the day of the death of the Prophet, Abū-Bakr came to al-Madinah and inquired about his condition

When he was assured that There was some diminution in the pain suffered by the“
[Prophet (a.s), He (Abū-Bakr) went satisfied to his home in Sakh.”[۱۵

It is surprising that Abū-Bakr used to live in Sakh and was not in al-Madinah at the time of the demise of the Prophet (a.s), nor did he have any house adjacent to the mosque, then from where and how that ‘window’ was installed to remain installed and all other windows were ordered shut! Remember, these were the last days of the Prophet (a.s) and in his extreme illness, according to Al-Tirmidhi, three days before his death he orders all windows opening towards al-Masjid al-Nabawi sealed and Abū-Bakr’s window to remain in its place! If we analyze this narration, the order was issued on Friday or Saturday and the Prophet (a.s) demised on Monday. This means that this event happened after the Event of Qirtas, that took place on the Friday before the Prophet’s demise when the COMPANIONS raised hue and cry that he was seriously ill and pen and paper must not be brought to him that he was not in full control of his senses! But the later, ostensible, order about the WINDOW they
!sheepishly accept, if ever it was issued, and implemented

This narrative, being against all norms of dirayah, is constructively wrong that in one version it talks about khawkhah (window) and in others as bab (door). The meaning of the narrative becomes different with the use of these two different words and thus the narrative is unreliable. If instead of window, we accept the word door, the two events cannot be coordinated. Because in the earlier event all the doors opening towards the mosque were ordered closed excepting that of the house of `Ali (a.s) that continued to remain open. In the second, ostensible, event, when there was no other door opening towards the mosque, then how could they be sealed and the door of Abū-Bakr’s (nonexistent) house to continue to have the door opening towards the Mosque! The purpose for the concoction of this story seems that when, even `Umar recognized the opening of `Ali’s door towards the Mosque as a singular privilege, they
!made a weak attempt to devise a story to establish the same privilege for Abū-Bakr

It is imperative to consider that what was the reason for leaving the door of `Ali (a.s) open towards the mosque and ordering all others sealed. It is apparent that the main purpose must have been to preserve the sanctity of the precincts. The doors of the Companions were opening towards the mosque and they used to enter through those doors in all conditions of cleanliness or otherwise. This was ultra vires the sanctity of the place. The Prophet (a.s) therefore ordered all the doors opening into the mosque to be sealed excepting that of `Ali's house. The reason for this exception was that `Ali (a.s) was chaste, pure, and was free of all apparent impurities. Therefore, no conditions were imposed on his entry to the mosque, as was the case of the Prophet (a.s). Therefore, the Prophet (a.s) said

O `Ali! None other than you and me is permitted to enter his mosque in the state of“ [apparent impurity”[۶

On account of this purity and chastity, `Ali's door was kept open towards the mosque and all others were ordered sealed. As the homes of Mūsa (a.s) and Harūn (a.s) were accepted as mosques, the house of the prophet (a.s) and his Vicegerent (a.s) too had :the same sanctity. Therefore, the Prophet (a.s) said

Allah ordered Mūsa (a.s) that he build a pure and clean Mosque and none else, other“ than Mūsa (a.s) and Harūn (a.s), should reside in that. Allah ordered me to build a pure and clean mosque wherein only me, `Ali (a.s) and his two sons, And none else, should [reside.”[۷

When this privilege was reserved only for the Prophet (a.s.), `Ali (a.s) and his Chaste sons (a.s), no question arises of allowing the door or window of any other person opening into the mosque. If it was the Divine will to give the same status to Abū-Bakr, he would have been allowed to keep the door open in the first instance only! When he was not eligible for such a privilege, what was the question of his having a door or window opening in that direction! Another question about the narrative is that the word khawkhah does not mean a window. At best, it can be translated as ‘a ventilator’. It is written in the al-Fayrūzabadi’s Arabic–Arabic Dictionary, “a hole that allows light into a house.” The ventilators cannot be used for entering or leaving a house and they are located on the walls almost at the roof level! When it is impossible to enter or exit the house through the khawkhah, then what privilege such a contraption would provide to Abū-Bakr

Footnote

Sahīh Al-Tirmidhī, Vol ۲, Page ۲۱۴ [۱]

Khasā’is al-Nassā’ī, Page ۳۷ [۲]

Mustadrak Hakim, Vol ۳, Page ۱۱۷ [۳]

Mustadrak Hakim, Vol ۳, Page ۱۲۵ [۴]

Vol ۲, Page ۴۲۰ [۵]

Mishkāt, Page ۵۶۴ [۶]

Khasā’is, Suyūṭī, Page ۲۴۳ [۷]

THE PROPHET’S EXPEDITIONS

A ghazwah is a war or a battle in which the Prophet (a.s) himself participated. After the Annunciation, the Prophet (a.s) bore the hardships inflicted by the infidels of Makkah for thirteen long years. When he moved from Makkah to al-Madinah, he did not have any thought of wreaking revenge on the infidels and polytheists. But the Quraysh were working under the shame of defeat and failure and were very upset over the

Prophet (a.s) escaping unscathed from Makkah. After rendering the Muslims of Makkah homeless, they were planning strategies to destroy Islam and finish the Movement once for all! They started putting together all their evil powers to achieve their ends. The Prophet (a.s) who had peacefully tried to propagate his Faith in Makkah and had struck agreements of peace with the Jewish Tribes of al-Madinah, wished that no opportunity arose for wars with the Quraysh that would mean unnecessary shedding of innocent blood. But the Quraysh wanted to destroy the peace and tranquility of the Muslims in al-Madinah by imposing wars over their heads. The Prophet (a.s) was left with no other choice than fighting in self-defense. Therefore, the Prophet (a.s) made no mention of waging wars and did not give permission to his men to take any precipitate action until the Quraysh and the Jews forced any such eventuality. Allah had given assent for jihad when the activities of the :infidels crossed all limits of decency. Therefore, Allah says in the Holy Book

Those (the Muslims) against whom the Infidels fight, too have permission to battle,“
.because hardships were inflicted on them, and Allah has the power to help them

The fact is not hidden that the Infidels first forced the Muslims out of their homeland and attacked their homes to annihilate them. In these circumstances if war was not declared against them, their very existence would have been in jeopardy. No doubt, Islam is the custodian of peace and tranquility, but it does not mean that it wants people to stoically face all the tyrannies endlessly. The Muslims had to exercise their right to fight for their own safety and tranquility. In the circumstances, they were left with no other choice than rising to the occasion and preparing to combat the enemy. If war is an abhorrent activity, the responsibility for the consequences rests on the shoulders of the aggressors. One who clashes with the enemy in self-defense can
.never be blamed for the consequences of the conflict

The word ‘Islam’ has its root in the word ‘Salamah’ that means ‘Peace’. It is evident from the very name that the Religion, of Islam, stands for peace and tranquility. It shows that Islam is opposed to bloodshed and conflict. Islam makes no difference of race and color and is opposed to any forced annexation of territory. It permits war only in two situations: the first is when the enemy wages a war of aggression and attacks Muslims and without warfare there is no way of protecting the lives and property of the Muslims. Secondly, if there is positive evidence of the enemy making warlike preparations and any neglect might cause irreparable damage to lives and properties of the Muslims. In both circumstances, when waging war became unavoidable, the Prophet (a.s) gave his assent for it. The Muslims clashed with the Infidels once at the wells of Badr then at the foot of the hills at Uhud. Sometimes they defended themselves from within the bounds of al-Madinah. All these theatres of war were geographically close to the Dar al-Islam, al-Madinah and very far from the Dar al-Kufr of those days, Makkah. This proves that all these campaigns by the Muslims were solely in self-defense. If Muslims had aggressive designs, these battles would have been fought nearer the homes of the Infidels! They were all the preemptive and planned attacks of the Infidel Enemy! Only the Battle of Khaybar was fought away from the Islamic Base and closer to the stronghold of the Jews. But the truth is that

they were exiled from al-Madinah for intriguing against the Muslims and raising men and materials to wage a war against them. If the Prophet (a.s) had not initiated preemptive action, they were about to attack al-Madinah with immense power of .men and materials

Although Islam has given permission of waging wars in unavoidable circumstances, there are strict norms about the various stages like the outbreak, the action in the actual theater and the aftermath of the wars! At every stage, they have to keep in mind the ultimate aim of peace and tranquility. Before any warlike activity, they have to invite the opponents to Islam or Peace! The opponents must be informed that the purpose of the conflict is not shedding unnecessary blood and causing loss of property and making slaves and prisoners out of children, women and men. Islam also prohibits harming women, children and maimed and injured men. Therefore, in the Battle of Hunayn, when Khalid ibn al-Walid killed a woman, the Prophet (a.s) expressed his disapproval of the act and ordered him not to commit any such act in the future. Once talking to the troops, the Prophet (a.s) said that they must take care to see that the women and children of the infidels were not harmed during the war. Someone said that they were the children of the polytheists and they deserve to be killed. The Prophet (a.s) said, "Are not many of you good persons not the offspring of the infidels?" Islam never permits causing obstruction to the flow of essentials like food and water even for the troops of the enemy. It also bans destruction of enemy property like gardens, farms and buildings. Similarly, it abhors sadistic severing of the body parts of the fallen enemies. This was one of the heinous practices of the Days of Ignorance in Arabia. Islam abolished this nefarious practice! Islam also laid down norms for the treatment of the prisoners of war. It also established norms for collecting reparations (fidyah) and releasing them honorably. If circumstances required keeping them under detention, norms were there for their proper treatment during the incarceration. Even if they were to be kept as slaves, the treatment had to .be very humane

It cannot be denied that after the Prophet of Islam (a.s.), Muslims had waged some wars of aggression and expansion when the norms of jihad were overlooked. While one group championed the acts of terror and suppression as their right, they thought that victory, wealth and pelf acquired through such wars was Rightful! But Islam neither approves of such wars nor is it responsible for such atrocious acts! Islam has declared in clear terms: "There is no aggression in the Faith!" All the Verses that have been revealed in the Holy Qur'an concerning jihad are about the circumstances when the enemy forcefully tries to suppress and crush the Muslims. Islam neither permits aggressive warlike initiatives nor does it allow forcing its thoughts on others cruelly. The responsibility of the wars is always on the kings and emperors who, for self-aggrandizement and craving for wealth, plundered innocent peoples and caused untold hardship to huge human populations. These acts gave an opportunity to some people to blame Islam that it was spread with the strength of the sword

After these introductory sentences, we shall describe the ghazawat that were fought by the Prophet (a.s) that highlight the defensive aspect of these battles and at the same time illustrate the prowess and valor of the Standard Bearer of Islam and the Victor of the Battles, `Ali (a.s).He set such high standards in his conduct of the warfare that he never chased a combatant running away from the theatre, he never harmed women and children, never killed an injured opponent and never stripped an enemy as was the practice during the battles of those times

THE EXPEDITION OF BADR

THE EXPEDITION OF BADR

The Quraysh who had already become the deadly enemies of the Muslims of Makkah, after the Migration the Ansar of al-Madinah too had become abhorrent for them. Their crime was that they came to the help of the Prophet (a.s), gave him succor and shelter. The Faith that the Quraysh did not like flourishing in their own domain, was finding roots in Yathrib. How could they bear to see it prosper and grow there and elsewhere? They determined that to safeguard their cultural and traditional heritage, they would not allow this new Faith to establish and spread. They resolved to fight with the Muslims until they were totally obliterated from the face of the Earth or they recant from the new Faith and revert to the old ways! Therefore, describing their plans, the Holy Qur'an says

وَلَا يَزَالُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّى يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَنْ دِينِكُمْ إِنِ اسْتَطَاعُوا

These infidels will always fight with you, until, if they can, make you turn away from“
”(your Faith. (۲:۲۱۷)

Although the Jews of al-Madinah had made a covenant of peace with the Prophet of Islam (a.s) on his arrival, that they would support the cause if an attack was made by the infidels on al-Madinah, but they were very concerned with the increasing popularity and power of the Muslims as a threat for their own safety. They therefore established surreptitious contacts with the Quraysh and tried to form a joint front against the Muslims. To give vent to mischief, Karz ibn Jabir al-Fahri was made to attack the pastures of al-Madinah and chase away the flocks of animals with him. The Prophet (a.s) chased him until the valley of Safwan but could not catch him. Now he appointed `Abdullah ibn Jahsh to keep an eye on such events. He went with a few companions to Naqlah, which is a place between Makkah and Ta'if. When they reached Naqlah, a small group of Quraysh businessmen was halting there on their return from Ta'if. One of the companions of `Abdullah ibn Jahsh, Waqqad ibn `Abdullah al-Tamimi, shot dead `Amr ibn al-Hadrami with an arrow. They took `Uthman ibn `Abdullah and al-Hakam ibn Kaysan prisoner along with their

merchandise and returned to al-Madinah. These were the days of the month of Rajab when fighting and killing are prohibited. The Prophet (a.s) was very upset with `Abdullah ibn Jahsh, reprimanded him, and set the detainees free along with their goods. Although this was an isolated incident that was committed without the approval of the Prophet (a.s), the Quraysh saw it as an excuse to prepare for a war. They started crying about reparations (qisas) for the life of Ibn al-Hadrami and went ahead in full swing for the preparations for war. They decided that they would attack al-Madinah as soon as Abū-Sufyan returned from his business trip to Syria. Abū-Sufyan was to return through al-Madinah, that was the usual halt for caravans back and forth Syria. While the people of Makkah were eagerly awaiting Abū-Sufyan's return, he sent to them a letter through Zamzam ibn `Amr al-Ghifari that the Muslims were planning to attack his caravan near al-Madinah to plunder his merchandise and that they should reach there post haste with all preparations for a war. The Quraysh were almost ready and did start without any loss of time on getting the letter. Now Abū-Sufyan avoided the normal route and proceeded on his journey along the coast, reached Jeddah in five days and Makkah in another three days. When the troops of the Quraysh reached near Badr, they got news that Abū-Sufyan's caravan had reached home safely. Some men of Banū-Zahrah said that the caravan had reached home unmolested and therefore there was no need of fighting and that they should return home from there. But Abū-Jahl refused to return home without fighting. With the attitude of Abū-Jahl it is clear that the intention of bringing the troops was not to protect the caravan but he wanted to fight a war at any cost. The Banū-Zahrah .however returned home and did not participate in the war

The story was going the rounds in al-Madinah that Abū-Sufyan's caravan was to pass along with lot of merchandize enroot to Makkah from Syria and that the warlike preparations were in full swing at Makkah to attack al-Madinah. The Muslims were still unprepared for a war and wanted to avoid any such eventuality. They were eagerly watching for the arrival of Abū-Sufyan's caravan through the normal route that it might not be difficult for them to overpower that small group and capture large amount of booty in the bargain. The Qur'an records this in the following words

وَإِذْ يَعِدُكُمُ اللَّهُ إِحْدَى الطَّائِفَتَيْنِ أَنَّهَا لَكُمْ وَتَوَدُّونَ أَنَّ غَيْرَ ذَاتِ الشُّوْكَهِ تَكُونُ لَكُمْ.

When Allah informed you that the Infidels of Makkah will confront you in two groups,“
”(you wanted to have the smaller group in your share. (٨:٧)

Generally the historians have believed the cohorts of Banū-Umayyah that the Prophet (a.s) came out with the intention of plundering the caravan of Abū-Sufyan, but instead of finding the caravan, he came across the Quraysh troops. It is a pity that the historians have included even the Prophet (a.s) among the persons who had the thought of plunder and loot and termed it as the only purpose for the campaign.

:Therefore, Muhammad ibn Isma`il al-Bukhari writes

The Prophet (a.s) moved out with the idea of getting the Caravan of the Quraysh, and“
[unexpectedly he came across the enemy (troops)].”[١]

This stand is contrary to the clarifications made by the Holy Qur'an. It says about the events of Badr

كَمَا أَخْرَجَكَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَيْتِكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لَكَارِهُونَ. يُجَادِلُونَكَ فِي الْحَقِّ بَعِيدًا مَا تَبَيَّنَ كَأَنَّمَا يُسَاقُونَ إِلَى الْمَوْتِ وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ.

As your Sustainer has sent you out of your home with the Truth, when one group of “ Muslims was talking against the war and on knowing about the Truth was fighting ”(with you as if in front of their eyes they were being pushed towards death. (٨:٥-٦)

If the move of the Prophet (a.s) were to plunder the Caravan, it would have been exactly the same way, as some Muslims wanted it. Then there would have been no reason for them to protest and fight and think that they were being pushed towards death. They knew it that Abū-Sufyan’s Caravan had no more than forty persons and the Muslim men totaled over three hundred. This expression of a group of Muslims was because they were scared of the large number of the Quraysh Troops. We have to accept the fact in the light of what the Holy Qur’an says that the Prophet (a.s) did not move out to plunder the caravan, but to prepare in advance to meet the onslaught .of the Quraysh Army! Therefore, `Ali (a.s) says

The Prophet (a.s) used to ask about Badr. When we learned that the Infidels have“ moved forward, the Prophet (a.s) moved towards Badr. Badr is the name of a well [where we reached earlier than the infidel Quraysh”[٢

This was the first major war between Islam and infidelity. The Muslims were poorly equipped and in small numbers as compared with the expected strength of the enemy. Therefore, the Prophet (a.s) thought it necessary to take the opinion of the Ansar and Muhajirūn about their willingness to take on the formidable adversary. People gave different replies to the queries of the Prophet (a.s). Some were heart breaking and others very encouraging. It is recorded in the Sahih Muslim that on one of the replies of Abū-Bakr and `Umar, the Prophet (a.s) turned away his face. When al-Miqdad ibn al-Aswad saw the signs of concern on the face of the Prophet (a.s) he ,said

O Prophet (a.s)! We are not the Banū-Isra’īl who told Mūsa (a.s) ‘You go and your God, and both of you Fight! We shall keep sitting here!’ By Allah! Who has endowed you the Prophethood! We shall fight from your back your right and your left Until Allah
”gives you Help and Victory

These words took away the gloom of concern from the face of the Prophet (a.s) and he offered a prayer for al-Miqdad. Then he turned towards the Ansar and asked them, what is your opinion?” Sa`d ibn Mu`adh al-Ansari told with enthusiasm, “O Prophet of Allah (a.s)! We have absolute Faith in you and we have vowed to obey you! Therefore, we are with you! If you jump into the ocean, we shall jump along with you! Nothing can stop us from keeping your company! Do rise in the name of Allah! Not one person from us will turn his Back on you!” The Prophet (a.s) was very pleased with this
:reply and said

[By Allah! Now I see the spots with my eyes where the Enemies will fall dead!”[۳“

The Prophet (a.s) had a small contingent of three hundred and thirteen men, of whom there were seventy seven Muhajirūn and the rest were the Ansar. They left al-Madinah and stayed at a little distance from the Well of Badr. They did have a fear that the enemy might make a surprise attack by the night. As a precaution he had asked `Ali (a.s), Sa`d ibn Abi-Waqqas and al-Zubayr ibn al-`Awwam to reconnoiter the location of the enemy by going a little forward. Surveying the surroundings the three reached near the well of Badr and spotted some men there. Seeing them, the other men fled. `Ali (a.s) chased them and captured two of the men who were slaves. The companions, seeing them, gathered around them and asked as to who they were? They said that they were the watermen of the Quraysh and had gone to the well in search of water. Hearing the name of the Quraysh, the companions lost their temper and started beating the men trying to make them reveal that they were not the slaves of the Quraysh but were the men of Abū-Sufyan. Out of fear they confessed that they were the men of Abū-Sufyan. The Prophet (a.s) was busy offering his prayer. After finishing the prayer he said that it is very strange that they tell the truth, you beat them, and leave them when they tell a lie. These certainly are the men of the Quraysh. The Prophet (a.s) himself interrogated them and they revealed that

they had no knowledge about the whereabouts of the Caravan of Abū-Sufyan. They also said that the Quraysh army was camped about three miles from Badr. About the numbers, they said they had no correct idea, but every time they are slaughtering nine to ten camels! The Prophet (a.s) made estimation from this information that they will be about nine hundred to one thousand men. Then he asked who the chiefs among them were. The men told the names of some prominent chiefs of Quraysh. At this, the Prophet (a.s) said that Makkah had sent forth pieces of its heart for the
!campaign

Hearing about the arrival and location of the Quraysh, the Muslims moved towards the Well of Badr. The Quraysh army was camping at the periphery of the valley of Badr on a hillock of sand. They were about a thousand men and had seven hundred camels and three hundred horses with them. They had plenty of spears, swords and other implements of war. Against this, the Muslims were lesser in numbers and very weak in the matter of materials. They had very few swords and armors. They had seventy camels and two horses. Where they had camped, the feet were sinking down into the sand. It was Divine help that it showered hard during the night and the sand was consolidated. They also collected plenty of drinking water. With this Divine help, the sagging morale of the Muslims improved! They all prepared themselves to face the enemy with courage! Ibn al-Athir, al-tabari and other historians have written about the happenings at the Battle of Badr that when the Prophet (a.s) arrived at Badr, Sa`d ibn Mu`adh said, "O Prophet of Allah (a.s)! We prepare a thatch with the leaves of the date palm so that you can sit in its shade! Near the shack will be in readiness your steed. If we overwhelm the enemy, there is no problem. In the event of our defeat you can proceed fast to al-Madinah on the horse! There our men will defend you. If they had known that you are going out for a battle, they would not have stayed back!" The Prophet (a.s) prayed for the welfare of Sa`d and asked him to erect .the shack and stayed in that

If dirayah is kept in mind while judging the veracity of the narrations, then this narration cannot be trusted at its face value. It neither is supported by the events of the Battle of Badr nor is it commensurate with the character of the prophet (a.s) that the world knows of. First of all, from where could Sa`d get so many date palm leaves to be able to erect a shack in the desert sands. Therefore, Ibn Abil-Hadid writes

I am very surprised at the matter of the shack. From where did he get sufficient“ number of date palm leaves to build the shack when in the soil Of Badr no date palms [grow?]”[۴

If it is said that he had brought them from al-Madinah, it sounds ridiculous that why he brought so many palm leaves all the way? As such, the party was short of draught animals and it would be laughable to carry along the palm leaves from there. Besides this, it has always been the wont of the Prophet (a.s) that he always wanted to be the same way as all the others in his party and never accepted any special treatment for himself. He took active part in the physical work of the construction of the mosque and in digging the trenches. Also, it was the need of the leadership that he moved shoulder to shoulder with the Muslims without seeking or accepting any special treatment! And in the battles, everything depends on the spirit and the Spiritual Strength of the commander! Then how could it be imagined that the Prophet (a.s) instead of joining the ranks of the brave warriors, kept sitting comfortably in a shack! Not only this, but in the event of defeat the suggestion that the Prophet (a.s) would have a fast steed waiting for him near the shack to escape to al-Madinah leaving behind his defeated companions to the mercy of the enemy! It is the most unimaginable act that could ever be suggested to the Prophet (a.s)! The events of Badr are the proof that the Prophet (a.s) spent his time organizing the troops in formations, arranging the left and the right flanks, and issued orders from time to time depending on the fast changing circumstances. He identified the spots where the prominent men from the ranks of the enemy fell and held the command like an experienced commander. Al-tabari writes

On the Day of Badr the Prophet (a.s) was seen chasing the enemies with His“ unsheathed sword, reciting the Verse ‘Soon the enemy army will face defeat and flee [showing their backs!’”[٥

All these affairs cannot be conducted sitting away from his men in a comfortable shack. For the accomplishment of all these affairs, and prediction of victory and success, which were certainly according to a Revelation from Allah, no question arises of making arrangements to flee in the event of defeat! Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s) has :thrown light on the activities of the Prophet (a.s) on the Day of Badr

When the Day of Badr came, and People assembled, we took shelter under The“ Prophet (a.s); his majesty was dominating and was in the vicinity of the enemy more [than all of us!”[٦

It is evident from this statement that instead of preferring the shack, or thinking of escape in the event of defeat, the Prophet (a.s) was all the time controlling the theatre of the war and functioning as a commander who doe not get any thought of the possible defeat! The last part of the narrative, where Sa`d says, “If those who remained back in al-Madinah had known that you were coming out for a war, they would not have stayed back”, is a reflection of the weakness of the narrative. The Revelation of the Qur’an has clearly indicated that one group was feeling uneasy about the war and that they were being pushed to meet death. If they had no idea of .the impending war, why there was so much scare and fear

In the army of Quraysh, too there were persons who were not so much against the Prophet (a.s). Despite their infidelity, they had some consideration for the person of the Prophet (a.s). Some of such persons had already embraced Islam but had not declared their Faith. They did not want to participate in the war but Quraysh forced them to join up. The Prophet (a.s) thought it proper to warn his men about such people. He said that some persons from Banū-Hashim and others are in the ranks of the army of the infidels but they have no enmity or wish to fight with us. Therefore, if any of you come across Abul-Bukhtari ibn Harith, `Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib or anyone from Banū-Hashim, you should not kill them because they have been forcibly recruited to fight with us.” After this announcement of the Prophet (a.s), some persons winced and expressed their unhappiness. Therefore, Hudhayfah Ibn `Utbah told the Prophet (a.s) that he wanted them to put to sword their relatives and he wanted them to leave `Abbas alive. He swore on Allah, that if he came face to face with `Abbas, he would kill him. The Prophet (a.s) asked `Umar if he heard what Hudhayfah had said.

:Will he strike my uncle with his sword? `Umar said

[O Prophet of Allah (a.s) Allow me to cut his head with my sword. He is a Hypocrite!”[v“

After these necessary instructions, the men were arranged in the left and the right flanks in proper order. The Standard of the Ansar was given to Sa`d ibn `Abadah and :that of the Muhajirūn was handed over to `Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s). Ibn Kathir writes

The Prophet (a.s) gave the Standard on the Day of Badr to `Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s)“
[When he was twenty years old.]”[۱۸]

The enemies too organized their men. `Utbah ibn Rabi`ah, his brother Shaybah and his son al-Walid came forward from the ranks of the Quraysh and called for hand-to-hand combat. From the troops of Islam `Awf ibn Harith, Mu`awwadh ibn Harith and `Abdullah ibn Rawahah went forward to fight. `Utbah asked who they were. They replied that they were the Ansar from al-Madinah. `Utbah knit his brows and said that they were not of the same status as he was and that they should go back to their lines. He addressed the Prophet, “Muhammad! Send men in status equal to us to fight! Men who are from our Tribe!” The three volunteers returned to their positions. When the prophet (a.s) saw this conceited attitude of the Quraysh, that they did not rate the Ansar equal to themselves, he sent `Ubaydah ibn Harith, Hamzah ibn `Abd al-Muttalib and `Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s). `Utbah was demanding that Quraysh be sent to fight with him. The Prophet (a.s) not only deputed the Quraysh but the tallest figures of Banū-Hashim, the progeny of `Abd al-Muttalib! He did this to prevent others from saying that in partiality he was trying to protect his relatives! At that time `Ubaydah was seventy years old, `Ali (a.s) was a youth who had no experience of warfare and was coming to a theatre of war for the first time. When `Utbah knew that `Ali (a.s), `Ubaydah and Hamzah had come to fight him, he said that he had a match to confront him in battle. `Ubaydah went forward to fight with `Utbah, Hamzah with Shaybah and `Ali (a.s) with al-Walid. Al-Walid tried to attack `Ali (a.s) but he sent an arrow to incapacitate him. After being hit by the arrow, al-Walid went to the side of his father to take his support. But before he reached `Utbah, the son of Abū-Talib (a.s) surrounded him in such a way that he could not save himself from `Ali’s sword and slept unto death before reaching the lap of his father. When Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s) was through with al-Walid, the Muslims called him that Shaybah was overwhelming his uncle Hamzah. He noticed that both were lying exhausted on the ground with their swords blunted and the shields shattered. He went forward, attacked Shaybah, and severed his head with the sword. Now `Ali (a.s) and Hamzah turned towards `Utbah who was busy combating with `Ubaydah. They noticed that `Ubaydah was injured and unable to stand the onslaught any more. When `Utbah was about to martyr him,

the swords of Hamzah and `Ali (a.s) severed the head of `Utbah. `Ubaydah was severely injured and `Ali (a.s) and Hamzah carried him to where the Prophet (a.s) was stationed. He saw that a leg of `Ubaydah was almost completely amputated and the pith was oozing from the cut. He put `Ubaydah's head in his lap and tears fell from his eyes on `Ubaydah's face. He opened his eyes and said, "O Prophet (a.s)! Will I be raised with the Martyrs?" The Prophet (a.s) said, "Yes! You will be counted with the martyrs!" `Ubaydah added, "How I wish Abū-Talib was around to see that we did not
:let his words go in vain

We shall surrender Muhammad (a.s) to the enemies only when we die fighting before“
”!him and we become oblivious of the memory of our wife and Children

Ubaydah, while returning from Badr, died either at the Valley of Rawa' or Safrah and `
.was interred there

The killing of the renowned braves of the Quraysh made the morale of their troops sink to very low ebb. When Abū-Jahl saw their morale running very low, he shouted to egg them on! tu` aymah ibn ` Adi got motivated. He went like a wild elephant to the arena. ` Ali (a.s) hit him with his lance. The giant could not control his balance and fell ,down. He turned on the ground for a while and breathed his last. ` Ali (a.s) said

By Allah! After today he will not come to fight with us about Allah with hatred in his“
[heart!”[۹

After tu` aymah, al-` As ibn Sa` id came fully armored to the arena. ` Ali (a.s) killed him too with a stroke of the sword. Then ` Abdullah ibn al-Mundhir and Harmalah ibn ` Umar came with great vigor. Both became the victims of ` Ali's sword. Similar was the fate of Hanzalah gave such a blow of his sword on his head that it shattered into two. This Hanzalah was the son of Abū-Sufyan and Mu` awiyah's brother. Before him, his maternal grandfather, ` Utbah, uncle al-Walid were killed by ` Ali (a.s).When during the caliphate of ` Ali (a.s), Mu` awiyah threatened him of war, he reminded him of the :fate of his grandfather, uncle and brother in the Battle of Badr. He wrote

I am none other than Abul-Hasan who killed `Utbah, your grandfather, al-Walid your“
[Uncle and Hanzalah your brother on the day of Badr”[۱۰

Because of the killing of these eminent persons of the army of the infidels, there was total chaos in their ranks and men were scared of coming forward for man-to-man combats. They realized that if they came to the arena alone, none will be spared by the sword of `Ali (a.s). Therefore, now they started attacking in groups. The Muslims, seeing their increasing numbers of combatants coming forward, wanted to move forward too. But the Prophet (a.s) ordered to maintain their order and attack the :Quraysh with arrows only. He prayed to Allah

O Allah! If this group of Muslims is killed, then on the face of the earth there would not“
[remain any to worship You! O Allah! Fulfill Your Promise of Succor and victory!”[۱۱

He took a nap of sleep, opened his eyes and said, “Thanks to Allah! He has answered my prayers and has sent the Angels to help us!” Therefore, Allah says in the Holy :Book

When you were pleading with your Sustainer, He accepted your prayer and replied“
”.that a thousand Angels would come in droves for your help

When the Quraysh threw arrows, in reply to arrows, and came near to the troops of Islam, the Prophet (a.s) ordered his men to attack them in full vigor now. Therefore, the swords were unsheathed, the bows twanged and arrows were released. The fight was so intense that the arena was echoing with the sounds of the clash of swords and the hiss of the flying arrows. The Muslims went on forward killing the infidels. Alas, the onslaught of `Ali (a.s) and Hamzah disheartened the enemy ranks. They went as a :flock of sheep attacked by a tiger. Sa`d says

I saw `Ali (a.s) fight on the Day of Badr. From his chest came a sound like neighing of a horse and was constantly reciting martial poetry. When he returned His sword was [red with blood!]"[۱۲

During the battle, Nawfal ibn Khuwaylid, a mortal enemy of the Prophet (a.s) passed in front of `Ali (a.s). He gave Nawfal such a blow of the sword that it cut the helmet, shattered the head of the infidel, and cut his jaw. With the next blow both his legs were cut. The Prophet (a.s) was pleased that the enemy of Allah was killed. And said, "Thanks to Allah! He has answered my prayers!" The battle was in its last stages. The infidels' morale had totally vanished. Abū-Jahl, his brother al-`As ibn Husham and other chiefs of Quraysh had been slaughtered. The enemy was in the last throes of defeat. Around dusk, they had abandoned arms and fled leaving behind their materials. The Muslims chased them and, instead of killing them, took them captive with the idea of collecting ransom from the Quraysh. When Sa`d ibn Mu`adh saw that the Muslims were taking the infidels captive instead of killing them, he was very upset :(and told the Prophet (a.s

O Prophet of Allah! This has been the first occasion when Allah gave us victory over [the infidels. Instead of leaving them alive, I would prefer crushing them!"[۱۳

Seventy bodies of the infidels were scattered in the arena. The Prophet (a.s) got them thrown into the Well of Badr and addressing them said, "I saw the truth in Allah's promise! Did you find the promise of your gods true?" Some people said, "O Prophet of :Allah! Do you speak with the dead? Do they hear us talk?" He said

[They hear my talk more clearly than you do, but they have no faculty to reply!]"[۱۴“

After accomplishing these tasks, the Prophet (a.s) ordered all the booty of war to be collected in one place. Some natures did not like this arrangement. They wished that, according to Arab custom, whatever booty anyone got, it were his rightful possession. But the Prophet (a.s) did not permit this and put the entire collection in the charge of `Abdullah ibn Ka`b. The captive infidels were sent to al-Madinah. When they reached the valley of Safrah, he got the booty equally divided among all the men. This task could also have been done after reaching al-Madinah, but perhaps some persons were becoming restless and it was thought good to be done with the booty. On reaching al-Madinah he arranged for the captives to be accommodated with different persons and instructed them to give humane treatment to the men. Therefore, as long as they were in the custody of the Muslims, they were treated well. The captives too acknowledged this fact. Those captives who were men of worth, arranged for the ransom money. The poor were released without paying any ransom. At the time of the Annunciation of the Prophet (a.s), there were only seventeen literate Quraysh. Feeling the need for literacy, such of those captives who were literate and poor, he ordered them to teach reading and writing to small groups of, say ten, children, after which they would be released from captivity! There is also a narrative about the captives of Badr that the Prophet (a.s) consulted Abū-Bakr, `Umar and `Ali (a.s) whether they should be killed or ransomed. Abū-Bakr opined that they should be :released on payment of ransom. `Umar was against this idea

By Allah! I do not agree with this view of Abū-Bakr! You must order me that I behead“
so and so! Ask Hamzah to kill his brother `Abbas and ask `Ali (a.s) that he kills
[`Aqil!”[۱۵

The Prophet (a.s) through his ijtihad, decided not to act on the suggestion of `Umar and preferred Abū-Bakr’s suggestion of releasing the captives on payment of ransom money. On the day following the decision, `Umar came to the Prophet (a.s) and found him and Abū-Bakr crying. He asked, “Why are you two crying? If there is something on account of which you are crying, please let me know that I could join you too!” The Prophet (a.s) said that because of accepting the ransom I find retribution hovering as near as the tree here (pointing towards the tree in the neighborhood). He also said :that the following Verse too has been revealed

The Prophet (a.s) should not make enemies captive without lot of bloodshed. You“ want wealth and Allah wishes the betterment of the Hereafter. Allah is Dominant and Wise. If Allah’s Guidance were not there from before, you would have gathered ”.something. That would bring you lot of Retribution

Umar says that because of collection of ransom, the Prophet (a.s) lost seventy` companions, the very next year in the Battle of Uhud and seventy more were taken captive by the enemy. The Prophet (a.s) also lost his tooth, his face was injured and .his companions left his company

It needs consideration why the Prophet (a.s) had to consult his companions. Is not there clear instruction in the Holy Book about the matter? No. The Qur’an clearly says about the prisoners of war to take ransom from the captives and release them. :Therefore, the Qur’an says

When you fight with infidels, kill them. When you make them thoroughly injured, tie“ them up. Then release them in kindness or take ransom and free them. Do this until ”!the enemy puts down his arms

This is a verse from Sūrah of Muhammad and was revealed before the Battle of Badr. Therefore, the Qur’an had provided instructions about treatment of the captives ahead of the Day of Badr, and the Prophet (a.s) released some of the captives on payment of ransom, some on providing instruction on reading-and-writing to the children and some others he released in kindness because they were poor persons. When all this was done in accordance with the prior instructions of Allah, then what was the question of any reprimand? When there was Divine Decree (nass) what was the need of consulting the companions about treatment to the captives of war? And about `Umar suggesting that Hamzah kill `Abbas, `Ali (a.s) kill `Aqil, we do not know what reply the Prophet (a.s) gave to him. This suggestion came after hearing the Prophet (a.s) before the battle commenced that the Muslims should exercise care to see that none of the Banū-Hashim or `Abbas in the enemy ranks were killed. And this suggestion coming from `Umar who, when Hudhayfah thought of killing `Abbas, called Hudhayfah a hypocrite. Had all these ideas escaped from `Umar’s mind or for him killing the persons was not legitimate in the theatre of war and it became !legitimate later on

If this narrative is accepted that because of accepting the ransom, and releasing the men, retribution was hovering around, then the Prophet (a.s) could have abrogated the acceptance of the ransom and arranged for the execution of the captives. Because the ransom money would take lot of days and the event took place immediately after the battle was over. In fact, the history records that it took about two months for the ransom money to arrive. And terming the happenings of the Battle of Uhud as a retribution for the acceptance of ransom and release of the captives sounds strange. Anyway, this is a concocted narrative and the reason for the concoction to cover the shame of the desertion of the Companions (including some very prominent names) from the Battle Field of Uhud! They want to make an excuse that if the Prophet (a.s) had not released the captives at Badr by taking ransom, the

event of the desertion of the Companions would not have taken place! They also contend that the reprimanding Verse too was revealed as a consequence of the release of the prisoners although; there is not the slightest indication towards the Prophet (a.s) in the said Verse

Shah Waliyyullah blames the Companions of not killing the deserting infidels, making them captives and extracting ransom from them. He writes

The Companions were inclined towards taking ransom from the captives. Although“ Allah wished that the root of infidelity was destroyed. Because of this, they were [reprimanded and then pardoned!”[۱۶

Craving for wealth and riches is a human failing but where the strengthening of the Faith against the Infidels is concerned, the material gains have always to be forgone. This tendency of running after wealth in the Arabs could not be curbed very much even after the advent of Islam. Therefore, in the beginning the Companions preferred attacking the Caravan of Abū-Sufyan to plunder its rich merchandise rather than meet the army of the infidels in the battle! The men also took the infidels captive instead of killing them with the same purpose of getting the ransom from them. Once the captives were shifted to al-Madinah, they were not in the arena of war and the only alternative left was to release them on taking ransom from them. It was the right (thing to do according to the Verse of Sūrah of Muhammad (a.s

In this ghazwah, the infidels were shamed absolutely. They lost seventy men and seventy were taken prisoner. The rest fled. Muslims lost only fourteen men, of whom six were Muhajirūn and eight Ansar. The infidels being killed at the hands of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) numbered thirty-five. This was half the total number of casualties suffered by the enemy. He accounted particularly for the chiefs of the Quraysh, viz: Shaybah, al-Walid, Hanzalah, Nawfal ibn Khuwaylid, al-`As ibn Sa`id, Mughirah ibn al-Walid, etc. The victims dying at the hands of `Ali (a.s) is the evidence of the fact that he was not enamored of the ransom nor he had chased the deserters from the ranks of the infidels. He was busy all the time in uprooting the strength of the infidels through his exploits. If the Muslims were defeated in this battle, they would have suffered extreme feelings of inferiority and lack of valor and bravery would cause them abject defeat. But the victory at Badr got Muslims the recognition as a force to reckon with! This victory, that was the victory of truth, justice and equality had the greatest contribution coming from Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) through his chivalry and
!bravery

.This battle was fought on Friday, the seventeenth of Ramadan, ۲ A.H

Footnote

- Sahīh al-Bukhārī, Vol ۳, Page ۳ [۱]
- Tārīkh Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۱۳۳ [۲]
- Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۱۴۰ [۳]
- Ibn Abī-Hadīd, Vol ۳, Page ۳۳۰ [۴]
- Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۱۷۲ [۵]
- Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۱۳۵ [۶]
- Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۱۵۱ [۷]
- Al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah, Vol ۷, Page ۲۲۳ [۸]
- A`lām al-Warā, Page ۸۹ [۹]
- Nahj al-Balāghah [۱۰]
- Tārīkh Kāmil, Vol ۲, Page ۸۷ [۱۱]
- Kanz al-`Ummāl, Vol ۵, Page ۲۷۰ [۱۲]
- Tārīkh Kāmil, Vol ۲, Page ۸۸ [۱۳]
- Tārīkh al-Kāmil, Vol ۲, Page ۹۰ [۱۴]
- Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۱۶۹ [۱۵]
- Hujjat Allāh al-Balaghī, Vol ۲, Page ۵۷۳ [۱۶]

THE EXPEDITION OF UHUD

THE EXPEDITION OF UHUD

In Badr, seventy renowned warriors of the Quraysh were killed. The other troops were shamed and ran away showing their backs to the theatre of war. This defeat caused the silence of death on the streets of Makkah. This was like the quiet of the ocean under which strong currents struggle to rise. It was like a dormant volcano that might erupt any time. There was a wave of anger and sorrow in the hearts of the Quraysh. Their hearts were burning with the thought of revenge. With the fear that the anger might subside, they had prohibited people from shedding tears on the loss of the near and dear in the Battle of Badr. Besides, there was also a custom in the Arab society that women did not cry until they had avenged the loss of a dear person in a fight or a war. This spirit encouraged to wage another decisive war of revenge. Abū-Sufyan, who had dreams of leading the Quraysh, got an opportunity after Abū-Jahl and other chiefs died in the Battle of Badr. To win the support of the masses he took a public oath that he would not oil his scalp until he did not take revenge for every Quraysh life lost in Badr. Therefore, in Dhul-Hijjah ۲ A.H. he went with a contingent of two hundred men to cause destruction in al-Madinah. When he reached the outskirts of al-Madinah, he killed two men of Ansar who were working in the farms. He also committed arson by setting fire to a date garden. When the Prophet (a.s) heard of this, he chased him up to a place called Kudr but he escaped with his .men

This was the preface for the preparations for a bigger campaign. `Ikrimah ibn Abi-Jahl, Safwan ibn Umayyah, `Abdullah ibn Rabi`ah and other important persons gave the previous year's profits as their war effort to a common fund for the warlike preparations. This was fifty thousand miskal of gold and one thousand camels. They thought that their troops had to be financially strong to be able to fight a war successfully. Therefore, the Holy Qur'an says about them

These infidels spend their riches to stop men from taking the Path of Allah. They will“ soon spend these riches, it will become the cause of craving and sorrow for them, and then they will be defeated. Those who adopted infidelity will be sent straight to the Hell”.

The Quraysh had no problems for funding the war. What they lacked were men of valor and bravery. To solve this problem they hired some poets who were capable of writing fiery patriotic poems. They sent their men to recite, and incite men, in the areas of different tribes far and near! One poet of Makkah, Abū-`Uzza `Amr ibn `Abdullah went to Tihamah and made the men of Banū-Kinānah endorse his views and seven hundred of them joined the ranks of the Quraysh army. The recruitment proceeded in this manner and the number of men swelled to three thousand. These were committed men ready for any sacrifices

Hind, the wife of Abū-Sufyan, whose father `Utbah, brother al-Walid and uncle Shaybah were killed in the Battle of Badr, made tireless efforts to prepare the Quraysh for another decisive campaign. She became chief of fourteen women who joined the army. Among these women was Khalid ibn al-Walid's sister Fatimah, `Amr ibn al-`As's wife Rita, `Ikrimah ibn Abi-Jahl wife Ummu-Hakim bint Harith, Sufyan ibn `Uwayf's wife Qutaylah bint `Amr, al-`Azib ibn Sufyan's wife `Amrah bint Harith, Talhah ibn `Uthman's wife Saltah bint Sa`d, al-Harith ibn Sufyan's wife Ramlah bint tariq and Safwan ibn Umayyah's wife al-Barra' bint Mas`ūd. The purpose of these women joining the army was to upbraid the feelings of the fighters in the theatre of the war and egg them on to fight more valiantly! They were to shame them and bring them back to the battlefield in the event of their trying to desert

When this army, in the command of Abū-Sufyan, left Makkah, `Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib thought that if it made a preemptive attack on al-Madinah, the Muslims would not be able to defend themselves. Therefore, through a person from Banū-Ghifar he sent word to the Prophet (a.s) that the troops of Quraysh have started for an attack on al-Madinah. Because of his timely warning the Prophet (a.s) deputed two men to keep a watch on the outskirts of al-Madinah. They went to some considerable distance and brought the intelligence that the report from `Abbas was correct. And the army of Quraysh causing destruction enroot had reached almost the out skirts of al-Madinah. Although these were the same people who were vanquished at Badr, they had refurbished their ranks with men from Tihamah and Kinanah. When the Muslims got the wind of fast approaching enemy, there cropped up differences in their ranks as to how best to tackle the attack. Some felt that since the Muslims had lesser numbers, and the infidels were many times more, the best approach would be to take a defensive stance. They suggested that the stronger persons should guard the ways to the city with swords and lances. If some of the enemy's men managed to sneak in, the women, children and the old persons should start throwing stones and other missiles to hurt them. When the enemy was weakened and confused, the men should organize to combat with them. Some other persons thought that under the circumstances only defensive fight was possible. The best approach for this defensive fight was for the men to go out and create a front at some distance from the ramparts of the city. Of those who were making this suggestion were Hamzah, Sa`d ibn `Abadah and the persons who did not join the combat in Badr and were keen to show their valor now. Those who wanted to fortify inside the city and fight were `Abdullah ibn Ubay, the infamous hypocrite, and some others. The mind does not accept the thought that this suggestion was made in the best interests of the Muslims while it was well-known that he was sagaciously scheming against them that they were .evacuated from al-Madinah ignominiously

The historians generally have endorsed the opinion that the Prophet (a.s) himself was of the view that they must remain entrenched inside al-Madinah and fight from there. But because of the majority opinion, he condescended to go out for the fight. When he came out of his home fully equipped with the battle gear, the persons who were insisting on conducting the battle from outside al-Madinah told him that he might as well do the defense of al-Madinah from inside and there was no need for him to wear the battle gear. The Prophet (a.s) said

It is not proper for the Prophet that when he has worn the battle gear, to remove it“ [before the battle is fought.”[1]

These words are a reflection of the confidence, and determination to do jihad with the enemy. This also proves that the Prophet (a.s) would not act under any external influence or pressure. In fact it was the need of the hour to take the enemy on in open ground and not to give him the freedom to cause destruction inside al-Madinah. The statement of the Prophet (a.s) is not only the proof of his indomitable courage but it is also a golden lesson for the Muslims to face the enemy with courage and valor. When the battle had become inevitable, there was no need for very defensive stances. In such circumstances, offence is the best form of defense! They have to fight with courage not showing their backs to the foe

The Prophet (a.s) appointed Ummu-Maktūm as the administrator of al-Madinah and on the fourteenth of Shawwal 3 A.H., after the Friday Prayer, went out of the city with his contingent. From a shorter route, he moved towards the Mount Uhud where the armies of the Quraysh had been camping since the twelfth of Shawwal. The Prophet (a.s) would have traversed half the distance when, `Abdullah ibn Ubay along with his men, cut away from the Prophet's party and returned to al-Madinah. He made the excuse that his suggestion of fighting from within al-Madinah was turned down and therefore he was not joining the combatants. Now the Muslims were only seven hundred, who had to contend with three thousand men of the Quraysh. From the seven hundred, men from the Ansar of Banū-Salamah and Banū-Harithah too were thinking of withdrawing. But better sense prevailed with them and they stayed on. :The Holy Qur'an speaks about them like this

”When two groups from you (from here only) determined to accept defeat“

The Prophet of Islam (a.s) with these seven hundred established base at the foot of Uhud. The day was already over, and the next day, the fifteenth of Shawwal, Saturday, both the armies opened their fronts. The army of the infidels was large and there was excess of materials with them too. They had seven hundred armored men while the Muslims had only one hundred. The infidels had three thousand camels and two hundred horses and the Muslims had only two horses. One was with the Prophet (a.s) and the other with Abū-Buradah. Because of paucity of men and material, the troops had to be arranged in such a way that the enemy did not get the chance to attack from every direction. Therefore, with defensive tactic, the hill was placed in the back and the troops faced towards the city of al-Madinah on the left, in the Ravine of al-`Aynayn fifty men were stationed under `Abdullah ibn Jubayr. He was strictly instructed not to leave the station at any cost until further orders. From the strategic point of view, this was a very important requirement. If this was not done, the infidels could have attacked the Muslims from that end and decimated the Muslims. After this strategic arrangement, the remaining troops were arranged in order. On the Right Flank was Sa`d ibn `Abadah and on the Left Flank was Usayd ibn Hudayr. One standard was given to Mus`ab ibn `Umayr and the main standard of the Prophet's Army, as in all the battles fought by him, was in the hand of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s

The infidels too arranged their troops. On the right flank was Khalid ibn al-Walid and on the left flank, the chief was `Ikrimah ibn Abi-Jahl. The chief of cavalry was `Amr ibn al-`As and of the archers, `Abdullah ibn Rabi`ah. At the heart of the formation, the Quraysh had the idol of Hubal on a camel beside which Abū-Sufyan stood. The standard of the army was in the hand of a person from Banū-`Abd-al-Dar, Talhah ibn `Uthman. When the army was in full readiness, the Quraysh shouted praises for Hubal and Hind and other women stood in front of the troops and to promote enthusiasm in the men they started singing and dancing with drums in their hands

We are the daughters of stars. Walk on carpets demurely. Like the active birds. Musk“ in the parted hair. And pearls shining in the necks. If you advance, we shall embrace you. And spread carpets for you. If you turn your backs, we shall abandon you. In a ”way as if we never had any attachment

Once this song was over, the drums of war were sounded and the fighting started. The standard-bearer of the Quraysh, Talhah ibn `Uthman came forward fully equipped and with proud gait. He said sarcastically, “O Muslims! It is your feeling that when one of you is killed, he goes to the Heaven and if anybody from our side dies, his place is the Hell! Therefore, anyone from your ranks who wishes to go to the Heaven or wants me to go to the Hell should come into the arena!” `Ali (a.s) came forward reciting the rajz waving his sword in his hand. The swords of the two warriors clashed. Talhah made a skirmish, and `Ali (a.s) made it go in vain and made a counter skirmish and with one stroke cut Talhah’s legs. He swayed and fell to the ground. The Prophet (a.s), when he saw him falling and the standard of the infidels dipping, said, allahu-akbar, and the Muslim, in unison, repeated the call! `Ali (a.s) wanted to sever Talhah’s head but he noticed that he was lying naked. He did not like to strike at him a second time in that condition and left him turning with pain on the ground. Some persons said, “Why did not you kill him?” He replied, “When he turned naked, my modesty did not permit me to strike him any further! He also pleaded with the mention of my relationship with him!” After wriggling on the ground for some time, Talhah died. With the killing of Talhah, the morale of the infidels’ nose dived! They had no courage left to come for man-to-man combat. Now they started to attack in groups. The Muslims

came forward and quelled their onslaught. From both sides the bows twanged, swords clashed with swords and the fight became intense. Abū-Dujanah al-Ansari, Hamzah and `Ali (a.s) made repeated attacks and killed rows after row of the enemy. This created pandemonium in the ranks of the infidels

The Prophet (a.s) had donated a sword to Abū-Dujanah at the start of this war. He tied a red scarf on his head, took the sword in his hand and dashed into the crowd of the enemy's men. He thus reached the place where the women of the infidels were singing and beating the drums to enthuse their men to valor. He lifted his sword to hit Hind bint `Utbah for a moment. But he thought that he should not defile the sword given by the Prophet (a.s) with the blood of an infidel female

Hamzah's sword too was creating havoc in the ranks of the infidels. After the killing of Talhah ibn `Uthman, `Uthman ibn Talhah picked up the standard of the infidels. Hamzah struck him one blow and silenced him

Ali (a.s), keeping his standard aloft, attacked the enemy vigorously and continuously. Whosoever lifted the flag of the infidels, he was killed and the flag used to dip in this manner on a regular basis! In this short space of time, eight times they had to change the standard-bearer! When there was none left from Banū-`Abd-al-Dar to lift the flag, a slave of the family, Thaw'ab, lifted it! `Ali (a.s) came forward, hit him with his sword diagonally at his waist and cut him into two. Thus, all the standard-bearers of the infidels were finished. Ibn al-Athir writes

[One who finished the standard-bearers (of the infidels) was `Ali (a.s).]"[۷۴

The enthusiasm of the Quraysh sagged with the obliteration of all their standard-bearers. The spirit of the Muslims rose and they fought bravely although they were a fourth in numbers when compared with their adversaries. They continued to advance with valor. The infidels fled, in dire disarray, leaving behind the idol of Hubal flat on its face on the ground! The women of the Quraysh gathering their skirts ran for their lives! The Muslims, when they saw the enemy fleeing, were over whelmed with greed and, forgetting about the enemy, started gathering the booty of war. The keepers of the ravine, who were under strict instructions from the Prophet (a.s) not to leave their post at any cost, too abandoned their position, descended to loot, and plunder the defeated infidels. Al-tabari writes

Those persons were shouting “Booty! Booty!” `Abdullah asked them to stay that they“ were forgetting the Prophet’s orders. But they refused to stop and went in search of [booty!”[۳

This irresponsible behavior of the guards gave Khalid ibn al-Walid and `Ikrimah ibn Abi-Jahl to bring two hundred men through the vacated ravine and attack the Muslims from the rear. `Abdullah ibn Jubayr valiantly defended the ravine with two to four men who stayed back with him, but they were all martyred by the infidels. Seeing this success of Khalid, the fleeing infidels started coming back. The fallen standard of the infidels was picked by a woman from Banū-`Abd-al-Dar, `Amrah bint `Alqamah al-Harithiyyah. The infidels rearranged their fleeing hordes and attacked the Muslims. The Muslims, oblivious of the developments, were busy collecting the booty was now facing the enemy onslaught from two fronts. This created confusion in their ranks and in some instances, they attacked their own comrades. Therefore, Usayd ibn Hudayr was injured by Abū-Buradah ibn al-Nayyir and Abū-Buradah was mistakenly struck by Abul-Dana. In spite of the shouting of Hudhayfah’s father, Muslims were killed at the hands of Muslims! The picture of the war suddenly reversed. The war that was almost won was now on the brink of defeat. Some Muslims were martyred, some were injured and some others fled showing their backs to the battlefield! The historian al-:tabari writes

When the Muslims were inflicted with this calamity, a third of them were martyred, a“ [third injured, and a third fled for their lives!”[۴

In this atmosphere of utter pandemonium, Suba` ibn ` Abd al-` Uzza came in front of Hamzah. Hamzah called him "O son of mischievous woman!" Then he rushed towards him with his sword and killed him at that very spot. Jubayr ibn Mut`im whose uncle, Taymah ibn ` Adi was killed by ` Ali (a.s) in the Battle of Badr had promised his slave Wahshi that if he killed Muhammad (a.s), ` Ali (a.s) or Hamzah, he would free him from slavery. For Wahshi it was difficult to attack the Prophet (a.s) or ` Ali (a.s), but he determined to kill Hamzah. When he got the opportunity, he threw his lance with such dexterity that it pierced the umbilicus region of the body of Hamzah. Despite this mortal blow, Hamzah jumped towards his attacker but because of the effect of the .injury, he fell down and joined the ranks of martyrs

Ibn al-Athir writes in Usd al-Ghabah that when there was general pandemonium, the Prophet (a.s) was for a while out of ` Ali's sight. He looked around in the bodies of the dead Muslims but there was no sign of him. He thought for a moment if he had gone away from the theatre of the battle. But then he felt that he was one who would never be a deserter. He also thought whether Allah had raised him alive to the Heaven in His anger against the misbehavior of the Muslims! He now thought that the best course for him would be to succumb fighting with the infidels. Therefore, he broke the sheath of his sword and attacked the columns of the enemy. When the crowd of the infidels thinned, he found the Prophet (a.s) determinedly fighting the enemy. Thus, he never left the battlefield for a moment. ` Ali (a.s) stayed with the Prophet (a.s), defended him and fought bravely with the infidels. Ibn Sa` d Writes

On the day of Uhud when the people ran away, `Ali (a.s) steadfastly stayed with the Prophet (a.s) and resolved that he would be with the Messenger until his own [death.]”[٥

In the meantime, a group of fifty men advanced to attack the Prophet (a.s). He told `Ali (a.s) to go ahead and quell them. `Ali (a.s) attacked them like a tiger and spread-eagled them. Thus, from whichever side the infidels appeared, `Ali (a.s) dealt with them severely. In these attacks Shaybah ibn Malik al-`Amiri and all the four sons of Sufyan ibn `Uwayf, Abul-Shu`a` , Khalid, Abul-Hamra’ and Ghurab were killed by `Ali (a.s) and he kept the Prophet (a.s) safe from their onslaught. Seeing this valor and the : (spirit of sacrifice of `Ali (a.s), Archangel Gabriel told the Prophet (a.s

[O Prophet of Allah! This is truly sympathy and affection!”[٦“

The Prophet (a.s) replied, “Why not! `Ali (a.s) is mine, and I belong to `Ali (a.s)! Archangel Gabriel then said, “I belong to both of you!” At that moment the sound of the Herald was heard saying, “There is no sword other than Dhul-Faqar and no victory without `Ali.” There were sounds of appreciation and approbation all around

While `Ali (a.s) was busy combating, the infidels ambushed the Prophet (a.s) and `Abdullah ibn Shihab, `Utba ibn Abil-Waqa’, Ibn Qamiyyah al-Laythi, Ubay ibn Khalaf attacked him and `Abdullah ibn Shihab hit on his forehead. `Utba ibn Abi-Waqqas hurled at him four stones, one after another in quick succession and he lost four of his teeth and his lips were badly bruised with this attack. Ibn Qamiyyah came near him and hit his hood with a sword. As a result of this blow, the links of the hood hurt his forehead. The face of the Prophet (a.s) was red with the blood flowing from the forehead. Ubay ibn Khalaf attacked the Prophet (a.s) and he snatched a lance from his companion, Harith ibn Suma` , and struck Ubay who died on his return journey at a place, Saraf, on the way. From these attackers, `Abdullah ibn Hamid was killed by Abū-Dujanah. Some men from the Ansar saw that the Prophet (a.s) was under attack and they came forward and intervened. Seeing the Ansar, the infidels retreated some distance and started throwing arrows from there. Abū-Dujanah al-Ansari became the shield for the Prophet (a.s) to save him from the arrows. He took the arrows on his

back. Also near the Prophet (a.s), Mus`ab ibn `Umayr got busy stopping the attacks of the enemies. Ibn Taymiyah got an opportunity and martyred him. He thought by mistake that he had martyred the Prophet (a.s) himself in the confusion. Therefore, he approached close to his men and proudly announced that he had killed Muhammad (a.s)! Happily, they shouted, "Muhammad (a.s) has been killed!" From the Muslim ranks some had already deserted when they smelled defeat, most of those who remained was disheartened when they heard this announcement. Now there was a total chaos in their ranks. Some sat quiet on the hillocks keeping one hand over the other, and others ran speed haste to al-Madinah! Al-tabari writes

The Prophet's Companions fled leaving him behind. Some sped Away to al-Madinah“ and some others climbed the hillocks for shelter. The Prophet (a.s) called them, ‘O [Creatures of Allah! O Creatures of Allah! Come to me! Come to me!’][v

:The Holy Qur'an records the event in this manner

إِذْ تَضَعِدُونَ وَلَا تَلُؤُونَ عَلَىٰ أَحَدٍ وَالرَّسُولُ يَدْعُوكُمْ فِي أُخْرَاكُمْ

When you were scaling the hillock and the Prophet was calling you, you did not turn“ ”(back to look! (3:153

In this state of pandemonium and selfishness Anas ibn Nizar happened to pass by the hillock where the Muhajirūn and Ansar were sitting with bowed heads. He looked at them in surprise and asked them, “why you people are sitting here?” They said, “The Prophet (a.s) has been martyred!” He repudiated them saying, “What will you do living after he has gone? Rise, and defend the Faith for which he laid down his life!” Saying this Anas rushed towards the theatre of war. There he met Sa`d ibn Mu`adh and told him that he was getting the fragrance of the Heaven from the Mount Uhud. Saying this he rushed into the rain of arrows and the swords to attack the infidels. Thus, he was martyred fighting with valor. Al-tabari has particularly taken the names of `Umar ibn al-Khattab and Talhah ibn `Ubaydullah amongst those who were sitting on the hillock while the Prophet (a.s) was at great risk and even they heeded the rumor that he had been martyred and had no concern for defending the Faith and resigned to their fate that everything was lost. Al-tabari has recorded their conversation that :illustrates their bent of mind

Some of the men sitting on the hillock said how much they wish to get a messenger, “whom they could send to `Abdullah ibn Ubay, who would request Abū-Sufyan to give us amnesty. O People! Muhammad (a.s) has been killed, return to your tribe, Quraysh, [lest they come and kill you too!]

:The Holy Qur’an tells about these people

أَفَايُن مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَىٰ عَقْبَيْهِ فَلَنْ يَضُرَّ اللَّهَ شَيْئًا وَسَيَجْزِي اللَّهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ

If the Prophet (died his natural death or) was martyred, then will you return towards“ infidelity? And those who revert to infidelity cannot harm Allah in any way. Soon Allah ”(shall give Good Reward to those who are thankful to Him (۳:۱۴۴

The Prophet (a.s) gave the Lava to `Ali (a.s) after Mus`ab was martyred. He was occupied in quelling the enemy when he heard that the Prophet (a.s) had been martyred. He cut through the crowd of men to the place where he had left the Prophet (a.s) a short while ago. He found him alive and his anxiety was relieved. Although he was himself contending with injuries, he forgot his own condition when he found the Prophet (a.s) bleeding. He supported him and led him toward the ravine. When Ka`b ibn Malik saw the Prophet (a.s), he was happy and instantaneously said, “This is the Prophet of Allah (a.s)!” `Ali (a.s) cautioned him to be quiet and went with the other Muslims in the surroundings to the ravine. Then he went to the Pond of Mihras and fetched some water in his shield. At that moment, Fatimah al-Zahra’, with some other ladies, came to the ravine having heard the rumors that the Prophet (a.s) had been martyred. She was relieved to see her father alive, but started crying when she saw his forehead bleeding. She instinctively embraced her father and then, with the assistance of `Ali (a.s), nursed his wounds. She burned a piece of rug and applied .the ash as an astringent to the wounds

The battle was almost over the infidels were happy over their victory and the defeat of the Muslims. Abū-Sufyan climbed one of the peaks and asked the Muslims, “Is Muhammad (a.s) alive?” The Prophet (a.s) asked his men not to give him any reply. He again repeated the question. He asked, “Is the son of Abū-Quhafah there? He did not get any reply. Then he asked, “Is `Umar ibn al-Khattab there?” Even then, he did not get any reply! He now told his men that perhaps they had all been killed. `Umar. Despite the Prophet’s warning could not control him and said that they were all alive. Abū-Sufyan shouted the slogan, “Exalted is Hubal!” On the advice of the Prophet (a.s), the Muslims echoed in unison, “Allah is Most Exalted and Most Majestic!” Abū-Sufyan said, “We have al-`Uzza and you do not have it!” The Muslims replied, “Allah is the Guardian for us and you do not have any!” He then said that they won yesterday and he was the winner today. He added that they have avenged the death of those killed at the Battle of Badr. He also warned that during the same month next year they would again confront the Muslims for a war at Badr. He proudly announced, “Muslims! Our people have retaliated upon some of your dead. I neither permitted nor stopped them from doing it!” Saying this, Abū-Sufyan marched towards Makkah with his men and materials

In this bloody encounter, two ladies were in the theatre of war to nurse and help the wounded and to give water to the fighting men. One of them was Ummu-`Imarah Nasibah bint Ka`b. Her husband, Zayd ibn `Asim and two sons, Habib and `Abdullah, were martyred fighting in the Cause of Islam. When this lady saw that the Prophet (a.s) was in the range of the enemy’s arrows, she stood in front of him and took the arrows on her chest. When Ibn Qamiyyah came with a sword to attack the Prophet (a.s), she took a sword to defend him until her arm was badly injured. The other lady was Ummu-Ayman who, when she saw the Muslims deserting the arena and running away, she tried to stop them from this shameful act. When her appeals fell on deaf ears, she was throwing sand on their faces and telling

Go and sit at home (like women) spinning the cotton and leave behind your sword“
[with me!”[۹

Compared to the boldness and character of these ladies, there is a sizeable list of men who timidly deserted the theater of the war. In this roster are names of men who could definitely be expected to remain committed and provide help, protection and support to the Prophet of Islam (a.s). This is an irrefutable fact of history. The only persons who remained steadfast were `Ali (a.s), Abū-Dujanah al-Ansari, Sahl ibn Hunayf, `Asim ibn Thabit, al-Miqdad ibn `Amr, Sa`d ibn Mu`adh, Usayd ibn Hudayr, Talhah ibn `Ubaydullah and al-Zubayr ibn al-`Awwam. The rest were in the roster of deserters. Some of them did flee, but returned after things cooled down. Among the :returnees was Abū-Bakr himself who said

On the day of Uhud, people deserted the Prophet (a.s) and I was the first to return to“
[him.”[۱۰

Although there is no clarification in this statement as to when this ‘return’ came about, but the events are indicative that this happened only after the battle was over. If this ‘return’ was in the midst of the battle, history would certainly have recorded about his valorous conduct of inflicting blows on the adversaries or of suffering wounds at their hands! Imagine, one of the fingers of Talhah was injured during the battle and history has the record of this minor hurt! If such an august personality had undergone any !hardship, its remaining unreported is not at all possible

It has already been mentioned that `Umar was spotted at a safe distance from the theatre of the battle on the top of a hillock! Therefore, he himself says

We got separated from the Prophet (a.s) on the Day of Uhud and I was (safe) atop a [hill!]"[11

Uthman was in the group that appeared after full three days of the battle.` Therefore, Ibn al-Athir writes

Among those deserters was `Uthman ibn `Affan and others who remained in Uways“ for three days and then returned (safely) to the Prophet (a.s). He saw them and said: [“You had gone too far!”][12

The bravery and valor that `Ali (a.s) showed in this ghazwah is a great example of Islamic jihad. At a time when the feet of the Islamic army had shaken with the concerted attack of the enemy, he combated all alone, curbed their advances with his indomitable courage, and protected the Founder of Islam (a.s). As long as the combat lasted, he neither took his hand away from the scabbard of his sword nor his feet at all swayed! Although he was fatigued with constant fighting throughout the day and he had several injuries caused by arrows, spears and swords, his spirit was indomitable! `Allamah al-Suyūti writes

[On the Day of Uhud `Ali (a.s) was inflicted with sixteen sword injuries”][13“

Although Muslims did not achieve victory in this ghazwah, `Ali’s and Hamzah’s exploits of valor and the brave support of some other persons saved the Muslims from total defeat. This situation did not crop up because of some unexpected and accidental event. But the main cause was misunderstandings and lack of discipline in carrying out strict commands. Even before the battlefield was created, the opinion of the Muslims was divided as to the strategy to be adopted. One group insisted on fighting from within al-Madinah and the other, rightly, wanted to meet the enemy outside the city. And when the Prophet (a.s) came from his house in readiness for the battle, there was another change in the opinion suggesting that he stayed in the city to conduct the war. One group did withdraw into al-Madinah because their suggestion

was not accepted. This affected the morale of the men and two tribes of Ansar, Banū-Salamah and Banū-Harithah were thinking of withdrawing from the conflict. These events prove that the Muslims, from the very beginning, were showing signs of indiscipline and the spirit that is imperative for jihad was absent in most men. This resulted in the set backs that have been described in the earlier paragraphs. This situation was not because of the superior numerical and material strength of the enemy, but it was due to lack of determination in the Islamic troops. Therefore, the indomitable spirit exhibited by a handful of the Muslim participants limited the enemy's success to partial win. The main culprits in the poor performance of the Muslim army were the men who were under strict instruction from their Commander, The Prophet (a.s), not to leave the post of vigil at the ravine, but out of avarice for the booty from the deserting enemy troops, they did leave their post and the enemy attacked from that end and made the Muslims a sandwich between the two fronts. They neither remembered the Prophet's strict orders nor did they listen to their supervisor who repeatedly asked them not to abandon their post. If they had not done, what they did, the result would have been different from what it was. The Holy

:Qur'an observes about these men of avarice

”Some men amongst you are desirous of the world and others want the Hereafter“

Al-tabari has written that from the words “desirous of the world” are meant those persons who left the ravine unprotected to loot and plunder the fleeing troops of the enemy and those who wanted the “Hereafter” remained steadfast with the Prophet (a.s) to defend him and the Faith. Ibn Mas`ūd says

I never thought before this day that from the Companions of the Prophet (a.s) there“ [were men who cherished the worldly wealth.”[۱۴

Besides these guards, the responsibility for the poor performance also goes to those who left the Prophet (a.s) encircled by the enemy and fled, despite the Prophet (a.s) repeatedly asking them to be courageous and to stay back! Allah says in the Holy :Qur’an

O people of the Faith! When you are confronted with the enemy in the battlefield,“ !Beware! Do not flee showing your backs

Although the Muslims had to suffer severe casualties, they learnt a lesson that they should not allow indiscipline and differences to creep into their ranks. They must remain disciplined at all times and obey their Commander implicitly. They should remember that differences, selfishness and controversy are the precursors of defeat. This battle also proves that the apparent victory or defeat is not the touchstone of right and wrong. Sometimes, those who are on the Right Path have to face defeat! There was another very important benefit to the Ummah that the faces of the Hypocrites were blatantly exposed by their own behavior. The cowards in the ranks of the Muslims too were exposed that they did not have the spirit of sacrifice that a true !Muslim must have

During this ghazwah, seventy Muslims were martyred and twenty-two infidels were killed. Although the hypocrites of Quraysh avenged their dead from Badr, the fires of revenge were still burned in their hearts. In the intoxication of success, they ill-treated the Martyrs bodies that were lying in the battlefield. Therefore, Mu`awiyah ibn Mughirah ibn Abil-`as cut the ears of Hamzah's dead body. Hind bint `Utbah cut asunder his stomach, extracted the liver and chewed it. She severed the different parts of his body, made garland from them, and wore around her neck. The other women too followed suit and did the same heinous things to the bodies of other martyrs. Abū-Sufyan too, keeping aside all norms of decency, desecrated the dead body of Hamzah; hit the point of a spear on his face. At this point one person, Halis ibn `Alqamah shouted, "See! What treatment Abū-Sufyan is giving to the dead body of a person from a noble tribe!" When Abū-Sufyan heard this, he withdrew in shame

Abū-Sufyan's spirit of revenge remained in his nature even after embracing Islam.

:Therefore, during the reign of `Uthman, he kicked the grave of Hamzah and said

O Abū-`Imarah (Hamzah)! The State for which we clashed swords, is today in the
[hands of our children, with which they are playing!]"[۱۵

This was Abū-Sufyan's spirit of revenge which continued with his progeny after his death. Therefore, Mu`awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan, at the Battle of Siffin, wanted to give the same treatment to the body of martyred `Abdullah ibn Badil. At that point a man, from his own army, `Abdullah ibn `Amir, said

[As long as I live you cannot do defiling of his body!]"[۱۶“

Mu`awiyah was forced to desist from the heinous act. Similarly Abū-Sufyan's grandson, Yazid ibn Mu`awiyah, desecrating the severed head of Imam al-Husayn (a.s) perpetrated the foul tradition of his accursed father and grandfather! He proved the heinous nature of Banū-Umayyah by ordering the perpetration of the Tragedy of .Karbala

The Prophet of Islam (a.s) had already heard that the bodies of the martyrs had been desecrated and defiled by the tyrants. He asked the people to find about the condition of the body of his uncle, Hamzah. Harith ibn Suma`ah said that he had seen the place where Hamzah was martyred and that he would go there forthwith and bring back the information. Saying this he went to the base of the hill to find about the body. But on returning he could not muster courage to relate the condition of the body to the Prophet (a.s).The Prophet (a.s) sent `Ali (a.s) to find out the condition of the body. He too could not relate the details to the Prophet (a.s). In the end, the Prophet (a.s) himself went personally. When he saw the body and its severed parts, he cried .inconsolably

:Ibn Mas`ūd says

[We had never seen the Prophet (a.s) cry so inconsolably."[۱۷“

When some people told that Hind had chewed the liver of Hamzah, he asked whether she ate a part of it. They said she just chewed and threw it away. The Prophet then :said

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[Allah will not tolerate that any part of Hamzah's body went to the Hell.]"[۱۸"

When the news reached al-Madinah that Hamzah was martyred, his sister Safiyyah came running from there. The Prophet (a.s) tried to dissuade her from seeing her brother's body. But she said that there was no use preventing her from setting eyes on her brother's remains. She told that she knew what heinous treatment was given to him by the infidels. Then the Prophet (a.s) put his shawl on the body of Hamzah. The shawl was small; therefore, they put some grass and leaves to cover his feet. Now the Prophet (a.s) allowed Safiyyah to see him. When Safiyyah saw the body, she uttered, "We are Allah's and to Him shall we return." Despite all her efforts to control herself, she could not stop her tears and sobs. The Prophet (a.s) too cried

Now the martyrs had to be interred. First, the Prophet (a.s) led the funeral prayer for Hamzah and then for the other martyrs in a manner that Hamzah too was in the rows of the persons praying behind the Prophet (a.s). Then, two martyrs at a time were interred in their own bloodied clothes. With Hamzah, his sister's son, `Abdullah ibn Jahsh too was buried. In one narration, it is mentioned that he was buried alone. Some of the martyrs were also buried in al-Madinah at Jannat al-Baqi`. Their relatives took these bodies away before the Prophet (a.s) had asked not to remove any bodies from Uhud

On the twenty second of Shawwal, the Prophet (a.s) moved to al-Madinah. When he passed through the locality of the Ansar he heard the wails and cries of the women. On inquiry, he was told they were mourning those who were martyred at Uhud. Tears came to the eyes of the Prophet (a.s). He said, "There is none to cry for Hamzah!" When the Ansar heard this, they asked their women to visit Hamzah's place and give their condolences. Therefore, the ladies went and gathered at the house of Fatimah and condoled Hamzah's death. The Prophet (a.s) went to the Mosque and hearing the sound of the cries of the condoling women he prayed for their welfare. Ibn Sa`d :writes

It is a custom among the women of the Ansar that whenever there is a death in their families, they first cry over the martyrdom of Hamzah and then cry over the person [who was dead."] [۱۹

This should be an eye-opener for the people who, against the example set by the Prophet (a.s) himself, say that those who believe that the martyrs are dead might cry over them and not those who believe that the martyrs are not dead

On return from the Battle of Uhud, two persons from the army of the infidels were taken prisoner who was killed. One of them was Abū-`Uzza al-Jamahi who had motivated the people of Tihamah and Kinanah through his oratory to join the ranks of the Quraysh army. He was also among those who were taken prisoner at Badr and taking pity at his poverty, the Prophet (a.s) had released him without paying any ransom. He had taken a vow at that time that in future he would not take part in any activity against the Muslims. Again, he growled for release in front of the Prophet (a.s) :who said

[A mu'min (true believer) cannot be bitten (by a snake) from the same pit twice!]"[۲۰۰۰

He was now killed for his breach of promise. The second person was Mu`awiyah ibn Mughirah who had taken part in perpetrating retaliation with the dead body of Hamzah. He spent the night hiding in the out skirts of al-Madinah but came in the morning to the residence of his relative, `Uthman. On enquiring, he was told that `Uthman was not home. He said that he had bought a camel from him and had come to pay for it. Therefore, he must be asked to come home wherever he was. Therefore, `Uthman was fetched home. When he saw the enemy of Allah and the Prophet (a.s) at his threshold, he was much worried. He asked, "Why he had come?" The man said that he was his near relation and wanted shelter from him. `Uthman took him to a dark corner of the house and hid him there and returned to the Prophet (a.s). There he heard him say that Mu`awiyah was in al-Madinah and was loitering inside the city in the morning. He must be searched and apprehended. Some persons said that he had no place to go in al-Madinah other than `Uthman's home. They left `Uthman with the Prophet (a.s) and went to his house. On inquiry, the inmates did not utter any word but pointed towards a dark corner of the house where the person was hiding. They apprehended him and brought him to the Prophet (a.s). `Uthman now knew that the secret was out. He told the Prophet (a.s), "I had come to you early morning to request for granting amnesty to this person!" The Prophet (a.s), on the request of `Uthman, gave a respite of three days to the person to get away from al-Madinah or else he will be executed. `Uthman arranged a means of transport and money for him so that he could go anywhere he wanted to. But Mu`awiyah was still in the limits of al-Madinah after expiry of the three days. On the fourth day the Prophet (a.s) ordered people to chase Mu`awiyah and apprehend him. Hearing this, Zayd ibn Harithah and `Ammar ibn Yasir, searched for Mu`awiyah and apprehended near al-Jamar. `Ammar threw an arrow at him and Zayd killed him with his sword. Another narration is that `Ali (a.s) :had killed him. Al-Buladhari writes

[Ali (a.s) killed Mu`awiyah ibn Mughirah.] [٢١] “

Some historians say that Mu`awiyah had left al-Madinah, lost his way and again entered the limits of the city and had the hope that `Uthman would again obtain his release. He therefore came to `Uthman's home and was hiding there. But the Muslims apprehended him before `Uthman could petition the Prophet (a.s) in the person's favor. The story that he lost the way and wandered back to al-Madinah does not sound plausible. The route to and from al-Madinah was very clear and there was no wilderness on the outskirts for long distances that a person could get lost. The ostensible purpose of the person, perhaps, was to linger on in al-Madinah and spy on the Muslims about their future course of action

Footnote

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ١٩٠ [١]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ١٩٧ [٢]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ١٩٣ [٣]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ١٩٧ [٤]

Tabaqāt, Vol ٣, Page ٢٣ [٥]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ١٩٧ [٦]

Tārīkh Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٢٦ [٧]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٢٠١ [٨]

Al-Sīrah al-Halabiyyah, Vol ٢, Page ٢٥٤ [٩]

Tārīkh Khamīs, Vol ١, Page ٤٨٥ [١٠]

Izālat al-Khafā, Vol ١, Page ١٦٨ [١١]

Tārīkh al-Kāmil, Vol ٢, Page ١١٠ [١٢]

Tārīkh al-Khulafā', Page ١١٤ [١٣]

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.Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by Ibn Abi'l-Hadīd, Vol ٤, Page ٥١ [١٥]

Ibn Abil-Hadīd, Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah, vol ٥, Page ٢٧١ [١٦]

Al-Sīrah al-Halabiyyah, Vol ٢, Page ٢٧٣ [١٧]

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Tabaqāt Ibn Sa`d, Vol ۲, Page ۲۷۳ [۱۸]

Tabaqāt, Vol ۲, Page ۴۴ [۱۹]

Tārīkh al-Kāmil, Vol ۲, Page ۱۱۴ [۲۰]

Ansāb al-Ashrāf, Vol ۱, Page ۳۲۸ [۲۱]

THE EXPEDITION OF BANŪ-AL-NADIR

THE EXPEDITION OF BANŪ-AL-NADIR

In Safar ۴ A.H. one chief of Abul-Bara' came from Najd to al-Madinah. The Prophet (a.s) invited him to embrace Islam. He said that he would have no objection to embracing the Faith, but he would prefer if the Prophet (a.s) sent with him a delegation of Muslims to Najd to extend the invitation to the people there. The Prophet (a.s) expressed his doubt that some persons in Najd might harm the delegates. Abul-Bara' said that the men would go in his personal protection. The Prophet (a.s) selected seventy companions who were pious, and well informed, and sent them with a letter from himself to the people of Najd. On reaching the region, the delegation halted at Bi'r-Ma`ūnah and gave the Prophet's letter to Haram ibn Malhan to take it to `Amir ibn al-tufayl, the nephew of Abul-Bara'. That enemy of Allah refused to read or even take the letter. Haram ibn Malhan, sensing the situation said that if he had his pardon, he would say something. Before he could say anything further, at a hint from `Amir, one of his men pierced a spear in the back of the courier.

.He fell down dead

After this heartless murder, `Amir sent his men to Bi'r-Ma`ūnah to attack the Muslims. But they refused to act because they were aware of the protection that al-Barra' had promised them. With the help of some other tribes, `Amir surrounded the Muslims and killed all of them excepting two of the group. Of these two, one was Ka`b ibn Zayd whom they thought dead and left him. The other was `Amr ibn Umayyah who was taken prisoner but later on released as a thanksgiving offer of `Amir's mother for a boon that she had received! When `Amr reached Qarqarat al-Kadar, on the way to al-Madinah, he noticed two companions of `Amir and quietly shadowed

them. While the two were sleeping under a tree, he murdered them as retaliation for the killing of the delegates by `Amir. When he reached al-Madinah he learnt that both the persons had been given a written amnesty by the Prophet (a.s). When the Prophet (a.s) was informed of this event, he said that whatever had happened was because of lack of information and misunderstanding and that blood money shall be paid to both .the families

The Prophet (a.s) was having an agreement of cooperation with the Jewish Tribes of Banū-Qunayqa`, Banū-Qurayzah and Banū-al-Nadir. He thought of borrowing some money from Banū-al-Nadir for paying to the families of the two deceased persons as a settlement. They responded by saying that he was their guest and they would comply with what he has asked for. The Prophet (a.s), along with his Companions, went to the locality of Banū-al-Nadir which was in the neighborhood of al-Madinah. He sat there with his back to the wall of their fortress. Banū-al-Nadir were not having any good intentions. They sent a person, `Amr ibn Jahsh, to climb the wall of the fortress and throw a big stone on the Prophet (a.s) to kill him. The Prophet (a.s) got a vision that he should immediately rise and return to al-Madinah. He sent a word through Muhammad ibn Maslamah that the Banū-al-Nadir were behaving treacherously and were attempting to kill him contrary to the terms of their agreement. He served them a notice that with all their belongings they should go away within ten days. When Banū-al-Nadir got this notice, they prepared to leave al-Madinah. But `Abdullah ibn Ubay, who was their cohort, asked them to keep staying in their homes and not to shift to any other place. He assured them that he would help them with two thousand strong contingent. He also told them that in the event of a conflict even Banū-Qurayzah, Banū-Ghatafan and their allies too will help them. When Banū-al-Nadir received offers of help, they decided to stay put and sent word to the Prophet (a.s) that they would not evacuate their homes and he might do whatever he wished to! In a manner, it was an invitation to fight, leaving no choice for the Prophet (a.s). The Prophet (a.s) got together a small contingent and marched towards the
:fortress. Al-Tabari writes

On that day the Standard of the Prophet (a.s) was in the hand of `Ali ibn Abi-Talib“
[(a.s).”[1]

When Banū-al-Nadir saw the Islamic contingent coming, they locked themselves inside the fortress. The Muslims established a siege of the fortress. When they saw that they were surrounded from all sides, the Banū-al-Nadir started flinging stones and arrows from the ramparts of the fortress but did not succeed in disturbing the siege. One night some Jews came out of the fortress and sent a barrage of arrows on the Muslims to force them lift the siege. One of them took aim of the Prophet’s tent and shot an arrow. The Prophet (a.s) ordered his tent to be pitched at the base of the hill away from the open, exposed place. The Prophet (a.s) ordered the shifting, and `Ali (a.s) stood up and watched to identify the bowman. When the Companions missed `Ali (a.s) they asked the Prophet (a.s) of his whereabouts. He said that he must have gone for some work. A short while after that they found `Ali (a.s) coming with the head of a Jew in his hand. He went near the Prophet (a.s) and put the head near his feet. He said, “This is the head of the famous Jewish bowman, Ghalūl, who had sent the arrow towards your tent! He and nine of his fellow bowmen have been creeping around our camps. If I can lay my hands on more of them, I shall bring them dead or alive!” The Prophet (a.s) sent Abū-Dujanah, Sahl ibn Hunayf and a few more persons with `Ali (a.s). He came out with his men. They must have gone a little distance when they surrounded the Jews before they could get inside the fortress and lock themselves in. All the nine Jews were killed outside the gate of their fortress

When Banū-al-Nadir saw that their men got killed and Banū-Ghatafan and Banū-Qurayzah did not turn up to help nor was any sign of the two thousand men promised by `Abdullah ibn Ubay, they capitulated to the Prophet (a.s) and requested for amnesty that they would ultimately evacuate the fortress and leave the place. The Prophet (a.s) agreed to their request but prohibited them from taking the arms with them. Whatever else was in their possession, they were free to take away. Therefore, the Jews demolished their dwellings with their own hands and they carried away the doors, windows and other merchandise on camels and went singing and playing musical instruments! Some of them went towards Syria and one group in which there was Salam ibn Abil-Haqiq, Kinanah ibn Rabi`ah and Huyay ibn Akhtab went to the west of al-Madinah and settled down in Khaybar

The lands of Banū-al-Nadir and the gardens were treated as evacuee property were termed as the property of the Prophet (a.s). Therefore, `Umar says

The property of Banū-al-Nadir that Allah had given to His Prophet (a.s) was a special“ [property because the Muslims neither ran their horses nor the camels.”[Y

This event took place on the fourth of Rabi` I, v A.H. and six months after the Battle of Uhud

Footnote

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۲۲۶ [۱]

Futūh al-Buldān, Page ۲۶ [۲]

THE EXPEDITION OF AL-AHZAB

THE EXPEDITION OF AL-AHZAB

Banū-al-Nadir, after expulsion from al-Madinah, settled down in Khaybar. But their mischievous nature did not let them remain quiet. They were very keen to take revenge for their expulsion from their homes. They were themselves not strong enough to take on the Muslims, but they were making efforts to enhance their fighting strength and had plans of joining hands with the Quraysh and some other tribes to

attain the cause dear to all these parties. Therefore, a delegation of twenty persons from Banū-al-Nadir, of which the prominent persons were Huyay ibn Akhtab, Kinanah ibn Rabi`ah, Salam ibn Mushkam and Salam ibn Abil-Haqiq along with some chiefs of Banū-Wa'il went to Makkah and met Abū-Sufyan and other chiefs of Quraysh. They discussed with them about their intention of a conflict with the Muslims, and definitely, this was the favorite subject of the Quraysh. They all pressed their chests to the walls of the Ka`bah and vowed to help each other that they would fight with the Muslims until they are not very annihilated. When this oath was taken, the Jews headed towards Banū-Ghatafan and convinced them to ally with them and the Quraysh. Similar alliances were struck with Banū-Kinanah and some other tribes and they had approximately four thousand men in the group now. They now set out to attack al-Madinah. On the way the troops of Banū-Sulaym, Banū-Asad, Banū-Fazar and Banū-Ashja` joined them. Their force now was touching ten thousand men. They had three hundred riding, draught horses, and four thousand camels. There was no scarcity of material for war

Although they kept all their preparations in wraps, and wanted to make a preemptive, surprise attack, through some riders of Banū-Khuza`ah, the Prophet (a.s) got wind of the impending attack. He got together an emergency meeting of the Companions to discuss the gravity of the situation and to devise the strategy to prepare for the confrontation. Salman al-Farisi said that the people of Iran used to dig trenches on the expected entry points of the enemy to prevent swift advancement of their troops and to take defensive measures in the time thus gained. The benefit will be that the trenches serve as defensive fortresses. This suggestion was generally liked by everyone and the Prophet (a.s) ordered speedy implementation of the project. Al-Madinah was secure from three sides because of the walls of the houses, hills and the oasis. Only the Eastern end of the city was not secure and always the entry point for any invaders. The Prophet (a.s) shifted all the women and children to small fortresses within al-Madinah and the men all came out with crowbars to dig the trench. They surveyed the area, fixed the benchmarks, divided the entire length into blocks of the length of forty hands each, and entrusted each block to a group of ten persons. The Prophet (a.s) took active part in the work and assured the Muslims that one day they would rule Syria, Rome, Pars and Yemen

Arabs were not aware of the construction of the trenches. This was first thought of by the grand son of Faridūn, Manocher, who invented the trenching for defensive purposes. For the first time in Arabia, Salman was introducing it. He was not only supervising the work of others but was giving a helping hand to groups along the length of the trench. Because of his dexterity, both Muhajirūn and the Ansar wanted Salman to be with them. Therefore, the Muhajirūn said, "Salman is ours!" The Ansar too echoed, "Salman is one of us!" The Prophet, when he heard this, said

[Salman is ours! Salman is from our Ahl al-Bayt!]"[\ “

Therefore the Muslims, who were three thousand in numbers, worked day and night and dug a five yards wide, five yards deep and three and half miles long trench. The Prophet (a.s) got erected eight defensive stations along the length of the trench, and at each station was posted a Muhajir and an al-Ansari to keep constant vigil along with some men to help in time of need. They had stocks of stones to keep as missiles to prevent the enemy men from crossing over the trench. When the Jews and the infidels reached the environs of al-Madinah, they found that the huge trench was a
:big hurdle in their way! They said

[By God! No Arab has devised this strategy so far! [\ “

The Jews and the Quraysh were of the view that because of their numerical and material strength, they would take on the Muslims as soon as they reached al-Madinah and immediately bring them down to their knees! But this new defensive strategy had pulled back their advancing steps. They had a feeling of dejection on
.confronting the hurdle

One of the Jewish tribes with whom the Prophet (a.s) had the agreement of peace was Banū-Qurayzah. They were under an oath to support the Muslims if an outside force attacked al-Madinah. Abū-Sufyan was worried that if Banū-Qurayzah sided with the Muslims in terms of their agreement, and then their strength would increase. He wanted to try to make them repudiate the agreement. Therefore, he deputed one chief of Banū-al-Nadir, Huyay ibn Akhtab to visit Banū-Qurayzah and persuade them to violate the agreement. Huyay went to the fortress of the chief of Banū-Qurayzah, Ka`b ibn Asad that was situated on the East of the city of al-Madinah. He knocked at the entrance and Ka`b asked who it was? When Huyay identified himself, Ka`b understood his sly purpose. He refused to open the door and admit him. Huyay insisted on him to open the door and told him that he was bringing for him a happy tidings that the Quraysh and all the tribes of Arabia had united to fight with the Muslims! He added that if he wanted the goodwill of the Arabs, he should support their cause. Ka`b said that they had never experienced anything from the Prophet (a.s)

other than good and trustworthiness! He said they would not breach the agreement needlessly. He also added that the unity of the Arabs he talked of was like the fast flying clouds that might thunder, but seldom rain! Huyay said that keeping the door closed for a guest is not a way with Arabs! Please open the door and talk to me for a while! On the insistence of Huyay, Ka`b opened the door and admitted him. They entered into an argument and the result was that Huyay was able to talk Ka`b into agreeing to cooperate with them. He also assured him that in the event of the Quraysh losing, his tribe would face the situation with Banū-Qurayzah. Therefore, they tore away the document of agreement the tribe had signed with the Prophet .(a.s). Now, Banū-Qurayzah were friends and allies of the Quraysh

When the Prophet (a.s) learnt about the breach of agreement by Banū-Qurayzah, he sent Sa`d ibn Mu`adh to them to persuade them to behave. But this had no effect on them and they said in clear terms that they did not know any one nor did they have any agreement with anybody. Since these people were living within the boundaries of al-Madinah, they would be a danger for the women and children when hostilities with the enemy troops started. Their attitude added pressure on the Muslims. The Holy Qur'an describes this situation thus

When those people were on you from the top and from the bottom and when your eyes became stony and the hearts stretched and came to your throats and when you started

having several doubts about Allah, then came the time for the trial of the Muslims and they were shaken severely

At this time, it was natural that the Muslims were worried and confused. When the enemy was on their doorstep in hordes and within the city Banū-Qurayzah too were waiting in ambush. Then there were a sizeable number of hypocrites in the ranks of the Muslims as well who were themselves scared for their lives and were creating panic in others as well. Therefore, they started making excuses and pulling away from the line of action and even told the Prophet (a.s) that their homes were not well protected, they had fear of thefts and thus wanted to go home. The Holy Qur'an says

وَإِذْ قَالَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَا أَهْلَ يَثْرِبَ لَا مُقَامَ لَكُمْ فَارْجِعُوا وَيَسْتَأْذِنُ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمُ النَّبِيَّ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّ بُيُوتَنَا عَوْرَةٌ وَمَا هِيَ بِعَوْرَةٍ إِنَّ يُرِيدُونَ إِلَّا فِرَارًا.

And when a group from them said, ‘O people of al-Madinah! You have no place here“ and you must return back.’ From them one group that sought the Prophet’s permission said that their homes were empty (unprotected), although they really were not empty and unprotected. They just wanted to make an excuse for running
”(away. (۳۳:۱۳)

Things went to such a pass that Mut`ib ibn Qushayr, who had the honor of serving in
,the Battle of Badr said

Muhammad (a.s) was promising us that we will have the treasures of Khusrow and“ Caesar in our hands. But today our predicament is such that even if someone wants to
[go to attend the nature’s call, he does not feel safe!”[۳

But there were some sincere persons who were not afraid of the enemy’s strength and were not scared of the hardships confronting them. In fact, these conditions strengthened their Faith and confidence levels enhanced. The Holy Qur’an says about
:these persons

وَلَمَّا رَأَى الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْأَحْزَابَ قَالُوا هَذَا مَا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَصَدَقَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَمَا زَادَهُمْ إِلَّا إِيمَانًا وَتَسْلِيمًا

When the True Believers saw the hordes of the infidels, they said. ‘This is the thing“ that Allah and His Prophet (a.s) promised. And Allah and His Prophet (a.s) had told the
”(truth.’(۳۳:۲۲)

This was the time of great trial for the Muslims. The extreme cold and non-availability of food made them weaker and even the infidels were fed up waiting on the other side of the trench. It was the twenty-seventh day since they started the siege and still the hand-to-hand battle had not started. Only stones and arrows were exchanged with no result whatsoever. At last, they decided that somehow hoodwinking the guards they should go across the trench and fight the Muslims with swords. So some of their chiefs reconnoitered the trench and found a spot where it was slightly less wide and, as it chanced, the spot was not so well protected. They determined that the horses could be jumped from there to cross over. For this purpose they selected the famous cavalier of the Quraysh, `Amr ibn `Abd-Wudd al-`Amiri with `Ikrimah ibn

Abi-Jahl, Hasal ibn `Amr, Munabbih ibn `Uthman, Dirar ibn al-Khattab al-Fahri, Nawfal ibn `Abdullah and Hubayrah ibn Abi-Wahab. They went round, came forward, kicked the horses and were able to jump across the trench. This small success gave the infidels some encouragement and Abū-Sufyan and Khalid ibn al-Walid organized the ranks of their men to send the footmen across to commence concerted fighting. Although, the cavaliers were all experienced men in warfare but `Umar ibn `Abd-Wudd had a very high reputation and was known as the support of the Arabs and the knight of Yalyal, that at a place of this name he overpowered a thousand robbers all alone. Therefore, `Umar told the Prophet (a.s) at that moment that he was himself in a caravan of trade proceeding to Syria and `Amr too was one of the group. When the caravan reached Yalyal, a thousand robbers attacked them. The entire group fled except `Amr ibn `Abd-Wudd who kept fighting alone and chased away the robbers. After this event, `Amr had the fame as the best swordsman in Arabia. With his participation in any battle, the morale of the men shoots up. As if a thousand more men were with them! When `Amr threw a challenge for fight, there was total silence! The Prophet (a.s) said, "Who is there to answer this dog?" `Ali (a.s) went near the Prophet (a.s) and said, "O prophet of Allah! I shall fight him!" The Prophet (a.s) asked him to wait that some other of his Companions might volunteer! He again asked if anyone was willing to face `Amr in battle. But the result was only stony silence! `Ali (a.s) again asked for permission and he was ordered to wait. `Amr started repeatedly calling someone for combat! He said sarcastically, "O Muslims! Where is your Heaven that you go to after your death! And where is the Hell that will be my destiny after I die? Come! Either you go to the Heaven or consign me to the Hell!" Then he kicked his horse, came closer to the Muslim troops, and started reciting a martial poem

!My voice has gone soar shouting and shouting“

!I fight like a brave even in places where men of valor show weakness

My feet move faster towards battle, and a bold youth’s qualities certainly are charity
”!and valor

Because of repeated calls of `Amr, a quiet had descended on the Muslim ranks. They were stealing glances at each other quietly. None of the ostensible “brave” Companions had the courage to come forward and challenge him. The historians have recorded the moment in these words, “As if birds were sitting on their heads!” When `Ali (a.s) heard the repeated challenge from an infidel and the timid silence of the valiant Companions, he could not stand it anymore. He once again came close to the Prophet (a.s) and sought his permission to go and combat! “O Prophet of Allah! I must now fight with this accursed person! “The Prophet (a.s) had stopped `Ali (a.s) twice before this. The purpose was not that he did not want him to fight, but it was to know that whether any other ‘brave” Companions really take courage in their hands to face that champion! If `Ali (a.s) was allowed to fight at the very first call of `Amr, the others would have said that they too were ready to fight with him. Now it has been proved that they were the shirkers! After this general trial of the will of the Companions, the
:Prophet (a.s), to brighten the quality of self-confidence and bravery in `Ali (a.s) said

”!That cavalier is Yalyal `Amr ibn `Abd-Wudd“

:Ali (a.s) said`

”(If he is ` Amr, let him be! I am ` Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s“

The Prophet (a.s) put the headgear, al-Sahab, on the head of ` Ali (a.s) and put the armor, Dhat al-Fudūl, on his body, tied the sword, Dhul-Faqar, around his girdle and
:lifting his hands towards the sky prayed

O Allah! You had taken away ` Ubaydah on the day of Badr, and Hamzah in the battle“
of Uhud. Now there is only ` Ali (a.s) whom You must guard. O Allah! Do not make me
[lonely and You are the better Guardian!”[۞

:While ` Ali (a.s) proceeded towards the arena, the Prophet (a.s) uttered these words

”!The total Faith moves towards total infidelity“

:Ali (a.s) challenged ` Amr and recited the following poem in reply to his earlier rajz`

;Wait! The one who will respond to your challenge has come“

.He is not weak and is a person with determination and vision

!And only truth is the guarantee for success

I hope that I shall arrange women to wail for you with such a blow that it will vanish
!after doing its task

!But its mention will always be made during encounters

Both stood for a while facing each other. According to the martial practice, ` Abd-Wudd asked who his opponent was. He replied that he was ` Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s).
` Abd-Wudd asked, “In your army, is not there anybody else to fight with me? You are the son of Abū-Talib and he was my friend! I do not want to kill the son of my friend! You better go and send out some grown up person so that he will be killed at my
”!hands instead of you!” ` Ali (a.s) said, “But I like to shed your blood

The famous author of the Ahl al-Sunnah, Musaddiq ibn Shabib, says that `Amr mentioned about his friendship with Abū-Talib only to save his own life, because he had witnessed in the Battle of Badr that whosoever confronted `Ali (a.s) would not return alive from the arena. Therefore, he wanted to avoid the chance of fighting with `Ali (a.s). It was not possible to show his back after entering the arena. Therefore, he .(devised this ruse to avoid the combat with `Ali (a.s

When `Amr knew that it was not possible to avoid this combat, he acquiesced. When `Ali (a.s) noticed that he was himself on foot and `Amr was on his steed, and generally a horseman has an advantage over a foot soldier, he thought of making `Amr dismount. He said, O `Amr! If your opponent asked of you three favors before the fight, you are known to be accepting one of his requests. Is it true?" He said "Yes" `Ali (a.s) then said, "My first wish is that you embrace Islam that you do not have to fight with me!" `Amr said, "It was not possible!" `Ali (a.s) said, "My second wish is that you cut away from your troops and go away!" `Amr replied, "Turning away from the arena is not the wont of men! Only women can be deserters from the theatre of war!" Then `Ali (a.s) said, "If you are not ready to fulfill this wish of mine, my third and final wish is that you should dismount from your horse and combat with me!" Hearing this `Amr, dismounted from his steed in anger and anguish and

slashed on the feet of the horse with his sword. Apparently, this was a meaningless act, but he wanted to impress that cutting away the legs of the horse he had sealed his avenue of escape. Now he had to kill or to be killed! Another reason could be that perhaps he wanted to gain some psychological advantage over the opponent by his dramatics! But `Ali (a.s) was not the one to be carried away. When he came to fight in the way of Allah, he was a mountain of determination! He did not give any importance to the swordsmanship of `Amr and gave him the chance to take precedence in attacking. Therefore, he rushed on `Ali (a.s) brandishing his sword. He stopped the sword on his shield. `Amr was an accomplished swordsman. Despite his defense, `Amr's sword bruised his head and blood flew on his forehead. Now the Sword of Faith swayed in `Ali's hand and he made a counter attack! He roared like a tiger and hit on the legs of `Amr with such ferocity that both his legs were cut away and he fell on the ground! `Ali (a.s) loudly said, "allahu-akbar!" and the ground reverberated with this slogan! `Ali (a.s) climbed on to the chest of `Amr and severed his head. The Companions, because of a sand storm, were unable to see anything. When they heard the sound of the slogan, they realized that `Ali (a.s) was victorious. In the meanwhile, the storm abated and things became clearly visible. They saw that `Ali (a.s) was coming with bloodied sword in one hand and the head of `Amr ibn `Abd-Wudd in the other! His gait was like that of a tiger walking during a light shower of rain! He had a couplet on his lips

”I am `Ali (a.s) and son of `Abd al-Muttalib! For a man death is better than deserting“

Seeing `Ali (a.s) coming in that manner, some said that he was walking with pride that day! The Prophet (a.s) heard this and said that in the arena of battle, Allah likes this attitude! Any way, when `Ali (a.s) arrived after winning the battle of Faith over infidelity, the Prophet (a.s) embraced him and praising his great service to the Cause
:said

One blow of `Ali (a.s) on the Day of Khandaq (the Trench) is more (felicitous) than the “
[prayers of all the Jinn and Men!”[۵

When `Umar noticed that quite contrary to the practice of the Arabs, `Ali (a.s) neither took away the armor of `Amr ibn `Abd-Wudd nor he took the sword and the helmet, he asked, “O `Ali! Why did not you take away his armor?” `Ali (a.s) replied, “I did not feel like making him naked.” This was the greatness of `Ali’s character!” At this
:juncture one Arab poet said

In the battle the determined eyes of the warriors turn towards the adversary and not“
”!the booty

Amr’s sister too recognized this gesture of `Ali (a.s). Therefore, when she heard that` the killer of her brother did not remove anything from the body of her brother, she said, “His killer is definitely a noble person with high moral values!” When people said
:that it was `Ali Ibn Abi-Talib (a.s) she recited the following couplets

,If `Amr’s killer was anyone other than `Ali

I would have cried for him forever

But his killer is he who has no faults

.And his father is known as chief of Makkah

After the death of `Amr, his friends were disheartened. No one else had the courage to call for man-to-man combat. All of them ran towards the trench to jump away from it. `Ali (a.s) got them surrounded. `Amr's son showed signs of resistance and he was killed by `Ali (a.s). Nawfal ibn `Abdullah, trying to cross the trench, fell into it. The Muslims started throwing stones at him. He said, "If you want to kill me, do not kill me in this insulting manner. Let someone from you come down and fight with me" `Ali (a.s) jumped into the trench and finished him with one blow! Munabbih ibn `Uthman, while trying to cross the trench, was pierced by an arrow, and died after reaching Makkah. `Ikrimah reduced his weight by throwing away his spear, crossed the trench and with Hubayrah reached the camp of the Quraysh. `Umar saw Dirar ibn al-Khattab running away. He chased him. Dirar turned back to attack, but when he noticed it was `Umar, he said, "O `Umar! Remember this good deed that I have done to you!" He also escaped to his camp. The infidels were not in a position to take away their dead. But they demanded to take the bodies of `Amr and Nawfal are given to them in exchange for a sizeable ransom. The Prophet (a.s), said, "They are your property! We do not sell dead bodies!" When they got permission, they took the dead bodies away

After the killing of the few eminent persons of the infidel forces, the morale nosedived very low and none else had the courage to attempt crossing the trench. The paucity of food materials too was pressing. Staying there any further would have disastrous consequences for them. They were already thinking of withdrawing when, one night, there was a severe rainstorm that destroyed their tents and paddocks. The horses and camels were going helter-skelter, the cauldrons on fire over turned. Now there was no other way than lifting the siege and quietly going away. Therefore, Abū-Sufyan said that biding there any more was of no use. Saying this he got up and the camps were wound up! In the morning, when the Muslims looked across the trench, they found the ground vacant. They made prostrations of thanksgiving to Allah!

!Shouting slogans of victory, they happily returned home

In this battle, the hypocrites lost four men. `Amr ibn `Abd-Wudd, Nawfal ibn `Abdullah and Hasal ibn `Amr were killed by `Ali (a.s) and Munabbih ibn `Uthman got injured and died after arriving at Makkah. The other men of the Muslim army either threw stones at Nawfal when he fell into the trench and one of them shot an arrow at Munabbih who died of the injury in Makkah. And `Umar made a short chase of Dirar ibn al-Khattab and he himself had to be indebted to the fleeing person that he decided not to attack the worthy. The one person who really dealt with the renowned warriors of the infidels was `Ali (a.s). His blows to the great warriors of the Quraysh dampened .their spirits and all their plans for subduing the Muslims

There is a lot of similarity between the ghazwah al-Khandaq and the battle between Saul and Goliath. Briefly, we are describing the other battle to highlight the salient similarities between the two. Goliath, a scion of Pharaoh, was the ruler of Banū-Isra'il. He was a tyrant and had made the lives of his subjects miserable. The Banū-Isra'il complained about it to Ishmael, the prophet of the time. Ishmael, with Allah's permission, selected a poor water carrier, Saul, to be the king. Banū-Isra'il were upset saying what was so special in Saul. They felt that neither he had wealth nor did he have an impressive personality. The reply given by Ishmael is indicated in these words of the Holy Qur'an

Allah has given him preference and superiority, knowledge and strength of the body."
"Allah gives his land to anyone He wants

The way the Qur'an has put forth the contents of the Verse, it reflects on the method of appointment and the style of governance. This appointment is not because of the wealth or status of the person but it is because of knowledge, nobility and valor

When Goliath saw that the state was being transferred to Saul, he arranged his army and came to the battlefield. Saul too took the Banū-Isra'il with him and moved away from Palestine and went to the region of Jordan, camped in front of the enemy's army. The army of Saul had one thousand and three hundred men. When he saw the huge army of Goliath, he felt scared. When Goliath came to the arena riding on an elephant, no one took courage in his hands to meet him in combat. When Saul saw the cowardice of his companions, he declared that whoever killed Goliath would be given half of the kingdom and he would give his daughter in marriage to him. But none had courage to challenge the strong man. Ishmael said that he will be killed by the person who is from the progeny of Lu'ay ibn Ya`qūb and Mūsa's armor would fit his body. Therefore, Isha, who was from the progeny of Lu'ay ibn Ya`qūb, was asked to present his ten sons. When they came, each one of them was asked to try the armor of Mūsa, but it fitted only Dawūd, who was the youngest son. They said that only he could overpower Goliath. Dawūd wore the armor and came to the arena. Goliath, seeing him said

[O young man! Will you fight me at your tender age?]"[۶“

He replied that he was willing to take him on. Dawūd took stones in his sling when Goliath said; “Will you kill me like they kill the dogs?” He replied, yes! The reason is that you are worst than a dog!” Dawūd swung his sling and threw the stone at such speed that it broke Goliath’s head and went through it. Goliath fell down on the ground and died instantly. With Goliath’s death, there was pandemonium in his army and the men fled. Ya`qūb was given the kingdom because of this achievement. He was also .married to Saul’s daughter

Now let us compare the ghazwah Khandaq with that battle and see the similarities between the two. In Khandaq, the army of Muslims was very small compared to that of the infidels. Similarly, Saul’s army was small and that of Goliath was very large covering the wilderness of Jordon. Saul’s men were scared of this very large army. The way `Amr ibn `Abd-Wudd came boasting of his strength, Goliath too behaved the same way. The way none in the army of Islam had the courage to challenge `Amr other than `Ali (a.s), so too Ya`qūb was the only person from Saul’s army who could challenge Goliath. As `Amr came astride a horse to challenge the army of Islam, Goliath was riding on an elephant. The way Dawūd was on foot, so too was `Ali (a.s). As Mūsa’s armor exactly fitted Ya`qūb so did fit the Prophet’s armor for `Ali. As Dawūd was the youngest of his brothers, so was `Ali (a.s) the age of Dawūd and `Ali (a.s) was thirty years at the time of the wars! As Goliath objected to the young age of :Dawūd, so did `Amr about `Ali (a.s). Shaykh `Ali `Ala’uddin has written

Amongst the prophets, Dawūd (a.s) and amongst the Saints `Ali ibn Abi-Talib were “
[the leaders of the warriors”[٧]

The way the Prophet (a.s) addressed `Amr as dog, Dawūd called Goliath worse than a dog as well. As the armies of the infidels fled from the Battle of al-Ahzab, so did those of Goliath! The way `Amr’s killer became the son-in-law and successor of the Prophet (a.s), so did Ya`qūb got married to Saul’s daughter and was his successor too.

:Awareness of this similarity is evident from what Hafiz Yahya ibn Adam has said

If the killing of `Amr by `Ali (a.s) can be compared to any event reported in the Holy Qur’an it is the Verse, ‘Then those people defeated the enemy with Allah’s Orders and [Dawūd killed Goliath.’”[٨]

Footnote

Tārīkh al-Kāmil, Vol ٢, Page ١٢٢ [١]

Sīrat Ibn Hushām, Vol ٣, Page ٢٣٥ [٢]

Sīrat Ibn Hushām, Vol ٣, Page ٢٣٣ [٣]

Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by Ibn Abi’l-Hadīd, Vol ٤, Page ٣٤٤ [٤]

Mustadrak Hakim, Vol ٣, Page ٣٢ [٥]

Bidāyat al-Rumūz, Page ١٥٩ [٦]

Muhāḥarāt al-Awā’il, Page ٢٠٤ [٧]

Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyah, Dahlān, Vol ٢, Page ١١١ [٨]

THE EXPEDITION OF BANŪ—QURAYZAH

THE EXPEDITION OF BANŪ—QURAYZAH

When the joint forces of the Quraysh and the Jews were vanquished in the ghazwah al-Ahzab, The Prophet (a.s) decided to take action against Banū-Qurayzah who had breached their agreement with the Muslims and openly sided with the Quraysh-

Jewish Combine during that campaign, on the instigation of Huyay ibn Akhtab. The Prophet (a.s) formed an advanced party of three Khazrajis under `Ali (a.s) and sent them with the standard of war. Al-Tabari writes

p: ٢٨٩

The Prophet (a.s) gave the Standard of War to `Ali ibn Abi-Talib and sent him with the “
[Advance Guard towards Banū-Qurayzah.”][1]

Banū-Qurayzah had a feeling that they might be punished for their breach of the agreement. They had locked themselves up in their fort after the armies of the infidels was decimated and thought that their fort was unconquerable. When `Ali (a.s) reached near the fort, and planted a spear in the ground, the Jews shouted invectives against the Prophet (a.s). When he heard this, he wanted to return and tell the Prophet (a.s) to stop going close to the fort. He was still on the way when the Prophet (a.s) arrived. `Ali (a.s) requested him not to go near the fort because the Jews were using foul language. The Prophet (a.s) said that when they see him, they would desist from using such language. On reaching near the fort, the Prophet (a.s) reprimanded them and ordered his tent to be pitched outside the fort. The Muslims laid siege of the fort and sealed all the exit and entry points for the besieged Jews. Among the inmates of the fort was Huyay ibn Akhtab who had tempted Banū-Qurayzah to support the Quraysh in the Battle of al-Ahzab. He had promised the Banū-Qurayzah that in the event of the defeat of the Quraysh he would stay with them and share their fate

The chief of Banū-Qurayzah, Ka`b ibn Asad saw that the siege by the Muslims was getting tougher, therefore he told his people that there is mention of the prophethood of Muhammad (a.s) in the Divine Books, and if they agree to embrace Islam now, they could win their freedom without any problem... But their men would not agree to this suggestion. Then Ka`b suggested that the next course of action open for them was to kill their women and children, go out of the fort and fight to finish. Doing this, they will have no care left for their families. They would not accept even this suggestion. Then he said that it was the eve of Sabbath, the Muslims would not imagine that the Jews would attack on the sacred night. The attack, if it is executed, will have an element of surprise and the Muslims will be taken on unawares. But the Jews turned down even this suggestion. They said that they could not imagine desecrating the Sabbath

Twenty-five days passed since the fort was besieged. They kept raining stones and arrows on the Muslims but did not succeed in breaking the siege. When they were fed up with the hardships of the siege, the Jews sent Nabash Ibn Qays to the Prophet (a.s) that they were willing to lay down arms if they were pardoned and allowed to move away with their families and their wealth. They then offered that they would abandon all their belongings and would leave only with the families. Even this was not acceptable to the Prophet (a.s). They were told that they must surrender unconditionally. Nabash went back and told them what transpired. They sent a message to the Prophet (a.s) requesting him to depute Abul-Bu`bu` al-Ansari so that they talk to him and come to a final conclusion. The Prophet (a.s) sent Abul-Bu`bu` to them. They asked him if it would be safe for them if they made an unconditional surrender. He replied in the affirmative but pointed his hand towards the neck .indicating his apprehension of what would happen to them if they surrender

This act of Abul-Bu`bu` contrary to all norms of decency and was not proper official :emissary to do. The Qur'an mentions about this event thus

O believers! Do not be dishonest in the matters of Allah and the Prophet (a.s), nor“ ”.knowingly commit dishonesty with trusts

When Banū-Qurayzah felt that unconditional surrender might spell their doom, and :then they said

[We accept Sa`d ibn Mu`adh as the mediator and will abide by his decision.”[۷“

The Prophet (a.s) too accepted Sa`d ibn Mu`adh as the mediator and that his decision would be binding for both the parties

:Ibn Husham writes that when the Banū-Qurayzah refused to surrender, `Ali (a.s) said

[By Allah! I shall either get martyred, as Hamzah was martyred, or capture the fort!]"[۳

Saying this, he took al-Zubayr ibn al-`Awwam along and advanced to attack the fort.

:When Banū-Qurayzah saw him advancing to attack, they shouted with concern

O Muhammad (a.s)! We bow our heads to the decision of the arbitrator, Sa`d ibn“
”!Mu`adh

Sa`d ibn Mu`adh was injured in the Battle of al-Ahzab and was recuperating at al-Madinah in the tent of Rafidah al-Ansariyyah. When he was brought in a litter, Banū-Aws surrounded him and said that the Prophet (a.s) had left the decision about the fate of Banū-Qurayzah to him and he should give a mild judgment in their favor. Sa`d said that he will give a decision which is just and fair. The people understood from what Sa`d said that the judgment would go against Banū-Qurayzah. His decision was that the men of Banū-Qurayzah be executed and the women and children taken as slaves. Therefore, the men were executed and the women and children taken away as captives. Their belongings were confiscated and distributed to the troops. The Holy
:Qur’an says about this incident

وَأَنْزَلَ الَّذِينَ ظَاهَرُوهُمْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِنْ صَيَاصِيهِمْ وَقَذَفَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ فَرِيقًا تَقْتُلُونَ وَتَأْسِرُونَ فَرِيقًا . وَأَوْرَثَكُم أَرْضَهُمْ
وَدِيَارَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ وَأَرْضًا لَمْ تَطْنُوهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرًا.

And He drove down those of the followers of the Book who backed them from their fortresses and He cast awe into their hearts; some you killed and you took captive another part. And Allah turned back the unbelievers in their rage; they did not obtain any advantage, and Allah sufficed the believers in fighting; and Allah is Strong,
".Mighty

This punishment appears very severe, but if the circumstances were considered, the worst critic would accept that Banū-Qurayzah did deserve the harsh punishment. Despite the Prophet (a.s) giving all the concessions in terms of the agreement, Banū-Qurayzah collaborated with the enemy, the Quraysh, against the interests of the Muslims. Even their chief, Ka`b ibn Asad, had accepted that the Prophet (a.s) was abiding by the agreement in

word and spirit. Flouting this agreement, Banū-Qurayzah themselves were responsible for the consequences. When Banū-al-Nadir were exiled from al-Madinah, the agreement with Banū-Qurayzah was revised maintaining the old mild terms even when the circumstances demanded making a more severe agreement. But they flouted the agreement by collaborating with the enemy during the battles of Uhud and al-Ahzab. If they were left alive, they would be a constant danger to the people of al-Madinah. The punishment meted out to them was not so strange for the people of the world. Traitors and collaborators are dealt with everywhere in this manner. When Huyay ibn Akhtab, the main instigator of the episode who tempted Banū-Qurayzah to collaborate with Quraysh was taken for execution he told `Ali (a.s), "A decent person is executing another decent person!" And then he requested `Ali (a.s) that he not be undressed after execution. `Ali (a.s) said it was not his way to render an enemy naked after killing him! In accordance with his practice, he did not take away the dress of
.Huyay

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۲۴۵ [۱]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۲۴۶ [۲]

Sīrat ibn Hushām, Vol ۳, Page ۲۵۱ [۳]

THE TRUCE OF AL-HUDAYBIYAH

THE TRUCE OF AL-HUDAYBIYAH

Makkah was the ancestral town and the birthplace of the Prophet of Islam (a.s). He spent fifty-three years of his life here and it was here that he got his first Revelation from Allah. For thirteen years the Revelations of the Holy Book continued coming here only. Although he had to leave the home and hearth because of the troublesome attitude of the people of Makkah, he always liked to mention and hear about his home town. Love for ones own place of birth is quite natural Whether one had a comfortable life or had to face hardships in his home town, its memories will ever live in his mind. Besides this natural affinity, the Prophet (a.s) had a spiritual attachment with the place because it has located in it the Ka`bah and other places of religious importance. This urge for Makkah was not only in the heart of the Prophet (a.s) but all the Companions had the same attachment for the place. Now it was six years since they had Migrated and now they were all eager to visit Makkah and circumambulate the Ka`bah. Once the Prophet (a.s) related about a dream of his. He saw in the dream that they had entered the Haram of Ka`bah and were doing the circumambulation. Hearing of this dream the eagerness of the Companions to make a visit too increased. They insisted on the Prophet (a.s) to plan a visit. From the Quraysh they expected some resistance in allowing the Muslims to come there. However after the ignominious defeat at al-Ahزاب, it was conjectured that their spirit of battle had cooled and that they might not hinder the visit by the Muslims. Considering the keenness and pressure from the Companions, the Prophet (a.s) planned a visit and invited people from the neighborhood of al-Madinah too to join. Some people avoided going because it crossed their minds that the Quraysh might think it a good opportunity to start a

battle. The number of persons who made up their minds to travel was around one thousand and four hundred to one thousand and five hundred. Along with this entourage, the Prophet (a.s) started from al-Madinah on I Dhul-Qa`dah 9 A.H. They had seventy camels for the ceremonial sacrifice, and all the members of the party were dressed in the loincloth prescribed for the pilgrimage and carried no arms to give confidence to the Quraysh that they had no warlike intentions

It was evident from the dress of the Prophet (a.s) and the Companions that they were not going for a battle and heading for a pilgrimage to Ka`bah. But the Quraysh did not allow them to enter Makkah. When this caravan reached the Valley of `Asfan, Busr ibn Abi-Sufyan al-Ka`bi came to the presence of the Prophet (a.s) and said that the Quraysh had assembled in the Valley of Dhi-tuwa hearing of the arrival of the caravan and Khalid ibn al-Walid was stationed at Kura`al-Ghamim with a contingent of troops to prevent them from reaching Makkah. The Prophet (a.s) changed his route, and via Thaniyyat al-Marar, they reached Hudaybiyah which is a well at a distance of fifteen miles from Makkah and the area around it was known by the same name. Khalid informed the Quraysh that the caravan has changed its route and had reached Hudaybiyah. Quraysh sent Badil ibn Warqa' al-Khuza`i along with some men from Banū-Khuza`ah to talk with the Prophet (a.s). He asked the Prophet (a.s) to give up the idea of going to Makkah and return from Hudaybiyah only. He said that if he went any further, Quraysh would use force to stop him. At any cost they did not want his party to enter Makkah. The Prophet (a.s) said that they had come only to circumambulate the Ka`bah and Quraysh need not have any apprehensions from them and they had no plan whatsoever of fighting with them. Badil conveyed the Prophet's message to the Quraysh who agreed that the intentions did not appear warlike; nonetheless they would not be allowed to enter. If they tried to enter forcibly, the Quraysh would fight to stop them. `Urwah ibn Mas`ūd al-Thaqafi said that it would not harm Quraysh in any manner if they enter, perform `Umrah and return like any other group generally coming for the pilgrimage! Quraysh said that Arabs would consider it as their weakness and capitulation if the Muslims were allowed in. Then `Urwah sought permission to negotiate with the Prophet (a.s) and send his party back peacefully. Quraysh agreed and he came to the presence of the Prophet (a.s). He said, "O Muhammad (a.s)! Quraysh is the tribe you personally belong to! Imagine if you annihilate the tribe, it will be the first example in the entire Arabia that someone destroyed his own tribe! Quraysh do not want that you enter Makkah. If you try to do it, the consequence will be a fight! When the hostilities start, the same people who are around you will run away!" At this point Abū-Bakr chided him rather impolitely and said that they shall never abandon the Prophet (a.s). `Urwah asked who this person was. He was told that it was Abū-Bakr. He said, "O Abū-Bakr! I remember one good turn

you did to me! Otherwise I would have properly replied to your impoliteness!”

Urwah’s patience and forbearance nipped the little tiff in the bud. It was possible that he might have left the talk incomplete and gone away and misguided the Quraysh to go for fighting. The Prophet (a.s) realized about his balanced and fair thinking and asked him, “Is it fair to prevent us from performing the Umrah and not allowing our sacrificial camels reaching near the Ka`bah? We have neither come with an intention of war nor shall we unnecessarily start hostilities” Urwah was very much impressed with the attitude of the Prophet (a.s) and returned to the Quraysh. He told them that he had gone in the past to the presence of kings like Caesar, Khusrow and Najashi, but meeting the Prophet (a.s) was an entirely different experience for him. He did not find the aura of respectability and dignity anywhere else as in his company. He recommended that the party must be allowed to perform the Umrah and go back peacefully. But the Quraysh did not heed his advice and were adamant in their stand. When Halis ibn Alqamah saw that the matter was not getting resolved, he asked to be permitted to make his efforts for resolution. He proceeded to Hudaibiyah. When he saw the sacrificial camels restless with hunger, and he heard the call of “labbayka! allahumma labbayka!” from the men in the caravan, he returned without entering the camp. He told the Quraysh that preventing the group from performing the Umrah will be sheer cruelty and there is no reason stopping any pilgrims from entering the :Ka`bah. Quraysh however were still adamant. Seeing this attitude Halis said

O People of Quraysh! Maybe we have a pact with you! But we have not made any understanding with you that you prevent, whosoever it might be, from performing [the rites of pilgrimage in Makkah!]"[1]

When these representations failed, the Prophet (a.s) sent Kharrash ibn Umayyah al-Khuza`i on his personal camel to the Quraysh to assure them that he did not mean to fight and had come there only for `Umrah. Kharrash talked to the Quraysh that they need not obstruct the party performing the rites of pilgrimage but they did not listen to any argument and even threatened to kill him. Halis and the tribes under his control prevented them from the act. Under protection of their swords they escorted Kharrash to safety. However the Quraysh slaughtered the Prophet's camel. They did not stop at it. They deputed fifty roughs from Makkah to go to the camp and trouble them. They reached near the camp and started throwing stones and arrows on the party. The Muslims were not so weak that they would be cowed down by those roughs. They surrounded and withheld the men. They were brought before the Prophet (a.s) who released them without any punishment. He called `Umar

and asked him to visit Makkah and impress on the Quraysh that their visit was not for fighting. `Umar expressed his inability in the following words

In Makkah there is none from my tribe, Banū-`Adi, who could come forward for my rescue! I have enmity with Quraysh and my harshness and strictness towards them is no secret. I have fear for my life from them. You may send `Uthman instead, he has [more influence over the Quraysh!]"[2]

Now the Prophet (a.s) called `Uthman and appointed him for the task. Along with him a delegation of ten Muhajirūn too was sent. When he reached Makkah he conveyed the message from the Prophet (a.s) to Abū-Sufyan and other chiefs that they need not resist the group's entry for `Umrah. They did not pay any heed to what he said. Instead they stopped him from returning. `Uthman secured the protection of his relative, Aban ibn Sa`id, but the others were at the mercy of the Quraysh. Because of their detention in Makkah, rumors became current amongst the Muslims that `Uthman and the other delegates had been killed. Since they were sent by the Prophet (a.s) as diplomats and their killing was against all norms of international laws, there was a feeling of anger amongst the Muslims. They started talking of avenging the killings. When the Prophet (a.s) felt the disturbed emotions of the Muslims, he gathered them under a tree and took a bay`ah from them that in the event of a conflict, they would not desert and run away. Therefore, Jabir ibn `Abdullah says

[The Prophet (a.s) took bay`ah from us that we do not run away from the fight!]"[۳۴

This bay`ah is called the bay`at al-ridwan (Allegiance of Approval) because Allah had expressed His approval and happiness over it and said

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَابَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا .

Certainly Allah was well pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance to“ you under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility ”(on them and rewarded them with a near victory. (۴۸:۱۸

Now they learnt that `Uthman and other delegates were safe and there was no need for fighting. They returned safely to the camp. The result of this was that the emotions of the Muslims cooled down. On the other side, the infidels of the Quraysh too were not in a mood for hostilities. They only wanted to salvage their false sense of honor and prestige. Therefore, after this event, they sent Huwaytib and Suhayl ibn `Amr for negotiations. The Prophet (a.s) too was not in favor of a battle. He approved negotiations for an understanding. For the negotiations he nominated `Ali (a.s). Al-Tabari writes

The Quraysh sent Suhayl ibn `Amr and Huwaytib and the Prophet (a.s) selected `Ali“ [(a.s) for the parleys.”[۴

When the talks started, the representatives of the Quraysh felt that the opposite party did not intend fighting, started putting forward unreasonable conditions for the settlement. Therefore, after much debate, the following terms were agreed to by :both the sides

.This visit the Muslims would return without performing the `Umrah (۱)

Next year they can visit Makkah for `Umrah but not to halt there for more than (۲) .three days

They should not carry any arms, other than swords, along with their caravan. The (۳) .swords should all the time be in the sheaths

The tribes of Arabia shall have the right to make agreement of cooperation with (۴) .any of the two sides and the conditions will also apply to the tribes on both sides

If any person from Makkah strayed into the territory of the Muslims, it would be (۵) binding on the Muslims to return him safely. If any Muslim went to the Quraysh territory, he will not be returned to them

The agreement will be valid for a period of ten years. During this period there will (۶) be neither hostility nor restriction on travel

All these conditions were, more or less, in the favor of the Quraysh and they were not ready for the deal without enforcing them. In these conditions it was really difficult to establish peace with them when a sizeable block of the Quraysh was not in favor of any peace and the majority of Muslims did not like the terms of the agreement. Now there were only two options. Either to accept their conditions or reject them outright and get ready for a battle! The Prophet (a.s) had an eye on the consequences of any conflict with them at that time when the Muslims were in a state of absolute unpreparedness for battle. If the Prophet (a.s) decided to fight, despite the disadvantage, and even if the Muslims were victorious, and entered Makkah as the winners, the animosity of the Quraysh would become so much that they would never ever think of embracing Islam. Another conclusion could also have been drawn that the Prophet (a.s) was not peace loving and that as soon as he had military strength he took the first opportunity to wreak vengeance on the Quraysh. While all the previous battles were defensive in nature, this one would have been termed an aggressive campaign. This was the prime reason that the Prophet (a.s) gave preference to peace. Although they had to yield some concession in the terms of the agreement, the deal was not as a result of defeat in any battle. In fact it was after repeated successes in the previous battles. But the Prophet (a.s) demonstrated his love for peace after victories in battles! He also exposed the ignorance and the stubbornness of the Quraysh by offering them conditions of peace

After deciding the terms of peace, it came to drafting the agreement. Suhayl created hurdles at every step in this matter too. When `Ali (a.s) started writing the draft, the Prophet (a.s) asked him to write “bismillahirrahmanirrahim” on the top of the document. Suhayl said they did not know what “arrahman” was. He just wanted them to write “bismikallahumma” at the head of the document (this was first used by Umayyah ibn al-Salt before Islam and was generally written in all letters and documents since then). The prophet (a.s) did not want to enter into an argument and accepted his suggestion. Then `Ali (a.s) wrote “This is the agreement of peace which Allah’s Prophet Muhammad has made with Suhayl ibn `Amr.” Suhayl objected about this sentence as well that they did not accept Muhammad (a.s) as the Prophet of Allah. If they had recognized him as the Prophet (a.s) they would not have objected to his entering Makkah. He therefore wanted them to write his name as “Muhammad (a.s) ibn `Abdullah”. The Prophet (a.s) asked `Ali (a.s) to strike off the words “rasūlullah” with his pen and write “Muhammad ibn `Abdullah”. `Ali (a.s) put down his pen in anger saying, “By Allah! I shall not strike off the words, ‘rasūlullah’ from the document!” The Prophet (a.s) said, “I shall strike off the words myself!” He drew a line across those
:(words and told `Ali (a.s

[One day, you too will be put to such a test!”[۵“

When the document was ready, witnesses from both sides put a hand to it. One copy .of the document was given to the Prophet (a.s) and another to Suhayl ibn `Amr

All the matters connected with the drafting and execution were completed under the direct supervision of the Prophet (a.s) and no Companions were asked to participate in the proceedings nor their opinions were obtained. It was only `Ali (a.s) who helped the Prophet (a.s) in deciding on the terms and drafting of the document. Many Companions were against the terms of the agreement and even the need to make peace with the Quraysh. They were hoping to enter Makkah despite the opposition of the infidels and perform `Umrah. But when they were asked to return from Hdaybiyah without performing the `Umrah they were so much disturbed that :doubts cropped up in their minds. Al-Tabari writes

When the Companions of the Prophet (a.s) started from al-Madinah they had no“ doubt about victory on the basis of the dream that the Prophet (a.s) saw. But when they knew about the truce and the need to return, and knew that the Prophet (a.s) himself had agreed to the terms of the truce, a big doubt crept into their minds and [were about to start a dispute.”[۶

Umar was most upset with this truce. His anger rose so much that he went to the ` presence of the Prophet (a.s) and said, “Are you not the true Prophet?” The Prophet (a.s) replied, “Yes! I am!” ` Umar added, “Did you not say that we shall all enter the al-Masjid al-Haram and circumambulate the Ka` bah?” The Prophet (a.s) replied, “Yes! I had seen a dream and interpreted it that the time is coming when we shall enter to al-Masjid al-Haram and circumambulate the Ka` bah! But I did not say that we shall do it this year only. Whatever has happened is with the Command of Allah! I cannot do anything against His Commands! Allah will never let the enemy to be trampling me!” Even after this explanation by the Prophet (a.s), ` Umar’s ire did not subside. He went :to Abū-Bakr in anger and talked in the same manner with him. He said

[O `Umar! Keep holding his reins! I bear witness that he is the Prophet of Allah (a.s)!"]⁷

Abū-Bakr had to confirm about the prophethood of Muhammad (a.s) because it was evident from `Umar's way of talking that he was so much angry and upset about the truce that he started doubting the very prophethood of Muhammad (a.s). Therefore,

:`Umar has expressed his doubts in this manner

[By Allah! Ever since I embraced Islam, I never had a doubt, but on that day!"]⁸

The anger of the companions was such that while the Prophet (a.s) giving a practical shape to it ordered them to sacrifice the animals and cut their hair, they started disobeying. Despite instructing them several times they did not comply. The Historian

:al-Tabari writes

By Allah! Despite the Prophet (a.s) ordering them thrice, none of them rose to

[obey!"]⁹

When the Prophet (a.s) saw this state of affairs, he was very saddened. He stood up and went to the tent of Umm-Salamah and sat down quietly. She saw the sad visage of the Prophet (a.s) and asked the reason for his glumness. He complained about the behavior of his companions. Umm-Salamah said, "You need not force anyone. Go and sacrifice your animal, get your hair removed and change the dress." The Prophet (a.s) came out of the tent, sacrificed the animal, removed his hair and changed from the Ihram to ordinary dress, when the companions saw that the decision of the Prophet (a.s) cannot be changed, some persons followed suit. Most of them got small tufts of

:hair removed. Their anger seemed not be coming down. Al-Tabari writes

They were clipping each other's hairs. But it seemed as if they were in a state of
[sadness and might slay each other.] [۱۰

When the Prophet (a.s) saw the men removing their hair, he said, "May Allah be kind
:on them!" The companions said

O Prophet of Allah (a.s)! You have offered a prayer of blessing for the men who are
getting their hair cut But you did not pray for those who got their hair clipped! He said,
[‘Because they did not doubt!’] [۱۱

In spite of the misbehavior of the Companions, the Prophet (a.s) strictly adhered to
the terms of the truce. The conditions of the truce were still being discussed. At this
time the son of Suhayl ibn `Amr, Abū-Jandal, who had converted to Islam and was
facing incarceration with the infidels, escaped from the vigil of his guard and came to
the presence of the Prophet (a.s), the chains of the gaol still in his ankles. He said, "O
Prophet of Allah! Allow me to ride with you!" When the representative of the Quraysh,
Suhayl saw his son, he said, "A truce agreement has already been agreed upon by us!
If any of our men escaped and came to you, you will have to return them to us. In
terms of this clause you must return Abū-Jandal to us." The Prophet (a.s) said, "The
agreement is not complete as yet and you started asking for complying with its
terms!" Suhayl said, "If you do not hand over my son to us, we shall abrogate the
agreement of truce!" The Prophet said, "Then, you might take him away!" He advised
.Abū-Jandal to be patient and handed him over to Suhayl

When Abū-Jandal started walking away, `Umar stood up, and guiding his hand toward the scabbard of the sword, said, “The blood of an infidel is not worth as much as that of a dog!” He thought that Abū-Jandal would attack his father and kill him. Abū-Jandal said

O `Umar! You do not have more right than me to follow the command of the Prophet“ [(a.s.)!”[۱۲

The infidels of Quraysh getting their conditions accepted practically thought that they had the upper hand, although this condition was not harmful to the Muslims in any manner whatsoever. After the truce one person from the Quraysh, Abū-Basir `Utbah ibn Usayd embraced Islam and came to al-Madinah slyly. Quraysh deputed two persons to al-Madinah with a letter to bring him back. The Prophet (a.s) called Abū-Basir and asked him to go back to Makkah. He unwillingly accompanied the emissaries. When they reached the Valley of Dhul-Halifah, Abū-Basir praised the sword of one of them. He said that certainly the sword was very good and took it out of the sheath. With the excuse of looking at it, Abū-Basir took the sword from the hand of the person and killed him. When the other person saw that his companion was killed, he ran away and reaching al-Madinah informed the Prophet (a.s) that Abū-Basir had killed his companion. In that time Abū-Basir too reached al-Madinah and told the Prophet (a.s) that he had handed him over to the Quraysh in terms of the agreement and now there is no responsibility on him any further and that he need not be handed over to them again. The Prophet (a.s) said that this person wanted to give vent to trouble between the two sides, If he was given any support, the Quraysh would definitely start a conflict. Abū-Basir now understood that the Prophet would definitely hand him over to the Quraysh. Taking an opportunity he went towards the shore of the sea and stayed there. On the other side, Abū-Jandal, who was incarcerated in Makkah, heard that Abū-Basir was hiding at a place on the coast and he too escaped from captivity and went the same way. In due time that place became a place of refuge for the fugitives from Makkah. The number of such persons rose to seventy and they formed a strong group. When the caravans of Quraysh used to pass through there on the way to Syria, this group attacked and looted them. The Quraysh

were fed up of this and sent word to the Prophet (a.s) to call those men to al-Madinah. They said that in future they would not claim back any person who had embraced Islam of his free will and moved to al-Madinah. The Prophet (a.s) sent word to Abū-Basir to come to al-Madinah. He was seriously ill at that time and asked Abū-Jandal to go. Therefore, they disbanded the group and went to al-Madinah. The route of travel .now was safe for the Quraysh

The utility and advantage of this truce was not comprehended by most Muslims. At the time of the execution of the agreement, and even after that, they were unhappy about it. But later on when they got certain political and other advantages because of the terms of the truce, they realized that their thinking was wrong and started appreciating the farsightedness of the Prophet (a.s). Some of the salient advantages .the Muslims got from the truce are

The first benefit was that the unreasonable attitude of the Quraysh became evident to the tribes that they had stopped the Muslims from performing pilgrimage at Makkah which was the right of every individual, from whatsoever place he came. The tribes were unhappy with the Quraysh on account of this and sympathetic towards .the Muslims

The second benefit was that the Muslims, who were in Makkah, and keeping their Faith secret, became fear less and openly declared it and publicly performed the rites of prayer etc. And when persons, impressed by the Islamic norms, converted to the Faith, the Quraysh could not interfere with them because of the terms of the .agreement

The third benefit was that the infidels got opportunities to meet and exchange views with the Muslims Because of removal of restrictions of visiting al-Madinah, they frequented there and observed the excellent morals and the divine qualities of the Prophet (a.s) more closely. They started getting impressed with the Islamic teachings and subtly carried the message back to Makkah. Therefore, in a short span of two :years the number of Muslims in Makkah doubled. The historian al-Tabari says

Within two years the population of Muslims was more than double than what it“
[was.”[۱۳

The fourth benefit was that it refuted the belief of the people that Islam had spread with the strength of the sword. If the sword had played any part in the spread of the Faith, the truce should have played a role of deterrent in its spread. To the contrary its fast growth was a result of the love of peace that the Faith propagated. If hostilities had continued after Hdaybiyah, the spread of Islam would not have been so fast.

.Peace gave an opportunity to the right thinking persons to flock towards it

The fifth benefit was that the new generation of the Quraysh observed the peace loving attitude of the Prophet (a.s) in comparison to the stern stance of Abū-Jahl and Abū-Sufyan. They also thought about the canard spread by the infidels and the Jews and read through it. They realized that all this talk about the Prophet (a.s) was wrong. If the Prophet (a.s) was of aggressive bent of mind, he had better strength of men and material and could have started battles to avenge the earlier fights that the Quraysh had imposed on him. But this truce, and his attitude thereafter, proved that he was a
.man of peace! In the past he fought back only in self-defense

The sixth benefit was that the Quraysh were contented that during the period of the truce they will not be attacked by the Muslims. Therefore, they did not feel the need to arm themselves any more. But when they took part in the conflict between Banū-Bakr and Banū-Khuza`ah, against the terms of the truce, and sided with their friends, Banū-Bakr, and killed persons from Banū-Khuza`ah who were the allies of the Muslims, the Muslims came forward and conquered Makkah! The truce in fact laid the foundation of the consolidation of the Muslim State! Allah has termed the annexation
”!of Makkah as “al-fath al-mubin” and the Prophet (a.s) termed it “`azm al-futūh

While this truce proved the sagacity and right thinking of the Prophet (a.s), its implementation proved that he had great regard for commitments and agreements

:The advantages derived from patient and meticulous follow up of the truce are

The first is that when there is the possibility of peace, war cannot be started with this end in view even if harsh terms and conditions for the truce are accepted, it would be beneficial for the society in the longer run. No doubt, it could have caused some heart burn to the Companions who were ignorant and less farsighted. The truce was declared on the terms of the infidels and the fruitful results are there for every one to see

Secondly, the implicit implementation of a truce or an agreement is absolutely essential even if the truce is with infidels and hypocrites. Therefore, the Prophet (a.s) did not hesitate in handing over Abū-Jandal and Abū-Basir to the infidels to meet the requirements of the terms of the truce. This shows his high respect for the terms of the agreement. However, when the Quraysh acted against the terms of the truce, immediate action was taken and the conquest of Makkah was the result

Thirdly, the Prophet (a.s) is not bound with the public opinion. The opinion of the companions was against the signing of the truce. But the Prophet (a.s) used his best discretion and the results are there for everyone to see. This discretion also had the Divine Backing. If the Prophet (a.s) consulted the Muslims, it was only to keep them at rest. When their opinion was not worth accepting, he discreetly kept it aside

The part played by Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) in the negotiations and formulation of the truce of Hudaibiyah has been invaluable. He conducted the parleys for the truce as meticulously as he did during the earlier campaigns of battle with the Quraysh. It is common experience that those who are adept at warfare do not have any aptitude for peace making. `Ali (a.s), who was the greatest warrior of his time, proved his mettle at peace making too. Shaykh al-Mufid writes

All the matters connected with Hudaibiyah were in the charge of Amir al-Mu'minin“ (a.s)—whether it was the bay`at al-ridwan, organizing the troops or the negotiations [and drafting of the truce!”[۱۴

He had felt the need for truce and peace from the very beginning. Therefore, he was neither confused nor did he doubt the Prophet (a.s), as was done by some senior Companions. He also did not like to score off the words rasūlullah from the truce document. This shows his staunch Faith and dedication to the Prophet (a.s). Shaykh :` Abd al-Haqq al-Muhaddith al-Dahlawi writes

Ali (a.s) not agreeing to erase the words rasūlullah is not disobedience nor`“ disrespect, but it is the manifestation of his obedience and respect for the Prophet [(a.s).”[۱۵

Footnote

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۲۷۶ [۱]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۲, Page ۱۳۸ [۲]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۲۷۹ [۳]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۲۷۸ [۴]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۲, Page ۱۲۸ [۵]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۲۸۱ [۶]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۲۸۰ [۷]

Tārīkh al-Khamīs, Vol ٢, Page ٣٢ [٨]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٢٨٣ [٩]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٢٨٣ [١٠]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٢٨٣ [١١]

Tārīkh al-Khamīs, Vol ١, Page ٢٢ [١٢]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٢٨٣ [١٣]

Kitāb al-irshād, Page ٥٤ [١٤]

Madarij al-Nabuwwah, Vol ٢, Page ٢٨٦ [١٥]

THE CAMPAIGN OF KHAYBAR

THE CAMPAIGN OF KHAYBAR

After the Truce of Hdaybiyah, in the beginning of the seventh year of the Migration, the Prophet (a.s) decided to invade Khaybar. Khaybar is a word from the Hebrew lexicon. This means either a fort or a rampart. There is another saying that among `Amaliqah (the giants), there were two brothers by names of Yathrib and Khaybar. Wherever they resided, those places got named after them. Therefore, after the name of Yathrib the city of al-Madinah was originally named. So too was named .Khaybar after the brother of that name

Khaybar is located eighty miles from al-Madinah on the border of Hijaz and Syria. It was famous for its oases and greenery and was inhabited by the Jews. It was also the center of their armed forces. For defensive purposes they had built seven small and big forts. These forts were named as al-Na`am, al-Katibah, al-Shiqq, al-Natat, al-Wati, Salamlam and Qamūs. In these forts lived ten to fourteen thousand Jews. In this number those who were exiled from al-Madinah too were there who had fought the Muslims in collaboration with the infidels and had lost the battle notwithstanding their numerical strength and better battle equipment. When they heard that the Muslims

had accepted the Quraysh's terms of truce at al-Hudaybiyah, they thought that the Muslims now have no will to fight. Because of this misapprehension, they thought the Muslims have surrendered their spirit to fight and, therefore, the time was ripe for the Jews to start a campaign of attack and destruction against them to erase the shame of the Battle of Ahzab. Although the Jews were not lesser in numbers, even then to augment their forces, they made an agreement of cooperation with Banū-Ghatafan who were located about six miles from Khaybar. They promised to Banū-Ghatafan that they would give half the produce of Khaybar if they helped them win against the Muslims. The Banū-Ghatafan agreed to this offer and sent four thousand troops for .the campaign

When the Prophet (a.s) learned that the Jews of Khaybar were preparing to attack al-Madinah, he thought of taking punitive action at the earliest. Therefore, after return from Hdaybiyah, they stayed in al-Madinah for twenty days and with one thousand and six hundred Companions, of whom there were some cavaliers and the rest footmen, proceeded toward Khaybar. When the Islamic army reached the outskirts of Khaybar it was morning. The inhabitants of Khaybar were proceeding to their fields with the farm implements and pitchers of water. When they saw the Islamic army arrive, they ran back to their forts. When the Prophet (a.s) saw them running away, he raised the slogan of “allahu-akbar” and said

Khaybar is destroyed! Whenever we enter the borders of any place, those who were “affected with bad times would have very bad times

The Prophet (a.s) knew that Banū-Ghatafan were committed to help the Jews if hostilities erupted. He therefore camped his army strategically at the place called Rajih which was between the habitations of Khaybar and Banū-Ghatafan. The plan was to prevent Banū-Ghatafan from reaching to help the Jews. When they heard of the arrival of Muslims and came out to go towards Khaybar, they were obstructed by the Muslim army. Fearing destruction of their own villages, they went back home. After the return of Banū-Ghatafan, the Muslims now moved for the siege of Khaybar. The Jews secured the women and children in the Fort al-Katibah and locking themselves in the other forts started a barrage of arrows on the Muslims. After a few skirmishes, the Muslims took some of the fortresses, but victory depended on subduing the fort of Ibn Abil-Haqiq that was situated on a sloping hillock and that was called Qamūs. The fort too was called with this name. This is the same fort that is mentioned as Khaybar in the traditions and the history. In front of the fort there was a deep trench. The fort was rather invincible because of its location and construction

In the Ghazwah generally, the command used to be with the Prophet (a.s) the standard bearer was `Ali (a.s). But the Prophet (a.s) was suffering for some days with pain in the temples and `Ali (a.s) was not able to join the ranks at Khaybar because he had conjunctivitis. Because of this some people got a chance of asserting themselves and, taking the standard in their hands without formal approval, thought of annexing the Fort Qamūs. Therefore, `Umar held the flag in his hand and with one contingent of the army advanced to attack the fort He tried his best but did not succeed. He had to return disappointed and disillusioned. Then Abū-Bakr took the flag in his hand and got the same results. `Umar took the flag a second time and failed in his attempt. To cover his failure, he put the blame on the troops. But the troops squarely blamed him :for the defeat terming it as the failure of his strategy of warfare! Al-Tabari writes

When `Umar went with some troops and confronted the men of Khaybar, he and his“ men ran away and returned to the Prophet (a.s). At that moment the troops said that `Umar had showed cowardice and `Umar said that the troops were a bunch of [cowards!”[۲

When there was some reduction in the Prophet’s head ache, he emerged out of his :tent and noticing the dropping morale in the troops he said

By Allah! I shall give the Standard to a person tomorrow who will attack ceaselessly“ and will not be the one who flees! He befriends Allah and His Prophet (a.s) and they [are his friends. Allah will give us Victory on both his hands!”[۳

The Prophet (a.s), in spite of the leaders of the troops blaming them for the failure, did not make any changes in the troops who went for the previous attempts. He only changed the chief because the success of any operation depends on the perseverance and the leadership of the chief. When the chief shows his back to the battle, naturally the troops follow the leader! The words of the tradition too indicate the fact that the chiefs in the earlier attempts flew! Otherwise, there was no need to say that he would next time give the Standard to a person particularly stressing on his quality of steadfastness and that he would not flee. Anyway, this statement of the Prophet (a.s) is a mirror in which there is clarification of the facts of the matter and description of the traits of the conqueror of Khaybar. And the faces of the persons who chose to fly! The statement also gives the tiding of victory. In the beginning of the statement there is an oath and a positive expression that the next day victory will be theirs. This statement, therefore, is the result of a Revelation from Allah because predicting what is going to happen tomorrow is not permitted. Allah ordains that what one intends doing tomorrow, he should not say that it shall certainly be done.

:Therefore, Allah says

وَلَا تَقُولَنَّ لِيْ شَيْءٍ اِنِّيْ فَاعِلٌ ذٰلِكَ غَدًا اِلَّا اَنْ يَشَاءَ اللّٰهُ.

”(And do not say of anything: Surely I will do it tomorrow, unless Allah pleases. (۱۸:۲۳“

In the tradition quoted the words are few, but every word is reflective of praise and superiority for the person intended by the Holy Prophet (a.s) as the subject of his .attentions

The first expression is that he will be a ‘man’! If the word is used allegorically, it means that the person will be a paragon of valor and will fight with determination. The use of this word is also a pun against the earlier incumbents who lacked in the trait of valor. Otherwise all of them were men! A man is one who, after entering the arena of battle, does not show his back until victory is achieved or he succumbs to the onslaught of !the enemy

The second quality of the chief mentioned by the Prophet (a.s) is that he is valorous and not the fleeing type! After saying that he will be valorous, there seems no need to say that he would not flee. But this point was raised that those who had the dreams of becoming the standard-bearers should introspect whether their feet shook in the .battlefield. If they did, then they should forget about becoming the standard-bearers

The third quality of the chief mentioned by the Prophet (a.s) is that he is a friend of Allah and the Prophet (a.s), and they befriend him. It is the charisma of friendship that :in the way of Allah, man faces all hardships. Therefore, Allah says

Allah befriends those who fight in his way in formations as if they are walls that have“
”.been impregnated with lead

Another indication the Prophet (a.s) made was that the fort would be annexed by him. Where there is perseverance, Allah helps. There was so much certainty of this victory that on return from al-Hudaybiyah, the Prophet (a.s) was given the vision in the following words

”They will soon get victory“

,Therefore, the Prophet (a.s) said

”Allah will give victory at his hands“

Allah had predicted victory and the Prophet (a.s) said that the one who carried the standard on the next attempt would be the victor

After this announcement by the Prophet (a.s), the matter was on everyone’s tongue. There was an element of expectancy in the atmosphere. Every Companion wished that he was the lucky person tomorrow to get the standard in his hand. Even those who took the standard earlier during this campaign and failed were expecting to be chosen the next time! Ibn al-Athir writes

[From the Quraysh everyone expected that he only will be the standard bearer.”[۴“

If they had kept their attention on the words of the Tradition and kept in their minds the events of the past, each word was sufficient to put off the flame of the lamp of hope. But it is human nature that they claim positions of importance, however little they might have the hope of succeeding. They were sure that `Ali (a.s) would not be able to go to the front because the inflammation of his eyes would not allow him even to look at the ground under his feet. Therefore, they were assuring each other that they need not have any fear from `Ali (a.s) because of the ailment of his eyes. The only alternative to take the Standard would be one of the others. Here the persons were making conjectures, and on the other hand `Ali (a.s) was informed of the announcement made by the Prophet (a.s). Hearing this he became quiet

O Allah! The one whom You bestow, cannot be deprived by anyone, and the one“
”whom You deprive, he cannot be bestowed by anyone

Waiting for the morrow, the Companions were turning the whole night in their beds.
In the morning they gathered in front of the Prophet’s tent. Muhammad Ibn Isma`il
:al-Bukhari writes

They all assembled near the Prophet (a.s) early in the morning. Everyone was hoping“
[that the Standard would be given to him!”[٥

After the morning’s prayer, the Prophet (a.s) emerged from his tent with a white flag
in his hand. Seeing the flag, there was a feeling of expectancy in every heart. Every
one tried to push aside the others and come to the front. Some stretched their necks
and others tried to rise on their haunches expecting that the Prophet (a.s) would give
his attention to them. Some of them were so excited and restless that their names
:appeared in the History of Islam. Of these was also `Umar, who himself said

Before that day, I did not have the urge to be the leader as I had then! On that day I“
[stretched my neck and hoped that the Standard would be given to me!”[٦

(٢٥٢)

Burayd ibn Aslamah who was present in the ghazwah Khaybar took the names of
:both `Umar and Abū-Bakr, saying this

On the second day, both Abū-Bakr and `Umar raised their necks in the hope of“
[getting the Standard!”[٧

:Sa`d ibn Abi-Waqqas says

[I sat squatting near the Prophet (a.s), got up and stood in front of him!”[٨“

p: ٣١٢

The acts of valor of none of his Companions was hidden from the Prophet (a.s).that he would consider anyone claims if he raised his neck or reject the claim of one who squatted down! He glanced at the crowd and asked where was `Ali (a.s). None thought that `Ali's name would come up. There were voices from all directions that he was down with the inflammation of the eyes. The Prophet (a.s) asked to send someone and fetch him. Therefore, Salamah ibn al-Akwa` went and asked him to come. The Prophet (a.s) put `Ali's head on his lap and applied his saliva on the :inflamed eyes and said

O Allah! Protect him from the effects of heat and cold, and help and support against“
”his enemy

The saliva of the Prophet (a.s) worked as a medicine for the eyes of `Ali (a.s). Instantly the inflammation disappeared. At that time, Hassan ibn Thabit, praising the Prophet : (a.s), composed the following couplets

Inflamed were the eyes of `Ali (a.s) in battle of Khaybar“

Saliva of the Prophet (a.s) worked as the remedy

Without medicine, the saliva brightened the eyes

Felicitous was the cure and felicitous the healing power

The Prophet said I should give standard to him who is double-edged sword

”(Valiant and destroyer of enemy columns and dotes on the Prophet (a.s

When the eyes of `Ali (a.s) were cured, the Prophet (a.s) himself put the armor over the cloak of `Ali (a.s), put the sword around his girdle, gave the Standard in his hand and asked him to conquer the fort of Khaybar. `Ali (a.s) stood up after taking the flag in his hand, turned towards the Prophet (a.s) and asked him how long he wanted him to fight? The Prophet (a.s) said he must fight them until they embrace Islam. Even if one person came to the right path because of you, it will be better than having a camel with red hair! `Ali (a.s) went running towards the arena. Some persons asked

him to wait that they too would join him. But he did not stop for a while and stopped when he reached near the Fort Qamūs and planted the Standard there. One Jew saw him from the top of the fort and asked who he was. He said that he was `Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s) When he saw his demeanor, he said, “O group of Jews! Your defeat is certain!” The Jews were very proud of the invincibility of Fort Qamūs. Because of the failure of the earlier flag bearers of the Islamic army, their morale was high. But hearing such words from their own man there was pandemonium in their ranks and fear in their hearts. Now some persons from the Muslim army too reached near `Ali (a.s). The governor of the fort Marhab’s brother al-H arith, who had earlier come to the arena of the battle, made a surprise attack and martyred two Muslims. `Ali (a.s) moved like a lightning and killed him. When Marhab saw that his brother was killed, blood entered his eyes. He wore a second armor over the first and, on the head wore a helmet carved out of a stone and with two swords and a lance, came out of the fort.

:He was reciting the following martial poem

The people of Khaybar know I am Marhab“

”!I am armed and an experienced warrior

Marhab was bulky and an adept at fighting. When he called for a fight, very few
:responded! Diyarbakri writes

[Amongst the Muslims, it was not possible for anyone to take him on.”[۹“

:When `Ali (a.s) listened to his rajz, he said

I am that whose mother named him Haydar“

I am a male lion and valiant like the tiger

Whose knuckles are strong and the neck wide

Like the tiger in the jungle, ferocious to look at

I shall attack in a way to shatter your joints

And leave the adversary to be fodder for the wild beasts

Like a honorable and strong youth

I shall use my sword on the columns of the infidels

”.And slay you with my sword on a large scale

Marhab moved forward and attempted to attack `Ali (a.s). He evaded the attack and counter attacked him. `Ali’s stroke cut through Marhab’s helmet, his head and pierced the jaws. He fell down dead with a thud. Marhab’s death disheartened the Jews. And when some more renowned warriors met their end at the hands of `Ali (a.s), there was total chaos in their ranks and all of them ran towards the fort. `Ali (a.s) kept advancing forward when a Jew attacked his arm and, with the impact, his shield fell down to the ground. With his Divine Strength `Ali (a.s) picked up a heavy door and used it as a shield! This door was so heavy that later on eight persons were not able to

:lift it. Therefore, Abū-Rafi` says

p: ۳۱۴

I had seven men with me, and I was the eighth. We tried our best to turn that door“
[but we were unable to do that!”[۱۰

Umar too was much surprised at the incident. Therefore, he told `Ali (a.s) that he `
:picked up very heavy load. `Ali (a.s) replied

[It did not seem heavier than my own shield to me!”[۱۱“

The Jews got scared with this show of strength and locked themselves inside the fort.
`Ali (a.s) went forward and with one jerk both the shutters of the gate of the fort
came in his hands. This incredible strength was nothing but Divine Strength!
:Therefore, `Ali (a.s) himself said

I did not break the gate of the fort of Khaybar with my own human strength. But it“
[was the Divine Strength that helped me!”[۱۲

If someone does some service in the cause of Islam, it is a grave crime to attribute it
to someone else! But this kept happening in the annals of Islamic history for the craze
for power. Therefore, about the event of Khaybar too such attempts, however
unsuccessful, have been made. They have concocted a tradition in the name of Jabir
ibn `Abdullah al-Ansari, who was not even present in Khaybar at that time, that
Marhab was killed by Muhammad ibn Maslamah al-Ansari! This they do blatantly,
despite all the major historians are witness to the fact that Marhab was killed, while
battling with `Ali (a.s), by the Imam (a.s) himself! Whether Muhammad ibn
Maslamah’s name has ever been mentioned in the histories as a man of valor, his
name is certainly there with those of persons who refused to owe allegiance to `Ali
(a.s) and openly opposed him! Perhaps this attitude of Ibn Maslamah prompted the
adversaries of the Imam (a.s) to concoct the story! If Muhammad ibn Maslamah was
really the killer of Marhab, then histories should have recognized him as the
conqueror of Khaybar. Overpowering, and eliminating, Marhab was like overpowering
Khaybar! If Ibn Maslamah is recognized by the historians as the conqueror of
Khaybar, then they shall have to think of the Prophet’s tradition wherein he said,
“Allah will give conquest at his hands.” It is unanimously accepted that these words
were uttered by the Prophet (a.s) about `Ali (a.s). How could one imagine that the

Prophet (a.s), through his Divine Knowledge, forecasts the name of the victor, and
!some people concoct stories to credit the event to someone else

p: ۳۱۵

Although the tribes of the Jews had made agreements of peace and cooperation with the Prophet (a.s), whenever they got an opportunity they never abstained from mischief. As a result they were banished from al-Madinah. Even after leaving al-Madinah their activities continued. There was no other alternative left than giving them punitive punishment. The battle was a result of all these events in which fifteen Muslims lost their lives and ninety-two Jews were killed. Women were taken captive, of whom there was Huyay ibn Akhtab's daughter who was Safiyyah whom the Prophet (a.s) married. The other Jews were released on conditions that they worked as farm hands on the lands of Khaybar and shared half of the produce with the Muslims.

Khaybar was a very fertile area and it used to cater to a major portion of the food requirement of the Hijaz Province of Arabia. When this area came under the control of the Muslims, it brought economic prosperity to them. The Muhajirūn, who were living in penury after leaving Makkah, found avenues to improve their lot. `Abdullah ibn `Umar said:

“After the conquest of Khaybar, we got the ability and means to have our square [meals.]” [١٣]

:Umm al-Mu'minin `A'ishah says

“[When Khaybar was captured, we thought that we would eat the dates to our fill!”] [١٤]

Buladhari writes in Futūh al-Buldan that from the produce of Khaybar, each of the spouses of the Prophet (a.s) was getting eighty wasq of dates and twenty wasq of barley.

Although there was a large number of foot soldiers in the campaign, the victory was only at the hands of `Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s)! Although others too attempted to fight with the standard in their hands, they turned their backs away from the arena! After getting repeatedly repulsed, the Prophet (a.s) declared that he would give the standard in the hands of the victor on the morrow! There was high expectancy among the Companions, but the victor, as decided by Allah and his Prophet (a.s) was `Ali ibn

!Abi-Talib (a.s

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Footnote

Sahīh Muslim, Vol ١, Page ٤٥٩ [١]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٣٠٠ [٢]

Tārīkh al-Khamīs, Vol ٢, Page ٥٣ [٣]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٢, Page ١٤٩ [٤]

Sahīh al-Bukhārī, Vol ١, Page ٥٢٥ [٥]

Tabaqāt Ibn Sa`d, Vol ٢, Page ٤٨ [٦]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٣٠٠ [٧]

Tārīkh al-Khamīs, Vol ٢, Page ٤٨ [٨]

Tārīkh al-Khamīs, Vol ٢, Page ٥٠ [٩]

Sīrat Ibn Hushām, Vol ٣, Page ٣٥ [١٠]

Al-Manāqib, Vol ١, Page ٤٤٤ [١١]

Tārīkh al-Khamīs, Vol ٢, Page ٥١ [١٢]

Sahīh al-Bukhārī, Vol ٢, Page ٤٠ [١٣]

Sahīh al-Bukhārī, Vol ٢, Page ٤٠ [١٤]

THE LAND OF FADAK

THE LAND OF FADAK

Fadak is on the outskirts of Khaybar. It is a fertile and lush green settlement where Fadak ibn Ham was the first to pitch his tents. The place was therefore named after him. Like Khaybar, here too the Jews lived. They organized the irrigation facility and :made the barren land bloom! Yaqūt al-Hamawi writes

[This land had bubbling ponds and many oases.]“

After the conquest of Khaybar, the people living in the neighborhood owed allegiance to the Muslims without any conflict. The inhabitants of Fadak too surrendered the proprietary rights over the land and entered into an agreement to share the produce equally with the Muslims. Therefore, they sent word to the Prophet (a.s) that they had no intention of fighting and they were willing to accept the same conditions as were imposed on the people of Khaybar. The Prophet (a.s) accepted their offer and sent `Ali (a.s) to finalize the agreement with their chief, Yūsha` ibn Nūn. After the discussions, it was agreed that the people of Fadak would forego the proprietary rights over the land, until it and share the crop equally with the Prophet (a.s). By virtue of the agreement, the Land of Fadak became the property of the Prophet (a.s) because the land that was acquired without any fight or conflict, in terms of the Islamic Law, vested with the Prophet (a.s). Therefore, the Holy Qur'an says

وَمَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْهُمْ فَمَا أَوْجَفْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ خَيْلٍ وَلَا رِكَابٍ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَلِّطُ رُسُلَهُ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

And whatever Allah restored to His Messenger from them, you did not press forward against it any horse or a riding camel but Allah gives authority to His messengers against whom He pleases, and Allah has power over all things

The territories that are annexed through warfare are termed as ghanimah or Booty. The land and property that is acquired without any war or conflict is called fay' or anfal. The land of Fadak too came in the category of anfal because it was acquired without any physical conflict. Therefore, it was the personal property of the Prophet (a.s) on which the other Muslims had no right. Al-Tabari writes

Fadak was the exclusive property of the Prophet (a.s) because the Muslims neither“ [ran their camels over it nor the horses!”[۲

:Al-Buladhari writes

Fadak was an exclusive property of the Prophet (a.s) because the Muslims neither“ [ran their camels nor the horses over it.”[۳

:Yaqūt al-Hamawi writes

This village Allah gave to the Prophet (a.s) in the seventh century as a consequence“ [of the truce.”[۴

After the clear Commandment of the Qur'an and the recorded history of the event by the reputed chroniclers, the fact is established that Fadak was the exclusive property of the Prophet (a.s). Therefore, in exercise of this right, he had transferred this property to Fatimah al-Zahra' (a.s) during his lifetime through a written deed.

:` Allamah Jalal al-Din al-Suyūti writes about it

Ibn Mardawayh has quoted from Ibn `Abbas that when the Verse, ‘O Prophet! Give“
[the right of your kin to them’ was revealed, he transferred Fadak to Fatimah (a.s).”[٥

:Thana’ullah, the judge, writes

Al-tabarani and others have quoted from Abū-Sa`id al-Khidri that when the Verse, ‘O“
Prophet! Transfer the rights of your kin to them’ was revealed, the Prophet (a.s) called
[Fatimah al-Zahra’ (a.s) and gave Fadak to her.”[٦

Thereafter, until the Prophet (a.s) lived, the land of Fadak was in the possession of
:Fatimah al-Zahra’ (a.s). Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s), mentions about it in his letter

Under this sky we had only the land of Fadak in our possession. Even on that, the“
[mouths of some persons were watering! The Best Judge is Allah!”[٧

But after the demise of the Prophet (a.s), for certain ‘reasons of State’ the Land of
Fadak was taken away from Fatimah (a.s). She went in appeal against this, but her
claim was rejected! We shall deal with this matter in detail in a subsequent chapter.
The pity is that the person against whom the appeal was preferred was also sitting in
!judgment

This travesty of justice and fairplay resulted in Fatimah (a.s) not being accepted as the
owner of the Land of Fadak despite holding the transfer deed nor in terms of her
being the rightful successor to the inheritance of her father, Muhammad (a.s)! She
was so upset with this injustice that she boycotted the person responsible for the act
!and did not talk to him until her death

Mu`jam al-Buldān, Vol ١٤, Page ٣٣٨ [١]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٣٠٢ [٢]

Futūh al-Buldān, Page ٢٧ [٣]

Mu`jam al-Buldān, Vol ١٤, Page ٢٣٨ [٤]

.Al-Durr al-Manthūr, Vol ٤, Page ١٧٧ [٥]

Tafsīr al-Ma`harī, Vol ٥, Page ٤٣٢ [٦]

Nahj al-Balāghah [٧]

THE CONQUEST OF MAKKAH

THE CONQUEST OF MAKKAH

At al-Hudaybiyah, a truce was declared between the Quraysh and the Muslims that both the parties will not indulge in fighting for the next ten years. If one of the parties infringed the agreement, then the other will not be bound by the terms. One of the tribes having a treaty with the Muslims, Banū-Khuza`ah and a tribe having a treaty with the Quraysh, Banū-Bakr, had been at loggerheads for long, but because of the wars between the Quraysh and the Muslims they were quiet for some time. They had both kept aside their differences and were united against the Muslims. When the long truce between the Quraysh and the Muslims became effective, Banū-Bakr attacked Banū-Khuza`ah and killed one of their men. The suppressed animosity was revived. Although Banū-Bakr was sufficient to deal with Banū-Khuza`ah, Quraysh supplied arms to Banū-Bakr. This was an infringement of the truce with the Muslims. Also, `Ikrimah ibn Abi-Jahl, Safwan ibn Umayyah and Suhayl ibn `Amr who were the signatories to the treaty with the Muslims took active part in the conflict between the two tribes in favor of Banū-Bakr. Banū-Khuza`ah took shelter in the Ka`bah to save their lives. Even there they were attacked and killed. When they were helpless, a delegation of forty persons from Banū-Khuza`ah under the leadership of `Amr ibn

Salem went to the Prophet (a.s) in al-Madinah and lodged a protest that the Quraysh had infringed the truce taking part in the hostilities and supplying arms to Banū-Bakr against them, the vassals of the Muslims. The Prophet (a.s) agreed to provide help to them. He sent a message to the Quraysh to give the blood money to Banū-Khuza`ah for their lives lost during the conflict or abstain from aiding and abetting Banū-Bakr, or otherwise their treaty with the Muslims would become void. Quraysh refused to abide by the suggestions and said plainly that neither they would give the blood money nor they will abstain from helping Banū-Bakr. Because of this stubborn attitude of the Quraysh, the Prophet (a.s) made a public declaration that there was no more a treaty .of peace with the Quraysh

After this announcement by the Prophet (a.s), the Quraysh were restless. They started brooding over the consequences of their infringement of the terms of the truce. Realizing that they were incapable of meeting the onslaught of the Muslims, they started planning to keep the truce intact. Therefore, they deputed Abū-Sufyan to al-Madinah to negotiate and diplomatically save the situation. When he arrived at al-Madinah, Abū-Sufyan went straight to his daughter Ummu-Habibah who was one of the spouses of the Prophet (a.s). When Ummu-Habibah saw her father coming, she quickly folded the bedding of the Prophet (a.s). When Abū-Sufyan asked her why she moved away the bedding, Ummu-Habibah said that it was the bedding of the Prophet (a.s) and she would not like him to sit on that because he was an infidel and idolater. Abū-Sufyan went away from there with an unpleasant mood. He went to the Prophet (a.s) and requested him to renew the treaty for truce with the Quraysh. The Prophet (a.s) did not pay heed to any of his arguments. He sat there for a while and went to Abū-Bakr and asked him to recommend to the Prophet (a.s) for renewing the treaty. Abū-Bakr expressed his inability to help. He then went to `Umar and he too excused himself. When he was disappointed everywhere, he went to `Ali (a.s) and sought his help in the matter. He said that when the Prophet (a.s) arrives at a decision, none else has the right to interfere with it. Abū-Sufyan told Fatimah (a.s), who was sitting there, "O daughter! If your son, Hasan (a.s), intervenes and gets the truce renewed he will be called as the Chief of Arabs until the world exists." She replied, "Hasan (a.s) is still a child and has nothing to do with these matters!" In the end he told `Ali (a.s) that if he cannot help, he must at least suggest what the Quraysh should do to save the situation. `Ali (a.s) suggested to Abū-Sufyan to make an announcement for renewal of the truce and go away to Makkah! Abū-Sufyan asked what benefit such an announcement will bring to the Quraysh? He replied that it could not be predicted whether the declaration would be of any advantage to the Quraysh or not. Any way, Abū-Sufyan did go to the mosque and made a public announcement that the Quraysh were unilaterally renewing their truce of peace with the Muslims. After this announcement, he went away to Makkah

When he reached Makkah, people asked him what was the result of his visit to al-Madinah? He said that he had a discussion with the Prophet (a.s) but he would not agree to renew the truce. Then he told about going to Abū-Quhafah and `Umar ibn al-Khattab and getting no help. He said that he went to `Ali (a.s) who listened to him with attention and only on his suggestion he had made a unilateral public announcement of renewal of the truce by the Quraysh. The Quraysh asked whether the Prophet (a.s) approved of this measure. Abū-Sufyan said that he did not have the approval of the Prophet (a.s) for the renewal. The Quraysh said that any declaration of a truce has at least two consenting parties, if the other party has not agreed there is no sense in your announcement. `Ali (a.s) has pulled a fast one on you

The Prophet (a.s) was much affected with the bloodshed caused by Banū-Bakr and in terms of the agreements, he was bound to come to the rescue of Banū-Khuza`ah. Therefore, he asked his people to be ready for battle and asked others outside of al-Madinah to prepare for joining the troops. People started arriving in numbers on the call of the Prophet (a.s) and started preparing the arms for the fight. But none knew where they had to go for the fight! The Prophet (a.s) took full care to see that the Quraysh did not learn about these preparations to take them on unawares! The Companions who knew about the program were strictly warned to keep their confidence. But Hatib ibn Balta`ah, whose family was in Makkah, committed the mistake of revealing the secret by writing a letter to `Amr ibn `Abd al-Muttalib and sending it to him through his slave girl. In the letter, he mentioned that the Prophet (a.s) was preparing to attack Makkah. The Prophet (a.s) learned about this betrayal through a Revelation. He sent `Ali (a.s) and al-Zubayr ibn al-`Awwam to intercept the girl and bring her back to al-Madinah. She had only reached the Valley of Dhul-Halifah when she was captured. `Ali (a.s) asked her about the letter, but she flatly refused any knowledge about it. Al-Zubayr rummaged her belongings but did not find the letter. `Ali (a.s) said that it was not possible that she did not have the letter when the Prophet (a.s) had informed them about it. There is no question of a wrong statement from him. He sternly questioned the girl and told her that if she did not produce the letter a search of her clothes would be made. Because of this threat, she produced it from the hair of her head. `Ali (a.s) went with the letter to the Prophet (a.s) and

reported to him about the entire episode. The Prophet (a.s) assembled all the Companions and told them that he had warned everyone to maintain the secrecy about the entire operation. But one of them tried to unsuccessfully reveal the secret to the Quraysh. The letter written in this connection has been intercepted and, therefore, the person should own his guilt. Otherwise, he might be put to grave shame! Hearing this, Hatib stood up shaking and said, "O Prophet of Allah (a.s)! I am the guilty person. I have not done it for the friendship of the Quraysh or enmity for Islam. I thought that I would be able to secure my children by earning the gratitude of the Quraysh. My family is living in Makkah at their mercy. `Umar angrily rose up and
:said

[O Prophet of Allah! Permit me that I cut away his head. He is a hypocrite!]"[۱]

But the Prophet (a.s) forgave the person. The Holy Qur'an mentions about the episode

...تُسْرُونَ إِلَيْهِمْ بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ بِمَا أَخْفَيْتُمْ وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْهُ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ.

would you manifest love to them? And I know what you conceal and what you... manifest; and whoever of you does this, he indeed has gone astray from the straight (path. (۶۰:۱)

On the tenth of Ramadan ۶ A.H., the prophet (a.s) marched with one hundred thousand strong army of armed men Four hundred companions were on horses and the rest were footmen. When the army reached Ghadir, the prophet (a.s) asked the men to break their fasts and he too did the same. Some people hesitated in doing it. When the Prophet (a.s) learnt about it, he said that they were sinners. After this everyone broke his fast. When they reached Thaniyyat al-`Uqab, the Prophet's uncle, `Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib, met him along his family members. `Abbas sent his family to al-Madinah and himself joined the entourage of the Prophet (a.s). Twelve miles before Makkah, the Prophet (a.s) established camp. `Abbas came out riding on the mule of the Prophet (a.s) to find a person who could go to the Quraysh to tell them to come to the camp and appeal for amnesty. He also suggested to them that they embrace Islam and save themselves from destruction. After the unsuccessful visit of Abū-Sufyan to al-Madinah the Quraysh had the fear that the Muslims would come anytime to settle scores with them. Therefore, they used to remain alert during the nights to quell any surprise attack in the darkness of the night. With this purpose Abū-Sufyan, Hakim ibn Hizam and Badil ibn Warqa' were on rounds of the outskirts of Makkah when they noticed lights of fire at a distance in the direction of Marj al-Dharan. Abū-Sufyan asked who these people could be? Badil ibn Warqa' said it could be the troops of Banū-Khuza`ah. Abū-Sufyan said that Banū-Khuza`ah had no means to mobilize such a huge army. They were still discussing the matter when they met `Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib. Abū-Sufyan asked him if he knew about the army at some distance from there. He replied that it was the army of the Prophet of Islam

(a.s). The Prophet (a.s) was marching towards Makkah with an army of one hundred thousand men and might attack with the dawn! He said none from the Quraysh will survive this onslaught. Hearing this, Abū-Sufyan shivered and asked what should be done to save themselves. `Abbas asked him to sit on his mule behind him and that he will get him amnesty by talking to the prophet. When `Abbas passed through the army with Abū-Sufyan, `Umar espied them and he went running to the Prophet (a.s) and told him that the enemy of Allah was coming. He asked for his permission that he would kill him. When `Abbas heard `Umar stressing on killing of Abū-Sufyan, he said

Stop O `Umar! You are saying this because he is from the progeny of `Abd-Manaf. If“
[he was from your tribe, Banū-`Adi, you would never have uttered any such thing.”[Y

The Prophet (a.s) told `Abbas to keep Abū-Sufyan in his tent and fetch him to his presence in the morning. When he was brought in the morning, the Prophet (a.s) said, “O Abū-Sufyan! You have still not understood that besides Allah, there is no other god!” Abū-Sufyan replied that it seemed like it. If there were any other god than Allah, he would come to their rescue. The Prophet (a.s) said, “You have still not understood that I am the Prophet of Allah (a.s)?” Abū-Sufyan replied that his mind was not clear about it! `Abbas told Abū-Sufyan that if he cared for his life, he should embrace Islam or else someone would kill him. When he saw that there was no other way, he recited the kalimah and joined the ranks of Muslims. `Abbas recommended that Abū-Sufyan loved pomp and show and that he may be given some important position. The Prophet (a.s) said that whoever took shelter in his house will have amnesty and those who take shelter in the al-Bayt al-Haram too will have amnesty. Those who lock themselves up in their homes too shall be safe. The Prophet (a.s) asked `Abbas to take Abū-Sufyan to such a spot that he could have a birds eye view of the vast army! `Abbas took him to a place from where he saw the well armed troops, row after row! He told `Abbas, “Your nephew has become the ruler of a great Empire!” `Abbas replied,” it is not an empire. It is only the grandeur of the prophethood!” Abū-Sufyan
”!added, “I did not remember when I made the remark! It must be as you say

After seeing the army of Islam, Abū-Sufyan returned to Makkah. He told the Quraysh that Muhammad (a.s) had come with a huge army. People asked him if he had been there. What has he said? Abū-Sufyan informed them that the Prophet (a.s) had told him that those who took shelter in Abū-Sufyan's house will have amnesty. The people said that his house was not big enough to take lot of people. He then told that those who took shelter in the al-Bayt al-Haram too would have amnesty. He then addressed the Quraysh and told them that they are not strong enough to fight the Muslims. It would be better for them if they embraced Islam. His wife, Hind bint `Utbah, hearing this came forward and caught hold of his beard and said, "O people! Kill this foolish old man!" Abū-Sufyan told her, "remember! If you hesitate slightly in embracing Islam, you will lose your head!" The Quraysh were still brooding over the matter in surprise .when Sa`d ibn `Abadah entered Makkah carrying the Standard of Islam

The words that Sa`d was uttering were manifesting his desire to avenge the atrocities that the Quraysh had inflicted on the Muslims and that he will advance killing people and letting their blood. `Abbas told the Prophet (a.s) that Sa`d had intentions to harm the people. The Prophet (a.s) had no plan to enter into unnecessary fights. He :therefore asked `Ali (a.s) to

[Go to Sa`d, take the Standard from him and enter Makkah!]"[۳۴

Ali (a.s) took the Standard from Sa`d and marched into Makkah with the army behind him. Quraysh had no courage left to encounter the huge army. They locked themselves up at homes. For those who had the doors of Makkah closed for them yesterday, the doors of victory and success were wide open today. This was a victory of Islam's love for peace and amity! For this victory they did not have to fight any battles. But in every group there will be some trouble makers. They cannot live without being harsh to their adversaries. Therefore, Khalid ibn al-Walid, who had embraced Islam just before the conquest of Makkah, and Islam has not yet brought about any change in his thinking, while passing through the lower reaches of Makkah, started fighting with Banū-Bakr. The Prophet (a.s), passing through the Mount Hajūn, noticed the shining of the blades of swords. This upset him very much. He ordered, "This bloodshed must be stopped forthwith!" But many men from Banū-Bakr were

already killed. When the Prophet (a.s) arrived from the upper reaches of Makkah, he came to the Ka`bah and circumambulated it. He noticed that the chiefs of the Quraysh were standing with bowed heads. These were the persons who did everything possible to harm the Prophet (a.s). they pushed him away from home and did not let him live in peace even in exile. He looked at them and asked what treatment they expected from the Muslims? They put their heads further down in shame! The Speaker of Quraysh, Suhayl ibn `Amr said, "You are the son of a noble brother and a noble uncle! We only expect good from you!" The Prophet (a.s) replied, "Today there will be no revenge taken on you! Go! You are all free!" This was the manifestation of the noble character and broadmindedness of the Prophet (a.s). Those who were his deadly enemies embraced Islam. Yesterday's orphan was today's ruler who not only ruled their bodies but also their hearts! The hegemony of Quraysh had vanished in thin air and infidelity died its own death

Although the men of Makkah embraced Islam and some of them were already having the seeds of Faith in their minds, but certainly, there was a vast majority of persons who had embraced Islam in their helplessness. Sudden change in the Faith and beliefs is difficult for the human nature. There were also some who were adamantly infidel. Many of them escaped from Makkah and were hiding elsewhere. They would have proved dangerous for Islam. Therefore, it was necessary to mete out to them punitive punishment. Although the Prophet (a.s) had declared general amnesty, he issued orders for some mischief mongers to be executed wherever they were found, even if they were hanging from the cover of the Ka`bah. Therefore, `Abdullah ibn Khatal and his slave girl who used to sing lampooning songs against the Prophet (a.s), Huwayris ibn Nuqayd and Mughith ibn Sabbabah were executed. Some persons were pardoned from orders of execution as well. Therefore `Abdullah ibn Abi-Sarh took shelter with `Uthman and was released on his recommendation. `Ikrimah ibn Abi-Jahl escaped towards Yemen. His wife Umm Hakim appealed for amnesty for him, that was granted. Habar ibn al-Aswad, `Amr ibn `Abd al-Muttalib's slave girl Sara and Khatal's slave girl saved themselves by embracing Islam. Besides these some other persons were hiding in Makkah with the intention of creating trouble. `Ali (a.s) heard that al-Harith ibn Husham and Qays ibn al-Sa'ib and some persons of Banū-Makhzūm were there in the house of Ummu-Hani' bint Abi-Talib. He came to her house and asked that those hiding inside must be handed over. Ummu-Hani' could not recognize `Ali (a.s). She said, "O person! I am the real sister of `Ali (a.s) and the daughter of Muhammad's uncle! If you force me to surrender those whom I have given shelter, I shall complain to the Prophet (a.s). Now `Ali (a.s) removed the hood from his head when Ummu-Hani' recognized him. She ran close to him and said that she had already resolved to complain to the Prophet (a.s). He said, "You may keep your resolution by complaining to the Prophet (a.s)! Ummu-Hani' then came to the Prophet (a.s). The Prophet (a.s) asked her the reason for her visit. She said, "O Prophet of Allah! I have given shelter to some people from my husband's family. `Ali (a.s) wants to take them in custody!" The Prophet (a.s) said, "To whomsoever you gave shelter, I have given

"shelter

About the events of the conquest of Makkah, `Ali's attitude had been exemplary at all stages. He preferred obedience to the Prophet (a.s) over everything else. This attitude was so much engrained in his nature that everything he thought and did was a reflection of the actions of the Prophet (a.s). He was the keeper of the confidences of the Prophet (a.s) about the campaign for the conquest of Makkah and he never opened his mouth ever to assert his own importance when a Companion who was there at the Battle of Badr and at bay` at al-ridwan tried to reveal the secret to save his family from the Quraysh in Makkah. When Abū-Sufyan consulted him regarding the renewal of the truce with Quraysh, unlike Abū-Bakr and `Umar he adopted a soft, discreet attitude in denying to intercede with the Prophet (a.s) that was acknowledged by Abū-Sufyan on his return to Makkah. This was the reason that he had not returned to Makkah totally dissatisfied about his efforts at renewing the truce. If this were not the case, he would certainly have stressed that the Muslims might soon attack them. In that event, all efforts at keeping the plans of the attack confidential would have been futile. Then `Ali (a.s) also hinted to Abū-Sufyan that there was no guarantee that if he made unilateral announcement of renewal of the truce, whether it would be of any advantage or not. This advice by `Ali (a.s) to Abū-Sufyan appeared as if he wanted to momentarily shake him away. But even then Abū-Sufyan was grateful and .did acknowledge it when he returned to Makkah

During this campaign too the Standard of Victory was in the hands of `Ali (a.s) like in all other battles. Although in the beginning the Standard was given to Sa`d ibn `Abadah, but when his attitude was seen to be harsh and revengeful, the Prophet (a.s) took away the Standard from him and gave to `Ali (a.s). If the Prophet (a.s) had given the Standard to anyone other than `Ali (a.s), Sa`d would have deemed it a personal affront and might have hesitated to hand over the Standard But giving it to `Ali (a.s) was like giving it back to the Prophet (a.s) himself. `Ali (a.s) had the capability of handling matters both at war and during the peace times. One cannot even imagine that he would do anything under momentary emotions. It is an attractive aspect of his character that when at war, he is an adept warrior and in peace, he is so soft and pliable that he never took part in any warlike actions

Here, he also manifested his attitude of following the rules. He did not want to spare even the persons who took shelter in his own sister's house until the Prophet (a.s) himself ruled on the matter. This shows that in the enforcement of the law there was no dividing line between kin, friend or foe

Footnote

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۳۲۸ [۱]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۳۳۱ [۲]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۲, Page ۱۶۶ [۳]

PURIFICATION OF THE KA`BAH

p: ۳۲۸

Amr ibn Laha al-Khuza`i had seen the `Amaliqah (the giants) worshipping idols in the` year ۲۰۷ A.D. in Egypt and Syria. He did not find any advantage in idol-worship, but he liked the art of carving of the idols. He brought some of the idols to Makkah and installed them in the Ka`bah. In time, Makkah became a centre of idolatry. The biggest idol of the Quraysh was Hubal which was installed at the highest point in the Ka`bah. Around it there were kept hundreds of idols tied to each other. Out of the three hundred and sixty days of the year, one day was earmarked for the veneration of one particular idol. In emulation of the people of Makkah, the people in the surrounding areas too were attracted to idol worship. When they visited the Ka`bah during the Hajj, they would take home stones from there and carve out idols for themselves in the shape of the idols in Makkah. This way every tribe of Arabia had its own idols. About one stage away from Makkah, a place called Naqlah had an idol by name al-`Uzza. This place was venerated by the Quraysh and Banū-Kinana. In Ta`if there was the idol of al-Lat. At some distance from al-Madinah there was Manat that was the god of Aws, Khazraj and Ghassan. For the Hamdan tribe of Najran the idol for worship was Ya`ūq. In Yanbu` and its environs the idol of Hudhayl, Sawah was installed. In Dawmat al-Jandal Banū-Kalab's god, Wudd was installed. Some isolators considered these idols as the representatives of one and only God. They used to pray and ask for boons from these inanimate idols! They were unable to understand that those inanimate pieces of stone had no power to grant their wishes or save them from the natural calamities! They used to say that through them they were able to reach closer to God! The Holy Qur'an also records their thoughts

وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَى ...

And as for those who take guardians besides Him, saying, We do not serve them“
(save that they may make us nearer to Allah... (۳۹:۳

The purpose for annexing Makkah was not that the Prophet (a.s) wanted to expand his territory and get termed as a conquer. The main purpose was to abolish idolatry and spread the message of Unity of Allah. After subduing Makkah the first step was to give attention to the destruction of the idols in the Ka`bah. Although there was the risk of the Quraysh rising against this step, the Prophet (a.s) decided to go ahead with the performance of his duty against all possible odds. First he erased the paintings of the prophets and the angels from the walls of Ka`bah. Then, along with `Ali (a.s), he destroyed the idols put at the lower levels of the Ka`bah. Now was the turn of the bigger idols at higher level. The Prophet (a.s) told `Ali (a.s) that he would climb on his shoulders to reach the idols. He did climb but he felt weakness and came down. He now asked `Ali (a.s) to climb on his shoulders and perform the task. `Ali (a.s) went up the shoulders of the Prophet (a.s) and besides the smaller idols he destroyed the big Hubal that was installed on a foundation of steel rods. He pulled it with such strength that it crashed to the ground and shattered to pieces. It would have been such a pathetic scene for the Quraysh that until the other day they were worshiping the idol
!that was lying today shattered on the ground

Ali (a.s), after breaking this big idol, dropped down to the ground and smilingly told` the Prophet (a.s), "I have jumped form such height but was not hurt a little!" The Prophet (a.s) replied, "How could you get hurt when Muhammad (a.s) raised you and Jibril (Archangel Gabriel) helped you down!" This was the greatness of `Ali (a.s)! In other words, this was the Mi`raj (Ascension) on the shoulders of the one who had the :privilege of the Real Mi`raj. `Ali (a.s) himself has said

"!If I wished, I could have touched the heights of the sky"

There were other people too with the Prophet (a.s) at that time. This task could have been entrusted to any other person by the Prophet (a.s). But the Prophet (a.s) did not want any one else to be associated with the work of the purification of the Ka`bah. The reason was that `Ali (a.s) had never bowed down before the idols in the past and always prostrated before Allah, the Real Creator! Other persons, at some time in their past lives, were idolaters! If they were asked to destroy the idols, they might have hesitated in performing the task. One example is the people of Ta'if, who, even after embracing Islam, did not like to break the idol with their own hands. Therefore, when they embraced Islam at the hands of the Prophet (a.s), they requested him to leave their idols untouched for one year. When the Prophet (a.s) turned down their request, they refused to break the idols with their own hands and wanted someone else to do !the task

After the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet (a.s) was still there when he arranged to send delegations to various places in the neighborhood to propagate the Message of Islam. For this purpose Khalid ibn al-Walid was sent to Judhaymah with a group of three hundred and fifty persons. He was strictly told not to pick up a fight with anyone. He was asked to restrict himself to the task of propagating the Faith. Ibn Sa`d writes

The Prophet (a.s) sent Khalid ibn al-Walid to Banū-Judhaymah to propagate the“
[Message of Islam and not to fight with them.”][1]

In the period before Islam, Khalid's uncle, Fakhrah ibn Mughirah and `Abd al-Rahman's father `Awf were killed by some youths of Banū-Judhaymah on their return journey from Yemen. The Quraysh, to avenge these killings, attacked them, but they paid the blood money and settled the claim. Now that Khalid chanced to go there at the head of the delegation, his desire for revenge revived and he could not control himself from fulfilling his vile wish. When the party reached the Well of Ghumayda', at a distance of two stages from Makkah, they broke journey there. This well was the property of Banū-Judhaymah and they lived in its environs. When they saw Khalid camping with his men near the well, they feared that he intended to fight with them. They therefore armed themselves and got ready to fight. When Khalid saw them in readiness to fight, he asked them who they were. They replied that they were Muslims; they had constructed a mosque in their neighborhood, given regular call (adhan) for prayer and regularly offer prayers in the mosque! Khalid said that if they were Muslims, why they were carrying arms with them. They expressed their fear that on account of the past enmity, he might start fighting with them. He assured them that he had no intention of fighting and asked them to unarm themselves. They
:replied

[When we are Muslims, we shall not take to arms against Allah and His Prophet”[۱۶“

Saying this, they started unarming themselves. One person from their tribe, Jahdam, asked them to think before they unarmed. He thought that after disarming them, Khalid would tie them up and then execute them to death. He said that in no event he would disarm and wanted his people to do the same. His people told him the period of battles was over and they should not disturb the peace again. They said that Khalid was now a Muslim and there was no need to fear him. Thus, they all removed their arms and kept them aside. When Khalid saw them unarmed, he asked his men to charge and overwhelm them. He asked the men, who were mostly from his own tribe, to tie them securely with ropes and confiscate their arms. Then he got them executed one after the other. ` Abd al-Rahman ibn ` Awf, who was a member of the delegation, was very upset with the act of Khalid. Both had an altercation and ` Abd al-Rahman said, “You have committed an act of the period of ignorance in the times of Islam!” Khalid said, “I have avenged your father ` Awf!” ` Abd al-Rahman said, “You are a liar! I have myself killed my father’s killer! You have avenged the killing of your own uncle

[Fakihah ibn Mughirah!”[۱۷“

:The historian Al-Ya` qūbi writes

Abd al-Rahman ibn ` Awf said, “By Allah! Khalid has killed those persons who had` embraced Islam!” Khalid told him, “I have avenged the killing of your father ` Awf!” ` Abd al-Rahman said, “You have only avenged the killing of your uncle Fakihah ibn

[Mughirah!”[۱۸“

When the Prophet (a.s) learned about the killing of the people of Banū-Judhaymah, he
:was very sad, turned towards the Ka`bah and said

O Allah! I express in Your Presence my displeasure over the act of Khalid ibn al-“
[Walid.”][۵

Then he asked `Ali (a.s) to go with the cash received from Yemen to Banū-Judhaymah
at the well of Ghumayda’ and pay the blood money for every life lost by them. `Ali
(a.s) went there, paid the blood money to every family and made good their losses. In
the end he asked, if they had any more claims. They said they did not have any further
claims. Then `Ali (a.s) said that some more money was left with him and he did not
,want to take it back. Therefore

he distributed the money to them on behalf of the Prophet (a.s). After completing the
:task, he returned to the Prophet (a.s) and reported on the visit. The Prophet (a.s) said

I sacrifice my father and mother on you! I liked what you have done more than the“
[red haired camels!”][۶

The act of Khalid ibn al-Walid was absolutely against the norms of Islam. Islam does
not permit killing even an infidel without valid reason. Even in the arena of battle, if an
infidel recites the kalimah, he should not be attacked. Once Usamah ibn Zayd killed a
person when, during the battle, he had recited the kalimah. When the Prophet (a.s)
learnt about this, he reprimanded Usamah. Usamah said that the person had recited
the kalimah out of the fear of the sword. The Prophet (a.s) said angrily, “Did you peep
into the heart of the person?” Imagine killing of Banū-Ghumayda’ by Khalid, who had
built a mosque and offered prayers, only to avenge a killing of his relative during the
Period of Ignorance! At the time of the Conquest of Makkah the Prophet (a.s)
abolished the practice of avenging killings that was prevalent in the Period of
:Ignorance, saying

The avenging of blood, the tribal pride and unnecessary shedding of blood of the“
[Period of Ignorance I have trampled under my feet!”[۷]

After the sad killings, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) not only paid the blood money for every life lost, but paid them more than their legitimate right. If their feelings were not ameliorated in these manners, there was a danger of their recanting the Faith because they had newly embraced Islam. The heinous act of Khalid could have had a very bad effect on the others who were still brooding over the prospect of coming into the fold of Islam. The healing touch of the prophet (a.s) and `Ali (a.s) had a salutary effect on the people

Footnote

Al-Tabaqāt, Vol ۲, Page ۱۴۷ [۱]

Tārīkh al-Ya`qūbī, Vol ۳, Page ۴۷ [۲]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۳۲ [۳]

Tārīkh al-Ya`qūbī, Vol ۳, Page ۴۷ [۴]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۲۴۲ [۵]

Tārīkh al-Ya`qūbī, Vol ۲, Page ۴۷ [۶]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۲, Page ۱۷۰ [۷]

THE EXPEDITION OF HUNAYN

THE EXPEDITION OF HUNAYN

During the conquest of Makkah, the Quraysh had laid down arms in front of the Prophet of Islam (a.s) and then the fear of the Muslims became rooted in the minds of the infidel tribes of Arabia. Most of them sought amnesty from the Muslims. But the naughty tribes of Banū-Hawazin and Banū-Thaqif were still rebellious. They were still planning to be mischievous. One of the chiefs of Banū-Hawazin, Malik ibn `Awf al-Nasri, colluded with Banū-Jathm and Banū-Nasr to raise an army for a result oriented

battle with the Muslims. Banū-Thaqif who had once stoned away the Prophet (a.s) from Ta'if joined hands with them. Malik ibn `Awf also sent word to Banū-Sa`d to join hands with them. Banū-Sa`d did not agree with the offer saying that Muhammad (a.s) had his upbringing with them and they would not like to fight with him. But some of their men did join the collaborators. The size of the army reached a total of five thousand. Malik ibn `Awf was named the Commander-in-chief and Abū-Jarwal the standard bearer. They started on the campaign along with their families, children and flocks of animals! In this army was the famous warrior of Arabia, Durayd ibn Samah. His age at the time was ١٢٠ years but he was brought sitting in a litter on the back of a camel to make use of his vast experience of planning the strategies of battle. When the army halted at the Valley of Awtas he said that the place will be suitable for the movement of horses and for undertaking combats! He also said that the place was neither too soft nor very stony. At that moment, he heard the sounds of children and sheep. He enquired of Malik ibn `Awf about the sounds. He informed that women and children too were there with the army. He asked why they were brought with the troops. He was told that with the families and children along, no one will think of showing his back to the battlefield! He said that when the fear of the enemy dominates the minds of the troops, nothing can stop them from running away! If defeat was faced in these circumstances, the shame will not leave them forever! Then he asked, "Are Banū-Kalab and Banū-Ka`b too with you?" He replied that they had not joined with them. The old man said that if luck had favored them, they too would have joined the army! He expressed his frank opinion that they return to their respective habitations! If then the Muslims attacked them, they would be able to defend themselves and other tribes too might come to their rescue against the aggressors. Malik did not agree with his advice. Durayd said that then he would not have anything to do with the campaign! In fact Malik did not want his interference because he would claim credit if the battle was won by them! Therefore, rejecting a wise suggestion, the troops advanced forward to fight

When the Prophet (a.s) learned that Banū-Hawazin and Banū-Thaqif were advancing for a battle with the Muslims, he deputed `Abdullah ibn Hadrad to reconnoiter about their movements. He returned after his investigations and reported to the prophet (a.s) that their intention to battle was very evident and that the Muslims must be ready to repulse their attack. The Prophet (a.s) called `Umar and told him what he had heard from Ibn Abi-Hadrad. `Umar said Ibn Abi-Hadrad cannot be trusted because :he is a liar. At this point Ibn Abi-Hadrad addressed `Umar and said

[O `Umar! If you are refuting me, you were used to refuting the Truth in the past”[۱۰“

The Prophet (a.s) trusted the intelligence of Ibn Abil-Hadrad and ordered the troops to be in readiness. They loaned from Safwan ibn Umayyah, who had not still embraced Islam, a hundred armors and other equipment of war and on ۸ Shawwal ۸H moved with ۱۲,۰۰۰ troops. In this contingent there were ۱۰,۰۰۰ persons who had accompanied him from al-Madinah. The other ۲,۰۰۰ were the recent converts from Makkah. The numerical strength was thrice as much as that of the Infidels. This has created a subtle feeling of pride among the Muslims. Therefore, seeing the strength of the army of Islam, Abū-Bakr said, “Today we shall not face defeat because of paucity of numbers!” The enemy arrived at the Valley of Hunayn and entrenched the men in the crevices and passages of the passages of the hills Hunayn is a valley lying on the hills between Makkah and Ta’if and had plain grounds on one side and ravines and ditches on the other. When the Muslims reached the Valley of Hunayn in the morning, and advanced on the difficult and sloping terrain, the enemy started throwing stones and arrows on them. The Muslims did not expect this sudden attack on them. Pandemonium broke out in the troops. First the Front Guard flew! The commander of the group was Khalid ibn al-Walid! When those coming from behind saw Khalid running away, they too took to their heels! The pandemonium was such that no one bothered about the others. They were all running helter-skelter. Abū-Qutadah who :was one of the deserters said

The Muslims flew! I too flew with them. Suddenly I noticed `Umar Ibn al-Khattab“ among the deserters I asked him, ‘What has happened to the people?’ He replied, ‘It [is Allah’s Wish!’”[۲

The books of Hadith and biographies certainly recorded about this flight, but the Holy :Qur’an too records the incident thus

لَقَدْ نَصَّيْكُمْ اللَّهُ فِي مَوَاطِنَ كَثِيرَةٍ وَيَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ إِذْ أَعْجَبْتُمْكُمْ كَثْرَتُكُمْ فَلَمْ تُغْنِ عَنْكُمْ شَيْئًا وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ ثُمَّ وَلَّيْتُم مَّدْيَنَ.

Certainly Allah helped you in many battlefields and on the day of Hunayn, when your“ great numbers made you vain, but they availed you nothing and the earth became (strait to you notwithstanding its spaciousness, then you turned back retreating. (۹:۲۵

When Abū-Sufyan saw the Muslims running away he said, “Wait! When they are vanquished, they will run to the sea shore!” Kildah ibn Hanbal said, “Today the spell of Islam has been broken!” Some said that al-Lat and Manat had avenged their destruction! Although they were in the army of Islam, but their hearts were not with them. They would certainly have showed their backs if defeat looked into their faces. But the surprising fact was that those who were there at the bay` at al-ridwan and swore to lay down their lives for the Cause chose to fly! Within no time, a major portion of the ۱۲,۰۰۰ men vanished in thin air! Very few persons remained with the Prophet (a.s). According to one narration, only four persons, `Ali (a.s), `Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib, Abū-Sufyan ibn al-Harith and `Abdullah ibn Mas`ūd remained steadfastly with the Prophet (a.s). According to another narration there were ten persons with him, viz: `Ali Ibn Abi-Talib (a.s), `Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib, al-Fadl ibn `Abbas, Abū-Sufyan ibn al-Harith, Rabi` ah ibn al-Harith, `Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr ibn `Abd al-Muttalib, `Utbah and Mu`tah sons of Abū-Lahab and Ayman ibn `Ubayd. The Prophet (a.s) was astride a pony in the battlefield. `Abbas and al-Fadl were standing on the right and left of him. Abū-Sufyan was at the back holding the saddle of the mule and `Ali (a.s) was in the front meeting the attacks of the enemy with his sword. The other persons formed a protective circle around the Prophet (a.s). The enemy’s pressure increased every moment. Malik ibn `Awf came forward to attack the

Prophet (a.s). Ayman ibn `Ubayd countered his attack and was martyred defending.

The history records that in the moment of trial the

:Prophet (a.s) was the most steadfast. He had these words on his lips

”!It is true that I am the Prophet (a.s) I am the son of ` Abd al-Muttalib“

When he saw the Muslims deserting the theatre of war, he turned left and right, and
:called them

”?O Allah’s Creatures! Where are you heading to“

When he found none heeding his call, he turned to his uncle, ` Abbas, and asked him to
:call the deserters in a loud voice. ` Abbas shouted at the top of his voice

”!O men of Ansar! O those who were present at the bay ` at al-ridwan“

On this call, some of the deserters came back. ` Ali (a.s) gathered them under his Standard and advanced to attack the enemy. On the other side, the enemy too was alert. Both the sides attacked each other with swords. Sparks came out of the clashing
:swords. The Prophet (a.s) said

”!The oven of battle is hot now“

The Standard Bearer of Banū-Hawazin, Abū-Jarwal was riding on a camel. He was waving his black flag, and he attacked reciting martial poems. ` Ali (a.s) was looking for a chance to attack him. From the back he hit the legs of the camel with his sword. The camel fell down and Abū-Jarwal was not able to keep his balance. At that moment ` Ali (a.s) gave him such a blow that he was cut into two. With the killing of Abū-Jarwal the morale of the enemy sank low. Their men started running away. The deserters from the Muslim army who were hiding themselves in the crevices of the hills came back and attacked the enemy in unison. Some of the enemy men were killed and others were taken captive. The fight was on when the time for meals arrived. The Prophet (a.s) said that they should stop fighting now and those taken captive should not be executed. But despite this order, two of the captives were killed. One of them was Ibn al-Akwa ` who was functioning as a detective for Banū-Hudhayl during the campaign for conquest of Makkah. When ` Umar found him helpless, he motioned to an al-Ansari to slay him. The other person killed was Jamil ibn Mu ` ammar. He too was killed

by an al-Ansari. When the Prophet (a.s) asked for an explanation from him, he said that `Umar had prompted him to kill the person. The Prophet (a.s) said that he had personally asked them not to kill the captives, looked angrily at `Umar and turned away his face! After some days, on the intervention of `Umayr ibn Wahab, the Prophet (a.s) overlooked that act of `Umar. Similarly, the Prophet (a.s) was disturbed at the killing of a woman. Looking at her dead body, he asked who had killed her. The people informed that it was Khalid ibn al-Walid who killed her. He asked the persons
:to go to him and tell

[The Prophet of Allah (a.s) prohibits you from slaying women, children and laborers.]”[۳“

The war was over but the Muslims continued to chase the infidels. They took custody of the enemy’s animals and materials. They took lot of prisoners of war, among whom were women and children. The Prophet (a.s) wanted one person, Bahad, to be apprehended alive. Therefore, the Muslims held him and his family members. Among the captives was al-Shayma’ bint al-Harith, who was the prophet’s sister by the virtue of her mother being his foster mother during his childhood. When she was put to hardship by the Muslim troops, she told them that she was their Prophet’s foster sister. They did not believe it and brought her to the presence of the Prophet (a.s). She said, “I am al-Shayma’, your foster sister! Once you had bitten my back in your childhood! The mark is still there!” The Prophet (a.s) recognized her and made her sit on his own quilt. He asked her, “Would you like to live with us, or return to your own tribe?” She preferred to get back to her tribe. The prophet (a.s) gave her a slave, one camel and some sheep and sent her away with respect

During this campaign, four Muslims were martyred and seventy infidels were killed. Thousands were taken captive. They got large amount of booty of war. In that, there were ۲۴,۰۰۰ camels, ۴۰,۰۰۰ sheep and lot of silver. The captives and the booty were left in the charge of Badil ibn Warqa’ al-Khuza`i at Valley al-Ju`aranah. Those who were able to escape with their lives went to Ta’if. The chief of Banū-Hawazin, Malik ibn `Awf was among the fugitives who reached Ta’if. One group went to Awtas and another reached Naqlah

Ghazwah of Hunayn was a big trial for the Muslims. In the beginning, they were unable to meet the sudden attack of the enemy. They were under the illusion of the large force they had. If they had exercised care and forethought to the possibility of the enemy troops attacking from the caves and crevices, they would not have faced the initial setbacks. There was also a group of the capitulators of the campaign for conquest of Makkah who were not wholeheartedly participating in the battle. If, during this battle, the prophet (a.s) and his near relations were not steadfast, the battle was nearly lost

In this victory too, `Ali (a.s) played the major part. He never left the company of the Prophet (a.s) for a moment and was fighting the enemy like a shield for his Master. It was his example that brought back many a deserter to the battlefield

Footnote

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۳۴۶ [۱]

Sahīh al-Bukhārī, Vol ۳, Page ۴۵ [۲]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۲, Page ۱۸۰ [۳]

THE SIEGE OF AL-TA'IF

THE SIEGE OF AL-TA'IF

Banū-Thaqif and their chief, Malik ibn `Awf al-Nasri, escaped from Hunayn and took shelter in Ta'if. They kept accumulating the equipment of warfare for one full year and locked themselves up in the fort. The army of Islam, under the command of the Prophet (a.s) chased them and laid siege of the Ta'if Fort. From both sides there was exchange of arrows. The Muslims were in open ground and the Infidels were in the security of the fort. They rained so many arrows from the fort that some of the Muslims got martyred and many more injured. When there was no means of subduing the well-entrenched enemy, Salman al-Farisi came up with the idea of Catapult. With a specially devised catapult they started hurling fairly large stones on the fort. Thus they were able to breach the wall of the fort. When the Muslims tried to enter the fort

through the breach, the infidels threw red-hot iron rods from the top. The Muslims
.were forced to withdraw a little and did not succeed in capturing it

p: ۳۴۰

In the meantime, the Prophet (a.s) asked `Ali (a.s) to visit areas surrounding Ta'if and ordered him to destroy any place where idols were installed. `Ali (a.s) took a group of men with him and passed near the habitation of Banū-Khatm while it was still dark. They resisted and one of their well-known fighter came forward and challenged for a fight. `Ali (a.s) asked someone of his men to go ahead and kill the infidel. When none took courage in his hands, Abul-`As ibn Rabi`ah saw that `Ali (a.s) was himself getting ready to confront the enemy. He offered that he would go. But the Imam stopped him and told him that if he succumbed during the fight, Abul-`as should take the command. Saying this, `Ali (a.s) advanced swiftly and killed the infidel in one stroke. When Banū-Khatm saw their warrior killed, they retraced their steps. `Ali (a.s) went forward and destroyed all the idols of Banū-Hawazin and Banū-Thaqif. When the entire area was free of the idols, he returned. When the Prophet (a.s) saw him coming, he loudly raised the slogan of 'allahu-akbar' and took `Ali (a.s) to a corner. They were quietly exchanging confidences for quite some time

Some persons did not like this quiet talk. They said, "Today the exchange of confidences with the cousin is quite long!" `Umar could not control himself. And he told the Prophet (a.s) directly that he talked with `Ali (a.s) in private and did not allow others to come near him! The Prophet (a.s) replied

[I have not exchanged confidences with `Ali (a.s), but Allah has done it.”[۱۰“

During these days of the siege, Nafi` ibn Ghaylan, with some cavaliers of Banū-Thaqif, emerged out of the fort. He was chased and killed. The cavaliers fled in fear. Now the besieged persons did not have any courage to come out of the fort. During this time the people living in the environs of Ta’if accepted Islam. Some slaves of Banū-Thaqif came out of the fort and accepted Islam on condition that they would be free men. The siege was now over twenty days and there was no indication of the fort being captured. The Prophet (a.s) asked Nawfal ibn Mu`awiyah about the matter. He said that the enemy was like a fox in its den. On waiting it can be caught, if the chase is given up, there is no fear of harm. The Prophet (a.s) thought it better to lift the siege and leave Banū-Thaqif to their own scruples. He made an announcement that they were leaving from there the next day. Therefore, the Companions prepared for traveling on the following day. `Uyaynah ibn Hasan al-Fazari talked of Banū-Thaqif in laudatory words when the Muslims prepared to lift the siege. Despite being a member
:of the Islamic army, he praised the enemy in these words

By Allah! I did not come with you to fight with Banū-Thaqif. My purpose was that“
[when Muhammad (a.s) captured Ta’if, I take a woman of Banū-Thaqif as my slave!”[۱۱

Someone said, “O Allah’s Messenger! At least curse the Banū-Thaqif!” Instead of
:cursing, the Prophet (a.s) uttered these words

[O Allah! Guide Banū-Thaqif and send them to me!]"[۱۳۴

The Prophet's prayer was answered very soon after that. One delegation of Banū-Thaqif came to al-Madinah and called on the Prophet (a.s). They offered to embrace Islam but made a condition that their idol of al-Lat should be left unharmed for three years! The Prophet (a.s) rejected this condition. Then they reduced the period to two years, one year and finally to one month

Every time the Prophet (a.s) refused to accept the condition. Then they said that if he insisted to break the idol, he should ask someone else to perform the task and should not ask them to break their own idol! The Prophet (a.s) accepted their request. Then they asked to be exempted from offering mandatory prayers. The Prophet (a.s) said

"!There is no good in a Faith Where there is no prayer"

:Then he uttered these words of warning

You accept Islam, or else I shall send one, towards you, who is from me, (or he said, "he is like my Conscience)! He will cut your necks and enslave your women and children [and confiscate your wealth and property." [۱۳۵

Umar said that a wish came to his mind that the Prophet (a.s) meant him as that person! But the Prophet (a.s) caught hold of `Ali's hand and said twice: "This is him!" "This is him

The delegation returned to Ta'if and made their report about the meeting. They all agreed to unconditionally accept Islam

In this expedition too, `Ali's presence is prominent. Along with the duties of the jihad, he is also active propagating the Faith. During the siege he destroyed the idols of Banū-Thaqif and Banū-Hawazin and brought about a change in the thinking of the people in the environs of Ta'if preparing them to embrace Islam. He killed a strong warrior of Banū-Khatm forcing them to capitulate. He killed Nafi` ibn Ghaylan and chased away his cavaliers. In the end, they all embraced Islam fearing his valorous attacks

In this campaign, certain aspects of `Ali's superiority are very evident. The Prophet (a.s) exchanged confidences with him within sight of the other important Companions! When others expressed their objections, the Prophet (a.s) said that `Ali (a.s) was not only the keeper of his confidences, but of Allah as well! Then the Prophet (a.s) compared `Ali (a.s) with his own Conscience, with his Own Self

Footnote

Sahīh al-Tirmidhī, Page ٤٨٧ [١]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٣٥٥ [٢]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٢, Page ١٨١ [٣]

Al-Istī`āb, Vol ٢, Page ٤٧٧ [٤]

DISTRIBUTION OF THE BOOTY

When the Prophet (a.s) returned from Ta'if and camped at the Valley of al-Ju`ranah on the fifth of Dhul-Qa`dah, a delegation of Banū-Hawazin embraced Islam and came to his presence. They requested the persons of their tribe taken captive be freed. One chief of Banū-Sa`d, Zuhayr ibn `Amr, said that among the captives were two of the Prophet's own aunts who had brought him up in their own arms. If any Arab chieftain had taken the milk of one of our ladies, he would certainly have respected her. You too must treat us with dignity, and we do not expect anything else from you. The Prophet (a.s) told him that when the Muslims assembled, he should broach the subject of the release of the captives with them. He said that at that moment he will raise the matter of the release of the progeny of `Abd al-Muttalib. Therefore, when the Muslims came after the 2^{uhr} Prayer, the captives said that the Prophet (a.s) had taken the milk of one of their tribeswoman and on that strength; they ask to be freed from captivity. The Prophet (a.s) said that he was foregoing the share of Banū-`Abd al-Muttalib. The Muhajirūn and the Ansar said that their share too belonged to the Prophet (a.s) and that they had foregone their rights in his favor. However, `Aqrah ibn Habis, `Abbas ibn Mirdas and `Uyaynah ibn Hasan were a bit reluctant. When the captives were released, the Prophet (a.s) asked the delegates

about Malik ibn `Awf al-Nasri. They said that he was with the Banū-Thaqif at Ta'if. The Prophet (a.s) asked them to send word to him that if he came there, the members of his family will be released from captivity. When Malik got the message, he immediately started from Ta'if, and reaching al-Ju`ranah, he went to the presence of the Prophet (a.s) and embraced Islam. The Prophet (a.s) released his family, gave .back his confiscated assets and gave him a hundred camels as a gift

When the captives of Hawazin were released, the Muslims insisted on the distribution of the booty of war and said that the camels, goats and sheep might be distributed there and then! The Prophet (a.s) gave his approval and the distribution started. The Prophet (a.s), from his khums, gave a hundred camels each to the persons who had newly embraced Islam. Abū-Sufyan and his sons Mu`awiyah and Yazid were given a hundred camels each. Besides

(۲۸۳)

them, `Aqrah ibn Habis, `Uyaynah ibn Hasan and some other persons received a hundred camels each. Some persons were given lots of fifty camels. Generally, the rest of the men got four camels and forty sheep each. The Ansar too received the booty in the same manner. They complained that the Prophet (a.s) preferred his own people, although the Ansar supported him in the time of need. When he heard about these murmurs, he assembled them and told them that he had given some preferential treatment to the Quraysh that they do not recant from Islam! He said that they had their camels and sheep with them and you, the Ansar, have with you your Prophet (a.s)! He asked them what was preferable. The eyes of the Ansar watered and they said, “O Allah’s Messenger (a.s)! We wholeheartedly accept the distribution of the booty! In their share is the worldly wealth and you are in our share!”

!The Prophet (a.s) offered a prayer for the Ansar and their progeny

Abbas ibn Mirdas al-Aslami too was expecting a larger share of the booty than the ordinary Muslims got. He wrote some couplets to express his displeasure, “Hasan and Habis were not superior to my father Mirdas in any society, neither I am inferior to `Uyaynah and `Aqrah. But whom you down grade will not rise again

p: ۳۴۵

The Prophet (a.s) said, “Cut his tongue!” meaning that he be quietened by giving him some more of the booty! But he did not understand the allegory and shivered thinking that his tongue was about to be cut! When `Ali (a.s) asked him to come, he asked where he was being taken. He said that he was being taken along to comply with the orders of the Prophet (a.s)! He therefore accompanied `Ali (a.s) to the place where the camels and sheep were penned. `Ali (a.s) asked him to take more camels to bring his tally to hundred and join the group of the al-Mu'allafatu-Qulūbuhum (the Pretenders) or remain contented with the four camels and continue in the group of Muhajirūn!” `Abbas ibn Mirdas asked `Ali (a.s) to let him be with his four camels because he could not imagine to be counted among the al-Mu'allafatu-Qulūbuhum

Amir al-Mu'minin had placed before him both the situations and had also explained the consequence of each of them giving him the right to maintain the privilege of being in the group of the Migrants or going to the side of the Pretenders

After the distribution, the Prophet (a.s) returned to Makkah and performed the minor pilgrimage of `Umrah. `Attab ibn Usayd was appointed the governor of Makkah and then the Prophet (a.s) left for al-Madinah in the beginning of the month of Dhul-Hijjah

PROPAGATION OF ISLAM IN YEMEN

PROPAGATION OF ISLAM IN YEMEN

During ۸H, the Prophet (a.s) deputed Khalid ibn al-Walid with a group of Companions to Yemen for propagating the Message of Islam there. He stayed there for six months, but the efforts did not bear any fruits. There was no positive reaction from the people there al-Barra' ibn `azib, who was a member of the delegation, says

The Prophet (a.s) sent Khalid ibn al-Walid to Yemen for inviting people to the Faith. I was one of the persons sent with him. He stayed there for six months, but none paid [any heed to him.]^[1]

When the Prophet (a.s) learnt about the failure of the mission, he sent `Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s) to take charge of the work. He asked him to send Khalid and his team back. Those from the team who wished to stay further in Yemen; they may be permitted to stay back. Al-Barra' ibn `azib says that he preferred to stay on with `Ali (a.s). When the Yemenis learned that Khalid was going and `Ali (a.s) was replacing him, they were keenly interested and gathered at one place. After the Morning Prayers `Ali (a.s) went to them and read the letter that the Prophet (a.s) had sent for the people of Yemen. Then he delivered a Sermon on the virtues of Islam. The talk was so effective that the people, who did not respond even after six months of Khalid's efforts, embraced Islam. The Historian al-Tabari writes

[The entire tribe of Hamdan embraced Islam in one day.]^[2]

When `Ali (a.s) informed the Prophet (a.s) about this event, he did a Prostration of Thanksgiving and said thrice: On Hamdan my Salam

In the Battle of Siffin the tribe of Hamdan was solidly behind `Ali (a.s). Seeing their exploits of valor, `Ali (a.s) said

If I was the keeper to the Gate of Heaven, I would have asked the Tribe of Hamdan "to enter peacefully

After the Tribe of Hamdan embraced Islam, the avenues for the progress and propagation of Islam opened up in Yemen. With the rays of the sun of knowledge, the darkness of infidelity was dispelled! In every nook and corner there were the voices
witnessing the Unity of Allah

Footnote

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۲۸۹ [۱]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۳۹۰ [۲]

THE EMIRATE OF YEMEN

THE EMIRATE OF YEMEN

Although the Yemenis had embraced Islam with one Sermon of `Ali (a.s), they were still not fully conversant with the tenets of the Faith. Therefore, it was necessary to give them instruction on the legitimate (halal) and taboo (haram) from Islamic point of view. They were also to be told about the mandatory, the optional prayers, and other pillars of Islam. They needed to get their disputes settled according to the laws of the Faith. For taking care of all these things, the Prophet (a.s) deputed `Ali (a.s) once again to Yemen. For this important mission, there was the need for knowledge and balanced thinking was very essential. This was his first stint outside the area of Hijaz and `Ali (a.s) was initially reluctant to accept the onerous responsibility. He told the Prophet (a.s) that he was still young and new to such an assignment. He felt that it might be difficult for him to handle the work without advisers around. The Prophet (a.s) put a hand on the chest of `Ali (a.s) and said

[O Allah! Make `Ali's heart well informed and the tongue free of defects and errors!]"[۱]

Ali (a.s) says that after that day he never had difficulty in assessing correctly` between two persons. The quality of confidence and determination became stronger .in him

At that time of his selection the senior Companions, both Muhajir and Ansar, were present. But the Prophet (a.s), despite `Ali's youth nominated him for the emirate of Yemen. In this connection, he neither consulted anyone nor obtained anyone's opinion. The Prophet (a.s) was confident that `Ali (a.s) was the most suitable candidate of the job. It was this confidence that the Prophet (a.s) entrusted the important functions of delivering justice to people in his lifetime and prepared `Ali :(a.s) for the same function after him as well. Therefore, the Prophet of Islam (a.s) said

[O `Ali! After me, you will be the judge for the mutual disputes of the people!]"[۲“

If leading a congregational prayer is termed the qualification for selecting the Caliph, then why is the emirate of Yemen, first ever such important assignment in the annals of Islamic History, not termed a better qualification for the selection as the Caliph! We should understand that leading a congregational prayer is one thing and leading the governance of a people is another! The duties of an emir and a caliph are similar that .need skills in governance and deliverance of justice

Footnote

Al-Istī`āb, Vol ۳, Page ۳۶ [۱]

Mustadrak al-Hākim, Vol ۳, Page ۱۲۲ [۲]

SARIYYAT WADI AL-RAML

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Some people gathered in Wadi al-Raml and were planning a surprise night attack on al-Madinah. They were looking for an opportune time to carry out their plan. But one person chanced to know their plans and gave the information to the Prophet (a.s). These people were not a regularly organized contingent but were a group of brigands and highway robbers. The Prophet (a.s) gave the standard to Abū-Bakr and sent with

troops to quell and disburse this mob. When the troops reached the Wadi al-Raml, the brigands went into hiding. The Muslims looked around for them, and not finding any trace, relaxed thinking that they had fled getting wind of the coming of the Muslim attack. The Muslims were tired of their journey. They decided to spend the night in the valley and slept soundly. After some hours of their sleeping, the brigands came out quietly from their hideouts and attacked the Muslims. In the confusion, some Muslims were killed and the rest ran for their lives. When the unsuccessful group returned, the Prophet (a.s) gave the standard to `Umar to lead the campaign. The morale of the brigands was high now. When they saw the contingent arrive, they came out of their hideouts and started fighting with such ferocity that the Muslim contingent was forced to withdraw. After these two failures, `Amr ibn al-`As told the Prophet (a.s) to give him the command to control the situation. The Prophet (a.s) complied with his wish, but the result was the same as before. After these repeated failures, the Prophet (a.s) appointed `Ali (a.s) as the Commander of the contingent and sent him for the campaign. He also asked the earlier unsuccessful commanders too to join the contingent under him. The first strategy of `Ali (a.s) was to change the route of advance from that which was followed by the earlier three attempts. He also made the journey during night and rested the troops during the day. This provided them a degree of stealth in their movement. They thus were able to surprise the enemy by sudden attack. While the first rays of sunlight was about to touch the peaks, the tips of the swords started shining. The enemy fled because of the element of surprise in the attack and the Muslims proceeded to al-Madinah victoriously. The Prophet (a.s) on hearing of the arrival of the victorious army came out of the city to give them a :reception. He happily said

O `Ali! If I had not the fear that some people of my Ummah might say what the Christians said about `Isa (a.s), I would have said something about you that people [would pick up the soil from under your very feet, wherever you went!]"[1]

The success of this campaign was because of the leadership of `Ali (a.s) in planning the strategy of war. He kept a keen eye on the reasons of the failure of the previous attempts and took care to eliminate them. In the first attempt, they were lethargic and careless in their movement. Having gone to the den of the enemy, they casually retired to sleep without even posting nominal night vigil. The second and third attempts they made the mistake of following the same route of travel and thus gave early warning of their arrival to the enemy. `Ali (a.s) eliminated all these faults and added the element of surprise by traveling in the night and reaching the arena just before dawn! If he had made the same mistakes as the first three leaders did, his attempt might have met with the same result as theirs did

Footnote

Kitāb al-irshād Shaykh al-Mufīd, Page ٧٩ [١]

SARIYYAT BANŪ-TAYY

After the conquest of Makkah the idols of the Ka`bah had been destroyed. During the ghazwat al-Ta'if, the idols of Banū-Thaqif and Banū-Hawazin too were destroyed. But those of Banū-tayy were still intact. Among these idols was one, by name of Fils that was the center of their adulation! The Prophet (a.s) determined to destroy it too. He deputed `Ali (a.s) during the month of Rabi` II, ٩ A.H. towards the habitations of Banū-tayy to destroy the idols there and invite the people to the Right Path. `Ali (a.s) started for the campaign with a contingent of ١٥٠ men. The Chief of Banū-tayy, `Adi ibn Hatam went toward Syria along with his family and children, when he heard of the arrival of the Muslim contingent. `Ali (a.s) attacked the neighborhood of Banū-Hatam and destroyed their idol. From that place, he got three expensive armors and three swords. Among these swords were Rasūb and Mukhazzam that were very famous swords throughout Arabia for their excellent quality which were offered to the idols by al-Harith ibn Abi-Shimr. Besides these, lot of other valuables and livestock were

obtained from there. `Ali (a.s) distributed some of the booty to the men in the contingent and took the rest and the captives to al-Madinah. Among the captives, there was Safanah, the daughter of the legendary Hatam, who was accommodated at a place near the mosque where captive women were generally kept. During those days, the Prophet (a.s) passed that way when Safanah complained that her father was dead and there was none to take care of her. She pleaded to be released and said that Allah will reward him for the kindness. The Prophet (a.s) asked who she was. She said that she was the sister of `Adi ibn Hatam. The Prophet (a.s) asked her if she was the sister of the same `Adi ibn Hatam who fled from Allah and His Prophet (a.s). Saying this, he went his way. The next day when he passed that way, Safanah pleaded again and he gave the same reply! Safanah thought that there was no hope left for her release! The third time when the Prophet (a.s) passed that way, she had no courage to renew her appeal. While she was thinking whether to say anything or not, someone from behind the Prophet (a.s) prompted her to appeal to the Prophet (a.s) for her release. She took courage in her hands, stood up and said, "O Prophet of Allah (a.s)! Please do not make me a subject of ridicule among my people! I am the daughter of the Chief of Banū-tay, Hatam! My father was very charitable His wont was to release the captives, feed the poor and help the needy!" The Prophet (a.s) ordered that she be released forthwith because she was the daughter of a person who was gentle, kind and held high morals. He also told Safanah to stay in al-Madinah until a dependable escort was arranged to send her safely to her people. Safanah asked the people about the identity of the person who prompted her to speak with the Prophet (a.s). They informed her that he was the Prophet's cousin `Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s). After sometime, a caravan from Banū-Khuza`ah came to al-Madinah. Safanah requested the Prophet (a.s) to send her with them. The Prophet (a.s) made good arrangements for her journey and she safely reached her brother `Adi Bin .Hatam in Syria

Safanah complained to her brother `Adi that he abandoned her alone and fled. She also told him about `Ali (a.s) on whose prompting she could accomplish her release from captivity. She also told him about the good treatment meted out by the Prophet (a.s) to her. She very strongly suggested to `Adi to go to the presence of the Prophet (a.s) at the earliest that he will get the honor of joining the ranks of the people who have adopted the Right Path. `Adi says that he liked the suggestion and therefore headed for al-Madinah. When he went to the presence of the Prophet (a.s) in the al-Masjid al-Nabawi (the Holy Prophet's Mosque), he told him that he was `Adi ibn Hatam. The Prophet (a.s) was very pleased to meet him and asked him to accompany him home. On the way, they met an old woman and heard her complaints. `Adi thought that the Prophet (a.s) had not the slightest element of pride and conceit for his position. When they reached the Prophet's home, he spread his carpet for `Adi to sit. And he squatted on the bare ground. `Adi again thought that this cannot be the way of royalty! `Adi was still indecisive in his mind when the Prophet (a.s) said, "O `Adi! You take a fourth of the booty of war, but in your Christian Faith this is not permissible! Perhaps you are shy of our Faith because there is poverty among our people and there are lots of enemies in our environment! But soon there will be such affluence here that even on searching there will be scarcity of takers for the wealth! Women will then visit the House of Allah all alone fearlessly! You will learn that the White Palace of Babylon has been annexed by the Muslims!" `Adi witnessed with his own eyes the excellent character and manners of the Prophet (a.s) and heard his talk that went straight to his heart! He embraced Islam at the same auspicious moment and became an ardent companion of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) and was on his side during .the campaigns of Jamal, Siffin and Nahrawan

One trading caravan from Syria spread a rumor in al-Madinah that the Caesar of Rome, Heracles, was planning to attack al-Madinah and the Christian tribe, Banū-Ghassan, Banū-Lakhm, Banū-Qazm and Banū-Amilah were gathering under his flag. Banū-Ghassan, they said, had converted their territory, Syria, as a cantonment to mobilize the armies of Rome and Syria. They also said that the reconnoitering troops have reached as close as the area of Balqa'. The Prophet (a.s) on the basis of these reports started the preparations to meet the enemy. He ordered the Muslims to prepare for stopping the advancing enemy. All the wars that the Muslims fought were inside the country and they had not faced any external opponent. This campaign was to be fought on foreign soil, and was against a distant Emperor whose conquests extended to Persia and beyond. On hearing the Prophet's orders, the men, instead of feeling the thrill of the prospective battles, were crestfallen. The reason for this mood was that they were facing a drought of late and only during the current season, the crop was good and nearing harvest. They were not in a mood to travel leaving behind their ready crops. Besides, the summer heat was severe and harsh for travel through the desert. In such circumstances, the Muslims started making excuses to avoid going on the campaign. The Holy Qur'an says about these persons

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَا لَكُمْ إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ انْفِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ اثَّاقَلْتُمْ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ أَرْضَيْتُمْ بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ .

O People who embraced the Faith! When you are asked to start in the way of Allah, “ your feet became embedded in the ground. Are you happy with this life instead of the
” (Hereafter? (۹:۳۸

When pressure mounted over the Muslims with admonishing, Verses, and they saw no way out other than joining the contingent, then some willingly and others not so willingly got ready to go. Some others malingered and stayed back at their homes. The Prophet (a.s) took help from within al-Madinah and other areas to get together a
contingent of ۳۰,۰۰۰ men and

during the month of Rajab ۹H left al-Madinah and their first halt was at Thaniyyat al-Wida` . `Abdullah ibn Ubay, with his men, too was with the contingent and camped in the low-lying area of Thaniyyat al-Wida` . When the Prophet (a.s) advanced with the
.army, Ibn Ubay returned to al-Madinah with his men

After a major number of the Muslims leaving al-Madinah, the hypocrites who remained back and those who returned from the way, in the event of the defeat of the Muslim army, which `Abdullah Ibn Ubay expected, they planned to invade the Prophet’s home and loot it and send away the members of his family from al-Madinah. There was also danger from people who had not as yet embraced Islam and were defeated in the battles that they fought with them. Such people might see an opportunity to plunder the properties and assets of the Muslims. In these circumstances, it was the demand of farsightedness that a person should be left in al-Madinah who could face any eventuality with courage and control things from going awry. Therefore, the Prophet (a.s) decided to leave behind `Ali (a.s) whose fear was already embedded in the hearts of the Arabs because of his recent successes in the battles. The hypocrites of al-Madinah did not like this arrangement. When they were
:unable to find any excuse, they said

[The Prophet (a.s) considering him a burden, has left him behind!]"[۱۰

Ali (a.s) who was continuously winning in the battles with the infidels, was feeling for ` being dropped from the contingent going for the new Campaign. When he heard this taunt from the hypocrites, he could not control himself and put on the arms and started moving behind the army at some distance. After sometime, he caught up with them and went to the presence of the Prophet (a.s). He complained to the Prophet (a.s) that the hypocrites say that he was left behind because he would be a burden during the campaign. The Prophet (a.s) said that they were liars and I am leaving you behind in al-Madinah because the administration there should be either with me or with you. He also said that in his Ahl al-Bayt and in his Ummah, he was his successor.
:He added

Are you not happy that you have the same relationship with me as Harūn (a.s) had“ [with Mūsa (a.s). The only difference is that there will be no prophet after me.”[۱۱

Hearing this, `Ali (a.s) happily went back to al-Madinah. And the Prophet (a.s) proceeded with the army towards the border of Syria. The ruins of the Tribes of Thamūd were on the way. When they reached the place, the Prophet (a.s) asked his men not to take any water from the wells there, neither for ablutions nor for drinking purpose. When his eyes fell on the ruins, he hid his face with a cloth and rode his camel faster to leave the place behind as soon as possible. The next day the Muslims ran short of water. They came to the Prophet (a.s) and told him that if they were allowed to take water on the way, this situation of scarcity would not have arisen. The Prophet (a.s) lifted his hands for prayer and before his prayer was over, dark clouds appeared on the horizon and copious rain started. The men drank it and stored in .their containers

The journey through the dry deserts was very tiring. Fifteen to twenty persons had to share one camel or horse. They rode on these animals in turns. They had to trudge through the desert more on foot than astride any animal. For eating, they got no more than dry bread and water was very scarce. Those who were unable to bear the hardship, they started returning back. Whenever the Prophet (a.s) was informed of the deserters, he used to say, "If they have virtue in them, they will come back to join us. If not, it will be lesser burden on our heads!" Abū-Dharr fell behind because his camel was very emaciated and was unable to keep pace with others. People told the Prophet (a.s) that even Abū-Dharr had deserted. About him, too the Prophet (a.s) said that if he had virtue in him, he would join back the caravan. When Abū-Dharr saw that the camel was unable to go any further, he took away his baggage from its back and started moving forward on foot. Some people of the army saw him coming at a distance. They started speculating who the person could be who was walking all alone. The Prophet (a.s) said it must be Abū-Dharr. When the men strained their eyes a little, they confirmed it was he! The Prophet (a.s) said

May Allah have mercy on Abū-Dharr that he is coming alone, he will die in loneliness"
[and will be raised on the Day of Judgment alone.]"

When the army reached Tabūk, they struck camp there. For long distances, there was not any sign of the Roman troops. The Prophet (a.s) camped there for twenty days, but from no direction, there was any sign of approaching armies. The information given by the Syrian traders was wrong. In this time, the Prophet (a.s) sent delegations to the chiefs of the tribes in the area inviting them to embrace Islam or start paying the jizyah. The chief of Ayla, Yawhanna ibn Rawbah came to the Prophet (a.s) and struck a truce at a jizyah of ۳۰۰ Dinar. Similarly, the Christians of tribes of al-Jarba', Adhruh and al-Muqanna too entered into agreements to pay jizyah. The chief of Dawmat al-Jandal, Ukaydar ibn `Abd al-Malik was brought in captivity. He too accepted to pay jizyah and was released. When the Prophet (a.s) was satisfied that there was no sign of the enemy Roman troops, he ordered his men to return to al-Madinah. There is a valley, al-Mushaqqaq, lying between Tabūk and al-Madinah. At that place, there is a spring from where water was coming at a very slow rate. He

ordered that those who reached earlier than him should not drink water from the spring. But some men, who arrived there earlier, drank the little water that had accumulated from the spring. When the Prophet (a.s) arrived there, he found that the pit of the spring was empty of water. He asked the men about who arrived there first. The men took the names of the first arrivals. The Prophet (a.s) asked them if they were not warned not to drink the water before he arrived. Al-Tabari writes

[Then the Prophet (a.s) cursed them.]“[۴“

The Prophet (a.s), noticing the scarcity of water, held his palms under the oozing water and the palms were full of it, he offered a prayer. And the water from his hand he poured into the pit. The prayer was answered and the spring started yielding water .copiously. Everyone of the army quenched his thirst

On the return journey, another sad event happened. When they reached `Uqbah Dhul-Fatr, they thought that the passage through the hills was tortuous and difficult. If the animals became restless, there was a likelihood of their falling into the ravines. The Prophet (a.s) announced that no one should take that route until his camel goes. But some persons conspired that they will disturb the Prophet's camel to cause an accident. The Prophet (a.s) was astride his camel and Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman was holding the rope in the front, and `Ammar ibn Yasir was at the back. With the lightning they saw twelve riders, with faces covered, proceeding towards the ravine Hudhayfah pointed this out to the Prophet (a.s), and he reprimanded the group. Hudhayfah and `Ammar pushed back those twelve camels. The Prophet (a.s) asked Hudhayfah who these persons were. He expressed his ignorance. The Prophet (a.s) said that they were the hypocrites and will ever remain so. They came with a view that they wanted to disturb my camel and cause its fall in the ravine. Then the Prophet (a.s) told the names of all the twelve culprits to Hudhayfah and asked him to keep the information a secret. But despite this warning, the information got revealed to some :people. Once Imam al-Hasan (a.s) told Mu`awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan

You will recall the day when some persons wanted the camel of the Prophet to fall“ into the ravine and these persons were twelve in number and one of them was Abū- [Sufyan.”]٥

When the Prophet (a.s) was proceeding towards Tabūk, some deceptive persons came to him and said that they had constructed a mosque so that the diseased and disabled, who are unable to go long distances to the other mosques offer prayers there. They requested him to visit their mosque and offer prayer there. The Prophet (a.s) said that he was on an important journey then, and would visit the mosque some other time. When he returned from his journey to Tabūk and reached Dhi-`Awan :near al-Madinah, the following verse was revealed

وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مَسْجِدًا ضِرَارًا وَكُفْرًا وَتَفْرِيقًا بَيْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَإِرْصَادًا لِمَنْ حَارَبَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَيَحْلِفْنَ إِنْ أَرَدْنَا إِلَّا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ .

And those who built a masjid to cause harm and for unbelief and to cause disunion“ among the believers and an ambush to him who made war against Allah and His Messenger before; and they will certainly swear: We did not desire aught but good; (and Allah bears witness that they are most surely liars. (٩:١٠٧)

The Prophet (a.s) ordered Malik ibn Dakhsham and Ma`an ibn `Adi to dismantle that .mosque

The expedition to Tabūk was a very trying experience for the Muslims. They had to travel through the scorching heat of the desert leaving behind the gardens and the green fields. Only those were steadfast who preferred the Rewards of the Hereafter to the comforts of this life. Those who had accepted Islam to enjoy the power and pelf that they thought it will give them, were unable to bear the hardships of the journey and complained about it. The hypocrites therefore deserted the army at various stages and left a proof of their mindset. So far, they were able to hide their infidelity in the thick veneer of hypocrisy. But now they were exposed. Therefore, this campaign is also called the disclosing campaign because it exposed the veneer of the hypocrites and they faced shame and ignominy. Even if they wanted to keep their hypocrisy in wraps at that moment, they could not have done it. They could have hidden their

hypocrisy only if they had boldly come out of their homes, faced all the hardships of the journey and remained steadfast with the Prophet (a.s) all through the campaign.

!They could not do it, and thus they were exposed

p: ۳۵۷

Ghazwah of Tabūk is the only campaign of the Prophet (a.s) in which `Ali (a.s) did not participate. But this was not because he did not want to be there in the war. It was the decision of the Prophet (a.s) to leave him behind in al-Madinah to take care of things that he would do while present there. This too was a responsibility like the jihad that `Ali (a.s) performed well. He maintained the law and order in al-Madinah efficiently and effectively.

Whenever the Prophet (a.s) traveled out of al-Madinah he appointed someone to take charge of the administration of the city. The person used to be given the position of an ordinary governor or administrator. But `Ali's appointment was of a different nature. He told him that his status, in the eyes of the Prophet (a.s), was the same as that of Harūn (a.s) for Mūsa (a.s). Harūn (a.s) was the caliph and Successor of Mūsa (a.s)! The Holy Qur'an therefore says about the prayer of Mūsa (a.s):

وَاجْعَلْ لِي وُزِيرًا مِّنْ أَهْلِي هَارُونَ أَخِي اشْدُدْ بِهِ أَزْرِي وَأَشْرِكْهُ فِي أَمْرِي.

And give to me an aider from my family Harūn, my brother Strengthen my back by“
”(him and associate him (with me) in my affair. (۲۰:۲۹-۳۲)

The Prophet (a.s) terming `Ali (a.s) as the equivalent of Harūn (a.s) proved that as Harūn (a.s) was the Caliph and Vicegerent of Mūsa (a.s) so was `Ali (a.s) his own Vicegerent. Saying that Mūsa (a.s) nominated Harūn (a.s) his successor for a short while, and so was the appointment of `Ali (a.s) temporary is not correct. But the question arises, why Mūsa (a.s) did not appoint anyone else instead of Harūn (a.s)? The answer is that he was the most superior and the most competent to be the successor and the vicegerent of Mūsa (a.s). So was `Ali (a.s) the most superior and the most competent to be the Prophet's Caliph and Vicegerent

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۳۶۸ [۱]

Sahīh al-Bukhārī, Vol ۳, Page ۵۴ [۲]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۲۷۱ [۳]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۳۷۳ [۴]

Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by Ibn Abil-Hadīd, Vol ۲, Page ۱۰۳ [۵]

PROPAGATION OF SŪRAT BARA`AH

PROPAGATION OF SŪRAT BARA`AH

The infidels and hypocrites of Arabia used to perform the Hajj at the Ka`bah and even after the conquest of Makkah, they continued the practice. In their practices, circumambulating the Ka`bah in naked state was one amoral aspect. It was necessary to stop it. So far, the Prophet (a.s) had not banned them from coming for the ritual. But the initial Verses of the Sūrah of Bara`ah express disgust for the infidels and hypocrites. In compliance with this, it was felt necessary to stop them from entering the precincts of the Ka`bah. The Prophet (a.s) gave these verses to Abū-Bakr and sent him to Makkah. Soon after sending him, he deputed `Ali (a.s), to proceed on his personal camel, al-`Adhbah, and take the parchment on which the Verses were inscribed from Abū-Bakr and proceed to Makkah to recite them to the people there. `Ali (a.s) rode the camel fast, overtook Abū-Bakr, communicated the Prophet's message, obtained the Verses from him and proceeded to Makkah. He also told Abū-Bakr that if he wished he could go along with him or else return to al-Madinah. Ibn al-Athir writes

The Prophet (a.s) gave the Sūrah of Bara`ah to Abū-Bakr to take to Makkah, but“ called him back from the way and told him that for the propagation of the Verses the person from his own house was suitable and therefore entrusted the Verses to `Ali (a.s)”[۱]

:Al-Tabari has written about this event in greater detail

The Prophet gave the verses to Abū-Bakr and sent him appointing him as the emir of“ the Hajj. When he reached the Valley of Dhū-Halifah near the Masjid al-Shajarah, `Ali (a.s) arrived and took the Verses from him. Abū-Bakr came back to the Prophet (a.s) and said, ‘I sacrifice my parents on you! Is there any revelation about me?’ The Prophet said, No! But

[these Verses have to be propagated either by me or the one who is from me!”[۲

Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s), on reaching Makkah, recited the Verses to the people at `Arafat and Mina and announced that the hypocrites who had committed the breach of trust, the truce agreement with them would go void in four months. And then no infidel and hypocrite, who has not embraced Islam, shall be allowed to enter the precincts of Ka`bah to circumambulate it for performing the Hajj Pilgrimage. It caused some brows to frown among the hypocrites, but none had courage to say anything. They were helpless before the might and dominance of Islam. They were :forced to pretend that they had embraced Islam. Al-Tabari writes

The hypocrites blamed each other and returned and said that since the Quraysh had“ [embraced Islam, they had no way other than following suit!”[۳

This task was not as simple as it appeared. The truce agreements with the infidels were being abrogated and entry into the Al-Masjid al-Haram and performance of Hajj by them was banned. It was possible that they turned rebellious and started to conspire against the Muslims. Because of these fears the Prophet (a.s) was worried about the safety of `Ali (a.s) and was eagerly awaiting his return. When Abū-Dharr gave the news of his return, the Prophet (a.s) was overjoyed. He went out of the city .(with his companions and welcomed `Ali (a.s

For this task removing one emissary and appointing another was not the personal decision of the Prophet (a.s) but it was in compliance to a Revelation from Allah. All the Commands of Allah have always a definite purpose behind them. The purpose behind the change must have been the need to highlight the importance and the superiority of the person entrusted with the job! Therefore, if from the beginning `Ali (a.s) was deputed, it would have been considered a matter of routine. Detailing an important person and withdrawing him midway to send `Ali (a.s) highlighted the importance of the task and the eminence of the person who replaced the earlier emissary! Then the announcement that the replacement was at the Command of Allah gave the act more eminence! It is a matter of conjecture that a person whom Allah did not deem fit to propagate a couple of Verses of the Qur'an to the people of Makkah, was elevated to
!(the caliphate after the demise of the Prophet (a.s

It is a pity that some people took shelter behind the excuse of public opinion and installed a person to caliphate and sending the candidate into oblivion who was most deserving of the position. The Commentator of the Qur'an, Ibn `Abbas, too mentions
:about this incident to prove `Ali's right to caliphate. He says

By Allah! The Prophet (a.s) had thought only him suitable to recite the Verses of Sūrah“
[of Bara'ah to the people of Makkah.”[۴

Ibn `Abbas arguing about the Right to caliphate referring to the incident about the Recitation of the Sūrah of Bara'ah meant that the Prophet (a.s) was hinting at his choice of the successor. `Ali (a.s) himself referred to the incident while making claim
:of the Caliphate at the meeting of the Shūra. He said

Is there anyone amongst you who was entrusted with the task of propagating the“
Sūrah of Bara’ah and the Prophet (a.s) had told him that anyone other than the
[prophet (a.s) and ME could do the task.”[۵]

If claim is made for Abū-Bakr sitting his Imamate of the prayer, would not they have
used the incident of the Sūrah of Bara’ah as another strong proof to claim the
Caliphate for him! Then why they do not accept this as a proof for the claim of `Ali (a.s)
?for the caliphate

Footnote

Jāmi` al-Usūl, Vol ۹, Page ۴۷۵ [۱]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۳۸۳ [۲]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۲۸۳ [۳]

Kanz al-`Ummāl, Vol ۶, Page ۳۹۱ [۴]

Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by Ibn Abil-Hadīd, Vol ۲, Page ۶۱ [۵]

THE CALL FOR MUBAHALAH OR IMPRECATION

THE CALL FOR MUBAHALAH OR IMPRECATION

Najran is in the north of Yemen about ten stages away from San`a'. It was a fertile
area with ۷۳ settlements those days. In those conglomerates about forty thousand
Christians lived. They were initially idol worshippers like the Arabs but a Christian
hermit, Fimiyūn, who earned his living as a mason, converted them to Christianity.
Fimiyūn was a migrant from Rome. It was his selfless missionary zeal that the entire
population converted to Christianity. Very soon, Najran became an important centre
of Christianity. They constructed a Church for performing their religious rites. This was
built with the skins of the camels and became famous as Ka`b Najran. People
assembled there for prayers and made offers. In addition to the offerings made at the
Church, its income was ۲۰۰,۰۰۰ annually that were used for the upkeep of the hermits
.and the pastors

When Islam progressed after the conquest of Makkah, and the warring groups capitulated, the Prophet (a.s) invited those tribes that had not embraced Islam until then. In ۱۰H a message was sent to the Christians of Najran as well. They were asked to embrace Islam or start paying jizyah as the subjects of the Islamic Dominion. When the Bishop of Najran read the Prophet's letter, he gathered all the important persons of the area and discussed the matter with them. he told them that they should all put their head together and devise the strategy to find a solution for the problem. Although the news created a commotion in the population, the braves started talking of battle. The Bishop calmed them down. When he talked to the people, there were different suggestions to face the situation. In the end, after much deliberation, they decided to send a delegation to al-Madinah and talk to the Prophet (a.s). Therefore, a delegation of ۱۴ persons under the leadership of `Aqib al-Sayyid and Abū-Harithah was constituted. Abū-Harithah was an eminent scholar of Christian Faith and Aqib Sayyid was known for his sagacity and wisdom. When the delegation arrived at al-Madinah, the people were surprised at the grandeur of their raiment! Earlier no other delegation had arrived with such pomp! When they descended from their carriages near the al-Masjid al-Nabawi (the Holy Prophet's Mosque), and entered proudly into the Mosque, the Prophet (a.s) noticed the gold rings in their fingers and their dresses of silks; he turned away his face from them! The time for their prayer was at hand and turning to the East, they commenced their prayer. Some persons wanted to stop them from praying but the Prophet (a.s) prevented them from doing it. After their prayer the delegates waited for a while. When the prophet (a.s) did not pay them any attention, they had frowns on their faces and left the mosque in a huff. When they saw `Uthman and `Abd al-Rahman outside, they complained to them about the cold treatment meted out to them. They said that they have come in response to the message of Muhammad (a.s) but he turned away his face from them and did not acknowledge even the greetings! They said that they did not know why he treated them like that. But `Uthman asked them to go to `Ali (a.s). They took the delegates to `Ali (a.s) and mentioned about the cold treatment that the Prophet (a.s) gave them. He told them that they should go in ordinary raiment and without the gold rings in the fingers. Then the Prophet (a.s) will give them a good reception. They followed `Ali's advice and the Prophet (a.s) sat down with the delegates after the `Asr Prayer and discussed with

them many matters of mutual interest. When he invited them to embrace Islam, they said that they were already Muslims! He asked, “How you are Muslims when you eat pork, worship the Cross and consider Jesus as the Son of God?” They replied that certainly they consider the Messiah as the Son of Allah! They asked the Prophet (a.s), “If he is not the son of God, then who his father is? Can anyone take birth without a :father?” The Prophet (a.s) recited the following verse from the Qur’an

إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ .

For Allah, the example of `Isa (a.s) is like that of Adam (a.s), whom He made with the“
”(soil and said, ‘Be’, and he ‘Was’. (۳:۵۹

The Prophet (a.s) conveyed that `Isa (a.s) did not have only the father, but Adam was created by Allah without either parent. Then why do not they call Adam (a.s) the Son of Allah? They had no reply for this argument and hence they started unnecessary debate. When they were not paying any heed to the arguments, the following Verse
:was revealed

فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَنَا وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ .

But whoever disputes with you in this matter after what has come to you of“
knowledge, then say: Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our near people and your near people, then let us be earnest in
”(prayer, and pray for the curse of Allah on the liars. (۳:۶۱

The Prophet (a.s) read this verse to the Christians and invited them for the imprecation (Mubahalah). The need for imprecation arose because if the matter was closed just with discussions, they would turn back and say that they requested the Prophet (a.s) for a debate, but we were not satisfied with his arguments. There was only one alternative to challenge them for the imprecation. After the Mubahalah, they would have nothing to brag home about. Initially the Christians were scared about the prospect of an imprecation. But later they relented. They asked the Prophet (a.s) to give them a day respite. Then they went back to their inn and had a long discussion between themselves. Everyone had his own opinion. Abū-Harithah said that if Muhammad (a.s) came tomorrow with his Companions and lot of men in attendance, we can accept to go for imprecation with him. But if he came in humility with his
!children and the family members, we must refute to have imprecation with him

After making the agreement for the imprecation, the Prophet (a.s) selected a place outside al-Madinah for the purpose. Salman al-Farisi prepared it by removing the grass and the weeds from the ground. Early next morning the Christians reached the venue of the imprecation. The Muhajirūn and Ansar too came to the ground. When the Prophet (a.s) learned that the Christians had reached the site, he called for `Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn (a.s)

:Sa`d ibn Abi-Waqqas says

When the Verse of Mubahalah (Imprecation) was revealed, the Prophet (a.s) called“ [`Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husayn (a.s) and said, ‘O Allah! These are my Ahl al-Bayt!’”[۱]

:Al-Ya`qūbi writes

The Prophet (a.s) came out early morning that al-Hasan and al-Husayn were holding“ [his hands, `Ali was in his front and Fatimah was behind him.”[۲]

When the Prophet (a.s) reached the grounds of Mubahalah he squatted under a tree and made `Ali (a.s) sit in his front, Fatimah (a.s) at his back and Hasan (a.s) and Husayn (a.s) on his right and left. He told them that when he offered prayer they should all say ‘Amen!’ When the Christians saw with the Prophet (a.s) one male, a female and two children, they were first surprised and then an unknown fear took hold of them! Abū-Harithah said

O group of Christians! I am seeing such faces that if Allah Desire to move a mountain“ from here, He will do it for those faces. Do not imprecate with them! Or else you will [meet with death and destruction!”[۳]

When the Christians knew that the persons coming with the Prophet (a.s) were his cousin and son-in-law, `Ali (a.s), the daughter Fatimah (a.s) and the grandchildren al-Hasan and al-Husayn (a.s), they were dumb founded. They now thought that if the Prophet (a.s) had not strong Faith, he would not have exposed his family to the imprecation! They were still in a dilemma when Abū-Harithah's brother Karaz ibn `Alqamah, who was already impressed with the Truth of Islam, said, "O Group of Christians! I see that Muhammad (a.s) himself is that last prophet about whom there is reference in our Sacred Bulletins. We should not imprecate with him. Because those who imprecate with the Prophets, they fall perpetually in the abyss of destruction. Just open your eyes and see the surroundings. The nature is silently telling about your impending destruction!" When they lifted their eyes, they noticed that the brightness of the sun had dimmed, in the atmosphere there were clouds of smoke, the leaves were shed by the trees and the birds were hiding in their nests! The hearts of the Christians shook seeing these manifestations of the nature! They requested to be excused from the imprecation. The Prophet (a.s) readily acceded to their request. He appointed `Ali (a.s) to settle the terms of the truce with Najran. `Ali (a.s) agreed on the following terms

Every year twice, in the months of Safar and Rajab, they will give ١٠٠٠ drapes (each valued forty dirham) as jizyah to the Muslims. If there were hostilities in Yemen, Najran will give to the Muslims ٣٠ armors, ٣٠ swords, thirty horses as their war effort. In return, they will be free to until their own lands and live in peace. The safety of their lives and property will be the concern of the Muslims

This victory in the annals of human history is unique and only one of its type. On the one side are five individuals, unarmed, of whom there is one lady and two innocent children! They were firm on the strength of Faith and made the representatives of Najran capitulate before them and enter into a treaty on their terms

At this time the Ansar, the Muhajirūn, the al-`asharah al-mubashsharah, the Warriors of Badr along with their children too were present. According to the Verse of the Qur'an, the Companions, and their families, too could have been included in the imprecation! But only `Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan, and al-Husayn (a.s) were selected for the event! If the meaning of the Verse was that one should go with two sons, one daughter and a person dear to him, then the Prophet (a.s) could have told the others that he considered them to participate in the imprecation. But according to the Verse of the Qur'an, he was permitted to take only four persons along. He could have also said that if there were scope for more than four persons, he would have taken them along. It was not the restriction on the numbers for not including more persons in the imprecation. It was the qualities that were not present in any other persons than the four who went. Otherwise, there was no reason for the Prophet (a.s) to ignore others for the event

For entering the stage of Mubalahah, two qualities were essential. One was Strong Faith and the other Truthfulness. Strong Faith was essential because without it there was risk of fatality as a result of the imprecation if the participant was weak in his Faith. In such situations only those will come forward who are truthfully following their Faith without any doubt or fear. Therefore, the Prophet (a.s) selected the persons who were absolute in their Faith and the most truthful. The imprecation was with the untruthful persons, if there was the slightest element of untruth on this side, the result could be fatal! The Christians, by the clear-cut text of the Holy Qur'an were untruthful on account of their beliefs, because they falsely believed in three gods the father, the son and the Holy Spirit! But the belief of Unity is so strong that they also said that there is only one God! Because of this confusion, their Faith or Belief was not strong. The philosophy of Trinity is the innovation of some inventive minds and the Holy Qur'an says about it

إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُنَافِقُونَ قَالُوا نَشْهَدُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُهُ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَكَاذِبُونَ.

When the hypocrites come to you they say that they bear witness that you are“
”(prophet of Allah, and Allah bears witness that they are liars. (٤٣:١)

Therefore this proves that if the heart is separated from the tongue, in a way that the heart thinks something and the tongue says something else, then it is a falsehood, although the words coming out of the tongue may be factual. Truthful is the word that is compatible with both the heart and the tongue. What comes out of the tongue is factual and is also there in the heart. Who can deny that the persons whom the Prophet (a.s) selected to participate in the imprecation were paragons of Faithfulness and Truthfulness? ` Ali (a.s) himself said

The Prophet of Islam (a.s) did not find the slightest untruth in any of my talks nor any“
[falsity or weakness in my actions.”[٤

While this selection manifested the Strength of faith and Truthfulness of the Ahl al-Bayt, and their superiority over others, that Allah deemed their participation necessary in the act of imprecation, the Prophet (a.s) asked them to say ‘Amen’ on the completion of his prayer of Mubahalah! It was thanks to their exemplary characters that Islam achieved the Victory the al-fath al-mubin ! It is surprising that those who were actively participating with the Prophet (a.s) in his Prophetic Duties, and without whose participation the Mubahalah was not possible, they were kept aside in the matter of the Caliphate that they were not thought necessary even at the
!consultative stage of the Succession

Sahīh Muslim, Vol ۲, Page ۲۷۸ [۱]

Tārīkh al-Ya`qūbī, Vol ۲, Page ۶۶ [۲]

.Tafsīr al-Kashshāf, Chapter ۳ [۳]

Nahj al-Balāghah [۴]

SARIYYAT BANŪ-ZUBAYD

SARIYYAT BANŪ-ZUBAYD

When the Prophet (a.s) returned from Tabūk the chief of a branch of Banū-Madhhiġ, Banū-Zubayd, `Amr ibn Ma`d Yakrab came to al-Madinah and met the Prophet (a.s). When he was invited to embrace Islam, he accepted and his tribesmen followed suit. `Amr's father, Ma`d Yakrab was killed during the period of Ignorance. `Amr told the Prophet (a.s) that he wanted to claim qisas for his father's life. The Prophet (a.s) said that the heinous practice has been abolished and he should forget about qisas. He kept quiet at that time but returning home he took to rebellion and recanted from Islam. He attacked Banū-al-Harith ibn Ka`b and killed their men

When the Prophet (a.s) heard of his mischief, he sent three hundred men under `Ali (a.s) to Yemen for subduing these rebellious people and to collect the jizyah from the Christians of Najran. When `Ali (a.s) was about to start on his journey, the Prophet (a.s) gave him the Standard and tied the headgear, one end of which he kept on the chest and the other on the back. The Prophet (a.s) told `Ali (a.s) that any outbreak of fight with Banū-Zubayd, if it takes place, should be from their side only. Another contingent, under Khalid ibn al-Walid, was also sent at the same time towards the tribe of Banū-al-Ju`fi. He instructed Khalid that if ever both the contingents came together, and were involved in fight, `Ali (a.s) will hold the joint command. `Ali (a.s) made Khalid ibn Sa`id the chief of the front guard of his contingent and Khalid ibn al-Walid appointed Abū-Mūsa al-Ash`ari. Both the contingents moved towards their destinations. When Banū-al-Ju`fi learned of the arrival of the Muslim army, they

divided into two groups, one group went to Yemen and the other joined Banū-Zubayd. When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) learned about this, he sent word to Khalid that when he received the message, he should halt at that place. But Khalid thought that this way he would lose the command of the contingent and refused to halt. `Ali (a.s) sent a group of men under Khalid ibn Sa`id to go and stop Khalid from proceeding any further. Khalid ibn Sa`id moved forward and stopped them. When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) joined with the other contingent he reprimanded Khalid ibn al-Walid for his attitude and the army went forward. When they reached a place called Kashar, they came face to face with Banū-Zubayd. `Amr ibn Ma`d Yakrub came to fight. Khalid ibn Sa`id wanted to start fighting, but `Ali (a.s) restrained him and himself came out with his sword. `Amr ibn Ma`d Yakrub was a famous combatant, but when he saw `Ali (a.s) himself in the arena, he fled. One of his brothers and a nephew was killed. His wife Rakanah bint Salamah and children were taken captive. Besides them, several other women too were taken captive and plenty of booty too was captured. After defeating the enemy, `Ali (a.s) proceeded toward Makkah for Hijjat al-Wada` leaving behind Khalid ibn Sa`id to collect the taxes from Banū-Zubayd and if any of them embraced Islam, provide them amnesty. When `Amr ibn Ma`d Yakrub learnt that his wife and children had been taken captive, he came to Khalid ibn Sa`id, embraced Islam and got his wife and children released. At that time he presented his famed sword, Dhussa'mah, to Khalid ibn Sa`id

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) had taken one slave girl from the booty. Khalid ibn al-Walid sent a letter to the Prophet (a.s) in which he complained about this action of `Ali (a.s). When the Prophet (a.s) read this letter, he was much upset and told al-Barra' ibn `Azib

What opinion you have about this person who is a friend of Allah and the Prophet and“ [they befriend him”[۱]

Al-Barra', finding anger written on the face of the Prophet (a.s), said, “O Prophet of Allah! I seek refuge from the anger of Allah and His Prophet (a.s)! I have come to you only as a courier. “Hearing this, the Prophet (a.s) cooled down

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) had every right on the booty of the battle. And his share could have been much more than a maidservant. But those who have enmity in their hearts searched for such opportunities to turn the Prophet (a.s) against him. At that time too, they made a similar attempt, but the tables turned on them only. The Prophet (a.s) shut their mouths saying that `Ali (a.s) was a friend of Allah and His Prophet (a.s) and they his friends

Footnote

Sahīh al-Tirmidhī, Page ۲۱۵ [۱]

THE HIJJAT AL-WADA

THE HIJJAT AL-WADA

In ۶H the Prophet (a.s) started with the intention of performing `Umrah (the Minor Pilgrimage) at Makkah but the Quraysh obstructed the effort and he returned to al-Madinah from Hdaybiyah. During ۷H too he went for `Umrah but because of the terms of the truce with the infidels he could not stay in Makkah for more than three days. In ۸ A.H. Makkah was conquered and the Ka`bah was cleared of the idols. In ۹H `Ali (a.s) was deputed to Makkah with the Verses of the Sūrah of Bara'ah to purify the various aspects of the Hajj from the undesirable practices of the infidels. He banned the infidels from entering the precincts of the Ka`bah. In ۱۰H the Prophet (a.s) decided to perform the Hajj and the invitation for the pilgrimage was announced all over

وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَى كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ.

And proclaim among men the Pilgrimage: they will come to you on foot and on every“
” (lean camel, coming from every remote path. (٢٢:٢٧

On the call of the Prophet (a.s) Muslims came from all over and assembled in al-Madinah to join his entourage to Makkah to learn about the Islamic Rites of the Hajj and to perform the pilgrimage with him. The Prophet (a.s) left al-Madinah along with thousands of pilgrims on ٢٦ Dhul-Qa`dah. Fatimah al-Zahra' (a.s) and the Prophet's spouses too were in the group. When around the 2uhr Prayer the caravan reached the Valley of Dhul-Halifah, they took the bath prior to wearing the Hajj uniform and everyone recited the talbiyah

Ali (a.s) was still in Yemen when the Prophet (a.s) wrote to him to proceed to Makkah` for Hajj. With a small contingent of troops, he started on the journey. On the way, he gave the command of the men to a senior person, wore the Ihram at Yalamlam, and reached Makkah before the arrival of the Prophet (a.s) to welcome him. When the Prophet (a.s) saw him, his face glowed. He asked, “O `Ali (a.s)! With what Intent have
”?you put on the Ihram

Ali (a.s) replied, “Since you had not mentioned about the matter in the letter, I have` worn the Ihram with the intent that I shall perform the same pilgrimage that you perform! I have left behind ٣٤ camels for the sacrifice.” The Prophet (a.s) said that he had with him ٦٦ camels and that `Ali (a.s) was a member of his family for the rites of the Hajj and the Sacrifice of the animals. Then `Ali (a.s) made a report about his campaign in Yemen and gave the account of the booty and jizyah collected. He said that he had left those things in the charge of the contingent and had started for the pilgrimage. The Prophet (a.s) asked him to fetch his contingent to Makkah. He must have gone a small distance when he saw his contingent arriving. He reprimanded the men for coming away without orders. He also saw that they were all wearing cloth from the booty as Ihram. He told the person in charge of the contingent to take the cloth pieces from the men. The men were not too happy about this order and they :complained to the Prophet (a.s) when they met him. The Prophet (a.s) said

[O people! Do not complain about `Ali (a.s)! He is strict in the Cause of Allah!]"[۱“

Prior to Islam people used to perform two types of Hajj; hajj al-ıfrad hajj al-qıran. In both these types, `Umrah has a definite and permanent place which is performed after the rites of the Hajj. The only difference between the two types is that for the Hajj al-Qıran the sacrificial animals have to be with the pilgrim and for the hahh al-ıfrad the sacrificial animals will not be with the pilgrim

At this time, the verse “And accomplish the pilgrimage and the visit for Allah... (۲:۱۹۶)” was revealed and a third type of Hajj, Hajj al-Tamattu` came into vogue. In this type of Hajj, both Hajj and `Umrah are performed together. The `Umrah here is performed, at the same time, prior to the Hajj. After the `Umrah the Ihram is removed and is again put on for the Hajj. This is called Hajj al-Tamattu` because the restriction of wearing Ihram between `Umrah and Hajj is removed. Here the Ihram is removed and again put back on the eighth of Dhul-Hıjjah, the Day of Tarwıyah and the rites of Hajj are performed. This Hajj is for the people who live within ۴۸ miles or .more from Makkah

During the Hıjjat al-Wada`, mostly there were people who did not have the sacrificial animals with them. The Prophet (a.s) asked them to change their intent for Hajj to that of `Umrah and remove the Ihram thereafter. Those who had the animals with them must keep wearing the Ihram after the `Umrah. Since the Prophet (a.s) was having the sacrificial animals with him, his intent was for Hajj al-Qıran and since `Ali’s intent too was same as that of the Prophet (a.s), he too did not remove the Ihram and continued with the performance of the Hajj al-Qıran. When the people saw the Prophet (a.s) continuing with the Ihram, they were hesitant about removing theirs. When he saw them not obeying the orders, he felt sad and anger appeared on his :face. `A’ıshah says about it

The Prophet (a.s) arrived at Makkah on the 9th or 10th of Dhul-Hijjah and came to me“ in great anger. She asked him, “Who has angered you? May Allah send the person to the Hell!” He said, “Do you not know that I gave an order to the people and they hesitated in obeying it! If I had known that the situation would develop like this, I would not have brought the sacrificial animals with me, bought the animals here and [then I could have removed my Ihram as they are supposed to do!”[۲

As people opposed the Hajj al-Tamattu` during the lifetime of the Prophet (a.s), they did the same after him as well and preferred their own wish against the order of the :Shari`ah. Therefore `Imran ibn Husayn says

The Verse of Hajj al-Tamattu` was revealed in the Qur'an and the Prophet (a.s)“ ordered us about it. Later on no further Verse was revealed on the matter to change the order nor did the Prophet (a.s) stop us from it until his death. But there was one [person who said, what he said with his own intuition.”[۳

:The Commentator of Sahih Muslim, al-Nawawi writes

Here, `Umar ibn al-Khattab is meant, because he was the first to raise objections“ against the Hajj al-Tamattu`. As far as `Uthman and others were concerned, they [were his followers!”[۴

Anyway, on ۸ Dhul-Hijjah the Prophet (a.s) ordered the people who had removed Ihram after the `Umrah to wear them again for the Hajj. The Prophet (a.s) was already in Ihram and so was `Ali (a.s) on the instructions of the Prophet (a.s). When the people wore the Ihram, they proceeded to Mina. The next day, after the Morning Prayers, the pilgrims moved to `Arafat. Prior to Islam the Quraysh had established a custom that they used to stop at al-Mash`ar al-Haram and say that they were the Ahl al-Haram and that they would not go out of the Haram. But the other people used to go to `Arafat. The Quraysh were thinking that the Prophet (a.s) too would not go beyond al-Mash`ar al-Haram. But the Qur'an ordained, “From where others start to go, you too should go!” Therefore, the Prophet (a.s) proceeded towards `Arafat, and reaching there, camped at Namirah. The 2uhr and `Asr Prayers were offered together and then spending the night at al-Mash`ar al-Haram they returned to Mina

on the day of `Id. After stoning the jamarat al-`aqabah, the Prophet (a.s) sacrificed the thirty camels with his own hands and asked `Ali (a.s) to sacrifice the remaining animals. After the sacrifice he took one piece of meat from each animal, got it cooked, tasted a little and got the rest distributed. After the sacrifice, they got their heads shaved, changed from the Ihram into ordinary clothes and returned to Makkah. Then they circumambulated the Ka`bah and did the sa`y between the Safa and Marwah. Now they returned to Mina where they waited until ١٣ Dhul-Hijjah and did the stoning of the ramy al-jamarat. Now all the rites of the Hajj were over and the prophet (a.s),
with his retinue, started for al-Madinah

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۴۰۲ [۱]

Sahīh Muslim, Vol ۱, Page ۴۰۳ [۲]

Sahīh Muslim, Vol ۱, Page ۴۰۳ [۳]

Sharh Sahīh Muslim, Vol ۱, Page ۴۰۲ [۴]

GHADIR KHUMM

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When the Prophet of Islam (a.s) started his journey towards al-Madinah after the Hajj, there were approximately one hundred thousand persons in the entourage who hailed from various towns and villages. Some people wanted to travel to al-Madinah with the Prophet (a.s) before they disbursed towards their respective homes. There were others who would leave the caravan when they reached the places from where they were to take diversion towards their homes. As the homes of the people were getting nearer, they advanced faster. Some of them were very happy that they were returning safely after performing the pilgrimage and some others were morose that the felicitous journey was coming to an end. The caravan was moving smoothly when at a place about three miles from al-Juhafah was a thorny valley that is known as Ghadir Khumm. The Prophet (a.s) ordered the caravan to halt there. This was such a sudden and unexpected order that the people were rather surprised. The surprise was more because the place was not for the halting of caravans. There was no provision for shelter from the sun in the place

The purpose of stopping the caravan was that the Prophet (a.s) wanted to communicate to the Muslims an important Commandment of Allah. This was the most appropriate place and time because very soon the crowds would disburse and proceed towards their respective homes. People from all the places were there and it was the best occasion to disseminate the important message to all the nooks and corners of the Islamic domain. There was another valid reason to stress the

importance of the message that Ghadir Khumm was not a regular station for rest and recuperation of the caravans. They were asked to stop there specifically because something very vital was to be communicated to them. They were eagerly and .patiently waiting to hear about the important Commandment of Allah

p: ۳۷۴

Prior to this, the Da`wat al-`Ashirah was in a small group of close persons from Banū-Hashim, and during the ghazwah Tabūk and the Propagation of the Sūrah of Bara'ah the Prophet (a.s) had subtly indicated about the succession that was sufficient for any intelligent person to know that `Ali (a.s) was the person he desired to succeed him as his Vicegerent. On the other side were the persons who did not like even small matters of import assigned to `Ali (a.s). How was it possible for them to bear with the declaration of `Ali (a.s) as the Prophet's Successor! The Prophet (a.s) was fully aware of this tendency in some persons. He was reading from their faces their inner feelings concerning `Ali (a.s) and their actions strengthened his conviction about their thinking and knew that they would bring about all sorts of impediments in the matter of the succession. He wished that there should be a positive Command from Allah in this regard and He fulfilled his wish thus

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَّا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ.

O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message, and Allah will protect you from the
 ”(people; surely Allah will not guide the unbelieving people. (٥:٦٧)

:Allamah al-Shawkani writes`

Abū-Sa`id al-Khidri says that the verse was revealed in Ghadir Khumm concerning“
 [`Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s) ”[١]

After receiving this implicit Command, there was no scope for any delay in communicating the contents to the Ummah. The Prophet (a.s) dismounted from his camel and others too followed suit. On the shouting of the slogan of hayya `ala khayr al-`amal (Come to the Best of Deed) those who were going ahead turned back and the stragglers hurriedly came forward. They all gathered in that desert wilderness. It was midday and the winds were scorching hot. Barring some thorny Acacia bushes there was no greenery around. The Companions took off their cloaks, tied them round their limbs, and sat down intently listening on the burning sands. The Prophet (a.s) asked his men to improvise a pulpit by stacking saddles of the camels one over another between two Acacia bushes. He then ascended the pulpit. Zayd ibn Arqam :says

The Prophet of Islam (a.s) stood at the dried lake, Ghadir Khumm, which lies between“ Makkah and al-Madinah, and after Praising Allah and sermonizing the gathering, said, ‘O People! I am a mortal human being and the time is not far when the Messenger will come from Allah and I shall have to abide by the Call! I am leaving behind with you two weighty things; one is the Book of Allah which has radiance and Guidance. Keep holding it firmly!’ He stressed on the need of the people holding fast to the Book of Allah. Then he said, ‘The second weighty thing that I leave with you is my Ahl al-Bayt. I remind you of Allah regarding the Ahl al-Bayt! I remind you of Allah regarding my Ahl [al-Bayt! I remind you of Allah regarding my Ahl al-Bayt!’”[۲

After these introductory words, the Prophet (a.s) called three times in a high pitch, “Do I not have more right over you than you have yourself?” The gathering assented in unison, “Of course! It is so!” After obtaining this assent from the people, the Prophet (a.s) raised `Ali (a.s) by putting his hands under his arm pits and said

O People! Allah is my Master and I am the Master of all the Believers, I have more right over them than their selves! Remember of whomsoever I am the Master, he too is their Master! O Allah: Be a friend to one who befriends him and be an enemy of one [who is his enemy!”[۳

:Ibn `Abd al-Barr writes

The Prophet (a.s) said on the Day of Ghadir Khumm, ‘of whom I am Master, this `Ali (a.s) too is his Master! O Allah! Whosoever befriends him, be his friend; be the enemy [of those who have enmity for him!”[۴

After this announcement, the Prophet (a.s) descended from the makeshift pulpit and offered the 2uhr Prayer in congregation. After the prayers he went into his tent and asked people to go to `Ali’s tent in groups and congratulate him on his appointment to the august position. Therefore, the Companions met him and gave their felicitations. The Prophet’s Consorts and other ladies too expressed their happiness over the event. `Umar’s words of praise are an indelible part of the History

Felicitations, O son of Abū-Talib! You have become the master of all believing men [and women!”[۵

While the people were felicitating `Ali (a.s), Archangel Gabriel came and gave the good news of the Completion of the Faith and the Fulfillment of the Blessings

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا.

This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favor on you and“
”(chosen for you Islam as a religion. (٥:٣

Jalaluddin al-Suyūti writes

Abū-Sa`id al-Khidri says, ‘When the Prophet (a.s) raised `Ali (a.s) in his place at Ghadir Khumm and announced his Wilayah, Jibril (Archangel Gabriel) came to the [Prophet (a.s) with the Verse.”[٦

The tradition of Ghadir has been narrated in continuity and is free of any doubt whatsoever. None could refute it. But people have been making some interpretations to dilute its importance. `Alam al-Huda Sayyid al-Murtada has said that refuting the event of Ghadir is like denying the existence of the Sun and the Moon! `Allamah Muqbalī has said that if the event of Ghadir is not certain, then there is nothing certain in the Din! The narrators of both the schools agree that the Prophet (a.s) addressed a huge gathering of Muslims and took oath of their allegiance to himself. Then he told them that for whomsoever he was the Master, `Ali (a.s) too was the Master. But efforts have been made to interpret the meaning of the word Master to hide the fact of the matter. Because if they accepted that `Ali (a.s) had the same status for the Ummah as did the Prophet (a.s), the plan of some people to manipulate the succession and the event of Banū-Saqifah would have failed. Therefore, they attach the meaning of friend to the word mawla. Sometimes they say that it means supporter and helper. But it is a matter of conjecture that the Prophet (a.s) had to hold the crowds eager to reach their homes in that hot desert to communicate the message of help, support and friendship? The message was of such import that he did not want it communicated to their homes through individual couriers and wanted to convey in the huge gathering of the Believers. At that time a part of the Caravan was staggering far behind and another group was advancing fast in front and reached al-Juhafah, about three miles ahead He ordered both the groups to assemble in the hot

desert and started his talk only when all had arrived. Then the Prophet (a.s) took an oath from the large gathering that he had complete right over each and every individual in the Ummah. When they assented in unison, the Prophet (a.s) said that `Ali (a.s) too was their master with the same rights as himself. No intelligent person will agree that the Prophet (a.s) went through all the inconvenience and trouble at that extremely hot place just to stop people and tell them that if he was their friend and supporter, `Ali (a.s) too was the same! There was not any need for him to announce :about the friendship because the Holy Qur'an had already proclaimed

As for the believing men and the believing women, they are guardians of each other.“

”(٩:٧١)

The announcement was not necessary just to create or strengthen friendship between all the Believers. That was already expected and mandated by Allah. The purpose was that there were pressure groups in the Ummah and Allah had also said “Allah will save you from the mischief of men.” This mischief was not only external but also from the inside and therefore the announcement was made so forcefully. In fact, this announcement was the echo of the announcement that the Prophet (a.s) made to the small group of Banū-Hashim twenty years ago at the Feast of al-`Ashirah

[This is my brother and my heir and successor. Hear him and obey him!]"[٧١

This announcement not only cleared the matter of the Caliphate but its importance in all the propagation of the Faith carried out by the Prophet (a.s). Although the Prophet (a.s).had from his Annunciation to Migration and then until Hijjat al-Wada` spelled out the commandments that were revealed from time to time. The Muslims implicitly started following these commands as and when they were communicated to them. Therefore, they started offering mandatory prayers, fasting during the month of Ramadan, participated in the jihad and came in hordes for the Hajj. But the Verse “If you do not do this, it will be as if you have not delivered any message at all”, proves that all the earlier commands would be ineffective unless the last and final commandment was communicated to the Ummah. This means that the twenty-three years of the Prophet’s Mission depended on its completion on the conveyance and fulfillment of the last Commandment Revealed at Ghadir Khumm

If this message were not communicated, the task of Prophethood would have remained incomplete. Two things become evident from this. One is that this Commandment is the principal and foundation of the Faith of Islam. The other tenets have a secondary, though mandatory, nature. As a superstructure cannot stand firm, like a house of cards, without a strong foundation, so also this Commandment is the foundation of the Faith of Islam

Footnote

Fath al-Qadīr, Vol ۳, Page ۵۷ [۱]

Sahīh Muslim, Vol ۲, Page ۲۷۹ [۲]

Al-Sawā`iq al-Muhriqah, Page ۴۱ [۳]

Al-Istī`āb, Vol ۲, Page ۴۶۰ [۴]

Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Vol ۴, Page ۲۸۱ [۵]

Tafsīr al-Durr al-Manthūr, Vol ۲, Page ۲۵۹ [۶]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۲, Page ۴۲ [۷]

THE CONTINGENT OF USAMAH IBN ZAYD

THE CONTINGENT OF USAMAH IBN ZAYD

The Prophet of Islam (a.s) had deputed al-Harith ibn `Umayr al-Azdi as his ambassador to the ruler of al-Basrah with the Message of Islam. But on the way the ruler of Balqa', Shurahbil arrested and killed him. When the Prophet (a.s) got this sad news, he sent a contingent under Zayd ibn Harithah, Ja`far ibn Abi-Talib and `Abdullah ibn Rawahah with instructions that if Zayd was killed, Ja`far ibn Abi-Talib should assume command. If he was martyred, `Abdullah ibn Rawahah should take charge of the contingent. When they reached Ma`an, they got news that Heracles of Rome was camping at Balqa' with the armies of Rome and Syria. When the Muslims got wind of the huge enemy armies, they halted at Ma`an and wanted to call more

troops from al-Madinah. But `Abdullah ibn Rawahah encouraged the men to improve their morale and said that they should not be afraid of the disparate groups forming the enemy ranks and that they must go forward and confront the enemy! The courage of the Muslims was thus boosted and they marched forward. When they reached, Mushrif, a satellite town of Balqa', they turned towards Mu'tah sensing the movements of the enemy and confront them appropriately. They organized their men into proper left and right flanks. The enemy troops too arrived there and organized themselves. Zayd ibn Harithah went forward with the Standard in his hand and was martyred fighting. Now Ja`far ibn Abi-Talib took the Standard in his hand and lost his right hand fighting the enemy. He took the Standard in his left hand. That too was severed during the fight. He now held the standard close to his chest and bearing more than eight wounds from swords and arrows, he was martyred. The Prophet (a.s) gave him the posthumous titles of Dhul-Janahayn (One with two wings) and al-Tayyar fil-Jannah (The one who flies in the Heaven). `Abdullah ibn Rawahah now took charge of the battle and he too was martyred fighting. After these well-known commanders, there was none of the renowned warriors left. But one al-Ansari, Thabit ibn Arqam picked up the Standard and asked the men to select a standard-bearer from amongst them. They proposed that he himself should do the duty. He said that he was not ready to take the responsibility. Therefore, Khalid ibn al-Walid came forward to become the Standard-bearer. After a little while of fighting, the dusk fell and it became dark. The fighting stopped because of the darkness. Khalid considered the nightfall was to his advantage and withdrew with the men in the cover of darkness and started the return journey to al-Madinah. When the fleeing contingent reached al-Madinah, the people started pelting dust on their faces to shame them. They used to hide their faces while going around and Salamah ibn Husham stopped going to the congregational prayers in shame. When they went to the mosque, the people used to

:shame them with the calls of deserters! They used to say

[Are you one of the persons who deserted from Allah's Way?]"[۱“

This event took place in Jumada I, ۸H but no steps were taken to exact qisas for the martyrs of Mu'tah. It appears that, for some reason, the Prophet (a.s) wanted to postpone it for his last days. Therefore, during his illness, he called Usamah ibn Zayd, :a youth of ۱۸ or ۱۹ years, and put him at the head of a contingent. Ibn Sa`d writes

From the Ansar and Muhajirūn there was hardly any prominent person who was not“ asked to join the ghazwah. Amongst them were Abū-Bakr Siddik, `Umar ibn al-Khattab, `Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah, Sa`d ibn Abi-Waqqas, Sa`id ibn Zayd, Qutadah ibn [al-Nu`man and Salamah ibn Aslam ibn Huraysh were included”[۲

When the Prophet (a.s), despite his illness, handed over the Standard to Usamah ibn Zayd, the Muslims started criticizing his capability instead obeying the Commands of the Prophet (a.s) and accepting him as their commander. Sometimes they said that Usamah was too young and inexperienced and at other times, they said that he was the son of a freed slave and it was below their dignity to serve under him. When the Prophet (a.s) got wind of this gossip, he came out with covered head, in a state of high :fever, and said

If you have objection about his Commanding the Contingent, you have been critical“ of his father's command too. By Allah! He was capable of the Command and in my [eyes more likeable than others! This youth too is dear to me than the others!”[۳

Then he went into the house and the ailment became more acute. Even in that state, he was repeatedly telling, “Send the Contingent of Usamah soon, send the Contingent of Usamah urgently, and send the Contingent of Usamah urgently”

Usamah came to the presence of the Prophet (a.s) to see him and said, “O Prophet of Allah (a.s)! It would be better if the contingent leaves after you recover from your illness!” He replied, “No! You must start forthwith without any delay!” Usamah got up to go and prepare for the departure of the contingent. On the other side, the Prophet’s ailment increased and he swooned. When he recovered slightly he asked if the Contingent had left or not. When he was told that the preparations for the departure were under way, he folded his brow and said

Send the Contingent of Usamah urgently and Allah’s curse on those who do not join“ [it”[۴

With repeated exhortations of the Prophet (a.s) the Contingent moved out of al-Madinah, but it halted at a distance of three miles in Wadi al-Jurf. Someone came to them and gave the tiding that the Prophet (a.s) was in his last throes. Hearing this Usamah, `Umar and Abū-`Ubaydah came back to al-Madinah. When the Prophet (a.s) demised, the rest of the Contingent returned to al-Madinah

For the Muslims every Command of the Prophet (a.s) is the Command of Allah. Going against his commands is tantamount to disobeying Allah. Despite the repeated exhortations by the Prophet (a.s), the persons nominated to be a part of the Contingent were hesitant in proceeding on the campaign. When the Prophet (a.s) asked for paper and pen to dictate his will, they said that he was in a state of delirium and not in his senses. But when they refused to obey the Command for proceeding on the Campaign what excuse they were offering for disobeying the Orders of Allah’s ?(Prophet (a.s

To understand the reasons for the behavior of the Companions at that time, we shall have to go into the scenario of the event. History points out that after the Hijjat al-Wada` ; the Prophet (a.s) started keeping indifferent health. This illness was the forerunner of his death. The Prophet (a.s) had hinted in his Sermons of the Hijjat al-Wada` and Ghadir Khumm that the time for his departure was nigh. After returning from the Hijjat al-Wada, ` he hinted about it. The Companions understood that this sun was about to set after giving his radiance for twenty-three years! ` Abdullah ibn Mas`ūd says

[Our Prophet (a.s) gave the tidings of his death a month before he died.]“[۵“

On the one hand, the Prophet (a.s) was talking about his imminent demise and on the other; he was expressing concern about mischief by some people in the Ummah. Therefore, one night he walked with much difficulty to Jannat al-Baqi` and prayed for the people of the graves and said, “Seeing the living people the way they are, your condition is praiseworthy. Now mischief is spreading like dark nights and the mischief that will rise will be worse than the earlier one

In the trying circumstances when the time for his Call was nigh on one hand and on the other mischief was raising its ugly head. He had to think whether to suppress the mischief or to seek qisas for the martyrs of Mu`tah. Almost two years had passed since the persons were martyred at Mu`tah and the qisas was not obtained so far. The subject was almost in the cold storage for very long and why did the prophet (a.s) think of sending a contingent to extract the qisas now when he was himself critically ill? He also did not have the tendency of conquering people and annexing places. He always fought in his own defense. Then why did he repeatedly order the contingent to go, and prayed for the Curse of Allah for those who abstained from joining the Contingent. He had never taken such a stringent stand before. Whenever any person made excuses for not joining to jihad, he readily conceded his request. But here there is only one command that the people in the Contingent must leave immediately for the campaign. Generally, people during their last days have the wish to have all their kin and companions near them to make their passage smooth and help in arranging the last rites. Here the Prophet (a.s) was sending away two of his closest Companions

on a campaign under the Command of a youth of nineteen years! If the Prophet (a.s) had the matter of the Shūra and the imminence for the selection of the successor in his mind he would never have tried to send the two important contenders for the position hundreds of miles away from al-Madinah at this critical juncture! If he had the idea of prevention of possible mischief after his demise through their good offices, he would never have packed them away to a distant destination! It is a fact that the Prophet (a.s) was not happy with the men around him. Some persons were deviating from Islam when they felt that his end was near and others gave indications that they were paving their way to capture the seat of power. They were busy designing and devising ways to usurp power through

these stratagems dividing people. The Prophet (a.s) had already declared at Ghadir Khumm that `Ali (a.s) was his Vicegerent and Caliph. But he was foreseeing certain difficulties in the implementation of this decision. He had felt that attaching the slightest importance to `Ali (a.s) upset and disturbed certain persons. He knew that these persons would oppose the implementation of what was decided at the Feast of Dual-`Ashirah and Ghadir Khumm. Those who did not accept the Command of Usamah ibn Zayd in the Prophet's lifetime, they would go to any length to deny the Caliphate to `Ali (a.s) when the Prophet (a.s) was not around. The Prophet (a.s) had appointed Usamah the

Commander of the contingent over Abū-Bakr and `Umar because he was indirectly impressing on them that youth was no bar for persons holding positions of responsibility. The Prophet (a.s) did feel that his antagonists would raise the question of `Ali (a.s) youth when the question of Caliphate came up. Even after this exercise of care the opponents did raise the question that `Ali (a.s) was young and an old person should take the office of the caliph. The contingent of Usamah ibn Zayd was set up with the twin purpose of extracting qisas for the martyred Muslims and to send away the main contenders for the Caliphate hundreds of miles away to facilitate smooth succession. But the contenders had their well thought out plan ready and even at the cost of getting cursed by the Prophet (a.s) they did not move more than a few miles from al-Madinah. It was their utter misfortune that they did not comply with the last
!(Command and instruction of their beloved Prophet (a.s

During the lifetime of the Prophet (a.s), his command was treated in a cavalier manner. But soon after his demise, the first thing the Caliph did was to send Usamah's Contingent on the Campaign. It was a poor attempt to cover their tracks that they had blatantly disobeyed the prophet's Commands. This was done by Abū-Bakr despite opposition from many quarters. The Ansar were of the view that the Campaign should be postponed and, if not, some person other than Usamah should command it. Therefore, `Umar took sides with the Ansar and Abū-Bakr pulled `Umar's beard in anger and said

You die and let your mother sit in mourning for you! O son of al-Khattab! He was "[appointed the Commander by the Prophet (a.s) and you ask me to remove him!]"[۞

If sending of the Contingent was in compliance of the Command of the Prophet (a.s), then no demand should have come for removing him from the post because he was selected by the Prophet (a.s) himself. Usamah was the choice of the Prophet (a.s) and although `Umar was asking Abū-Bakr to remove Usamah as a mouthpiece of the Ansar, he should have himself told them that he was the choice of the Prophet (a.s) instead of strongly seeking his removal! Abū-Bakr too should have taken out his ire on the Ansar for their demand instead of pulling at the beard of `Umar in anger. Abū-Bakr did not join the campaign because of his duties as the Caliph. `Umar took permission from Usamah, the Commander, to stay away. The question is whether Usamah had the right to permit the persons named and detailed by the Prophet (a.s) to join the contingent for the Campaign to stay away. But how could the poor youth
act against the might of the ruling clique

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۳۲۳ [۱]

Al-Tabaqāt, Vol ۲, Page ۱۹۰ [۲]

Sahīh Muslim, Vol ۲, Page ۲۸۳ [۳]

Al-Milal wan-Nihal, Page ۸ [۴]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۴۳۵ [۵]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۴۶۲ [۶]

LEADING THE CONGREGATION

LEADING THE CONGREGATION

The Prophet (a.s), during his illness, as long as he had strength, regularly kept going to the mosque for prayers. But when the ailment increased, he had to stop going there. Therefore, on Monday, after the call for the morning prayers was sounded, Bilal came to the Prophet (a.s) and reminded him to go for the prayer. He told him that he did not have enough strength to reach the mosque and that someone else may be asked to lead the congregation. `A'ishah suggested that her father, Abū-Bakr, be asked to do it. Hafsa said her father `Umar could do the job. When the Prophet (a.s) heard the names of Abū-Bakr and `Umar from them, he realized that instead of being in the Contingent of Usamah they were still in al-Madinah contrary to his orders. In anger, he got up and with difficulty proceeded towards the mosque. He thought that one of them might lead the prayer and make it an excuse for elevation to the position of the Caliphate. He kept his arms round the shoulders of al-Fadl ibn `Abbas and `Ali ibn Abi-Talib and went to the mosque. He found that Abū-Bakr had reached the arch of the mosque. The Prophet (a.s) waved him to move back, went forward and led the congregation. The incident had been given another color that the person who was the deputy of the Prophet (a.s) at the congregation, deserved to be the first Caliph of Islam. But we have to see whether Abū-Bakr, on his own, went to the Prophet's place of prayer or he was ordered to do so? Even if he was ordered to lead a prayer in the

?mosque, is it a qualification to be named the Caliph

p: ۳۸۶

The traditions recorded in the books of History are so different and contradictory that it is very difficult to accept them as authentic. One narration says something and another something else about the same incident. Most of these narrations are from `A'ishah. The contradictory nature of these narrations render them weak. We shall mention a few of the narrations to prove our point of view. Ibn Husham writes

Bilal reminded the Prophet (a.s) of the prayer when he asked `Abdullah ibn Zum`ah to ask someone to lead the congregation. `Abdullah says, 'I went out and did not find Abū-Bakr and `Umar with the people there. I asked `Umar to come and lead the prayer. When he loudly sounded the Takbir, the Prophet (a.s) asked where was Abū-Bakr? Allah and the Muslims do not agree that `Umar leads the prayer. Then Abū-Bakr was called but he arrived when `Umar had already finished the prayer. Abū-Bakr too offered the prayer with the congregation.'[1]

It appears from this tradition that in the beginning the Prophet (a.s) did not name any particular person to lead the prayer and had left it to the discretion of `Abdullah to ask someone to do the job. Because of this open permission he asked `Umar to lead. When he started the prayer the Prophet (a.s) called for Abū-Bakr to lead the prayer. But before he arrived `Umar had completed the prayer and Abū-Bakr repeated the process. It surprises seeing this narration that when the Prophet (a.s) had told `Abdullah that he should ask someone to lead the congregation, and `Umar complied, then what was the need to rush a person to call Abū-Bakr to come and repeat the process? Was praying behind `Umar not legitimate? If it was legitimate, then what was the sense in repeating the process? If the Prophet (a.s) wanted that only Abū-Bakr should lead the prayer, then he could have instructed `Abdullah in the first instance to ask that person to lead! If that was done, `Umar could have been spared the ignominy that his leading the prayer was voided

:Ibn Sa`d says

When `Umar sounded the Takbir the Prophet (a.s) said, ‘No! No! Where is the son of “Abū-Quhafah?” Hearing this, the rows got disturbed and `Umar moved away from the [niche and Abū-Bakr came forward and led the prayer.”[۲

In the first narrative quoted above it is mentioned that a person was sent to call Abū-Bakr and from this narration it seems that he arrived himself. In the first narrative it is recorded that Abū-Bakr arrived after the prayer was over and in this narration it is said that `Umar had to give way from the middle of the prayer! Besides the contradictions, there is one thing that disturbs the minds is that what was the need to interrupt the prayer. If it is accepted that the person leading the prayer was a sinner and transgressor, there is one group in Islam, which does not enforce the condition of decency (`adalah) for Imamate during prayers. And the group in which decency of the Imam is mandatory, breaking the prayer in progress is not permitted! If during the prayer it is learned that the Imam is a sinner, the people can change the intent from the congregational prayer to individual prayer and complete the process. In no event, .they can break the prayer when they have started to offer it

:Ibn Jarir al-Tabari writes

The Prophet (a.s) said that Abū-Bakr be told lead the prayer. Then he himself took“ support of two persons and stirred out in a manner that his two feet were dragging on the ground. When he reached near Abū-Bakr, the latter moved back. The Prophet (a.s) waved him to stay where he was. He sat near Abū-Bakr and offered his prayer. (`A’ishah says) that Abū-Bakr was following the Holy Prophet and the other people [were following him.”[۳

This narration suggests that the Prophet (a.s) had sent for Abū-Bakr to be called to lead the prayer. When he stood up for the prayer, the Prophet (a.s) himself, despite his sickness, came and joined the congregation sitting next to Abū-Bakr. The Prophet (a.s) asking Abū-Bakr to lead the prayer and then himself coming to the mosque, despite his sickness, gives a doubt whether he really asked for Abū-Bakr to lead the prayer. The narration does not mention that the Prophet (a.s) himself asked Abū-Bakr to go and lead the prayer. Perhaps like `Abdullah ibn Zum`ah asking `Umar to lead, similarly someone else might have prompted Abū-Bakr to come and take the lead at the prayer. When the Prophet (a.s) learned of these happenings, he would have decided, despite the poor condition of his health, to go to the mosque. The narration that Abū-Bakr was following the Prophet (a.s) in his prayer and the other persons in the congregation were following him is a meaningless contention. Because if Abū-Bakr was the Imam for that particular prayer, he could not have been the follower of anyone else for that prayer! If the Prophet (a.s) was the Imam then Abū-Bakr would be only the follower and nothing else. It is not possible that a person can be an Imam and the follower at the same prayer! If such was the case then those who are in the back rows, they become followers of those who are in the rows in front of them

Ibn Jarir al-Tabari writes

The prophet (a.s) asked `Ali (a.s) to be called. `A'ishah said she wished he had called "Abū-Bakr. Hafsah said she wished he had called `Umar. In that time, all of them assembled near the Prophet (a.s). The Prophet (a.s) said, 'You people go away. I shall call you when needed!' Therefore, they went away. Then the Prophet (a.s) asked if it was time for prayer. He was told it was the time. He wanted to ask Abū-Bakr to lead the prayer. `A'ishah said he was weak of heart and `Umar must be asked to lead. The Prophet (a.s) then agreed for `Umar to be asked for leading the prayer. `Umar said that with Abū-Bakr around he would not agree to lead. Abū-Bakr went forward. In this time, the prophet (a.s) felt some relief from his ailment and came out of his room. Abū-Bakr heard his footsteps and tried to move back. The Prophet (a.s) pulled at the lapel of his cloak and made him stand where he was. He himself sat down and where [Abū-Bakr had stopped the Recitation, he continued.]"[۴

In this narration certain things have come that help in understanding the real facts. One thing is very evident that the prophet (a.s) had asked for `Ali (a.s) to be called but why and for what reason, the narration does not elucidate. In the last part of the narration, the Prophet (a.s) asked if it was time for the prayer. He was replied in the affirmative. This highlights that the Prophet (a.s) was calling `Ali (a.s) when it was the time for the prayer. What else could have been the reason of calling him at the time of the prayer other than that he was to be asked about leading the prayer? This was so evident that `A'ishah and Hafsah read between the words and suggested and wished that their fathers were called. If the Prophet (a.s) was calling `Ali (a.s) for some other specific work there was no reason for `A'ishah and Hafsah suggesting that their fathers be called! Their suggestion would be reasonable when they were sure of the purpose of the call and that they preferred their fathers to substitute `Ali (a.s) for performing that task. There is another point to be noted that as soon as the names of the two persons are suggested, they arrive. Their arrival suggests that it was a pre planned move thinking that the Prophet's condition would not warrant his coming to the mosque and that when a call came from `A'ishah and Hafsah they would rush to the mosque to take the lead in the prayer. On this basis, their claim to caliphate would strengthen. But the Prophet (a.s) sends them away saying that he did not need their presence immediately and would call them when needed. This proves that the

Prophet (a.s) wanted to be alone at that time to discuss the matter for which he had called `Ali (a.s). If he wanted Abū-Bakr to lead the prayer, what was preventing the Prophet (a.s) to ask Abū-Bakr to lead the prayer before asking him to go away from his presence. It was the time for prayer and Abū-Bakr was present before the Prophet (a.s)! As soon as he goes out of the room, he is given a message that he should lead the prayer! The question arises that why Abū-Bakr was not asked to lead the prayer when he came to the Prophet's presence and was sent the instruction immediately after coming out of the room. What was the strategy in the message and who carried the message to him? The answer to this question is that neither any message was given to him nor was there any messenger who carried it to him

At that time `A'ishah made an excuse that Abū-Bakr was weak at heart and that `Umar should be asked to lead the prayer in his place! When `Ali (a.s) was called, she did not talk of `Umar and said that she wished Abū-Bakr was called and later on she expressed about the weakness of her father's heart and suggested the name of `Umar for leading the prayer. The more surprising thing about the narrative is that the Prophet (a.s) agrees with this suggestion! Although in the narration of `Abdullah Ibn Zūm`ah it is mentioned that when the Prophet (a.s) heard `Umar loudly saying the Takbir, he was angered and said that `Umar leading the prayer was neither to the liking of Allah nor do the Muslims like it! Now, in the latter narration the Prophet (a.s) is very willingly allowing `Umar to lead the prayer! Now the dilemma is whom to believe and whom not to believe. How is it possible that the person whose lead in the prayer is not to the liking of Allah and the Muslims is permitted to lead in the end on the recommendation of `A'ishah? When `Umar is at last asked to lead, he withdraws saying that when Abū-Bakr was around he would not come forward to lead. This does not sound correct because when `Abdullah ibn Zūm`ah asked him to lead, he immediately agreed without a whimper of protest in favor of Abū-Bakr. It is another matter that the prayer that was already offered was voided, or left incomplete, and Abū-Bakr took over the lead. No sooner Abū-Bakr stood up to lead the prayer, the Prophet (a.s) arrived. The plausible reason is that when the Prophet (a.s) called `Ali (a.s), it was thought that he might ask `Ali (a.s) to lead the prayer. To circumvent this, they told Abū-Bakr, as if on behalf of the Prophet (a.s), that he should lead the prayer. When he stood up to lead the Prophet (a.s), somehow arrived at the mosque to stop him and take the lead himself. Otherwise, when the Prophet (a.s) had expressed in ability to go to the mosque, what persuaded him to change his plan? In this narration a sentence has been added saying that the Prophet (a.s) continued the Verse that Abū-Bakr was reciting from the point where the latter stopped. This was an attempt to make Abū-Bakr a partner to the Prophet (a.s) in leading the prayer. We wonder if this prayer too was void like the one that `Umar was leading a while ago. If the recitation is done from the middle, it will be in complete and there will be a doubt of .the prayer becoming void

:Muhammad ibn Isma`il al-Bukhari writes

A'ishah says that when the Prophet (a.s) suffered from his last illness, Bilal came` “ and mentioned about the prayer. The Prophet (a.s) said that Abū-Bakr be asked to lead the prayer. I said that Abū-Bakr had a weak heart and standing in your place he might start crying and may not be able to recite the Verses Again the Prophet (a.s) said that Abū-Bakr must lead the prayer and repeated the same words. On the third or fourth repetition he said, ‘You are like the women of Yūsuf! Abū-Bakr must lead!’ Abū-Bakr started the prayer. In that time the Prophet (a.s), leaning on the shoulders of two men, went out and I remember the scene that his two feet were dragging on the ground under them. When Abū-Bakr saw the Prophet (a.s) he started withdrawing. The Prophet (a.s) asked him to continue with the recitation. Abū-Bakr withdrew a little backward and the Prophet (a.s) sat beside him. Abū-Bakr was [sounding the Takbir to the hearing of the congregation.”[۵

In this narration too the weakness of the heart of Abū-Bakr is mentioned with a corollary that when he stood in the niche of the mosque he might cry. This way `A'ishah wanted to impress on the Prophet (a.s) that the concern that Abū-Bakr had about his illness, none other had it. He will shiver standing in the Prophet's place in the Mosque thinking that his master would never again stand there! The purpose behind this talk certainly was to impress on the Prophet (a.s) that her father had the greatest love and regard for him and therefore none other qualified more than he did to lead the prayer in the absence of the Prophet (a.s). The author of “al-Sirah al-Halabiyyah” says the Prophet (a.s) compared `A'ishah to the lady with Yūsuf (a.s) that Zulaykhah had gathered the ladies of Egypt for a feast, although the purpose was only to show Yūsuf (a.s) to them. Similarly `A'ishah wanted Abū-Bakr to lead the prayer but outwardly gave an impression that she did not want him to do that

In this narration it is also mentioned that the Prophet (a.s) insisted on Abū-Bakr leading the prayer. On the one hand they talk of the Prophet's insistence and on the other as soon as Abū-Bakr stood up for the prayer; they say that the Prophet (a.s) arrived with the support of two persons to lead the congregation! Reading this tradition, even a person with average intelligence would neither accept that the Prophet (a.s) insisted on the assignment to Abū-Bakr to lead nor even permitting him to stand at the niche of the Mosque. If this appointment was from the Prophet (a.s) he would certainly have asked Abū-Bakr to lead the congregation to the completion of the prayer! When the Prophet (a.s) took over the lead, Abū-Bakr acted as the Mukabbar who sounds the Takbir when the Prophet (a.s) went into genuflection and prostration. The Mukabbar is not the Imam and crediting Abū-Bakr of leading the prayer instead of the Prophet (a.s) is not right

Seeing the contradictory nature of these narratives, one cannot believe that the Prophet (a.s) nominated Abū-Bakr to lead the prayer. There was no question of his nomination because the Prophet (a.s) had detailed Abū-Bakr, `Umar and other Companions to proceed on the campaign with Usamah ibn Zayd and kept insisting until his last moment that they should go in obedience to his orders! How is it possible that on the one hand he orders them to leave al-Madinah with the Contingent of Usamah and on the other to stay back and lead the prayer? This story of leading the prayer has been created to justify elevating and justifying Abū-Bakr's appointment to the Caliphate. Ibn Hajar al-Makki went to the extent of considering his leading in the prayer as the text for Abū-Bakr's Caliphate. He writes

On account of this Imamate, all the scholars believe that there was a text for Abū-“
[Bakr’s caliphate.”][۶

If certainly the Prophet (a.s) appointed Abū-Bakr as the Caliph on account of a Divine commission through his leading the congregation at the prayer, then despite his poor condition of health why did the Prophet (a.s) come out of his room and removed Abū-Bakr to lead the prayer himself? If it is assumed that leading the congregation is the Nass caliphate then how could Abū-Bakr nominate `Umar as Caliph when the Prophet (a.s) had stopped him from leading the congregation at prayer? If leading the congregation in prayer is the Nass caliphate, then the Prophet (a.s) used to detail someone or other to do this whenever he was away from al-Madinah in connection with the Ghazwah. With this logic Ibn-Ummi-Maktūm was the most deserving :candidate because he was given this privilege many a time! Ibn Qutaybah writes

The prophet (a.s) generally on the occasions of ghazawat used to leave behind Ibn“
[Ummi-Maktūm in al-Madinah to lead the people in prayers.”][۷

From this Imamate of Ibn-Ummi-Maktūm, that was for much longer duration than the one time Imamate of Abū-Bakr, have people ever thought that it was the Nass caliphate for Ibn-Ummi-Maktūm? Even in his presence, the Prophet (a.s) asked others to lead the prayers on several occasions. The prominent among such persons are Abul-Bu`bu`, Sabbah ibn `Arfatah, `Attab ibn Usayd, Sa`d ibn `Abadah, Abū-Dharr al-Ghifari, Zayd ibn Harithah, Abū-Salamah al-Makhzūmi and `Abdullah ibn Rawahah. Did any one of them who did the Imamate of the congregation stake their claim for the caliphate on the basis of this singular privilege enjoyed by them? Then what is the meaning of considering Abū-Bakr standing up to lead a prayer as the Nass caliphate :<in his favor? Abū-Hurayrah al-Dūsi narrates from the Prophet (a.s

The obligatory prayers can be offered behind any Muslim, virtuous or otherwise,“
[even if he had committed the major sins.”][٨

If this Imamate is the Nass caliphate, then the appointment of Usamah above Abū-Bakr, `Umar and other senior Companions can also be sited as a Nass for claiming the position of the Caliph! The command of the contingent was more important than the Imamate of the Congregation at that time as, otherwise, the Muhajirūn and Ansar would not have objected to making the son of a slave, and a youth, to lead such heavyweights like `Umar and Abū-Bakr in battle

Footnote

Sīrat ibn Hushām, Vol ٢, Page ٣٠٢ [١]

Al-Tabaqāt, Vol ٢, Page ٢٢٢ [٢]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٤٣٩ [٣]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٤٣٩ [٤]

Sahīh al-Bukhārī, Vol ١, Page ٩٥ [٥]

Tathīr al-Jinān, Page ٤٠ [٦]

Al-Ma`ārif, Page ١٢٦ [٧]

Al-Mishkāt, Page ١٠٠ [٨]

THE CALAMITY OF QIRTAS

THE CALAMITY OF QIRTAS

Islam was the life’s achievement for the prophet (a.s) for the propagation of which he had borne all sorts of hardships and severe opposition. Every individual desires that whatever he has developed with hard work remains safe from the machinations of destructive opponents. He preserves and protects it in his lifetime and tries to leave it in safe hands when the time for leaving the world arrives. He therefore makes an oral

will or reduces his instructions on paper to doubly safeguard his legacy. Can we imagine that the Prophet (a.s) would leave intestate especially when it was the question of preserving and protecting his legacy which was the great Faith of Islam

In view of this very important and urgent need, knowing that his sickness was of terminal nature, the Prophet (a.s) asked for pen and paper brought to him two to four days before he demised. He wanted to write a document that would be a source of guidance for the people until the end of the world and safeguard his Ummah from getting divided into many sects and groupings. But some persons conspired to obstruct the Prophet (a.s) from making his will and testament

Umar said that the Prophet (a.s) was overwhelmed with pain and for us the Book of “ [Allah is sufficient.”[۱]

:This is a narration from al-Bukhari who also says

The Prophet (a.s) said, ‘Bring a paper to me that I write for you a document after“ which you will not go astray!’ On this, persons started sharp arguments, although quarreling near the Prophet (a.s) was not proper. People said, ‘The Prophet (a.s) is in a delirium!’ the Prophet (a.s) said, ‘Leave me to my scruples! I am fine in whatever [condition I am than what you are calling me to!”[۲]

When the differences overstretched and the sounds of shouts were coming, the :consorts of the Prophet (a.s) said from behind the curtains

Give to the Prophet (a.s) whatever he is asking for. ` Umar asked them to keep quiet“ and said that they were like the women of Yūsuf who cry when the Prophet (a.s) falls ill and when he is hale and hearty ride on his neck. At this, the Prophet said, ‘they are [better than you!”[۳]

The ladies kept calling from their private quarters but none paid any heed and never gave a paper and pen to the Prophet (a.s). The Prophet (a.s) was sad over the Companions disobeying his Commands, terming his ill health, although he was in full senses, as delirium and raising a rumpus instead of leaving him in peace. He was fed up of the happening around him and said, "Go away from me!" this was the worst calamity of the History of Islam that its founder wanted to write down his last will and testament for the benefit of the Ummah to protect them from going astray and his voice was submerged with in the noise raised by the people around him. Alas! He left this world disappointed and dismayed with certain of his close associates! Ibn ` Abbas used to cry much thinking of the events of that day and the pebbles of sand kept in front of him used to get wet with the tears that dropped from his eyes

It was such a great calamity that the differences between the Companions and their " [shouting and misbehavior obstructed the Prophet (a.s) writing down his will." [۴

People have tried in several ways to find excuses from the happenings of that sad day. They tried to put the blame on the entire crowd instead of pin pointing the culprits and exposing their evil designs and faces! But all these efforts went in vain and the facts could not be hidden from the public gaze. Al-Bukhari's two narrations quoted above are a reflection of this. While in the first narration there is reference of the Prophet's acute pain and the accusation of delirium, he has tried to hide the name of the person by referring to the accuser in the plural form instead of mentioning it as a singular and recording the name of that person. Where the events are light of nature al-Bukhari does not refrain from using the names of the characters involved! Where the words used are unpalatable, he cleverly tries to avoid the name of the person who used them. But this attempt does not seem to protect the memory of the perpetrators of those cruel and undesirable words. In some narratives, they use the word "some" instead of blaming the "crowd" to protect the big ones from ignominy.

:Ibn Sa ` d says

Some persons who were there said that because of the intensity of the ailment, the“
[Prophet (a.s) was uttering insensible words.”[٥]

In this narration, the circle of the perpetrators has been narrowed down. Bu even there the use of the word “some” does not pinpoint the real culprit! However Shaykh Shihabuddin al-Khafaji has lifted the curtain from the face of the person and written
[the fact, and nothing but the fact

[Umar said that the Prophet (a.s) was uttering insensible words.”[٦] “

Accusing the Prophet (a.s) of delirium and insensible talk, from whatever quarter, is the most heinous thing to do and the persons who perpetrated such talk must be identified! A person having the ordinary knowledge of the Divine Knowledge of the Prophet will never dare to say that the prophet (a.s) was talking insensible things in his delirium. Because of this impertinent talk, the Prophet (a.s) had to ask those persons to leave him alone! It is really a great calamity that the people succeeded in preventing the Prophet (a.s) from making his will and testament. One fails to understand what fear the person had in his mind that he was not allowing the Prophet (a.s) to get the paper and pen. Even in the state of delirium he wanted to write something, what was the problem for the person allowing reducing to writing down the last wishes of a person no lesser than the Prophet of Islam (a.s)? The persons who were bent on disobeying the Prophet (a.s) succeeded in disobeying his last Command
[and wish

Here, to get over the blame of disobeying the Prophet (a.s) they said that the Faith was Complete and the chain of the Revelations was already broken. Therefore, it was not necessary to write down any thing else. Of course, the Din or Faith was complete, but it does not mean that the Ummah was totally safe from going astray. If it were the case, there would never have been schisms in the ranks of the Muslims nor the springing up of myriad sects. This is all the result of the Ummah going astray. To eliminate these causes the Prophet (a.s) wanted to write down his final Will and Testament. If he had not thought it necessary, what was the need for him to ask for paper and pen? It is also not correct to say that the chain of the Revelations was broken. Until the last breath, the Prophet (a.s) continued to get the Revelations.

:Therefore, Anas ibn Malik says

Allah continued the series of Revelations from the time before the demise of the“ Prophet (a.s) until his last breath and the maximum revelations came on the day of his [death.”[v

This proves that whatever the Prophet (a.s) was saying, and whatever he wanted to be written down, was on the basis of revelations and the commands of Allah. The person who said that it was delirious talks, even if it were reduced to writing; they would have rejected it to suit their own ends

We have also to consider what the Prophet (a.s) was trying to communicate and what was the need for doing it. The books of history and tradition are witness that on his :deathbed, the Prophet (a.s) was continuously saying

I am leaving behind me two things for you. If you remain attached to both of them,“ you will not go astray after me. Both the things are bigger than each other. One is the Book of Allah that is a rope that has one end in the Heaven and the other on the earth. The second thing is my `itrah, my Ahl al-Bayt. These two shall not separate from each other until they come to me at the Cistern of Kawthar. You must think yourself what [attitude you should have for these things.”[A

:When the time for his death drew nigh, he raised the hand of `Ali (a.s) and said

Ali (a.s) is with the Qur’an and the Qur’an is with him. The two will not separate from ` each other until they reach me at the Cistern of Kawthar. I shall ask them how you [proved yourself in THEIR regard.”[A

In the tradition previous to this, the Prophet (a.s) had termed remaining attached to the Qur’an and the Ahl al-Bayt as a guarantee against depravity and going astray. The words used by him were, “You will not go astray after me.” We have also used the same words here lest we go astray in our act! After now, you shall never go astray! This proves to every individual of average intelligence that the things that the Prophet (a.s) termed as the guarantee for their protection from going astray, he wanted to write in his Will and Testament for the benefit of the Posterity. He knew that there were certain for

Sahīh al-Bukhārī, Vol ١, Page ٢٥ [١]

Sahīh al-Bukhārī, Vol ٢, Page ١٢١ [٢]

Al-Tabaqāt Ibn Sa`d, Vol ٢, Page ٢٤٤ [٣]

Tabaqāt Ibn Sa`d, Vol ٢, Page ٢٤٤ [٤]

Tabaqāt Ibn Sa`d, Vol ٢, Page ٢٤٢ [٥]

Nasīm al-Riyāḥ, Vol ٤, Page ٢٧٨ [٦]

Tabaqāt Ibn Sa`d, Vol ٢, Page ٩٣ [٧]

Al-Mishkāt, Page ٥٩٩ [٨]

Al-Sawā`iq al-Muhriqah, Page ١٢٤ [٩]

THE PROPHET'S LAST JOURNEY

THE PROPHET'S LAST JOURNEY

(٣٣٨)

THE PROPHET'S LAST JOURNEY

One day prior to his demise the Prophet (a.s) called `Ali (a.s) close to himself and said, "O `Ali! Now is the time for my departure! After my death, you must give me the bath, drape me in the shroud and put my mortal remains in the grave. You must fulfill the promises that I have made with people. I have taken a loan from a certain Jew for the expenses of the Contingent of Usamah ibn Zayd. You must clear this debt!" Then he took out the ring from his finger and asked `Ali (a.s) to wear it. He also gave to `Ali (a.s) his sword, helmet the yellow turban and other arms. That day was over and the next day was Monday ٢٨th of Safar ١١H. Now the condition of the Prophet's health deteriorated. The clouds of death were hovering over his head. He was in semi comatose condition prior to death. The time was close when the human body stops

breathing and the spirit travels towards its final destination. The Prophet (a.s) opened his eyes and when he did not find `Ali (a.s), who had gone out for some errand, he :said, "Call my friend!" `A'ishah says

When the time of his departure was nigh, the Prophet (a.s) asked his dearest one“ (habib) to be called. Someone went and called Abū-Bakr. The Prophet (a.s) did not look on him and put his head down. He again wanted his Habib to be called. A person went and called `Umar. When the Prophet (a.s) saw him he put his head down and again asked for his Habib. Now `Ali (a.s) came. When the Prophet (a.s) saw him, he took him under his quilt and remained like that until he was dead. His hand was over `Ali (a.s) at [that moment.”[۱]

This was the greatest tragedy in the History of Islam. Everyone was affected with this sad event but for the Banū-Hashim and his close family it was the most irreparable loss. The condition of the Prophet’s Daughter was such as if her own life had been snatched away from her. Her children were crying for the loss of their doting Grandfather. The entire world of `Ali (a.s) was changed. In spite of exercising maximum control over his emotions, tears were running from his eyes. Crying, he touched his hands to the face of his departed mentor and cousin and touched his own face. He closed the eyes of the Prophet (a.s) gently and covered his face with the cloth. Then, as per the wish of the Prophet (a.s), he got busy with the preparation for :his interment. Ibn Sa`d writes

When the Prophet (a.s) died, his head was on the lap of `Ali (a.s). It was `Ali (a.s) who“ gave him the last bath. Al-Fadl Ibn `Abbas was supporting the Prophet (a.s) and [Usamah ibn Zayd was giving the water.”[۲]

When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) had given the bath to the Prophet (a.s), he draped his body in the shroud and alone offered the Funeral Prayer. The persons who were gathered at the mosque were discussing as to who must be asked to lead the last parting prayer for the Prophet (a.s) and where he should be interred. Some people thought that the compound of the mosque was a suitable place for the purpose. Other said that the Jannat al-Baqi` was the right place. When `Ali (a.s) learned about these discussions, he came out of the room and said, "The Prophet (a.s) was our leader in his lifetime and is our Imam and leader in his death too! Therefore, every individual group should go into the room and offer Funeral Prayer individually! As far as the place for his interment is concerned, he will be buried at the same place where he breathed his last!" As instructed by the Imam (a.s) the Banū-Hashim first went into the room and offered the Funeral Prayers. Then followed the Muhajirūn and the Ansar. Of course, one group was deprived of offering the Prophet's Funeral Prayer. They were the persons who were jostled together at the Saqifah of Banū-Sa'idah busy in the worldly conclave of deciding about the corporal power structure! After the Funeral Prayers, the Prophet (a.s) was interred in the same room where he expired. Zayd ibn Sahl excavated the grave. The persons in charge of the interment were `Ali (a.s), `Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib, al-Fadl ibn `Abd al-Muttalib and Usamah ibn Zayd. When the time for burial came, the Ansar called from outside, "O `Ali! Please include one of our persons in the process that we do not remain deprived of the felicity!" `Ali (a.s) called Aws ibn Khawli to come in and allowed him to descend into the grave of the Prophet (a.s). `Ali (a.s) took the body in both his hands and lowered it into the grave. When the body was laid in the grave, he removed the cloth from the face, turned the body towards the Kiblah, and put the cheek on the dust in the grave. `Ali (a.s) put the earth on the body with his own hands, leveled its surface and sprinkled water over it

Al-Riyāḥ al-Naḥīrah, Vol ۲, Page ۲۳۷ [۱]

Al-Tabaqāt, Vol ۲, Page ۲۶۳ [۲]

COMPLIANCE WITH THE WILL

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The things that a person leaves unfulfilled in this world and those that need to be done only after the death of the person, he entrusts to a person close to himself whom he deems capable and willing to comply with his wishes. It is the bounden duty of a person to comply with the will of a dear departed person to the best of his capability. The Prophet (a.s) had appointed `Ali (a.s) as his wasi with the confidence that he would comply with all his wishes and instructions during his lifetime and thereafter. He would treat them as his bounden duty. Therefore, `Ali (a.s) acted as the most responsible and committed executer of the Will of the Prophet of Islam (a.s). For the last rites of the Prophet (a.s), in accord with his wish, `Ali (a.s) personally gave him the bath and the burial. Despite of the unfavorable conditions in the neighborhood and the machinations of the adversaries, his only concern at the time was to comply with the last wishes of the Master. In addition to these normal duties, he was responsible for fulfilling the promises that the Prophet (a.s) had made to some people and to clear his outstanding debts. This has also been sited in one of the traditions of the Prophet (a.s): “`Ali will fulfill the promises made to me and will clear my debts.” `Ali (a.s) meticulously performed all the tasks and responsibilities that were entrusted to him by the Prophet (a.s). `Abd al-Wahid ibn `Awan says

When the Prophet (a.s) died, `Ali (a.s) appointed a herald to announce that whatever“ promises the Prophet (a.s) made to the persons or the debts he owed to them, should call on him for settlement. Every year during the H ajj, he used to send a person to make an announcement near `Uqbah, the place of sacrifice, about his commitment to honor the promises made to the people by the Prophet (a.s). After him, Imam al-Hasan (a.s) followed the practice and so did Imam al-Husayn (a.s). Then the practice [was discontinued.”[1]

Could there be a better example of dedication and fulfillment of responsibilities than this that during the Hajj when people from all over are assembled the announcement was made for fifty years to ensure that the demands of no person remained unattended? For such settlement `Ali (a.s) neither made the condition of any written documents nor he asked for any witnesses. `Abdullah ibn `Awn says that whatever claims anyone made, `Ali (a.s) settled them

This attitude of Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) should have been a lesson for the persons who did not value the claim of the Prophet’s daughter and made the excuse that the requirements of the witness were not completely complied with. They should have also thought that when the legacy of the Prophet (a.s) was the property of the State then, logically, the liabilities of the Prophet (a.s) too should have been the responsibility of the State as well. But they kept their silence on this matter! It does not stand to reason that the fixed assets of a person are attached by the State and the debts incurred by him, also in the discharge of his duty to the State, were left for others to discharge! One has to recognize that one who took the responsibility of discharging the debts was the Prophet’s Deputy after him and the usurpation of the Prophet’s was not a legitimate act

DENYING THE PROPHET'S DEATH

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There was a pall of gloom over al-Madinah after the death of the Prophet (a.s). Muslims were gathered inside and around the al-Masjid al-Nabawi (the Holy Prophet's Mosque). Their eyes were turning again and again towards the room where the mortal remains of their beloved mentor were lying. Every person was in deep sorrow and grief. The initial rites of the funeral were being performed in the midst of tears and mourning. Suddenly in this sad environment rose a shrill voice

Some hypocrites think that the Prophet (a.s) has passed away! By Allah! He is not dead and is visiting Allah as did Mūsa ibn `Imran and returned after remaining away from his people after forty days. At that time too it was said that Mūsa was dead. By Allah! The Prophet (a.s) will return and cut the hands and feet of the persons who say [that the Prophet (a.s) has died.] [۱]

:Again, the voice rose in a warning tone

One who says that the Prophet (a.s) is dead, I shall strike him with my sword. The [Prophet (a.s) has been carried away to the Firmament!] [۲]

These sounds were coming from the mouth of `Umar who was adamant in saying that the Prophet (a.s) was alive and the rumor of his death has been spread by the hypocrites and thus he had put guard over the tongues of the people swinging around his sword. Ibn Kathir writes

Umar stood up and started sermonizing and threatened the people who talked “ about the death of the Prophet (a.s) that he would cut them to pieces! He said that the Prophet (a.s) was lying unconscious and when he rose, he will kill people and cut their limbs. At this time `Amr ibn Za'idah was reciting the following Verse at the rear of the Mosque: ‘Muhammad (a.s) is a Prophet and many prophets have gone by afore [him?’]”[۳

The effect of this outrageous talk of `Umar was to affect the thinking of the people and to change their topic of discussion. Therefore, the saddened masses started looking at one another in surprise and whispering to one another whether the Prophet (a.s) had really died or was alive! Although the people who heard him were not willing to believe his words, they had no courage to ask him to go inside and see for himself whether the Prophet (a.s) was really dead or not. Everyone was dumbfounded and was looking at `Umar fencing around with his sword! He was sometimes saying that the Prophet (a.s) was lying unconscious, again he said that he has been raised to the Firmament and he said that like Mūsa ibn Harūn he had gone into hiding! Now, which version of his to accept and which to reject? There was total confusion among those who were standing around watching his fencing skills! What was the need of frightening the people with his martial skills with the sword? If the spirit had gone to the Firmament, as he said, then that was death! If according to `Umar the Prophet (a.s) had gone the way Mūsa went, then Mūsa had gone bodily and had returned with the Torah. The Prophet’s body was very much there and there was no purpose his going the way Mūsa (a.s) went. When Mūsa (a.s) went for forty days he left behind his brother and Vicegerent, Harūn (a.s). `Umar in his outrage was silent about this very :important aspect of the comparison that he was making! The Holy Qur’an says

وَقَالَ مُوسَى لِأَخِيهِ هَارُونَ اخْلُفْنِي فِي قَوْمِي وَأَصْلِحْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ .

Mūsa said to his brother Harūn: Take my place among my people, and act well and do “
”(not follow the way of the mischief-makers. (٧:١٤٢

Umar should have hinted at this aspect when he was drawing a comparison with ` what happened to Mūsa (a.s). But, perhaps, discreetly, he was avoiding hinting at this
!point in his talk

Besides, he should have also clarified about who those hypocrites were who, according to him, spread rumors about the death of the Prophet (a.s). He knew that, naturally, the sad news emanated from the household of the Prophet (a.s) where the consorts of the Prophet (a.s), Fatimah al-Zahra' (a.s), `Ali (a.s), Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn (a.s), `Abdullah ibn `Abbas, al-Fadl ibn `Abbas, `Abdullah ibn Ja`far and others from Banū-Hashim were there. Were these the hypocrites whose limbs, according to `Umar, the Prophet (a.s) would return to cut away

Certainly, there was confusion in the people about the demise of their beloved Prophet (a.s). This confusion would have persisted, but Abū-Bakr arrived from the place of Sakh in the environs of al-Madinah hearing about the demise of the Prophet (a.s) and heard `Umar ferociously denying to accept that the Prophet (a.s) was dead. He went inside, removed the cloth from the face of the Prophet (a.s), went out, and :talked with `Umar for a while, and then addressed the people thus

One who worships Allah must know that Allah is immortal and those who worshipped“ Muhammad (a.s) should know that Muhammad (a.s) has expired. Then he recited this Verse, ‘Muhammad (a.s) is only a prophet of Allah. Before him, there were prophets who have gone. If he dies, or is assassinated, you will turn to infidelity. And those who turn back they cannot harm Allah in any way. And Allah will soon Reward the [grateful.]’[٤

When `Umar heard this Verse from the mouth of Abū-Bakr, he expressed surprise
:and said

Is it a Verse from the Holy Qur'an? I did not know that it is a Verse from the Qur'an.“
Then he added, ‘O people! This is Abū-Bakr who has ascendance over the Muslims!
[Owe allegiance to him! Owe allegiance to him!”[۵

Umar who was insisting that the Prophet (a.s) was not dead a while ago accepts the`
fact hearing the Verse from the mouth of Abū-Bakr. Seeing this sudden change in his
attitude, a doubt rises in the mind that whether `Umar really believed that the
Prophet (a.s) was alive and not dead. If so, did he get the idea only after hearing that
the Prophet (a.s) was no more? If his belief was such, while obstructing the Prophet's
call for pen and paper for writing his will, he could have said that wills are made only
by mortal human beings and the Prophet (a.s) was immortal and he did not need to
make a will! Instead of this, he said that the Prophet (a.s) was in a state of delirium
and he might utter insensible words as his will! A while ago, he was an adamantly
:denying the Prophet's death and now changed his stance and said

By Allah! I decided to say what I said because of this Verse:’ in the same way We“
have made you the Middle Ummah that you bear witness to the people and the
Prophet (a.s) a witness over you!’ By Allah! I had the feeling that the prophet (a.s) will
[remain with his Ummah until the end to bear witness over them!”[۶

Then he had seen the Prophet (a.s) struggling between life and death, and now he had seen that the Prophet (a.s) had no signs of life in his body. There were wails rising from the house and the people were expressing sadness over the demise

This vehement denial of the death of the Prophet (a.s) and sudden face suggests to every right thinking person that there must have been some strategy behind his behavior. His sudden advocacy of people's allegiance to Abū-Bakr instead of thinking of the last rites of their beloved Prophet (a.s) suggests that he was not so much concerned about the Prophet (a.s) than the matters of power and Caliphate. The truth is that `Umar was not so ignorant that he was not recognizing the fact of the demise of the Prophet (a.s). This was his well thought out political move

To understand this political move we shall have to recapitulate on certain events. The history is witness that `Ali (a.s) was closely associated with the invitation to the faith of Islam from the very time of the annunciation of the Prophet (a.s) and was always ready to serve the cause. The Prophet (a.s) wished to propagate and protect Islam through him. This fact is evident from the events of Da`wat al-`Ashirah and the Ghadir Khumm. Most of the Companions, both the Muhajirūn and Ansar, were aware of the choice of the prophet (a.s) for his Vicegerent and Successor. Ibn Abil-Hadid writes

The majority of Muhajirūn and Ansar had no doubt that after the Prophet (a.s) `Ali“ [(a.s) will be wali `Amr (the Vicegerent)]”[Y

It cannot also be denied that the Prophethood and caliphate in the same family was not acceptable to a particular group, and the reason was that they wanted to establish their own hegemony. Therefore, they started preparing their strategy from the living days of the Prophet (a.s) itself. They put impediments against any move that they found was going against their interests. The Prophet (a.s) asks for paper and pen from his deathbed, and they talk impertinently to avoid writing of the will by the Prophet (a.s). The Prophet (a.s) orders these persons to proceed on a Campaign under the command of Usamah ibn Zayd and they disobey the Prophet's orders. One of the main perpetrators of this disobedience was the same `Umar who enacted the drama that the Prophet (a.s) had not demised when the ostensible reason for disobeying his command was that they were sure that he was going to demise and they wanted to be around to manipulate the Caliphate in their favor! Al-Buladhari writes

When the Prophet of Allah died, `Abbas said, 'O `Ali! Come out! I shall owe allegiance to you in front of the people to ensure that none differs about you.' But `Ali (a.s) refused and said, 'who can differ (or deny) our Rights and who can overwhelm us?' [`Abbas said, 'then you will see this will happen!']¹⁸

Umar was one of the persons who did not want the Prophethood and caliphate remaining with one family and feared that the initiative for the bay`ah might assume a practical shape. Therefore, he wanted to crush the movement before it raised its head. At that juncture, he could not think of any strategy and hence, to gain time by diverting the attention of the crowds, he played the ruse of the Prophet's immortality and that the story of his death was a rumor spread by the hypocrites! As soon as Abū-Bakr arrived the entire drama was over and `Umar started seeking the people's allegiance for his Caliphate! What was the need for asking for the people's allegiance at that somber moment? Anyway, after his appeal for votes, it became evident that all his fencing with the sword and the words was merely to play to the galleries until his candidate for the Caliphate arrived on the scene and none else was proclaimed as the successor and Caliph to the Prophet (a.s). Therefore, the events of the Saqifah Banū-Sa`idah are witness to the fact that the group considered installation of their candidate as Caliph more urgent than attending to the last sickness of their beloved

Prophet (a.s) and his last rites! They gave a political defeat to the Ansar and established their own hegemony

p: ۴۱۱

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٤٤٢ [١]

Tārīkh Abul-Fidā', Vol ١, Page ١٥٤ [٢]

Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah, Vol ٥, Page ٢٤٢ [٣]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٤٤٣ [٤]

Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah, Vol ٥, Page ٢٤٢ [٥]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٤٥٠ [٦]

Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by Ibn Abil-Hadīd, Vol ٣, Page ٨ [٧]

Ansāb al-Ashrāf, Vol ١, Page ٥٨٣ [٨]

AN OVERVIEW OF THE EVENTS OF SAQIFAH

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p: ۴۱۲

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Umar stood up and started sermonizing and threatened the people who talked “about the death of the Prophet (a.s) that he would cut them to pieces! He said that the Prophet (a.s) was lying unconscious and when he rose, he will kill people and cut their limbs. At this time `Amr ibn Za'idah was reciting the following Verse at the rear of the Mosque: ‘Muhammad (a.s) is a Prophet and many prophets have gone by afore [him?’]”[۲

The effect of this outrageous talk of `Umar was to affect the thinking of the people and to change their topic of discussion. Therefore, the saddened masses started looking at one another in surprise and whispering to one another whether the Prophet (a.s) had really died or was alive! Although the people who heard him were not willing to believe his words, they had no courage to ask him to go inside and see for himself whether the Prophet (a.s) was really dead or not. Everyone was dumbfounded and was looking at `Umar fencing around with his sword! He was sometimes saying that the Prophet (a.s) was lying unconscious, again he said that he has been raised to the Firmament and he said that like Mūsa ibn Harūn he had gone into hiding! Now, which version of his to accept and which to reject? There was total confusion among those who were standing around watching his fencing skills! What was the need of frightening the people with his martial skills with the sword? If the spirit had gone to the Firmament, as he said, then that was death! If according to `Umar the Prophet (a.s) had gone the way Mūsa went, then Mūsa had gone bodily and had returned with the Torah. The Prophet’s body was very much there and there was no purpose his going the way Mūsa (a.s) went. When Mūsa (a.s) went for forty days he left behind his brother and Vicegerent, Harūn (a.s). `Umar in his outrage was silent about this very important aspect of the comparison that he was making! The Holy Qur’an says

وَقَالَ مُوسَى لِأَخِيهِ هَارُونَ اخْلُفْنِي فِي قَوْمِي وَأَصْلِحْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ .

Mūsa said to his brother Harūn: Take my place among my people, and act well and do “
”(not follow the way of the mischief-makers. (٧:١٤٢

Umar should have hinted at this aspect when he was drawing a comparison with ` what happened to Mūsa (a.s). But, perhaps, discreetly, he was avoiding hinting at this
!point in his talk

Besides, he should have also clarified about who those hypocrites were who, according to him, spread rumors about the death of the Prophet (a.s). He knew that, naturally, the sad news emanated from the household of the Prophet (a.s) where the consorts of the Prophet (a.s), Fatimah al-Zahra' (a.s), `Ali (a.s), Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn (a.s), `Abdullah ibn `Abbas, al-Fadl ibn `Abbas, `Abdullah ibn Ja`far and others from Banū-Hashim were there. Were these the hypocrites whose limbs,
!according to `Umar, the Prophet (a.s) would return to cut away

Certainly, there was confusion in the people about the demise of their beloved Prophet (a.s). This confusion would have persisted, but Abū-Bakr arrived from the place of Sakh in the environs of al-Madinah hearing about the demise of the Prophet (a.s) and heard `Umar ferociously denying to accept that the Prophet (a.s) was dead. He went inside, removed the cloth from the face of the Prophet (a.s), went out, and
:talked with `Umar for a while, and then addressed the people thus

One who worships Allah must know that Allah is immortal and those who worshipped“ Muhammad (a.s) should know that Muhammad (a.s) has expired. Then he recited this Verse, ‘Muhammad (a.s) is only a prophet of Allah. Before him, there were prophets who have gone. If he dies, or is assassinated, you will turn to infidelity. And those who turn back they cannot harm Allah in any way. And Allah will soon Reward the
[grateful.’”[٤

When `Umar heard this Verse from the mouth of Abū-Bakr, he expressed surprise
:and said

Is it a Verse from the Holy Qur'an? I did not know that it is a Verse from the Qur'an.“
Then he added, ‘O people! This is Abū-Bakr who has ascendance over the Muslims!
[Owe allegiance to him! Owe allegiance to him!”[۵

Umar who was insisting that the Prophet (a.s) was not dead a while ago accepts the`
fact hearing the Verse from the mouth of Abū-Bakr. Seeing this sudden change in his
attitude, a doubt rises in the mind that whether `Umar really believed that the
Prophet (a.s) was alive and not dead. If so, did he get the idea only after hearing that
the Prophet (a.s) was no more? If his belief was such, while obstructing the Prophet's
call for pen and paper for writing his will, he could have said that wills are made only
by mortal human beings and the Prophet (a.s) was immortal and he did not need to
make a will! Instead of this, he said that the Prophet (a.s) was in a state of delirium
and he might utter insensible words as his will! A while ago, he was an adamantly
:denying the Prophet's death and now changed his stance and said

By Allah! I decided to say what I said because of this Verse:’ in the same way We“
have made you the Middle Ummah that you bear witness to the people and the
Prophet (a.s) a witness over you!’ By Allah! I had the feeling that the prophet (a.s) will
[remain with his Ummah until the end to bear witness over them!”[۶

Then he had seen the Prophet (a.s) struggling between life and death, and now he had seen that the Prophet (a.s) had no signs of life in his body. There were wails rising from the house and the people were expressing sadness over the demise

This vehement denial of the death of the Prophet (a.s) and sudden face suggests to every right thinking person that there must have been some strategy behind his behavior. His sudden advocacy of people's allegiance to Abū-Bakr instead of thinking of the last rites of their beloved Prophet (a.s) suggests that he was not so much concerned about the Prophet (a.s) than the matters of power and Caliphate. The truth is that `Umar was not so ignorant that he was not recognizing the fact of the demise of the Prophet (a.s). This was his well thought out political move

To understand this political move we shall have to recapitulate on certain events. The history is witness that `Ali (a.s) was closely associated with the invitation to the faith of Islam from the very time of the annunciation of the Prophet (a.s) and was always ready to serve the cause. The Prophet (a.s) wished to propagate and protect Islam through him. This fact is evident from the events of Da`wat al-`Ashirah and the Ghadir Khumm. Most of the Companions, both the Muhajirūn and Ansar, were aware of the choice of the prophet (a.s) for his Vicegerent and Successor. Ibn Abil-Hadid writes

The majority of Muhajirūn and Ansar had no doubt that after the Prophet (a.s) `Ali“ [(a.s) will be wali `Amr (the Vicegerent)]”[Y

It cannot also be denied that the Prophethood and caliphate in the same family was not acceptable to a particular group, and the reason was that they wanted to establish their own hegemony. Therefore, they started preparing their strategy from the living days of the Prophet (a.s) itself. They put impediments against any move that they found was going against their interests. The Prophet (a.s) asks for paper and pen from his deathbed, and they talk impertinently to avoid writing of the will by the Prophet (a.s). The Prophet (a.s) orders these persons to proceed on a Campaign under the command of Usamah ibn Zayd and they disobey the Prophet's orders. One of the main perpetrators of this disobedience was the same `Umar who enacted the drama that the Prophet (a.s) had not demised when the ostensible reason for disobeying his command was that they were sure that he was going to demise and they wanted to be around to manipulate the Caliphate in their favor! Al-Buladhari writes

When the Prophet of Allah died, `Abbas said, 'O `Ali! Come out! I shall owe allegiance to you in front of the people to ensure that none differs about you.' But `Ali (a.s) refused and said, 'who can differ (or deny) our Rights and who can overwhelm us?' [`Abbas said, 'then you will see this will happen!']¹⁸

Umar was one of the persons who did not want the Prophethood and caliphate remaining with one family and feared that the initiative for the bay`ah might assume a practical shape. Therefore, he wanted to crush the movement before it raised its head. At that juncture, he could not think of any strategy and hence, to gain time by diverting the attention of the crowds, he played the ruse of the Prophet's immortality and that the story of his death was a rumor spread by the hypocrites! As soon as Abū-Bakr arrived the entire drama was over and `Umar started seeking the people's allegiance for his Caliphate! What was the need for asking for the people's allegiance at that somber moment? Anyway, after his appeal for votes, it became evident that all his fencing with the sword and the words was merely to play to the galleries until his candidate for the Caliphate arrived on the scene and none else was proclaimed as the successor and Caliph to the Prophet (a.s). Therefore, the events of the Saqifah Banū-Sa`idah are witness to the fact that the group considered installation of their candidate as Caliph more urgent than attending to the last sickness of their beloved

Prophet (a.s) and his last rites! They gave a political defeat to the Ansar and established their own hegemony

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Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٤٤٢ [١]

Tārīkh Abul-Fidā', Vol ١, Page ١٥٤ [٢]

Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah, Vol ٥, Page ٢٤٢ [٣]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٤٤٣ [٤]

Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah, Vol ٥, Page ٢٤٢ [٥]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٤٥٠ [٦]

Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by Ibn Abil-Hadīd, Vol ٣, Page ٨ [٧]

Ansāb al-Ashrāf, Vol ١, Page ٥٨٣ [٨]

HOMAGE AND USE OF COERCION

HOMAGE AND USE OF COERCION

The efforts of Abū-Bakr, `Umar and Abū-`Ubaydah bore fruits and they succeeded in getting the Caliphate in their favor. When this campaign was over, they started from the Saqifah towards the Mosque. On the way, some other persons joined them. On such occasions, generally people come getting influenced by curiosity or the position of power the person has attained. On the way the persons they met were asked to shake hands with Abū-Bakr. Thus taking bay`ah, and announcing about the bay`ah :this small group proceeded on its way. Al-Barra' ibn `azib says

Whosoever they met on the way, they forced him to come along and for the bay`ah“ [touched his hand with that of Abū-Bakr, whether he wished to do it or not.”[١]

When they arrived at the Mosque, they sent some couriers to catch hold of people and bring them for the bay`ah. Therefore, people were assembled at the Mosque where in one of the rooms the Prophet (a.s) was being given his final bath before burial. The process of the bay`ah proceeded with the slogans of Takbir. Buladhari

:writes

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Abū-Bakr was brought to the Mosque and the people did their bay`ah with him.“
`Abbas and `Ali (a.s) heard the sounds of Takbir from the Mosque when they had just
[completed the bath for the Prophet (a.s).”[۲

This is a very sad reflection of the unfaithfulness of the world that on the one side are the mortal remains of the Prophet of Islam (a.s) and on the other there is a crowd of persons come to take bay`ah at the hands of the new rulers. Only sometime ago the same people were sad in mourning. But now there is no tear in any eyes or any sign of mourning on their faces. This gives us an idea of the minds of the populace. In such a situation, they cannot be expected to think how the selection of the Caliph came about and whether it was legitimate or not. Was it done with the consent of the people or done with the opinion of selected few? Who were these selected few? Were there any other persons involved than the three who managed to go to the conclave of the Ansar? Were `Abbas, `Ali (a.s), Salman al-Farisi, Abū-Dharr, al-Miqdad, `Ammar, al-Zubayr, Khalid ibn Sa`id and the important persons of the Banū-Hashim consulted before making the selection of the Caliph? People were just flooding in as if they were coming out of curiosity. If anyone raised a little objection, he was silenced either by force or through promises of material benefit. Those who had some power behind them were avoided for the time being. Therefore, clashing with Sa`d ibn `Abadah was not thought discreet before establishing themselves in the reins of power. When the disposition was consolidated with the bay`ah of `Uthman, `Abd al-Rahman ibn `Awf, Sa`d ibn Abi-Waqqas, Banū-Umayyah and Banū-Zahrah, he was
:sent a message to come and owe his allegiance. His reply was

By Allah! I shall not owe my allegiance until I throw the arrows from my quiver on you“
[and battle with you along with the men of my Tribe!”[۳

Hearing this reply Abū-Bakr kept quiet but `Umar was furious and said that he will not rest until he took the bay`ah from the person. Bashir ibn Sa`d said at this point that if he has refused to owe allegiance, he would rather give his life than condescend to the demand! His family members too will prefer to die with him and they will not die until the tribe of Khazraj totally perished and Khazraj will not perish until a single person of the Aws lived. The most far-sighted thing would be to leave Sa`d ibn `Abadah to his own scruples. Therefore, they did not approach him thereafter. During the rule of Abū-Bakr, he lived in al-Madinah but kept no contact with the ruling clique. He neither participated with them in the prayers nor went with them for the Hajj. When `Umar came to power, he once met Sa`d on the way and told him if he was the same Sa`d. He replied in the affirmative and added that his stand was the same and unaltered as before! He said that he hated `Umar's company as much as he hated before! `Umar asked him why he then did not leave al-Madinah for good? Sa`d now felt that `Umar might make an attempt on his life any time. Therefore, he left al-Madinah and moved away to Syria and after sometime became the victim of someone's arrows at a place :called Hawran. Ibn `Abd-Rabbih al-Andalusi writes

Umar sent one person to Syria and asked him to demand bay`ah from Sa`d. If he` “ refused, seek Allah’s help against him. The person reached Syria and met Sa`d within the four walls of a house and invited him for the bay`ah. He replied that he would never give bay`ah to any Qarashi. The person said that in the case he would battle with him. Sa`d replied that he did not mind battling. The man said that he wanted to be out of what the entire Ummah had accepted. He replied that he preferred to be out [of the bay`ah. The man took out an arrow and shot him dead.” [۴

The person who killed him is said to be Muhammad Ibn Maslamah or Mughirah Ibn .Shu`bah but a rumor was spread that a Jinn had shot him with an arrow

During the First Caliphate, Sa`d ibn `Abadah was neither troubled nor was treated with cruelty. But the operatives of the Caliphate immediately started efforts to obtain allegiance from `Ali (a.s) and did not abstain from any harsh method to obtain their objective. Therefore, he was spending the life of a recluse at home. A message inviting for the bay`ah came from the rulers. `Ali (a.s) and others who were at his house refused to abide by the invitation. `Umar, in a rage of anger came threatening :to burn down the house of `Ali (a.s). Buladhari writes

Abū-Bakr sent a message to `Ali (a.s) seeking his bay`ah. But `Ali refused to comply,“ at which `Umar brought burning fire. Fatimah (a.s) saw `Umar and said, ‘O son of al- [Khattab! Will you burn down the door along with me?’ `Umar replied, ‘Yes” ” [۵

Al-Zubayr ibn al-`Awwam was present in the house of `Ali (a.s) at that time. Although he was Abū-Bakr's son-in-law from the side of his mother Safiyyah bint `Abd al-Muttalib, he was related to the Banū-Hashim as well. When he saw `Umar trying to burn down the house in a rage, he came out angrily with his sword unsheathed. But Salamah ibn Ashyam snatched away the sword from his hand and arrested him :disarmed. The historian al-Tabari writes

Umar ibn al-Khattab came to the house of `Ali (a.s). At the house there were `Talbah, al-Zubayr and a few Muhajirūn. `Umar called for them to come out for bay`ah. He swore by

Allah that he would set fire to burn all of them down. Al-Zubayr took out his sword and came out to fight. But he stumbled, the sword fell off his hand, the men overwhelmed [him and he was arrested.”[۶

Umar and his men somehow succeeded in taking `Ali (a.s) to Abū-Bakr for the` :bay`ah. Protesting against the demand, `Ali (a.s) said

I am more entitled to caliphate than you! I shall not do the bay`ah with you but you“ must owe allegiance to me! You snatched the caliphate from the Ansar with the plea that you were close relations of the Prophet (a.s). And now you are bent on snatching away the caliphate from the Ahl al-Bayt. Did not you make a claim with the Ansar that you were more deserving of the Caliphate than them on which basis they entrusted the leadership and Emirate to you? The reason that you gave to the Ansar for establishing your right, for the same reason I prove my right to you. We are more important for the Prophet (a.s) in his life and his death. If you have embraced the Faith, be just to us. Otherwise you are not unaware that you are committing an [injustice!”[۷

Abū-Bakr sat quietly but `Umar threatened that until he agreed for the bay`ah he would not be released. `Ali (a.s) replied that he was neither going to give any cognizance to his talk nor owe allegiance to any one Then bringing out the hidden :secret, `Ali (a.s) said

Milk (the cow that is) the caliphate! You too have an equal share in that! By Allah! You “ are killing yourself for the caliphate of Abū-Bakr that tomorrow he leaves it behind for [you!”[۸

On Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) refusing to owe allegiance to Abū-Bakr they went to great lengths to force him into acquiescence. They threatened to burn down his house; they dragged him with a rope round his neck and threatened to assassinate him. The treatment meted out to `Ali (a.s) was so harsh that Mu`awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan wrote :a letter to Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr in a very sarcastic manner

Those who were first to usurp `Ali’s right were your father, Abū-Bakr and al-Farūq.“ They demanded bay`ah from `Ali (a.s) but `Ali (a.s) delayed his acquiescence. On [account of it the two inflicted on him mountains of difficulties and torture!”[۹

The procedure adopted for obtaining the bay`ah was absolutely illegitimate and unwarranted. In no law, it is permitted to force one’s will on others. If they had evidence that `Ali (a.s) was preparing from the time of the Prophet (a.s) to acquire a position of power, and if he had organized a group for such a purpose, there could have been some justification in adopting harsh measure to protect their own interests. But when there was no such evidence, it is surprising why Abū-Bakr and `Umar adopted very harsh measures to extract bay`ah from `Ali (a.s). How such measures could be called just and legitimate from no lesser persons than the first and [the second Caliphs of Islam

Ali's refusal to give bay`ah was not just for sentimental reasons. But his denial was purely on principles. Even if the aggression had gone to the maximum extent, he would not have bowed down to the injustice inflicted in the name of democracy. There was no justification from the Shari`ah for such hegemony. Therefore, he bore with great courage all the hardships inflicted on him. He never accepted the Democratic Caliphate and therefore no question arises of his ever acquiescing to owe bay`ah to those Caliphs

Footnote

Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by Ibn Abil-Hadīd, Vol ١, Page ٧٤ [١]

Ansāb al-Ashrāf, Vol ١, Page ٥٨٢ [٢]

Tabaqāt Ibn Sa`d, Vol ٣, Page ٤١٤ [٣]

Al-`Iqd al-Farīd, Vol ٣, Page ٤٥ [٤]

Ansāb al-Ashrāf, Vol ١, Page ٥٨٠ [٥]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٣, Page ٤٤٣ [٦]

Al-Imāmah wal-Siyāsah, Vol ١, Page ١١ [٧]

Ansāb al-Ashrāf, Vol ١, Page ٥٨٧ [٨]

Murūj al-Dhahab, Vol ٢, Page ٤٠ [٩]

AMIR AL MU'MININ'S DISCREET SILENCE

AMIR AL MU'MININ'S DISCREET SILENCE

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) openly challenged the Democratic Caliphate and proved his Right with the same proofs that his opponents used at the Saqifah. His proof was, in fact, more valid than that of his adversaries. His was a protest against the politics that resulted in the 'elected ruler' who assumed the status of Caliph of the Prophet (a.s)! In his protest, there was neither wish for acquiring power nor craze for position of

strength. If he had such ambitions, he could have also indulged in politics of the same order that the other group did. He could have accepted the cooperation of persons who had offered their support to him for such moves. But he discreetly turned their .offers down

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When the selection of Abū-Bakr was taking place in Saqifah, the Umayyad Chief Abū-Sufyan was not present in al-Madinah. The Prophet (a.s), during his last days, had deputed him for some work away from there. When he returned after the Prophet's demise, and heard about the passing away of the Prophet (a.s) and the elevation of Abū-Bakr to the Caliphate, he raised a hue and cry. He went running to `Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib and after discussing with him came to `Ali (a.s) and wanted to assure him of the support of his tribe to stand against the self-styled rulers. Therefore, in a very confident tone he said

How has the governance gone into the hands of a person from the lowliest family of the Quraysh? If you wish, by Allah, I can fill al-Madinah with cavaliers and footmen!"[۱]

Any ordinary person would find it very difficult to control his emotions. He might tend to accept such an offer in a similar situation. But Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was never influenced by emotions nor could he be tricked by wearing a cloak of friendship. He read through the subterfuge of Abū-Sufyan that it was not the spirit of friendship and fairplay that motivated his offer. But it was his ulterior motive to cause trouble in the fledgling Islamic State and usurp power in the bargain. Refusing his offer, the Imam (a.s) angrily said

By Allah! Your aim is only to create disorder. You have always opposed Islam and I do "not need your sympathies and advice!"[۲]

This fact needs consideration that what enmity Abū-Sufyan had with Abū-Bakr that immediately on arrival he started lobbying against him. In fact both persons were always very chummy and even during the days of Abū-Sufyan's infidelity, Abū-Bakr did not like to hear anything against him. Once some companions, amongst whom were Salman, Suhayb and Bilal, were sitting at a place when Abū-Sufyan passed by. They passed a remark that the enemy of Allah was not killed by Allah's Swords even to that day! Abū-Bakr was angry at their remark and said that they were making an impertinent remark against a senior chief of the Quraysh and moved away from there. He then went to the presence of the Prophet (a.s) and repeated what he had heard them say about Abū-Sufyan. The Prophet (a.s) said

Perhaps you have offended those persons! If you have angered them, you have " [angered Allah!]"[۳

Hearing these words from the Prophet (a.s), Abū-Bakr returned to those persons and asked them if they were upset with what he told them concerning Abū-Sufyan. They only said, "May Allah forgive you

This incident can only be from the days of Abū-Sufyan's infidelity. If he were not an infidel, the persons would not have termed him as Allah's enemy and deserving of getting killed by Allah's Swords. Even Abū-Bakr would not have referred to him only as a senior Quraysh Chief. Some historians have clarified that this event took place at the time of Hdaybiyah in ۶ H and Abū-Sufyan embraced Islam after the conquest of Makkah in ۸ H

It becomes evident from this event that neither Abū-Sufyan had any enmity with Abū-Bakr, nor Abū-Bakr disliked him. Then how is it that the person thought of disturbing his apple cart and trying to bring a person from the Tribe inimical to his own who had personally dispatched many of his close kinsmen in recent battles! The truth is that he played the trick to give an impression to the rulers of the day that he was capable of creating a group in opposition to them to put their rule in danger. This way he wanted to frighten Abū-Bakr and his cohorts to get things decided the way he wanted them. Therefore, this strategy of his proved successful. When the rumor spread that Abū-Sufyan was conspiring with Banū-Hashim against the rulers, the rulers quietened him by giving him undue favors. `Umar told Abū-Bakr

Abū-Sufyan has arrived! He is bound to create some mischief. The Prophet (a.s)“ himself used to keep him appeased with regard to Islam! The charities that are in his control they should remain with him. Therefore, Abū-Bakr did accordingly and Abū-Sufyan was happy. He extended his bay`ah!” [۴

Abū-Sufyan was not only appeased in this manner. His son Yazid was appointed the governor of Syria that proved as the cornerstone of the Umayyad Dynasty

Ali's discreet quiet is reflective of his sagacity and understanding of the fissiparous` conditions prevalent at that time. If he had agreed to fight at the instigation of Abū-Sufyan, the conflict would not have been given any other name than the search for power. The hands of the enemies of Islam would have strengthened as a result of the war of attrition between two groups of Muslims. People would have felt that taking shelter behind the Prophet's name he was running after acquisition of power. Then his silent protest against the existing power center would have gone in vain. He still had strength in his arms to face any adversary, the examples of which he had set time and again in the ghazawat that he won single-handed while other important functionaries were fleeing, and he had the courage and will to stand any onslaught. But his farsightedness stopped him from taking any precipitate action. The defeated Jews and the captive Ansar were looking for a chance to rise no sooner they smelled that the Muslims were a divided house. The hypocrites were busy in the garb of Muslims as well. All these forces were raring to unite under one flag to inflict one final

blow to the Muslims! This is a great favor to Muslims from `Ali (a.s) that he made only silent protest and did not rise against the persons who had deprived him of everything .(that was rightfully his as Ordained by Allah and His Prophet (a.s

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۴۴۹ [۱]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۴۴۹ [۲]

Ansāb al-Ashrāf, Vol ۱, Page ۴۸۹ [۳]

Al-`Iqd al-Farīd, Vol ۳, Page ۶۲ [۴]

THE LAND OF FADAK

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Fadak was a personal property of the Prophet (a.s). When the Verse “And give to the near of kin his due, (۱۷/۲۶)” was revealed, he transferred its ownership to Fatimah al-Zahra’ (a.s) through a document. The land was in the possession and use of Fatimah (a.s) until the demise of the Prophet (a.s). When Abū-Bakr assumed power, he evicted her from the possession of the land and the garden thereon. She went into appeal against this action and produced `Ali (a.s) and Umm Ayman as her witnesses. They both gave the evidence that Fatimah (a.s) was right in her claim that the Prophet (a.s), in his lifetime, had made the hibah of the property in her favor. Abū-Bakr rejected the claim saying

O Daughter of the Prophet! The evidence is not complete unless there are two male“ [witnesses or one man and two female witnesses!”][۱]

Fatimah (a.s) seeing that the evidence of `Ali (a.s) and Umm Ayman was deemed incomplete and the gift of the Garden of Fadak was rendered invalid she claimed it as an inheritance from her father, the Prophet (a.s). The contention was that if Abū-Bakr did not consider it as a donation; he should concede it to her as an inheritance from her father. Abū-Bakr said that the properties of the Prophet (a.s) are not to be transferred to his offspring as inheritance because the Prophet (a.s) had said: “We, the group of Prophets do not make any inheritors and our assets are the sadaqah

Fatimah (a.s) rejoined, “Is it written in the Book of Allah that you receive your father’s inheritance and I do not? Has the Prophet (a.s) not said that the right of a person is [that his off springs are protected?”[۲

Fatimah (a.s) was so upset with the verdict of Abū-Bakr that she stopped talking to him and was cross with him the rest of her life. This attitude was not a momentary thing. The person, Fatimah (a.s), whose truthfulness and veracity the Prophet (a.s) established and proved on the day of Mubahalah was suspected of making a false :claim by Abū-Bakr. Imam al-Bukhari writes

Fatimah (a.s), after her father’s demise, claimed from Abū-Bakr al-Siddik that the“ property that the Prophet (a.s) acquired from the infidels without battling, and had left behind as inheritance, was her right and must be given to her. Abū-Bakr said, ‘Allah’s Messenger (a.s) has observed that the prophets do not give any inheritance. Whatever they leave behind is a sadaqah (charity)’. Fatimah (a.s) was very angry at [this and severed all contact with Abū-Bakr until her demise.”[۳

If we presume that neither a donation was made of the Fadak nor it was an inheritance, what was the problem in Abū-Bakr giving away the land to Fatimah (a.s) considering her nearness to the Prophet (a.s). It is considered a right and the duty of a ruler that he can give anything to anyone at his discretion! Therefore, Muhammad al- :Khadrami al-Misri writes

The Shari`ah of Islam does not prevent the ruler from giving any gift to any“ [Muslim.”[۴

:Abū-Rayyah, an Egyptian scholar, writes

”It is the right of the Khalifah that he can give what he wants to give to anyone“

Therefore, Abū-Bakr gave to al-Zubayr ibn al-`Awwam a property in the valley of al-Jurf and `Umar too transferred to him a property in the Valley of `Aqiq. `Uthman gave away Fadak to Marwan during his reign. Why did not Abū-Bakr give the garden of Fadak to Fatimah (a.s) in the same manner? Fatimah (a.s) was certainly angry with Abū-Bakr and the gravity of this anger can be judged from what the Prophet (a.s) himself had said

O Fatimah (a.s)! Allah is angry if you are angry and if you are happy Allah will be“
[happy!”[۵

It surprises one as to what rule of Shari`ah was followed when the claim of Fatimah (a.s) was turned down. The Prophet (a.s) had given to her the possession of the land and made the document of donation. If the possession was not there, Abū-Bakr could have said that since she was not in possession of the land the donation was incomplete. Since possession is the proof of ownership, the burden of proof was on Abū-Bakr to establish that the donation was wrong. There was no need for him to ask her to produce witnesses. Could anyone have doubted Fatimah (a.s) would tell falsehoods just to keep possession of the Fadak and make a claim over something that did not belong to her. Her truthfulness is an established fact and the certificate is issued by no less a person than `A`ishah

[I have not found anyone other than Fatimah's father more truthful than Fatimah.]”[٤٦“

When Fatimah al-Zahra' (a.s) presented the witnesses then Abū-Bakr said that the evidence was incomplete. The contention was wrong because the Prophet (a.s) in his time had decided cases on the basis of the evidence of even a single witness. If Abū-Bakr wanted he could have decided in favor of Fatimah (a.s) by taking an oath from `Ali (a.s) that the Prophet (a.s) had given the land at Fadak as hibah to her. In the books of tradition, there are several cases where even the need of a witness was not considered for arriving at a decision considering the personal status of the claimant. In some cases, they accepted the evidence of one witness only. When the sons of Suhayb went to the court of Marwan claiming that the Prophet (a.s) had given two houses and a room to Suhayb, they were asked to produce their witness. They said

:Ibn `Umar will bear witness for them. Ibn `Umar was called to the court

He witnessed that the Prophet (a.s) had given to Suhayb two houses and a room.“

[Marwan gave a verdict in their favor on the basis of the evidence of Ibn `Umar.]”[٤٧

At that time neither Ibn `Umar's evidence was deemed incomplete nor was there any delay in accepting it. Was `Ali (a.s) not even of the status of Ibn `Umar that his evidence was not accepted. On Ibn `Umar there was a remark that he had owed allegiance to the evil Yazid. Those who bore witness in the matter of Fadak were known for their nobility and strength of character. Therefore, al-Ma'mūn once asked the scholars their opinion about those who bore witness about the hibah of the land of

:Fadak. All of them said that they were truthful and straightforward

When the scholars unanimously agreed about their truthfulness, al-Ma'mūn gave“
[Fadak to the progeny of Fatimah (a.s) and gave them a certificate to the effect.”[۱۸

There was no justification of even rejecting the claim of Fatimah (a.s) to the inheritance left by her father, the Prophet (a.s). The tradition that Abū-Bakr quoted in support of his claim is quite contrary to the Command of the Holy Qur'an that says

وَلِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مَوَالِي مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ.

And to every one We have appointed heirs of what parents and near relatives leave.“
”(۴/۳۳)

When this verse is there, there is no justification in terming the Prophet's inheritance as sadaqah and depriving his daughter of the ownership of the land. If it was sadaqah, then the Prophet (a.s) would have immediately distributed it to the poor and needy as soon as it came in his possession. Of course, the Prophet (a.s) used to distribute the produce of the land to the poor and needy. But this does not mean that he had forfeited the ownership of the property. Instead of seeking shelter behind the tradition of 'we, the Prophets, do not leave inheritances,' if Abū-Bakr had said that Fadak was not the personal property of the Prophet (a.s) and the question of its going as an inheritance to his daughter did not arise. But when Abū-Bakr accepted it as the property of the Prophet (a.s), and then denying that the Prophets do not leave any inheritance is not tenable. The right of inheritance given by the Qur'an cannot be voided by a tradition which, according to Abū-Bakr, he was himself the sole narrator! Abū-Bakr was silent about the other material inheritance left by the Prophet (a.s). If the tradition narrated by Abū-Bakr pertained only to the property in the form of land, then he should have evicted the consorts from the houses they inherited from the Prophet (a.s)! Eviction was a far-fetched idea; their ownership of the assets was approved by the Caliph. On the basis of this right to ownership that when permission was sought from `A'ishah for the interment of Imam al-Hasan (a.s) near the Prophet (a.s), she asserted the right of ownership of the room and refused permission! Umm al-Mu'minin used these words while denying permission

[This house is my house and I do not permit him to be buried in this house!]"[۹“

In the Qur'an when reference is made about the houses concerning the consorts of the Prophet (a.s) reference is also made about the houses of the Prophet (a.s) as well. If the reference is pertaining to the ownership of the houses, then two persons cannot be the owner of the same premises. Therefore, in one case, that of the spouses, it is the right to live in the house and in the other instance, it the right of ownership of the house that was vested in the Prophet (a.s) If the right to ownership of the houses by the consorts is accepted, we have to know how they acquired the ownership? Did the Prophet (a.s) make a hibah in their favor? If they became owners through donation, then why did not the First Caliph evict them and asked for the examination of the witnesses to the process of hibah? If such a procedure was not followed, then the Caliph had concocted the tradition about the prophets being prohibited from leaving any inheritance for their families

If it is a fact that the prophets cannot pass on any inheritance to their next of kin. Then why did not he Prophet (a.s) communicate this commandment to the most concerned person, his daughter and the Consorts. He did not talk about it in the open as well. The only person he told about it was Abū-Bakr! It is very surprising that the Prophet (a.s) has left behind detailed instructions about the inheritance of properties for his Ummah, but he mentioned about his personal inheritance only to the First Caliph

After the demise of the Prophet (a.s), his consorts wanted to claim their share of the inheritance. They preferred their claim through `Uthman. Therefore, `A'ishah said

When the Prophet (a.s) passed away the wives wanted to send `Uthman to Abū-Bakr“ and seek their share of the Prophet’s inheritance. `A'ishah then said, ‘Has not the Prophet (a.s) said that they (the Prophets) do not give any inheritance. Whatever we [leave behind is a charity.’”[۱۰]

If the consorts had known about this tradition, they would never have tried to seek their share. If `Uthman had known about it, he could have sounded the ladies about their position. But `A'ishah tells to the other wives of the Prophet (a.s) about this order. Perhaps she had heard this from her father. She once said

People differed about the inheritance left by the Prophet (a.s). I found no single“ person who knew anything about it. But Abū-Bakr said, ‘I have heard the Prophet (a.s) say ‘We, the Prophets, do not make anyone our inheritor. Whatever we leave behind [is a sadaqah.’”[۱۱]

If instead of denying the right of inheritance to all the prophets, it was thought of for only the last Prophet (a.s), it might have been acceptable to people. But when all the prophets have been included in the order, one starts feeling uneasy whether all the successors of the prophets, from Adam to `Isa were deprived of their fathers’ heritage? And despite all the epochs going by, only Abū-Bakr was fortunate enough to have learned that the prophets have no inheritors! Contrary to this claim, the Holy Qur’an has talked in clear terms about the inheritance of the prophets. Therefore, about the inheritance left by Dawūd (a.s) it says, “Sulayman was the inheritor of his father Dawūd

People have tried to interpret this Verse in a way that the inheritance received by Sulayman (a.s) was not material inheritance but it was the inheritance of knowledge and wisdom. They must know that at the time of the demise of his father Sulayman had possessed all the knowledge and wisdom and the inheritance mentioned in the :Book is the material assets of his father , Dawūd (a.s). Ibn Qutaybah writes

When Dawūd (Prophet David) died, Sulayman (Prophet Solomon) inherited his“ [realm.”[۱۲

:Muhammad ibn Sa’ib al-Kalabi says

Those good and pedigree horses that were produced before Sulayman (a.s) were the“ [one thousand steeds that Sulayman (a.s) had inherited from his father.”[۱۳

:Similarly, through Zachariah (a.s) it is related in the Holy Qur’an

وَإِنِّي خِفْتُ الْمَوَالِيَ مِنْ وَرَائِي وَكَانَتِ امْرَأَتِي عَاقِرًا فَهَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا يَرِثُنِي وَيَرِثُ مِنْ آلِ يَعْقُوبَ وَاجْعَلْهُ رَبِّ رَضِيًّا.

And surely I fear my cousins after me, and my wife is barren, therefore grant me“ from Thyself an heir Who should inherit me and inherit from the children of Jacob, and ”(make him, my Lord, one in whom Thou art well pleased. (۱۹/۵-۶

Even interpreting this verse to mean inheritance of knowledge and wisdom is not correct. Knowledge, wisdom and prophethood are not hereditary. If that meaning is taken then the fear expressed by Zachariah (a.s) loses its meaning. Did he have a fear that the people would steal his knowledge and occupy it forcibly? Or was he scared that despite not having the capability of prophethood he was made a prophet? It is evident that such a fear was neither there nor there was any reason of being there. But the fear could have been there that his not having any children, people could have usurped his property and belongings. Zachariah did not want that his possessions went to his tribesmen because they were greedy and avaricious people and they would use the assets for wrong purposes. Therefore, he prayed for such an inheritor .who would be liked by Allah and that he should use his assets for good purposes

After these clear proofs, taking shelter behind the tradition and saying that the prophets do not have inheritors is tantamount to going against facts. Against the evidence from the Qur'an giving credence to a tradition where the narrator is only one person certainly creates doubts about its veracity. The authenticity of this tradition was denied in clear terms by the daughter of the Prophet (a.s) and his Vicegerent (a.s). If Fatimah (a.s) had accepted this tradition as the saying of the Prophet (a.s), there was no reason for her to become angry on Abū-Bakr. To the contrary, she would have sympathized with him saying that he was helpless with regard to her claim. And if `Ali (a.s) had accepted this tradition, instead of taking sides with Fatimah (a.s) he would have asked her to forget her claim. In fact the events prove that even Abū-Bakr did not have doubts about the authenticity of the tradition nor the caliphs after him gave any cognizance to it. Therefore, in the beginning Abū-Bakr acknowledge Fatimah al-Zahra's right to inheritance and even he had written down the document and given to her But with the intervention of `Umar he had to retract his decision. `Allamah Halabi writes

Abū-Bakr wrote the document about Fadak and gave to Fatimah (a.s). At that moment, `Umar came and asked what it was. Abū-Bakr said that he had written down the document about Fatimah's inheritance that came to her from her father. `Umar then asked what he was going to spend on the Muslims while the Arabs were [raring to battle with them. Saying this, `Umar tore away that document.”[۱۴

If Abū-Bakr was certain about the authenticity of the tradition, and was confident that the Prophet (a.s) was not entitled to an inheritor, he would not have prepared the document in the first instance. When `Umar intervened he did not cancel the deed because Fatimah (a.s) had no right over the property but for other reasons. If `Umar was confident about the tradition he need not have mentioned about the monetary needs of the State and could have only insisted on the disqualification of the Prophet's daughter from the inheritance. Although `Umar intervened at that time and tore away the document, his agreement with the tradition narrated by Abū-Bakr is not indicated. It is recorded in the books of Ahl al-Sunnah to the extent that, in his own time, accepting the right of Fatimah (a.s) to the inheritance, he had entrusted Fadak to `Ali (a.s) and `Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib. Therefore, Yaqūt al-Hamawi writes

A dispute arose between `Ali (a.s) and `Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib about Fadak. `Ali“ (a.s) says that the Prophet (a.s) had given Fadak to Fatimah (a.s) in his lifetime. `Abbas denied this and said that the Prophet (a.s) died intestate leaving Fadak as his property and that he was its inheritor. This dispute reached `Umar. He said that they [understood their matters themselves and he had entrusted it (the Fadak) to them!”[۱۵

According to this narration the point of dispute between `Ali (a.s) and `Abbas was that whether Fadak was a gifted (hibah) property or an intestate property of the Prophet (a.s). `Abbas was claiming that since it was a legacy, he had a right over it as a close relation of the Prophet (a.s). Now a decision was to be made whether the land was a hibah, legacy a property of the Prophet (a.s) that, according to one opinion, was to remain in public domain. If `Umar thought that it was a hibah property he would have handed it over to `Ali (a.s). If he thought that it was a sadaqah, then it would remain as a public property. He allowed it to remain in the joint hands of `Ali (a.s) and `Abbas. This proves that he neither considered the land as hibah nor sadaqah and since he felt that it was an inherited property he entrusted it to both the persons as they had an interest in it as the inheritors of the deceased. This proves that if `Umar had given any credence to the tradition of “we the Prophets do not leave legacies” he would not have given this decision. In this matter, people invent an excuse. They say that `Umar did not transfer the estate to `Ali and `Abbas. He had just entrusted it to them as the

official representatives! If such was the case, he could have clearly told the persons
.about his intention while entrusting the property to them

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It is certainly proved from this tradition that `Umar did accept the right to inheritance and as far as the actual handing over of Fadak was concerned, the coming events do not support it but it remained as a 'no-man's-land' for long. The men in power allowed its use to whomever they favored in their time! Therefore, when `Uthman's reign :came, he gifted it to his son-in-law Marwan in ٣٤ H. The historian Abul-Fida' writes

Uthman gave the Fadak as a gift to Marwan although it was a sadaqah of the `“ [Prophet (a.s) and Fatimah (a.s) had claimed it as an inheritances.”[١٤

When Mu`awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan came into power, he took Fadak in his control and left a third of it in the use of Marwan, gave a third to `Umar ibn `Uthman and the remaining portion to his own son `Abd al-`Aziz When `Umar ibn `Abd al-`Aziz got it as an inheritance, he handed it over to the Progeny of Fatimah (a.s). Yaqūt al-Hamawi :writes

When `Umar ibn `Abd al-`Aziz assumed the Caliphate, he wrote to the administrator“ [of al-Madinah ordering that Fadak be returned to the progeny of Fatimah.”[١٧

It is evident from this action of `Umar ibn `Abd al-`Aziz that he did not give any credence to the tradition of “we, the Prophets, do not leave legacies” and termed the decisions of the past caliphs as absolutely wrong. It is a highly commendable act that he recognized the truth and returned the usurped right of Fatimah (a.s) to her children. But after him, the same things happened that were happening before him. Yazid ibn Abd al Malik, on succeeding `Umar, took back Fadak from Banū-Fatimah and gave it to Banū-Marwan. Until the collapse of Banū-Umayyah Dynasty it remained with Banū-Marwan. When Abul-`Abbas al-Saffah acquired power, he gave Fadak to `Abdullah ibn al-Hasan ibn al-Hasan ibn `Ali. After al-Saffah, al-Mansūr, the `Abbasid ruler, took the land away from the progeny of al-Hasan (a.s). But al-Mahdi ibn Mansūr once again gave the land to Banū-Fatimah. When Mūsa ibn al-Mahdi assumed power he took away the land as a state property. Until the time of al-Ma'mūn Rashid it remained a state property. On sitting on the throne in ٢١٠ H al- :Ma'mūn ordered the administrator of al-Madinah, Qathm ibn Ja`far

The Prophet (a.s) had gifted Fadak to his daughter Fatimah (a.s). It is such a clear and established fact that there is no difference of opinion between the Prophet's Household about it. Fadak requires from Amir al-Mu'minin (al-Ma'mūn) that because of his true dedication to the Prophet (a.s) it is most appropriate that Fadak be given back to them who are its true inheritors. This way the rights ordained by Allah will be discharged and the orders of the Prophet (a.s) complied with. Therefore, he orders that this decision be recorded in all offices and the functionaries informed accordingly. At the time of the demise of the Prophet (a.s) it was the practice that during the Hajj it used to be announced that whoever was given any sadaqah or anything was given as a hibah, he should come and prefer a claim for it. The claims used to be accepted and the promises fulfilled. Then Fatimah (a.s) was the most deserving of getting the thing that the Prophet (a.s) had apportioned for her. Her word and claim should have been accepted. Amir al-Mu'minin (al-Ma'mūn) has given written orders to his freed slave, Mubarak al-Tabari that he should return the estate of Fadak to the progeny of [Fatimah (a.s) along with the slaves and the grains stored therein.] [18

Therefore, according to the decree of al-Ma'mūn, Fadak was handed over to Banū-Fatimah. When al-Mutawakkil assumed power, he again withdrew the estate from :them. Buladhari writes

When al-Mutawakkil became the caliph, he ordered Fadak to be restored to its“ [former state that it was before al-Ma'mūn.] [19

With the prevaricating stand of different rulers over the ownership of Fadak, it is evident that the tradition narrated by Abū-Bakr was not given credence by many of them. A pious and just ruler like `Umar ibn `Abd al-`Aziz realized the weak points of the tradition narrated by Abū-Bakr and thought that depriving Fatimah (a.s) of her inheritance was a gross injustice. He did justice, but injustice continued to be inflicted on Banū-Fatimah for centuries to come

Footnote

Futūh al-Buldān, Page ۳۸ [۱]

Tārīkh al-Ya`qūbī, Vol ۲, Page ۱۰۶ [۲]

Sahīh al-Bukhārī, Vol ۲, Page ۱۳۲ [۳]

Itmām al-Wafā, Vol ۲, Page ۱۳۲ [۴]

Al-Isābah, Vol ۴, Page ۳۶۶ [۵]

Al-Istī`āb, Vol ۴, Page ۳۶۶ [۶]

Sahīh al-Bukhārī, Vol ۱, Page ۳۵۷ [۷]

Tārīkh al-Ya`qūbī, Vol ۳, Page ۱۹۶ [۸]

Tārīkh Abul-Fidā', Vol ۲, Page ۱۸۳ [۹]

Sahīh Muslim, Vol ۲, Page ۹۱ [۱۰]

Tārīkh al-Khulafā', Page ۵۴ [۱۱]

Al-Akhhbār al-Tiwāl, Page ۲۰ [۱۲]

Al-`Iqd al-Farīd, Vol ۱, Page ۸۴ [۱۳]

Al-Sīrah al-Halabiyyah, Vol ۲, Page ۴۰۰ [۱۴]

Mu`jam al-Buldān, Vol ۱۴, Page ۲۳۹ [۱۵]

Tārīkh Abul-Fidā', Vol ١, Page ١٧٩ [١٤]

Mu`jam al-Buldān, Vol ١٤, Page ٢٣٩ [١٧]

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THE MISCHIEF OF APOSTASY

THE MISCHIEF OF APOSTASY

After the provisional bay`ah at the Saqifah of Banū-Sa`idah the majority of the people of al-Madinah owed their allegiance to Abū-Bakr and his caliphate was established from the democratic point of view. But when this news spread far and wide, a wave of discontent arose and restlessness developed in the minds of the Arab tribes that urged them not to cooperate with the establishment. Some of the tribes joined under the flags of the apostates. From every side the voices of opposition started emanating. In this atmosphere only Quraysh and Banū-Thaqif remained steadfast with the establishment. Ibn al-Athir writes

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The Arabs became apostates. The land of Arabia became a center for mischief and“
unrest. Barring the Quraysh and Banū-Thaqif, almost all the tribes, or certainly a part
[of each, turned to apostasy.”[۱]

During the reign of Abū-Bakr the chiefs of the apostates who raised their heads had already turned apostate while the Prophet (a.s) was alive. Therefore, al-Aswad al-`Anzi, Musaylamah the Imposter and tulayhah ibn Khuwaylid had already turned hostile and made claims of prophethood during the lifetime of the Prophet (a.s) al-Aswad al-`Anzi was killed by Fayrūz al-Daylami during the times of the Prophet (a.s) and his supporters created mischief. Musaylamah was killed by Wahshi during the period of Abū-Bakr. tulayhah embraced Islam during the time of `Umar. Similarly, `Alqamah ibn `Alasah and Salma bint Malik became apostates during the time of the Prophet (a.s) and after his demise entered into armed conflict However Laqit ibn Malik became an apostate after the Prophet (a.s) and Sujah bint al-Harith too made a claim of prophethood after his demise. Laqit was vanquished by the Muslims totally and Sujah was rendered a supplement of Musaylamah and married him to spend the rest of her life in obscurity. These were the apostates who created mischief during the period of Abū-Bakr. The people who were known as those who refused to pay the zakat were from these tribes. They were the same persons who claimed to be prophets and their cohorts. Therefore, Abū-Bakr had said about the delegation of
:tulayhah ibn Khuwaylid

Even if they refuse to give the rope that is used for tying the camels, I shall fight with“
[them.”[۲]

This mischief had raised its head during the lifetime of the Prophet (a.s) and later on, some more tribes joined them. But saying that barring the Quraysh and Thaqif all other tribes were involved in apostasy was far from the truth. How could it be possible that immediately after the Prophet (a.s) all the tribes became antagonistic to Islam? Did they embrace Islam out of fear of the growing power of the Muslims? When they knew that, the Prophet (a.s) was no more they recanted from Islam. This sort of thinking will strengthen the idea of some people that Islam did not spread with the missionary zeal of the Prophet (a.s) and that the main cause of the spread was the swords of the Arabs

The truth is that to settle scores with some tribes, they were unreasonably blamed of apostasy and they were attacked with this excuse. Therefore, `Amr ibn Harith asked Sa`id ibn Zayd whether he was present at the time of the Prophet's death? He replied in the affirmative. He asked on what day the bay`ah of Abū-Bakr took place? He replied that happened the same day as the Prophet's demise. He was asked, did any one oppose the selection? He replied

None objected except those who were apostates or were about to become“ [apostate.”[۳

This reply proves the fact that those who opposed the candidature of Abū-Bakr were dubbed apostate, although their refusal to owe allegiance to Abū-Bakr was the only thing that prompted such an extreme reaction from his supporters. As far as withholding of payment of zakat is concerned, when those people had not accepted Abū-Bakr as the Caliph, they were naturally reluctant to pay the zakat. They were just refusing to pay the zakat and were not against the institution of zakat. They were aware that the zakat Tax was mandatory in the Shari`ah. But since they did not approve of the new establishment, they were refusing to fulfill their obligation of paying the zakat. The evident proof that they were not apostates was that they regularly offered their mandatory prayers. They had also not denied the rules and conditions for the zakat. They were only refusing to pay zakat to the rulers of the day and not denying it as an obligatory pillar of the Faith. They cannot therefore be termed apostates. Therefore, when Abū-Bakr mentioned about taking armed action

against them, the senior Companions raised objections to the idea. `Umar too said in
:clear terms

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O Abū-Bakr! On what account you want to battle with them that the Prophet (a.s) has“ said, ‘I am not permitted to battle with people until they do not recite the kalimah Tawhid and besides other rights their lives and properties are secure and their [account is Allah’s concern!’”[۴

But at that time neither the Companions opinion was considered nor what `Umar said. Abū-Bakr remained firm on his stand and deputed Khalid ibn al-Walid to destroy the Arab tribes. Therefore, he murdered Malik ibn Nuwayrah and his tribesmen and added a dark chapter to the history of Islam. He severed the limbs of the people and .killed them mercilessly

Malik ibn Nuwayrah was the respected chief of the tribe of Banū-Yarbū` . No person from the tribe could disobey his commands. He personally went to the presence of the Prophet (a.s) in al-Madinah and embraced Islam. He learned personally from the Prophet (a.s) the mandatory rites and duties of the Faith. Trusting his honesty, the :Prophet (a.s) authorized him for the collection of the alms. Ibn al-Athir writes

The Prophet (a.s) appointed Malik ibn Nuwayrah for the collection of the alms from“ [Banū-Hanzalah.”[۵

His charity, bravery and valor were exemplary. Therefore, in Arabia they used to say, “Youth is there, but where is the like of Malik?” He was so hospitable that his kitchen fires burned day and night. Whenever a traveler lost his way and came in his environs, he used to bring him home and entertain him. Until the last days of the Prophet (a.s), he regularly collected the alms and sent them. When the news of the Prophet’s demise reached him, he abstained from the collections and told the people of his tribe that they must retain the amount of zakat with them until it was confirmed that the new establishment at al-Madinah was trustworthy. In that period Sujah bint Harith wanted to attack al-Madinah with ۴,۰۰۰ men. When he reached Jarwan near the locality of Banū-Yarbū` , al-Bitah, he sent word to Malik for truce and agreement for :non-hostility towards each other. Ibn al-Athir writes

Sujah decided to battle with Abū-Bakr and sent a message to Malik ibn Nuwayrah“ and made a request for an agreement of peace and no-war-pact. Malik accepted this suggestions but asked him not to fight with Abū-Bakr. He suggested to Sujah to attack [the tribes of Banū-Tamim, instead, and Sujah accepted his advice.”[٤٦

This agreement and no-war-pact cannot be termed as apostasy. Therefore, Ibn al-
:Athir writes

When the Prophet (a.s) died and the Arabs turned apostates and Sujah claimed that“ he was prophet, at that time Malik struck an agreement with him. But this does not [indicate in any manner that that he was himself an apostate.”[٤٧

The strategy in this agreement was to involve Sujah in battle with the non-Muslim tribes and divert him from attacking the Capital, al-Madinah. Therefore, Malik was able to divert him from his original plan of attacking al-Madinah and heading towards the habitations of Banū-Tamim. If this was apostasy, then Waki` ibn Malik, who also belonged to Banū-Tamim, had also struck a similar deal with Sujah. He was not taken to task by the Caliph. Khalid ibn al-Walid was deputed to attack Banū-Yarbū` for destruction and killing. Malik had disbursed the people of Banū-Yarbū` to restrict the losses of lives. Khalid sent men to chase and round them up. When Banū-Yarbū` saw this situation, they took to arms. Abū-Qutadah al-Ansari, who was in Khalid’s
:Contingent, seeing them armed, said

We are Muslims; they say they too are Muslims. We asked, why are they carrying“ arms? They asked why you have come armed. We told them, ‘If you are Muslims according to your claims, then disarm yourselves.’ Therefore, they disarmed. We [prayed and they too joined in the prayer.”[٤٨

When Banū-Yarbū` were disarmed, then Malik ibn Nuwayrah was arrested and brought before Khalid. When Malik was taken prisoner, his wife, Ummu-Tamim bint Minhal, came out behind him. Ibn Wadih al-Ya`qūbi writes

[His wife came behind him. When Khalid saw her, he liked her looks.]^[٩]

Malik, who was aware of Khalid's character, realized that he would now eliminate him. Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani writes

Thabit ibn Qasim narrates that when Khalid saw the wife of Malik, who was an extremely pretty lady, Malik told her, 'You have prepared the way for my killing!'^[١٠]

His fear was correct. Khalid devised an excuse to kill Malik that Malik said a couple of times

[My doubt is that your master, Abū-Bakr, must have said such and such things.]^[١١]

At this Khalid got angry and said why he was repeatedly calling Abū-Bakr his 'master' as if he did not consider him his own master. He now gave an eye to Zurarah ibn al-Azwar to pounce on Malik and slay him. Then the men of Khalid attacked Banū-Yarbū` and in no time ١,٢٠٠ persons were killed. They made hearths from severed heads and put the cooking pots on fire over them to cook their food. Al-Tabari writes

The soldiers made hearths from the severed heads and put the cooking pots over them.^[١٢]

After this murder and bloodletting Khalid ibn al-Walid gave more evidence of his cruelty with regard to Malik's spouse Ummu-Tamim that the men in the army felt revulsion and Abū-Qutadah al-Ansari was so much affected that he broke away from the army and went to al-Madinah

He made a pledge to Allah that he who not participate in any other campaign with“
[Khalid ibn al-Walid.”][۱۳

On the return of Abū-Qutadah, when this awful news reached the people, they condemned the act of Khalid ibn al-Walid and `Umar was furious. When Khalid came back to al-Madinah, he entered the mosque proudly wearing an arrow in his turban, `Umar went forward and took away the arrow from the turban, twisted and trampled :it under his feet in an anguish of temper. He then said

You have killed a Muslim and molested his wife. By Allah! I shall stone you to“
[death”][۱۴

Umar wanted to stone Khalid for his sin of adultery or execute him for the killing of` Malik, or at least to remove him from his position. But Abū-Bakr waved him aside :saying

Wait `Umar! He has made a mistake in his interpretation. Therefore, do not talk“
[about what he has done!”][۱۵

After this event, Malik’s brother, Mutammim ibn Nuwayrah, came to al-Madinah. He offered his Morning Prayer at the Mosque and thereafter he recited some couplets of pathos in the memory of his brother. In one of the couplets he said, “You invited him in Allah’s name and then you rebelled against him and cheated him. If he had invited you ”.to anything, he would never have shown faithlessness

At this Abū-Bakr said, “Neither have I killed him nor did I rebel against him!” Then he ordered the blood money to be paid from the bayt al-mal to his people! Ibn al-Athir :writes

Abū-Bakr ordered that the captives be released and the blood money paid for the“
[blood of Malik.”[۱۶

After these events, terming such cruel acts as jihad is tampering with the very concept of Islamic jihad. Does Islam permit that people should be disarmed and massacred their heads used cruelly to make pot-stands for cooking food and their womenfolk molested? This act was not only an abject contravention of the Islamic norms but was also contrary to the instructions given by Abū-Bakr to Khalid. Khalid was under strict instruction not to harm any habitation from where he heard the :sounds of adhan and prayer. Therefore, Al-Tabari writes

Abū-Bakr, in addition to all other instructions, said that wherever the men halted,“ they should say the adhan and Iqamah. If the people there too followed suit, they [need not be attacked.”[۱۷

But where Abū-Qutadah al-Ansari, `Abdullah ibn `Umar and other Muslims find Banū-Yarbū` saying the adhan and offering prayers and bear witness to their being :Muslims, Khalid and his men cruelly behead them. Al-Tabari writes

Among the persons who bore witness to the Islam of Malik ibn Nuwayrah was Abū-“ [Qutadah Harith ibn Rab`i.”[۱۸

The demand of justice is that the misdeed of a person be recognized and to justify his evil act a group of Muslims are not falsely termed apostates. Is not it a sin to term a Muslim apostate? If Khalid was a Companion, was not Malik too a Companion of the Prophet (a.s)? It is surprising that after the Prophet (a.s) it is believed that apostasy was rampant and many tribes turned hostile. People do not say that these tribes, in fact, turned hostile to the establishment of the day that was thrust on their head in the name of democracy rather than becoming apostate. Can anything besides their refusal to accept the caliphs be produced as a proof of their apostasy? The refusal to pay the zakat too was connected with their non-acceptance of the Caliph. When the establishment was not proper in their view, they naturally abstained from paying their taxes. When these people regularly offered prayers, how could they recant from the important tenet of zakat? Therefore, `Umar too bore witness to their Islam. And even

Abū-Bakr did not blame them of apostasy. If Abū-Bakr considered Malik and his people apostates, he would not have said that Khalid had made an error of interpretation. When Mutammim ibn Nuwayrah claimed qisas, Abū-Bakr approved it without raising any question of the apostasy of Malik and his men. However, Abū-Bakr's fault was that he did not institute any action against Khalid ibn al-Walid terming it as a khata' ijthadi (error in interpretation)! How could the question of ijthad arise when a person blatantly contravenes a clear and established norm of the Faith! If such crimes can be condoned behind the excuse of interpretation, then crime will not remain crime at all and people could get away with anything

This was the first instance in Islam when the excuse of error in interpretation was used to save the perpetrator of a serious crime. Then the door of ijtiḥad was wide open for such persons. For every misdeed, there was an ‘interpretation’ to protect the person. Therefore, the history records that under the umbrella of error in interpretation thousands of Muslims were killed and innumerable habitations were put to fire. None could raise their voice against this tyranny because whatever happened was, in the eyes of the rulers, on account of error in interpretation

It is surprising under what rule Abū-Bakr termed the foul act of Khalid ibn al-Walid as an error of interpretation and spared him from drastic punishment? Can error of interpretation be admitted in the matter of killing of Malik or for molesting his spouse? Even if he had admitted her as a Kaniz, could he be exempted from the period of `iddah that any widow has to undergo before her remarriage. Khalid did commit a major sin and the Caliph was condoning it as a khata’ ijtiḥadi! Ibn Abil-Hadid al-Mu` tazili, although he tried to protect Khalid, had to concede in the end, saying

I do not condone Khalid of the crime. I feel that he was cruel and heartless. On whatever thing he was infuriated or his carnal desires upbraided him, he did not consider the norms of Faith in the matter. Therefore, in the times of the Prophet (a.s) what he did with Banū-Judhaymah, and more than that his treatment of Malik Ibn Nuwayrah proved his cruel nature. The Prophet (a.s) was upset with him for long. Then he forgave him. Because of this forgiveness he became bolder and he did, what [he did, with Banū-Yarbū` at the place of Bitah.”[۱۹

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٢, Page ٢٣١ [١]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٤٧٤ [٢]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٤٤٧ [٣]

Itmām al-Wafā, Page ٢٤ [٤]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٢, Page ٢٠٥ [٥]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٢, Page ٢٣٩ [٦]

Usd al-Ghābah, Vol ٣, Page ٩٧ [٧]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٥٠٣ [٨]

Tārīkh al-Ya`qūbī, Vol ٢, Page ١١٠ [٩]

Al-Isābah, Vol ٣, Page ٣٣٧ [١٠]

Tārīkh al-Kāmil, Vol ٢, Page ٢٤٣ [١١]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٥٠٣ [١٢]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٥٠٣ [١٣]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٥٠٤ [١٤]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٥٠٣ [١٥]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٢, Page ٢٤٣ [١٦]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٥٠٢ [١٧]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٢, Page ٥٠٣ [١٨]

Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah, Vol ٤, Page ١٨٧ [١٩]

ISTIKHLAF OR NOMINATION OF THE SECOND CALIPH

ISTIKHLAF OR NOMINATION OF THE SECOND CALIPH

At the Saqifah, the foundation of democracy was raised in Islam. Whatever that democracy was, could not be continued with any more and nomination took its place. Therefore, Abū-Bakr, in his deathbed, decided to nominate `Umar. He called `Uthman and `Abd al-Rahman ibn `Awf and took their advice. `Abd al-Rahman said that the choice was right but `Umar had an element of anger and cruelty in his nature. `Uthman fully supported the idea and said that it was for the betterment of the Ummah to nominate `Umar as the next caliph. After this discussion Abū-Bakr sent the two persons away. He again called `Uthman to prepare the document of nomination. When he started dictating, and only the preamble was written when Abū-Bakr swooned and became unconscious. `Uthman knew what he was intending to dictate. Therefore, during the period of the unconsciousness of the caliph `Uthman wrote, "I
".have nominated `Umar ibn al-Khattab as caliph

When Abū-Bakr revived from his unconsciousness he asked what was written. `Uthman read to him what he had written down. He asked `Uthman whether he hurried writing down the name fearing that he might not revive and pronounce the name of his successor and that might cause unrest and differences amongst the Muslims? `Uthman nodded his agreement. Abū-Bakr said that Allah would Bless
!`Uthman for what he did

After this document of succession was completed, Abū-Bakr called `Umar and gave him the document for safekeeping and to follow the decree recorded therein. `Umar took the document from him and asked people to pledge that they would abide by the decree of the first caliph! One person asked `Umar, what was written in the document? `Umar said he was not aware of what was written in the document but affirmed that the contents of the document were binding for him. The person said, “But by Allah! I know what is written in the document. Last year you made him the
[caliph and now he is leaving creating you the caliph!”[۱

When this news spread, some people remained quiet out of discretion and some started protesting against the nomination. Therefore, a group of Muhajirūn and Ansar came to Abū-Bakr and said, “O Deputy of the Prophet! Nominating Ibn al-Khattab as your successor you have placed a ruler over our heads! When you go to the presence
[of Allah, what reply will you give Him?”[۲

Talhah ibn `Ubaydullah too expressed dissatisfaction on the nomination and said, “You have imposed `Umar over the people as caliph and ruler. You know fairly well that with you around how much hardship he was putting them to! Now he will have total authority to do what he wished to do! What reply will you give to Allah when He
[asked you questions about the people?”[۳

It has been the attitude of the democratic regimes to beat the drums about the peoples' right to elect their representatives. But when they are elected, they keep aside the people's rights and do what suits their own interests. Then the democracy gets restricted to one or a few persons only. The democracy of Saqifah Banū-Sa`idah came to such a pass. In about two years and half it got restricted to two or three persons! If the process of nomination is accepted, we shall have to acknowledge that the selection of the caliph is not determined by the opinion of the populace. Even if Abū-Bakr was the people's representative, he was not given the authority to nominate his successor unilaterally. In no democratic regime such an authority is ever given. Even if Abū-Bakr expressed his choice, it was only to `Abd al-Rahman ibn `Awf and `Uthman and none else. One of them thought it futile to oppose the nomination and the other wholeheartedly supported the nomination to reap the benefits in the future! The opinion of two persons cannot be termed as the opinion of all the people. If he really wanted advice of the men of wisdom, he could have consulted `Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib about whom the Prophet (a.s) had said that he was his uncle and his ancestors' representative. Even `Ali Ibn Abi-Talib (a.s) was available who had been with the Prophet (a.s) from the beginning of his Annunciation. They had an excuse that he was not invited to come to the Saqifah of Banū-Sa`idah because he was preoccupied with the last rites of the Prophet (a.s) at that time. But for this nomination process Abū-Bakr had no excuse why he avoided consulting `Ali (a.s) on this very important matter. It is surprising that `Ali (a.s) was consulted on all important matters like the ghazawat etc, and his wisdom was praised by

everyone, including the new coterie, but now he was totally forgotten in this very vital decision. According to the opinion of the Prophet (a.s), `Ali (a.s) was having the first right to be the caliph. But here he was not even consulted on the matter

Anyway, those who accepted the caliphate on the flimsy democratic process concluded at the conclave of Saqifah, surrendered themselves to the rule of `Umar as well. Abū-Bakr, after being on the throne for two years, three months and ten days, left this world on ۲۲ Jumada II ۱۳ H leaving the reins of power in the hands of `Umar

Footnote

Al-Imāmah was-Siyāsah, Vol ۱, Page ۳۳ [۱]

Talkhīs al-Hubbayr, Page ۳۴۸ [۲]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۶۲۱ [۳]

SHŪRA OR THE COMMITTEE

SHŪRA OR THE COMMITTEE

Ten years, six months and four days had passed since `Umar took the reins of governance in his hands when Abū-Lu'lu'ah Fayrūz, the slave of Mughirah ibn Shu`bah, struck him with a double edged poniard. Some people lifted him and shifted home. A physician was immediately called to treat him. The injury was so severe that the wine administered through his mouth came out of the injury inflicted by the blow through the stomach. People around him were confused and confounded. They thought that the throne of the caliphate will be vacant and were whispering to each other about the probable successor. Some said that it would be better if he nominated someone and save the people from the trouble of selecting his replacement. Therefore, some important persons came to `Umar and suggested to him to nominate someone as his successor. He said with a sigh that he had none in view. He added that if Abū-`Ubaydah was living he would willingly have transferred the burden to him. Then if Allah had questioned him, he would have said that he had entrusted the caliphate to a person who was termed by the Prophet (a.s) as the Trustee of the

Ummah. He said that if Hudhayfah's slave Salim was alive, he could have given the position to him. If Allah asked him, he would reply that he had given the control to a person about whom the Prophet (a.s) had said that he loved Allah very much. Ibn Qutaybah had written about Khalid ibn al-Walid and Mu`adh ibn Jabal in this connection that `Umar remembered them as probable candidates for succession. The person who mooted the idea of Yazid succeeding Mu`awiyah, Mughirah ibn Shu`bah, suggested to `Umar to nominate his son `Abdullah ibn `Umar to the :caliphate. In reply `Umar said

May Allah destroy you! By Allah! You have not said this without keeping Allah in front“ of you. How can I make a person the caliph who is helpless even to divorce his own [wife?”[۱]

Ibn Hajar al-Makki writes

This is an indication towards the event when `Abdullah, during the days of the“ Prophet (a.s), gave divorce to his wife during the period of menstruation and the [Prophet (a.s) instructed `Umar to ask `Abdullah to go to his wife”[۲]

After rejecting Mughirah’s suggestion, `Umar told the gathering that if he nominated anyone the caliph, there will be no problem because Abū-Bakr too had nominated him, and he (Abū-Bakr) was better than himself! He added that even if he did not nominate a successor, there would not be any problem, because the Prophet (a.s) did not nominate anyone as well! And he was better than both of them were! In that time `A’ishah sent word through `Abdullah ibn `Umar that he must nominate a successor to save the people from confusion and unrest. `Umar said that he had given a serious thought to the matter and was of view that `Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s), `Uthman ibn `Affan, `Abd al-Rahman ibn `Awf, Sa`d ibn Abi-Waqqas, al-Zubayr ibn al-`Awwam and Talhah ibn `Ubaydullah should form a committee The Prophet (a.s) was happy with those persons during his last days. They are capable that they can select one amongst themselves to be the next caliph. When he was alone he said that if they unanimously select `Ali (a.s) he will lead the Ummah on the Right Path. `Abdullah ibn `Umar said that if that was his opinion, he ought to nominate `Ali (a.s) for the succession himself. To this `Umar replied, “I do not like to carry the burden both in [this life and the Hereafter.”[۳]

After deciding about the membership of the Shūra Council, `Umar called the selected members to apprise them of the procedure for the selection. When the six assembled at his place, he told them that he knew they all aspired to be the caliph al-Zubayr did not keep quiet. He said that it was natural that they were desirous of the position. He said that in precedence in accepting Islam and in status they were not less than `Umar. He added that if he, `Umar, could be the caliph, why not they! Ibn Abil-Hadid had said that `Umar was lying mortally injured; therefore al-Zubayr was talking fearlessly. If it were some other occasion, he would not have dared to talk in that manner. `Umar kept quiet at his talk, but when he commented on the members of the Shūra he indicated that he was upset with al-Zubayr. Therefore, he addressed al-Zubayr and said, "O al-Zubayr! You are avaricious, small hearted and ill tempered. In anger, you are an infidel and a mu'min if in a happy mood! If you get the caliphate you will fight for a little barley!" He told about Talhah, "He is proud and conceited. On one occasion he talked such an impertinent thing that the Prophet (a.s) was very upset with him and remained so until the end

He then turned towards Sa`d and said, "You are a good archer but the caliphate is out of your reach because you are from Banū-Zahrah and what Banū-Zahrah has to do with the caliphate!" He told `Abd al-Rahman ibn `Awf, "You are very fond of rest and pleasures! If you become the caliph, you might leave the affairs of the caliphate to your wife!" Ibn Qutaybah records the following words

O `Abd al-Rahman! I might have given the caliphate to you, but you are the Pharaoh“
[for this Ummah!”[۴

.If the members select one person unanimously, it is well and good

Umar told `Uthman, “If the caliphate is given to you, then you will put the burden of `Banū-Umayyah and Banū-al-`As on the necks of the people! The bayt al-mal will become the fiefdom of your tribe.” Finally he turned to `Ali (a.s) and said, “You are suitable in all respects for the position of the caliph. But the trait of humor dominates
”!your nature

After these comments he asked the members of the Shūra to decide about the successor within three days. He also asked them to invite al-Hasan ibn `Ali (a.s), `Abdullah ibn `Abbas and some more important persons from the Ansar. But they should not have any say in the matter of the Caliphate. Abū-Talhah al-Ansari was appointed the director of the Shūra. He asked Abū-Talhah to gather all the members of the Shūra after his death in the room of `A’ishah and tell them that they must decide about the successor within the allotted time and during the interim period the responsibility of leading the prayers should rest with Suhayb al-Rūmi. If they select the successor unanimously, it is well and good. If five are on one side and one is in opposition, then he must be killed. If three are on one side and the three on other, then his son, `Abdullah ibn `Umar to be the arbiter. Whichever side he supported, the caliph will be their nominee. Then he advised his son, “If there is difference of opinion in the Ummah you should side with the majority. If three are on one side and three on
[the other, you should opt for the side in which `Abd al-Rahman is there.”[۵

Umar expired after three days of struggle between life and death. When his burial was over, at `A'ishah's room or the house of `Abd al-Rahman ibn `Awf's nephew, Musawwir ibn Makhramah the Committee of the Shūra met. Abū-Talhah stood with a contingent of fifty persons at the door. Mughirah ibn Shu`bah and `Amr ibn al-`As too came and sat near the door to make their personalities prominent. When Sa`d ibn Abi-Waqqas saw them, he threw pebbles at them and said, "Do you want to show off [that you too are the members of the Shūra?]"[x]

Both of them escaped from there when Sa`d threw pebbles on them and the proceedings of the Shūra commenced. Talhah and Sa`d gave their vote to `Uthman. Al-Zubayr voted for `Ali (a.s). Now `Ali (a.s), `Uthman and `Abd al-Rahman remained to cast their lot. `Abd al-Rahman told `Ali (a.s) and `Uthman to withdraw from the contest and take the right of selecting one from the remaining two, or that he will withdraw from the contest and take the right of selecting one from the two, `Uthman or `Ali (a.s). `Ali (a.s) and `Uthman both did not agree to withdraw from the contest. Then `Abd al-Rahman said that they must accept him as the arbitrator. `Uthman immediately agreed to the suggestion. But `Ali (a.s) was hesitant. When he was persuaded very much he made a condition that `Abd al-Rahman should not be governed by any base instinct in coming to a decision on the basis of the consideration of his kin. `Abd al-Rahman agreed that his decision will be based on true facts. When `Abd al-Rahman was appointed the arbitrator, he assembled the Muhajirūn and Ansar along with the members of the Shūra in the al-Masjid al-Nabawi (the Holy Prophet's Mosque) and asked them as to who they wanted to select as the Caliph. `Ammar ibn Yasir told the people that if they wanted peace and tranquility they should opt for `Ali (a.s). Al-Miqdad ibn al-Aswad agreed with him. `Abdullah ibn Abi-Sara and `Abdullah ibn Rabi`ah spoke in favor of `Uthman. On this, some harsh words were exchanged between `Ammar and Ibn Abi-Sara. When `Abd al-Rahman saw the argument prolonging, he quietened the persons. Then he addressed `Ali (a.s) and said, "You must make a pledge that you will act on the Book of Allah, the Sunnah [of the Prophet (a.s) and those of the two Caliphs.]"[y]

Ali (a.s) said, “I hope that, to the extent of my knowledge and capability, I shall do my`
[duty.”[٨

Then `Uthman was asked the same question. He immediately agreed to follow the example of the first two Caliphs. On this `Abd al-Rahman gave his hand to `Uthman in bay`ah and announced his Caliphate. `Ali (a.s) saw this situation and said, “This is not the first day that you have inflicted an excess on us. What else can we do than being patient? What things you do, Allah only must help! By Allah! You have given the
[Caliphate to `Uthman on the hope that he will turn it over to you tomorrow.”[٩

The supporters of `Uthman and Banū-Umayyah came forward to owe their allegiance to him. Mughirah ibn Shu`bah, who was an opportunist, started telling `Uthman that if `Abd al-Rahman supported someone else, he himself would not have approved of that person. When `Abd al-Rahman heard this flattering talk, he said, “O unlucky person! You are telling a blatant lie! If I had owed my allegiance to someone else, you would have followed suit and told him what you have told now (to
[`Uthman).”[١٠

:The following conclusions can be drawn from the Shūra of `Umar

It is not necessary for the Caliph to be a Qurayshi. Even a freed non-Arab Slave (١) could also qualify for the position and the Tradition, “Leaders must be from Quraysh”
was just concocted to meet the requirement of the selection of the first caliph

People's opinion for selection of the Caliph is not necessary. The Caliph is entitled to (۲) make a selection of the successor or can nominate a committee of two or more persons to do the selection

If someone from the Shūra raises his voice against the majority of the members of (۳) the committee he will be liable to be executed for that crime even if he was a Companion of the Prophet (a.s)

The Ummah could remain without a Caliph for three days. It was not necessary (۴) that on the death of one caliph the successor to be in place without break. Only at the time of the demise of the Prophet (a.s) the dispatch with which the caliph was selected, without even waiting for his last rites, was the need of the time and the political expedient

The failings and the defects which the Second Caliph pointed out in the members of (۵) the Shūra were pride, conceit, avarice, nepotism and impertinence with the Prophet (a.s) were no disqualifications for being considered as candidates for the caliphate. Nor there was any need of knowledge, experience and moral qualities to qualify for selection as the caliph

If we consider this Shūra and the procedures followed for the earlier selection of the caliphs, we do not find any particular rule or procedure to be followed. If we accept that, the selection of the caliph has to be done by a group of wise men or it has to be done through the popular opinion then how the important companions, like `A'ishah and `Abdullah ibn `Umar, advice `Umar to nominate someone as his successor. Did not they know that selection of the caliph was the prerogative of the wise men or the populace? Instead of rejecting the suggestion, `Umar sites the precedence set by `Umar in nominating him as the second caliph. Then he says that if Abū-`Ubaydah or Salim were living he would have nominated one of them as his successor. If the caliph has the right to nominate his successor, the Prophet (a.s) must have had a bigger right to nominate a caliph and successor! `Umar says that if he nominated a successor, it would be following the tradition of Abū-Bakr and if he did not nominate the successor he would be following the tradition of the Prophet (a.s)! But in practice, what he did

was neither the way of his predecessor nor of the Prophet (a.s) the truth is that neither `Umar wished to nominate anyone nor did he have confidence in the popular opinion that will select the person he had in his mind. Therefore, he constituted a Shūra of six persons that was free of the popular opinion and constituted in such a way that the success of his favorite candidate was certain. In the process, he took the names of certain persons that if they were living, he would have nominated one of them. Of the two Abū-`Ubaydah was a Qurayshi, and fitted well into the condition made at the time of the selection of the first caliph. The second person was Salim who was a freed non-Arab slave and therefore did not qualify the test of being a Qurayshi on which count the Ansar were denied the right of contesting to the caliphate at the time of selection of the first caliph. But now `Umar was not bothered about that condition and would have nominated Salim to the caliphate if he lived. The other names that came up were Mu`adh ibn Jabal and Khalid ibn al-Walid. Mu`adh ibn Jabal was from the tribe of Khazraj and `Umar was opposed to consider the Ansar for the caliphate. The other person was Khalid ibn al-Walid with whom `Umar never saw eye to eye. As soon as `Umar assumed the caliphate he deposed Khalid from the position he held. When he did not tolerate to even keep him under his own control, how could he nominate him to be the caliph over all the Muslims! Ibn al-Athir writes

On assuming the Caliphate) the first decree `Umar issued was in the name of Abū-`Ubaydah al-Jarrah to take the command of the troops from Khalid and consider him dismissed. The reason for this was that from the time of Abū-Bakr, `Umar was angry on him because of his attack on Malik ibn Nuwayrah and other acts that Khalid committed during the campaign. The first action that `Umar took as the caliph was to [dismiss Khalid and saying that he will not be given any position under him.]^[11]

Umar had also taken the name `Ali (a.s) for nomination as the caliph but avoided the issue by saying that he did not want to shoulder the responsibility. It is surprising that he was willing to take the responsibility of nominating Abū-`Ubaydah or Salim if they were alive, but not of `Ali (a.s). In spite of recognizing and accepting `Ali's capability and suitability, he was referring his candidature to the Shūra for the selection. Thus he turned the caliphate in another direction very cleverly constituting the Shūra to push through his favorite candidate. `Abd al-Rahman was the brother-in-law of `Uthman and would certainly support him. Sa`d ibn Abi-Waqqas was the cousin of `Abd al-Rahman and would naturally go with him. Talhah was from the tribe of Taym and was against `Ali (a.s). Only al-Zubayr was with `Ali (a.s) because his mother Safiyyah bint `Abd al-Muttalib was an aunt of `Ali (a.s). If Talhah had voted for `Ali (a.s) both sides would have had three votes each. In such an event `Umar had instructed that `Abdullah ibn `Umar will be the arbiter and instructed him to select the candidate on whose side will be `Abd al-Rahman. He was also sure that `Abd al-Rahman will be on the side of his favorite candidate. Now the only alternative for the opposing candidate was to side with `Abd al-Rahman and accept `Uthman as caliph or lose his own life. This was the strategy of `Umar that with all permutations the caliphate would ultimately come to `Uthman. Therefore, the author of al-Riyad al-Nadira writes

At the halt during the Hajj `Umar was asked who will be the caliph after him. He said“
[`Uthman ibn `Affan.”][۱۲

Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) saw the constituents of the Shūra and had understood that the entire process was to select `Uthman for the position and had said to `Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib, “The direction of the caliphate has been turned away from us. `Abbas asked, ‘How do you know this?’ ‘`Uthman has been attached with me and has asked us to support the majority. If two are on one side and two on the other, then you must opt for the side, in which `Abd al-Rahman is there. Then Sa`d will support [his cousin, `Uthman, and `Abd al-Rahman is his brother-in-law.”][۱۳

If `Uthman was to be brought to power, then instead of setting up the Shūra, he could have directly nominated him. That would have eliminated lot of mischief and internecine fighting. Because of the constitution of the Shūra the thoughts of avarice and position came to the minds of the members and every individual started thinking that he was the candidate for the caliphate because of this state the door for conflicts between the Muslims was opened. And as a result Talhah and al-Zubayr later on rose against `Ali (a.s), although al-Zubayr was `Ali’s supporter before the Shūra. The battles of Jamal and Siffin were the natural consequence of the Shūra. Ibn `Abd-Rabbih writes that once Ibn Husayn, went as a courier of Ziyad to Mu`awiyah. Mu`awiyah once called him in seclusion and asked what was the reason of the internecine differences between the Muslims? He replied, it was the assassination of `Uthman. Mu`awiyah said that he had heard he was very shrewd and clever but his reply was very shallow. Ibn Husayn, “Was it the Battle of Siffin?” Mu`awiyah said, “No!” He asked, “The Battle of the Camel?” Mu`awiyah said, “Not even that!” Finally Ibn Husayn said, “I cannot visualize any other cause!” Mu`awiyah said, “The fountainhead of the conflict was the constitution of the Six Member Committee of the Shūra by `Umar; therefore, “every member of that group started expecting to be the caliph and his conscience bent towards the thought of power and even his tribe and [family started thinking in the same terms.”][۱۴

Another reason for the greed for the caliphate was the affluence of the members of the Committee. Where there is excess of wealth, the desire for power too comes in. Therefore, when we look at the members of the Shūra, the history indicates that excluding `Ali (a.s), all other members were very rich. If it was necessary to constitute the Shūra, he should have opted for persons who had the welfare of the common man at heart instead of picking up a group of persons of high affluence. Even if the selecting is taken as a political expedient, making their decision subservient to one person under the sharp edge of the sword was the biggest impediment to the freedom of opinion and had made a farce of the Shūra

Umar had made the yardstick for the selection of the members of the Shūra their closeness to the Prophet (a.s) and his liking for them. But the question arises whether these persons only were those who were liked by the Prophet (a.s) and there were none else who would have similar or better qualification than they did? Was `Uthman selected because the Prophet (a.s) liked him or because he was to the liking of `Abd al-Rahman? The Holy Qur'an says thus about the true believers

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ.

Certainly, Allah was well pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance to“
”(you under the tree. (٤٨/١٨

It is certainly not possible that those whom Allah likes, the Prophet (a.s) would not like them. When the privilege of the Prophet's liking was also enjoyed by other persons as well, then restricting the 'liking' only to the six persons is certainly full of meaning. Was the Prophet (a.s) happy with only six Muhajirūn and with none from the Ansar? If the Prophet (a.s) liked these six, the reasons for the liking should have been highlighted by the selector. But instead of highlighting these, the failings and shortcomings of the members are mentioned in a very ridiculing manner. Abū-`Uthman al-Jahiz writes

If someone had said to `Umar that he said that the Prophet (a.s), at the time of his death, was happy with the six persons and he says that the Prophet (a.s) was unhappy with Talhah until he died. He was thus contradicting what he (`Umar) himself [said.”[١٥

Talhah’s talk that disturbed the Prophet (a.s) was that at the time of the revelation of the verse of Hijab he had said that the Prophet (a.s) was keeping his spouses under the curtains at that time but that they would marry them after his death. After this event, the following Verse was revealed

وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْذُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَنْ تُنكِحُوا أَرْوَاجَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَبَدًا.

And it does not behoove you that you should give trouble to the Messenger of Allah,“
”(nor that you should marry his wives after him ever. (٣٣/٥٣

There was a time when such impertinent words came out of the mouth of Talhah that were highly objectionable, but what `Umar uttered at the time of the Truce of al-Hudaybiyah were words much more objectionable than what Talhah said. If by doubting about the Prophethood and saying that the Prophet (a.s) was talking gibberish in delirium of sickness one could reach the position of the caliphate, why should not Talhah rise to the Committee of the Shūra? What was the need to taunt at Talhah during the important and crucial conclave of the Shūra

The opinion that `Umar expressed about `Ali (a.s) is nothing more than a personally devised talk. Just after the Prophet (a.s) it was said that `Ali (a.s) was too young to aspire for the Caliphate and an old person was suitable for the position. But now when the excuse of age was not there, it was said that he had propensity for humor and the caliphate needs a person with a serious demeanor. This utterance of `Umar gave the opportunity to others to air this opinion around. Therefore, `Amr ibn al-`As put it into the minds of the Syrians that `Ali’s nature was just to keep joking. Hearing about this propaganda, `Ali (a.s) said, “That son of a bad woman surprises me when he says that there is an element of jesting in my nature and I keep jesting around all the time!” No doubt `Ali (a.s) was having an excellent sense of humor that reflected the sense of humor of the Prophet (a.s). He never hurt anyone with his humor. If this element of

humor is not a disadvantage for the august position of prophethood, how could it be a disqualification for the caliphate? A person in the position of power need not always keep an angry face. With his sense of humor `Ali (a.s) combined an aura of respect and carriage that attracted the respect of people. Ibn `Abbas says, "When `Ali (a.s) [used to sit with us, we never had the courage to start the conversation." [۱۶

Beware! Do not bring talks that provoke laughter during important discussions even“
[if they are quoted from others.”[۱۷

Therefore the allegation that `Ali (a.s) used to jest around is absolutely wrong. `Umar had to say something about all the six members. If he did not say what he said, he would have said something else. As far as keeping the caliphate away from `Ali (a.s) .was concerned, the very constitution of the Shūra was indicative of that

Although the Shūra was an invention of `Umar’s mind, `Abd al-Rahman ibn `Awf put it into practice with his cunning. He himself did not expect to get the caliphate because `Umar had cleverly made his son, `Abdullah, the arbiter in the event of a tie. `Abd al-Rahman did not give the opportunity of arbitration to `Abdullah by bringing about the corollary of telling to `Ali (a.s) that he would support his candidature if he agreed to abide by the sirat al-shaykhayn (the conducts of the two Caliphs—Abū-Bakr and `Umar) and `Ali (a.s) did not agree to this suggestion. Hence, `Abd al-Rahman .supported `Uthman

Under the basic tenet of Islam `Ali (a.s) had refused to abide by the sirat al-shaykhayn. The intention was to make the sirat al-shaykhayn a part of the Islamic Shari`ah. The Islamic Shari`ah has to be based on the Qur’an and the Holy Prophet’s conduct. Even the two sheikhs were bound to abide by these two! Then what was the need to include the sirat al-shaykhayn or the conduct of any other person as a condition for the caliphate? If that condition was accepted by `Ali (a.s), it would have :become a part of the Islamic identity. Therefore, Mulla Qari writes

Ali (a.s) declined to do the emulation of the two Caliphs and `Uthman did agree to ` “
[that condition.”[۱۸

Even if `Ali (a.s) is not accepted as the Imam and Khalifah by the Nass, he will certainly be acknowledged as a mujtahid (Interpreter) of very high caliber. Making one mujtahid bound to the interpretations of another is not correct according to the norms. One interpreter cannot be asked to abide by what another has done. Such conditions will create intellectual stagnancy and disturb the spirit of thinking and interpretation. When one has eyes, he has the right to look around. When a person has the ears, he must listen and decide about the things with the help of this sense. Someone asking people to become deaf and blind and toe his line may not be acceptable to them. This has nothing to do neither with wisdom and intellect nor with
.the Faith of Islam

If by sirat al-shaykhayn they mean the modus operandi adopted by the first two caliphs in the day-to-day operations of the State, it cannot be made compulsory to be adopted because the circumstances change with the times and the actions have to be devised according to the needs of the day. For example, during the days of `Umar, Iran and Rome were conquered and that brought tremendous wealth to the Arabs. On account of heavy cash-flow, the quantum of pensions and allowances too increased. Now, will following his conduct mean that whether there was sufficient cash in-flow or not, the pensions must be maintained at the inflated levels? Therefore, what was possible during the time of `Umar might not be possible in the subsequent times. It is quite possible that the reason for insisting on following `Umar's conduct was that they wanted the pensions issued by him to continue during the regime of the next caliph! This condition therefore becomes only an economic
.requirement and does not have anything to do with the caliphate

After analyzing the events of the Shūra, one comes to the conclusion that `Ali (a.s) had a very radiant side to his personality that with one word he rejected power and pelf to protect the Book and the Sunnah of the Prophet (a.s). If he had accepted the caliphate against the voice of his conscience, whether he acted on the conditions put to him or not, the world would have pointed a finger at him blaming him of .opportunism. He has set an immaculate example of taking the Right Path

This fact is also worth considering that when the past acts of the previous incumbents were not acceptable to him, then how he could accept to emulate them in his own career. When the sirat al-shaykhayn was not worthy of emulation for him, the only alternative for him was to refuse the caliphate with this condition attached to it

Footnote

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۳, Page ۱۹۲ [۱]

Al-Sawā`iq al-Muhriqah, Page ۱۰۴ [۲]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۳, Page ۱۰۴ [۳]

.Al-Imāmah was-Siyāsah, Page ۲۴ [۴]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۳, Page ۲۶۵ [۵]

Vol ۳, Page ۲۹۵ [۶]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۳, Page ۲۹۷ [۷]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۲, Page ۲۹۷ [۸]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۳, Page ۳۷ [۹]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۳, Page ۲۹۸ [۱۰]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۳, Page ۲۹۳ [۱۱]

.Al-Riyād al-Naḫirah, Page ۱۵۳ [۱۲]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۴, Page ۲۹۴ [۱۳]

al-`Iqd al-Farīd, Vol ۳, Page ۷۵ [۱۴]

Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by Ibn Abil-Hadīd, Vol ۱, Page ۳۷ [۱۵]

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THE ALLEGIANCE TO IMAM `ALI

THE ALLEGIANCE TO IMAM `ALI

Uthman assumed the reins of office at the age of seventy on the first of Muharram `۳۶ H. Unfortunately his period, excepting the Umayyads, was not very good for the Muslims in general. The people were put to too much hardship. Even very senior, and octogenarian, Companions of the Prophet (a.s) were ill-treated. The ribs of `Abdullah ibn Mas`ūd were broken. `Ammar ibn Yasir was tortured. Abū-Dharr al-Ghifari was exiled. Cruelty and torture was rampant. Voices were raised against this attitude of `Uthman. There was unrest amongst the people. From amongst the members of the Shūra, `Ali (a.s) was already unhappy with the way the succession was effected. Talhah and al-Zubayr too turned openly hostile to the caliph. `Abd al-Rahman ibn `Awf who was instrumental in bringing `Uthman to the caliphate by playing the ruse of sirat al-shaykhayn was repentant and not very happy for promoting him. He was so angry that he did not talk to `Uthman until his death. Ibn `Abd-Rabbih writes

During the illness of `Abd al-Rahman, `Uthman went to inquire about his condition.“
[Looking at him, `Abd al-Rahman turned his face towards the wall.”[۱]

Uthman was killed in his house on the eighteenth of Dhul-Hijjah ۳۵ H because of the `general unrest amongst the people owing to his nepotism with Banū-Umayyah and
.general maladministration

These twelve years of misrule awakened the people about the wrong choice of the ruler. They realized that the control should be in capable hands and a person who had the welfare of the people at heart and not that the wealth of the nation got concentrated in one person and his cohorts hands. Therefore, as soon as the position of the caliphate was vacant, the leading Companions and the public looked towards

`Ali (a.s). If `Uthman had died a natural death, the caliphate might not have come to the focal point where it ought to have been. If `Uthman had sufficient time, he might have put the mill of Saqifah and Shūra into operation as did his predecessors. But death was sudden and did not give him respite to organize the succession. The cohorts of `Uthman were the people who were using him in their personal interests. They too would not have tolerated to see a person in the position of the caliph who would put a stop to their activities of loot and pillage. It can be said with certainty that Mu`awiyah, `Amr ibn al-`As and the other functionaries appointed by `Uthman knew `Ali's nature very well. They would have put all sorts of impediments that `Ali (a.s) was defeated in the race for the succession. They had also prepared `A'ishah to toe their line. She was, in fact, in the first lines of the opponents of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). These persons would have advised `Uthman to set up a new Shūra and repeat the history again! They could have persuaded him to nominate someone using the subterfuge of the sirat al-shaykhayn to justify the decision. But the circumstances changed so fast that they did not get the opportunity to put their plans into operation. `Uthman paid with his own life for the maladministration that was perpetrated during his regime

After the Prophet (a.s), `Ali (a.s) spent a long period with no concern for the governance and the life style that he lived attracted the attention of the people. They therefore reached a conclusion that there is no person better than `Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s) to be at the helm of affairs. Therefore, the important persons from the Muhajirūn and Ansar gathered at the al-Masjid al-Nabawi and decided unanimously that `Ali (a.s) be requested to take the reins of the caliphate in his hands. After this decision they sent a delegation to `Ali (a.s). In this delegation, Talhah and al-Zubayr too were there. The delegation made their request with `Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s). `Ali (a.s) hesitated in accepting their request and said that he did not like to interfere in their affairs and that they should look elsewhere for another person. He wanted them to leave him to his own scruples. Those people said

We do not consider anyone other than you deserving of the Caliphate, nor is anyone“ more eminent than you on the basis of the past services to the Faith. There is none [near to you in the closeness with the Prophet (a.s).”[۲

Ali (a.s) refused once again. But they pleaded with him very much. When they saw ` that `Ali (a.s) was not yielding to their requests they literally begged him

We request you in the name of Allah! You are seeing the condition we are in! Are not“ you seeing the state of Islam and the mischief that is rampant? Are you not [concerned about the mischief?”[۳

Ali (a.s) refused to accept their request, but when their insistence increased very much, he felt that for Fulfillment of the Condition, despite unfavorable circumstances, he could not any more resist the call of duty, he said

I accept! But remember one thing that this acceptance is on condition that I shall take“ [you on the path that I think is better for you!”[۴

It was the charisma of the changing circumstances that after `Umar the condition of sirat al-shaykhayn was imposed along with the offer of the Caliphate, that was rejected by `Ali (a.s). Now the same Caliphate was offered to him and he was putting forth his own conditions before he accepted it that he would use his own discretion in performing the task rather than depending on others advice

After `Ali (a.s) accepted the Caliphate, the general bay`ah was organized on Friday, the twenty-fifth of Dhul-Hijjah ۳۵ H. Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) emerged from Bayt al-Sharaf and came to the al-Masjid al-Nabawi where a huge gathering was already there. In his simplicity `Ali (a.s) was wearing an ordinary turban on his head, carrying the footwear in one hand and, instead of the staff, a bow in the other, entered the precincts of the Mosque. When he arrived, there was a movement in the crowd. He went past the crowd towards the pulpit of the Mosque and sat at the place where the Prophet (a.s) used to sit. He rested his arm on the bow and the process of the bay`ah was commenced. Talhah and al-Zubayr were the first to extend their hands to owe their allegiance to him. Husayn Diyarbakri writes

[First Talhah and al-Zubayr did the bay`at and then the others followed.]”[٥“

Talhah had lost one of his hands in the Battle of Badr. When Habib ibn Dhu`ayb saw
:him doing the bay`ah, he said

[A person with the useless hand has done the bay`ah. It will not be successful!]”[٦“

After this men came forward for the bay`ah in hordes as the thirsty come to quench
their thirst. None from the participants in the Battle of Badr who was living had missed
:the bay`ah of `Ali (a.s). Ibn Hajar al-Makki writes

None from the people of Badr was missed. All of them came to `Ali (a.s) and said that“
they considered none more deserving of the Caliphate than him. They asked him to
[extend his hand in bay`ah. Thus the allegiance was accomplished.]”[٧

Among the people who did the bay`ah not only there were the people of al-Madinah,
but also there were men from Yemen, Egypt and Iraq as well. Everyone owed his
allegiance to the Imam (a.s) happily and pledged to be faithful to him. Thus,
.unanimously his Caliphate was established

After the accomplishment of the bay`ah, the representative of the Ansar, Thabit ibn
:Qays, said on behalf of his group

By Allah! O Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s)! Although they had taken precedence over you in“
assuming the reins of the governance, they did not have precedence over you in
embracing the Faith! Then they went ahead of you, but now you are at that place!
With them around neither your status was hidden nor your position unknown! They
were dependent on you for the matters about which they were ignorant, and you,
[with your knowledge did not have to depend on anyone!]”[٨

The Ansar, in general, took very active part in the bay`ah. But some of them who were affiliated to the `Uthmanite coterie abstained from the bay`ah. Therefore, Hassan ibn Thabit, Ka`b ibn Malik, Maslamah ibn Muqallid, Abū-Sa`id al-Khidri, Muhammad ibn Maslamah, al-Nu`man ibn Bashir, Zayd ibn Thabit, Rafi` ibn Khudayj, al-Fadl ibn `Ubayd and Ka`b ibn Hajar did not do the bay`ah. These men remained at their respective homes

Ali (a.s) did not deprive any person of his right of choice. He did not bring about any` pressure on any one nor forced people to come to owe their allegiance. Those who came willingly, he did bay`ah with them. But he did ask Sa`d ibn Abi-Waqqas and `Abdullah ibn `Umar to come for the bay`ah because their appearances indicated that they might try to prevent others from coming for the bay`ah. Therefore, Sa`d ibn Abi-Waqqas and `Abdullah ibn `Umar were particularly sent for and their allegiance was demanded. Sa`d said that when the others owe their allegiance, he too would do it. He added that even if he did not do the bay`ah, he would not openly oppose `Ali (a.s). When `Abdullah ibn `Umar refused to do the bay`ah, he was asked to commit that he would not try to disrupt the peace and tranquility of the realm. He refused to give any such guarantee. At this Malik al-Ashtar was angry and asked `Ali's permission to cut away `Abdullah's head. `Ali (a.s) said, "You need not do anything to him! I take the responsibility on his behalf! He had been stubborn in his childhood and "is the same even now

There were several persons who did bay`ah at the hands of Amir al-Mu`minin, who were very active at that time but went back on their promise later on and became rebellious. Among such persons were Talhah and al-Zubayr who did the bay`ah in front of a crowd. But when their expectations of undue benefits were not fulfilled, they said that they had owed their allegiance under duress and not willingly! The manner in which Amir al-Mu`minin's bay`ah was conducted, any fair person would not accept the canard of Talhah and al-Zubayr. After much persuasion by the Muslims the Imam (a.s) conceded to their demand for taking over the Caliphate and there was no element of coercion in the conduct of the bay`ah. There were several persons who refused to owe their allegiance and they were happily going around without any fear. What was the importance of the insignificant Talhah and al-Zubayr that their bay`ah, willing or unwilling, was thought absolutely necessary and under the shadow of the sword, as alleged by them, they were forced to owe allegiance! Then this process could also have been followed for Sa`d and `Abdullah ibn `Umar. Why they were left to their own scruples and the twin of Talhah-al-Zubayr were coerced to give their allegiance

With the bay`ah of Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) both worldly and spiritual power was vested in him. Caliphate, in fact, is from Allah for enforcing His Commands and running the society according to the norms of the Shari`ah. The caliphate is through Nass and not the prerogative of the people or a small coterie of persons who manipulate the circumstances to acquire power for personal gains and aggrandizement. The caliphate that was offered to `Ali (a.s) was just a worldly position that he accepted under much persuasion from the people and he had made it clear to them that all his actions would be in consonance with the Shari`ah. Therefore, in one of his sermons ,he says

If the presence of those who came for the bay`ah and those who supported me, had not persuaded me, and the pledge that Allah has taken from the Ulema that they should not remain quiet at the tyranny of the cruel and the penury of the poor, I would
".have left the caliphate on others shoulders

Although he remained away from the power after the demise of the Prophet (a.s), he was not away from the divinely commissioned caliphate for a single moment. Whether he had worldly power or not, he was to be obeyed as the Holy Prophet's successor and a Divinely commissioned Imam. Even those who considered obedience to him was not necessary ultimately came round and owed their allegiance to him for the worldly caliphate. Although obedience was the common factor in both the groups –one group owed total allegiance, both worldly and spiritual, to the Imam (a.s) and the
!other group only the worldly allegiance

The worldly power is the height of achievement for the mundane creatures, but Amir al-Mu'minin's status is much more elevated. Before this worldly caliphate there was no shortcoming in him nor did, the caliphate enhanced his status in any way.

:Sa`sa`ah ibn Sawhan al-`Abdi told `Ali (a.s) at the time of the bay`ah

By Allah! O Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s)! You have enhanced the status of the caliphate. The caliphate has not elevated you in any way! You have taken it to greater heights by
[accepting it. You did not need it, the caliphate needed you!"[۹

Once a discussion was started about the caliphate in the presence of Ahmad ibn Hanbal when he said

O people! Why are you talking so much about `Ali (a.s) and the caliphate, and the caliphate and `Ali (a.s)? Caliphate had not enhanced `Ali's status in any way. It was [`Ali (a.s) who gave the status to caliphate!"] [١٠]

Footnote

Al-`Iqd al-Farīd, Vol ٣, Page ٧٩ [١]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٣, Page ٩٨ [٢]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٣, Page ٩٩ [٣]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٣, Page ٩٩ [٤]

Tārīkh al-Khamīs, Vol ٢, Page ٢٧٦ [٥]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٣, Page ٤٥١ [٦]

Al-Sawā`iq al-Muhriqah, Page ١١٨ [٧]

Tārīkh al-Ya`qūbī, Vol ٢, Page ١١٨ [٨]

Tārīkh al-Ya`qūbī, Vol ١, Page ١٣٥ [٩]

Tārīkh Baghdād, Vol ١, Page ١٣٥ [١٠]

AMIR AL MU'MININ'S STYLE OF GOVERNANCE

AMIR AL MU'MININ'S STYLE OF GOVERNANCE

For ages, the system of rule by the kings has been dominating on the human race. As a result of this system, the craving for power had become a part of the human instinct. Therefore, the ancient Egyptians and the Japanese had a belief that the kings were born to rule over the people and that others were their serfs and servants! This created an inferiority complex in other people of those races. They were used as

bonded slaves of the ruling elite. Despite all the tyranny, they thought they had no right to protest against the injustices of their masters. They thought the purpose of their lives was to abjectly surrender to the will of their rulers

p: ۴۷۳

When the voice of Islam rose from the desert of Arabia, the conditions there were almost the same. The weak were helpless in front of the persons with power. The poor persons always remained in the clutches of the usurers or the shackles of the masters. Slavery was rampant. Islam gave them the tiding of freedom and equality. It removed the differences of color and race. It abolished the rule of men and established Allah's Rule! The meaning of Allah's Rule is that the people believe that He is our Master and observes all our words and deeds. We are subservient only to His Commands and answerable to Him! This new concept did away with idolatry and .hypocrisy and the minds and hearts were endowed with brotherhood and equality

The prophet of Islam (a.s) was not having the political power and pelf in his view. The purpose of his Annunciation was to establish Allah's Rule among the people. Therefore, he gave the lesson of the Unity of Allah to the people. And invited all people to gather at one focal point and give birth to a clean society. The society in which there was knowledge instead of ignorance and where there was justice in place of tyranny. The Prophet (a.s) was not doing this only for his own time. His message was for the posterity as well. He advocated a system that is termed Divinely commissioned leadership. The one to establish the divinely commissioned leadership was to set an example to the people with his beliefs and actions in accordance to the Commands of Allah. The people should obey him accepting him as the Representative of Allah amongst them. The acceptance of Allah's Commands is to follow his directives!
:Therefore, Allah says

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ.

O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority from“
(among you. (٤/٥٩

This is an undeniable fact that after the Prophet (a.s) the weak democracy that was the basis of the governance was the forerunner of the monarchy of the type followed by Caesar and Khusrow. Instead of Allah’s Rule, the hegemony of individuals was enforced on the people. In divinely commissioned government, there is no place for personal aggrandizement. The yardstick of Allah’s Rule is neither power nor pelf of individuals but the one who administers and enforces the norms and Commands Revealed by Allah. No doubt, those who came to the caliphate were called Muslims. But the Islamic Rule does not mean that a person who has embraced Islam comes on the top to rue. But it is the implementation of the life style that the Prophet (a.s) had enunciated. If anyone establishes rule contrary to those norms, then that is not an Islamic regime. Therefore, the rule of Yazid, Marwan, ` Abd al-Malik and persons of that ilk cannot be called as Muslim rulers. In fact, they were the images of Heracles and Caesar in an Islamic environment

Ali’s rule was truly Islamic. He had accepted the caliphate only on condition that no` one should interfere in his running the administration exactly in accordance with the norms laid down by the Shari` ah of Islam. Although his period was dominated by intrigue and troubles created by his enemies, that in his brief rule he presented an administration that was in accord with the style of governance of the Prophet (a.s) and implicitly followed the Commands of Allah. If he had not taken the reins of governance in his hands, people would have forgotten what is divinely commissioned government. Running the governance on the Islamic norms is something and .acquiring power through politics is something else

Amir al-Mu'minin's entire life is a proof that every act of his was in accordance to the Commands of Allah. If he accepted the caliphate, he did it with the condition that it would be the divinely commissioned government and not personal rule. He gave real interpretation to "Who has not a partner in the kingdom, (ﻻ ﻳﻮﺷﻚ ﻭﺍﻟﻠﻪ)" through his actions as the caliph. If he were interested in personal aggrandizement, he would not have dismissed the functionaries of the previous regime against many well-meaning advisers. He went against their advice because he knew that those functionaries were promoting their own interests instead of governing according to the norms set by Allah. He had accepted the caliphate only to do away these personal and corrupt coteries. If the Imam (a.s) was interested in his personal power, he could have closed his eyes to the misdeeds of those persons. But in his eyes, personal power and influence had no meaning. His intent was to educate and inform the people about the Islamic norms. Once he was mending his foot wear when he told Ibn `Abbas

By Allah! If in my view the establishment of the Truth and the destruction of the "Falsehoods was not there, this footwear would be dearer to me than being the [ruler.]"[1]

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) has described the purpose of his rule in two simple sentences. The first is the establishment of the Truth and the second the destruction of the Falsehood. During his rule, he kept these two things in view. His main aim was to propagate the Islamic norms and practices. Not only he was firm on his stand, but also he created movement in the stagnant natures of the people with his actions. Although he was not interested in the annexation of other territories, but conquering hearts and developments of the minds is a bigger achievement. No doubt the other rulers annexed large territories and were termed conquerors, `Ali (a.s) tried to put the Islamic society on healthy ground. Despite all the unrest and mischief in the realm, `Ali (a.s) proceeded with his task of reforming the society. He heard the complaints of the people against their exploitation by the functionaries of the state and removed unnecessary restrictions imposed on the people. He crushed the destructive and disruptive forces and kept an eye on the activities of the functionaries. He fixed the duties and responsibilities of the persons responsible for the collection of zakat. He

abolished the racial discrimination among the people and promoted equality and
.fraternity among all

p: २१६

Ali (a.s) had such an ideal society in his view that it should be free of injustice, cruelty, bribery, cheating and other such ills. He promoted legal and societal equity among the people. He wanted to inculcate the sense of responsibility among the people and he used to sound them, from time to time, with his writings and sermons. At the top of these writings and lectures there used to be an exhortation to the people to adopt piety and a reminder about the Day of Reckoning. Although every writing of his is a document of advice, but the letter that he wrote to Malik al-Ashtar while nominating him as the governor to Egypt is a reflection of the Divine Instruction. The document covers the norms of statecraft in such perfection that until today the human mind cannot think more than that on the subject. With all the developments taking place, no additions could be thought of on the basic norms enunciated therein. George Jordac, a Christian Scholar, comments on the comprehensiveness of the document in these words:

Among his writings this is a great document of advice and instruction. It is a comprehensive instrument of the laws of citizenship and city life and encompasses [the rights and privileges of the common man.]

In this document, the Imam (a.s) has encompassed the lowest rung of the society to the elites, the rights and duties of each stratum, and has mentioned about the rights of the workers, the traders, artisans, soldiers, judges, advisers and viziers. He described the functions of the departments of finance, interior, foreign affairs, the covenants of the state, the relations between the Muslims and the Dhimmis; about administration of justice, the duties of the functionaries in all the departments and ...their staff

This document, as far as its efficacy is concerned, is not bound by conditions of time and place. `Ali (a.s) had created this document ۱,۴۰۰ years ago and the picture that he had drawn of the administrator and the administered still holds good, and will hold good until this world exists! The wonderful thing about the document is that it is as efficacious to the democratic societies as it is to the totalitarian environments as well! If the countries that raise the slogans of universal peace and equity take guidance from this document, neither then there will be any conflict between the landlord and the tiller, nor will the factory worker raise the slogan of injustice by the factory owner. There will not be any grouse about iniquitous distribution of wealth nor will economic inequality exist. Such peaceful environment will result that it will be an example of welfare and justice

Instead of copying the document here, we recommend to the reader to peruse “Nahj al-Balaghah”, the compendium of `Ali’s writings and sermons. However, in this book, we shall present the relevant extracts from the book as we proceed with our writing

Footnote

Nahj al-Balāghah [۱]

Sawt al-`Adālah al-Insāniyyah, Vol ۱, Page ۳۳۵ [۲]

THE NORMS FOR SELECTION OF THE FUNCTIONARIES

THE NORMS FOR SELECTION OF THE FUNCTIONARIES

The progress of a society very much depends on the organization of the State on proper lines, be it a monarchy or a democracy for that matter. Whether it is Islamic or otherwise. When there is good law and order in a state and respect for the human rights, it is a well-managed welfare state. All this depends on the wisdom and sagacity of the head of the state and the capability and efficiency of the functionaries of the state. These functionaries provide efficient administration and make the people law-abiding citizens of the state. All these functionaries are appointed to the various provinces of the state at the discretion of the head of the state. If it is an Islamic state, the functionaries will be responsible for efficient collection of the zakat and jizyah in

addition to the other duties like law and order, dispensation of justice to the people
.etc

p: ११४

This is a fact that the people take inspiration from their administrators. They adopt the way their administrator follows. If the administrator in an Islamic state is pious and follows all the tenets properly, the people too try to emulate him. If the administrator is selfish, corrupt and ill mannered, the people in that area will also behave in that manner. Therefore, it is imperative that maximum care is exercised to select administrators after proper screening of their dossiers

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) used to judge his functionaries on the basis of their piety, honesty and capability to perform the function assigned to them. He gave key positions only to persons with immaculate honesty, nobility and straightforwardness. Ibn ` Abd al-Barr writes

Ali (a.s) appointed only those persons as the governors of provinces who were "[trustworthy and honest." [1]

He never considered the family background, the tribe to which the person belonged and the recommendations of important persons for appointment as functionaries of the state. He used to instruct these functionaries not to retain any person on the basis of recommendations. Therefore, he said on one occasion

Do not accept any recommendation for retaining personnel; only consider that they "[are trustworthy and honest." [2]

Among the functionaries of the ` Ali (a.s) there were some Hashemites as well. Among them were the sons of ` Abbas; ` Abdullah, ` Ubaydullah and Qathm. Some people started thinking that he had retained them because of his close relationship with them. They said that if ` Uthman had favored Banū-Umayyah as functionaries of state, what was wrong? The question is whether these functionaries were honest, just and capable of performing the assignment entrusted to them. But ` Uthman's functionaries were conceited, ill behaved and absolutely incapable of good administration. If he had placed persons who were men of piety, honest and capable, the criticism of nepotism would not have been leveled. The persons whom ` Ali (a.s) appointed were above criticism as far as their honesty, piety and capability were concerned. Just because of the relationship with the caliphs, putting the functionaries

of both the administrations on the same level is not justifiable. This comment would be justifiable if the Hashemite functionaries were appointed all over as the Umayyad functionaries were predominantly all over the realm during `Uthman's caliphate. During `Ali's period there were only a few Hashemites in important positions and their antecedents were immaculate. Was no Hashemite deserving of any important position? If they were capable, keeping them away from assignments just because they were Hashemite was no justice. It is surprising that over a period of twenty-five years after the Prophet (a.s) no Hashemite is seen in any important position of the state! `Ali's yardstick for appointment of any person was his piety, capability and character. If the person did not measure up to these requirements he would not consider him fit for the assignment, be he a Hashemite, Muhajir or Ansar! If any functionary were found committing an impropriety, he would not be spared of the punishment, whosoever he was

ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE FUNCTIONARIES**ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE FUNCTIONARIES**

The functionaries of the state can be both constructive and destructive in their action and attitude. With their constructive actions, the state develops and prospers. If they adopt a contrary attitude, it would certainly be harmful for the state. The head of a state needs to monitor the activities of the functionaries and should not relax after assigning them to their tasks. However honest and trustworthy the functionaries, they are fallible human beings. They might get attracted to the luster and lucre of wealth and stray from the right path if left to their own scruples for long. They might indulge in bribery, misappropriation and other such destructive activities. Instead of serving the people, they might turn self-serving

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) knew the futility of the human nature very well. He did not believe in closing the eyes and ears in trusting people. Besides, some of the functionaries of the previous administration had convinced him of their reliability and were continuing in service, for example: Abū-Mūsa al-Ash`ari, al-Ash`ath ibn Qays and Masqalah ibn Hubayrah. It was necessary that all their activities were monitored and the cash inflows and outflows audited. Therefore, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) used to keep an eye on every minute thing like the lifestyle of these persons. He praised them for good performance and reprimanded them if he found any oversights, defects or dereliction of duty in their activities. He used to check the account of bayt al-mal regularly. If he received reports of misappropriation by any functionary, he used to lift his eyes towards the sky and say

O Allah! You know that I have placed them over Your creatures not to harm them and “
[defy Your Rights.”[1]

He then used to conduct an audit and punish the person according to the seriousness of his misdemeanor. From some he used to recover the misappropriated funds and some he incarcerated as a punishment for their crime. Some of such events are mentioned here in brief

The governor of al-Basrah, `Uthman ibn Hunayf attended a party. `Ali (a.s) came to know about it and wrote to `Uthman

I did not expect that you would accept their invitation from whose doors the beggars and the needy are chased away and the affluent entertained! The morsels that you chew, you must first look at carefully! Leave aside those morsels that give you some suspicion. O Ibn Hunayf! Fear Allah and remain contented with your own bread so that
”!you get relief from the fire of the Hell

Some reports of misdemeanor came about al-Ash`ath ibn Qays, who was the governor of Azerbaijan since the times of `Uthman. After the Battle of the Camel, `Ali (a.s) wrote to him, “You are the treasurer of all the funds of Allah that are in your trust until you hand them over to me!” al-Ash`ath understood that he was about to be dismissed. He gathered whatever amounts he could and told some of his friends about `Ali’s letter and that he intended to go under the protection of Mu`awiyah. His friend said that it was not proper for him to leave behind his tribesmen and go to Syria. On the advice of his friends, he gave up his intention of going there. `Ali (a.s) sent Hijr ibn `Adi to him, who somehow brought him to al-Kūfah. When his baggage was rummaged, they recovered ٤٠٠,٠٠٠ dirhams in cash. `Ali (a.s) gave him ٣٠,٠٠٠ dirhams as a compensation for his services and the rest was transferred to the bayt al-mal

Al-Mundhir ibn al-`Abdi, whom he appointed as the governor of Astkhar did some misappropriation. `Ali (a.s) wrote to him, "I have been informed that you are losing your Hereafter to make this world! You are breaking your link with the Faith and doing favors with your relations! You do not deserve to be in a position of trust or to depend on you for protecting others from misappropriation. Therefore, as soon as you get this letter, come and report to me!" When al-Mundhir came, his accounts were audited. It was found that he was short of ٢٠,٠٠٠ dirhams. But he denied having that money with him. `Ali (a.s) asked him to make the statement under oath, that he refused. He was sent to the jail. After some time he was released at the instance of .Sa`sa`ah ibn Sawhan

Reports of cheating came about Ziyad ibn Sumayyah, who was on a deputation in place of Ibn `Abbas, at al-Basrah. `Ali (a.s) wrote to him, "If I find that you have misappropriated the funds of Muslims and you have done malpractice in anything big or small, I shall give you such punishment that will make you empty handed, weak and "discredited among people

Ali (a.s) wrote to the governor of Ardshir, Maslamah ibn Hubayrah, "The funds that were earned through the tips of the Muslims' lances and the hoofs of their horses, for which they had shed their blood and sweat, you are distributing to the Bedouin of your tribe. If this is proved right, you will come down in my estimation! In this fund, the "Muslims who are with me here and those who are with you there are equal partners

When some persons from Banū–Tamim complained about the harsh treatment of Ibn `Abbas, `Ali (a.s) wrote to him, “May Allah be kind on you! Whatever good or bad that comes from your mouth and the hands about the people, do not hasten in doing that!
”!Remember, we are both equal partners in whatever you do

Ali (a.s) wrote to the governor of Halwan, al–Aswad ibn Qatbah, “When a person in ` authority has different attitudes towards different persons, then mostly it may not be a just act! Therefore, justice demands that all people must be equal in your
”!consideration! Protect your psyche and protect the people to the best of your ability

Footnote

Al–Istī`āb, Vol ۳, Page ۴۸ [۱]

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

One of the important functions of the state is the dispensation of justice to the people. It has to constitute such courts that unbiased and fair judgments are made on disputes between the citizens. If the poor and needy are not protected by the state, the foundations of such a state become weak and peace will not prevail there for long. This will bolden the perpetrators of cruelty on one side and on the other, the suffering poor might rise in rebellion. Therefore, it is said, “A country can exist with infidelity but
”.not under oppression

The constitutional regimes of the world form courts for civil, criminal and small causes, but people have to make rounds of the courts for hearings and pay heavy fees to the attorneys seeking redressal for, in most cases, a just cause. But Islam has devised such system of justice that, if it is followed properly, neither there will be any difficulty in delivering justice nor will the supplicant have to be burdened with heavy expenses. In this system, there is no scope for partiality or bribery. In Islam, only such persons are authorized to deliver justice who have attained a high degree of piety and have an interpretational awareness of the Islamic law of justice. They must be self–respecting and with a clear conscience. They have to be highly respected persons

.in the society so that they do not stoop to bribery and favoritism in dispensing justice

p: ۴۸۳

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) gave special attention to the department of justice during his regime. At every prominent place, he constituted courts. He appointed as qadis only persons of piety, honesty, integrity, and knowledge about the Islamic Laws and jurisprudence. `Ali (a.s) himself had served as a qadi during the time of the Prophet (a.s) and he is known for his dispensation of justice in the annals of the History of Islam. After this practical experience, none could match his skills in the organization of the department of justice. Keeping the human weakness in mind, he provided sufficient compensation to the qadis that they need not think of malpractices and bribery in the discharge of their duties. As a check, strict vigilance was kept on their activities and the lifestyles. If any suspicions arose, they were either reprimanded or removed from their positions. Therefore, the qadi of al-Kūfah, Shurayh Ibn Harith, who was serving in that position since the times of `Umar, was found that he had bought a house for eighty Dinars. `Ali (a.s) called him and said, "I have heard that you have bought a house for eighty Dinars!" Shurayh replied, "Yes!" `Ali (a.s) looked at him in anger and said, "O Shurayh! Is it that you bought the house with someone else's money or through ill-gotten money? If it is so, then you lost this world and the

"!Hereafter too

Islam is a religion of justice. It wants to see justice in all walks of life. Then the very purpose of the department of justice is specifically for deliverance of justice!

:Therefore, the Holy Qur'an says

”(And that when you judge between people, you judge with justice. (4/58...“

The requirement of this justice is that during the hearings the judge must be absolutely impartial and unbiased. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was very particular about equitable treatment of the contesting parties whether they were Muslim or they were Dimmi. He gave strict instructions to the judges to follow this rule meticulously without any consideration for any one. The author of wafiyat al-a`yan has written that with one Dhimmi he (`Ali) went as a contesting party to the court of Shurayh the judge. Shurayh the judge stood up to receive him with due respect. The Imam (a.s) said, “This is your first injustice!” Once a person was `Ali's guest and during the same period he made an appeal against another person in the Imam's court. He told him that he was a contestant and the Prophet (a.s) has said that it is against the requirements of justice that the judge keeps one of the contesting parties as his guest and not the other. Therefore, he asked him to move away from his place. It is recorded in the books of tradition that once `Ali (a.s), during the period of `Umar, visited him in connection with a case. `Umar addressed him as Abul-Hasan and the contesting party as the opponent! At this signs of unease came on the face of `Ali (a.s). When he was asked about his disturbance, he said that the requirement of justice is that the way of addressing the contesting parties must be equitable. Addressing the one with his kunyah and the other in a different way smacks of making difference between the two

Mentioning about a couple of instances, that are an infinitesimal part of innumerable such instances, it has to be accepted that the eyes of `Ali (a.s) used to be focused on the requirements of justice and even minute aspects did not escape his attention. In the events narrated here, it has certainly become evident that he did not like welcoming one contestant to the hearing and neglecting the other, or addressing one with more respect than the other. Such intricacies will be noted by a person who keeps intently focused on the details of the matter. He made the Judges understand that although what they did was not very important but the attitude might reflect the possibility of bias creeping into their verdict. Will there be any person in this world who would object being addressed with due respect, when he is certainly deserving of all respect! But the Imam's sense of justice was such that he felt that there was an element of bias when the other party and he were addressed in a different way

These days we hear a lot that the judiciary must be free of extraneous pressures so that it did not become an instrument in the hands of the establishment and instead of protecting the public interest, it starts serving the functionaries of the state. No doubt, to this extent the independence of the judiciary is very essential. The judiciary is the institution for the translation of the laws and statutes into practice and the laws are not restricted to the people but also the state is subservient to them. But this does not mean that the judiciary is given total liberty to act as it wished. There must be someone to review the functions of the judiciary. It is the responsibility of a just establishment to evaluate the judgments of the department of justice and review the decisions wherever necessary. Therefore, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) made it mandatory for the judiciary to communicate the verdict on important cases to him for review before they were pronounced. The author of Wasa'il al-Shi`ah writes that the Imam (a.s) told the Shurayh the judge

Beware! Do not pass any verdict on cases of qisas or the matters requiring Divine“
[Justice and about the Rights of the Muslims before referring them to me.”][1]

As far as freedom to the judiciary in the ordinary cases was concerned, he stressed on the qadis to practice the utmost equity and fairness in their verdicts. He was very particular of the judges not favoring anyone, however important he might be. Therefore, when he was returning from the Battle of Siffin, he lost one of his armor chain. After some time he saw a Christian wearing the same armor. The Christian insisted that it was his property. `Ali (a.s) went in appeal to the court of the Shurayh the judge. On inquiry by the judge, the Christian said that the armor belonged to him and that he was in possession of it was the proof of his ownership. Shurayh asked `Ali (a.s) his

proof of the ownership of the material. The Imam (a.s) said, “The armor is mine! I have neither sold it nor have I gifted it to anyone!” Shurayh was confused that on the one hand the claim of `Ali (a.s) could not be wrong and on the other hand the respondent had the strong proof of the possession of the material. With the evidence available, the verdict would go against `Ali (a.s). The qadi was reluctant to pass the verdict against him. Noticing this, the Imam (a.s) told him to give a verdict that was according to the requirement of justice. Therefore, the verdict went against `Ali (a.s) and the Christian retained the armor with him

When we analyze this case, several aspects of justice become evident that highlight `Ali's great sense of justice. As the head of state, he could have passed a verdict on the case. The verdict would have been in his favor only because he knew that the armor was his own stolen property. But he did not want the supplicant himself to give a verdict. Therefore, he went before the Shurayh the judge. Instead of telling to the qadi that the property was stolen by the respondent or he might have bought it from the thief, `Ali (a.s) told that he had neither sold nor gifted the armor to anyone. Although the intent was clear that the property was stolen, he did not say that the person was a thief. Although he lost the case, it was his moral victory. The result was that the Christian felt defeated even after winning the case. When he came out of the court he could not look straight into the eyes of `Ali (a.s). He apologized to `Ali (a.s) and said that he had picked up the armor on the way from Siffin and wanted to give it to him. He praised the Imam's high morality, sense of justice and in fact, he was so impressed, that he embraced Islam at that instant. `Ali (a.s) was very happy that the person had embraced Islam and gifted that armor along with a horse to him

Footnote

Wasā'il al-Shī'ah, Vol ۳, Page ۳۹۵ [۱]

PROTECTION OF BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS

PROTECTION OF BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS

p: ۴۸۸

Every person, on attaining the age of consent, starts feeling on the one hand that certain duties are imposed on him and on the other that the society in which he lives, he has certain rights and privileges. This feeling requires that he recognizes his duties and protect his rights, be the rights the individual rights or the collective rights! He also has to see that not only his rights are not denied, but the rights of his fellow men too are protected. If some impediments come in the way of these rights, he must try to the best of his capabilities to remove them. The biggest responsibility for protecting the rights of the individual and the society rests on the state. Therefore, the states, in their statutes give a pride of place to the individual and human rights. They do this to preclude a feeling of insecurity from the minds of the people

.These rights, basically, are four in number

The Right to Live

The first right is the right to live. Every individual in this world has a right to live. The individual or group of individuals have no right to deprive a person the right to live. Islam, which is a system based on the norm of peace, considers murder as the most heinous crime. One blatant murder is termed such a huge sin by Islam as if an entire :race has been killed. Therefore, Allah says

...أَنَّهُ مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا.

Whoever slays a soul, unless it be for manslaughter or for mischief in the land, it is...“
”(as though he slew all men. (٥/٣٢

This verse also permits that killing a person who is guilty of making mischief on the earth is permissible. Because the person himself had been guilty of killing others and creating mischief in the society. Islam prescribing the punishment of a life for a life has very efficiently controlled the urge for taking human life for no reason at all. A person, before killing any one thinks twice that soon he will meet the same end at the hands of Justice! Therefore, the Holy Qur'an terms the Law of qisas as the very life of
:the human race

وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَاةٌ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ.

And there is life for you in the law of retaliation (qisas), O men of understanding, that“
”(you may guard yourselves. (٢/١٧٩

Similarly, killing someone who attacks with an intention of killing too is not forbidden.
.It is done in self-defense

Islam not only forbids killing someone else, but committing suicide too is a major sin in the Faith. In fact severing any part of one's body is not allowed. Man is made the trustee of his life and the act of killing oneself or severing the parts of one's body too are taboo. Although in some countries suicide is considered an act of valor, but the truth is that it is the worst type of cowardice and defeatist tendency in the person. The
:Holy Qur'an has prohibited people from this act

”(And do not kill your people; surely Allah is Merciful to you. (٤/٢٩“

While Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was the protector of the human values, he was also aware of the importance of the human life. He did not like or tolerate taking human lives needlessly. Although he was in the forefront during the battles fought during the time of the Prophet (a.s), he even fought some battles during his reign as well, but all these battles were in self-defense and not aggressive battles for conquest and self-aggrandizement, as some others did. The Prophet (a.s) took up his sword when the enemy had attacked. Similarly `Ali (a.s) initiated action only when the enemy aggressively came and started hostilities. In fact, he always tried to nip the conflict in the bud and find ways of establishing peace with the enemy. `Ali (a.s) never made a preemptive attack on the enemy and retaliated only when the attack started from the opposing side. Also, he tried to make the hostilities as short as possible to limit loss of lives on both sides. He refrained from taking men captive and forgave even the known sworn enemies. Therefore, after the Battle of the Camel, with a single stroke of pen he gave amnesty to all people of al-Basrah. He did not seek any reparations from Marwan, `Abdullah ibn `Umar, `Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr and sent Umm al-Mu'minin from the battlefield to al-Madinah with all the respect! The Iraqis and the Syrians who were taken prisoner during the Battle of Siffin were released unconditionally. At the end of the Battle of Nahrawan, the injured Khawarij (the excommunicated) who numbered ٤٠٠ were released from detention unconditionally. The people from their tribes were called to take them away. He wanted them to be treated and sent to al-Kūfah after total recovery. Every fair thinking person can make out from the attitude of `Ali (a.s) that his purpose in fighting was just to curb the mischief and not to kill men and plunder territories, as was done by some others not
very long ago

While `Ali (a.s) was very much against unnecessary bloodletting, he did not permit anyone's blood going waste without the application of qisas. Therefore, when `Umar was killed, his son `Ubaydullah killed al-Harmuzan and a few other innocent persons. `Uthman closed his eyes to this and was not willing to punish the guilty. When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) took reins in his hands, he determined to extract qisas for the life of al-Harmuzan. But the culprit fled and went to the protection of Mu`awiyah in Syria. Ibn al-Athir writes

When `Ali (a.s) took reins of office, he decided to get `Ubaydullah executed, but he“
[(the culprit) escaped to Mu`awiyah in Syria.”[1]

Ubaydullah ibn `Umar was finally killed fighting against `Ali (a.s) in the Battle of`
.Siffin

The Right of Thought

The second right is the freedom of thought. This means that every individual must be free of extraneous pressures in his thought process so that he is able to independently decide what is good for him and what is bad. If this freedom of thought is curbed, then he will say a thing is good if the powerful say it is good, and he will accept a thing as bad when the persons in power say that it was bad. He will thus be subservient to the thinking of others and will not have any independent opinion about things. The freedom of thought is the most important aspect of freedom and
.wherever it is curbed, there the society becomes retrograde

Islam brought forth this freedom of thought to its followers and broke all the oppressive practices of the Days of Ignorance (jahiliyyah). There is no place for coercion in Islam and its beliefs have never been forcefully thrust on anyone. Those who wanted to embrace Islam were invited to freely think about it and decide for
.themselves if they were willing to embrace the Faith

:Therefore, the Qur'an tells in very clear terms

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ.

There is no compulsion in religion; truly the right way has become clearly distinct“
”(from error. (٢/٢٥٦)

The period of Amir al-Mu'minin's reign was a period of independence of thought for the people. When, at the end of the third caliphate the people wanted to owe their allegiance to him, `Ali (a.s) asked them to think over the matter before casting their lot. He gave them a full week to think over the matter. `Ali (a.s) had in his mind that in their selection the people should not act on the spontaneous emotions because such decisions are not durable. One day they decide something in a hurry and the next day they go back on it. So, instead of making an emotional decision at the spur of the moment, they must make a well considered and thoughtful decision. Although the cunning and seasoned politicians take advantage of such emotions of the people and win their election campaigns with this policy. But Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) gives the people all the time to think and decide. Such an example cannot be cited in the annals of the elections anywhere in the world

Similarly, in the matter of religion neither he closed the avenues of thought nor he enforced any change of Faith under coercion. People of all faiths, viz: Jews, Christians, and Magians, etc... had total freedom to practice their creeds

The Right of Action

The third right is the right to act. Man is free, to a certain degree, to act the way he wishes. He cannot be forced to act contrary to his own wishes. He will do what he himself thinks is right for him and shuns what he thinks is harmful. He is within his rights to do this as far as his action does not go against the interest of the people in general. Therefore, certain restrictions are imperative with the right of action. In every civilized society, such restrictions are deemed necessary

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s).believed in freedom of action as well as freedom of thought. He never forced any person to do things that he personally did not want to do. Therefore, when some persons refused to owe allegiance to him, he did not force them to agree. When Talhah and al-Zubayr went back after pledging their allegiance to `Ali (a.s), he told them that no one forced them to do the bay`ah. When they wanted to go to Makkah, he told them that it would be better for them to stay at al-Madinah. But when they insisted on going, he told them that if they wished to go, they might. About `Umar the history records that he forced important Companions to stay put in al-Madinah lest they go out and hatch conspiracies against him! But Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s), despite knowing the nature of the two persons that their intention in traveling was to create mischief, did not curb their freedom of action. But when they headed towards al-Basrah for raising a rebellion, it became necessary to control them. Similarly Mu`awiyah too raised the standard of rebellion in Syria and steps had to be initiated against him. The step was not taken because he had refused to owe allegiance to the Caliph. The action was necessary because he was creating mischief and disturbing law and order in the realm. Mu`awiyah was only a governor in a province and his action was a clear rebellion by any standards of statecraft. Similarly, the Khawarij were left to their own scruples until they crossed their bounds and .started to become rebellious

Ali (a.s) respected the freedom of action of the individual so much that even in very delicate situations he did not interfere with it. Even during battles, he allowed this privilege to persons. When he received word that some persons had escaped to Syria, he told Sahl ibn Hunayf, the chief of al-Madinah, "I am told that some of your people are stealthily going to Mu`awiyah. Do not worry about those who have gone. These are worldly-wise persons and they will bend towards worldly things! They have understood, seen and felt justice and learned it well that here, according to their rights, all are equal. Therefore, they have run away to a place where partiality is rampant!" One can know from these few instances to what extent he allowed personal freedom to people: be it a friend or a foe, strong or weak, a known person or a stranger; none was deprived of this freedom. And this is the freedom that the people of a civilized society demand from their rulers. The purpose of this freedom is not that people keep doing anything they wanted to do. When the establishment finds that people have abused the freedom given to them, then drastic action can also be .instituted against such persons

Right of Racial Equality

The fourth right is the right to racial equality. This means that discrimination on the basis of race, color and geographical origin has to be done away with. Every person, by virtue of the fact that he is a human being is entitled to the same respect as any other human being. All the social and economic rights for all individuals in the society have to be maintained at the same level. It is immaterial whether the person is rich, poor, Arab or non-Arab, rich or poor, black or white. They are all the creature of the same Allah and belong to the human kind. The differences that existed among the people were the creation of the Days of Ignorance. This was done to put into the :minds of the people that some were superior to others! Allah says in the Holy Qur'an

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ.

O you men! Surely, We have created you of a male and a female, and made you“ tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the most honorable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful (of his duty); surely Allah is Knowing,
”(Aware. (٤٩/١٣

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was the torchbearer of Islamic equality and the guardian of human rights. He treated Qarashi, Arab, non-Arab, freemen, slaves and everyone else on an equal footing. He did not tolerate discrimination between men on the basis
.of tribal and racial differences

From the bayt al-mal, a freed slave would get as much allowance that was received by a Qarashi. The way he treated others, he had the same attitude towards his own relations. He never took others and outsiders for granted. His attention was shared in equal measure by all. Once he learned about a governor that he had misused some money. He wrote to the person, “By Allah! If al-Hasan or al-Husayn (a.s) had done what you did, I would not have shown any consideration to them, nor would they be
”able to influence my decision

This was the equity of treatment that the Vicegerent of the Prophet (a.s) presented to the world. Today the Charter of Human Rights is given much importance by all the nations in the world. But Amir al-Mu'minin, in his time, practiced all the norms of human and the individual's rights that are very dear to the people in these modern
times

THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM**THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM**

In modern day, the economic system of countries revolves around capitalism and socialism. The capitalist system is an independent economic order in which every one is free to pursue acquisition of wealth keeping aside all norms of religion and morality. Neither there is any moral bonding in hoarding wealth nor does the society prevent them from doing so. In this system, the individual's interest dominates over the interest of the society! The capitalists' eyes are always focused on the hoards of wealth. This avarice reaches such heights that the capitalist crushes the common interest of the people and adopts the way of selfishness and considers that his aim is to keep running in the race of accumulating wealth. He neither refrains from harming anyone in this pursuit nor does he feel ashamed of sucking the blood of the poor workers in his factories and establishments. Because of the behavior of these capitalists, the instinct of hate arises in the minds of the suffering workers. The worker thinks that the profit that goes into the coffers of the capitalist is the result of his hard toil. The capitalist on the other hand thinks that the profit comes because of his wisdom, planning and investment. He thinks that the worker is only a cog in the machines of his factory that can be thrown away when it gets rusted and is useless! This economic exploitation and the difference in the status of the owner and the worker create the socialist movements. The aim of socialism is to eliminate the capitalist and distributing the wealth equitably to all the people in the society. In the view of these socialists, without removing the single ownership of businesses, the gap .between the rich and the poor cannot be bridged

The idea of socialism is not new or a product of the past century. In 500 B.C., Plato noticed the ups and downs of the economy and the wrong attitude of the government of Greece when he laid the foundation of the concept of socialism. In 3rd Century A.D. during the reign of Qabad, a person by name of Mazdak termed women and wealth as joint capital and propagated the concept of socialism. His contemporaries, and those who followed him, accepted the concept of socialism. But this concept was followed by very few people and after sometime, it almost disappeared. In the 14th Century A.D. Again, socialism was heard of. Some people made efforts to adopt it. But their efforts did not bear fruit. In the year 1847 A.D. one German born Jew, Karl Marx enunciated the norms of socialism as a Concept of Economics. He believed that it was the remedy for all the economic and social ills. This was the time when in Russia there was excess of wealth and the affluent groups were rolling in wealth and on the other hand, due to unemployment and economic problems there was general discontent among the masses. The majority of people was farmers and because of coming up of industries, a new group of workers too came into existence. The farmers were at the mercy of the landlords and the workers were subservient to the factory owners. Because of the ill treatment by the factory owners and the landlords, the workers were striking work and the farmers started agitations. Ultimately, the people started hating the moneyed classes and the path was thus leveled for the rise of socialism. Therefore, after the death of Marx, Lenin rose and in 1917 A.D., he formally launched the concept of Socialism. He gathered around himself the Russian youth with the slogan of equitable distribution of wealth and crushed the opposing voices with force. He ultimately succeeded in formulating a system based on the concept of Socialism. Some other countries too were impressed with the concept and accepted it with some minor changes. Whether it is the concept of Capitalism or that of Socialism, both revolve around worldly economics and economic growth. They neither have any consideration for religious and moral norms nor other values of material. The difference between the two is that capitalism believes in Economic Freedom and Concept of Individual Ownership of assets, but there is no guarantee of Economic Safety. In Socialism, there is Guarantee of Economic Safety but the individual ownership of assets is not permitted.

The Islamic Economic System that is quite close to nature provides solution for all the economic ills and problems. This system neither depends on experimentation nor is it the result of the thoughts of experts in economics. It is the Concept propounded by Allah and presented by the Prophet of Islam (a.s). The System, instead of depending on the personal or group interests, stresses on collective interests of the society. The reason is that Allah is not the Creator only of any particular person or a group. Everyone owes his, and her, existence to Him! Therefore, in the Economic System propounded by Him the Collective Interest of the entire Ummah is envisaged

From the Islamic point of view, the real owner of everything in the world is Allah. :Therefore, He exhorts about the distribution of the wealth thus

وَأَتُوهُمْ مِنْ مَالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي آتَاكُمْ.

”(And give them of the wealth of Allah which He has given you. (٢٤/٣٣“

In Allah’s wealth, basically all humans have equal right of use. They are all equally entitled to utilize it all the things that come out of the earth, or are produced from the earth, or those that are found in the world, are for the benefit of all men. Therefore, :Allah says

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا.

”(He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth. (٢/٢٩“

However, a person who acquires, through legitimate means, more or less, wealth through either hard labor or toil like trading, farming, doing jobs or gets it as inheritance without any effort, becomes his. But to maintain a balance between men in the society, a share has been fixed out of this wealth of the person for the society in general. One reason for this is that the individual remains connected with the society and the society remains in touch with the person and the relationship of mutual .brotherhood and equity remained intact

Islam does not believe in capitalism to the extent that the wealth gets intensely concentrated in only a few hands and others live at their mercy. Nor is it so much opposed to capitalism that the person is denied right over the wealth generated with his personal toil and effort. Islam preaches contentment and treading the middle path and its economic system is based on this concept. In this system, neither unfettered capitalism is allowed that is free of all neither religious nor moral bindings nor socialism that takes away all the individual rights to ownership of wealth and property. The individual's efforts are bought by the society for provision of food and clothing in the socialistic system and a special group gets authorized to make use of the wealth thus generated. Islam neither backed capitalism that an unjust and unbalanced social structure came into existence, nor has it preached the unnatural concept of socialistic equality that the state keeps all the resources of production in its control and become responsible for meeting the needs of the individuals

With this coercive equity, the spirit of competition among the people gets curbed because the individual has been deprived of the right of ownership and finds no incentive in putting in maximum efforts at work. Islam, instead of the forced equity of socialism, has kept equity in the economic resources and has provided equal opportunities for every individual that he generate livelihood depending on his capability and toil. Therefore, the Holy Qur'an says

وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ .

”(And that man shall have nothing but what he strives for. (٥٣/٣٩“

Under this system, there will be difference between the individuals according to their capability and the efforts put at work. Not all the persons are of the same level of intelligence and learning and therefore the results achieved by them in their fields of activity too will be different. Instead of creating artificial equity, Islam has tried to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. It has not enforced such conditions on the affluent sections that after complying with them neither there will be imbalance in the society nor did any individual remains deprive of his basic needs

Islam has provided individual ownership of wealth in addition to economic independence. The sense of ownership is such a human sentiment that has been recognized by Islam and has been promoted with certain checks and conditions. The Holy Qur’an has highlighted this

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالِكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتُدْخِلُوا بِهَا إِلَى الْحُكَّامِ لِتَأْكُلُوا فَرِيقًا مِنْ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْإِثْمِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ.

And do not swallow up your property among yourselves by false means; neither“ seeks to gain access thereby to the judges, so that you may swallow up a part of the ”(property of men wrongfully while you know. (٢/١٨٨

Islam not only gives personal ownership rights to the individual, but it has also stressed on respecting and strengthening it. Therefore, stringent punishment for thefts is prescribed to provide these safeguards only. Islam does not tolerate using others wealth clandestinely or utilizing it without the consent of the owner. Therefore, the Prophet (a.s) has said

”The use of the assets of another person without his consent is not legitimate“

Although Islam has given the right of ownership to the individual, it has enforced certain conditions to prevent unrestricted capitalism. Therefore, clear differentiation has been made between legitimate and taboo. One big source of capital growth is usury. Islam has declared usury as taboo to curb capitalism. Allah says in the Holy
:Qur’an

وَأَحَلَّ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا.

”(And Allah has allowed trading and forbidden usury. (۲/۲۷۵“

We have presented a brief outline of the economic system in Islam before we discuss the economic policy during the caliphate of Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s) that he had implemented those norms that had been prescribed by Islam. Although the period was not conducive for enforcing Islamic economic reforms because it followed the period of conquests and plunder and the treasury created capitalistic tendencies in the people because of the heavy gifts and allowances that were given to them. There was already a group of capitalists who had abandoned the Islamic norms of plain living and indulged in luxury and pomp. Without giving any importance to this group, `Ali (a.s) started revolutionizing the economic system. Therefore, as soon as he assumed his position he ordered confiscation of the feudatory gifts of land given to some persons by the former regimes. He said, “By Allah! If I had noticed such wealth that had been spent on the dowry of women and buying slave girls, I would have withdrawn it!” Therefore he confiscated swords, armors and camels meant for sadaqah from `Uthman’s place and announced that whosoever had the wealth gifted by `Uthman must deposit it in the bayt al-mal. This announcement created commotion among the Umayyads and other capitalists. Al-Walid ibn `Uqbah came to `Ali (a.s) and said that they would owe allegiance to him if he allowed them to retain
:the gifts given by `Uthman to them. `Ali (a.s) said

Do you want me to leave the wealth that has been illegitimately usurped by you? It is“ [not in my power to relinquish Allah’s Right that is with you and other rich capitalists.”[1]

To run the economic system on proper lines, Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s) thought it necessary to bring the people and the ruling class on the same level. Therefore, he said, “Allah has made it binding on the Imams (a.s) that they keep themselves in penury at the level of the common man, so that the downtrodden do not feel dejected of their economic difficulties.” He spent all his life in that manner. His standard of life, food and other habits were the same as a common poor person. Neither he liked to eat food better than that of the common man nor did he dress lavishly. He says, “Shall I eat to my fill when I find people around me who starve. Or should I be the way a poet describes, ‘Is it a lesser ailment that you sleep after a large meal and around you
”there are hungry hearts who crave for dried crumbs

Amir al-Mu’minin wanted to put the economy on a pedestal that the gap between the rich and the poor was narrowed. He did not like the society to be divided into two distinct groups of ‘very rich’ and ‘very poor’. He did not want that on the one side there are palatial mansions and on the other dilapidated shacks. On one side grand raiment and on the other tattered and patched clothes. On one, hand even the dogs of the rich appeared well fed and on the other starving, emaciated men! On the one hand people wasting the nation’s wealth and on the other men, to name one, the Prophet’s favorite Companions, perishing without food and medicine in the wilderness of al-Rabadhah! These are the consequences of undue accumulation of wealth by the
:privileged few and denial of the rights of the poor. ` Ali (a.s) has therefore said

Allah has kept the sustenance of the poor in the wealth of the rich. If a beggar“ starves, it is because a rich person has hoarded wealth and Allah is going to seek [account of it from them.”[۳

Instead of this uneven economic situation, `Ali (a.s) wanted to establish a system where the needs of every individual were fulfilled and that none, wherever he was, suffered from want of basic necessities of life. He wanted that in the resources of production, everyone got his legitimate share and everyone got equal opportunity to toil and generate fair livelihood. This is the Islamic concept of equity which is very practicable. The spirit of equality amongst people is evidenced from the concepts of khums, zakat and the institution of Hajj when all the Muslims, irrespective of their :status come to perform the pilgrimage. Therefore, `Ali (a.s) said

The betterment of men lies in their being different from each other. They will perish if“ [they are all equal.”[۳

It is evident that when all men are on the same economic level then one will not need the other. As a result of this, the contacts between them will be weak and the .economic relations will be disturbed

If we view the economic system during the time of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s), it becomes evident that besides freedom to trade, the resources were owned by the people. Everyone was free to adopt any profession, viz: agriculture, trading, handicraft etc. This is the yardstick of any good economic system that the people are free to pick the profession or avocation of their own choice. On the other side, they must have total economic protection so that every individual will have assurance that the desired results will emanate from his toils. `Ali (a.s) did not like people sitting at home doing nothing and becoming a burden on the society. Such drones depend on others' income instead of earning their own livelihood. However, if a person was incapacitated to work due to some physical disability, he was supported by the bayt .al-mal

Ali (a.s) considered agriculture and trading as the mainstay of the economy.`
:Therefore, he said

One who has land and water for irrigation, and even then he is poor, then Allah“
”!should keep him away

:About trading, he said

Do trading! Trading is that investment which will keep you contented from money“
”!and wealth

For the encouragement of agriculture and trading `Ali (a.s) did farming himself. He also was a trader. Therefore, he used to reclaim fallow lands and digging wells, he used to create oases. Similarly, for creating interest in trading, he promoted sales of
:loincloths in these words

I have bought this loincloth for five dirhams. If someone gives me a dirham extra, I“
”!shall sell it to him

Whenever he had free time, he used to sit at his friend, `Ammar ibn Yasir’s shop. When `Ammar used to be away on some work, `Ali (a.s) would sell the dates. He
.never felt belittled doing this task

Ali (a.s) used to keep a watch on the trading community to ensure that they did not`
inflate the prices. Therefore, he used to go round the bazaar and inquire the prices of different commodities. He also used to look at the weights and measures with the
:traders. Abul-Sahba’ says

I have seen `Ali (a.s) going round al-Basrah inquiring the selling rates of different“
”.materials

Hoarding materials to create artificial scarcity is a big economic crime. To stop this malpractice, `Ali (a.s) announced that if any trader, for inflating prices, hoards more than necessary inventories of materials, he will be liable for punishment. Therefore, he wrote to Malik al-Ashtar, “Warn traders against hoarding, because the Prophet (a.s)

was against it. Whenever anyone is found hoarding materials, give him suitable
”punishment

p: ५०५

The balance in the economic system is possible when extravagance and unnecessary purchasing is avoided. `Ali (a.s) considered both these habits as the cause of the economic structure of any society. Therefore, about the habit of incurring unnecessary expenses he says

Cultivate moderation and avoid extravagance. Do not forget today that there is a “tomorrow”

:About accumulating unnecessary things `Ali (a.s) said

”.The thing that you do not need, leave it! Acquire only the things that you need“

When man shuns moderation and becomes extravagant, the result is that he becomes poor and dependent on others. Therefore, extravagance at the time of marriages and other occasions people mortgage or sell their houses and other property to meet the unnecessary and in fructuous expenses. Many times, they become indebted to meet the expenses of such occasions. They spend with both hands and are praised by friends and neighbor for the excellent arrangements for the function. But, in fact, the person traps himself in heavy debts and falls into the clutches of the usurers. Similarly, unnecessary purchasing too affects the economy. When a thing is bought without its need by a person, he sells it at a heavily reduced price when he needs money for some other important requirement. If this habit of buying without need spreads in the society, it will affect the economy very badly

Footnote

Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by ibn Abil-Hadīd [١]

Nahj al-Balāghah [٢]

al-Amālī by Shaykh al-Sadūq [٣]

DISTRIBUTION FROM THE BAYT AL-MAL

DISTRIBUTION FROM THE BAYT AL-MAL

The Prophet (a.s) used to distribute the zakat, alms and booty of wars as soon as it was collected, within the city where they were received. And therefore he neither constituted the bayt al-mal nor did he ever feel the need of such an institution. After the passing away of the Prophet (a.s), when Rome and Persia were conquered, treasures were brought to al-Madinah and the bayt al-mal was founded. To maintain it, a separate department of revenue was constituted. Under this department the accumulated wealth was kept. From this money, development activities were organized and annual pensions were paid. During the period of the Prophet (a.s), the funds were distributed equitably. After him, the method of distribution was changed. During `Umar's time there was no equity that some got more from the bayt al-mal and others less. The wives of the Prophet (a.s) were given more than the other ladies and `A'ishah received ۲,۰۰۰ more than the other wives of the Prophet (a.s). Those who participated in the campaign of Badr received more pension than those who were not present there. The Muhajirūn received more than the Ansar. During the period of `Uthman even this procedure was not followed. Even after making a pledge that he would follow the Book, the Sunnah and the sirat al-shaykhayn, he neither made equitable distribution nor he followed the method of ranking of the recipients of the pensions. He distributed the funds of the Muslims to his kinsmen in the tribe of Banū-Umayyah. He gave as much as he wanted to these Umayyads

When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) took control of the bayt al-mal in his hands, according to the practice of the Prophet (a.s), arranged distribution of the funds in the city where they were received. When some funds were remaining after the distribution, and were sent to al-Madinah, he distributed them instead of retaining in the bayt al-mal. Such distribution was done on every Friday when, generally the bayt al-mal was rendered empty of funds. When that happened, `Ali (a.s) would sweep the floor of the premises with his own hands. After doing this, he would offer two prostrations of thanksgiving to Allah! He used to say after such events that he was thankful to Allah that he was going empty handed from there as he had come empty-handed! Ibn `Abd al-Barr writes

Ali (a.s) did not allow it to happen that he spent a night and funds remained lying in `the bayt al-mal. He used to distribute the funds before nightfall. If some other [important thing came in the way, he would keep it for the morrow.]`

Once the funds arrived when it was already, dusk. He said that the money must be distributed immediately. People said that it was already night and the distribution could be done next morning. He asked if they were sure that he would be alive until the morning. He added that about death only Allah knows. He insisted on distributing the funds immediately. Torches were lighted and all the money was distributed then .and there

The iniquitous distribution of the funds from the bayt al-mal rendered the economy unbalanced. `Ali (a.s) felt the need of changing the system and making the distribution more equitable. He removed the distinction of big and small while distributing the pensions. The influential persons did not like the change and the affluent opposed it. `Ali (a.s) did not budge a little from his stand that was exactly in accordance with the norms of Islam. Therefore, `Abdullah ibn Abi-Rafi` narrates that when Talhah and al-Zubayr saw that in the distribution of the funds their status was being compromised, they came to `Ali (a.s) and said that `Umar was giving them such and such an amount as pension. They asked him to keep that in mind. `Ali (a.s) asked them to forget what someone else used to give them. He asked them to tell what the Prophet (a.s) used to give them. At this, they kept mum. When the Imam (a.s) found them quiet, he said

whether the Prophet (a.s) was not following the method of equitable distribution of funds. Both the persons affirmed. Then, he asked them tell him whether the Sunnah was more worthy of following than the Sunnah `Umar? They said that definitely the Sunnah has to be emulated but added that they had the privilege of taking active part in the Prophet's ghazawat and that they had been close to him. `Ali (a.s) asked them if they had precedence in embracing Islam or him? They agreed that he had the precedence. He asked them if they took more part in jihad than him. They agreed that he took more part. He asked if they were more closely related to the Prophet (a.s) or him. They affirmed that he was more closely related to the Prophet (a.s) `Ali (a.s) pointed towards a laborer standing there and said that from the fund he took the same share as this person gets! When I do not claim more pensions for my status, ?how could you expect to get more

Ali (a.s) believed that the share of big, small, Qarashi or others, is equitably same in the funds of the bayt al-mal. He did not make any discrimination on the basis of color, descent, nationality or the place of origin of the people. He had announced that he would eliminate all discrimination on the basis of status in the society. When `Aqil heard this, he asked `Ali (a.s) whether he wanted to treat him on par with the Nubian :Slave? The Imam (a.s) said

Sit down! May Allah be kind on you! If you want to have precedence over him, it could“
”!only be on the basis of Piety and precedence in embracing the Faith

Once two women came to `Ali (a.s) He gave them equal amounts to both. One said that she was an Arab woman and free and the other woman was a slave girl. She complained that he was treating them equally though she was superior to her. `Ali : (a.s) lifted some earth from the ground, looked at it, and said

It is not in my knowledge that Allah has made one superior over the other, unless one“
”!is more pious than the other

Once Sahl ibn Hunayf brought his Abyssinian slave along with him and told `Ali (a.s) that the slave had come to take his share from the bayt al-mal. Sahl asked how much the slave will get? The Imam (a.s) asked how much he himself had received. He said !every one got ۳ Dinars each. The Imam (a.s) said then he too would get three Dinars

Once Ummu-Hani' bint Abi-Talib came to the Imam (a.s) He gave her ۲۰ dirhams from the bayt al-mal. She turned to her non-Arab slave and asked her what she had received? She replied that she had also received ۲۰ dirhams. Then Ummu-Hani' came to the Imam (a.s) and said that she had been given the same allowance as was given to her slave, not considering her superior status. `Ali (a.s) said

”!By Allah! In this money Banū-Isma`il has no preference over Banū-Ishaq“

Ali's sense of justice and equity did not permit him to give any preference to ` relationship to change the norms of distribution of the funds of the bayt al-mal. Therefore, when `Aqil, his brother, complained of his poverty and penury and asked for money from the bayt al-mal, `Ali (a.s) asked him to be patient for some more days when others would get their allowances and he too will be given. When `Aqil insisted very much to be given some money, `Ali (a.s) asked a person to take `Aqil to the bazaar where he should break the lock of a shop and take the money. `Aqil was upset and said that he was asking him to steal and get a bad name in the society. The Imam (a.s) then said, “Do you also want me to steal from the funds of the Muslims and give to you

Once `Aqil's children invited the Imam (a.s) home for a meal. When the food was served he asked from where it had come? They said that they were saving their share of the barley for some days. The barley was sold to buy the food. The Imam (a.s) said that if you have been able to save, it means that your allowance was that much more and from that time, the allowance of barley for them would be reduced by that quantity. `Aqil got angry on this. The Imam (a.s) heated an iron rod and took it near `Aqil. `Aqil was taken aback. The Imam (a.s) said that `Aqil was scared of just one hot steel rod and wanted to consign him, his brother, to the perpetual Hellfire

Once `Abdullah ibn Ja`far told the Imam (a.s), “Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s)! Give me something from the bayt al-mal. My predicament is that I am unable to meet the daily :expenses unless I dispose of my horse!” The Imam said

By Allah! I do not have anything with me to give you. But you tell your uncle to steal“ ”!and give you

Whether it was a relative or any outsider, Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) would not show the smallest undue favor to anyone. If he had closed his eyes and distributed favors, none could have questioned him. Therefore, once `Amr ibn Salamah, who was the governor of Isfahan, brought some shortening and honey from there. Ummu-Kulthūm took a small quantity of the materials for her use. The next day when the containers reached `Ali (a.s), he did not find them in their original condition. When he inquired, `Amr said that Ummu-Kulthūm had taken out small quantities. `Ali (a.s) sent both the containers to the assessors and asked them the value of the material taken out from them. After evaluation, they said that the shortening and honey taken out was worth approximately ۵ dirhams. He asked Ummu-Kulthūm to pay the value and .the entire quantity of the products was distributed to the people

Once, from al-Basrah came a valuable string of pearls. Ummu-Kulthūm asked Abū-Rafi`, the keeper of bayt al-mal, to lend it to her for three days. Abū-Rafi` sent to her the necklace. When Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) saw the pearls with her, he asked from where she got them. Ummu-Kulthūm said that she had borrowed it from the bayt al-mal and requested him to give it to her. The Imam (a.s) said how he could give it to her until every Muslim woman had such a necklace in her neck! He also said that she was pardoned because she had just borrowed it from the bayt al-mal, or else she would be liable to be punished for theft! He then ordered it to be deposited with the bayt al-mal

With the sense of responsibility, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) used to give much importance to even very small things. He would not be content until everything at the bayt al-mal was distributed. Once he found a rope, lying in the bayt al-mal after the distribution process was over. He ordered that also to be given to a deserving person. Once when materials arrived from Isfahan, there was a bread in the packages. While he had made seven portions of the materials for the seven tribes, he divided the bread too in seven portions! Once cloth was being distributed. Imam al-Hasan (a.s) found a cap in the packages of the cloth. He asked for the cap to be given to him. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) refused the request and the cap went to the share of al-Hamdani person. People told him that Imam al-Hasan (a.s) had liked the cap but Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) had refused to give it to him. The al-Hamdani sent the cap to Imam al-Hasan (a.s)

These few events would give a clear idea that Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) followed the same practices for the distribution of materials to the people as did the Prophet (a.s). Neither he hoarded the materials in the bayt al-mal nor did he make any distinction of status or importance in the matter of equitable distribution. Can an example be cited that his own brother pleading for help from the bayt al-mal in the form of a few seers of barley for the feeding of his hungry children, but he is refused help to maintain equity in the process of distribution! When a sister asks for increase of a few dirhams in her pension, she is refused. He did not allow the smallest favor to his relatives from the bayt al-mal. He did not want to put even the smallest of burden on the Muslims by showing the smallest of favors to his own family. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) used to buy his own requirements of grains from the bazaar of al-Madinah and did not take from the bayt al-mal although he was entitled to it. Harūn ibn `Antarah says that he saw the Imam (a.s) at Qurnaḡ using an old rug that was insufficient to protect him from the cold. He told the Imam (a.s) that he was entitled to a share in the material in the bayt al-mal and he could take a new rug from there for his use. The Imam (a.s) said

By Allah! I do not want to take anything from your assets! The rug that I am using I
”!have brought from al-Madinah

Footnote

Al-Istī`āb, Vol ٢, Page ٥٠ [١]

THE SYSTEM OF ZAKAT

zakat tax is a tenet in Islam that is applicable to wheat, barley, dates, raisins, gold, silver, cattle, goats and sheep, camels; and is mandatory for every major Muslim at prescribed rate. The meaning of the word zakat is purity and cleanliness and the Shari`ah too has used the word in the same sense. The purpose is that the person pays this tax to cleanse his or her assets. When the zakat is not paid, the holdings of a person are deemed unclean. After payment of the zakat they affects of a person are clean and even the mind will be free of miserliness, avarice and undue love for wealth.

:Therefore, the Holy Qur’an said

خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا.

Take alms out of their property, you would cleanse them and purify them thereby.“

”(٩/١٠٣)

The basic purpose of zakat is providing help to the poor and needy that none in the society remains helpless. Therefore, zakat has eight uses. Out of the eight, seven are applicable to individuals and one pertains to the collective requirement of the society.

:The Holy Qur’an says

إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْعَامِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغَارِمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّ السَّبِيلِ فَرِيضَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ.

Alms are only for the poor and the needy, and the officials (appointed) over them,“
and those whose hearts are made to incline (to truth) and the (ransoming of) captives
and those in debts and in the way of Allah and the wayfarer; an ordinance from Allah;

”(and Allah is knowing, Wise. (٩/٦٠

zakat can bridge the economic imbalances to a greater extent. The reason is that a substantial amount of wealth goes from the hands of the affluent for the benefit of the poor. Although it does not reduce the difference between the rich and the poor very much, but certainly it does make appreciable difference in the living standards of the poor. One of the main purposes of the zakat is that the wealth does not stagnate in the hands of a few and a part of it percolates to the poor and needy. Therefore, the Holy Qur'an describes the purpose of alms in these words

كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَهُ بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ.

”(so that it may not be a thing taken by turns among the rich of you. (٥٩/٧...“

In some circles there is a feeling that the quantum of zakat prescribed is so meager that it is neither sufficient to bridge the economic gap between the rich and the poor, nor the numbers of the poor and needy could be brought down with this amount. The best reply for this thinking has been given by Imam Ja`far al-Sadiq (a.s

Allah has affixed the share of the poor in the assets of the rich that is sufficient to meet their needs. If Allah had thought that it would not suffice for the poor, He would have enhanced the quantum

In fact, if Allah wanted He could have apportioned an equal share for the poor in the wealth of the affluent or even more! But the Divine Wisdom is that He leaves more for the affluent because it is the product of their hard work and toil. If the poor have a share in it, the rich too owns the wealth as a matter of right

The truth is that the quantum of zakat is not less because it is fixed in such a manner that the rich do not make excuses to avoid it which, they might have done, if the quantum was fixed higher. If the zakat is paid honestly and regularly by all, there is no doubt that the poor will rise above their economic problems and there will be general well being.

zakat is a religious obligation and therefore people should have the spirit of intent, nearness to Allah and sense of fulfillment of duty. They should not think that they are delivering any favor to the recipients but must know that it is the right of the society that had been endowed by Allah. Therefore, the Holy Qur'an says

وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ.

And in their property was a portion due to him who begs and to him who is denied“
”(good). (٥١/١٩)

was raised by the representatives and spent on predetermined heads. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) who was the wali `Amr after the Prophet (a.s) started the department of zakat during his regime. This department took special care to observe the steps that the Prophet (a.s) used to take in the matter of the zakat. Therefore, such persons were appointed to this task that was known for their piety and honesty. The Imam (a.s) used to exhort them not to use coercive tactics in demanding for the payment of the zakat. If someone voluntarily declared the quantity of the zakat applicable to him, that was collected. When some people said that the zakat was not applicable to them, no questions were asked. He told the zakat collectors that they should not give an impression to persons that they were not trusted. The collectors were also asked not to demand any particular animal from the flocks towards settlement of the zakat. It was always the discretion of the assessed to part with whatever he deemed fit to be given as the zakat. But the people were asked not to give lame, sickly and emaciated animals towards the zakat. `Ali (a.s) also instructed his men to take proper care of the animals that came in their charge as a settlement of zakat. He asked them not to bring them through ways that had no possibility of getting fodder and water for long spells. He asked them to keep the she camels and their young ones together. They

were also asked not take all the milk from the mother that the little ones suffered
.want of feed

p: ۵۱۵

These steps of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) indicate that he was not in favor of force or coercion in the matter of zakat. In fact, he wanted to create the right spirit in the minds of the people to come forward voluntarily that they fulfill this mandatory duty .of theirs

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) used the zakat money only on heads that have been prescribed .in the Holy Qur'an and never mixed it in the funds for other requirements of the State

THE SYSTEM OF TRIBUTE

THE SYSTEM OF TRIBUTE

Of the territories annexed by the Muslims, certain were those that were acquired through warfare and some others were annexed peacefully. In the areas annexed through warfare, the uncultivable barren land consisting of mountainous and marshlands were termed as anfal or the land that belong to Allah and the Prophet :(a.s). The Holy Qur'an says

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَنْفَالِ قُلِ الْأَنْفَالُ لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ.

They ask you about the windfalls. Say: The windfalls are for Allah and the Messenger.“
”(٨/١)

After the Prophet (a.s), the Vicegerent and Imams (a.s) have the authority to utilize the minerals and other resources from this land for the welfare of the people. Without the permission of the wali al-amr of the time, or his deputy, none has the authority to exploit such lands in any manner. The cultivated lands that were acquired through warfare used to be distributed amongst the Muslims so that they took crops on them and boosted the prosperity of the people. Those areas where the people, of their own free consent, embraced Islam, their ownership of the lands were not disturbed and they continued to use them as in the past. The examples of such areas are al-Madinah, Bahrain and a major part of Yemen. They were only required to pay the zakat on the returns they derived from the cultivation of those lands. If the people in such places wished not to embrace Islam, they will be bound by the terms of truce with them. If in the terms of truce it was decided that they would continue to have the

use and ownership of the land, they will not be evicted from them. However, they will be treated as Dhimmis and were liable to pay the jizyah. If the truce was with the condition that they would forego the ownership of the lands, then such lands were to be distributed amongst the Muslims. Such lands were called the lands of tribute. They are called the lands of tribute because they have been received as tribute from the people who had surrendered in terms of the truce with them. From the persons who cultivate such lands, in addition to the zakat, they have to pay land revenue which is either in kind called in cash that is termed khiraj. The quantity of khiraj is fixed by the wali al-amr at his discretion

During his time, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) fixed the limits of the kharaj and determined the norms for the collection of this revenue. But he had more concern for land use than collection of the tributes to ensure that there was prosperity among the people. Therefore, he instructed Malik al-Ashtar, "More than collection of the tribute, concentrate on the promotion of the use of land for cultivation because tribute is generated when the land is in use!" One, who wants to take tribute without putting the land to use, becomes the cause of destruction of the state and the people. Such regimes do not last for long." Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was not in favor of using coercion in the collection of the tribute and asked his representatives to have a soft attitude in the matter of collecting the land revenue. Therefore, when he retained a person from Banū-Thaqif to collect the tribute from a certain area, he told him

Beware! For the sake of the dirhams of tribute, do not trouble Muslims, Jews and Christians. Do not confiscate and sell farm animals to collect the tribute from the tillers. We have been commanded only to take from them what is in excess of their [needs.]

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) had fixed a very nominal rate for the collection of the tribute from the farmers. Buladhari has written in Futūh al-Buldan that Mus`ab Ibn Yazid said that his father was appointed for the collection of the tribute for the lands irrigated with the waters of Euphrates. He said that the rate of tribute for wheat, if the crop was good, was ١.٥ dirham or three seers of the produce per jurayb (land measuring approximately ١٢٠ square feet), if the crop was average the tribute was one dirham and for a poor crop two thirds of a dirham. For the barley crop, the tariff was half of this. For gardens, like dates and other fruits, the tribute was ten dirhams per jurayb. The grape vines that reached the fourth year after planting, the tribute were ten dirhams per jurayb. For vegetable, linseed, cotton and miscellaneous crops no tribute .was collected

THE SYSTEM OF JIZYAH

In Islamic states the other communities viz: Jews, Christians and Magians, had all the civic rights provided they lived amicably with the Muslims and remained faithful to the state and did not cooperate or collaborate with the enemies of Islam. If these conditions were fulfilled, the state would be responsible for their safety and they will be free to follow the tenets of their own Faith. However, they were not allowed to drink intoxicants, eat pork or marry such women who are taboo for marriages under .the Islamic system

In a state subscribing to a certain system, when the rights of certain other groups are recognized, then some duties too are imposed on those groups. Therefore, in return for those social and economic rights, in addition to following the local laws and regulations, one additional tax is levied on these groups that are called the Jizyah. This word is derived from jaza' that means return or compensation. This is the Arabic form of the Farsi word gazida or gaziya. The funds collected through jizyah were used for the development activity of the entire population irrespective of the religious denomination. Therefore, this tax was not an unnecessary burden on any community. The Muslims were paying the zakat and the others were paying the Jizyah for the common welfare of all the people. Therefore, it was not an unreasonable burden on the non-Muslims. The tariff for Jizyah was not fixed like that for Khiraj. The authorities fixed the charges on the basis of the circumstances prevailing. During the period of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) the rates of Jizyah were: Forty dirhams from rich and affluent, twenty-four dirhams from middle classes, and twelve dirhams from the common .people

The Jizyah was collected once every year. It was not levied on children, elderly persons, blind, mentally retarded and handicapped. There was no Jizyah on women and the religious hermits

CITIZENSHIP

Human beings are gregarious. Their life is identified with togetherness. Because of this togetherness, people are identified with families, tribes and nations. In these groups, because of different natures of the individuals there are bound to be differences and disputes. Therefore, it is necessary to create a balance placing some restrictions on the individuals and groups were imperative. These norms of civilization make what is called citizenship. Because of the importance of the subject of citizenship, its study has been included in the curricula of the young students

The basic principle of citizenship is that one should respect the feelings of others, cooperate, and protect each other in all matters in their environment. The concept of citizenship does not take effect until the individuals in the society understand their rights and duties and they learn how to live amicably together. They have to know how to behave with their neighbors, with men from their own profession, with the master, with the workers and others. They need to know what moral aspects they will have to bear in mind while interacting with others. A good citizen is one who thinks of the benefit of all the persons in his group as much as he thinks for his own benefit. He should dedicate himself to the service of his nation and the community. He should come forward to the aid of the weak and downtrodden. If someone calls for help, he should not quietly sneak away. The Prophet (a.s) said

If someone calls with the words, ‘O Muslims!’, and one who hears does not come to“
”his help, then he is not a Muslim

It is this sense of citizenship that voluntary organizations have come up in the society with the main purpose of benefiting the people. The purpose of citizenship too is the same that the individual should not think only of himself, but he should have care for :everyone around him. The Prophet of Islam (a.s) has said

”One who does not attach importance to the affairs of the Muslims is not a Muslim“

The norms of citizenship fixed by different nations, although they have a lot in common and subservient to the local customs and practices. But Islam, which is above all differences of color and race, and is the torchbearer of universal amity and welfare unites all men under the one brotherhood. It has based nationhood on universal basis where no distinction is made of color or of descent. It accepts neither .boundaries for nationhood nor the official geographical restrictions

The norms of citizenship promulgated by Islam do not pertain to any particular land or dominion. They are universal for all places and times. Therefore, Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s) who was a fountainhead of Islamic Learning has thrown light on the norms of citizenship. It is the result of our callousness and our pettiness that when the voice of this “Sage of Arabia” reverberated in the environment, we were deaf to it. But when the same voice was echoed by the West, we were all ear to it. There is no doubt that the norms and rules set by the thinkers in the world, have not a single article that was .not enunciated by `Ali (a.s). Some of these norms are given here as examples

The basic principle of societal welfare is justice and fairplay. This maintains a (۱) balance between the powerful and the weak. The powerful controls himself for fear of accountability in inflicting excesses on the weak and the weak will have confidence that if the unkind hand of the powerful was about to strike him, law and justice would protect him like a defensive shield. Therefore, in a society where justice exists, peace prevails. Where cruelty flourishes, there the flames of discontent will keep burning inside the hearts of the downtrodden to assume the proportions of a wildfire in time! Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) says, "Tread the path of justice and abstain from cruelty and waywardness. Because with waywardness you may have to leave your home and
"!hearth and cruelty invites people to take to the sword

It is the requirement of good citizenship that people respect the feelings of others. (۲) Do to others as one wishes others to do with him. `Ali (a.s) says, "What you like for yourself, you must wish for others too! What you do not want others to do; you must
"!refrain from that as well

Refrain from pride and prejudice because it creates hatred in the minds of others (۳) that might affect the amicable relations between people. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) says, "The biggest thing to be proud of is that one should have no pride!" The reason is that pride is the result of inferiority complex. A person with character, instead of making
.tall claims gives an example of his character with his actions

Treat the weak and downtrodden with sympathy and consideration. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) says, "Be kind to the weak. This kindness will be the source of Allah's
"!Blessing for you

If you hear any gossip about others, do not go around announcing it to others. `Ali (a.s) says, "One who heard something wrong and repeated it to others, it will be
"!tantamount to his committing that wrong deed himself

Do not take pleasure at someone falling into bad days after enjoying affluence. `Ali (a.s) says, "Do not express happiness on the losses suffered by others! Who knows
"!tomorrow people may give the same treatment to you

As far as possible do not pick up quarrels. The Imam (a.s) says, "One who wishes to
".preserve his self respect, he should abstain from fights

Do not always express lack of confidence on others because mutual confidence is the basis of community life. `Ali (a.s) says, "One who does not trust others, he is not
"!trusted as well

Do not deny the right of anyone on account of friendship and relationships. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) says, "Because of mutual relationships do not deny a brother's rights.
"?How is he your brother when you have denied him his rights

Meet a needy person with a kind demeanor. `Ali (a.s) says, "If on some occasion people need your help, meet them with humility and kindness. You may yourself need some help tomorrow and you may have to call on the same person for his assistance
".when you should not be in a predicament of being apologetic to him

One of the important requirements of Islam is forbiddance of evil, that is, (۱۱) wherever you notice a wrong being committed, do not keep quiet and try to the best of your ability to stop it. If this commandment is followed, many ills in the society can be nipped in the bud. People will then avoid doing wrong things thinking that there are people around who will warn them against such misdemeanors. `Ali (a.s) has said, “A person who does not stop wrong things through his tongue, his hand and the heart, ”!he is like a living dead among people

Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) did not content himself with moralizing sermons only. In practice, he made all the efforts to remove the social ills in the people. If he heard of any wrongdoing or was informed of an unnecessary conflict between persons, he used to stand up firmly to sort out the matter. Once a person complained to `Ali (a.s) that another person was troubling him by saying that he had had a wet dream with his mother. `Ali (a.s) said that the requirement of justice was that the person is made to stand in the hot sun and his shadow beaten with a whip because a dream is like a shadow. But he added that the person would certainly be punished so that he refrained from such canard in the future. The man was therefore called and was given the punishment he deserved. The Imam (a.s) once saw two persons fighting and asked why they were at loggerheads. One of them said, “O Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s)! I have sold him one piece of textile for ۹ dirhams and the agreement was that the payment must be in real dirhams. But he gave me counterfeit and broken dirhams. I refused to accept those coins when he slapped me and insulted me in the bazaar” The Imam (a.s) confirmed the facts of the event and told the other person to exchange the dirhams for the complainant. The man complied. Then he asked the complainant to slap the accused in return for the slap he gave him. The man said that he was forgiving the person for what he did. The Imam (a.s) was very happy with the spirit of forgiveness of the person and said, “It is your right whether you forgive or take ”!revenge for the hurt caused to you by the person

The matter should have been considered settled with the judgment, because the person had himself forgone his right to avenge the hurt caused to him. But besides his right, there was the collective right of the society that demands punishment of such transgressors that such acts are not perpetrated again. This right could not have escaped the mind of the Imam (a.s). Therefore, he pronounced a punishment of ١٥ lashes to the person for his breach of trust and causing bodily harm to the complainant

With the social ills being rampant, people gamble almost in the marketplace and it has almost become a source of recreation. This, despite the fact that the Holy Qur'an has termed them taboo and Satanic acts. Therefore, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) has said, "Chess and dice games are only maysir" When young children see their elders play these games, they too start doing the same. They then start gambling that leads them to total destruction. `Ali (a.s) considered indulging in such game as a punishable offence. Therefore, once he found some persons playing chess and said, "What sort of chessmen are these around whom you have formed a circle? Then he overturned the chess board and punished the men by asking them to stand in the sun

Yaqūt al-Hamawi writes in Mu`jam al-Buldan that `Ali (a.s) once noticed a group of houses outside al-Kūfah He asked someone what place that was? He was told that it was a locality of al-Kūfah which is known as Zurarah after Zurarah ibn Yazid. They said that alcohol was brewed and sold from there

Ali (a.s) crossed the Euphrates and reached that locality. He ordered the habitation to`
be burned down, which was done

The reform of societies depends on the reform of individuals. If they adopt the right path, the society flourishes. If the individuals are evil, they affect the type of society the people have. Individuals make the society. Therefore, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) always paid attention to the reform and correction of the individuals. He believed in persons rendering accounts of their deeds and reprimanded them to implicitly follow the norms of behavior established in the society. Of course, mildness is a very good trait. But he was never mild when he dealt with persons who committed social offences

MONITORING THE TRADING COMMUNITY

According to the Islamic point of view, every person is responsible for the moral instruction of the persons under his care. Such person could be a father, a guardian, or a mentor. Each will be responsible for the training of his wards. The Prophet of Islam (a.s) has said

”Every one of you is responsible and answerable for the persons under you“

When every individual is answerable for the training of his family and the persons under him, then one who is the leader of the Ummah is certainly responsible for the moral uplift of all the people. This requires that he did not leave the task to his functionaries and rested. To the contrary, he should personally keep a watch on the habits and behavior of the people. This cannot be done by remaining in the chambers of the state capital. It is necessary that he meets and mingles with the people

It was the practice of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) that he personally used to go and meet people in ordinary dress, sometimes incognito and at others openly. During these visits, he used to go to the lanes, bylines; used to inquire the rates of different commodities from the merchants and as a mentor of morality, he used to give appropriate instructions. He used to instruct them to be fair in their dealings and warn them against cheating and delivering short quantities to buyers by weight of the materials. To shake them up, he used to recite this Verse of the Holy Qur'an to them

تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ.

As for that future abode, We assign it to those who have no desire to exalt themselves in the earth nor is to make mischief and the good end for those who guard
”(against evil. (٢٨/٨٣

There is an incident about a butcher's shop. The Imam (a.s) was once passing through that area when he noticed a slave girl asking the butcher to give some more. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) observed, “Yes! Give some more because it is a matter of felicity

Once passing through the marts, he stopped at a tailor's shop. He advised the tailor to use strong thread for sewing the clothes and the cut pieces that remained from the material must be returned to the owner. He added, “I have heard the Prophet (a.s) say that on the Day of Judgment the man who has stolen cloth will be brought in such a manner that all the pieces of cloth that he had stolen will be loaded on his head

Ibn Kathir writes in *Al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah* that Abū-Matar al-Misri says, “I was coming out of the al-Kūfah Mosque when someone called me from the back that I must pick up the lapel of my shawl that was touching the ground. When I turned back, I saw a Bedouin carrying a whip in his hand, with a loincloth around his waist and a shawl around the shoulders. This simplicity was so great that I was much impressed. I asked a man about the identity of the person. The man said I looked a stranger. I affirmed that I hailed from al-Basrah. He replied that the person I asked about was Amir al-Mu’minin `Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s). I shook in my limbs and instead of moving forward, I went back a few steps and went behind the Imam (a.s). I saw that he stopped near the shops of grocers and told them, “Sell! But do not sell by taking oaths. This way the prosperity will depart even if all the material was sold!” Then he went to the section of the date sellers where he found a slave girl crying. When he asked her the reason for her crying, she said that she had bought dates from the shopkeeper for ١ dirham which her master did not like and asked her to return to the shop. The shopkeeper was not taking the dates back. The Imam (a.s) told the shopkeeper that the girl was a slave and a poor person and you must help her by taking the dates back. The shopkeeper refused to comply. I could not keep quiet. I told him, ‘Do you know who is asking you to take back the dates? He is Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s)!’ Hearing this, the shopkeeper took back the dates from the girl and gave her the dirham. Then the Imam (a.s) addressed the shopkeepers, ‘Give to the poor to eat, your business will flourish!’ Now he moved to the fish market. And said, ‘Beware! Do not sell fish that has died inside the water, not caring for legitimate and taboo!’ He moved forward and entered the cloth merchant’s area. He asked one shopkeeper to give a cloak worth about ٣ dirhams. The person recognized the Imam (a.s) and welcomed him. But the Imam (a.s) did not buy the cloak from him. From another shop, he bought a cloak for three dirhams. When the Imam (a.s) returned to al-Rahbah, one person came and wanted to give him ١ dirham. When he asked why the person was giving him the money, he said, “O Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s)! I have been told by the shopkeepers that you had visited my shop and bought a cloak from my son. He did not recognize you and sold the cloak worth two dirhams for three. This is the same dirham that you paid in excess of the cost. The Imam (a.s) refused to accept the money that the young man
”!had sold and he had bought at the price quoted and the transaction was complete

The purpose of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) could have been the purchase of the cloak but the requirement of Enjoining the good and forbidding the evil was not forgotten. Wherever he found anything good, he deemed it his duty to encourage people to emulate it, and stop them from bad things, however insignificant that might be. Therefore, when he saw a person moving on the street with the lapel of his shawl trailing on the ground, he asked him to pick it up because those days that style of the lapel trailing behind on the ground was indicative of pride and conceit of a person. When he saw tears in the eyes of the slave girl, he persuaded the merchant to take back the dates that were not approved by her master. The Imam (a.s) also encouraged the merchants to give some of their materials to the poor saying that the act would be felicitous for them. He also exhorted them not to bring taboo things to the market. He asked the merchants not to take false oaths to promote their sales saying that a person loses his reputation with people if he continues to take false oaths! The Imam (a.s) did not buy a cloak from a shopkeeper who had recognized him. He bought it from another shop. When the shopkeeper learnt that it was Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) he tried to return to him some money saying that his son has taken that in excess of the actual price. The Imam (a.s) refused to take the money saying that the youth had sold the cloak to him and he had bought it, thus the transaction was complete between them. The attitude of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was also an example .for the functionaries of the state to emulate his style of functioning

KINDNESS ON WIDOWS, ORPHANS AND THE POOR

Islam is not only performing the mandatory duties Viz: prayers, Fasting Hajj, etc... but it is a collection of beliefs and commensurate actions by the Believers. Kind treatment to the widows, orphans and the poor too is a part of good deeds that a Muslim must perform. If a person indulges only in personal comforts and luxuries not bothering about the orphans and other needy around him, he is not fulfilling the requirements of the Faith. When the Prophet (a.s) was asked about the requirements of the Faith, he :said

”Faith is respecting the Commands of Allah and kindness on His creatures“

It is the duty of every Muslim that, according to his capability, he helped the poor and needy persons but as the head of the State this is the most important function of his office that he ensures that the care of such poor and destitute persons was not .neglected

Amir al-Mu’minin’s heart was a depository of affection and care. Whenever he found a poor person, he felt kindness and compassion for him. He treated the orphans in a way that they forgot that they were orphans. Once containers of figs and honey arrived from Halwan and Hamdan. The Imam (a.s) asked some men to assemble orphans. When the children came, he distributed the honey and the figs to them. The children were taking the honey and licking the remnants sticking to the sides of the containers. Some person said what has happened to the children that they were licking the honey and the Imam (a.s) is not stopping them from doing it. The Imam :(a.s) said

Imam is the father of the orphans and because of this filial sentiment I have allowed“
”!the kids to lick the honey

Once the Imam (a.s) was passing through a lane. He noticed a woman carrying a leathern bag of water on her shoulder. Out of kindness, he took the bag from her and carried it himself. He asked if she had a male member at her home. She said that her husband was sent by Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) on a campaign where he was martyred and that her children have been orphaned. She said that she was herself bringing the water and earning a livelihood for her children and herself through hard labor. The Imam (a.s) came home after leaving the water bag at the woman's home. The whole night he was thinking about the troubles that family was facing. Early morning he bought the necessities for food and went to the house of the woman. When he knocked at the door, the woman asked who it was. The Imam (a.s) said that he was the same person who had carried the water bag to he home. She opened the door and the Imam (a.s) entered. He gave her the food materials he had brought. He asked her if she wanted to knead the flour or to tend to her children. She said that she would knead the flour and he can tend to her children in that time. When she finished the kneading she said, O kind person! Now put fire to the oven!” The Imam (a.s) put firewood in the oven and lighted it. When the flames rose, he felt the heat and
:thought

”O `Ali! Feel the heat of keeping away from the orphans and the widows“

In that time a woman from the neighborhood came and told the woman if she was not ashamed of asking Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) to work on the hot oven. When she heard this, she was very sorry. She craved his pardons telling him that she had not recognized him. The Imam (a.s) said that he himself was sorry that he did not care for her and the children for so long

Once he came out of the Mosque after the prayers. He saw a woman crying at the threshold. The Imam (a.s) inquired the reason of her crying. She said that her husband was cruel and was committing excesses on her and he had sworn that he would kill her. The Imam (a.s) told her that he would call him over after the sun goes down and try to correct him. She expressed her doubt and fear that he might do something serious in that time. The Imam (a.s) then agreed to go to her house immediately in the hot sun. Reaching the house, he called for the man who came out. The Imam (a.s) told him that he should have fear of Allah and he should not trouble his wife. The man could not recognize the Imam (a.s) and asked who was he to interfere in his domestic matters. He stubbornly said that even if he were not troubling his wife earlier, he would do it. In that, time some of the neighbors too assembled there. When they saw Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) they told the person that he was speaking in that manner with the Imam (a.s). The man repented his behavior and promised that he would not be harsh with his wife thenceforth even if she were very unreasonable. The Imam (a.s) sent the woman home advising her not to disobey her husband

The Imam (a.s) used to do social service and give monetary assistance to the deserving at the cost of his own essential needs. No person asking for help went empty-handed from his door. Al-Mas`ūdi writes in Murūj al-Dhahab that one needy person asked for help. `Ali (a.s) asked Imam al-Hasan (a.s) to fetch ١ dirham from home and give him. Imam al-Hasan (a.s) came and told that there were only ٩ dirhams at home that were kept for buying the flour. `Ali (a.s) said that one should have more faith on what comes from Allah than on what is at one's home. He then asked him to fetch all those ٩ dirhams and give to the needy person. Imam al-Hasan (a.s) brought the money and gave to the person. In that time, a person came riding on a camel. The Imam (a.s) asked if the camel was for sale. The man said that it was for sale at a price of ١٤٠ dirhams. The Imam (a.s) bought the camel and said that the payment would be made in a week. In a short while, another person came and bought the camel from the Imam (a.s) for two hundred dirhams. The Imam (a.s) paid ١٤٠ dirhams to the man who sold the camel to him and went home with the balance of ٩٠ dirhams. When Fatimah al-Zahra' (a.s) asked him from where the money had come, he said, "Allah has sent me sixty dirhams for the six dirhams I gave in His way and that
:His word is true

”What you wear, give them to wear. What you eat, give them to eat“

Imam (a.s) had great concern for the slaves. He used to spend his hard-earned money to earn their freedom and to support them. He got the slaves released and provided them opportunities to flourish. He believed that progress is not associated with any particular race or family. He said that a slave too

TREATMENT OF THE CAPTIVES

TREATMENT OF THE CAPTIVES

Putting persons in incarceration is an ancient practice. When persons were termed criminals and defaulters by the ruling establishment, they were put in dark dungeons and jails. Therefore, the story of Yūsuf (a.s) being put in the jail is mentioned in the Holy Qur’an

فَلَبِثَ فِي السُّجْنِ بِضْعَ سِنِينَ.

”(so Yūsuf remained in the prison a few years. (١٢/٤٢...“

During the Prophet’s times, prisoners of war used to be kept in captivity. Even after the Prophet (a.s), persons used to be incarcerated for various offences. But instead of locking them up in any building, they used to be pushed into dark and empty wells. Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s) stopped this practice and kept them in specially constructed jails. He was the first to establish a full-fledged jail for the offenders. Shaykh `Ala’ al-Din writes

In Islam the first to build a jail was `Ali ibn Abi-Talib. The other Caliphs used to throw “ [the captives in to wells.”[١]

In the beginning the Imam (a.s) got an enclosure erected with bamboo and then :converter it into a permanent building. `Allamah al-Zamakhshari writes

He constructed the jail with bamboos and called it Mani` . When the thieves cut holes“ into that, walls were constructed with stones and pebbles and called the structure as [Makhis.”[۱]

During the Umayyad and `Abbasid reigns, the captives were put into dungeons and none was allowed to meet them. They were kept totally away from any exposure to the outer world. They were generally put to so much torture that few escaped alive .from captivity

Ali (a.s) never put anyone in captivity as a revenge. He generally punished such` persons with captivity who had cheated or usurped others assets and the assets of orphans. The purpose of keeping them in captivity for short spells was to reform their criminal tendency to help them reclaim the respect that they had lost. They were allowed to come out of the jail at appointed times at prayer times generally the gates of the jail were kept open. They were provided with dresses to suit the weather. If they came from economically better background, the cost of their upkeep used to be the responsibility of their families. If the captives were poor , their expenses were met .from the bayt al-mal

Footnote

Mu`āzarat al-Awā`il, Page ۱۶۴ [۱]

Al-Fā`iq, Vol ۱, Page ۱۸۸ [۲]

TREATMENT OF THE DHIMMIS

TREATMENT OF THE DHIMMIS

Dhimmi are those Jews, Christians and Magians of the Islamic state who pay Jizyah according to the agreement with them and in return, the State takes the responsibility of protecting their lives and properties. They will have all the economic freedoms but they will be prohibited from fighting with the Muslims or causing them harm in any way. About these Dimmi, Amir al-Mu`minin's attitude was that of kindness. He defined their economic and cultural rights and did not have any narrow-minded

attitude towards them. He gave them total freedom to follow their religious rites. He neither belittled them on account of subscribing to a different faith nor did he tolerate any oppression against them from any quarter. He also instructed his functionaries to keep in mind their rights and not deprive them of any thing that was rightfully theirs.

:Therefore, in the document that he wrote to Malik al-Ashtar, he said

p: ۵۳۴

Do not become a wild beast against them that you think of swallowing them. Among the subjects, there are two types of persons: one is your brothers in Faith and the other is creatures of Allah who look like you

It is evident from what the Imam (a.s) said here that he used to keep all men, on account of being men, at the same level. He gave as much importance to the relationship of humanity that he gave to religious unity. Therefore, on account of difference in faith and belief, he never deprived any one of his rights nor did he ever express hate for anyone subscribing to another faith. Because of this attitude, the Dhimmi always remained faithful with him. Ibn Abil-Hadid writes

What should I write about the person who the Dhimmi liked as much as their own [lives although they used to belittle the prophethood (of the Holy Prophet)]?

Once Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was traveling to al-Kūfah. On the way, a Dhimmi joined him on the journey. He asked the Imam (a.s) where he was heading to. The Imam (a.s) told him that he was going to al-Kūfah. After traveling for sometime, the Dhimmi wanted to take a diversion to go towards his destination. The Imam (a.s) too accompanied him. The Dhimmi said, "This way does not go to al-Kūfah, your destination." The Imam (a.s) replied, "I know! But good manners demand that I come with you some distance before I go my way! Our Prophet (a.s) has taught us these manners!" The man said, "It is an excellent Faith that gives such good lessons and I shall now come with you to al-Kūfah." Therefore he went with the Imam (a.s) to al-Kūfah and when he learned that he was traveling with Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) he embraced Islam

The introduction of Ibn Abil-Hadīd's Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah, Page v [١]

THE TRUSTS AND THE PROJECTS FOR PEOPLE'S WELFARE

THE TRUSTS AND THE PROJECTS FOR PEOPLE'S WELFARE

It is the demand of brotherhood and friendship that one does not keep only his personal interest in mind but he makes efforts to contribute to the welfare of humanity in general. Islam, with this in view, stressed on the one hand that the Muslims must observe the rites and prayers regularly, and on the other also exhorted people to do works of common welfare. Therefore, from the zakat it encouraged a head of expenses for the works of general welfare. This amount has to be spent on excavating wells, constructing lakes, constructing rest houses for travelers and constructing mosques. It encourages people to take up such constructive activities that benefit all men irrespective of their religious denomination

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s.), during his short period, despite being engrossed with rebels and traitors, did not close his eyes to the works of general welfare of the people and took up reform activities. Ibn Shahrashūb writes in his al-Manaqib that Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) built for the Hajjis seven water cisterns in Yanbu`. He got wells excavated in al-Madinah, al-Kūfah and al-Basrah and constructed a road between Makkah and al-Kūfah and affixed milestones enroute. On this road, many wells were excavated for the benefit of the travelers. He built a place for impounding stray animals that used to spoil the crops of the farmers. These animals were given feed at the expense of the bayt al-mal. When any owner came and gave evidence of his ownership, the animal was given to him

The Imam (a.s) dug several cisterns with his own hands, planted gardens and gave them to the poor Muslims. Therefore, a freed slave of the Imam (a.s), Abū-Nayzar says that once the Imam (a.s) came to his place. He served to him his frugal fare. Then the Imam (a.s) started digging a pit until he was drenched in sweat. When the spring flowed out of the cistern, he said that it was Perpetual Charity and wrote the following document with his own hand

This is what Allah's creature, `Ali Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) has given in charity. Both the fiefs `Ayn Abi-Nayzer and al-Bughaybughah have been given as sadaqah for the poor of al-Madinah and for the travelers, so that, through them he will save his face from the hellfire. Both these fiefs cannot be sold nor gifted until they return to Allah and He is the better Successor. However if al-Hasan and al-Husayn (a.s) need them, they [shall have no restriction and none other than them will have this right.]

Yaqūt al-Hamawi writes that Imam al-Husayn (a.s) was in debts when Mu`awiyah wanted to buy `Ayn Abi-Nayzar for ٢٠٠,٠٠٠ Dinars, but Imam al-Husayn (a.s) refused to sell it saying that his father had made of sadaqah of the fiefs to save himself from the Hellfire I cannot sell the two fiefs at any cost

Besides the cisterns of Abi-Nayzer and al-Bughaybughah, there were fiefs that had been converted into trusts at Yanbu`, Irbaja, Uraynah, Raghad, Razin and Rabah

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) gave special attention to the construction of mosques as well. He constructed the Masjid Fath in al-Madinah and a mosque near the grave of Hamzah. He built a Mosque in the Miqat and in al-Kūfah, al-Basrah and Abadan. While ...going to Siffin while he halted at Aqtar, he laid the foundation for a mosque there

UNREST AND ITS CAUSES**UNREST AND ITS CAUSES**

Amir al-Mu'minin's bay`ah was still in process when disruptive activities commenced and a web of intrigue was created around him. Mischief raised its head from all sides. When one mischief was dealt with, another presented itself. His short reign was marked with these troubles. Because of these intrigues some people have formed an opinion that the unrest was because of his political ineptitude and that Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was not capable of organizing the administration, law and order. No doubt, his period was faced with internecine warfare that did not allow any expansion in the realm. All this was the after effects of the earlier administrations. It is a fact the excess of wealth created a race for power. Because of the conquests, lot of wealth came in and the minds of the people turned from caliphate to monarchy. This tendency poisoned the entire environment. Any one else in that situation must have thrown down the gauntlet. But Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) faced all the odds with great .courage and equanimity

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) assumed caliphate when al-Madinah itself was the epicenter of intrigues. Men with the idea of revolt assembled from many places in al-Madinah. The functionaries of the previous administrations were conspiring to promote intrigue. Mu`awiyah was raring to declare himself independent in Syria. Al-Zubayr wished to establish himself in al-Kūfah and Talhah had his eyes focused on al-Basrah. All of them conspired to create hurdles at every point. They organized troops and threw challenge for fight. It was the sagacity of `Ali (a.s) that despite all the trouble he was able to run the administration and crush the rebellion whenever it raised its ugly head. The disparate people who gathered under his banner were not sincere to him. Coordinating with such groups and contending with the guerilla tactics of the enemies was not an easy task. But he faced the enemies with the same army of disparate groups and defeated them. The defeat of the Syrians too was almost certain but they

created rift in the army of `Ali (a.s). Despite these intrigues and unrest, he introduced many long lasting reforms and kept an eye on the issues of the people's welfare. That is the proof of his political acumen and capability of administration. Ibn Abil-Hadid

:writes

p: ۵۳۸

Some spokesmen of our sect say that if some impartial person considers the politics“ of `Ali (a.s) he will find that he was faced with such situation at the hands of his companions that notwithstanding the complications, his politics was no less than a [miracle.”[۱]

:The following were also the causes of intrigue and disturbance

The first fact was that `Ali’s politics was purely Islamic administration and he was not willing, at any cost, to sacrifice the moral and Islamic values for worldly power. Therefore, it was beyond him to think of trying to hold to the power with falsehoods and worldly-wise talk. If `Ali (a.s) had adopted the same tactics as did his adversaries, he would have succeeded as did they. But then caliphate would be termed Monarchy. It would not then be an example of the caliphate that has no space for stealth and falsehoods or the tricks of cheating and misguiding the people. It is evident that while on one hand the rules of morality and the norms of the Faith were there on the other there was every type of intrigue and false allegations. The opponents knew that the Imam (a.s) would not allow any bend in his principles took advantage of his :forthrightness and played all types of political tricks. Ahmad Hasan al-Zayyat writes

Ali (a.s) would not bend the principles of the Faith and was not aware of the worldly` “ manipulations. They were these lofty traits that Mu`awiyah used in his cunning to [turn the atmosphere against him.”[۲]

The second reason was that for the appeasement of the elite, the Imam (a.s) would not compromise the interests of the people. In fact, he gave precedence to the interest of the common man over that of the affluent class. He also instructed his :functionaries too to do the same. Therefore, he wrote to Malik al-Ashtar

Of all the methods you must like the method that is the best from the point of view of“ the truth and from the point of view of justice it must encompass everyone and in accord with the wish of the majority of the people. The discontent of the masses nullifies the agreement of the elite, and the disagreement of the elite can be ”.overlooked if the masses are in agreement

This attitude was not palatable to the minds that wanted power and wanted to maintain their status and the elitist position in the society. When they saw that this was not happening, they planned to turn the administration tipsy turvy. They impressed the people with their revolutionary slogans and stooped down to create .intrigue and discord

The third reason was that the Imam (a.s) was strictly following his principle of equitable distribution and not discriminating between people on the basis of race or geographical origin of persons. Although the commoners were happy with this attitude, but those who were used to getting preference over others on account of their origins were unhappy with the new regime. They first protested. But when they were unable to create impression with their voices, they went towards Syria where the base for intrigues against the Imam (a.s) was established. Al-Fudayl ibn Ju`dah :says

The main reason for opposition of Amir al-Mu'minin(a.s) was wealth and that he was“ not giving any preference to the Arab over the non-Arab, nor was he receiving the rich and the chiefs of tribes with any pomp and he also did not try to attract anyone towards himself. Mu`awiyah's attitude was exactly opposite of this. Therefore, they [left `Ali (a.s) and joined hands with Mu`awiyah.”[۳

When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was told that those who were expected to create intrigue or were having the notion to join Mu`awiyah, could be won over with gifts and :concessions, he said

Do you want me to take help of some people through foul means? Then, By Allah!“ Until the day when the sun keeps rising and the stars shining in the sky, I shall not be willing to do that. Even if the wealth of the Muslims was my own, even then I would [have distributed equitably, more so, the wealth belongs to them (the Muslims)!”[۴

Opposite this character and attitude of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was Mu`awiyah's attitude that for political ends he distributed huge amounts as gratification and was buying the Faith of some people. Once Jariyah ibn Qudamah, al-Ahnaf ibn Qays, Jawn ibn Qutadah and al-Hattat al-Mujashi`i came to Mu`awiyah. Mu`awiyah gave seventy thousand dirhams to al-Hattat and one hundred thousand to each of the others. When al-Hattat learnt of this differentiation, he told Mu`awiyah that he had insulted him in his tribe by giving one hundred thousand to others and only seventy :thousand to him. Mu`awiyah said

[I have bought their Faith from them!]"[۵“

”!Al-Hattat said, “Then! Buy my Faith as well

Where the state of affairs was such that the very faith was compromised for Dinar and dirham how could Amir al-Mu’minin’s policy of equity and fairplay keep such persons happy and satisfied. How could such persons be expected to remain attached to the Truth merely on the basis of their Faith

The fourth reason was that the acts that were against the Shari` ah had assumed the shape of acts within the requirement of the Shari` ah and were understood to be the part and parcel of the Faith. The Imam (a.s) was not ready to give them sanctity by approving of them. The minds of people are such that those things that enter their minds, they cannot shake them off nor do they want to hear anything against them. Therefore, the Imam (a.s) once said something from the pulpit when `Ubaydah al-Salmani stood up and said

More than your solitary opinion we like your opinion that is in accord with the opinion“ [of the group.”[۶

This difference of opinion too gave vent to intrigues and people used to gossip about anything that was contrary to their own thinking and created bad heart among the people and spread intrigue

The fifth reason was that Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s), announced the removal of all those functionaries who were retained by his predecessors. The reaction to this step was that these persons made common cause with those who were expecting crumbs of office and were denied, and they joined together to destroy the law and order by starting the movement to claim retaliation for the blood of `Uthman

Despite all these forces in operation, the manner in which Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) carried on the administration is reflective of his political vision and understanding of the situation. The intriguers went to any length imaginable to create intrigue and lawlessness in the realm

Footnote

Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by Ibn Abil-Hadīd, Vol ۲, Page ۱۸۴ [۱]

Al-Adab al-`Arabī, Page ۱۷۴ [۲]

Bihār al-Anwār, Vol ۹, Page ۵۳۹ [۳]

Al-Manāqib, Vol ۲, Page ۳۳ [۴]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vo ۳, Page ۲۳۱ [۵]

Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by Ibn Abil-Hadīd, Vol ۲, Page ۱۸۴ [۶]

DISMISSAL OF FUNCTIONARIES AND REASONS THEREOF

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When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) assumed the caliphate, the functionaries appointed by the previous regimes were holding the positions in all the provinces. These governors had made the life difficult for the Muslims. They used to trouble the people as they wanted. They had no fear of getting questioned by the center. The Imam (a.s) decided to do away with these functionaries

Mughirah ibn Shu`bah got wind of this plan and he came to the Imam (a.s) and said, "I am your well-wisher and feel that I must give you a suggestion that you do not immediately remove Mu`awiyah, `Abdullah ibn `Amir and other functionaries of the time of `Uthman. When they enter your bay`ah you might do as you wish!" The Imam (a.s) replied, "Your advice is very right from the worldly point of view, but

By Allah! I cannot be two sided in the matters of Faith nor will I tolerate dishonor and "[indignity in my reign." [۱]

Now Mughirah had no face to talk any more and went away. He was feeling for the turning down of his advice. The next morning he again went to the presence of the Imam (a.s) and said, "The suggestion that I gave yesterday was not good. After more thought I have come to the conclusion that it will be better to remove all the functionaries." Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was surprised at this change of heart when Ibn `Abbas came and inquired on what purpose Mughirah was there. The Imam (a.s) replied that he visited him the previous day and on that day to give advice. "Yesterday his suggestion was that I continue to retain the functionaries and do not effect any changes. Today he suggests that I must change all of them!" Ibn `Abbas said, "In yesterday's advice there is an element of thoughtfulness and today's suggestion smacks of his anger because of the turning down of yesterday's suggestion. Today's advice smells of his deceit. I endorse his first advice and suggest to you to continue with the functionaries until they give their allegiance to you. They may be removed .thereafter." said

If I leave Mu`awiyah on his position, it will mean that I am making the misguided as " [my associates." [Y

Similarly Ziyad Ibn Hanzalah al-Tamimi too gave a similar advice. But the Imam (a.s) did not give any cognizance to all these suggestions and depended on the veracity of his own decision. He stuck to his decision of deposing all the functionaries .immediately

In some peoples minds there is a thought that if the Imam (a.s) had accepted the suggestions he might not have faced the difficulties that were to follow. But the truth is that these functionaries did not turn rebellious because of their summary dismissal. They were the Imam's enemies since long. Even if they were left in their positions, they would consider the Imam (a.s) an impediment to their worldly schemes and would continue to weave the web of intrigue all the same. When both the alternatives seemed like bringing about the same result, then the Shari` ah demanded that the step that was commensurate with the demands of the Faith must be taken.

:Therefore, the reasons for the deposition of the functionaries were

Firstly, the first purpose of the Imam (a.s) was to establish a truly Islamic regime. To do this it was important to close the avenues of selfishness, opportunism, avarice and to take steps to cleanse the society of these ills. This was not possible only with the change of the caliph. It was very important to remove the functionaries who were taking shelter behind political subterfuges and playing the game of family relations with the previous incumbent. The history bears evidence that because of the activities of those functionaries, the Islamic way of life was falling behind. If those men were continued in their positions, it was not possible to constitute a truly Islamic establishment.

Secondly, the Muslims were demanding from `Uthman to remove those conceited and cruel functionaries and to place just and morally steadfast persons in their place. When these demands were turned down, they took revolutionary steps. If the Imam (a.s) had agreed with the suggestions not to disturb the set-up, then once again the tyranny of the functionaries would provoke the revolutionary tendencies in the people.

Thirdly, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was personally doubtful of the honesty and integrity of those functionaries and had been expressing his opinion about them in the past as well. In fact he had advised `Uthman to do away with the functionaries. `Uthman made some excuse or other to continue with the status quo. About Mu`awiyah he made an excuse that he was appointed by `Umar as the governor of Syria. This excuse did not have any weight! If the Imam (a.s) continued with those functionaries after assuming the caliphate, the people would think that the demand for dismissal was not in public interest and was just to come to power. When that purpose was achieved, out of political expedient, Mu`awiyah and the functionaries were allowed to .continue holding their positions

Fourthly, if for the strength and continuity of his regime the Imam (a.s) continued to have Mu`awiyah and other functionaries in their positions, it would have been termed as political weakness and people would say that despite the difference in the thinking he had bowed down to the circumstances and had no courage to remove them because of their influence and clout. The result would be that others would deem this .as a weakness and would start making unreasonable demands

Fifthly, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) had accepted the Caliphate with total sense of responsibility and therefore he could not have closed his eyes to the tyranny of the functionaries against the people. Otherwise, the responsibility would fall on him that despite knowing the natures and the way of functioning of those functionaries, he continued them in office. Therefore, at the first instance he had declared that he .would do away with those functionaries

Sixthly, `Ali (a.s) and Mu`awiyah belonged to two diametrically opposite groups. Mu`awiyah was from the group which was free of any binding of the Faith and were opportunists. Against this, `Ali's politics was not under the debris of opportunism. Nor was there any element of cunning and subterfuge in his political stand. Because of this diametrically opposite nature, it was not possible for Mu`awiyah to remain quiet even if he was allowed to continue with his position. He knew that `Ali (a.s) would get rid of him one day or the other. Therefore, if he were allowed to remain the governor for some more time, he would not have quietly spent those days. But he would try to enhance his power of wealth and recruit more men to side with him. He could even have entered into an agreement with the neighboring Roman Empire. Considering all this, was not it discreet to depose him immediately without giving him any more time .to continue with his machinations

Seventhly, Mu`awiyah was not only having the ambition of preserving and conserving his position of the governorate of Syria. He had set sights on taking his standard to the entire Realm. Therefore, during the time of `Uthman he gathered around him a coterie of the Umayyad who would back him to the hilt. He was looking for an opportunity, with their backing, to declare himself the king. Therefore, when he felt that the tide had turned against `Uthman, he thought of taking advantage of that by asking him to move to Syria under his protection and in al-Madinah he had the danger from the disgruntled lot. The purpose of Mu`awiyah was to remove `Uthman from the center and take the reins of the administration in his own hands. This way he could have easily converted the temporary control into permanent hegemony. But `Uthman refused to move to Syria and this subterfuge of Mu`awiyah failed. When `Uthman was assassinated, Mu`awiyah used the event as a tool to further his interests. And started demanding qisas for `Uthman's blood. If `Ali (a.s) had continued with retaining Mu`awiyah as the governor of Syria, he would have redoubled his activities to foment intrigue and trouble. If nothing, he would have spread the canard that `Ali (a.s) was responsible for the killing of `Uthman. If `Ali (a.s) gave evidence of his non-involvement in the assassination of `Uthman they would have said that without the allegiance of the people of Syria the caliphate of `Ali (a.s) was not valid. Thus Mu`awiyah would have continued with his intrigues whether he

.was in the governorate or not

p: ۵۴۷

Eighthly, the functionaries were not selected on merit or their sympathies for the welfare of the people. They were the recipients of the favor from their relative. Therefore, `Uthman removed `Ammar ibn Yasir from al-Kūfah and appointed his own cousin al-Walid ibn `Uqbah. Removed Abū-Mūsa from al-Basrah and placed his uncle's son `Abdullah ibn `Amir. `Uthman removed `Amr ibn al-`As from Egypt and placed `Abdullah ibn Sa`d. In this manner, he exhibited his nepotism by placing all his relations in positions of importance. Sa`id ibn Musayyab writes

Uthman mostly nominated only those persons from Banū-Umayyah for the “positions of governor who had not the privilege of companionship with the Prophet (a.s) and there used to be such talk about them that was not liked by the Prophet's [Companions.”[۳

When this selection was purely on the basis of partisanship and nepotism, maintaining them on the positions was not at all proper. It would have been tantamount to supporting the wrong step of the predecessor. It could never be expected that Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) would ever approve of a wrong step and perpetuate it

Ninthly, Amir al-Mu'minin had been observing that the past regimes had neglected the Ansar and the Hashemites. It went to the extent that the Shūra that was instrumental in bringing `Uthman to the caliphate too had no representation of the Ansar. `Uthman had adopted the yardstick of selecting the Umayyads for positions of importance. On account of this, the Hashemites and the Ansar were deprived of their rights and the group rivalries had started raising their head. If merit was made the yardstick, there was no reason why none of the Hashemite and Ansar could be selected for important assignments. This injustice could only be rectified by deposing the existing functionaries and making the fresh selection purely on the basis of merit

Tenthly, although the functionaries were the product of `Uthman's nepotism, during the period of his virtual siege in his home at al-Madinah, none of them came to his rescue during that period of one month although they had with them the army and all the materials of war at their disposal. When they had failed their benefactor and guardian, how could `Ali (a.s) expect any faithfulness from them. However, when `Uthman was killed, some of his sycophants started raising noises about qisas for his blood. They must have rushed from their provinces for the succor of their master while there was time for them to reach and save him! They had no reasonable excuse for this lethargy. Mu`awiyah, who was an expert at fabricating excuses, and knew the art of face saving, was not also able to make any plausible excuse for his inaction. Therefore, once Abul-tufayl al-Kittani came to him. Mu`awiyah asked him where he was when `Uthman was assassinated? He replied that he was in al-Madinah but he could not do anything for `Uthman. Mu`awiyah said that it was binding on him to help :and provide succor to `Uthman. Abul-tufayl said

What came in your way came in my way too! You kept sitting in Syria and the dark“ [clouds of calamity kept hovering over his head!”[۴

Mu`awiyah replied that what else he could do than fight for the retaliation for the blood of `Uthman. Abul-tufayl said that Mu`awiyah's and `Uthman's matter was the same as was mentioned by al-Ju`di, “When I died the world remembered me much, ”!in life none came to my rescue

Now we give the individual profiles of the functionaries to highlight our position
.further

Footnote

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۳, Page ۴۶۱ [۱]

Al-Istī`āb, Vol ۳, Page ۲۵۹ [۲]

Tārīkh al-Khulafā', Page ۱۱۰ [۳]

Murūj al-Dhahab, Vol ۲, Page ۶۲ [۴]

MU`AWIYAH IBN ABI-SUFYAN

MU`AWIYAH IBN ABI-SUFYAN

Mu`awiyah was born from the womb of Hind bint `Utbah and was the son of Abū-Sufyan ibn Harb. Hind was first married to Fakhah ibn Mughirah. When Fakhah was killed at the hands of Banū-Judhaymah, she married Hafs ibn Mughirah, and married Abi-Sufyan when Hafs died. Hind was on top of the roster of women of ill repute in Makkah and was in the forefront of the enemies of Islam. In the Battle of Uhud, she rendered martial songs to encourage the infidels to fight the Muslims. She chewed the liver of the Prophet's uncle, Hamzah, and set a record of barbarity. She was known from that time as The Eater of the Liver. Similarly Abū-Sufyan too was a sworn enemy of the Prophet of Islam (a.s) and was a part of the conspiracy that forced the Prophet (a.s) to migrate from Makkah to al-Madinah. Even after the Migration Abi-Sufyan continued to fight with the Prophet (a.s) and the battles of Badr, Uhud and al-Ahzab were fought by the infidels at his instance. When Makkah was conquered in ۱H, he accepted Islam along with his son Mu`awiyah to save his and his children's' lives.

:Jalaluddin al-Suyūti has written

Mu`awiyah, along with his father, accepted Islam on the day Makkah was conquered“ and participated in the Campaign of Hunayn. He was in the list of al-Mu'allafatu-
”Qulūbuhum

The al-Mu'allafatu-Qulūbuhum are the persons who did not embrace Islam through their own conviction but they had done it out of fear for their lives. It was like the abjectly defeated surrendering to the victor! Therefore, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) has said about them, "By Allah! They had not embraced Islam but had bowed down their heads!" Notwithstanding this explicit Islam of those persons, the Prophet (a.s) included them in the fold so that they might slowly understand the teachings of the Faith. In fact, to humor them he gave them more facilities than to the other Muslims. Therefore, from the booty of the Battle of Hunayn he gave more to Abū-Sufyan and his two sons Yazid and Mu`awiyah. Abū-Sufyan and his two sons got the share of al-Mu'allafatu-Qulūbuhum, that was a hundred camels each while the other Muslims got .four camels each

The control of Mu`awiyah over the territory of Syria came about in the following manner. Abū-Bakr decided to attack Syria He organized four contingents of men under Shurahbil ibn Hasnah, Abū-`Ubaydah al-Jarrah, Yazid ibn Abi-Sufyan and `Amr ibn al-`As. He made an agreement with these commanders that after achieving victory Abū-`Ubaydah would be the governor of Hims, Shurahbil ibn Hasnah of Jordan, `Amr ibn al-`As and `Alqamah ibn Majzaz of Palestine and Yazid ibn Abi-Sufyan of Damascus. Then all the four contingents took different routes and met at Yarmūk. The Muslims were confronted with a huge Roman army. They sent word to Abū-Bakr to send more men. He sent Khalid ibn al-Walid with ٢,٠٠٠ men from Iraq to Yarmūk. Now the total force available was ٤٤,٠٠٠ men. In Yazid's contingent Suhayl ibn `Amr and some other sheikhs were present as advisers. The standard of the .contingent was in the hands of Mu`awiyah

While this campaign was in progress, Abū-Bakr died on ۲۱ Jumada II, ۱۳ H. And the caliphate was transferred to `Umar. During his reign, in the month of Rajab ۱۴ H, after a siege of ۶ months Damascus was conquered and Yazid ibn Abi-Sufyan was appointed the governor. In ۱۸ H Yazid ibn Abi-Sufyan died of a plague and `Umar appointed his brother Mu`awiyah, who was present at Damascus, in his place. After the death of `Umar in ۲۳ H when `Uthman became the caliph, he gave Mu`awiyah the charge of Jordan, Palestine, Hims and Qinnasrin in addition to Damascus. The foundation for the influence that Mu`awiyah laid, `Umar gave it a practical shape and `Uthman strengthened it.

It is surprising that the Companions of the Prophet (a.s), whose services had been invaluable, were totally neglected and those who were open enemies of Islam, opponents of Banū-Hashim and always opposed the Prophet (a.s), were supported and promoted by the three caliphs.

Umar not only gifted the governorate of Damascus to Mu`awiyah but he laid out the road map for his influence and perpetuation. He instructed people that when they noticed the changing environment, they must migrate to Damascus and gather around Mu`awiyah. Therefore, Ibn Hajar al-Makki writes

Umar used to encourage people to follow Mu`awiyah and used to prepare them “that when there was division among the people, they must migrate and go to [Mu`awiyah in Syria.”[۱]

This fact does not need any proof that in the hearts of Banū-Umayyah there was always enmity and hatred for Banū-Hashim. In addition to this ancestral maternal grandfather `Utbah, brother Hanzalah and uncle al-Walid ibn `Utbah. It was the nature of the Arabs that they did not easily forget old enmities. Although Islam tried to change this evil trait in people, but the trait that remained with them for centuries could not be removed so fast. The farsighted eyes of `Umar were seeing that the spirit of hatred and revenge can raise its evil head in the form of war. It was possible that the circumstances changed and the power shifted to the hands of `Ali (a.s). In such an event the influence of Mu`awiyah might wane. Forecasting such a scenario

he advised people to migrate to Syria and assemble under the flag of Mu`awiyah. This, he thought would strengthen the hands of Mu`awiyah. In fact, such a thing did happen. As soon as `Ali (a.s) assumed power, people started moving towards Damascus in numbers. They looked like moving at the slightest hint of his eyebrows! If this dissent was not in the mind of `Umar, how was he advising people to assemble under Mu`awiyah so far ahead of that time. What sort of dissent he was forecasting that he advised people to gather under Mu`awiyah at Damascus and not in al-Madinah, to strengthen it, the original Dar al-Hijrah

When it was not hidden from `Umar the type of lifestyle that Mu`awiyah had adopted was certainly the emulation of Caesar and Khusrow which had nothing to do with the Spartan Islamic Lifestyle! Therefore, once `Umar was in Syria. He saw the pomp and pageantry of Mu`awiyah and said, “You look the Khusrow of the Arabs! I have heard that the needy come to your door standing there for long hours and you remain relaxing at home! “Mu`awiyah replied, “We are in such a land that where the sleuths of the enemy keep an eye on every move of ours and conveying the intelligence to their center. We want to frighten them with our pomp and show! “Hearing this reply, ”!`Umar said, “This is the talk of a clever person

:Al-Tabari writes that `Umar used to say

You talk of the cunning exploits of Caesar and Khusrow, although Mu`awiyah is living “ [amongst you!”[۲

But, despite this he paved the way for Mu`awiyah and put it in his mind that he should take advantage of the mutual differences and to usurp the caliphate Thus, psychologically he made him a candidate for the caliphate. Therefore, Ibn Abil-Hadid writes with reference to the book, Al-Safinah, by Abū-`Uthman al-Jahiz quoting what :`Umar told the members of the Shūra

If you act with the spirit of mutual cooperation and help and thoughtfulness, then you“ and your progeny will taste the caliphate. If you persist with envy and hate and hesitated in helping each other, then Mu`awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan will overwhelm you [and grab the caliphate.”[۳

If this talk had reached the ears of Mu`awiyah he must certainly have been motivated by the words and his mind might have started thinking in terms of getting the caliphate in the future. Therefore, his movements and actions very well demonstrated that from the time of `Uthman he had started running around to achieve his end. After the assassination of `Uthman, he redoubled his efforts. He tried all methods, fair and foul to achieve his end

When the Umayyad standard flew in Syria, there was an imprint of the Roman culture on it. Even after the advent of Islam, there the people were still under the influence of the Roman culture. Mu`awiyah too forsook the simple Islamic style of living and adopted the Roman ways. He lived in the lavish palace, Qasr al-Khadra', built by him. On the gates of the palace, he had liveried guards and the slaves in bejeweled girdles used to flit around him. This pomp was a reflection of the lifestyles of Caesar and Khusrow. This show and the furniture that would create a glow in the eyes of the beholder were sufficient to overwhelm anyone. But where he thought that the royal pomp and show might not work, he adopted another tactic. Therefore, `Amr Ibn al-`As once came to him with a delegation of the Egyptians. He wanted to belittle Mu`awiyah in the eyes of the delegates. `Amr told them that when they met Mu`awiyah, they should not address him as the caliph. And wish him as they do with any other Muslim. He also told them to adopt a style of conversation as they do talking to ordinary persons. He warned them not to be awed with his pomp and show. He told them that behaving that way, their respectability would enhance. Mu`awiyah had already guessed that `Amr had plans of making him seem unimportant in the eyes of the visitors. He ordered the guards that when the Egyptians arrived, they should shake them up that all their smartness would vanish. They should be under the impression that they were being pushed towards death. The guards followed the instructions. When they arrived, confused and disturbed, before Mu`awiyah, a person by name Ibn Khayyat came forward and said, "Peace be upon you, O Allah's messenger." Then all the Egyptians who followed did the same. `Amr was furious when he met them outside and said

Allah curse on you! I had asked you not even to address him as the caliph! You have “
[addressed him as ‘O Allah’s Messenger”][۴

This is surprising that Mu`awiyah is addressed as the prophet and he keeps listening to it. If anyone else were addressed that way, his spirit would shiver. If the quiet were with some meaning, he would have thought that the utterance was blasphemous. But he kept quiet all along. What would he do if that frightened delegation addressed him as the god? Would he keep quiet even then or reprimand them for their blasphemous
?talk

Where the bent of mind is of that type, it cannot be imagined that the commandments of Islam are respected at all. Therefore, Islam has made the wearing of silks as taboo for the Muslim men. He wore silks without any reservation. He used vessels of gold and silver and intoxicants were in daily use! Even these drinks were served to the others. `Abdullah ibn Buraydah says that he went with his father to the court of Mu`awiyah. They were asked to squat on the floor. After the meal, they were served
:spirits. His father, when he saw the spirits, said

From the time the Prophet (a.s) had termed the spirits taboo (haram), I have never“
[touched them.”][۵

There is a long list of Mu`awiyah’s innovations in the Faith. Therefore, he termed the illegitimate issue of his father, Ziyad ibn Sumayyah as Ziyad ibn Abi-Sufyan, made a joke of the Prophet’s saying, “The child is his father’s and stone is for the adulterer.” In sermons, Mu`awiyah used to talk ill of `Ali (a.s). He started the practice of reciting the adhan prior to the `Id prayers. He gave priority to the Sermon of the `Id to `Id Prayers. He started delivering the khutbah sitting down instead of standing up. After Mu`awiyah, Banū-Umayyah made it their practice. After the Umayyads, when Abul-`Abbas al-Saffah, the first `Abbasid ruler, became the Caliph, he started delivering
:the khutbah standing. Then the people shouted

O son of the uncle of the Prophet (a.s)! You have revived the Sunnah! May Allah keep “
[you alive!”[۶

Mu`awiyah stopped reciting the basmalah [۷] loudly during prayers. Muhammad ibn
: `Aqil writes

Mu`awiyah was the first in al-Madinah to avoid saying the basmalah loudly during“
the prayer. The Muhajirūn and Ansar raised their voices against this and said, ‘O
[Mu`awiyah! You have stolen the Basmalah!’”[۸

Besides changing the clear commands of Islam, he invented several customs and
festivities that were prevalent amongst people of other faiths. He appointed other
people on key positions. He tried to disturb the central status of al-Madinah. The
person in charge of his main office was Sirjawn al-Rūmi, a Christian. The person
responsible for collection of the tribute in Hims too was a Christian, Ibn Awsal. When
Mu`awiyah went to al-Madinah during the Hajj in ۵۰ H, he wanted to shift the Pulpit to
Damascus. When they tried to lift it, there was suddenly an eclipse of the sun. The
people who saw this phenomenon were frightened. Seeing the anger of the people,
Mu`awiyah desisted from putting his plan into operation. He made an excuse that by
lifting the pulpit from its place he wanted to see whether it was affected with the
.mites

This event is similar to that of Hassan Ibn Kalal al-`Abdi. He too wanted to dismantle
the Ka`bah and carry the stones to Yemen but nature did not allow him to fulfill his
wish. In Mu`awiyah’s case, too nature expressed its fury in the form of the solar
.Eclipse

There are plenty of acts of Mu`awiyah that were contrary to the norms of the Faith. But his naming his evil son, Yazid, as his successor was worst act that he perpetrated. This was such a heinous act that the group which abstains from criticizing the Companions, closing their eyes and ears to their deeds, cannot control themselves from condemning this episode from Mu`awiyah's evil life. They were forced to accept that Mu`awiyah had turned caliphate towards Monarchy naming his son as his heir! He laid the cornerstone of such an evil innovation that it continued for centuries in the Islamic dominions. One, who sat on the throne of caliphate with cruelty and oppression, considered it his fief and put his uncouth, undeserving and evil son on that throne. Thereafter every person who usurped the position called himself the caliph of the Muslims and the chain of succession continued

This act of Mu`awiyah was not only contrary to the norms of Shari`ah, but from the moral aspect too was very undesirable. He had signed a covenant with Imam al-Hasan (a.s) that he would not nominate anyone as his successor. But in breach of the agreement, despite the opposition of the Muslims, imposed his son on them. A son who was a known debauch and drunkard. He was the practitioner of all the evil habits that can be named! Such a person was nominated to be the caliph of the Muslims! The people from whom he feared some resistance, he did not trouble them as a strategy. Some persons he threatened and silenced them, those who were not acquiescing to his demand, he silenced them by administering poison through cunning and stealth. Therefore, Imam al-Hasan (a.s) was poisoned by Ju`dah bint al-Ash`ath. Al-Mas`ūdi writes

Mu`awiyah secretly sent her a message that if she killed Hasan (a.s) by some means, “[he would give her one hundred thousand dirhams and will marry her to Yazid.”[۹

According to the terms of the conspiracy Mu`awiyah sent to her one hundred thousand dirhams but did not fulfill the second term of the agreement saying that Yazid’s life was very precious for him

Similarly Mu`awiyah got Khalid ibn al-Walid’s son poisoned. Ibn `Abd al-Barr writes that Mu`awiyah, delivering a sermon in Syria, said, “O People! I have grown old and my death is near! I wish to make arrangement for the realm after me.” He was under the impression that the people would themselves suggest the name of Yazid awed by the wealth and pomp of the court. Then under the cover of the public opinion he would announce the succession of Yazid. But the evil acts of Yazid were no secret for the people. They could not have imagined that Yazid’s name could even be mentioned about the caliphate. They took the name of `Abd al-Rahman ibn Khalid. When Mu`awiyah heard the name of `Abd al-Rahman coming from the people instead of Yazid’s name, a knot was formed in his evil heart. He instantly decided to remove this stone from the path of his son. Therefore, when he heard of the illness of `Abd al-Rahman, he deputed a physician from the court to administer the medicine that cured the poor person forever

[He was to go to him, administer the medicine and thus finish him.”[۱۰“

Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi-Bakr too was the victim of poison as well. Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani writes that when Mu`awiyah wanted to take bay`ah from the people for :Yazid, `Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi-Bakr said

Is it the reign of Heracles that one Caesar dies and the next Caesar take his place? By“ [Allah! We are not ready for this!”[١١]

Mu`awiyah sent him one hundred thousand dirhams to close his mouth. But he returned the money and said that he was not willing to sell his Faith for the world. The result of this was that on the way to Makkah, he must have traveled about ten miles :when he was sent to eternal sleep. Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani writes

[Abd al-Rahman died suddenly while in sleep!”[١٢ “

Footnote

Tathīr al-Jinān, Page ١٩ [١]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٤, Page ٢٤٤ [٢]

Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by Ibn Abil-Hadīd, Vol ١, Page ٣٧ [٣]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٤, Page ٣٤٤ [٤]

Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Vol ٥, Page ٣٤٧ [٥]

Muhāṣarat al-Awā'il, Page ٨٤ [٦]

Basmalah is saying, “bismillāhirrahmānirrahīm (In the Name of Allah, the All- [٧] ”(beneficent, the All-merciful

Al-Nasā'ih al-Kāfiyah, Page ٩٤ [٨]

Murūj al-Dhahab, Vol ٢, Page ٥٠ [٩]

Al-Istī`āb, Vol ٢, Page ٤٠١ [١٠]

Al-Isābah, Vol ٢, Page ٤٠٠ [١١]

AMR IBN AL-`AS`

AMR IBN AL-`AS`

Amr's father was al-`As ibn Wa'il whom the Holy Qur'an has termed abtar or`
issueless and the enemy of the Prophet (a.s). `Amr's mother was Salma bint
Harmalah and her title was al-Nabighah. She was brought as a captive from Banū-
Ghazzah. She was auctioned in the Mart of `Ukaz. Fakhrah ibn Mughirah bought her
and resold to `Abdullah ibn Jad`an. Thus, changing hands, she reached al-`As ibn
.Wa'il and gave birth to `Amr

Amr had inherited the enmity for Islam from his father. Therefore, he was in the first list of the enemies of the Faith. He used to utter impertinent things about the Prophet (a.s) and take part in the activities against him. When he was helpless with Islam gaining importance and power, he accepted the Faith and joined the ranks of the Muslims. `Umar, during his caliphate, appointed him the governor of Palestine and Jordan. When that territory came under Mu`awiyah, `Amr was sent with the army to Egypt. He fought with the Egyptians, defeated them, and was named the governor there. After `Umar, `Uthman too kept him in that position for sometime. He deposed him in the year ۲۶ H and replaced him with his relative, `Abdullah ibn Sa`d. `Amr, who was a supporter of `Uthman turned against him because of removal from the governorate of Egypt. This was not strange because nothing else could be expected from his selfish nature. This enmity became so much that he gathered a coterie around himself and started creating opinion against `Uthman. Ibn `Abd al-Barr :writes

Uthman removed `Amr from the Emirate of Egypt and he started instigating people ` “ [against him. He also used insulting words against `Uthman.”[۱]

He did not stop at this. In anger `Amr divorced his wife Ummu-Kulthūm bint `Uqbah who was half sister of `Uthman. He worked actively to over-turn `Uthman’s regime. When `Uthman noticed this, he called `Amr and told him, “O son of al-Nabighah! Beware of such acts! Shun hypocrisy and adopt nobility.” `Amr too replied in the same tone and heaped complaints against the old person. `Uthman was taken aback at his talk and told him that he had no right to interfere with his work and to criticize him. He said that even during the days of ignorance he was more respected than him and that presently he was holding a very important position. `Amr said that he had seen his father, `Affan, and that he was no match for his own father, al-`As ibn Wa’il. At this `Uthman did not say anything but Marwan, who was listening, became angry and told `Uthman, “You have come to such a pass that `Amr is not sparing even your father.” After this harsh exchange, `Amr redoubled his campaign of vilification and registered the opinion of Talhah, al-Zubayr and others against the caliph. When the sentiments of the people were aroused against `Uthman and he was in literal house-arrest,

` Amr left for Palestine where he was having a palatial house for himself to see his designs bear fruit against the caliph from a distance and save himself from the blame for the consequences

p: ۵۶۰

One day he was busy conversing with Salamah ibn Rawh al-Judhami and two of his own sons, Muhammad and `Abdullah, that a horseman passed that way. He called him and asked from where he was coming. He said that he was from al-Madinah and informed that `Uthman was still in heavy siege at his residence. Then another rider from al-Madinah passed that way who informed that `Uthman was assassinated. On hearing this `Amr said

I am the father of `Abdullah! In whatever task I put my hand; I never leave it half“
[finished!”[۲

:Ibn al-Athir writes that when the news of `Uthman’s killing reached him, `Amr said I am `Abdullah’s father! I have killed `Uthman living in the Valley of al Saba. If Talhah “ becomes the caliph, he is a young Arab, kind and charitable. If ibn Abi-Talib gets the [caliphate then from the point of view of governance he is not a desirable person.”[۳

He was still celebrating his success when he received the news of `Ali (a.s) becoming the caliph. As soon he got this news, he caught hold of his head. After some days when he learned that `A’ishah, Talhah and al-Zubayr have turned against `Ali (a.s), his hope was revived and awaited the result of the Battle of the Camel. But when he heard of the victory of `Ali (a.s), all his hopes were shattered. However, when he heard that Mu`awiyah had refused to owe allegiance to `Ali (a.s) he saw a ray of hope in the development. He did have the craving for power and had spent a major portion of his life holding positions of power. Although he was old, his desire for power was still young! Therefore, he approached Mu`awiyah with a wish for the governorate of Egypt. After coming to an understanding with him, he performed his deed that has gone into the annals of the history

Amr ibn al-`As was a past master at intrigue and conspiracy. He was an adept at creating differences between persons for his own benefit. Although he had to sacrifice the norms of Faith and morality to achieve his ends, he never thought about it for a moment. The events are the proof that Ibn al-`As felt no compunction for the acts that he perpetrated. After living a long life of ninety years, he died on `Id al-Fitr 43 H. His son first offered the funeral prayer followed by the `Id Prayer

Footnote

Al-Istī`āb, Vol 3, Page 322 [1]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol 3, Page 392 [2]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol 3, Page 141 [3]

ABDULLAH IBN SA`D`

ABDULLAH IBN SA`D`

Abdullah had shared his mother's milk with `Uthman. He was the son of Sa`d ibn `Abi-Sarh. Sa`d was amongst the persons who conspired against Islam remaining within it. Because of this attitude, such persons are termed as hypocrites. Ibn `Utaybah writes

[Abdullah's father, Sa`d, was in the group of the hypocrites (munafiqūn).]"[1]`

Although `Abdullah was a companion of the Prophet (a.s) and a transcriber of Qur'an, his mind was same as that of his father. The proof of this was that when the Prophet (a.s) dictated the Verses, `Abdullah used to make alteration in the words at will. Therefore, instead of the word al-kāfirin (the disbelievers), he wrote al-zālimin (the unjust ones); and instead of al-`aziz al-hakim (the Almighty, the Wise), he wrote al-`alim al-hakim (the All-knowing, the Wise). Once transcribing a verse about human birth, in the context of the Verse, the following words came out of his mouth: fa-tabaraka allahu ahsanu al-khāliqin (so blessed be Allah, the best of the creators). The Prophet (a.s) said, "This too is a part of the Verse. Write it down." Although he wrote it down, a doubt crept into his mind. Whether the Qur'an is a revealed scripture or the

Prophet (a.s) himself has thought it out. Then he started gossiping about it that the Qur'an was not a Divine Revelation and that he himself could produce such literature!

:The following Verse was then revealed

p: ۵۶۲

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ قَالَ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ وَلَمْ يُوحَ إِلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ وَمَنْ قَالَ سَأُنزِلُ مِثْلَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ.

And who is more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allah, or says: It has been“ revealed to me; while nothing has been revealed to him, and he who says: I can
”(reveal the like of what Allah has revealed? (٦/٩٣

Because of this loose talk, the Prophet (a.s) exiled `Abdullah from al-Madinah. He therefore turned against Islam, went to Makkah and continued his campaign of vilification. He told people that Muhammad (a.s) himself makes the verses and says that they are revealed to him. `Uthman was always in the forefront of taking up the cause of such person. He therefore recommended to the Prophet (a.s) to allow `Abdullah to return to al-Madinah. But the Prophet (a.s) refused him entry. When Makkah was conquered and the Prophet (a.s) entered there as the victor, he ordered `Abdullah ibn Sa`d to be executed even if he clings to the cover of the Ka`bah. When `Uthman learned about this order of the Prophet (a.s), he worried very much and hid `Abdullah somewhere. When the events normalized he took `Abdullah to the Prophet (a.s) and said, “O Prophet of Allah (a.s)! This `Abdullah ibn Sa`d has come to owe his allegiance to you. Do give him amnesty.” The Prophet (a.s) neither extended his hand for bay`ah nor did he speak anything. He was quiet for along time. On the other, hand the insistence of `Uthman increased. In the end, the Prophet (a.s) gave amnesty to him. When `Abdullah left, the Prophet (a.s) told the persons sitting with him that I kept quiet for such a long while that someone of you rose to slay the person, “Was there none amongst you who could rush towards that dog and killed him before I gave him
[amnesty.”[٢

Umar said, “O Prophet of Allah (a.s)! If you had given slight message through your`
”!eyes, we could have slain him

The Prophet (a.s) said, “I do not order executions with my eyes nor do the prophets
[communicate through their eyes.”][۲

Uthman, during his days, closed his eyes to the behavior of `Abdullah ibn Sa`d and` appointed him governor to Egypt. After taking charge of the emirate of Egypt, he adopted the same attitude that was feared from him. There was a spate of tyranny and oppression in the province. Contentment of the people turned into penury. Excepting some favorites of `Uthman, the entire population of Egypt was unhappy. People turned against the governor and they had a similar feeling for the center. In the end Muhammad ibn Abi-Hudhayfah overturned the establishment in Egypt and released the people from the clutches of the tyrant. Muhammad ibn Abi-Hudhayfah was brought up by `Uthman and was under his care after his father, Hudhayfah, was killed in the Battle of Yarmūk. When Muhammad grew up, he asked `Uthman to give him permission to work for the promotion and propagation of Islam and go for jihad with some contingent. `Uthman sent him with `Abdullah ibn Sa`d to help him in Egypt. He went with some companions to Egypt. Muhammad ibn Hudhayfah was a very pious person. When he saw the maladministration in Egypt, he tried to convince `Abdullah to mend his ways. When he did not pay any heed to Muhammad’s repeated appeals, he openly started preparing people to rise against `Abdullah. He also reported about the conditions in Egypt to `Uthman and told him that he had imposed such an evil person over the people in Egypt whom the Prophet (a.s) declared a persona non grata. They people of Egypt were impressed with the piety of Muhammad ibn Hudhayfah. They gathered around him. When he saw the situation worsening, `Abdullah ibn Sa`d wrote to `Uthman that his ward ibn Abi-Hudhayfah has spoiled the environment in Egypt and was instigating the people to rebel. If immediate arrangements are not made, things might go out of control. `Uthman could not think of any other strategy than controlling the situation through the use of wealth. He therefore sent some expensive garments and thirty thousand dirhams to Muhammad ibn Abi-Hudhayfah. This strategy did not work on Muhammad. He took

:the garments and the money to the people and said

p: ۵۶۴

O group of Muslims! You do not see this act of `Uthman that he wants to trick me in“
[the matter of the Faith and has sent to me this wealth as a gratification.”[۴

The result of this episode was that the opposition further increased. And the feelings of rebellion came up in the minds of the people. People openly started talking against `Abdullah ibn Sa`d. When `Uthman heard about this situation, he wrote to Muhammad that he did not expect such behavior from him. But Muhammad Ibn Abi-Hudhayfah was not impressed with the fans of `Uthman appeals and he continued his campaign against `Abdullah ibn Sa`d. At last one group of Egyptians went as a delegation to al-Madinah to plead with the caliph for removal of `Abdullah ibn Sa`d. In this group, there was Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr too was there who was associated
.with the movement of Muhammad ibn Abi-Hudhayfah

Following this delegation, `Abdullah ibn Sa`d too proceeded towards al-Madinah. Now the administration of Egypt came to the hands of Muhammad ibn Abi-Hudhayfah. When `Abdullah reached Aylah road to al-Madinah he learnt that `Uthman had been besieged in his own house and that going there would be fraught with danger. He returned to Egypt from there. But Muhammad ibn Abi-Hudhayfah did not allow him entry into the city. When he found no place of succor, he proceeded towards Palestine and halted at the border between Egypt and Palestine. He waited there to see what turn the events took. During those days, one person passed that way. He informed that `Uthman was assassinated in al-Madinah. He said “We are Allah’s and to Him do we return.” He asked who was elected as the next caliph. The person said it was `Ali Ibn Abi-Talib.” `Abdullah again said, “We are Allah’s and to Him do we return.” The man asked him, “Do you consider the assassination and selection of `Ali (a.s) to the caliphate as tragedies of the same order?” Then the person looked at him with deep intent and said, “Are you `Abdullah ibn Sa`d?” He replied, “Yes. I am!” The man said, “Then, run and save your life! Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) will put you and your associates to sword or will send you into exile!” `Abdullah proceeded from there to Damascus and lived there for some time under the protection of Mu`awiyah. He
.died at `Asqalan in ۳۶ or ۳۷ H

Al-Ma`ārif, Page ١٣١ [١]

Ansāb al-Ashrāf, Vol ١, Page ٣٥٨ [٢]

Ansāb al-Ashrāf, Vol ١, Page ٣٥٨ [٣]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٣, Page ١٣٥ [٤]

AI-WALID IBN `UQBAH

AI-WALID IBN `UQBAH

Al-Walid was born to Arwa bint Kurayz. His father was `Uqbah ibn Abi-Mu`it. He was `Uthman's half brother through his mother. `Uqbah was also in the forefront of fighting against the Muslims. The Muslims took him captive, produced before the Prophet (a.s), and was executed under the command of the Prophet (a.s). Al-Walid and his brother `Amarah embraced Islam after the conquest of Makkah. This change .was not because of any conviction, but the circumstances forced them to capitulate

When the Prophet (a.s) selected different persons for the duty of collection of zakat and sadaqah, al-Walid was deputed to the tribe of Banul-Mustalaq. When he reached near those hamlets, the people came out in numbers to welcome him. When he saw them advancing, he ran away thinking that they had recanted from the Faith and were coming to attack him. He went to the Prophet (a.s) and told him that the Banul-Mustalaq had recanted and were refusing to pay the zakat. The Prophet (a.s) expressed surprise at this report and wanted to take steps to reprimand and punish them. When Banul-Mustalaq heard about this, they came to the presence of the Prophet (a.s) and said, "O Prophet of Allah (a.s)! You have received a wrong report about us! We have neither recanted from the Faith nor have we refused to pay the :zakat." In this regard, the following Verse was revealed

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْحَبُوا عَلَيَّ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ.

O you who believe! If an evildoer comes to you with a report, look carefully into it, lest“
”(you harm a people in ignorance, then be sorry for what you have done. (٤٩/٦)

Once he told `Ali (a.s) that he was no less than him in the martial skill of swordsmanship and combating. The Imam (a.s) said, “Be quiet! You impious liar!” At
:that time, the following Verse was revealed

أَفَمَن كَانَ مُؤْمِنًا كَمَن كَانَ فَاسِقًا لَّا يَسْتَوُونَ.

Is he then who is a believer like him who is a transgressor? They are not equal.“
”(٣٢/١٨)

Ibn `Abbas says, “This Verse was revealed about `Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s) and al-Walid
[ibn `Uqbah.”[١]

In both the Verses al-Walid is termed as impious. Then in all meetings and groups,
people called him fasiq. Until the time the Holy Qur’an is recited he will be
.remembered with this title

Sa`d ibn Abi-Waqqas, whom `Umar had selected to the Shūra, was deposed from the
governorate of al-Kūfah by `Uthman and sent the fasiq al-Walid ibn `Uqbah to
replace him. He reached al-Kūfah in the scorching sunlight and went to the house of
Sa`d who had no inkling that the person had brought the orders for his dismissal. He
pleasantly asked, “What brings you here?” al-Walid said, “I have been appointed the
governor of al-Kūfah. I have been instructed to remove you and take charge of the
bayt al-mal and the functionaries appointed by you.” Sa`d said, “I am wondering
whether you people have become more wise and sagacious or we are the victims of
foolishness and stupidity. What is this sudden confusion?” al-Walid said, “With whom
this regime kept its faith that it would place faith in you! It is with some in the morning
and with someone else in the evening! Do not feel for what you have lost. One day or
other it was bound to go!” Sa`d said angrily, “I feel that you people consider this
country as a fief left to you by your ancestors! Give whatever you like to any one and

”snatch away whatever you wish to take

p: ۵۶۷

Sa`d handed over the emirate of al-Kūfah to al-Walid and came away to al-Madinah. Once in the position of the governor, power went to the head of al-Walid. He started to have parties of drink and dance. Ibn ` Abd al-Barr writes

Al-Asma`i, Abū-` Ubaydah, Husham ibn al-Kalbi, and others say that al-Walid ibn“
[` Uqbah was impious and an alcoholic.”[۲

One of the chief courtiers of al-Walid was a Christian, by the name of Abū-Zubayd al-ta`i. Al-Walid took a house near the mosque and gave him. He was using the compound of the mosque for his passage. He was seen by people walking through the enclosure of the mosque in a drunken, inebriated condition. They were angry, but afraid of questioning the governor’s friend! Once an incident happened that the people could not control their anger any more. What happened was that, in an intoxicated state, al-Walid offered four genuflections instead of two mandated for the Morning Prayer. He told the people that he was in a state of trance that morning. He said that he could make more genuflections if they wished! Instead of reciting the verses, he was repeating the following couplet during the prayer, “The heart is old and the rabab (stringed musical instrument) too is old! But the heart is still stuck in
”!that

The people of al-Kūfah were now fed up of al-Walid. They complained to ` Uthman and brought witnesses for the alcoholism of al-Walid. ` Uthman had no other alternative than of calling him to al-Madinah and punishing him with whipping. In his place Sa`id ibn al-` As was sent as the governor of al-Kūfah. Sa`id ordered the people that al-Walid was using to be cleansed by washing. When Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) became the caliph, al-Walid moved away to al-Basrah. After some time he moved to al-Riqqah where he died and was buried beside his friend Abū-Zubayd al-ta`i

Al-Istī`āb, Vol ۳, Page ۵۹۶ [۱]

Al-Istī`āb, Vol ۳, Page ۵۹۶ [۲]

SA`ID IBN AL-`AS

SA`ID IBN AL-`AS

Sa`id was the son of al-`As ibn Sa`id who was killed by `Ali (a.s) in the Battle of Badr. Sa`id spent his childhood, after being orphaned, under the care of `Uthman. After the conquest of Syria he moved there to live with Mu`awiyah. Later on he moved from Syria to al-Madinah. In ۳۰ H when al-Walid was dismissed from the governorate of al-Kūfah, he was appointed in his place. Sa`id was a self-centered, conceited and aggressive person. Ibn `Abd al-Barr writes

[Sa`id was cruel, vitriolic and aggressive.] [۱]

His conceit and cruelty is evident from one incident. Once he gathered some persons for the sighting of the `Id Crescent. He asked if some of them had sighted the moon. Hashim ibn `Utbah said that he had seen the moon and others said that they had not. Then Sa`id said that the one eyed person has sighted the moon and you have not been able to see it! Hashim had lost one of his eyes in the Battle of Yarmūk. He was angry at this style of speaking and asked why he was making a remark about his eye that he lost fighting in the Way of Allah! Saying this Hashim went home and people kept coming to him to confirm about the sighting of the Crescent. On the other hand Sa`id was angry and upset the way Hashim retorted. He sent some men to his house and got him beaten up and burned down his house. When this information reached al-Madinah, Sa`d ibn Abi-Waqqas told `Uthman that this tyranny must be stopped forthwith. When no satisfactory reply was forthcoming, he wanted to burn down Sa`id's house that was in al-Madinah. But on the intervention of `A'ishah he desisted from doing it

The period during which Sa`id was the governor, he used harsh, tyrannical methods with the people. He treated the bayt al-mal as his personal treasury and gave whatever he wanted to anyone. He neither had Allah's fear nor was there any accountability required by the center. If anyone raised a voice against him, he crushed it. His impunity became so much that, once, when al-Kūfah was full of important visitors, he said

[The land in Iraq is only for Quraysh (Banū-Umayyah)]“[۷

Malik Ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar could not keep quiet listening to this. He said that the lands that were conquered with their swords could not become the fiefs of your tribe. On this one senior officer of the police, `Abd al-Rahman ibn Jahsh al-`Asadi got entangled with Malik al-Ashtar saying that what the emir said was right. When the dispute increased, at the instance of Malik al-Ashtar, the important persons of al-Kūfah, roughed him up and rendered him incapable of walking back home. After this event the suppressed flames of hatred rose. Wherever some people gathered they started talking ill of Sa`id and blamed `Uthman who had appointed him. Sa`id could not do anything more than stopping those people from visiting him and wrote to `Uthman that certain persons were trying to create mischief against the state. `Uthman wrote in his reply that those persons must be exiled to Syria and wrote to Mu`awiyah that some mischief mongers were being sent to Syria who have to be kept in check that they do not conspire against the State. As a result, some persons were forcibly sent to Syria

The persons who were termed mischievous were the important persons of al-Kūfah, amongst whom were the memorizers of Qur'an, Companions of the Prophet (a.s) and some others who were known for their piety. Main persons amongst them were Malik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar, Malik ibn Ka`b al-Arhabi, al-Aswad ibn Yazid al-Nakha`i, `Alqamah ibn Sawhan al-`Abdi, Zayd ibn Sawhan, al-Harith ibn `Abdullah al-A`war, Thabit ibn Qays al-Hamdani, Kumayl ibn Ziyad al-Nakha`i, Jundub ibn Zuhayr al-Ghamidi, Jundub ibn Ka`b al-Azdi, `Urwah ibn al-Ja`d and `Amr ibn al-Hamq al-Khuza`i. The crime for which they were being exiled from their homes was that they had asserted their rights and had raised their voices against the tyranny of the ruling class. If, in a state that had claims of democracy, they protested against the tyranny and encroachment of a particular tribe on the lands jointly owned by the people, what wrong did they commit? If the same persons had adopted the policy of nodding their heads in assent to the deeds of the governor, they would have remained in his good books. But these were the true practitioners of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. If they had adopted an aggressive attitude, it was because of their moral duty to
.express the truth

When they reached Damascus, they were accommodated at Kunyah-Maryam, and instead of being harsh with them, Mu`awiyah adopted a soft political attitude with them. He told them that Islam had elevated their status that they had ascendance over other people. If Quraysh were not there, they would have remained in the darkness and backwardness. He said that he was told they were critical of the Quraysh functionaries of al-Kūfah and publicly criticized them. The state was tolerating their activities so far. If they did not mend their ways, they might come to great hardship. Sa`sa`ah told Mu`awiyah that he talked of the superiority of the Quraysh, but at no time they were ever more than us in numbers nor in strength. And his saying that the rulers are like shield for them, let the shield break and they would
.make their own shield

The talks proceeded in this manner. Once Mu`awiyah said that everyone knew that his father, Abū-Sufyan, was the most respected person of the Quraysh but Muhammad (a.s) had the Prophethood. If they were the progeny of Abū-Sufyan they would all be clever and intelligent. Sa`sa`ah said that he was wrong. Adam (a.s) who was certainly better than Abū-Sufyan was made by Allah and put His spirit in him and ordered the angels to prostrate to him. In his progeny, there are clever ones, and there are foolish persons as well. There are good persons as well as bad. Mu`awiyah could not reply to this and kept quiet. In another meeting, he said that they should keep their own welfare in view and they should adopt an attitude that should be beneficial for their tribe and their people. Sa`sa`ah asked him since when he had started giving sermons about good behavior? Was there any welfare for them that they disobey Allah and follow his advice? Mu`awiyah replied that he was asking them to fear Allah and follow the Prophet (a.s) and hold the rope of Allah fast and do not create dissent. Sa`sa`ah asked why, Mu`awiyah, had acted against the commands of the Prophet (a.s)? Mu`awiyah said that if such a thing has happened, he would express his repentance over what happened in the past. And now he ordered them to adopt piety, obedience and cooperation with the rulers of the day. He asked them to respect the rulers and give them advice in an atmosphere of friendship. Sa`sa`ah said that, in that event, they advise him to forsake the emirate of Syria and clear the way for those who truly deserve the position. Could he deny that in Arabia there were persons whose services to Islam have been far superior than his? He agreed, but said that, at the moment, none was more capable than him to carry the burden of the state on his shoulder. If he had any shortcomings, `Umar would not have supported him and allowed him to hold the position. Thus, there was no question of his forsaking the position. He added that their suggestion was a satanic suggestion and following Satan would bring shame and dishonor! At this Sa`sa`ah and others were upset and advanced angrily towards Mu`awiyah. He warned them that they were in Syria and not in al-Kūfah and that they must behave! If people there learned of their behavior with the emir, they would lynch them. He stood up at this, went home and wrote to `Uthman that the people who were visiting him have no wisdom and intelligence nor any attachment with the Faith. Their purpose was only to create mischief. He feared that if they remained there, they might create mischief and encourage the Syrians to

rebel. Therefore, it would be better to send them away somewhere else. `Uthman replied to him that they may be sent back to Sa`id ibn al-`As. Therefore, they were sent to al-Kūfah. They already had a rift with Sa`id. On returning there, the matters worsened. When `Uthman was informed of the situation, he wrote to Malik al-Ashtar :to leave al-Kūfah and go to Hims. On reading the edict, Malik said

O Allah! Amongst us the one who is the enemy of the people, send fast Your“
[Retribution to him!]”[۳]

Those people went to Hims from al-Kūfah. The emir of Hims, ` Abd al-Rahman ibn Khalid ibn al-Walid, exceeded all limits of decency in heaping insults on them. When one month passed bearing the torture and hardships, they were again sent back to al-Kūfah. Now the people were running out of patience. They were angry on the functionaries of ` Uthman and his own attitude toward those respected persons. ` Uthman could not have closed his eyes to the unsavory circumstances. To crush the rebellion he called a meeting of all the functionaries in al-Madinah. Sa` id ibn al-` As too went to al-Madinah. While returning from the meetings, he was stopped at a place called Jara near Al-Qadisiyyah. Malik al-Ashtar and his companions told him that they would not allow him to enter al-Kūfah. They asked him to return from where he had come. Sa` id made some excuses, but they did not relent. They asked him to return back because it would be beyond him to stop the onslaught of the people. Therefore, he returned to al-Madinah from there. ` Uthman appointed Abū-Mūsa al-Ash` ari as the governor of al-Kūfah in his place. About this person more when we discuss about .the Battle of the Camel and the arbitration later on

Footnote

Al-Istī` āb, Vol ۲, Page ۹ [۱]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۳, Page ۷۰ [۲]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۳, Page ۳۶۷ [۳]

RETALIATION OVER ` UTHMAN'S BLOOD

RETALIATION OVER ` UTHMAN'S BLOOD

Qisas or 'blood-for-blood' is a rule that is neither rejected by intelligence nor the Shari`ah. All civilized societies and religions agree on this. But every law has some exceptions, and this law too is not free of exceptions. Therefore, if someone is killed in punishment for some crime, or a person, in self-defense, kills someone, in both the situations, although a killing has taken place, neither the Shari`ah permits qisas nor intelligence supports it. In this manner several instances can be mentioned where the law of qisas cannot be applied. While one cannot deny the law of qisas, its applicability .differs from circumstance to circumstance

After Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) assuming the caliphate, when the demand for the retaliation for the blood of `Uthman came up, it became a controversial issue. People were divided into two differing groups. One group considered that the killing of `Uthman was legitimate. For them there was no question of claiming qisas in this case. The other group considered his assassination a sin and a crime and forcefully championed the need for qisas. We are not debating here whether one group was right or the other. The problem was so intricate that immediate solution was next to impossible. These complications could have been removed if `Ali (a.s) considered the assassination illegitimate and gave attention to the claim of qisas. If he did that, the other group, who thought that the killing was justifiable in the circumstances the act was committed, would have reacted strongly. Taking the side of either of the two groups was fraught with danger. The need was to bring both the groups to the middle ground and make efforts to resolve the issue. There were pulls and pushes in all directions and neither the feelings of the claimants of the qisas nor of their opponents could be assuaged. It was also difficult to round up the culprits who perpetrated the act. Therefore, when Talhah and al-Zubayr, and other persons of their ilk, approached Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) and demanded retaliation for the blood of `Uthman, he gauged the situation and said, "Whatever you know, I am not unaware of! But presently I do not have the power when the aggressors are in full flow and are overwhelming us, and we are not controlling them. Even your own slaves are siding with them and the Bedouin Arabs too have joined them. At the moment, they are in your midst and could harm you if they wish to! Have you thought of a way to control
"?the situation

The picture that `Ali (a.s) drew of the circumstances at that time, the history upholds as facts. The rebels were ruling the roost in al-Madinah and they had their influence everywhere. They did what they wished and none could open his mouth against them. If Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) initiated steps for the qisas, it was not possible that the culprits would bow down their heads meekly to the executioner's sword. They would have resisted the move with full force at their command that the lanes and by lanes of al-Madinah would have been gored with unnecessary bloodshed. They were not so meek and weak that they would easily surrender themselves. If it was so, the same claimants of the qisas could have overpowered them during the long siege that they held of `Uthman's palace prior to his assassination. But at that time, they meekly surrendered their arms and, after the act were done, they were claiming for revenge. These champions of qisas themselves, overtly and covertly, acknowledged that the strength of the rebels was much more than their own. Therefore, they decided to battle with `Ali (a.s) and `A'ishah advised them to attack al-Madinah because the killers of `Uthman were boldly going around the streets of the city. Talhah, al-Zubayr :and some others said

O Umm al-Mu'minin! Forget about al-Madinah. Because those who support us cannot“
[fight the rebels. You must come with us to al-Basrah!”[1]

These people, despite having all the paraphernalia of war and men, were unable to start hostilities in al-Madinah, and made an excuse that they were not in a position to face the rebels. If they were really, and truly, seeking qisas, there was no need to shift their theatre to al-Basrah. Their purpose was something else and the qisas was just a ruse. Their aim was to open a front against `Ali (a.s) and overturn his rule and pave the way for their own hunger for power. It was not possible to pin the responsibility for the killing of `Uthman on, one, two or a few persons. The populations of al-Madinah, Egypt and al-Basrah were fed up of the oppressive measures of `Uthman, and his coterie, and they had turned mortally against him. Those who instigated the killers were Muhajirūn, Ansar and even the senior Companions who wrote letters to the miscreants to teach him a lesson. To identify one or two killers was not possible .and killing thousands for one life was not admissible in the Shari`ah

One way to claim qisas was to execute all the persons who took part in the conspiracy, be they the Companions; from al-Madinah, Egypt, al-Basrah or al-Kūfah. The other way was to identify the real killers from the rebels and, establish their guilt by getting witnesses and then executing them. Witnesses were possible if there were some people at the place and time of the killing. Some Umayyads who were at `Uthman's place had meekly melted away sensing danger or took shelter in Ummu-Habibah's house. However, Na'ilah bint Farafisah was there, but she was not able to identify anyone! Therefore, when Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) asked her about the killers, she said

I do not know. However with Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr two persons came, whom I do not know.”[۲]

If it is assumed that the killers were alive, and the crime of murder was also established against them, one has to study the reasons that motivated them to take that extreme step. It is a fact that the crime was not committed as an act on the spur of the time. It happened after long parleys and discussions. Therefore, delegations from different places kept visiting `Uthman and complaining about the tyrannies perpetrated by his functionaries. But all these appeals had no effect on the caliph. In fact, on several occasions he had asked his men to be more harsh with the complainants. To send the delegates away, he always promised redressal, that he never seriously meant. He used to tell them

Whoever you want to be appointed the functionary, I shall appoint him. Whichever functionary you wish to be deposed, I shall do that. This would mean that I have no authority and your rule prevails!”[۳]

It was natural that the delegates were upset at this outburst. They said that removing the tyrants and delivering justice was not in his power, he might as well demit his office and sit at home. If he did not act, they said, they might have to take the ultimate step. `Uthman asked them for what crime they intended to kill him. He added that killing is a punishment for recanting from the Faith, adultery or unnecessary killing. He said that he had not committed any of those sins. The delegates said that, according to Allah's Book, those who obstruct or deny others' rights deserve to be killed. On the strength of your officers got the most respected Companions beaten up, frightened them and exiled them unnecessarily, on the people untold miseries were heaped by your hand picked functionaries. Those who fought for their rights, they were put to sword. If we accept that those who are your protectors with swords in their hands are perpetrating cruelties on the people without your consent, then their swords are also upholding your caliphate. If you demit office, their swords too will go blunt and they will sit peacefully at their homes! `Uthman could not reply and went quietly inside his home.

This conversation proves that they took the ultimate step when they had already made the matters clear to `Uthman and were convinced that according to the Qur'an and Shari`ah, they were justified in what they wanted to do. This has been proved right by the thoughts and actions of the senior Companions. Therefore, `A'ishah, Talhah ibn `Ubaydullah, al-Zubayr ibn Awwam, `Amr ibn al-`As and other eminent Companions were giving fatwas justifying the killing. If the Battle of the Camel fought by Talhah, al-Zubayr and `A'ishah has been termed as khata' ijthadi (Error in Interpretation), the ijthad justifying his killing could also be condoned as their error of interpretation. Any way, they quoted the Holy Qur'an to justify the killing, and a killing that takes place because of an interpretation of the Qur'an, is not subject to qisas.

:Therefore, Mulla `Ali Qari writes

Ali (a.s) did not kill the assassins of `Uthman for the reason that they were rebels, “ and those who are rebels have their own power and the justification for their act as well. They had the ta'wil for the killing of `Uthman and the strength to take on the establishment. They deemed the act justifiable because of the undesirable actions of `Uthman. For such rebels the Shari`ah ordains that when they become subservient to the Just Imam, whatever harm they had caused to the people, had shed their blood and had injured their bodies, there is no accountability (Malaise) for the acts. Therefore, it was not required of `Ali (a.s) to execute them or hand them over to those who claimed for qisas

Footnote

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۳, Page ۴۰ [۱]

Al-Sawā`iq al-Muhriqah, Page ۱۱۸ [۲]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۳, Page ۸۶ [۳]

THE BATTLE OF THE CAMEL

THE BATTLE OF THE CAMEL

The Battle of the Camel (al-jamal) is the furious battle that was fought at the beginning of the reign of `Ali (a.s) with the excuse of seeking retaliation for the blood of `Uthman. The responsibility for heavy loss of Muslim lives and the schisms that came about in the Ummah thereafter rests on the shoulders of Umm al-Mu'minin `A'ishah bint Abū-Bakr, Talhah and al-Zubayr! They stood up to claim retaliation for the blood of `Uthman. These three, however, were very much against him during his lifetime and instigated people against him. Therefore, `A'ishah used to keep the Prophet's footwear and cloak in front of `Uthman and say that still those things have not turned into relics when you have changed his Sunnah and the Commandments. `A'ishah had a great capability of reading the minds of the masses. She adopted the method of inflaming the thinking of the people that was most effective. She knew that the people had great love for their Prophet (a.s). She also knew that they would love to set eyes on the things that touched his body. When these things came in their view,

there will be a feeling of ecstasy in their minds. It happened the way she thought. When they saw these, their anger rose and they surrounded the caliph's palace. When Umm al-Mu'minin saw that the siege was strong, despite the best efforts of Marwan ibn al-Hakam, `Abd al-Rahman ibn `Attab and Zayd ibn Thabit she left for Makkah. During her journey, as well, wherever she stopped, she went inciting the people against `Uthman. Therefore, when she reached Salsal, seven miles from Makkah, she told Ibn `Abbas, who was proceeding as the leader of the group of :Hajjis, in a very forceful manner

O Ibn `Abbas! You have the gift of oratory and sleight of tongue. In the name of Allah, stop people from helping this person (`Uthman). Put the people in doubts about him. As it is, people's eyes have opened. The path of truth and the tower of light have risen. People from different cities have gathered for a decisive act. You know that

Talhah ibn `Ubaydullah has

control of the keys of the bayt al-mall. If the Caliphate comes to him, he will follow his

[cousin, Abū-Bakr, step for step!"]

A'ishah, during the first six years of the caliphate of `Uthman backed him completely. But then they had misunderstandings and she started antagonizing him. The apparent cause of this hatred and opposition was that `Uthman had reduced the pension that she was getting from the previous regime. Therefore, the historian al-

:Ya `qūbi writes

There was a gulf of hatred standing between `A'ishah and `Uthman. He had reduced the pension that `Umar had fixed for her. He started giving her an amount equal to

[that which was fixed for the other consorts of the Prophet (a.s)."]

Because of the dictatorial attitude of `Uthman and his functionaries, the atmosphere .was already bad when the provocative talk of Umm al-Mu'minin added fuel to the fire

This antagonism became more furious and people started scheming against him. Particularly Talhah ibn `Ubaydullah, and the people of Banū-taym, were in the forefront of the agitation. Talhah left no stone unturned in instigating the people

:against him. Buladhari writes

Among the Companions of the Prophet (a.s) none was as aggressive against

[`Uthman as was Talhah."]

Therefore, it was he who asked people not to supply water to `Uthman's house during the siege. It was he who rained the arrows on the house in the darkness of the night. He instigated people against him and asked their chief, `Abd al-Rahman ibn `Udays, who was one of the attendants at the bay`at al-ridwan, not to allow `Uthman to come out of the house and prevent others from going in and coming out.

:When `Uthman heard about this, he said

O Allah! Save me from the mischief of Talhah ibn `Ubaydullah. He has instigated “
[people against me and got me besieged!”[۴

Talhah had this attitude not only during the life of `Uthman. After his death, there was no change in the attitude. He got stones hurled at the bier and obstructed his burial in Jannat al-Baqi`. Similarly al-Zubayr, whose wife was `A'ishah's sister, was heard
:telling to the besiegers

[Kill `Uthman. He has changed your very faith.”[۵“

Only these people established the cause of `Uthman's killing. They created such an environment that resulted in his assassination. If killing of `Uthman was a crime, then these persons cannot be absolved of their involvement in the act. Because abetting a crime too is a crime. Although Umm al-Mu'minin was not in al-Madinah at the time of his killing, she had left the place only ۲۰ days prior to the event. When she was sure that the sapling she had planted would soon bear fruit. Going away at that time was perhaps to keep herself away from al-Madinah when the actual event took place. Then she wanted to install Talhah or al-Zubayr in his place and through them, she would recover the losses she had suffered because of reduction in her pension by `Uthman. But Umm al-Mu'minin could not succeed in her plan and in her absence, the
.(people of al-Madinah decided on the caliphate of `Ali (a.s

Talhah and al-Zubayr were the members of the Shūra composed by `Umar. Because of that membership, they could not keep the thought of caliphate away from their minds. Their efforts for the elimination of `Uthman too were directed towards this end. But when they saw that people were insisting for `Ali (a.s) to be the next caliph, and none else was acceptable to them, they took initiative gauging the sentiment of the people. They took precedence over others to extend their hands in allegiance to `Ali (a.s). If they saw the slightest chance of getting the position for themselves, they would have tried to achieve it. But they were forced to adopt a discreet silence. At that critical moment, it was necessary for them to back one of the two groups. But they did not have the support of any of the two groups. One group was of people who were angry at the ineptitude and his style of functioning. The other group was of his friends and supporters who were drawing benefits through him. The group that was against `Uthman, had not any intention of bringing forward any one of the two persons. The reason was that they were no different from `Uthman. Therefore, if `Uthman was fond of amassing wealth, these two persons too did not have any liking for piety and frugality. They were very affluent and their avarice knew no bounds. Therefore, Talhah bought huge properties in Iraq and Sarat, constructed palaces in al-Kūfah and al-Basrah and left behind huge amount of wealth. Ibn `Abd al-Barr writes

When Talhah ibn `Ubaydullah was killed, in his inheritance there were ۳۰۰ whole “
[skins of animal carcasses that were filled with gold and silver.”][۶

Al-Zubayr ibn al-`Awwam too was a very affluent person and a big capitalist.
:Therefore, al-Dhahbi writes

[He had one thousand slaves who used to pay him tribute.”][۷“

Al-Zubayr had constructed palaces in Egypt, al-Basrah and al-Kūfah. In addition to the fleet of slaves, slave girls and camels, his wealth cannot be assessed. After giving a
:third of his estate to his grandson, as per his will

Of his four wives, each got one hundred thousand which was a fourth of the eighth“
[part of his wealth.”][۸

Now about the other group, that was in support of `Uthman. They knew that both the persons had played their role in the assassination of `Uthman and they would not support them to reach the throne of the caliphate. Although Talhah had gained control over the keys of the bayt al-mall during the lifetime of `Uthman, neither he nor al-Zubayr succeeded in getting the caliphate for themselves

When after evacuating the caliphate they did not succeed in the race for the succession, they wanted to be content with minor gains. The very next day of the bay`ah they demanded from `Ali (a.s) to appoint them the governors of al-Kūfah and al-Basrah. Their main purpose in taking precedence over others in owing their allegiance was that they wanted to establish their priority in the matter of appointments. But the Imam (a.s) did not want to assign them to those provinces that yielded the maximum revenues. He knew their avarice and greed. Therefore, he refused saying that he would do in their regard what he thought was best for them. He told them that their remaining close to him at the capital was very essential. They were under the impression that they had good clout in al-Kūfah and al-Basrah, and that they were instrumental in mobilizing men to stage the uprising against `Uthman, they expected `Ali (a.s) to accept their demand. They understood that in the new administration they would not get any chance to do what they wanted to do. Nor will

they get the special privileges that the previous administrations provided to them. Now they started to think of other ways to achieve their ends. They now concentrated their attention towards the movements of `A'ishah

A'ishah wanted that after the assassination of `Uthman, Talhah should become the `caliph. Thus she was aiming at settling it permanently in her tribe of Banū-taym. After her stay in Makkah she was eager to know the result of the uprising in al-Madinah. She was asking every fresh arrival from al-Madinah about the conditions there. In that time one person, by name of Akhdar, came to Makkah from al-Madinah. `A'ishah called and asked him what was the result of the siege of the caliph's palace? He informed that `Uthman had executed the mischief mongers from Egypt and has established control over the situation. Umm al-Mu'minin's expectation was contrary to this and she was very disappointed with the news. She said in a very disappointed manner

We are Allah's and to Him do we return. Has he killed those who were demanding their rights and were raising their voices against the tyrants? By Allah we are not [happy with this.]^[٩]

She was still in a very depressed mood when another person came and said that Akhdar's information was wrong and that none of the Egyptians was killed and they are moving about freely in al-Madinah. To the contrary, he said, `Uthman was killed :by them. Hearing this she was satisfied and said

May Allah keep him away from His Blessing! This is the result of his deeds. Allah is not [cruel to His creatures!]^[١٠]

Now, instead of staying in Makkah it was necessary for her to move to al-Madinah. She now thought of building up opinion in favor of the person she wanted to promote, the person of her choice as the next caliph. Therefore, she made immediate arrangements for her journey and started for al-Madinah. She had hardly traveled six miles when, at Saraf, she was met by `Ubaydullah ibn Salamah. She asked him about the situation in al-Madinah. He said that `Uthman had been killed and the people of al-Madinah have sworn their allegiance to `Ali (a.s). When she heard this, it seemed that the ground from under her feet was slipping away. And the sky turned into a cloud of smoke. Not trusting her hearing she again asked whether `Ali (a.s) was the caliph? `Ubayd replied in the affirmative and said that there was none more

deserving of the position than him. Now it was difficult for Umm al-Mu'minin to control
:her emotions. The following words came from her mouth

If `Ali's bay`ah has taken place, how much I wish the sky burst on the ground! I must“
[get back to Makkah!”[۱۱

Therefore, she ordered her retinue to return to Makkah, and expressing her sorrow
:over the assassination of `Uthman she said

[By Allah! `Uthman has been killed. I shall avenge his blood!”[۱۲“

Ubayd ibn Abi-Salamah was surprised in the sudden face of Umm al-Mu'minin and`
:said that she used to say, again and again about `Uthman

[Kill that Na`thal. He is an infidel!”[۱۳“

He asked why there was the sudden change in her attitude. She replied that earlier
she held that opinion. But `Uthman was repentant in his last days and her present
.opinion about him was correct

The excuse of `A'ishah that `Uthman had repented was very surprising. As long as
she was in al-Madinah, he had not shown any signs of repentance. Otherwise, she
would not have left him at the mercy of the rebels and come away to Makkah. When
she got the news of the killing of `Uthman in Makkah she had no inkling of his
repentance and had even expressed her satisfaction over his killing. During the very
short journey of six miles, there was no source of information which could have
reported about the repentance of `Uthman. As soon as she heard of the bay`ah of
`Ali (a.s) she remembered the predicament of `Uthman and knew that he was
repentant of his past deeds. Even the demand of the persons besieging his palace
was for him to express repentance for his past deeds and cruelties inflicted by his
functionaries on the people of the realm. He was stubbornly refusing to express his
repentance all the while. If he had agreed to stop the tyrannies and cruelties, there
was no question of his getting killed. The truth is that when Umm al-Mu'minin was not
able to give a plausible excuse for her sudden change of attitude, she made the false
excuse of his repentance. But she was not able to convince `Ubayd ibn Abi-Salamah.
:Therefore, he said

[O Umm al-Mu'minin! By Allah! Your excuse is very weak!]"[۱۴“

Umm al-Mu'minin wanted to reach Makkah immediately. She did not pay any heed to what `Ubayd said. When she reached Makkah people asked her the reason for returning so suddenly. She said, “`Uthman was killed for no fault of his! I shall not let his blood go in waste! I shall not go back until his blood is avenged!” People were certainly surprised at the change in her attitude, but kept quiet

Umm al-Mu'minin started beating the drums about the innocence of `Uthman and tried to create a strong front against `Ali (a.s). When Talhah and al-Zubayr learned that `A'ishah was doing propaganda that `Uthman was innocent and was putting the responsibility on `Ali (a.s) for his killing, they sent letters through `Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr to her to run a movement and stop people from owing allegiance to `Ali (a.s). These messages further strengthened her determination and with full force, she started the campaign to demand retaliation for the blood of `Uthman. The first person to respond was `Abdullah ibn `Amir al-Hadrami who was the governor of Makkah during the reign of `Uthman. Sa`id ibn al-`As, al-Walid ibn `Uqbah and other Umayyad's followed

Talhah and al-Zubayr wanted to take shelter behind the claim for qisas to take revenge for their failure to get important positions in the new regime. But the environment in al-Madinah was not conducive for them. However, the movement could be successfully launched from Makkah because Umm al-Mu'minin, `Abdullah ibn `Amir, Marwan ibn al-Hakam and the Umayyads who flew from al-Madinah were there actively promoting the movement. Therefore, the two somehow spent a period of four months in al-Madinah and then decided to go over to Makkah to pursue the campaign. They told the Imam (a.s) that they wanted to go to Makkah for performing the `Umrah. He had gauged their intentions from their faces that they had an ulterior motive in going to Makkah. Therefore, he said

By Allah! Their intention is not to perform the `Umrah! They are bent on stealth and“
[rebellion!”[۱۵

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) did not want them to go to Makkah, but they persisted. In the end the Imam (a.s) took the bay`ah from them a second time and permitted them to go. In Makkah they started putting the blame of the killing of `Uthman on the Imam (a.s) and became active members of `A'ishah's movement

Some persons might think that when the Imam (a.s) knew that Talhah and al-Zubayr might break the bay`ah and attempt mischief, then why did he permit them to go to Makkah. If they were not permitted to leave al-Madinah, they would not have been able to raise an army nor the battle would not have taken place in al-Basrah. But when the other aspects of the situation are considered, then this sounds the most plausible alternative that they were allowed to go to Makkah. One alternative was to restrict them to their homes in al-Madinah. The other was to concede their original demand for the emirate of al-Kūfah and al-Basrah. But both these alternatives were impracticable. In the first case, if they were confined to their homes, it would be like punishment before committing the offence. It would then be termed as curbing the freedom of movement and speech. This would be against the norms of Islam and the Imam's own character. During those days only the Imam (a.s) had allowed persons from Banū-Umayyah to move to Makkah without any objection. If these two were forcibly stopped from going, there would be a hue and cry from their supporters. They would say that he had allowed the others to go where they liked and was refusing permission to the two senior Companions and important members of the Shūrah. Discretion required that they should not be stopped from going. As far as the other alternative of assigning to them the governorate of al-Kūfah and al-Basrah was concerned, it was very clear to the Imam (a.s) that the two neither wanted to remain under the Imam (a.s) nor they wanted to be obedient to him. If they were given the governorate, they would certainly try to declare themselves independent of the center, specially when al-Zubayr had lot of support in al-Kūfah and al-Zubayr had the backing of the people of al-Basrah. Those people wanted them to control the entire realm as the caliph. They had even expressed this desire. If they were assigned as

governors, they would first find their moorings and then attempt to move ahead. With al-Zubayr in al-Kūfah, Talhah in al-Basrah and Mu`awiyah already rebellious in Syria, it would be difficult to keep the realm together

Thus they reached Makkah with a predetermined agenda and started putting blame on Banū-Hashim in general, and `Ali (a.s) in particular, for the killing of `Uthman. A campaign for claiming the retaliation for the blood of `Uthman started gaining force. For this campaign, they needed funds. The solution came about in a manner that the deposed governor of al-Basrah arrived at Makkah with the entire wealth from the bayt al-mall. Ya`li ibn Umayyah came from Yemen with ٦٠٠,٠٠٠ dirhams and ٦٠٠ camels. All these funds were earmarked towards the expenses for the war. Abū-Fida :has written

Ya`li gathered all the assets and started for Makkah. He joined `A`ishah, Talhah and “ [al-Zubayr and gave all the wealth in their keeping.”[١٦

The people of Makkah too raised funds and they had sufficient finance. After the preliminary arrangements were over, there was a meeting at the place of `A`ishah. In principle, they were agreed on the battle but had to decide which place to be selected as the theatre of war. `A`ishah thought of besieging al-Madinah. But this suggestion was rejected because with the rebels there, it would not be possible to handle the :campaign there. Some people suggested going to Syria. On this Ibn `Amir said

[With Mu`awiyah in Syria, you are not needed there!”[١٧“

One more reason was in the way of making Syria the theater of war that being under `Uthman, Mu`awiyah did not help him. How could they, then, expect any help forthcoming from him? When he had refused to bear allegiance to `Ali (a.s), how could he accept Talhah or al-Zubayr as the caliph without any objection. Of course, Mu`awiyah was one with them to the extent of opposing `Ali's caliphate. But after achieving that end, he would not agree to the accession of Talhah or al-Zubayr to the caliphate. Ultimately, at the instance of `Abdullah ibn `Amir they decided on al-Basrah as the venue for the battle. One reason was that they had the support of the local population there. The other advantage was that Syria is on one side of Hijaz and Iraq on the other. If al-Basrah was made the theatre of war and Iraq was occupied, then Hijaz would be sandwiched between the two power centers. In this event it (would be easy to defeat the army of Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s

It is evident from the plan that the aim was not to claim the qisas for `Uthman's blood. If that was the intention, they should have attacked Medina and held the persons who had carried out the assassination. In al-Basrah there was no possibility of the conspirators of the killing of `Uthman being there. Any way, after deciding on the theatre of war, they started to prepare to go for the campaign. Ya`li bought a camel of ٤٠٠ dirhams from a person from the tribe of `Uraynah and presented to Umm al-Mu'minin. He made a general announcement that those who did not have the arms and other materials, they will be provided with everything. Therefore, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) has said about Ya`li

[He was giving to every person a horse, arms and ٣٠ Dinars to fight against me." [١٨

Talhah and al-Zubayr pressurized `Abdullah ibn `Umar to support them. But he refused saying

It is better for `A'ishah to sit at home and not in the canopy on the camel's back, and [for you remaining in al-Madinah would be better than going to al-Basrah." [١٩

A'ishah asked the other consorts of the Prophet (a.s), who was staying at Makkah, after the Hajj, to endorse her stand and to accompany her to the battlefield. Hafsa agreed without any objection. Other wives of the Prophet (a.s) rejected the proposal. In the end, at the intervention of `Abdullah Ibn `Umar, Hafsa too stayed back. Ibn al-Athir writes

The consorts of the Prophet (a.s) planned to go to al-Madinah with `A'ishah. But when she changed her plans and was going to al-Basrah, they cut away from her. Hafsa agreed to go with `A'ishah but her brother `Abdullah ibn `Umar stopped [her." [٢٠

Hafsah's agreement was not unexpected. The reason was that there were a lot of similarities in the thinking of both. Because of this, they were thought to be associated with a particular group. Therefore, Muhammad ibn Isma`il al-Bukhari writes

The wives of the Prophet (a.s) were in two groups. One group was composed of " `A'ishah, Hafsah and Sawdah. In the other group was Ummu-Salamah and [others." [۲۱

All the sympathies of Ummu-Salamah were with `Ali (a.s). When `A'ishah tried to win her over to her own side, she refused to listen to anything against `Ali (a.s). She opposed the plans of `A'ishah very much and wrote to her to desist from her scheme

If the Prophet (a.s) had known that women can bear the hardships of jihad, he would have ordered you. Do not you remember that the Prophet (a.s) had warned you against excesses in the matter of Faith? He knew that if the pillar of Faith bends, it could not be stopped through women. If it gets breached, the women cannot mend it. The jihad for women is that they keep their eyes down, gather their lapels and keep limited relationships. If the Prophet (a.s) had seen you on the camel back, going from one well to the other in the wilderness, what reply would you give him. Tomorrow you will have to go to the presence of the Prophet (a.s). By Allah, if I am told, 'O Ummu-Salamah! Enter the Heaven! Then if I had broken the Hijab that he has made binding on me, I shall be ashamed to face the Prophet (a.s). Therefore, you must remain in the [veil and stay at home!" [۲۲

Instead of taking a lesson from the writing of Ummu-Salamah, `A'ishah replied that she was going to arrange peace between the two warring groups and it is necessary for keeping the atmosphere peaceful. This reply was just an excuse, but the fact is well-known that she was herself an active participant in the dispute. If she had remained back at home, the dispute would not have arisen at all. If one agrees that she was going to arrange truce between two warring groups, then what was the need for the paraphernalia of war to be accumulated and carried along

Umm al-Mu'minin (a.s), with a contingent of ۷۰۰ men, marched towards al-Basrah. Enroute several persons joined the group. The numbers rose to ۳,۰۰۰. When the contingent reached Dhat al-`Irq, from where there is a diversion to al-Basrah, Sa`id ibn al-`As asked Marwan and some others of the same mind as to where they were heading for through the wilderness? Marwan said he knew they were going to al-Basrah and the purpose was to take revenge against the killers of `Uthman. He said

The killers of `Uthman, Talhah and al-Zubayr, are riding with you on camels. Kill them“ [and return home. Why unnecessarily kill each other.”[۲۳

Marwan said with what face they would go home He said that they must go to al-Basrah that they were able to take revenge against all the killers of `Uthman. Sa`id, after talking with them, went to Talhah and al-Zubayr and asked if they won the battle and succeeded with their aim, who will be their choice to be the caliph? They said, “Without doubt, one of them would be chosen as the caliph.” Sa`id said that when you came out seeking retaliation for the blood of `Uthman, then you must make one of his sons the caliph and both his sons, Aban and al-Walid, were in the contingent as well. He warned them that if they did not do this, the people would think that you have come out in search of power and position. Talhah and al-Zubayr said in one voice

Can we keep aside the senior, aged, Muhajirūn, and make his you sons the“
[caliph?”[۲۴

Sa`id understood that these persons had not come for the qisas and the entire drama was for personal gains. Therefore, he went away from them. Along with him went `Abdullah ibn Khalid, Mughirah ibn Shu`bah and the people of Banū-Thaqif. They all headed towards Ta`if. The remaining troops headed towards their destination. On the way something happened that shook the courage and determination of Umm al-Mu`minin momentarily. When the contingent reached a cistern of water that was named after a woman, Haw`ab bint Kalb ibn Wabrah, as the Cistern of Haw`ab, it halted there for the night. `A`ishah heard the sound of dogs barking from one direction. This was nothing unusual. But Umm al-Mu`minin had some disturbance in her mind. Nearby was the camel driver. She asked him what the name of the place was. He replied, “It is Haw`ab!” Hearing the name of Haw`ab, Umm al-Mu`minin’s
:limbs started shivering and shouted

[Let me go back! Let me go back! By Allah! I am the one of the Cistern of Haw`ab!”[۲۵“

Talhah, al-Zubayr and others were surprised in the sudden change in the attitude of Umm al-Mu`minin. They said what if the place is Haw`ab. Why are you frightened of
:the name? She said

Once the Prophet (a.s) had his wives sitting around him. I heard him say at that time,“
[“Who is the one amongst you on whom the dogs of Haw`ab would bark?”[۲۶

She said that she did not have any more doubt that the Prophet (a.s) was mentioning about her on that day. She insisted that she must return back from there only. When her cohorts felt that the entire campaign would collapse with her departure, they said that the camel driver was wrong in saying that the place was Haw`ab. `Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr gathered some fifty persons from the neighborhood, gave them some
:bribes, and asked them to tell her that the place was not Haw`ab. Al-Shi`bi says

[This was the first false witness that was given in the annals of Islam.] [۲۷“

Umm al-Mu'minin was still in a confused state of mind when a sound was heard from
:one direction

[Hurry! Hurry! `Ali Ibn Abi-Talib is arriving!] [۲۸“

Hearing this, there was utter confusion in the rank and file of the contingent. Umm al-Mu'minin's thoughts turned in such a way that she neither remembered Haw'ab nor the Prophet's words about it. Once again her spirit revived and she headed towards
.al-Basrah

On the other hand Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was thinking of organizing troops to move towards Syria when Talhah and al-Zubayr recanted from the bay`ah and the news of the impending attack by `A'ishah reached al-Madinah. The Imam (a.s) had a doubt that Talhah and al-Zubayr might hatch a conspiracy along with Mu`awiyah. But he never expected that Umm al-Mu'minin would rise against him and come out of her home against the commands of Allah and the Prophet (a.s). He was thus forced to alter his program of going to Syria to attend on this problem. The Imam (a.s) gathered the important persons of al-Madinah in the al-Masjid al-Nabawi (the Holy Prophet's Mosque) and said that they were aware of the rebellious moves of Talhah and al-Zubayr. He wanted them to be with him that they were intercepted before they reached al-Basrah. Some persons were hesitant to confront such eminent names like Talhah, al-Zubayr and `A'ishah. And some others like Sa`d ibn Abi-Waqqas, Usamah ibn Zayd, Muhammad ibn Maslamah and `Abdullah ibn `Umar flatly refused to go. But there were persons like Haitham ibn al-Tayhan, Ziyad ibn Hanzalah, Abū-Qutadah al-Ansari etc who were guided by the spirit of siding with the truth and assured of all
:cooperation. Abū-Qutadah told in an emotional tone

O Amir al-Mu'minin! This sword was tied around my girdle by the Prophet (a.s)! For a long time it has stayed in the sheath! Now is the time to take it out against the tyrants, [those who do not desist from cheating the Ummah!]"[۲۹

Ummu-Salamah presented her son `Umar ibn Abi-Salamah to Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) :and said

I am leaving him in your care. He is dearer to me than my own life! He will be on your side in all the campaigns, until Allah makes His final Command that He will! If it were not against the command of the Prophet (a.s), I would have come with you, the way [`A'ishah has gone with Talhah and al-Zubayr!"[۳۰

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) appointed Sahl ibn Hunayf al-Ansari in al-Madinah and Qathm ibn `Abbas as his deputies. He started with a contingent of between ۶۰۰ and ۱,۰۰۰ strong. In this, there were ۴۰۰ persons who were present at the bay` at al-ridwan. When they reached al-Rabadhah, three miles from al-Madinah, he got the news that the opponents had already started for al-Basrah and that they were going post haste. Now there was no likelihood of stopping them on the way and there was no other alternative that subduing them through battle. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) camped there and sent out some men to al-Madinah to fetch supplies of the arms and transport animals. To recruit more men, he deputed Muhammad ibn Ja`far and Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr to al-Kūfah. When they reached al-Kūfah, the emir there, Abū-Mūsa al-Ash`ari, stood like a wall between them and the people and stopped them from joining saying that this is the battle for worldly power, whoever wants to go, might go! Those who want a better Hereafter must stay home. Instead of being a help to Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s), he proved an impediment. Muhammad Ibn Ja`far and Muhammad Ibn Abi-Bakr tried their best to convince him, but he was adamant. Therefore, they returned disappointed. `Ali (a.s) started from al-Rabadhah and passed through feed, al-Tha`labiyyah and Asad to reach Dhi-Qar that is equidistant between al-Kūfah and Wasit. At this place Muhammad ibn Ja`far and Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr arrived and told the Imam (a.s) about the attitude of Abū-Mūsa. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) sent Ibn `Abbas and Malik al-Ashtar to al-Kūfah to convince Abū-Mūsa that he should desist from misguiding those who wish to join the contingent. The two were still in al-Kūfah

when the Imam (a.s) sent his son, Hasan (a.s) and `Ammar ibn Yasir. On reaching al-Kūfah they sat in the Masjid there and invited people to come to the assistance of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). Abū-Mūsa was informed of the arrival of Imam al-Hasan (a.s). When he came, Imam al-Hasan (a.s) told him that information has been received concerning him that he was preventing people from coming to the assistance of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) although the purpose is to fight against and remove mischief from the Realm. He said that he had heard the Prophet (a.s) say

Soon a mischief will break out. Those who sit will be better than those who stand“ those who stand will be better than those who walk and those who walk will be better [than men on horse backs!”[۳۱

Those persons, the opponents, are our brothers in Islam, and shedding their blood is taboo for us nor it is permissible to confiscate their assets. At this `Ammar ibn Yasir :became angry and said

[No doubt, your sitting in a room is better than your coming out!”[۳۲“

They both started arguing with one another. Abū-Mūsa insisted that what those people were doing was a mischief and it is better to keep away from it. An argument was going out there, when Zayd ibn Sawhan read out two epistles from `A'ishah from near the entrance to the mosque. One was addressed to him and the other to the people of al-Kūfah. In the epistles, she urged them to come to her help. She also pleaded that if they could not come to her rescue, they should not also respond to the :call from `Ali (a.s). After reading the epistles, he addressed the gathering

She was ordered to sit at home. We were ordered that we battle and fight that“ mischief did not raise its head! But what she had been ordered to do, she is asking us (men) to sit back at home and what we have been ordered to do (to battle) she is [doing!”[۳۳

Then addressing Abū-Mūsa he said, “O Abū-Mūsa! If you can stop the river flowing, then ask the people not to go! It is better refrain from a thing that is beyond your control. Instead of stopping the people from going, go home and sit quietly.” But all the talk did not have any effect on Abū-Mūsa. He continued insisting that what the opponents were doing was a mischief and people should keep away from it. When Imam al-Hasan (a.s) felt that he was becoming too stubborn, he became angry and [said, “Leave our mosque and go wherever you like to go!”[۳۴

Then he went to the pulpit and gave a sermon. He convinced people to come to the help of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). `Ammar ibn Yasir and Hijr ibn `Adi al-Kindi too appealed to the people to join. This had an effect on the people and they started in numbers to join up

When the environment of al-Kūfah was congenial, Malik al-Ashtar headed towards Dar al-Imarah, beat up Abū-Mūsa's slaves and evicted them. He occupied the palace. Abū-Mūsa came running to the palace and wanted to enter. But Malik stopped him from entering and said in a loud tone

O Abū-Mūsa! May your mother die! Get away from our palace! May Allah evict you! By“ [Allah! You have always been a hypocrite!”[۲۵

Abū-Mūsa pleaded to be given a night's respite. He was told that he had time until the Evening Prayer and that he who not be allowed to stay there in the night. Some people wanted to get into the palace and loot his belongings. But Malik stopped them and told them that they should not trouble him because he was ordered to evacuate. People did not trouble him any more. Abū-Mūsa went in the darkness of night and spent the night somewhere in al-Kūfah. In the morning, he trudged towards Syria! Now the people of al-Kūfah got ready to join the ranks in large number despite the efforts of Abū-Mūsa and the epistles of Umm al-Mu'minin. ۱۲,۰۰۰ armed men from al-Kūfah joined Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) at Dhi-Qar

One is surprised at the mental make-up and actions of Abū-Mūsa. On the one hand, he was holding a key position in the establishment and on the other; he was promoting the interests of the opponents of the head of the state. If he considered the battle with the owners of the Camel illegitimate, he should have demitted his office at the first instance and then he could have expressed his views. When he was the functionary of the state and expressing his opinion against the instructions of the Head of the State was tantamount to disobedience His attitude indicated that he was hand in glove with the opponents of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). Otherwise, there was no reason that he wanted to remain in office and tried to come in the way of mobilizing the men to fight with the rebels. He tried to describe the defensive arrangements as

mischief and tried to misinterpret the Prophet's tradition to make people sit at home and give a free hand to the rebels. Did he want Talhah, al-Zubayr and their cohorts to do what they wanted without any resistance? If defensive measures against the rebels is a fitnah, then every defensive war could be termed as fitnah! Amir al-Mu'minin's battle with the owners of the camel is one of the battles that had the
.(express approval of the Prophet (a.s

:Therefore, Abū-Ayyūb al-Ansari says

The Prophet (a.s) had instructed `Ali (a.s) that he should battle with the recanters of“ the bay`ah (at the Battle of the Camel), the wayward (at the Battle of Siffin) and the [apostates (the Khawarij).”[۳۶

Then the Prophet (a.s) had forecast the battle between `Ali (a.s), the righteous and :oppressed, with al-Zubayr, the oppressor and aggressor

O al-Zubayr! You will battle with `Ali (a.s) and you will be the oppressor over his“ [right!”[۳۷

:About the Cistern of Haw`ab, the Prophet (a.s) warned `A`ishah

[Beware! O `A`ishah! Lest you are the one!”[۳۸“

In addition to these statements of the Prophet (a.s), the Holy Qur`an too clearly :exhorts fighting against the rebellious

وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَاضْتَلُّوا فَأُضِلُّوهُمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فَبِأَن بَعَثَ إِخِيْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَأُضِلُّوهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ.

And if two parties of the believers quarrel, make peace between them; but if one of them acts wrongfully towards the other, fight that which acts wrongfully until it returns to Allah's command; then if it returns, make peace between them with justice ”(and act equitably; surely Allah loves those who act equitably. (۴۹/۹

When the troops of Umm al-Mu`minin reached Abū-Mūsa Spring beyond the Cistern of Haw`ab, and the governor of al-Basrah, `Uthman ibn Hunayf got the news of the arrival of the heavy troops, he sent Abul-Aswad al-Du`ali and `Umar ibn Husayn to `A`ishah to inquire about the purpose of her arrival at al-Basrah. Therefore, reaching there, Abul-Aswad asked `A`ishah, “O Mother! On what purpose you have come here. For what reason you have mobilized such a huge army?” She said, “I have come to avenge the blood of `Uthman who was killed mercilessly in his own house.” Abul-Aswad said, “In al-Basrah there is none of his killers” She replied, “It is true. But I want

the cooperation of the people of al-Basrah I wish to take revenge on those who have killed him and are in the group of `Ali (a.s).” Abul-Aswad said, “You are the consort of the Prophet (a.s) and he has ordered you to remain within the four walls of your home. What have you to do with these battles? This activity does not suit your dignity and status that you have left behind your home and come out for battling.” She said, “Who will have the courage to come face to face with us and fight!” Abul-Aswad said, “We
”!shall fight and the world shall see that battles are fought in this manner

Umm al-Mu'minin's conviction that none will dare to fight against her was perhaps on the basis that with `Ali (a.s) only a small contingent will be there who must have accompanied him from al-Madinah and the braves of al-Kūfah, who she thought were under the influence of Abū-Mūsa, would not join him. In this event, the small contingent of the Imam (a.s) may not be able to contend with her huge army and will be forced to surrender arms. Either it will be on the basis that out of respect for the spouse of the Prophet (a.s) they would abstain from fighting with her or they will get awed with the huge numbers against them. But the events turned out contrary to her expectation. Huge numbers of fighters joined the army of the Imam (a.s) from al-Kūfah. The other thought that the men would abstain from fighting seeing the consort of the Prophet (a.s) could possibly have had effect on their thinking only if she had maintained that decorum by remaining at home and not coming out in full battle cry. When she had not herself maintained the dignity and respect of her status, how could
?the fighting men be expected to respect her

After talking with `A'ishah, Abul-Aswad went to Talhah and al-Zubayr and asked them the same questions as he had put to `A'ishah. They too repeated what Umm al-Mu'minin had said that their purpose of coming there was to avenge the blood of `Uthman. Abul-Aswad asked, "Have not two of you on oath owed your allegiance to `Ali (a.s)? They said, "Yes! In conditions that a sword was hanging over our heads! There was no other alternative for us than doing the bay`ah!" Abul-Aswad understood from their attitude that they were bent on mischief and rebellion and there was no use for further discussion. He went back to `Uthman ibn Hunayf and reported about the parleys to him. He advised strengthening the fortification of the town. `Uthman ibn Hunayf assembled the people in the mosque and ordered them to
.keep their arms ready and remain on alert

Umm al-Mu'minin's army, after remaining at Abū-Mūsa Spring for sometime entered into the boundary of the al-Basrah city. It camped at al-Mirbad, the market yard for sale of camels. When the people of the city heard of the arrival of `A'ishah, Talhah and al-Zubayr, they started assembling in the al-Mirbad. They started commenting according to each person's point of view. One person stood up and said, "These people have come out with fear and terror from a city where even the birds are in safety. If they have come to avenge `Uthman's blood, we are not his killers! O People of al-Basrah! Listen to me! Force them to return back from here!" At this point the supporters of Talhah and al-Zubayr hurled stones and quietened him. Jariyah ibn :Qudamah took courage in his hands, moved forward, and asked `A'ishah

O Umm al-Mu'minin! Your sitting on that accursed camel and coming out is worse "calamity than the assassination of `Uthman. For you there is a Command from Allah you must maintain respect for the Hijab, but you have come out of the curtain and have lost your respect. One, who thinks fighting with you is legitimate, may not refrain from killing you. If you have come of your own will, return home! If you have been forced to come, please seek the people's help against those who have forcibly [brought you]"[۳۹

Umm al-Mu'minin did not take any cognizance of these words. Her attention was only on increasing her strength and taking more and more persons under her banner. It was necessary to get the people of al-Basrah under her sway. She wanted to convince them that `Uthman was killed at the instance of `Ali (a.s) and thus he had personally occupied the position of the caliph. She said that neither he had the support of the members of the Shūra nor the people's support. With this purpose, she wanted to address the crowd. There was pandemonium all around and none was able to hear what she wanted to communicate. Effort was made to quieten the crowd and Talhah made a speech, "O People! We were the well-wishers of `Uthman from the depths of our hearts! But some foolish persons overwhelmed the wiser and assassinated him! Now we want to avenge his killing!" he was able to speak this far, when the people said, "O Abū-Muhammad (Talhah)! Your letters contrary to this kept coming to us! Talhah could not give any reply and kept quiet. Now it was the turn of al-Zubayr. He

stood up and said, "From my side no letters came to you about `Uthman." He then talked about the circumstances under which `Uthman was killed. He blamed `Ali (a.s) for everything and used harsh words. At this point a person from the tribe of `Abd al-Qays stood up. At his standing, there was some commotion in the crowd. Some people tried to quieten him. But he did not care for the shouting and started speaking. At

the outset he talked about all the three earlier caliphates and then started talking about the caliphate of `Ali (a.s), “You people had pledged your allegiance to `Ali (a.s) without consulting us and accepted him as the caliph. What has happened now that you have turned against him? Do tell us, that we stand with you and fight! Has he usurped the booty of War? Has he taken any step against the Shari`ah? Or has he done anything that you do not like? Tell us, what wrong has he done, that we side with you? If all this is not there, then there is no sense in all the noises that you are making!” At this point, the men of Talhah and al-Zubayr jumped towards him. With the intention of lynching him. But the men from his tribe saved him. But the next day Umm al-Mu`minin’s men attacked and killed him and seventy men of his tribe. The historian :al-Tabari writes

The next day an attack was made on him and his companions and seventy persons“ [were killed.”[۴۰

After these speeches `A`ishah’s turn came. In a very pathetic manner, she described the innocence of `Uthman and the cruel manner that he was killed. And that people were very disturbed at his dastardly killing and were rising to avenge his assassination. She said, “Kill his murderers one after another and leave the matter of the caliphate to the Shūra constituted by `Umar! One who is involved in the assassination should be excluded from the Shūra” This suggestion of Umm al-Mu`minin was very meaningful. She suggests following the Shūra and very intelligently tried to turn the caliphate in the direction she wanted it to go. Only four members of the Shūra were alive at that time. They were `Ali ibn Abi- Talib (a.s), Sa`d ibn Abi-Waqqas, Talhah and al-Zubayr. `Ali (a.s), in her view, was involved in the murder of `Uthman and therefore had no right to be a part of the Shūra any more. Sa`d ibn Abi-Waqqas was not likely to come in the way of what she would have liked to happen. Since `Umar had suggested that the candidate who had the majority with him should be selected as the next caliph, automatically the candidate of her choice would win hands down! Talhah and al-Zubayr would certainly not vote for Sa`d. In that event, one of the two buddies would vote for the other and get through to the throne! The situation was such that Sa`d would be in an unenviable position of

supporting one of the two! If he sided with Talhah, he would be the caliph and the same was true for al-Zubayr. Either way, that was what Umm al-Mu'minin wanted! Her wish was to remove `Ali (a.s) and install one of the two of her cohorts in the caliphate

The crowds listened to the speech of Umm al-Mu'minin with quiet interest. But after the speech was over, they started shouting and protesting and it was a cacophony of noises. Some people said that Umm al-Mu'minin was right, and others were against her. The people of al-Basrah were divided in two groups. One group sided with Talhah and al-Zubayr and the other group was for `Uthman ibn Hunayf. They started pelting stones at each other. However, there was one group that remained quiet and was not able to decide which side to take. Thus, with the arrival of Umm al-Mu'minin, divisive tendencies arose in the families and households! Brother turned against his own brother

Now, with the strategy of widening their sphere of influence they sent out messengers in all directions to register support. Therefore, Umm al-Mu'minin called al-Ahnaf ibn Qays, who was the chief of the tribe of Banū-Tamim, and other important persons in the neighborhood and told them that they were refraining from doing the jihad to avenge the killing of `Uthman. She asked them what reply would they give to Allah for this dereliction of their duty. She said that in their tribes, there was no shortage of men and materials to fight nor will your men turn down your call. Al-Ahnaf said, "O Umm al-Mu'minin! It was only yesterday that you were critical of `Uthman! You left nothing in cursing him! Today you are seeking qisas for his murder!" She said that he was washed away as if they do the dirt from the utensils. When he was free of all his ills, he has been killed. Al-Ahnaf said

O Umm al-Mu'minin! I am ready to abide by the instruction that you give in a state of
[equanimity. But I cannot abide by the order that you give in a fury of rage!]"[۴۱

Al-Ahnaf saved himself from siding her, but the majority of the people of al-Basrah joined ranks with Umm al-Mu'minin. Now she wanted to capture the bayt al-mall and other important places in al-Basrah before the arrival of `Ali (a.s). There she moved towards the city. `Uthman ibn al-Ahnaf was not willing to hand over the city to her without any resistance. He created barricades on the way and, as far as possible, tried to defend the city. From whichever direction the attackers tried to advance, `Uthman's men resisted them. Some people hurled stones from the rooftops on the advancing army. But how long could they stop the onslaught of the advancing army. When `Uthman felt that he could not prevent the city any more from their depredation, he took one small unit of men and went to Talhah and al-Zubayr. He asked them what their demand was and why they were raising trouble in the peaceful city. They said that their intention was to seek retaliation for the blood of `Uthman. He asked, was it the way of seeking the qisas? He added that they were just interested in somehow acquiring the caliphate for themselves. They replied that even if that was true, `Ali (a.s) was not more deserving of the caliphate than they were. The discussion became more heated from either side and it almost went to the extent of drawing the swords. When matters were going out of control, `A'ishah demonstrated her liking for peace and intervened between the two groups. They agreed that until Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) arrived there, no hostilities would be started and that `Uthman will continue to be in the Dar al-Imarah and there would not be any change in the administration. Only two days had gone by since the agreement, when in the darkness of night `Uthman was attacked stealthily in the Dar al-Imarah. He was taken captive, was given forty lashes and the hairs of his beard, brows and eye lashes :were pulled out cruelly. Ibn al-Athir writes

Only two or three days had passed when they attacked `Uthman near the bayt al-rizq, took him captive, and tried to kill him. But out of fear that the Ansar might become furious, they were afraid of killing him. But they pulled out the hairs of his [head, beard and eyebrows. Then they incarcerated him.”[۴۲

When `Uthman ibn Hunayf was kept in captivity, taking `A’ishah’s opinion about the treatment to him was felt important. Therefore, `Uthman’s son Aban was sent to her to ask whether to keep `Uthman captive or he should be killed. `A’ishah asked them to kill him. One woman who heard her say this shouted, “O Umm al-Mu’minin! In the name of Allah! Be kind on him and save his life! After all he is a Companion of the Prophet (a.s)!” `A’ishah said, “All right! Call Aban.” When Aban came back, she asked :him not to kill `Uthman. When Aban heard the revised order, he said

If I had known that you are calling me back for this purpose I would not have“ [come.”[۴۳

With the orders of Umm al-Mu’minin, `Uthman was saved from the bloodied swords of her men, but forty companions of his were murdered in cold blood. After this massacre, the bayt al-mall was attacked. The guards there, who numbered fifty, were tied with ropes. They were then slaughtered like sheep and goats. Hakim ibn Jibillah, who was an eminent person of al-Basrah, heard about this massacre and torture of `Uthman ibn Hunayf. He took with him ۳۰۰ men of Banū-Bakr and Banū-Qays and proceeded towards bayt al-rizq where `Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr was distributing rations to his men. When he saw Hakim coming, he asked why he had come. Hakim asked him to give their share of the rations and to release `Uthman ibn Hunayf and to allow him to remain in the Dar al-Imarah until Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s) arrived. He also added that if they had sufficient numbers, they would not have tolerated the orgy of killing committed by them. Ibn al-Zubayr said that they had avenged the killing of `Uthman. Hakim asked him whether the innocent persons they had killed were the assassins of `Uthman? Why were not they afraid of the Retribution of Allah? Ibn al-Zubayr told Hakim that however much he shouted and cried, neither he would release any ration to his men nor `Uthman ibn Hunayf be released. He added that if he recants from the bay`ah of `Ali (a.s) he could be

released. When Hakim heard him, he said, “O Allah! You are Just! You must be witness
:to their tyranny!” Then he addressed his companions

I have no reservation in fighting with these tyrants. Those who have any may go“
[away!”[۴۴

Saying this, Hakim unsheathed his sword and with a few companions attacked the adversaries. From that side too men came up with their swords. In the winking of the eyes, a severe battle was started and blood was being shed. During the fight, one person hit the leg of Hakim and cut it. Hakim picked up the severed leg and hit it so hard at the man that he fell down. Hakim went crawling to him, and sat on the person until that person was dead. Hakim kept fighting until his strength lasted. But how could a small group fight with a large contingent. One by one, they were all killed. Hakim, his son Ashraf and brother Ra-al ibn Jibillah lost their lives in this battle. This is .remembered as the Battle of the Minor Camel that happened on ۲۵ Rabi` II, ۳۶ H

After killing Hakim and his men, Talhah and al-Zubayr wanted to kill `Uthman ibn Hunayf as well. `Uthman understood from their looks that they intended to kill him. He told them that if they killed him, his brother Sahl ibn Hunayf would certainly wreak revenge against them. My brother is the governor of al-Madinah and he will search each and every relative of theirs and kill them. Hearing this, they changed their minds and released `Uthman from captivity. He left al-Basrah and at Dhi-Qar reached the presence of Amir al-Mu'minin. When he saw the pitiable condition of `Uthman ibn Hunayf, `Ali's eyes watered. He asked `Uthman to tell him about the happening in al-Basrah and about the atrocities of the warriors at the Battle of the Camel. Hearing the details his face turned red with anger. Immediately he ordered arranging the left, right and the front flanks of the army. On the left was `Abdullah ibn `Abbas in the lead, on the right flank he put `Umar ibn Abi-Salamah and the front flank was commanded by Ya`li ibn `Umar. The Standard of the army he entrusted to Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah. They now started moving towards al-Basrah. On the way, they halted with the tribe of `Abd al-Qays. The people of this tribe had great regard for `Ali (a.s). When they learned about the campaign for which the Imam (a.s) .was going, they too joined the ranks

When Amir al-Mu'minin's army reached outer al-Basrah, al-Ahnaf ibn Qays, who had already owed allegiance to the Imam (a.s) after the death of `Uthman, came to his presence and said, "O Amir al-Mu'minin! I wish to say two things. If you order, I shall be with you to take part in the battle, or I shall stop the ۴,۰۰۰ swords that had been unsheathed against you. (a.s) agreed with his second suggestion and allowed him to go. How the Imam (a.s) northern al-Basrah and camped at al-Zawiyah. He sent some letters and messengers to Talhah, al-Zubayr and Umm al-Mu'minin. He asked them to desist from battle and bloodshed. The advice did not appeal to them. Generally, wars are destructive, but the internecine wars are the worst. The threesome did not agree to any suggestions of peaceful settlement of the dispute. When Amir al-Mu'minin's emissaries returned disappointed, and it became evident that there was no other alternative than the battle, the troops moved forward from al-Zawiyah and camped again on reaching Qasr `Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad. The army of `Ali (a.s) was ۲۰,۰۰۰ strong and the enemy had registered the cooperation of Banū-Azd, Banū-Dubbah, Banū-Hanzalah, Banū-Salim etc on the excuse of seeking retaliation for the blood of `Uthman. This way their strength was touching the figure of about ۳۰,۰۰۰ men. When both the armies came to the battlefield, the Imam (a.s) told them about the destruction that would be cause by the battle in terms of men and material. But the numbers had gone to the heads of the two rebels. Their men started shouting the slogan, "Revenge of `Uthman" stood in rows. The Imam (a.s) too organized rows of his men opposite their rows. Instructing his men, the Imam (a.s) said, "Until the enemy starts hostilities, you should not move forward. Until they attack, you should not attack. Do not stop those who show their backs to the battlefield. Do not attack the injured and maimed. Do not cut the limbs of the vanquished opponents and do not do anything that is taboo against the dead of the enemy troops. Do not harm any females!" After advising his men, he came to the front without wearing armor riding ,on a horse and shouted

Where is al-Zubayr?" First al-Zubayr was hesitant to respond. Then he put on protective armor and helmet and came near the Imam (a.s) He said, "O al-Zubayr! Why have you come to al-Basrah? Why have you taken this step fraught with dangers?" al-Zubayr replied, "To seek retaliation for the blood of `Uthman!" The Imam (a.s) said

You want the qisas for `Uthman's blood from me although you yourselves have killed him. May Allah inflict a pitiable death on those amongst us who were more aggressive [and harsh with him.]"[٤٥

:Al-Zubayr could not counter this but said

We do not consider you capable of being the caliph nor are we ourselves capable of [that.]"[٤٦

The Imam (a.s) said that today you do not consider me capable of being the caliph, but we have always accepted you as the progeny of `Abd al-Muttalib, until your accursed son erected between you and us the wall of separation. O al-Zubayr! I ask you in the name of Allah! Have not you heard the Prophet (a.s) say that you will battle with you [and me will be the oppressor against my rights?]"[٤٧

Reminded of this prediction of the Prophet (a.s), al-Zubayr said, "Yes! The Prophet (a.s) did say that." The Imam (a.s) said, "Then! Why have you come to fight against me?" al-Zubayr replied, "I had forgotten this saying of the Prophet (a.s). I am now reminded, and, seeing `Ammar, I remember the Prophet (a.s) saying, 'O `Ammar! A rebel group will kill you!' Now I have decided that I shall not fight with you and I will return home." Therefore, with a crestfallen face al-Zubayr went to `A'ishah and said, "Whatever steps I have taken, I had done that with due consideration. But my mind does not work in the matter of this campaign. Therefore, I shall not take part in the battle against `Ali (a.s) and I will go home forthwith." `A'ishah said, "What are you talking? " `Abdullah said, "It appears that you were scared of seeing the shining swords of the sons of `Abd al-Muttalib, their fluttering standard and the death looking into your face!" al-Zubayr said, "It is not like that! But `Ali (a.s) has reminded of something that I had forgotten. For me it is better that I depart from here now!" He

.said this and went away from the battlefield

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At a distance of seven farasangs or Leagues, from al-Basrah, in the Valley of Al Saba he was killed by `Amr ibn Jurmūz. And it was proved what Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) had said when he talked of demanding retaliation for the blood of `Uthman

This step by al-Zubayr is a proof that what he was doing earlier was wrong. It cannot be that fighting with `Ali (a.s) was right and going away withdrawing from the battle was also right. Therefore, once `Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr told sarcastically to Ibn `Abbas, "You people have fought with Umm al-Mu'minin and with the companion of the Prophet (a.s), al-Zubayr!" Ibn `Abbas retorted, "The truth is that your father brought out `A'ishah from her home and brought her to confront `Ali (a.s) in the battlefield! I ask you! Do you consider `Ali (a.s) a mu'min or not? If you consider him believer, then you have become heretics. If you consider that he was an infidel, then your father was misguided and subject to Retribution because he refused to fight with an infidel. Now it is left to you to decide who was the misguided one

After al-Zubayr, the Imam (a.s) wanted to talk to Talhah as well to convince him to refrain from battling. Therefore, he addressed him thus

O Talhah! You have brought the Prophet's consort to the battlefield, leaving your own wife at home! Did you not pledge your bay`ah to me?" [٤٨

When the Imam (a.s) reminded of Talhah's bay`ah with him, he carried the Qur'an in his hand and went round the rows of his troops saying loudly, "Who s there among you who will go with the Book to the rows of the enemy formation and invite them to follow the teachings of the Qur'an and ask them to refrain from mischief referring to the same Holy Book! But he should know that he would thus be going into the mouth of death. One youth from al-Kūfah, Muslim ibn `Abdullah Al-Mujashi`i, volunteered to go. After the Imam (a.s) made the announcement thrice, when none other than Muslim volunteered, he prayed for him and handed over the Qur'an to him. The youth went with the Book before the enemy troops and talked about the commandments of the Allah. He reminded them to act on the commands written in the Book. But none paid any heed to his voice! At that moment, `A'ishah's slave attacked him with a sword and severed both his hands. Muslim tried to protect the Book with his chest, fell

down and was martyred. The Qur'an too was damaged with a barrage of arrows.

:Seeing this happening, the Imam (a.s) said

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[Now there is no doubt left in the veracity of battling with these people”[۴۹“

After this martyrdom of the valiant Muslim Al-Mujashi`i, `Ammar Ibn Yasir came near the enemy formations and addressed them, “O People! You have kept your women behind the curtains at your homes, and have brought your Prophet’s spouse to face the swords, spears and the arrows! You have come to avenge the blood of `Uthman, although you know it well who are the killers of `Uthman and on whom rests the responsibility of that act! “`Ammar said this much when there was a barrage of arrows from the enemy troops that forced him to step back. Turning to the Imam (a.s) he said, “O Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s)! What is the delay now? These people do not want to listen to anything other than battling! “Because of the soft attitude of the Imam (a.s) and his prolonged efforts to avoid hostilities had made the enemy think that in his weakness he was trying to avoid hostilities. They started raining arrows on the troops and many a chest was pierced with them. In that time, one person was brought to the presence of the Imam (a.s) who had died with the wounds from the arrows. Another person martyred with the enemy arrows was brought before him. Then `Abdullah ibn Badil brought his brother, `Abd al-Rahman, who also had died with the wounds from the arrows. The brows of the Imam (a.s) knit now and said, “We are Allah’s and to Him
”.do we return

Now there was no other way than entering the battlefield. He tried his best to prevent the internecine battle taking place. All the possibilities for truce had been exhausted and, in fact, the enemy has commenced attacking. He asked for the Prophet's armor, Dhat al-Fudūl, and wore it. On his head, he wore a black turban. He had the sword, Dhul-Faqar, in his hand. He entrusted the command of the right flank to Malik al-Ashtar and the left flank to `Ammar ibn Yasir. He gave the Prophet's black standard, `Uqab, to Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah and asked him to go ahead. When Muhammad moved forward, a barrage of arrows stopped him. Seeing this, the Imam (a.s) took the standard from Muhammad. He now had the sword in one hand and the standard in the other. He attacked the enemy ranks with full force. He fought with such valor that everywhere there were enemy dead lying on the ground. When he returned and gave back the standard to Muhammad, he too demonstrated the same .valor and killed innumerable enemy troops

In this battle, Marwan was looking for Talhah to settle his score with him for the blood of `Uthman. He knew that the responsibility for the killing of `Uthman rested on him as well. Besides revenge, he had a political purpose too for eliminating Talhah. Marwan knew that as long as Talhah and al-Zubayr lived, the caliphate would not return towards Banū-Umayyah. The possibility could present itself after these two stumbling blocks were removed. Al-Zubayr had already left the theatre of war. If he had stayed in the battlefield, it was quite possible that Marwan's arrow would have targeted him as well. He got the opportunity of finishing Talhah. From behind the back of his slave, Marwan shot a poisoned arrow that pierced Talhah's knee region. Piercing the knee, the arrow entered the flank of Talhah's horse. The horse ran fast :and fell in a ruin. Talhah breathed his last at that place. Ibn Sa`d writes

On the day of the Camel, Marwan ibn al-Hakam attacked Talhah, who was stationed “beside `A’ishah, with an arrow that hit his knee. Then Marwan said, ‘By Allah! After [you, I shall not have to look for `Uthman’s assassin!’”[۱۵.

Even after Talhah’s death and al-Zubayr’s withdrawal from the battlefield, the morale of the enemy army did not go down in any way. They remained steadfast in the arena because the main character of the drama was Umm al-Mu’minin `A’ishah. They were attached only to her and were not bothered if anyone else remained or went away. Their dedication was of such magnitude that they were picking up the droppings of her camel, crushing them between their fingers and smelling them saying that they were the droppings of their mother’s camel and they smell of musk and ambergris. They guarded the camel as they would guard the standard of the army. They kept the camel encircled all the time `A’ishah was watching from the canopy of the camel’s back the men holding the reins of the camel falling down dead with the arrows of their adversaries. With one man falling, another would take his place immediately. The rein holders were mostly from Banū-Dubbah, Banū-Najiyah and Banū-Azd and men from Quraysh, who held the rein at their turns and recited martial poetry all the while. Although the number of the rein holders was very large, only from the Quraysh ۷۰ perished doing this duty. But the reference of a few of them is there in the books of history. One of them was the qadi of al-Basrah, Ka`b ibn Siwar. Although he wanted to remain neutral in this battle, but Talhah and al-Zubayr had asked `A’ishah to call him or personally visit him to register his cooperation. They said that if Ka`b did not come, none from the tribe of Banū-Azd would join the campaign. Umm al-Mu’minin sent word through someone calling him. But he avoided the visit. In the end, she herself went to his place. She called him, but he kept quiet. `A’ishah asked, “Why are you mum? Am I not your mother?” At this Ka`b opened the door. Umm al-Mu’minin asked him to take part in the battle. In the beginning, he remained quiet. But he did yield in the end and she was successful in bringing him to the arena of the battle. Because of him, Banū-Azd too came to fight. Ka`b brought a copy of the Qur’an hanging in his neck. He held a staff in one hand and the rein of the camel in the other.

!An arrow came from an unknown direction and he was killed

When the famous Arab swordsman, `Amr ibn Yasri, held the rein of `A'ishah's camel, from the troops of `Ali (a.s), Hind ibn `Amr came forward to challenge him. `Amr gave the rein to his son and came to meet the challenge. They tried their skill of swordsmanship on each other. But in the end, Hind was vanquished and killed by `Amr. After Hind, Alba ibn Haitham and Zayd ibn Sawhan came to fight with him and both were martyred by him. When `Ammar ibn Yasir saw this, he could not bear to stay quiet. He tied a belt of the leaves of date palm around his girdle and came to the battlefield with sword in hand. `Ammar was a grand old man of ۹۰ years and very weak when compared to his adversary. When people saw him, they thought that he would meet the same end as the persons who came out to fight with `Amr. When Ibn Yasri saw him coming with the intention of fighting, he gave the rein to `Amr Ibn Bajrah and jumped with speed towards `Ammar and attacked him with his sword. `Ammar fenced the sword with his shield. The shield was made of such material that the sword got stuck in it. `Amr tried to pull the sword out. But in that moment, `Ammar bent down and struck `Amr's legs with his sword. Both the legs of `Amr were severed. He fell down helpless. People picked him up and brought to the presence of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). The Imam (a.s) ordered his execution in qisas for killing the three persons slain by him. When `Amr ibn Bajrah saw that Ibn Yasri was killed, he gave the rein of the camel to someone else and came to the arena to fight. From the other side Rabi`ah al-`Aqili came and both rushed at one other with swords .in hands. Both were killed fighting with one another

When the rein of the camel came to the hand of `Awf ibn Qatan al-Sanbi, he said that the responsibility of the assassination of `Uthman was on `Ali (a.s) and his two sons. He said that he would fight with them to avenge the blood of `Uthman. Therefore, he :recited the following martial poem while coming to the arena

O mother! O mother! I am away from home
!Now I do not crave for the grave nor the shroud
At this place only `Awf ibn Qatan will perish
!If `Ali (a.s) escaped from our hands it is a certain loss
,Or if his two sons al-Hasan and al-Husayn escaped from our hands
.I shall die of that sadness and sorrow

After this recitation, he attacked and kept fighting. At last, Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyahh slew him with his sword. He took his desire of killing `Ali and his sons
!(a.s) to his grave

Among the rein holders was `Abdullah ibn Abza too. He first held the rein, then recited :the following martial poem before going to the arena

I shall fence my sword and not even care to look at Abul-Hasan
This battle is a pathetic affliction

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) went forward and hit him with his spear. And said, "You wished to look at Ab al Hasan (a.s). Tell me, how you have found him?" He left the spear .pierced in the person's chest

One of the well know warriors who came to the Battle of the Camel, Khabbab ibn `Amr al-Rasibi, recited the following martial poem and threw a challenge for a fight

I shall fight with my sword, and if I see `Ali (a.s), I shall attack him with my sharp,
.shining sword

.Malik al-Ashtar came forward and killed him with one blow of his sword

Then came `Attab ibn Usayd who was from the elite of Quraysh. He recited the
:following martial poem

”I am `Attab’s son and my sword is “Walwal

And my death is around the camel

Malik al-Ashtar attacked and killed him. He did die at the feet of the camel, but his
!sword did not serve him well

One warrior of al-Basrah, `Amr ibn Ashraf al-`Atiki caught the rein of the camel in
one hand and his sword in the other. Whoever came near him, he attacked reciting
:the following couplets

O our mother! In our knowledge, you are the best mother

The mother feeds her children and is kind on them

Do not you see how many valiant are injured

And heads and wrists are falling severed

Al-Harith ibn Zuhayr al-Azdi came to fight with him. Both attacked each other and fell
down injured with each other’s sword and died. Along with Ibn Ashraf, thirteen men
.from his tribe too perished fighting

Abdullah ibn Khalaf al-Khuza`i, an elite of al-Basrah, in whose place Umm al-`
Mu’minin stayed as guest on arrival there, came to the battlefield. He demanded for a
:combat with `Ali (a.s) reciting the following triplet

O Abū-Turab come closer to me

Closer you come I shall be closer than that

My chest is full of anger against you

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Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) came forward and with one stroke of his sword made two pieces of him

Abdullah ibn Hakim, who was the chief of the contingent of the Quraysh during this battle came out for combat. From the other side came `Adi ibn Hatam. He attacked `Adi and broke one of his eyes with the spear. In that condition it was difficult for `Adi to subdue his opponent. At this moment came Malik al-Ashtar and with his help the opponent was killed

Umm al-Mu'minin used to ask every person who came to hold the reins of the camel as to who he was. In that order, `Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr came to hold the reins. She also asked him who he was. He said that he was her sister's son, `Abdullah. Hearing his name she cried, "Pity! The womb of Asma' is ruined!" `Abdullah was holding the reins when Malik al-Ashtar passed from the front of the camel. Both stared at each other and raised their swords. Malik hit the head of `Abdullah and injured him seriously. He too got a minor injury from him. Both the injured persons caught each other with force. Malik threw `Abdullah on the ground and sat on his chest. When `Abdullah saw that he was about to be killed, he shouted, "Kill both me and Malik". People did not pay any heed to his words because everyone knew Malik as al-Ashtar only. If `Abdullah had said al-Ashtar instead of Malik, certainly people would have attacked him. `Abdullah was a youth and Malik was an old person. `Abdullah could somehow free himself from the grip of Malik and ran away saving his life. `Abdullah did save his life, but for his entire life he got the black mark of showing his back to the battlefield. This was a topic of gossip for long. Once someone ridiculed `Adi by asking him when he became one eyed, he said

When we had hit the spear at your buttocks and you ran away showing your“
[back!”[٥١

Umm al-Mu'minin was much worried about `Abdullah. When she was informed that he saved his life by running away from the battle, she took a sigh of relief! She gifted ٤,٠٠٠ dirhams to the person who brought this good tiding

Al-Aswad ibn al Bukhtari too was killed catching the reins of Umm al-Mu'minin's camel. Jundub ibn Zuhayr al-Ghamidi and `Abd al-Rahman ibn Usayd were killed by Malik. When, in the end, the reins came to the hands of Zufar ibn al-Harith, the battle became intense and row after row was finished. Everywhere rivers of blood were flowing. When Umm al-Mu'minin saw this gory scene, she threw a few pebbles towards the army of `Ali (a.s) and said, “May these faces blacken!” This was the copy of that miraculous act of the Prophet (a.s) at the Battle of Hunayn. But there the Prophet's act was against the infidels and here Umm al-Mu'minin was fighting an unnecessary, internecine battle. The Prophet (a.s) did that under the Command of Allah through a Revelation. Here `A'ishah was fighting with Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) and
(the revered Companions of the Prophet (a.s

Amir al-Mu'minin asked Malik al-Ashtar to attack the right flank of the enemy formations and Hashim ibn `Utbah to take care of the left. Both of them went with their troops with raised swords and made a severe onslaught that the feet of the right flank were uprooted. The men left their position and moved to the center of the formation. The chief of the right flank, Hilal ibn Waki` was killed by Malik al-Ashtar and the men ran to take shelter near Umm al-Mu'minin. The troops of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) chased the fleeing men and there was severe fighting around the camel of Umm al-Mu'minin. Banū-Azd, Banū-Najiyah and Bahilah had encircled the camel to safeguard it and were taking the arrows, swords and spears on their chests.

:Al-Zamakhshari records the scene thus

The swords banging on the heads produced such a sound as the beating of clothes“
[on the wooden plank while washing them.”[۵۲

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) saw that the battle had not as yet reached the final stages. Therefore, he decided himself to enter the theatre. He stood up with a contingent of Muhajirūn and Ansar. Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn were on the right and the left of him. Muhammad Ibn al-Hanafiyyah was carrying the Standard in front of him. The Imam (a.s) asked him to bisect the formation and reach with the standard near the camel of Umm al-Mu'minin. Muhammad started to move, waving the flag. But from the other side there was a barrage of arrows that stopped him. The Imam (a.s) went forward. Put his left hand on the shoulder of Muhammad and took the standard from him. Now he had the Dhul-Faqar in his right hand and the standard in his left. He attacked the enemies with such ferocity that innumerable heads fell. He returned for a while amongst his men, straightened his sword and once again commenced the attack. When he wanted to commence the battle again, his companions and men pleaded with him not to expose himself to the danger of injury. Then he told Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah that battles were fought in that manner. The people said, “O Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s)! Who has the strength and skill to fight like you! Who
”?has the strength and capability to fence the sword like you

This intense attack on the owners of the camel showed clear signs of their imminent defeat. Although their heads were falling continuously, they could not have thought of leaving the field until the camel was standing in their midst. Its condition too was such that there were arrows on the canopy of Umm al-Mu'minin and the saddle of the camel like the thorns on the back of the porcupine. The camel was unable to bear the onslaught and was turning round and round like the turning of the grinding wheel. When the Imam (a.s) felt that as far as the camel stood in the battleground, the battle would not end. On the other hand the people from al-Basrah were resisting others from going near it. He thought of removing the camel from the battlefield. He took youths from the tribes of Nakha and Hamdan and moved forward. Seeing the Imam (a.s), the rows were broken, and along with his companions, he reached near the camel. He told one of his troopers, Bujayr ibn Daljah al-Naqafi to go and cut the legs

of the camel Bujayr went forward and struck the legs of the camel with his sword. The camel made a shrill sound and slumped on its side on the ground. As soon as the camel fell, the battle suddenly stopped. And the men started running helter-skelter. None had any idea what to do. They were trampling the injured and the dead on their way. In no time, the battlefield was sparsely occupied. Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr and `Ammar ibn Yasir cut the belts of the camel, lowered the saddle to the ground. Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr put his hand inside the canopy of the saddle. Umm al-Mu'minin angrily asked who it was? He said, "I am your brother whom you do not like!"

,She asked, "Are you the son of al-Khath`amiyyah?" He said, "Yes!" She replied

Thank Allah! You are living and no harm has come to you” Muhammad asked her, “Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s) is inquiring if any harm has come to you?” She said, “One arrow had grazed my side, but I suffered no serious injury!” Then `Ammar ibn Yasir came near the saddle and said, “O Umm al-Mu’minin! You have seen your sons battling!”

[She said very angrily, “I am not your mother!”] [٥٣]

Ammar said, “You are the mother, whether you accept or you do not!” Umm al-` Mu’minin’s denial cannot be accepted right from the point of view of the Qur’anic Commandment! From the Nass Qur’an, the prophet’s wives are the mothers of Muslims, she was the mother of the Muslims, which neither the Muslims deny nor there is any way of denying it! The apparent reason for her denial is that when `Ammar took part in the battle against her, he had forfeited his right to be her son! But the battle was not between the mother and her sons. But it is not binding on the Muslims to obey the Prophet’s wives as they would their own natural mothers. They are the mothers of the Muslims because after the Prophet’s demise they were forbidden from entering into matrimony with others on account of being the Mothers of the Muslims. Such relationship was Haram for Muslims as with their own mothers. Therefore, when the verse of Hijab was revealed, some Muslims uttered that they might marry the widows of the Prophet (a.s) after his demise. Then to admonish them

:the following verse was revealed

وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْذُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَنْ تُنكِحُوا أَزْوَاجَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَبَدًا.

And it does not behoove you that you should give trouble to the Messenger of Allah,“
”(nor that you should marry his wives after him ever. (۳۳/۵۳

This banning of matrimony with the Prophet’s widows, are different from the duties of the children towards their natural mothers, and of the mothers towards their children. For example, the children are bound to provide sustenance to their own mothers. But in the case of the mothers of the believers, such binding is not there. Nor were the mothers of the believers permitted to discard the Hijab in front of their sons—the believers. Only in the matter of the forbiddance of marriage that they were given the status of the Mother of the Believers. While it is binding on Muslims to obey their mothers, the obedience has to be subject to the commands being within the norms of Shari` ah. The Prophet (a.s) has said

[Obedience cannot be in acts of sin and is required only in virtuous deeds.] [۵۴“

Perhaps Umm al-Mu’minin had realized this. That her act was aggressive and the journey to al-Basrah was for an illegitimate purpose. Therefore, during her journey she was not offering qasr (shortened form) prayers. Another interpretation is that this was her attitude only during the trip to al-Basrah, and considering the trip as a journey of illegitimacy, she was offering the full mandatory prayers instead of the curtailed qasr prayers mandated during the journeys. The mandate for qasr is only in lawful circumstances. Therefore, Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani has made the following
:observation

A'ishah was traveling with the intention of battling with `Ali (a.s) to al-Basrah and “ was offering all the mandated genuflections of prayers and in her opinion qasr Prayer [was mandated only during journey of obedience (to Allah).”[٥٥]

Anyway, Umm al-Mu'minin was still in the battlefield when Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) came near the saddle and tapped at its canopy with his stick. He said, “O Humayra! Did not the Prophet (a.s) order you to follow the dictum of “Once you establish dominance, treat the dominated well

He ordered Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr to erect a tent over the camel's fallen saddle and guard it that none came near it. With the dusk, he sent her to the widow of `Abdullah ibn Khalaf, Safiyyah bint al-Harith. He ordered the carcass of the camel to be burnt. And spread its ashes to the wind. Then he said, “Allah's curse on this animal.” He said that it was very similar to the calf, which was worshipped by Banū-Isra'il. He then recited the following verse from the Qur'an

وَانظُرْ إِلَىٰ إِلَهِكَ الَّذِي ظَلَلْتَ عَلَيْهِ عَاكِفًا لَنْهَرِقَنَّهُ ثُمَّ لَنَنْسِفَنَّهُ فِي الْيَمِّ نَسْفًا.

And look at your god to whose worship you kept (so long); we will certainly burn it,“ (then we will certainly scatter it a (wide) scattering in the sea. (٢٠/٩٧)

After the end of the battle, the Imam (a.s) announced to his men that they should not chase any person fleeing. They should not harm any injured person. They should not enter homes of people to loot. Those who surrender arms, give them amnesty and protection. Those who lock themselves in their homes, leave them in peace. Whatever arms and other materials they found in the battlefield was theirs. He said that on the women and the slave girls they did not have any right. On this, some objections were raised. They said how is it possible that shedding their blood was legitimate and making them slaves is not allowed. Perhaps this opinion was expressed because in the earlier period that was the practice when battles were fought with the infidels and their survivors from the battles, including women and children, were made slaves. The Imam (a.s) said that his decision is the same as that of the Prophet (a.s) after the conquest of Makkah. He said, “if you are insistent, tell me who will take charge of his mother, `A'ishah?” Hearing this silence fell on all the protesters and they realized that

their demand was not just. They said, “O Amir al-Mu’minin! The decision made by you
”.is absolutely correct

p: ٤١٨

The Imam (a.s) stayed for three days in the field of Jamal. After the burial of the martyrs he entered the city of al-Basrah and went straight to the Masjid. After the prayer, he stood with his back against the wall on the right side. He chided the people of al-Basrah against their waywardness and said

You were the troops of a woman and the obedient servants of a camel! When it yelled you went saying, 'At your service', when it was hurt you ran away! You are people with low morals, deniers of promises and your faith is something to show off and something else in your hearts! Even the water in your land is polluted! Those who stand to pray amidst you are entangled in sin. One who left you has the Blessings of [Allah.] [٥٦]

After the Sermon, the Imam (a.s) took bay`ah from the people of al-Basrah and warned them against creating mischief. Then he came out, and with Abul-Aswad al-Du'ali and others, went to the bayt al-mall and after spot inspection ordered all the funds there to be distributed to those who participated in the battle. He ordered that every trooper must get ٥٠٠ dirhams each. When the distribution was done, not a single dirham went less than the sanctioned amount for any person, nor any balance left after the entire amount was distributed! Habbah al-Urfi says that Amir al-Mu'minin too took his share equal to that of others. After the distribution was over one person came and said that he intended to take part in the battle, but could not present himself on time and that he must get a share in the funds distributed. The Imam (a.s) gave him his share of ٥٠٠ dirhams and remained empty handed

A'ishah was still in al-Basrah. The Imam (a.s) sent Ibn `Abbas to her with the message that she must prepare for going to al-Madinah. She was told that neither she had any work in al-Basrah, nor her remaining away from al-Madinah for long was desirable. Ibn `Abbas says that he went with the Imam's message and sought her permission to enter, but she refused him entry. He was forced to enter without permission and sat down on a rag. Umm al-Mu'minin saw him from behind the curtain and said, "O Ibn `Abbas! You have not cared for the manners prescribed by the Shari`ah and entered without my permission and came into my house and you are sitting on the rag too without my permission. Ibn `Abbas said, "we have better understanding of the norms of Shari`ah! If you have learnt these norms, it is from us. This is not your house that we have to get your permission to enter here. Your house is there, where the Prophet (a.s) had left you behind! When you are at that house, we shall not enter without your permission! I had to come here anyway to convey to you the command of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). He asks you to move away to al-Madinah soon. She said, "Amir al-Mu'minin was `Umar ibn al-Khattab." He said, "I meant `Ali ibn Abi-Talib when I said Amir al-Mu'minin!" She said, "I do not accept him as the Amir al-Mu'minin." Ibn `Abbas said, "What happens if you accept him as Amir al-Mu'minin or not. Since when you have been given the authority that if you accept one as Amir al-Mu'minin, he is, or otherwise, not!" At this Umm al-Mu'minin started crying and said, "I myself want to go away from this city soon

[For the reason that I dislike the place where you people live.]”[٥٧“

Ibn `Abbas said, “This is the height of not recognizing others rights. Is it the return for the fact that we have made you Umm al-Mu`minin and your father was called the siddiq. She said, “Do you want to claim superiority over me through the Prophet (a.s)?” he said, “You are only one of the nine wives of the Prophet (a.s).But because of this your slightest word is accepted as a command. We are the flesh and blood of the Prophet (a.s) and it is the same blood that is running in our veins. If you had this privilege, would you not have claimed superiority over us?” Umm al-Mu`minin kept quiet at this because she had no reply to give. Ibn `Abbas repeated the conversation :to the Imam (a.s). He was very happy to hear this and recited the following Verse

ذُرِّيَّةٌ بَعْضُهَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ.

”(Offspring one of the other; and Allah is Hearing, Knowing. (٣/٣٤“

When Umm al-Mu`minin agreed to travel, Amir al-Mu`minin made arrangements for her travel and the expenses for the way He asked Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr to accompany her and sent her safely on the way to al-Madinah. This journey .commenced on ١ Rajab ٣٦ H, The day was Sunday

Amir al-Mu`minin, from the beginning to the end of this battle, set a great example searching for peace against all odds. Although he had to fight a bloody battle to curb the big mischief, he did not commence the hostilities until the enemy attacked first. Although they had, before the Imam (a.s) arrived at al-Basrah, inflicted great atrocities on the people and killed hundred of the friends of the Ahl al-Bayt. They attacked the governor of al-Basrah, `Uthman ibn Hunayf, surreptitiously in the night breaking the commitment they had made with him. They captured the bayt al-mall and bayt al-rizq and carried out almost a general massacre of the Muslims. Although the justification for severe action was already created by these heinous acts, the Imam (a.s) tried his best to affect an amicable and peaceful solution. Therefore, he talked at length with Talhah and al-Zubayr. He sent a copy of the Holy Qur`an with Muslim al-Mujashi`i to ask them to follow the injunctions of the Book. When all these efforts were ineffective, and his efforts for peace were termed as his weakness, he

was left with no other alternative than fighting it out. When the hostilities started, he
.organized his ranks in such a manner that victory was guaranteed

:The things that Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) had exhorted his men to follow were

.They should not start the hostilities themselves .۱

.They should not attack any injured person .۲

.They should not chase any man running away from the arena .۳

.They should not touch anything other than those permitted as booty of war .۴

His men followed his commands implicitly. Until his men were getting hurt, even dying, with the barrage of arrows from the enemy, they did not start fighting. When blood started flowing in the battlefield, they did not touch the injured men of the enemy. When the enemy troops started escaping in defeat, they were not chased. They did not have a second look at the things left by the vanquished army

:Al-Daynawari has written

They saw gold, silver and other costly materials in the battlefield but none even looked at those things. They only took the arms and the transport animals of the [enemy men who were killed during the battle.]^[۵۸]

It is the custom in the world that the victorious armies hold the officers of the vanquished army as captives on false charges of treason and rebellion. They either keep them incarcerated for long or execute them. But the Imam (a.s) rose above the spirit of revenge and did not question anyone from al-Basrah who were openly against him. He pardoned such enemies of peace as `Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr, Marwan ibn al-Hakam, al-Walid ibn `Uqbah, `Abdullah ibn `Amir with one stroke of his pen. Umm al-Mu'minin who left no stone unturned in his opposition, was treated with due respect and was sent safely to al-Madinah. He explained the subtle difference between the jihad with the Muslims and that with the infidels. His men wanted to take the women and children as slaves, according to the prevailing custom after victorious conduct of wars. He convinced them that they were not permitted to take such women and children as slaves. Instead of transferring the bayt al-mall at al-Basrah to the center, he distributed the funds equitably to all his men. Thus, he retained the

.spirit of the fighting men to willingly participate in the future campaigns, if required

p: ۶۲۲

Umm al-Mu'minin, who for the common Muslim has the status of a scholar and adept at remembering the traditions of the Prophet (a.s), was not ignorant of the fact that she had no right to claim retaliation for the blood of `Uthman. That was the right and the duty of the establishment of the time or the successors of the victim. Neither `A'ishah was the representative of the Muslim interests nor was she one of the successors of `Uthman. Despite this, she entered into a fight with the caliph of the day and instigated a huge army of people to fight. This, despite the fact that the spouses of the Prophet (a.s) were mandated to remain within the four walls of their homes. The Holy Qur'an says

وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَىٰ.

And stay in your houses and do not display your finery like the displaying of the“
” (ignorance of yore. (33/33)

In obedience to this injunction of the Holy Qur'an, Umm al-Mu'minin Zaynab bint Jahsh and Umm al-Mu'minin Sawdah never went out of al-Madinah and their entire lives they followed the dictum. Some persons asked Sawdah why she was not going on Hajj. She replied that she had already performed the Hajj and that she was bound to live in the house where the Prophet (a.s) had left her behind. Therefore, after the demise of the Prophet (a.s), she never left her room. Besides this, even the ordinary Muslim women are not required by the Faith to actively participate in the warlike activities. Therefore, `A'ishah says

I sought the Prophet's permission to participate in the jihad. He said, "the jihad for"
[you women is performing the rites of the Hajj.] [٥٩]

:And Umm al-Mu'minin's own saying is

A spindle in the hands of a woman is better than the spear in the hand of a fighter"
[who struggles in the Cause of Allah.] [٦٠]

Despite knowing all this, she traveled with a crowd of thousands of men from Makkah to al-Basrah and leading the troops she entered the battlefield. Although she was witnessing that thousands of children would be orphaned because of her action. Thousands of young women would be unnecessarily widowed. And the blood of Muslims will be shed at the hands of Muslims! But she never bothered about the grave consequences. The responsibility for the huge loss of lives rests mostly with her. Even in her own lifetime, the people thought so. Therefore, once Ummu-Awfa al-`Abdiyyah, hundreds of men of whose tribe died fighting on the side of `Ali (a.s), asked `A'ishah, "O Umm al-Mu'minin! What do you say of the woman who had killed her young son?" She replied, "The woman would go to the Hell!" Then she asked, "What is the order for the woman who had killed ٢٠,٠٠٠ young sons only at one place!"

:Umm al-Mu'minin understood the intended sarcasm! She got angry and said

[That enemy of Allah should not be allowed to go free!] [٦١]

:Abū-`Uthman al-Jahiz has expressed the entire matter very subtly in these words

.In her act, she was like the meek and wicked cat that eats her kitten by cutting them

Anyway, her act was nothing to boast home about. The people of her own family considered an insult for themselves. Therefore, Umm al-Mu'minin once asked her nephew, Ibn Abi-`Atiq, to provide her a mule for some work. When he got her message he told the messenger, "Go and tell Umm al-Mu'minin

By Allah! Until now, we have not been able to wash away the spot of the Day of the " [Camel! Does she want to do the Day of the Mule now?]" [٤٢

Ibn Abi-`Atiq had said this sarcastically, "...but after the Day of the Camel, the people did see the Day of the Mule!" Therefore, when the mortal remains of Imam al-Hasan (a.s) were brought to be interred in the Prophet's room, Marwan ibn al-Hakam and his men stood in the way fully armed and obstructed the burial. At that time, `A'ishah too was with the men of Marwan! Therefore, Ibn Abil-Hadid writes

Abul-Faraj says that Yahya ibn Hassan the author of the book, al-Nasab, narrates that on that day `A'ishah was riding on a mule and Marwan ibn al-Hakam, Banū-Umayyah and their cohorts were tempted by her. About this someone has said, ["Sometime riding a camel, and some other time a mule!" [٤٣

In this regard the role of Talhah and al-Zubayr is no different from that of Umm al-Mu'minin. They reached al-Basrah and in the name of qisas for `Uthman they started general massacre. And without investigating who was the criminal, and who was not, everyone was dealt with naked swords. They had no right to kill anyone because the right for qisas rests with the state and the successors of the victim only. They were neither the caliphs of the time nor next of kin to `Uthman. Then the most surprising thing is that they considered breaking their bay`ah with `Ali (a.s) legitimate and their aggressive act justifiable. For this, they were putting the blame of the assassination of `Uthman on `Ali (a.s). This despite the fact that with regard to the killing of `Uthman, what was their own attitude and what was the attitude of `Ali (a.s). Therefore, `Ali (a.s) has said

By Allah! Talhah, al-Zubayr and `A'ishah know it well that I am on the right and they “
[are wrong.”[۶۴

If they really considered that `Ali (a.s) was involved in the killing of `Uthman, they would have raised their protests before owing their allegiance to `Ali. But neither at the time of the assassination nor during the period of the bay`ah for `Ali (a.s), they
:made any accusations. Muhammad ibn Asirin says

I do not know that someone has accused `Ali (a.s) of the killing of `Uthman. Even his“
bay`ah was conducted, it was finalized and after all that people started accusing
[him.”[۶۵

The chiefs of the persons who started the blame game were Talhah and al-Zubayr. They too opened their mouths when they felt that their interests were not served. This happened when the Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) refused to give them the governorates of al-Kūfah and al-Basrah. If their claim for the qisas of `Uthman was driven by the spirit of true sympathy for him, they would have raised it before the bay`ah for `Ali (a.s) commenced. They waited until much after the bay`ah and they failed in their attempts to wangle the governorships for themselves. In the light of the events, it can be told with certainty that the purpose behind all the mischief raised by the two and their cohorts was to usurp power somehow. Therefore, they recanted the bay`ah and incited others to follow suit. They told Hakim ibn Jibillah that until `Uthman ibn Hunayf did not break his bay`ah with `Ali (a.s) they would not release him from incarceration. They also said in the presence of the Imam (a.s) that they did not consider him capable of holding the position of the caliph. On an inquiry from Sa`id ibn al-`As they told in clear terms that they would not make `Uthman's son the caliph, but one of them, Talhah or al-Zubayr, should get the caliphate. The search for power egged them on to get `Uthman assassinated, and thereafter when Amir al-Mu`minin became the caliph, they hatched a conspiracy against him. They took shelter behind Umm al-Mu`minin to create mischief demanding qisas for `Uthman's blood. Thus, whether it was Umm al-Mu`minin or Talhah and al-Zubayr, they had no moral substance for their act nor that of Shari`ah. However important their personalities, but crime is, after all, a crime. Whoever is responsible for a crime, howsoever

important the personage, there has to be punishment for the crime committed. They had taken such a nasty step that thousands of lives of Muslims were lost. But there is one group that tries to shelter them under the banner of companionship. They seek many excuses and, when they fail in all their attempts, they take shelter behind the excuse of khata' ijtihadi. This excuse of khata' ijtihadi is not only for this event, but they bring it forth to cover the aberrations of their favorites time and again. If this killing of thousands of innocents was because of error in interpretation, then analyzing the errors of interpretation of these great personalities is certainly everyone's right! First of all, it has to be established under what rules and norms the ijti had was made and under what norms thousands of persons were killed to avenge the blood of one man? Was there a mandate of the Holy Qur'an for such a rash act? Or there was any tradition of the Prophet (a.s) directing them towards such precipitate actions? Did they have in their support the consent of consensus before they went ahead with their hush-hush campaign? If none of these can be proved, then where is the question of ijti had for this act

Some of the champions of these persons also concoct the excuse that some of the persons in the ranks of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s), who were the supporters of the assassins of `Uthman, finding the signs of compromise between the two groups, felt that it was against their interests and, at the instigation of Ibn Saba, before dawn attacked the troops of Umm al-Mu'minin, and in the garb of the warriors at the Battle of the Camel attacked the troops of `Ali (a.s). Thus, they say, that either side thought that the other party had attacked them and had commenced the hostilities. Thus, the fighting spread and the responsibility of the battle does not go to either of the two groups

This is a self-concocted story of those persons. It has no importance both from the point of view of narration (riwayah) nor knowledge or Higher Criticism (dirayah). This story was first recorded by Ibn Jarir al-Tabari in his famous book of history. Before al-Tabari no historian has touched on this story. But the historians who followed al-Tabari started quoting him and gave it a lot of publicity. Closing their eyes to the deeds of Talhah, al-Zubayr and `A'ishah, they put the blame for this bloody war on a fictitious character, Ibn Saba, and his band. Al-Tabari has quoted this story through Sayf ibn `Umar al-Tamimi, dead ۱۷۰ H. According to all the historians, Sayf ibn `Umar was a liar according to all the eminent scholars of `ilm al-rijal (Biographers of Narrators). Therefore, Al-Dhahbi writes in Mizan al-I`tidal that Yahya says, "One shell is better than this", Abū-Dawūd says, "That is nothing", Abū-Hatam says, "Not worth quoting", Ibn Habban says, "faithlessness and instigated by recanters." Not a single scholar has approved of it and considered it worth quoting. If there were some truth in the tradition, it would have acquired currency immediately after the event of Jamal. The first one to quote it was al-Tabari who came very much after the event. Even when it comes up, it is through a person who was known for his falsehoods. Is not it tantamount to closing one's eyes to facts by believing the narration of such a person? Anyone who studies the events of Jamal in depth will own that his narration appears out of place and concocted. The purpose definitely was to prove that the owners of the camel were not responsible for what had happened there was a mysterious and slimy person who stage managed the entire battle and remained incognito until al-Tabari's narrator broke the story for him! But the pages of history are witness that

before the battle started, several attempts were made by `Ali (a.s) to dissuade the trio from going to war! If that story has to be believed, would not the party of Jamal have said that `Ali's men made a surprise, preemptive attack instead of trying for peace. To the contrary the three were always bent on settling the scores and, even before the arrival of `Ali's army to al-Basrah they had killed tens of innocent persons .to show their might

In this connection the fictitious person, Ibn Saba, whom they term responsible for the outbreak of fighting, does not have a historical identity according to Dr taha Husayn, Egyptian Scholar, George Jurdac and other scholars. The person whose name appears prominently in connection with the assassination of `Uthman and the Battle of the Camel, his name is Safin the arbitration. His name is also heard at the time of the Battle of Nahrawan. In between, his name is not heard as if he had played the disappearing trick. One would like to know what happened to him after making his nightly attack. The truth is that his colorful personality was created to provide protection to the main characters of the episode. When his need did not remain, he was quietly withdrawn from the stage

The Battle of the Camel was fought in the middle of Jumada II, ۳۶ H (November ۶۵۶ A.D.). There are different versions about the numbers killed. From the ۳۰,۰۰۰ strong army of Umm al-Mu'minin, ۱۰,۰۰۰ or ۱۷,۰۰۰ or ۲۰,۰۰۰ men killed. And from the ۲۰,۰۰۰ strong force of `Ali (a.s) ۵,۰۰۰ or ۱,۰۷۰ martyred. Although this battle was a short duration affair, it had a long lasting effect on the feelings of the people. Therefore, after the Battle of the Camel, the flames of war rose from Syria and the swords of Muslims severed the heads of Muslims. If Umm al-Mu'minin, Talhah and al-Zubayr had not entered the battlefield, then Mu`awiyah would never have dared to challenge `Ali (a.s). But because of their activities, he got the time and opportunity to prepare himself to confront `Ali (a.s). He got an excuse that Umm al-Mu'minin who was from the tribe of Taym, came out seeking retaliation for the blood of `Uthman, then Mu`awiyah, who himself was from Banū-Umayyah, like `Uthman, had more right to seek qisas for the blood of his kinsman. This was such a strong political excuse that Mu`awiyah produced as the cause of his fight with `Ali (a.s). Therefore, he instigated people to fight the Battle of Siffin with that excuse. Then he usurped the caliphate and assumed the title of the caliph of the Muslims. As a consequence of the Battle of Siffin the group of Khawarij (the Excommunicated) arose and the Battle of Nahrawan was fought. These battles caused such schisms amongst Muslims that could not be healed during the past ۱۳ centuries

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TRANSFER OF THE CAPITAL

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During the caliphate of `Umar, when Iranian territory was annexed, the Muslims established two new cities in Iraq. One was al-Basrah and the other al-Kūfah. Al-Basrah is a coastal town and al-Kūfah is in the hinterland. Al-Basrah is named after the white and soft rocks found there that are called the same. Al-Kūfah is three miles from al-Hirah. In ٧ A.H., Sa`d ibn Abi-Waqqas moved from al-Mada'in to that place and started living in thatched shacks and thus settled one hundred thousand persons. Because of this settlement of huge numbers the place was called al-Kūfah. The word al-Kūfah has its root in takūf that means gathering. There is another etymological reason for the naming of the city. Because the place is full of small pebbles it is called al-Kūfah. A place that has plenty of stones and pebbles is called al-Kūfah or Kūfan. Al-Kūfah is located near the banks of the river Euphrates. Its climate is mild and it has plenty of gardens and oases. It has good agricultural production and was of particular interest to the Arabs from the deserts of Hijaz. After a fire accident in their

settlement, they constructed houses with bricks and stones. When it became the capital during the caliphate of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s), its importance increased very much. Because of the biographers' gathering there, it became the center for .scholastic, religious and political excellence

During the Battle of the Camel the people of al-Basrah sided with the party of Jamal and the people of al-Kūfah were with `Ali (a.s). After the battle was over, he made `Abdullah ibn `Abbas the governor of al-Basrah and appointed Hakim and Ziyad for collection of taxes and the chief of the bayt al-mal. Then he went to al-Kūfah to humor the people there who had wholeheartedly supported him. When he reached al-Mirbad outside al-Basrah, where Umm al-Mu'minin had camped with her army on arrival :there, he turned his face towards al-Basrah and said

All praise to Allah who has sent me out of this worst of lands, which is fast moving“ [towards destruction, is near the sea and far from the blessings of the sky.”[۱]

When the Imam (a.s) entered the limits of al-Kūfah on ۱۲ Rajab ۳۶ H, the elite of the town, who had already received the tidings of his victory, came out of the town to give him a warm welcome. They accompanied the Imam (a.s) riding alongside him into the town. They wanted him to reside in the Dar al-Imarah. But the Imam (a.s) did not like to reside there. He straight went to the mosque, offered two genuflections of prayer of thanksgiving and gave a sermon to the gathering. He expressed words of thanks and appreciation to the people of al-Kūfah for their help and cooperation in the successful campaign an al-Basrah. He then went to the locality called al-Rahbah and selected a middle class house for his residence there. He then decided to make al-Kūfah the provisional capital in place of al-Madinah

:This change was necessitated because of the following factors

Al-Kūfah was strategically located in the middle of the Islamic Domain from where (١) logistically all the regions could be better administered. The borders with Fars were nearby. There were facilities for land and sea voyages. The means of transportation were good. It was a meeting place of travelers from many cities and was a good source of information about the various regions. The edicts of the center could easily be communicated to other regions very easily. The defensive measures could also be organized fast in the event of attack by any alien force. Therefore, when the Syrian forces started attack in different places in the realm, the defense that was organized .from al-Kūfah would not have been possible if the capital was in al-Madinah

It was already seven months since Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) assumed the caliphate, (٢) but Mu`awiyah had neither accepted him as the caliph nor extended his hand in bay`ah. In such circumstances, one could not be unconcerned about the possibility of any mischief from him. But there were clear indications that to safeguard his position Mu`awiyah might take military action and commit unnecessary bloodshed. Therefore, the selection of such a place was necessary from where defensive moves could be made at short notice. Al-Kūfah was logistically the best place for the purpose. Al-Kūfah was nearer to Damascus, the head quarters of Mu`awiyah and more easily .accessible than from al-Madinah

It was experienced from the Battle of the Camel that the number of men who could (٣) be mobilized from al-Kūfah was not possible from al-Madinah. Despite the opposition from Abū-Mūsa, a large contingent could be got together from al-Kūfah at a short notice. At the call of the Imam (a.s), ١٢,٠٠٠ swordsmen were mobilized for the Battle of the Camel. From al-Madinah hardly a thousand men came. Therefore, it was .farsighted to move the capital to al-Kūfah

Al-Kūfah had the status of a cantonment and military center. Here traditionally the (۴) fighting classes were settled. And even their progeny had the same propensity. The people of al-Madinah, because of their affluence were easy going and submissive. Therefore, when the Imam (a.s) declared al-Kūfah as the capital, the people of al-Madinah did not react negatively. In fact, they were happy that now on they might not have to take part in military campaigns! In circumstances when the clouds of war were hovering, peace-loving people may not be depended upon in the event of emergencies.

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) had already seen that after the demise of the Prophet (a.s), (۵) with the exception of a few persons, the people had shown lack of enthusiasm towards him. When they noticed that even after ۲۵ long years of caliphate the conditions were not improving, they opted for his ascension to the caliphate. But not much time had gone by when one group from them had recanted the bay`ah and prepared to fight a battle with him. Those who did not join that group also showed utter unconcern. Therefore, the Quraysh did not seem like cooperating, Banū-Umayyah migrated to Syria as partisans of their kinsman, Mu`awiyah. Banū-Taym wanted talah to become the caliph. Banū-`Adi were in favor of `Abdullah ibn `Umar who had abstained from owing allegiance to the Imam (a.s). Thus many persons, for various reasons, were abstaining from giving him the required support. How could they be expected to rise like one if there was an attack from Mu`awiyah

Al-Madinah, because of its religious sanctity was not so much exposed to outside (٩) dangers as was Iraq. Mu`awiyah's sights were focused on Iraq. He wanted to capture it at any cost. Therefore, it was necessary for the Imam (a.s) to stay in al-Kūfah until those dangers subsided. But neither the dangers lessened nor the mischief of Banū-Umayyah under Mu`awiyah. The Imam (a.s), therefore, had to spend the remaining .years of his life in al-Kūfah only

Footnote

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APPOINTMENT OF THE FUNCTIONARIES OF THE STATE

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When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was free from the Campaign of Jamal, and he settled down in al-Kūfah, then he considered the appointment of functionaries to various positions in the realm. Although governors were already appointed to some places prior to the Jang Jamal, many places were still without his functionaries. Therefore, he had now to nominate governors to Hijaz, Egypt, Yemen, Iran, Azerbaijan etc. He selected the governors for these places. The incumbents were changed depending on the circumstances from time to time. Brief life profiles of some of the important .functionaries are mentioned here

Qays Ibn Sa`d

He was the Prophet's revered companion and the son of Sa`d ibn `Abadah, the elite of the tribe of Khazraj. Besides being a man of learning, he was tall, good looking and of robust built. Charity, valor and oratory were his main characteristics. He was very far-sighted and thoughtful. In those days, five persons were considered past masters in politics and diplomacy. They were Mu`awiyah, Abū-Sufyan, `Amr Ibn al-`As, Mughirah ibn Shu`bah, `Abdullah ibn Badil and Qays ibn Sa`d. Of these, `Abdullah ibn Badil and Qays ibn Sa`d were on the side of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). Although Sa`d was an authority on politics, he never bypassed the requirements of the Faith while :making the political moves. Therefore, his saying is

If Islam was not in the way, I would make such moves that it would not be possible“
[for the Arabs to counter them.”][۱]

He remained in the company of the Prophet (a.s) for ۱۰ years and learned from him the niceties of the Faith. He took part in all the ghazawat of the Prophet (a.s). In some of those battles, he had the privilege of carrying the Standard of Islam. He was also assigned for the collection of taxes by the Prophet (a.s). He inherited the qualities of charity and kindness from his father. During the battles, he would even take loans to feed the men. Sometimes he slaughtered the camels meant for his personal transport for this purpose. When the men mentioned about this event to the Prophet (a.s), he
:said

[Generosity is the habit of his family.”][۲“

Ibn Kathir writes in al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah that Haytham ibn `Adi has said three persons were conversing near the Ka`bah and had a strong argument. One of them was saying that the most generous person was `Abdullah ibn Ja`far. The second said that it was Qays ibn Sa`d. The third insisted that `Arabah al-Awsi was the most munificent person. When the argument became too heated, one person said that they need not argue and the matter can be sorted out easily. Each of them should go to the person he thinks is the most generous and pretending to be the needy ask for help. It will immediately be known if the assessment was right. The suggestion was accepted by the three persons. One of them went to `Abdullah ibn Ja`far. At that time he was about to go to his fief. He went forward and said, “O son of the brother of the Prophet (a.s)! Neither do I have the money for the travel expense nor the means of transportation!” Hearing this, `Abdullah took his foot out of the stirrup of the horse, got down, and said, “Take this horse and the money that is kept on it, they are all yours! There is a sword of Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) on the horse, keep it with care.” When the person took an inventory of the materials on the horse, he found ۴,۰۰۰
.Dinars, silk shawls and other things

The second person went to the house of Qays ibn Sa`d. On inquiry, he was told that he was asleep. One maid came out of the house and asked him the purpose for which he had come there. He said that he was a poor traveler and was seeking some help from Sa`d. The maid said that for this unimportant work he could not be awakened. There are ۷۰۰ Dinars at home which she gave him. She asked him to go to his stable and take one she camel and a slave from there. When Qays awoke, the maid reported the matter to him and told him that she did not want the needy person to go empty-handed from his threshold. Qays asked her why she did not wake him up. He thought that perhaps what she gave him was not sufficient for the need of the person. Then, appreciating the generosity of the maid, he released her from the slavery

The third person went to Arabia. He found him going for his prayers taking support of two slaves. At that time, he had lost his eyesight and needed others support to move around. The man reached near him and said, "O `Arabah! I am a traveler and I have no means of travel! Please help me!" `Arabah pushed the hands of the slaves from his shoulders and said, "It is a pity that fulfillment of duties has not left anything with `Arabah! Take both these slaves." The man said, "I cannot take away your supports and leave you to go around without help!" `Arabah said, "If you do not take them, I shall free them anyway!" The man took charge of the slaves and `Arabah took support of the wall and moved towards the mosque

When the three persons returned after their errands and assembled near the Ka`bah, they related their individual experiences. They said that although `Abdullah ibn Ja`far had given the maximum, considering his affluence and status, it was nothing for him. But definitely giving away `Ali's sword was a big act of generosity. Some people praised Qays that his maid could give all the money that was at home and later on, he freed her for this act of charity! In the end, all of them agreed about `Arabah that despite he being blind, gave away everything and in charity and in the .end even parted with his two slaves who were his support in his blindness

Once Qays fell ill, very few persons came to inquire about his health. It was told him that many of his friends had taken debts from him and were shy to visit because they were unable to clear their dues. Qays said curse on that wealth that makes friends shy away from visiting! Then he ordered announcement in al-Madinah that the debts of all those who have taken loans from him have been converted into gifts and the agreements have been cancelled. No sooner, the announcement was made; there .was a stream of visitors to his house

Ibn `Abd al-Barr writes in Al-Isti`ab that Kathir ibn al-Salt took ٣٠,٠٠٠ dirhams as loan from Qays. When he went to return the loan amount, Qays refused to take it back and said that there was some misunderstanding, the amount was not a loan and was a !gift

When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) became the caliph, in the month of Safar ۴۶ H, selected Qays for the governorate of Egypt because of his family background, capability and political acumen. And asked him to organize an army and take it with him. He asked him to treat the people kindly. However, where softness was not effective, strictness was allowed. Since he was permitted to take few persons with him, he selected a team of seven persons and left for Egypt. When he reached Egypt, he went to the
:Pulpit of the Mosque and gave a sermon

All praise to Allah who has manifested the Truth! He has crushed the falsehood and “demeaned the unkind! O People! We have owed our allegiance to the person who, after our Prophet (a.s), is superior to all persons that we know of! O people! Rise, and on the basis of the Book and the Sunnah, owe your allegiance to him! If we do not follow the Book and the Sunnah in your affairs, then you will not be bound by this
[bay`ah!”[۴

Then he took bay`ah from the people. None hesitated in owing his allegiance to the Imam (a.s), excepting the people of Kharbatah who were ۱۰,۰۰۰ in numbers. And all of them were fans of `Uthman. They sent word through Yazid ibn Harith al-Kinani that they will not raise objections in any matter. They said that the land belongs to the Realm and they would regularly pay the tribute. They requested him not to demand for their bay`ah until the circumstances become better. Qays sent word to them that they will not be forced for the bay`ah, but they must refrain from intrigue or mischief of any kind. The people of Kharabta promised to remain peaceful and Qays left them alone. But Maslamah ibn Muqallid, who belonged to the tribe of Qays, instigated people to seek retaliation for the blood of `Uthman. Qays sent him a message that he had created a front against him and tried to and instigated people to do mischief. He said that he could crush this mischief. He said that he would not like to shed his blood, even if he was given the territory from Syria to Egypt. Impressed with his soft attitude, he sent word to Qays that as long as he remained the governor of Egypt, no step would be taken against the government there. With the political acumen of Qays, the mischief that was to raise its head was nipped in the bud. As long as he remained in Egypt, peace prevailed. But the Umayyad politics created such a situation that after

remaining as governor from the first of Rabi` I, ۳۶ A.H. to the fifth of Rajab ۳۶ A.H., a period of ۴ months and ۵ days, he had to quit the post. The reasons for this will be dealt with in the following pages

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Qays, in his short tenure constructed a palace in Egypt. When he went back after demitting office, some people said that Qays had a house in Egypt. He said that he had constructed it with the help of the Muslims and it belongs to them only. He added .that whoever went to Egypt as the governor would stay there

.In the year ٥٩ or ٦٠ H Qays died during the caliphate of Mu`awiyah

Sahl ibn Hunayf al-Ansari

He was an important person of the tribe of Aws. He was the brother of the governor of al-Basrah, `Uthman ibn Hunayf. He had the privilege of being the Companion of the Prophet (a.s) and was a close associate of `Ali (a.s). He participated in Badr and other campaigns of the Prophet (a.s). In Uhud, when other persons showed their backs to the enemy, he stood steadfast with the Prophet (a.s) against heavy odds. He neither hid behind stones nor ran away from the battlefield, but took an oath on the hands of the Prophet (a.s) that he would fight to the end

Ibn Husham writes that after the migration to al-Madinah, `Ali (a.s) stayed at Qaba, after midnight he saw a person who was knocking at the door of a Muslim woman's house. When she came out, the person quietly gave her something. She immediately went inside the house. `Ali (a.s) was concerned that the woman was all alone. He asked the woman as to who visited her so late in the night. She said it was Sahl ibn Hunayf. She said that he knows she was a helpless woman who has none to take care of her. In the nights, he destroys the idols in the neighborhood and gives me the broken pieces to use as firewood. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was pleased with this act of .Sahl. Even after the death of Sahl, he used to talk about it

When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) went to al-Basrah to quell the mischief of the Companions of the Elephant, he appointed Sahl ibn Hunayf as his representative in al-Madinah. When after the Battle of the Camel, he moved to confront the forces of Syria in Siffin, he took Sahl along. After returning from Siffin, he appointed him the governor of Persia. The people of Persia, encouraged by the rebellion of Mu`awiyah, were trying to get rebellious. To save themselves from paying the tribute, they pushed Sahl out of Persia. In consultation with Jariyah ibn Qudamah, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) sent Ziyad ibn `Ubayd to Persia, who, with his guile created differences amongst the people there and brought them under control.

In ۳۸ H Sahl died in al-Kūfah. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) gave him the shroud with his own hands and performed the funeral prayer. Ibn Sa`d writes

Abū-Janab al-Kalbi says, ‘I heard from `Umayr ibn Sa`id that `Ali (a.s) offered the“ [funeral prayer for Sahl ibn Hunayf and said five Takbirs.”][۴

The Imam (a.s) offered the funeral prayer near the bier of Sahl several times. When he finished the prayer once, people would arrive and he would have to stand with them and offer the prayer. He had thus to lead the prayer five times. In every prayer he sounded the Takbir five times

Malik ibn al-Harith al-Ashtar

Malik was his given name and al-Ashtar the title. He was a valiant warrior and famous for his swordsmanship and fighting. He was a great asset in the battles of Jamal and Siffin. He was very close to Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) and a trusted lieutenant. He was so close to the Imam (a.s) that he said, “His place in my eyes is the same as I had for the Prophet (a.s)”. About his own status in the eyes of the Prophet (a.s), the Imam (a.s) said

The place that I had in the estimation of the Prophet (a.s) none else could get in the“
[entire Universe!”[5

When Abū-Dharr died in the wilderness of al-Rabadhah making his silent protest against the cruelty of the establishment of the time, although there were important person viz Hilal ibn Malik al-Mizani, al-Ahnaf ibn Qays al-Tamimi, Sa`sa`aha ibn Sawhan al-`Abdi and al-Aswad ibn Qays al-Tamimi present at the funeral, Malik al-Ashtar had the honor of leading the prayer. This throws light on the respect the .people had for his knowledge, justice and disposition

Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) appointed him the governor of the Arab Peninsula. This consisted of al-Mawsil, Nasibiyyayn, Miyafarqin, Dar I`anat, Sinjar and other cities. In the year ۳۸ A.H., he was sent as the governor to Egypt. But before he reached there, at the instance of Mu`awiyah, he was poisoned with laced honey. When Mu`awiyah :heard of his death, he said

[Honey too is an army of Allah.”[6“

Abdullah ibn `Abbas`

He was the son of the Prophet's cousin. He was born ۳ years prior to the Migration to al-Madinah. He was brought up under the tutelage of Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) and received his education under him. `Abdullah was a scholar of repute in Fiqh, Tafsir and several other branches of learning. There always used to be a gathering of seekers of knowledge at his place. He was remembered with the titles of habr al-ummah (the Scholar of the Nation) and tarjuman al-qur'an (the Interpreter of the Holy Qur'an). He was with `Ali (a.s) during the battles of Jamal, Siffin and Nahrawan. After `Uthman ibn Hunayf he was nominated the governor of al-Basrah. In his last days, he lost his eyesight. He died in the year ۶۸ H at Ta'if. Muhammad ibn al-.Hanafiyyah led his funeral prayer and laid him to rest

Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr

He was the son of Abū-Bakr born to Asma' bint `Umayy. He was born in the year of Hijjat al-Wada`. After Abū-Bakr's death, `Ali (a.s) married Asma' bint `Umayy and he took the responsibility for the upbringing of Muhammad. He looked after and educated him as his own son. He adopted the same school of thought about which he received instruction from his mentor. He took part in the campaigns of Jamal and Siffin. After the removal of Qays ibn Sa`d he was appointed the governor of Egypt. When the armies of Syria attacked Egypt, he was martyred by the enemies .mercilessly

Abū-Ayyūb al-Ansari

His given name was Khalid and his father was Zayd. But he became known with his kunyah. After migration to al-Madinah, the Prophet (a.s) stayed at his house for six months. He was a man of piety and was a person with great valor. He took part in the ghazawat of the Prophet (a.s) with much enthusiasm. In the battles of Jamal, Siffin and Nahrawan he was with Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). He was appointed the governor of Makkah by `Ali (a.s). He died in the year ۳۸ A.H. and was interred in Constantinople.

.Since centuries, his mausoleum is a place for the visit by thousands of devotees

Mikhnaf ibn Sulaym al-Azdi

He was among the trusted companions of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). The famous chronicler of the events of Karbala', Abū-Mikhnaf, was from his progeny. Abū-Mikhnaf's chronology was Lot, his given name, ibn Yahya ibn Sa`id ibn Mikhnaf ibn Salim. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) appointed Mikhnaf ibn Sulaym the governor of Hamdan and Isfahan. When the Imam (a.s) decided to proceed towards Siffin, Mikhnaf sought permission to come to al-Kūfah so that he could accompany the Imam (a.s) for the campaign against the Syrians. Feeling his spirit of jihad, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) permitted Mikhnaf to come. Therefore, he left Haras ibn Rabi`ah in charge of Isfahan and Sa`id ibn Wahab of Hamdan and proceeded to al-Kūfah. He held the standard of .Banū-Azd in his hand and participated in the Battle of Siffin

Qarazah ibn Ka`b al-Ansari

He was from the Companions of the Prophet (a.s) He participated in the Campaign of Uhud and other Ghazwat of the Prophet (a.s) thereafter. He settled down in al-Kūfah and was appointed the governor of Persia by Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). He was present during the battles of Jamal, Siffin and Nahrawan. In Siffin the standard of the Ansar was given to him by the Imam (a.s). He died during the period of the caliphate of the Imam (a.s) and his funeral prayer was conducted by Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). One of his sons, ` Amr Ibn Qardah al-Ansari was martyred in the Battle of Karbala

Qathm ibn al-` Abbas

He was the cousin of the Prophet (a.s) and was much similar in personality and looks to him. During the burial of the Prophet (a.s), he went down the grave and was the last to come out. He was generous and charitable. He used to fulfill the needs of persons to an extent that they no more required to contact others for help. A poet, Dawūd ibn Muslim says about him

”!O my she-camel! If you take me to Qathm, I shall not have to travel day after day“

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) appointed him the governor of Makkah. In one of his letters to him, the Imam (a.s) wrote, “Have meetings every morning and evening. Those who seek guidance, guide them. Educate the ignorant and have discussions with the learned” These words indicate Qathm’s state of learning and wisdom. After the martyrdom of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s), he went away to Samarkand along with Sa`id ibn ` Uthman and was martyred there

Yazid ibn Qays al-Arhabi

He was an important person from Banū-Arhab, a branch of the tribe of Hamdan. He had settled down in al-Kūfah. When the reciter of the holy Qur'an at al-Kūfah protested against the attitude of `Uthman and formed a delegation to meet him, Ibn Qays was selected to lead it. He participated with his brother Sa`id ibn Qays al-Hamdani in the Battle of Siffin and fought with great valor. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) appointed him the governor of Isfahan, Hamdan and Ray

Kumayl ibn Ziyad al-Nakha`i

He was very close to Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). He was a person of great piety and was the keeper of the knowledge and learning of the Household of Muhammad (a.s). The Imam (a.s) had taught him a supplication which is well-known as the du`a' kumayl and is quoted in the books of supplications. He was a resident of al-Kūfah He was at the side of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) in the Battle of Siffin and did Jihad with the Syrians

When al-Hajjaj ibn Yūsuf al-Thaqafi defeated `Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad ibn al-Ash`ath in 40 H, al-Hajjaj ibn Yūsuf captured al-Kūfah and massacred the Shi`ah of `Ali (a.s). The personality of Kumayl was not unknown amongst the Shi`ah of al-Kūfah. He went into hiding seeing the tyranny of al-Hajjaj. The tyrant inquired about him from his people but they did not reveal the information. al-Hajjaj therefore discontinued their pensions as a punishment. When Kumayl learned about this, he said that he had lived for long and that for a few more days of life he would not tolerate his people starving. Saying this he himself went to al-Hajjaj. al-Hajjaj treated him with much severity. Kumayl replied to his queries firmly and in the same tone as the questions were asked. He told al-Hajjaj that he was in his control and he could treat him the way he wanted. But he reminded that their account would be settled by Allah on the Day of Reckoning! He told al-Hajjaj that he was not afraid of death. He also told him that his Imam (a.s) had informed him that he would be martyred at the hands of a tyrant. al-Hajjaj said that he was searching for him with that purpose only. Then he ordered beheading of `Ammar. Therefore, he was instantly beheaded at that place only. At the time of he was martyred his age was 40 years. His grave is located at

.a place between al-Kūfah and Najaf

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Rabi`ah ibn Khaytham al-Asadi

He was another close companion of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). He was well-known for his piety. He was sent as the governor of Qazwin by Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). When the Imam (a.s) stayed at Naqilah on his way to Siffin, he awaited Rabi`ah's arrival with ۴,۰۰۰ men from Ray. He joined a contingent in ۶۱ or ۶۲ H and proceeded to Khorasan and died there. His grave is at a place about ۶ miles from the mausoleum of Imam al-Rida (a.s). His place of burial is well-known as ziyaratgah khajeh rabi`. When Imam al-Rida (a.s) arrived in tūs, he used to often visit Rabi`ah's grave and say, "The advantage of coming to Khorasan was the visits to Khwaja Rabi`ah's resting place

Umar ibn Abi-Salamah`

He was The son of Ummu-Salamah. His father was `Abd al-Asad Makhzūmi. He was born in Abyssinia in ۲ H. At the time of the demise of the Prophet (a.s), his age was nine years. In the Battle of the Camel, `Umar commanded the Right Flank of the Imam's army. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) had appointed him the governor of Bahrain. When the Imam (a.s) decided to undertake the campaign of Siffin, he recalled `Umar from Bahrain and after the battle appointed him as the governor of Persia. He died at al-Madinah in the year ۸۳ H

Al-Nu`man ibn `Ajlan al-Ansari

He was the chief of the Ansar Tribes and a poet of repute. He was a strong supporter of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) and used to express his rights and superiority through his poetry. The Imam (a.s) sent him in the place of `Umar ibn Abi-Salamah as the governor of Bahrain and Oman. He fought on the side of the Imam (a.s) in the Battle of Siffin. His brother Na`im ibn `Ajlan al-Ansari fought in the Battle of Karbala' and was among the first persons to be martyred on that day al-Nu`man died during the (period of Imam al-Hasan (a.s

Uthman ibn Hunayf al-Ansari`

He was a well-known person from Ansar. He participated in the Battle of Uhud and the ghazawat thereafter. He was among the very sincere companions of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). Before the Jang al-Jamal he was appointed the governor of al-Basrah by the Imam (a.s). After the Battle, `Abdullah ibn `Abbas replaced him. He settled down in al-Kūfah and died during the time of Mu`awiyah

Sa`id ibn Mas`ūd al-Thaqafi

He was the paternal uncle of al-Mukhtar ibn Abi-`Ubaydah al-Thaqafi. In the Battle of Siffin, he commanded one of the seven contingents of the people of al-Kūfah. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) appointed him as the governor of al-Mada'in. When Imam al-Hasan (a.s) was injured at the hands of Ibn Bashir al-Asadi during the rebellion of his army, he went to Al-Mada'in and stayed with Sa`id. Sa`id made arrangements for the treatment of his wounds

Ubaydullah ibn `Abbas`

He was the paternal cousin of the Prophet (a.s). Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) had sent him as the governor of Yemen and the commander of the forces in Yemen was Sa`id ibn Nimran al-Hamdani. When Busr ibn Abi- Arta'ah attacked Yemen, he could not bear his onslaught and left Yemen. For this act Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) too him to task

Hassan ibn Hassan al-Bakri

He was appointed the governor of al-Anbar by Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). When Mu`awiyah started his destructive activities on the borders of Iraq, Sufyan ibn `Awf al-Khalidi attacked al-Anbar with ٤,٠٠٠ men under his command. He martyred Hassan and his thirty companions

Al-Isābah, Vol ۳, Page ۲۳۹ [۱]

Al-Isābah, Vol ۳, Page ۲۳۹ [۲]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۳, Page ۵۵۱ [۳]

Tabaqāt, Vol ۳, Page ۴۷۳ [۴]

Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Vol ۱, Page ۸۵ [۵]

.Murūj al-Dhahab, Vol ۲, Page ۴۰ [۶]

INVASION OF AL-DAHAK IBN QAYS

When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was busy with the campaign of the Battle of the Camel, Mu`awiyah saw the opportunity to attack certain places like Harran, Qirqisiyah and al-Riqqah. He forced the people there to take his bay`ah and placed al-Dahhak ibn Qays al-Fahri over them. When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was through with the Battle of the Camel and arrived at al-Kūfah he learned that the people of these towns, who were the supporters of `Uthman, had owed their allegiance to Mu`awiyah and al-Dahhak ibn Qays was acting as the representative of Mu`awiyah in that area. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) formed a contingent of men under Malik al-Ashtar to be sent to al-Jazirah. He had confidence that Malik had the capability to set the matters right and evict al-Dahhak from that area. Therefore, Malik set off without any further loss of time. When he entered the bounds of al-Jazirah, and al-Dahhak learned of his arrival, he sought help from al-Riqqah that was the refuge of the fans of `Uthman. Therefore, Saman ibn Mahzamah al-Asadi moved from there with a contingent of men. When Malik reached near Harran, both al-Dahhak and Saman also reached with their armies and the fighting started at a place called Marj lying between al-Riqqah and Harran. With the intensive attacks of Malik and his men, the enemy's morale was shattered. When al-Dahhak saw defeat staring in his face, he fled with his contingent and locked himself in the fort of Harran. Malik chased him and besieged the fort. When Mu`awiyah learned of the defeat and ignominy of his forces, he deputed Khalid

ibn al-Walid's son, `Abd al-Rahman, with a huge enforcement of men. When Malik learned of this movement, he decided to lift the siege and deal with the new enemy enforcement. When both the armies came face to face, the swords were unsheathed and severe fighting commenced. `Abd al-Rahman and his men could not stand the onslaught and they fled to al-Riqqah. Malik besieged al-Riqqah from all sides. Al-Dahhak learned of the defeat of `Abd al-Rahman's contingent and he came out of the fort of Harran and moved towards al-Riqqah to relieve the contingent from the siege. In that time, the Syrians sent another contingent under the command of Ayman ibn Humayzah. Now al-Dahhak's morale was boosted and he attacked Malik's contingent with full force. Malik and his men took up arms and fought valiantly. The Syrians fought with enthusiasm for sometime but could not bear the repeated onslaught of the Iraqis and started running away defeated. The territory of the al-Jazirah was now devoid of any Syrian army men and the people of the area, who were the sympathizers of the fans of `Uthman, sat quietly at their homes. Malik sufficiently reprimanded those rebels and took oaths of allegiance and obedience from them and .took control of the administration of the territory of the al-Jazirah in his hands

DISMISSAL OF QAYS IBN SA`D

DISMISSAL OF QAYS IBN SA`D

After the Battle of the Camel, Mu`awiyah had the fear that Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) would remove him from the governorate of Syria. He was not willing to demit that office at any cost. This danger was there for him from both Iraq and Egypt. If Qays ibn Sa`d came with his armies from Egypt and from the other side Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) attacked with the Iraqi forces, he would not be able to face the two-edged onslaught. He was thinking of either winning over the loyalty of Qays or to cunningly get him removed from the governorate of Egypt. Therefore, he wrote a very cunning letter to him that “`Ali (a.s) had committed a grave indiscretion by shedding the blood of `Uthman and your tribe too was involved in that act. If you want safety for yourself, you must join those who are claiming qisas for the Blood of `Uthman. If you strengthen our hands, you will be given the control of the region of Iraq and anyone of your choice, from your family, will be made the governor of Hijaz. What ever else you need will also be granted to you I shall await your earliest response

Mu`awiyah had thrown this bait, but Qays was not an easy prey. He replied, but he neither committed to join hand with him nor totally turned down his offer. He thought it discreet to keep Mu`awiyah expecting a positive response from him. Therefore, he wrote, “I was not involved in the assassination of `Uthman, although the people of my tribe were implicated in the act. You have termed `Ali (a.s) as a party to this killing. That is not in my knowledge. As far as joining hands with you, the decision cannot be made in a hurry. However, I assure you that I shall not take any step that will not be to your liking

When Mu`awiyah read this letter he was unable to decide whether Qays was pulling away his hand or extending his hand in cooperation to him. He wrote back again, "I could not understand whether you are against me or in my favor! If you are trying to keep me in darkness, I am not the one to be easily carried away. The time is near when armies will be near me and the reins of the horses in my hands. Then no excuses will work with me

When Qays read this letter, he understood that Mu`awiyah cannot be brushed aside easily. Therefore, he wrote to him in clear terms, "I am surprised that you have not been able to understand me. You tried to mislead me with offers of governance and power! Can you imagine that I move away from the emirate of the person who is most capable of leading the Muslims, and whose veracity, nobility and nearness to the Prophet (a.s) is unquestionable? Do you want me to put the yoke of your obedience in my neck when you do not have anything to do with the emirate and leadership? You are deceitful and the son of a deceit and member of the group of the offspring of Iblis! In your letter, you have talked about the armies. By Allah! If you save your life from my onslaught, you must count yourself lucky

When Mu`awiyah read this letter, he was very angry. In the end Mu`awiyah lost all hope of winning over Qays. When no subterfuge worked, he turned his mind to cunning. He forged a letter purported to be from Qays in which it was written, "From Qays ibn Sa`d to Mu`awiyah, emir of Syria: I have decided after much thought that we should not side with those people at whose hand one pious and noble leader of Islam was killed. We repent from our sins and expect and pray to Allah for preserving our Faith. We assure you of our obedience and are ready to fight with the killers of the oppressed `Uthman and shall soon forward our military and monetary help

Besides this forged letter, they had also started spreading the story through the word of mouth that Qays was Mu`awiyah's friend and well-wisher. They said that he had already given all sorts of facilities to the residents of Kharbatah and he treats all who go to him from there with kindness

Mu`awiyah not only publicized this letter in Syria, but through his agents he spread the story in al-Kūfah as well to poison the environment there against Qays. Therefore, the story was taking rounds in the streets of al-Kūfah. The word also reached the ears of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) as well. He called some of his close persons and had a discussion with them. They said that Qays ibn Sa`d is unhappy with him and was conspiring with Mu`awiyah and that it would be better to relieve him of his position. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) understood that it should be the trick of Mu`awiyah. Therefore, he told his advisers

[By Allah! I cannot believe these talks about Qays!]"[۱۰

In this period Qays wrote a letter to the Imam (a.s) wherein he wrote, "In these surroundings some fans of `Uthman who want to be spared from taking the bay`ah. Their representatives have told me that until the circumstances do not normalize, they should be left to their own scruples. I have thought it discreet for the time being we should not fight with them. It is possible that they might come to the right decision".in some time

When `Abdullah ibn Ja`far was informed about this letter, he said, "O Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s)! I feel as if Qays is telling this to gain time. You must write to him that he should obtain the allegiance of those people. If they refuse, he must fight with them

Other persons too agreed with this suggestion. Considering the opinion of the people at al-Kūfah, the Imam (a.s) wrote to Qays, that the people of Egypt who had not as yet pledged their allegiance, seek their immediate bay`ah. If they refuse, fight with them. When Qays got this letter he wrote in the reply, “O Amir al-Mu`minin! If we fight with them, they will become stronger supporters of your enemies Discretion requires
”.that they are left to themselves for the time being

This reply from Qays convinced people that he was going closer to Mu`awiyah and al-Ash`ath ibn Qays, `Abdullah ibn Ja`far, Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah and other important persons of al-Kūfah insisted that he must be deposed forthwith. They suggested the name of Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr to replace him. (a.s) was not in favor of deposing him. But when the insistence increased, he issued orders for removing
.Qays ibn Sa`d and appointing Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr in his place

The trick that Mu`awiyah played was succeeding. The result came about in the shape of removal of Qays from Egypt. At first Mu`awiyah tried to tempt Qays to join hands with him. When he did not succeed in that, he forged the letter and through propaganda turned the people against Qays. Thus, through Amir al-Mu`minin’s own
:companions he got rid of Qays. Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani writes

Ali (a.s) had appointed Qays as the governor of Egypt. Mu`awiyah tried through “ several subterfuges to tempt him but he did not take the bait. Then he misguided the companions of `Ali (a.s) and they proposed appointment of Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr
[in such a manner that (a.s) appointed him the emir of Egypt.”[۲

Qays demitted his governorate of Egypt and came away to al-Madinah and those people who were scared of his skills at warfare and his exceptional valor took a sigh of relief. The enemy was pleased and those who wanted to rejoice at his deposition were rejoicing. Therefore, Hassan ibn Thabit, who was a person from the `Uthmanite Group, came to Qays and said that he was given a raw deal that he was deposed :although you were not a part of the conspiracy to kill `Uthman. Qays said angrily

O person with no vision! Get away from here! If I had not the fear that war would“ [commence between my tribe and yours, I would have killed you now!”[۳

Marwan ibn al-Hakam and al-Aswad ibn al-Bukhtari too threatened him. When he felt that there was a danger of being made a captive, or even killed, he went to Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) in al-Kūfah with Sahl ibn Hunayf. When Mu`awiyah learned about this, :he wrote in anger to Marwan and al-Aswad

You have both made the way for Qays going away to `Ali (a.s). By Allah! If you helped“ `Ali (a.s) with a hundred thousand armed men, I would not feel so much as I am feeling for your sending Qays to al-Kūfah that with his opinion and suggestions made [`Ali (a.s) more strong!”[۴

After deposition from Egypt, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) appointed Qays the governor of Azerbaijan. During his journey to Syria, Qays appointed `Abdullah ibn Shubayl al-Ahmasi his deputy and took part in the Battle of Siffin with great valor

About the deposition of Qays ibn Sa`d generally people criticize the political aptitude of `Ali (a.s). They say that the decision was contrary to the norms of discretion. He had moved away such a capable hand from the very important province of Egypt at a time when Mu`awiyah was looking for a chance to start hostilities. The need was to make the administration in Egypt stronger. But by removing him from there, the position was handed over to Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr who was neither capable of contending with Mu`awiyah's incursions nor did he save the province from the depredations of the enemy. Because of his poor political acumen, control over Egypt was lost and .Mu`awiyah had annexed it

Superficially, this objection sounds reasonable, but to make a fair decision about it is necessary to consider the circumstances obtainable during that period. That was the time when the means of communication were meager. Within the same realm, the happenings in one province were not known to the people in the other regions. Even if some messages got through, the event would assume an entirely different shape .than what actually happened

According to the political situation obtainable in Egypt, however much the attitude of Qays ibn Sa`d was discreet, but the messages that were traveling from there, through word of mouth or otherwise, doubting his attitude was not unlikely. On reaching Egypt, he did not deal strictly with the people of Kharbata who were loyalists .of `Uthman

Normally such elements are treated as rebels. There could be justification of leaving such people to their scruples when the establishment had neither means nor power to control them. It cannot be said that Qays did not have the means and the strength to subdue those `Uthman loyalists. Again when Mu`awiyah tempted Qays to join his group, he neither accepted the offer nor rebuked it. This attitude provoked more doubts about him. When he ultimately rebuked Mu`awiyah's offer, what was the need for him to publicize about the rebuff. Instead, Mu`awiyah went to the extent of forgery to create an impression in the minds of the people of Syria and al-Kūfah that Qays was hand in glove with Mu`awiyah! Notwithstanding all the pressures, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) continued to put his trust in Qays ibn Sa`d

He never doubted his integrity at any stage. He did not order for any inquiries about the rumors taking rounds of al-Kūfah about Qays. Despite this, it was difficult for the Imam (a.s) to continue with him as the governor of Egypt because the ineptitude of the natures of the people of al-Kūfah is not a hidden thing. Otherwise, if hostilities had started in Egypt, they would have refused to mobilize men for the operation. In such an eventuality, Qays would not have been able to contend with the Syrians with the force available to him in Egypt. Therefore, when the armies of Syria attacked Egypt, Muhammad kept pleading for men, but the people of al-Kūfah did not come to his rescue. Mu`awiyah was under the wrong impression that after being deposed from Egypt, Qays would prefer to sit at home and would not come back to active duty. That .was the pettifogging of a mean mind

Qays was a person who followed the Truth. It was not his nature to go away from the Truth when he was deprived of a worldly position. In fact, such occasions are the acid tests of the people of character. Although Mu`awiyah succeeded in getting Qays removed from the governorate of Egypt, but the truth is that his remaining in position at Egypt was not so unpalatable to him than his participation with great valor in the Battle of Siffin. Mu`awiyah was heard saying during the battle, “If the battle did not ”!stop by the morrow, Qays will obliterate us from the face of the Earth

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۳, Page ۵۵۴ [۱]

Al-Isābah, Vol ۳, Page ۲۳۹ [۲]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۳, Page ۵۵۵ [۳]

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(THE BATTLE OF SIFFIN (Part ۱

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Syria was the cradle of Umayyad power and the capital of Mu`awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan. He was occupying the region since the times of the second caliph. Because of this long period in the position of the governor, he had entrenched himself and was ruling from Damascus like an autocratic monarch. When Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) assumed the office of the caliph, he wanted to bring about a total change in the administration. Hence, he put all the governors under notice of change. Therefore, Qays ibn Sa`d was sent as the governor to Egypt, `Ubaydullah ibn `Abbas to Yemen, `Uthman ibn Hunayf to al-Basrah as the new incumbents. They took charge of the provinces without any problems. The Imam (a.s) sent `Imarah ibn Shihab towards al-Kūfah and Sahl ibn Hunayf to Syria

While going to al-Kūfah, when `Imarah stopped at Zabalāh, Talhah ibn Khuwaylid al-Asadi intercepted him and asked him to return from there or else he would be killed. Therefore, he returned from there. When Sahl ibn Hunayf reached the valley of Taboo on his way to Syria, a unit of men appointed by Mu`awiyah stopped him and asked who he was and where he was headed to? I am the governor for Syria appointed by `Ali Ibn Abi-Talib (a.s). They said that besides Mu`awiyah they would not accept anyone as the ruler of Syria

They warned him to return to the place from where he came, or else their swords will settle the matter! Sahl could not have fought with the patrol consisting of a large number of men. Therefore, he was forced to return back. He returned to the presence of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) and reported the matter to him. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) knew from the outset that Mu`awiyah would not vacate the position easily. He also knew that one day the flames of battle would rise between the Syrians and people of al-Kūfah. But he did not want to precipitate matters and wished to make all possible efforts for a peaceful settlement. Therefore, he sent al-Hajjaj ibn Ghaziyah al-Ansari with a letter to Mu`awiyah and asked him to come with a delegation of Syrians to al-Madinah to owe his allegiance to the Imam (a.s). Mu`awiyah read the letter but did not give it any importance and asked al-Hajjaj to go back. He gave one package to Qabisah al-`Absi and sent him to Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). When he opened the package, it was having a small note saying, "From Mu`awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan to `Ali ibn Abi-Talib." The Imam (a.s) asked what the meaning of the note was. Qabisah put a glance around and asked, "Amongst you is there anyone belonging to the tribe of Banū-Abs?" The people replied, "Yes!" He said, "Now! Listen to me with care! And think over the consequences! I have left behind in the Masjid of Damascus ٥٠,٠٠٠ persons, sheikhs and elite, crying over the bloodied cloak of `Uthman. Their beards are wet with tears and the sounds of wailing are emanating from the place. They have taken an oath that until they do not color their swords with the blood of the killers of :`Uthman, they would not take rest! At this Khalid ibn Zufar al-`Abasei said

By Allah! You are a very bad emissary of Syria! Do you want to frighten the Muhajirūn“ and Ansar with the army of Syria and the wailing over the cloak of `Uthman! By Allah! `Uthman’s cloak is not Yūsuf’s raiment nor their wailing the cries and laments of [Ya`qūb (a.s).”[1]

When Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) saw this attitude of Mu`awiyah, he thought of going to Damascus to admonish the person. He got together an army to start on the campaign. He had not even commenced the journey when the news of the mischief of Talhah and al-Zubayr reached him. Instead of going to Syria he had to go to al-Basrah and crush the rebellion of the owners of the camel. When he returned to al-Kūfah after that campaign, he decided to send another messenger to Mu`awiyah. The deposed governor of Yemen, Jarir ibn `Abdullah al-Bujali offered his services for the task and said that his long-standing relationship with Mu`awiyah will help him in convincing .Mu`awiyah for the bay`ah

Malik al-Ashtar opposed this idea and said that the person was secretly a friend of the Syrians He expressed his fear that instead of mending the fences, he might harm the interests of the Imam (a.s). The Imam (a.s) said that the person be allowed to go and see what results he achieves. Therefore, he was given a letter and sent to Syria. The contents were “The Muhajirūn and Ansar have owed their allegiance to me. Now you do not have any justification to refuse allegiance to me. You must adopt the same .attitude as was done by the people of al-Madinah

As far as the matter for the qisas of `Uthman is concerned, you can broach the subject with me after owing your allegiance to me. I shall decide about it in the light of the Qur'an and Sunnah." When Jarir went with this letter to Mu`awiyah, he read the letter and told him

[You ask `Ali (a.s) to give the territory of Syria to me, then I shall do the bay`ah." [Y"

After thinking for a while, he asked Jarir to wait there for a few days so that he would discuss the matter with the people of Syria and take their opinion. Therefore, he called his brother `Utbah ibn Abi-Sufyan to take his opinion. `Utbah asked him to call `Amr ibn al-`As to his place and make use of his wisdom. Certainly, he said, `Amr will give good advice. Mu`awiyah liked this suggestion. He wrote a letter to `Amr ibn al-`As, "You must have learned what treatment `Ali (a.s) has given to Talhah, al-Zubayr and Umm al-Mu'minin. Now he is turning towards me. He has sent Jarir ibn `Abdullah al-Bujali to me seeking my bay`ah. I do not take any step without consulting you. Therefore, come immediately to me

Amr read the letter and understood that Mu`awiyah did not need any advice about the bay`ah because the consequence of owing his allegiance would mean the loss of the Governorate of Syria and at any cost he would not like to give up the post. Certainly the consultation he wants to make is for opening up a front to fight against .(` Ali (a.s

Amr must have decided whether to go or not to go. But to get further opinion on his` decision he called his two sons, ` Abdullah and Muhammad, and asked for their advice. ` Abdullah said that he had no chance of becoming the caliph, it would be better for him to sit quietly at home and do not compromise the Faith for a little worldly benefit. Contrary to this, Muhammad opined that he should not miss such a golden opportunity. He said that such opportunities do not come every day. He added that he was not an unknown person in Arabia and that his opinion has certain weight. A new establishment is taking shape and his opinion would be of great help in the process. He insisted that when decisions are made about the caliphate, his being away from :action was unimaginable. After hearing both the sons' opinions, ` Amr said

O ` Abdullah what you have said is beneficial for my Hereafter and my Faith too will“ remain firm! O Muhammad! What you have suggested is best for me from the worldly [point of view and not for the Hereafter!”[۲

After taking the opinions of ` Abdullah and Muhammad, ` Amr asked his slave Wardan about his opinion. He said, “You are on such a cross-road where there is the world on one side and the hereafter on the other. The world is with Mu`awiyah and the Hereafter with ` Ali (a.s). Sometimes you bend towards the world and at others think of the Hereafter. It would be better if you sit quietly at home and not sided with any one. But I have a feeling that there is a turmoil going round in your mind and you will, in the end, opt for the world and prefer Mu`awiyah over ` Ali (a.s)” Hearing this ` Amr ”!said, “Only Allah will appreciate the vision of Wardan. He has exposed the hidden fact

Amr ibn al-`As was very desirous of the governorate of Egypt and there would not be a better opportunity to fulfill this long-standing wish. Therefore, he prepared to visit Mu`awiyah and reached Damascus with his two sons and Wardan. After exchange of pleasantries Mu`awiyah said, "I am having several matters troubling my mind and, therefore I have called you to take your advice. I hope you will be able to help resolve my troubles." Amr asked, "What are the problems?" Mu`awiyah replied, "One problem is that I have been informed of Muhammad ibn Abi-Hudhayfah has escaped from the jail with his men. I fear danger from him and his men. The second problem is that the Caesar of Rome is planning to attack Syria to annex this territory. The third problem is that Jarir ibn `Abdullah al-Bujali has brought a message from `Ali (a.s) that I must owe my allegiance to him or prepare for battle." Amr said, "If Ibn Abi-Hudhayfah has escaped, you must not have any fear from him. Send some riders to chase him. If he were held, it would be fine. Even otherwise, he cannot cause any .harm to you

About the possibility of attack by Caesar, release all the Romans in captivity with you. And send to him some slave girls and handicrafts of gold and silver as gifts along with an offer for peace. He would not turn down this gesture! However, the problem of `Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s) is different. The world knows that he is an experienced general. He is capable of the position that he is holding. There is no comparison between him and you." Mu`awiyah said, "I do not deny his capability. But he has given air to mischief and encouraged the killers of `Uthman in their heinous deed. Therefore it is our duty to claim qisas from him. I have called you to discuss about the matter of claiming the "qisas

Amr said, “You have called me to gather people under your flag, but you have yourself started tricking me! Who will trust you that you want to fight a war for avenging the blood of `Uthman? The world knows that during the siege `Uthman had pleaded for help and you, on purpose, did not pay any heed to his call! Even I moved away to Palestine leaving him to the mercy of the rebels! If you really want me to cooperate with you, then you must talk straight to me. We know each other very well! The truth is that `Ali’s services to Islam, his superiority in learning, his precedence in accepting the Faith and Migration are such that I do not have the courage to fight with him. It will be the work of a person with great courage.” Mu`awiyah understood that `Amr was just making an excuse. If he had no intention of cooperating, he would not have come all the way to Damascus. The purpose in dilly dallying was certainly that he would claim a huge compensation for his cooperation. Therefore, after taking a little
:more time, `Amr said

[If I cooperate with you and you succeed, what will be my share in that?][۴

Mu`awiyah knew that `Amr will not agree to cooperate without tough bargaining. He
:asked what price he would have to pay to him. `Amr said

[Until you rule, the state of Egypt must be under me!][۵“

When Mu`awiyah heard this claim, he was nonplussed. The price asked was far more than he expected. Neither he was in a position to turn down his demand nor did he wish to accept it. He stared at `Amr and said, “I can make a false promise, but I do not want to take you up the garden path!” `Amr, “Try to cheat me. I have the means of handling every trick!” Mu`awiyah said, “Come a little closer to me. I want to whisper something to you in confidence!” `Amr went closer and put his ear near the lips of Mu`awiyah. Mu`awiyah said, “What do you say about my cunning! I did trick you!”
.“How?” asked `Amr

Mu`awiyah said, "Here! And just now! We are both alone here and there is no third person in the hearing distance. Then what was the need of whispering into your ear! When you can be tricked being so alert, then you can be tricked later on as well! I would only suggest to you to reconsider your demand. If you remain insistent, people would say that to grab the emirate of Egypt you have taken the step." `Amr said, "Leave aside what people would say. No excuses will work with me. If you agree to the demand I have made, I shall support you wholeheartedly. Otherwise, you do what suits you." Saying this `Amr got up and went towards his residence

:When `Utbah ibn Abi-Sufyan heard about this conversation, he told Mu`awiyah

[We are not willing to buy `Amr by parting with Egypt.]"[۶

Mu`awiyah said, "I have not made any decision as yet. Tonight I shall think over it. Therefore he spent the night in deep thought and decided that to make use of the cunning and shrewdness of `Amr he will have to promise parting away Egypt to him. Therefore, he called `Amr and finalized the deal with him. He wrote out a formal agreement and handed over to him. Taking the document, `Amr came back to his residence happily and mentioned about it to a cousin of his. The cousin knit his brows and said, "I wonder what face you will show to the Quraysh? How will you spend an honorable life with your tribe when you are already infamous for your habit of selling your Faith?" `Amr said, "If I was with `Ali (a.s), the four walls of my house would be sufficient for me. Now I am with Mu`awiyah and cannot sit content with the four walls of my house!" His cousin said, "Mu`awiyah has certainly bought your Faith! You are .after him for worldly gains!" When Mu`awiyah heard of this talk, he was very upset

He ordered `Amr's cousin to be arrested that he was not able to misguide more persons. When he heard about the plans for his arrest, he quietly slinked away and safely arrived in al-Kūfah to meet Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). Through him the news of `Amr's agreement with Mu`awiyah was known by all and sundry

After the agreement `Amr gave to Mu`awiyah the farsighted suggestion that it was better not to broach the matter of the caliphate for the time being and the efforts be made to convince the people of Syria that the responsibility of the assassination of `Uthman rested on `Ali (a.s) and that he had instigated people to commit the act

Once he was assassinated, then he gave protection to the killers when this propaganda sank into the minds of the people, then a formal war could be declared against him. After the war, the question of authority would automatically resolve. However, to win the public opinion there will be need for the support of the prominent persons. For this `Abadah ibn Samit al-Ansari was present in Syria who had great influence over the people there. First, he will have to think their way. If they were able to influence his thinking, then every individual in Syria would be with Mu`awiyah

Mu`awiyah appreciated this suggestion very much and sent out a messenger to call `Abadah

When `Abadah came to Mu`awiyah, himself and `Amr were sitting shoulder to shoulder. Seeing `Abadah, they stood up respectfully. `Abadah went forward and sat between them. To gain his favor, Mu`awiyah praised him very much. And then described the good qualities of `Uthman. After this preamble he said that they wanted that his blood should not go waste and, therefore, they wanted his support for claiming qisas for his blood. `Abadah said that whatever they had said, he had heard. But he wanted to know from them that, contrary to the custom, why he was sitting between them? Mu`awiyah said that the requirement of his superiority was that he sat in the center and they on either side of him. He said that was not the reason. The reason is that during the ghazwah Tabūk, the Prophet (a.s) was traveling when he saw both of you together talking, he said

When you find them sitting together, separate them, because they will never be“
[together for any virtuous work!”[Y

Therefore, `Abadah said, he wanted them not to come together and sat between them. As far as supporting their cause was concerned, he said, he was not willing to
.do it

Now Mu`awiyah, on the advice of `Amr, made one move that on the way to Shurahbil, posted Yazid ibn Asad, Busr ibn Artah, Sufyan ibn `Umar, Makharraq ibn al-Harith, Hamzah ibn Malik, Habis ibn Sa`d and some elite of Yemen with instructions that when Shurahbil passed that way, they should give an impression that it was a chance meeting and try to create an impression on his mind that the responsibility for the assassination of `Uthman rested on none other than `Ali ibn Abi-Talib (a.s). Therefore, at every stage, wherever he halted, they were repeating the story. When he entered the precincts of Damascus, Mu`awiyah sent the elites of the city to receive him. They too gave him an impression that `Ali (a.s) was responsible for the
.killing of `Uthman

When he reached Mu`awiyah along with the reception group, he received him warmly and after exchange of pleasantries, he told him that `Ali (a.s) was seeking his bay`ah. He said that although he was not against this in principle, but has reservations that he is the killer of `Uthman. Shurahbil asked him about his decision in those circumstances. Mu`awiyah replied that he was willing to owe allegiance to `Ali (a.s) if the people of Syria want me to. If they wanted him to refuse, he shall abide by their opinion even in that event. He said that he had invited Shurahbil only to seek his opinion. He said that he wanted some more time to go round and gather information on the people's opinion about the killing of `Uthman. Mu`awiyah said that it would be the right thing to do. He went round the city and every person, he met, said that `Ali (a.s) was responsible for the killing of `Uthman. What else would they say? Their mouths were locked with the oppressive pressure of Mu`awiyah. Everywhere there were spies of Mu`awiyah. When Shurahbil came back from his rounds, his emotions
:were fully charged. Immediately on arrival, he told Mu`awiyah

No one can deny that Ibn Abi-Talib has killed `Uthman. If you owe your allegiance to “ [him, we shall chase you away from Syria.”[A

When Mu`awiyah saw that Shurahbil was totally under his spell, he matched his tone with his and said that if his opinion was so strong, his own opinion too was that `Uthman was killed for no fault of his and they should not owe allegiance to his killers. Their first duty, he said, will be to avenge the killing. But for this revenge, they needed the public opinion solidly behind them. This was possible only if they show to them that `Ali (a.s) was the killer of `Uthman. This task can only be accomplished by Shurahbil, Mu`awiyah added stressing that none else had such influence on the Syrians as he did. He asked Shurahbil to travel to all parts of Syria and build the public opinion. Shurahbil was highly emotional at that time. He immediately agreed to take up the journey

When the people of al-Kūfah heard that Mu`awiyah was creating doubts in the minds of the people and egging on to agree to fighting a war, they asked `Ali (a.s) to make a preemptive attack on Syria before Mu`awiyah was ready with his war machine. But the Imam (a.s) said that until Jarir did not return with a decision for war or peace, it was not advisable to start hostilities. It was already four months since Jarir reached Syria. Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) was repeatedly writing to him to get a final word and return urgently. But Mu`awiyah was delaying him with some excuse or other to gain time and prepare the people of Syria for going to war. When he was assured of the support of Shurahbil, and the events were shaping the way he wanted, he called Jarir :and said

Go to your Emir now and tell him that the people of Syria would not owe their“
[allegiance to him.”[۹

Shurahbil went from town to town, and village to village announcing that `Ali (a.s) had killed `Uthman and they should rise to seek qisas for his blood. Those who claimed qisas, `Ali (a.s) attacked and killed them and occupied their cities and their properties. He told them that only Syria was remaining. Only people from Syria must join hands and fight with him for the qisas He appealed to them to join under the flag of the emir of Syria. Shurahbil was very influential in the territory. People gathered in large numbers and assembled to join the forces of Mu`awiyah

In addition to the people of Syria, Banū-Umayyah and those who supported them too assembled in Damascus. The chief of these persons were Mughirah ibn Shu`bah, `Abdullah ibn Sa`d, Marwan ibn al-Hakam, Sa`id ibn al-`As, `Abdullah ibn `Amir, al-Walid ibn `Uqbah, `Ubaydullah ibn `Umar, Sa`id ibn `Uthman, Abū-Hurayrah, Hudhayfah, Abū-Umamah al-Bahili and al-Nu`man ibn Bashir. The first to arrive among them was al-Nu`man ibn Bashir. With him he brought the bloodied cloak of `Uthman and the severed fingers of his wife, Na'ilah bint Farfasah. Mu`awiyah fixed the cloak and the fingers over the pulpit of the Masjid of Damascus to upbraid the feelings of the people. After the men assembled in Damascus, the paraphernalia of war was arranged

When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) heard of this activity, he decided to advance his armies towards Syria. On a Friday, giving the Sermon from the pulpit, he said

O People! Move towards the enemies of the Qur'an and Sunnah! Go to meet the "killers of Ansar and the Muhajirūn! Go to face those mean and impertinent people who had accepted Islam out of fear! They were admitted to the fold just to humor them.

[Rise that they refrain from killing and destroying the Muslims!]"[۱]

One person from the tribe of Fazarah, Arbad by name, stood up and said, "Do you want that, the way you took us to al-Basrah to kill our own brothers, we attack our brothers in Syria and kill them. By Allah! We are not ready to do this!" Malik al-Ashtar understood that this was an agent of Mu`awiyah and was trying to create a bad heart in the ranks of `Ali's army. He shouted asking people to catch him. But the man ran
.away

Some people chased him. He had reached the neighborhood of al-Kunnasah when they caught up with him. He was trampled under their feet so much that he died at the spot. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) decided that his killer cannot be identified and therefore ordered paying the blood money for his life from the bayt al-mal. The Imam (a.s) was upset with this happening. Malik al-Ashtar said that the people were solidly behind him and that he should not give any credence to the episode. He said that they were obedient to him and would fight for him until they died. Similarly, other people too
.came up with their assurances

When all the fighters of al-Kūfah assembled under his flag, the Imam (a.s) selected `Uqbah ibn `Amr al-Ansari as his representative and declaring al-Nukhaylah as the cantonment ordered Malik ibn Habib al-Yarbū`i to stay in al-Kūfah so that he could direct the late arrivals to go and join the army. The Imam (a.s) left al-Kūfah with the army and camped at al-Nukhaylah He sent letters to the functionaries in the different provinces to mobilize men and materials and immediately report. Therefore, `Abdullah ibn `Abbas from al-Basrah, Mikhnaf ibn Sulaym from Isfahan, Sa`id ibn Wahab from Hamdan and functionaries of other territories reached with their men and materials. Among them, there was a group of the participants in the Battle of
:Badr and those who took part in the bay` at al-ridwan. Hakim writes

In the Battle of Siffin there were ٨٠ veterans of the Battle of Badr with `Ali (a.s) and“ [٢٥٠ of those Companions who were present at the bay` at al-ridwan!”[١١

The Valley of al-Nukhaylah was overflowing with fighting men and Amir al-Mu`minin was arranging them in order when information reached that the Syrian army was moving towards the Iraqi borders. The Imam (a.s) sent an advance guard of ٨,٠٠٠ men under Ziyad ibn al-Nadr al-Harithi and another of ٤,٠٠٠ men under Shurayh ibn al-Harith for patrolling the borders and to reconnoiter the strength and dispositions of the enemy troops. He gave them strict instructions that unless they received the Imam's orders, or the enemy attacked, they should not start fighting

For better management of the troops, Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) divided the army into seven groups. There was a commander for each of these groups. On the fourth day of the dispatch of the advanced guards, ٥ Shawwal ٣٩ H, he started with his huge army from the Valley of al-Nukhaylah. When, after crossing the river Euphrates, they came outside the limits of al-Kūfah, he announced about the ٢uhr Prayer and said that those who had come that far to send away their relatives, should offer all he four genuflections prescribed for the prayer. Those who were traveling should offer the Qasr prayer. The Imam (a.s) too offered Qasr. After the prayer, the journey was again commenced. At a distance of ٩ miles from al-Kūfah, Dayr Abū-Mūsa, the `Asr Prayer was offered. Moving from there, at Baras, a place lying between al-Kūfah and al-Hillah, the Maghrib and `Isha' Prayers were offered. The army halted there for the night. After the morning Prayer, they crossed the Canal of Qabin and halted at a place called Biyah so that the men had their midday meal. While starting from there, they set feet on the land of Babylon, and seeing the ruins of the city, the Imam (a.s) asked his men to ride fast and leave the accursed land as soon as possible. The reason was that the place had a curse over it and had sunk into the ground many a time. Therefore, left the reins of the horses loose and spurred the horses to speed. Then they crossed the Canal of Sarat on boats and, on the other side offered the `Asr Prayer in congregation. After the prayer they commenced the journey again and via Dayr Ka`b arrived at the place of Karbala'. Seeing this land, signs of sadness appeared on the face of the Imam (a.s) and his eyes were wet. Some people asked

the reason for his sadness. He told them about the sad events of Karbala' that were to happen years hence. He also indicated the spots that were to be soaked with the blood of Sayyid al-Shuhada' (the master of the martyrs) and others. Proceeding from there, they halted at Sabat for the night

The people of Sabat offered provisions for the men and fodder for the animals. But the Imam (a.s) did not accept their offer and said that they should not be burdened with the expense. On the banks of the River Tigris, near Sabat, there is the city of al-Mada'in. The people of al-Mada'in had not yet joined the army of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). He ordered al-Harith ibn `Abdullah al-A`war to tell the people of al-Mada'in that their strong young men must join the `Asr Prayer. When the men came, the Imam (a.s) said, "I am surprised that you are keeping away from our army! The enemy forces are advancing towards us!" They said, "O Amir al-Mu'minin! We were awaiting your orders. We shall abide by whatever orders are given to us!" He asked `Adi Ibn Hatam and his son Zayd to recruit men from al-Mada'in. `Adi mobilized eight hundred men in a stay of three days and Zayd ibn `Adi recruited four hundred men. They went and joined the advancing army. From al-Mada'in, the Imam (a.s) sent a contingent of three thousand men under Ma`qil ibn Qays ahead of the army and told him that the army was proceeding to al-Riqqah and he should go with the contingent to al-Mawsil that was a halting place for caravans those days and asked him to come to al-Riqqah via Nasibahin. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) left al-Mada'in and halted at Bahurasir. This was the picnic spot of the kings of Persia where pleasant gardens grew and palaces for the kings were constructed in the past. The cruel hands of time had destroyed everything. In place of the palaces, there were mounds of rubble. When Hurayz ibn :Sahm saw these ruins, he recited Ibn Ya`qūb al-Tamimi's couplet

,Where there houses were, winds are blowing“

”!It appears they were inhabited for a limited period

When the Imam (a.s) heard this couplet, he said, instead of the couplet he should
:have recited the following Verse of the Holy Qur’an

كَمْ تَرَكُوا مِنْ جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ. وَزُرُوعٍ وَمَقَامٍ كَرِيمٍ. وَنَعْمَةٍ كَانُوا فِيهَا فَاكِهِينَ. كَذَلِكَ وَأَوْرَثْنَاهَا قَوْمًا آخَرِينَ. فَمَا بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ
السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَا كَانُوا مُنظَرِينَ.

How many of the gardens and fountains have they left, and cornfields and noble“
places, and goodly things wherein they rejoiced. Thus (it was), and We gave them as a
heritage to another people. So, the heaven and the earth did not weep for them, nor
”(were they respited. (۴۴/۲۵-۲۹)

From Bahurasir they arrived at al-Anbar. The non-Arab inhabitants, Banū-Khushnushak, started jumping and running when they saw the Imam (a.s) with the army. The Imam (a.s) asked why they were behaving in that strange manner. They said that it was their custom to welcome the rulers in that manner. The Imam (a.s) said that the custom would benefit neither their ruler nor them. He asked them to stop that futile practice. After the customary welcome, the people offered supplies of horses, mules and fodder and wanted to arrange food for the men. The Imam (a.s) did not agree to have food there. But he accepted the horses and mules provided their value be adjusted against the tribute they paid. After spending two days at al-Anbar the army proceeded towards Hit and from there they went to Aqtar and halted there. Now they crossed the Euphrates and reached Ard al-Jaza’ir. Here Namr ibn Qasit along with the tribe of Banū-Taghlib gave a grand reception to the Imam (a.s) and his army. When they proceeded from there, they reached near Qarqisiyah where they saw that the advance guards under Ziyad ibn al-Nadr and Shurayh ibn Hani’ were arriving from different routes. The Imam (a.s) said, “It is a very interesting advance guard that is arriving after the main army!” Ziyad and Shurayh were apologetic and they said, “when we started from al-Nukhaylah, we reached I`anat along the river bank. Reaching there we learnt that you had crossed over to Ard al-Jaza’ir. We had a fear that if our small contingent came across Mu`awiyah’s army, our small contingent

would not be able to contend with them and because of the river being between us; it would not be possible to get immediate relief from you. We thought of crossing over the river from I`anat but the people there removed the bridge and locked themselves up in the fort. We were therefore forced to retrace our steps and from Hit we have reached here. "The Imam (a.s) considered their excuse admissible and proceeded further. When they reached near the town of al-Riqqah, they established camp near the Balaq Canal. Ma`qil ibn Qays, whom the Imam (a.s) had sent with a contingent of ۳,۰۰۰ men from al-Mada'in, via Nasibahin, too reached al-Riqqah. Al-Riqqah is situated on the Eastern bank of the River Euphrates and the army had to cross over to the Western bank. But the population of al-Riqqah consisted of fans of `Uthman, and Simak ibn Makhramah al-Asadi, who was staying there with ۸۰۰ of his tribesmen, too was a supporter of the Syrians. These people had started from al-Kūfah to join Mu`awiyah and under an instruction from him were trying to create hurdles in the way of the Imam's movement. Therefore, they removed the bridge from the river and hid themselves in their homes. Despite this mischief, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) did not want to have any conflict with them and, with his army, proceeded further along the bank of the river to cross it at the next bridge enroute. Malik al-Ashtar was very disturbed with this mischief of the people of Banū-Asad. When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) went further, Malik challenged and threatened Banū-Asad and warned them that if they did not erect the bridge by joining the boats, he would burn down the entire habitation. This threat was effective. The people came out of their homes and agreed to erect the bridge. Malik sent word to Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) that he must return back for the bridge was being erected The Imam (a.s) came back with his men and crossed to the western bank of the river

From here Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) sent, once again, Ziyad ibn al-Nadr and Shurayh Ibn Hani', with small contingents, as advance guards towards Syria. When they reached Sūr al-Rūm, they saw that Abul-A`war al-Salami, with twenty five thousand Syrian troops, was camping there. They immediately sent a letter with al-Harith ibn Hambahan to the Imam (a.s) alerting about a sizeable contingent of the Syrians camping at Sūr al-Rūm. After getting this information (a.s) sent Malik al-Ashtar with ۳,۰۰۰ men and asked him to take command of the situation in his hands. He was also instructed not to commence fighting until the enemy commenced it. In the event of fight starting, he was asked to be at the center of the formation, keep Ziyad on the right flank and Shurayh on the left. He was also asked not to go very close to the enemy formation that they think that he was very keen to fight, nor should he be at such a long distance that they thought he was scared of the fight. The Imam (a.s) added that he would follow them with the rest of the army. Malik started immediately, and with the contingents of Ziyad and Shurayh, he halted at a reasonable distance from the Syrian force. Although both the armies were face to face, Malik took care not to give the impression that he had any immediate intention of hostilities. Abul-A`war too gave an impression that he did not want immediate clashes. When day was over and night fell, Malik, and his men, started to prepare for sleep. They were still half-asleep when Abul-A`war took advantage of the darkness and made a surprise attack. Malik and his men woke up, took their swords in their hands and forced the enemy to .retreat

The enemy had already commenced the fight. With the dawn, Malik al-Ashtar and Hashim ibn `Utbah took a group of Mirqal cavaliers and footmen and advanced towards the enemy troops. For sometime intense fighting took place. Then the Syrian's famous warrior, `Abdullah ibn al-Mundhir al-Tanūkhi, was killed along with some of his accompanying riders. Abul-A`war withdrew and stopped at a safe distance. Malik wanted to teach him a lesson for the breach of the norms of war that he had made. Therefore, he asked a youth of his tribe, Sinan ibn Malik al-Nakha`i, to go to Abul-A`war and challenge him for a man-to-man fight

Sinan asked, "Should I ask him for a fight with me or with you?" Malik asked, "If I order you, will you be ready to combat with him?" The youth replied, "By Allah! If you order me, I shall break their ranks, attack and kill him!" Malik smiled and praised the youth's bravery and said, "You are not any less in bravery and status. But you are still a youth and he may not like to combat with a youth. You must go and challenge for a fight with me!" Sinan got up and reaching near the camp of the enemy shouted, "I am a messenger, give me protection!" The Syrians agreed with his demand. He went to Abul-A`war and gave to him Malik's message

At first Abul-A`war remained thoughtful with bowed head. Then he said, "Is it the same Malik who attacked the house of `Uthman and was involved in his assassination? He is a mischief monger and all the problems are because of him!" Sinan said, "Now listen to my reply to what you have said." Abul-A`war said, "I am not willing to hear anything from you nor will I give any reply to the message you have brought".brought

When Sinan wanted to say something, the Syrians jumped at him and pushed him out of their camp. This challenge of Malik left such fear on the heart of al-A`war that in the darkness of the night he slinked away from there with his men and reached Afih .where Mu`awiyah was camping with his army

When Mu`awiyah heard about the arrival of the Iraqi army and the skirmishes, he told Abul-A`war and Sufyan ibn `Umar that they should go forward and select a suitable battlefield and immediately inform him of the selection. They went and selected Siffin for the purpose that lies on the western bank of Euphrates between al-Riqqah and Balus. They selected a strategically suitable place and established camp. Mu`awiyah reached the place along with his army. He ordered Abul-A`war, "Stand with ten thousand men at the river face and obstruct the Iraqis who come to draw [water.]"[۱۲

Malik al-Ashtar too kept advancing with his men. When they reached Siffin, they were taken aback seeing the huge army of the enemy and established camp at a distance from them. The following day, Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) too arrived with his army. He noted that the Syrians had established camp on the level ground and had blocked the approaches to the river. Whenever any Iraqis went for water, they were pushed back.

.He asked his men to look for some other bank to draw their requirement of water

Despite the search, they could not find any suitable spot for their requirement. Even if any spot was there, the approach was very difficult because of morasses on the way and dense thorny bushes. When there was no source of water in sight, the Imam (a.s) sent word to Mu`awiyah with Sa`sa`ah ibn Sawhan that he did not wish to commence the fight before placing the facts before the enemy. He had occupied the source of water. It would be better if he removed the obstruction and discuss with them the cause of the differences between them. He made it clear to him that if he, Mu`awiyah, instead of sorting out the issue, wanted to fight over water; they were ready even for that. But then, who ever is able to dominate, will be controlling the source of the water. When Mu`awiyah got this message, he consulted his advisers.

:Al-Walid ibn `Uqbah said

Deny them the water and let them die of thirst. May Allah kill them! They had given“
[the same treatment to Amir al-Mu'minin `Uthman!”[۱۳

:Abdullah ibn Abi-Sarh said`

Keep them away from the water the whole night. When they fail in getting supply of“
water, they will retreat. This retreat will be their defeat. Ban water for them. May Allah
[keep them thirsty on the Doomsday!”[۱۴

:At this, Sa`sa`ah ibn Sawhan was angry and he said

May Allah deny quenching of your thirst! You evil drunkards! Allah's curse be on you“
[and on the evil (al-Walid)”[۱۵

Amr ibn al-`As said, “O Mu`awiyah! You should know that `Ali (a.s) and his`
companions, as far as there are shining swords in their hands, they will never remain
thirsty. It is better if you give them the water Otherwise they will force you to remove
:the vigil from the bank of the river!” Mu`awiyah said

By Allah! Water shall not be given to them until they die! The same way that `Uthman“
[was forced to die thirsty!”[۱۶

Although the stoppage of water was advantageous to the Syrians because men
cannot physically fight in a thirsty state, but from the point of view of morality it was a
heinous act. Even some troops of the Syrian army spoke against this act. Therefore,
one person from their army, Ma`ri ibn Aqbal al-Hamdani, expressed his displeasure
over the ban and told Mu`awiyah, “O Emir! We have occupied the source of water.
What would have happened if they had arrived here earlier and imposed a ban on us!
In their army, there are slaves, workers, aged and weak persons. Denying water to
such innocent persons is very cruel! Withdraw your orders and let them take the
”!water

Hearing him, Mu`awiyah shouted at the man. `Amr ibn al-`As too said a few harsh words to the man. The al-Hamdani, hearing these invectives, kept quiet and in the darkness of night he left Mu`awiyah's army and crossed over to the side of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). he expressed his feelings in the following couplets

!O son of Hind! What to say of your virtues

!When shame departs, what use is shame

?Do you want to stop the youth from water

!Those in whose hands are shining, swirling lances

!In their necks hang shining swords

!You thought they are not men and are women

!Do you expect `Ali (a.s) will remain thirsty near you

?And others will drink their fill

The Euphrates was in the control of the Syrians and the Iraqis looked with sadness on the gushing waters of the river. On one side, there was pride and prejudice, and on the other, there was the spirit of peace that was controlling the emotions of the thirsty men. However, when they did not get water for a full day and night, the Iraqis could not control themselves any more. They came to the presence of the Imam (a.s) and said, "O Emir! How long could we see the Syrians quenching their thirst and keep us deprived of water?" The Imam (a.s) replied, "Now a battle for water is inevitable! Rise and, at the strength of your swords, acquire water!" When permission was received from Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s), Malik al-Ashtar and al-Ash`ath ibn Qays announced to the men to prepare themselves to push the enemy away from the source of water on the riverbank. At this call, twelve thousand troops, with their swords in their hands and the bows on their shoulders, went forward. Malik al-Ashtar gave the standard in the hand of al-Harith ibn Hammam al-Nakha`i. Al-Ash`ath gave the flag of his tribe to Mu`awiyah ibn al-Harith. Both the commanders, leading their

units rushed against the Syrians who were guarding the waterfront and asked them to move away from there. They said that they would not leave the place until their swords quenched the thirst for blood

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On this side too, there were no cowards to be cowed down by the Syrian swords. Malik shouted and lunged forward. The Syrians took up their spears and swords and stood up to prevent the Iraqis advancing. One of their cavaliers, Salih ibn Fayrūz, came forward to fight. Malik struck his chest with the spear and the man died instantly. Then Malik killed, one after another, Malik ibn Adham, Riyah ibn `Atik, Ibrahim ibn Waddah al-Jamhi, Zamil ibn `Ubayd al-Khuza`i, Ajlah ibn Mansūr al-Kindi and Muhammad ibn Rawdah al-Jamhi. After these casualties, when others had no courage to come forward, Malik made a thrust on the enemy with his men. From the other side too the bows twanged and the arrows were flying. But the valiant Iraqis were not deterred. They kept moving forward. When swords started swinging over their heads, the Syrians started running for shelter. The Iraqis went further forward .and occupied the source of water

When the water changed hands, Mu`awiyah thought they might give the same treatment to his men as he gave to the troops of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). His face reflected this worry when `Amr ibn al-`As asked him, "What do you think? Will `Ali (a.s) ban water for you and your men? The way he fought and took over the Euphrates, can you do the same?" Mu`awiyah retorted in anger, "Do not be sarcastic! Tell me if `Ali (a.s) will really give us the same treatment that we gave him and his :men? Or will he permit us to take our requirement of the water?" `Amr said

I have a strong feeling that what you did to him, he may not retaliate the same way.“

[Because his purpose for coming here is not water but something else!]"[۱۷

The Iraqi's were already very angry on Mu`awiyah. As soon as they had control of the source of water, they declared that they would not give a drop of water to the enemy. When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) heard this, he said, "If the people of Syria took that barbaric step, it is not fair for you to forget your own norms of Faith and morality!" He sent word to Mu`awiyah immediately that although the control of the source of water was in the hands of his men, all will be free to draw water from there. After this declaration, the Syrians came freely to the river and took as much water as they .wanted

The troops of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) established camp near the river and became busy with their duties. In the meantime, an arrow came from the side of the Syrians on which there was a note saying, "I am your well-wisher! I warn you that Mu`awiyah has decided to cause a break in the river that the water gushes and submerges you!" The arrow fell in the hands of one of the people of al-Kūfah. The note traveled from hand to hand and in the end it reached Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). The Imam (a.s) immediately understood that it was a trick of Mu`awiyah. The purpose was to scare the Iraqis away from the source of water. Already there was panic amongst the .Iraqis. They were fast gathering their belongings

The Imam (a.s) said, “This is a trick to move you away from where you are! Do not leave your stations and remain steadfast.” Some of the men were convinced, and others shouted that Mu`awiyah’s men have already reached the river with their implements and have already started breaching the embankment. They said that if they did not move away swiftly, they would all be washed away. The Imam (a.s) asked them not to worry. He said that it was not in the power of Mu`awiyah to divert the flow of the river. But there were many cowardly persons in the army. Once they moved, others followed suit. Despite best efforts to convince them, they did not listen. When Mu`awiyah saw the place vacant, he moved into the breach with his men. When the Iraqis saw the Syrians take their vacated place, they understood Mu`awiyah’s cunning trick. Those who were insisting on vacating the position came shame-faced to the Imam (a.s) and apologized for their behavior. Now, al-Ash`ath ibn Qays and Malik al-Ashtar went with their men and forced the Syrians away from the .source of water

The fight for control over Euphrates was over. Two days had gone by since the Iraqis got control of the water source. In these two days, there was no talk between the contesting parties. The morale of the Iraqis was very high and they were ready to fight. But Amir al-Mu`minin’s quiet was disturbing them. They started thinking whether the Imam (a.s) was trying to avoid war or he had some doubts about going to war with the Syrians. When the Imam (a.s) learned about these doubts, he said that neither he was avoiding the war nor did he have doubts about the need for fighting with Mu`awiyah. The real reason for the delay was that in that interval better sense prevailed and, at least, from his side all possible efforts were made to convince the other party of their faulty stand. After all the waiting, on the first of Dhul-Hijjah ۳۶ H, for placing the facts before the enemy, he called Bishr ibn `Amr al-Ansari, Sa`id ibn Qays al-Hamdani, and Shabath ibn Rabi` al-Tamimi and asked them to go to Mu`awiyah and explain to him that he should not break the Islamic unity and abstain from divisive action and peacefully owe his allegiance. Bashir ibn `Amr said that he .had no hope that the person would give any cognizance to the suggestion

The Imam (a.s) asked him to go and make his efforts. The three of them rose and went to Mu`awiyah. Bashir ibn `Amr started the discussion. He said, "O son of Abū-Sufyan! This world does not side with anyone for all time! It will not also be with you forever! You will have to die one day or the other and have to go to the Presence of Allah! There your deeds will be accounted for. Then reward or retribution will be given on the basis of your deeds in this world! I ask you in the name of Allah to refrain from mischief and not to create dissensions in the Ummah with your negative attitude" Mu`awiyah interrupted saying, "Why do not you give this advice to `Ali (a.s)?" Bashir said, "Where he stands, and where are you! He has precedence in embracing Islam and the nearest of kin to the Prophet (a.s). He has all the superiority and felicity

There is none equal to him and deserving of the caliphate!" Mu`awiyah asked, "What does he want?" Bashir said, "He wants you to recognize the Truth and be with it. This way you will be successful in this world and in the Hereafter as well. Mu`awiyah said

Do you want us to forego our claim of qisas for the son of `Affan? By Allah! That shall [never happen.] [۱۸

Then Shabath ibn Rab`i addressed Mu`awiyah and said, "O Mu`awiyah! Your real purpose is not hidden from us. You have only one weapon to misguide the people that you tell them that their caliph was killed cruelly and that his qisas must be demanded. With this slogan, you have gathered some ignorant people around you. This, despite the fact that you refrained from helping `Uthman when he was crying hoarse asking for help! You wanted him to be killed so that you have an opportunity to start a fight in the name of qisas and usurp power. Remember! There are some people in this world who wish for certain things but Allah gives them no success. There are also people who succeed much more than their own expectations. But for you, in success or in failure, there is no virtue! If you fail in your efforts, there will be none more shamed than you in Arabia. If you succeed in your schemes, your Hereafter will be only intense Retribution! O Mu`awiyah! Fear Allah Give up your stubborn attitude and refrain from conceit. Do not challenge the one who is the true claimant of the caliphate!" Mu`awiyah was disturbed with the frank talk of Shabath. Instead of refuting what he said, he spoke angrily

Get away from my presence and now only the sword will decide the matters“
[between us.”[١٩

:At this point Sa`id ibn Qays al-Hamdani said

Do you want to frighten with your swords? By Allah! We shall soon advance towards“
[you with our swords!”[٢٠

After the return of the delegation, some memorizers of the Holy Qur'an came to Mu`awiyah and asked him why he had mobilized the big army of men? He said that his purpose was to claim retaliation for the blood of `Uthman. They asked from whom he was demanding the qisas. He replied that he wanted the qisas from `Ali (a.s). They asked, “Did `Ali (a.s) kill `Uthman? Mu`awiyah said, “He is the killer of `Uthman.” They went to `Ali (a.s) and repeated the accusations of Mu`awiyah. The Imam (a.s) said, “It is a false accusation.” They went back to Mu`awiyah and related what `Ali (a.s) had said. Mu`awiyah said, “He had not killed `Uthman with his own hands but had encouraged others to do the deed!” They came to the Imam (a.s) and mentioned this
”.to him. He replied, “This too is a false accusation

They reported the Imam’s reply to Mu`awiyah. He said, “If `Ali (a.s) is telling the truth, he should hand over the killers of `Uthman to us. They are present amongst his troops and are source of his strength!” The men came to `Ali (a.s) and conveyed this to him. `Ali (a.s) said, “`Uthman’s killers prove their justification for the act from the verses of the Qur’an. The killing that has taken place under an interpretation (ta’wil)
”.of the verses of the Qur’an does not call for qisas

When Mu`awiyah was told this he said, "If it is like this, then what right has `Ali (a.s) to become the caliph without even consulting us." (a.s) said in reply, "The Muhajir and Ansar who are the people of authority unanimously decided on the caliphate and all the Muslims abide by their decision." Mu`awiyah said, "Those Muhajirūn and Ansar who are with us never owed their allegiance to him nor have agreed to his accession
".to the caliphate

Thus he went on making such excuses and was not able to give any positive reason for denying to owe allegiance to `Ali (a.s). He knew that if he did the bay`ah then he would not be able to blame `Ali (a.s) for involvement in or supporting the killers of `Uthman. He had only this weapon to justify his plan to fight a battle with `Ali (a.s) for
.his ulterior motive of coming to power

In this regard Abū-Umamah al-Bahili and Abul-Darda' too spoke to Mu`awiyah and told him, "You are fighting with `Ali (a.s) while he is more deserving of the caliphate than you!" He said, "I am fighting just to claim the retaliation for the blood of `Uthman." They both said, "Is `Ali (a.s) his killer?" He said, "Although he has not killed him with his own hands, he has given refuge to the killers. If he hands them over to us,
"!I shall be the first to owe my allegiance to him

This talk appealed to the two persons. They went to `Ali (a.s) and repeated Mu`awiyah's words. The Imam (a.s) understood that Mu`awiyah wanted to trick him by raising something that was impossible to be done. He took the two persons to the rows of his troops and asked, "Amongst you, who are the killers of `Uthman?" The
[۲۰,۰۰۰ men shouted in unison: "We have all killed `Uthman!"[۲۱

Abū-Umamah and Abul-Darda' thought that for the blood of one person, the blood of many cannot be shed and there was not also any justification of handing over anyone to Mu`awiyah for this purpose. Instead of going to Mu`awiyah they retired to a quiet coastal place and preferred not to side any of the two parties

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) tried all the time to avoid fighting and settle the matter through negotiations. But Mu`awiyah knew that the final result of peace was bay`ah and that would be abject defeat for him. Therefore, he avoided all efforts at negotiations. He termed the efforts of `Ali (a.s) to maintain peace as his weakness and started posing threats to him. At last, the hidden flames were ignited and the preliminary clashes commenced. From the Syrians, `Abd al-Rahman ibn Khalid ibn al-Walid, Abul-A`war al-Salami, Habib ibn Muslim al-Fihri, Ibn Dhil-Kila` al-Himyari, `Ubaydullah ibn `Umar, Shurahbil ibn Simt al-Kindi and Hamzah ibn Malik used to come to the battlefield in turns. Similarly from `Ali's army Malik al-Ashtar, Hijr ibn `Adi, Shabath ibn Rab`i, Khalid ibn Mu`ammar, Ziyad ibn al-Nadr al-Harithi, Ziyad ibn Khasfah al-Taymi, Sa`id ibn Qays al-Hamdani, Ma`qil ibn Qays al-Riyahi and Qays ibn Sa`d al-Ansari came out in turn to face the opponents and sent them vanquished. Although they were all men of valor, but Malik al-Ashtar was a warrior of such caliber that big champions used to be scared of facing him. Therefore, during the first few days of the battle of Siffin, Sahm ibn Abil-Ghayrar came out of Mu`awiyah's army and challenged for a combat. He was a well-known fighter from the Syrian army and had a huge and imposing physique. He used to frighten people away just through his physical appearance

Malik al-Ashtar decided to match strength with him. People tried to stop him. But he did not listen to them. He went away and challenged the giant. The person was proud of his strength and prowess. He jumped his steed, came forward, and attacked Malik. Malik avoided his strike and gave him such a blow that he fell flat from his horse and died at the spot. One person from the Syrian troops saw Sahm dying and resolved that he would kill Malik al-Ashtar. Therefore, he challenged Malik for a combat. Malik attacked him with his sword and he fell down near the hoofs of his horse. Malik was about to kill him when the Syrians rushed in a crowd and carried him away alive. Thus, the month of Dhul-Hijjah was spent in these skirmishes. Everyday they had a couple .of combats but wholesale fighting had not yet commenced

When Muharram ۳۷ H commenced, respecting the sanctity of the month, fighting was stopped. Taking advantage of the halt to fighting, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) again tried for peace and sent a few representatives across to the enemy. `Adi ibn Hatam, Yazid ibn Qays, Shabath ibn Rab`i and Ziyad ibn Khasfah were sent to Mu`awiyah to prepare him for peace. Therefore, they went to him `Adi ibn Hatam started the talks and told Mu`awiyah, "We have come to you with a message of peace. If you listen to our voice, the fighting can be stopped and differences sorted out. You know that `Ali (a.s) has the leadership of the Muslims in his hands. There is none equal to him in superiority and precedence in embracing the Faith. Excepting you, and your cohorts, all the Islamic territories have accepted him as the caliph. Give up your stubbornness and change your attitude. Otherwise you might fall into troubles as did the owners of
".the camel

Mu`awiyah said, "You want to frighten me! I am the son of Harb! I cannot be cowed down by such threats. By Allah! You are one of the persons who instigated the killing of `Uthman. I am certain you will be killed for that crime." At this Shabath ibn Rab`i and Ziyad ibn Khasfah said, "Forget all that talk! That will benefit neither you nor us! Say something that is advantageous to both the parties. Let us come closer than moving away from each other" Yazid ibn Qays said, "We are the messengers! Our duty was to give the message; that we have done. Now, whatever you say, we shall communicate to Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s). However, we shall make efforts to convince .you and invite you not to create schisms in the Ummah

As far as the superiority of `Ali (a.s) is concerned, it is neither hidden from you nor from us! There is no question of equating you with him. Therefore, fear Allah and abstain from warlike activities against him. By Allah! We have not found anyone better than him in piety, superiority and capability." Mu`awiyah said, "You people have invited me to attach myself to the majority. I must tell you that the majority is with me! As far as obeying your Emir is concerned, it is beyond me! The reason is that he assassinated `Uthman, created rifts in the majority (the Ummah) and gave refuge to the killers. I have no doubt that the killers of `Uthman are present in his army. He must hand them over to us so that we kill them as the retaliation for the blood of `Uthman. Then we shall obey him and abstain from fighting as well." Shabath said, "If `Ammar ibn Yasir is handed over to you, would you mind killing him? 'Mu`awiyah said, "What is coming in the way of my killing him? What to talk of `Uthman, Even for his freed slave, Naqil, I would not hesitate to kill him!" Shabath said, "By the Creator of the earth and the sky! You are flying very high! You cannot reach `Ammar until the battlefield is full of cadavers and there are piles of heads! "In the end when they found that the talks were not reaching anywhere, they stood up and started back for their camp. They might have gone half the distance when Mu`awiyah sent a messenger to call Ziyad ibn Khasfah and told him that he had summoned him for a special purpose. He said, "You know it pretty well that `Ali (a.s) got `Uthman assassinated and is giving shelter to the killers. If you agree you and your tribe can cooperate with me in claiming the qisas. With Allah's witness I swear that if I succeed, I shall give you the governorate of al-Kūfah or al-Basrah." When Mu`awiyah finished talking, he looked

:expectantly at Ziyad, who said

p: ٤٨٤

With Allah’s help I have proof and conviction that I cannot bear to become supporter“
”!of the criminals

Hearing this reply, Mu`awiyah put down his head and told `Amr ibn al-`As, “May Allah
[destroy them! Their heart beats and movements of the lips are all similar!”[۲۲

The failure of these embassies gave one impression that the Imam (a.s) wanted to settle the matters through negotiations, but Mu`awiyah wanted to get his way through war! To remove this impression, Mu`awiyah sent Habib ibn Maslamah al-Fahri, Shurahbil ibn Simt al-Kindi and Ma`an ibn Yazid al-Aslami to `Ali (a.s). When they came to the Imam (a.s), Habib ibn Maslamah said, “O `Ali! `Uthman was the caliph, pious and follower of the Qur'anic precepts. But you people did not let him live and killed him for no fault of his. Hand over his killers that we kill them in qisas! Hand over the caliphate to the Shūra and stay away. Then we shall select a caliph with
:unanimity. When the Imam (a.s) saw his style of speaking, he said

Who are you to ask me to demit the caliphate? You are doing this when you do not“
[qualify to talk such things!”[۲۳

Habib stood up uneasily and said, “When we are face to face, you will see how I behave!” The Imam (a.s) said, “Even if you attack with a large army of men, I would consider you as nothing! Go and do what you wish to do!” Shurahbil said, “I too wish to say the same that my companion has said. Will I get the same reply that was given to him? “The Imam (a.s) said, “The reply I gave him, suited only him! But a different reply
”!can be given to you

Then Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) related the events from the Annunciation of the Prophet (a.s), the periods of the First and the Second caliphs and then he said, "When `Uthman became the caliph he committed such acts that people did not like them. They criticized him and tried to correct him. But when no result was achieved from their efforts, they surrounded and killed him. Then people gathered and came to me. And wanted to owe their allegiance to me. I thought it advisable to refuse. Therefore, in very clear terms rejected their offer. But their insistence increased and they said that other than me they would not do bay`ah with anyone else. They expressed the fear that if I did not accept their bay`ah people will get divided and the peace in the .realm will shatter. They felt that in that event Islam would face a major crisis

In those circumstances I had to agree for the bay`ah. When the bay`ah was over, two persons, Talhah and al-Zubayr, became disobedient and rebellious, although they had happily swore their allegiance to me. Then Mu`awiyah brought out the banner of rebellion against me, although he neither has any precedence over me in the Faith nor does he have any status in Islam. He is a freed son of a freed father! His father, and himself, had always been the enemies of Allah and His Prophet (a.s)! If they embraced Islam, it was out of fear in defeat! I am surprised you have moved away from the Ahl al-Bayt and got attached to the lapel of Mu`awiyah and started moving in the direction he wanted you to! You should, in fact, have been with the Prophet's Household and none else. I invite you to follow Allah's Book and the Sunnah of the Prophet (a.s) and to do jihad against the evil." Shurahbil listened to this talk but did not take any effect and said, "Do you believe that `Uthman was killed mercilessly as an oppressed person? "The Imam (a.s) replied, I neither term him as an oppressed person nor an oppressor himself!" At this Shurahbil and Ma`an ibn Yazid got angry and said, "One who has the belief that `Uthman was not assassinated as an oppressed person, we have nothing to do with him." Saying this, they got up and left. The Imam (a.s) was not expecting them to be impressed. However, he tried to convince them. When he saw them departing, the Imam (a.s) recited the following :verse

فَإِنَّكَ لَا تُسْمِعُ الْمَوْتَى وَلَا تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ الدُّعَاءَ إِذَا وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِينَ. وَمَا أَنْتَ بِهَادِيَ الْعُمْيِ عَنْ ضَلَالَتِهِمْ إِنْ تُسْمِعُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا فَهُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ.

For surely you cannot make the dead to hear and you cannot make the deaf to hear“ the call, when they turn back, nor can you lead away the blind out of their error. You cannot make to hear any but those who believe in Our communications so they shall
”(submit. ۳۰/۵۲-۵۳

:After this, the Imam (a.s) turned his attention towards his companions and said

Let it not happen that their efforts at deviation and waywardness surpass your“ [efforts, while your efforts are for Truth and in obedience of Allah.”[۲۴

When the month of Muharram was over and the crescent of Safar was sighted on the horizon, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) who had exhausted exploring all the avenues for possible peace, sent Marsad ibn al-Harith to the other side where he announced to
:the Army of Syria

O people of Syria! Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) conveys to you, 'I had given you respite to“ think and turn towards the Right Path. I had made it clear to you through Allah's Book and invited you to follow it. But you have not abstained from your mischief and stubbornness nor responded to the voice of the Truth. Now I have terminated all [negotiations and Allah, certainly, does not befriend the unfaithful.”[۲۵

As soon as this announcement was made, preparations were started for the war. They lighted fires and beacons were lighted. Men were arranged in order overnight and the Iraqis and the Syrians occupied their own entrenchments. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) gave special attention to the orderly arrangement of his men. On the cavalry he appointed `Ammar ibn Yasir as the commander and on the footmen, `Abdullah ibn
.Badil al-Khuza`i

On the riders from al-Kūfah, Malik al-Ashtar was given the command and Sahl ibn Hunayf was in charge of the riders from al-Basrah. Qays ibn Sa`d was given the command of the footmen from al-Basrah. The right flank was under al-Ash`ath ibn Qays and the left flank was commanded by `Abdullah ibn `Abbas. The footmen of the right flank were put under Sulayman ibn Sarad and of the left flank under al-Harith ibn Marw al-`Abdi. The men from every tribe were under a chief from the same tribe. The standard of war was given to Hashim ibn `Utbah Mirqal. The Imam (a.s) addressing the men said: "Until the time they do not attack, you should not attack them. Because you are, By Allah's Grace, fighting for a Cause. Your leaving it to them to start the fight will be another proof of your being on the side of the Right. Beware! When the enemies start running away, do not kill anyone who has shown his back! Do not attack the injured and the maimed. Do not attack women even if they shout invectives
".against you

Mu`awiyah appointed `Ubaydullah ibn `Umar as the commander of his right flank and Habbah ibn Maslamah for the left flank. Cavalry `Amr ibn al-`As was the commander and on footmen Muslim ibn `Uqbah. For the men from different cities and areas, persons from the same places were in command. The standard of war was
.given to `Abd al-Rahman ibn Khalid ibn al-Walid

On Wednesday, the first of Safar, early in the morning, men in both the armies stood in formation with enthusiasm and regular warfare commenced. The Iraqi unit was under Malik al-Ashtar and the Syrian unit under Habib ibn Maslamah. Both the armies gauged each other's strengths and weaknesses and then attacked flailing their swords. The entire day the swords were clashing. And until the dusk, the fighting
.continued. When it turned dark, both the armies returned to their respective camps

The next day Hashim ibn Mirqal took groups of cavaliers and footmen and entered the arena. From the other side, Abul-A`war al-Salami came with a large number of cavalry and footmen from the Syrian army. Both the sides flailed their swords and attacked each other with intensity. Swords kept clashing and spears piercing the . chests

On the third day, `Amr put a black flag on a spear and came out with a unit of men. People started whispering when they saw the black flag. Some said it is the same piece of cloth that the Prophet (a.s) had given to `Amr attaching to the wooden staff of the standard and gave him the honor of being the standard bearer. When Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) heard this, he said the truth about the cloth is that “the Prophet (a.s) took the flag in his hands and said, ‘who amongst you will lift the standard and justify the honor (by his deeds)’ `Amr ibn al-`As said, ‘O Allah’s Messenger! What are the conditions that will qualify one for the honor’ The Prophet (a.s) said, ‘Taking the Standard he will not run away from fighting the infidels and will not fight with the :Muslims?’ But he has justified the honor in this manner

During the lifetime of the Prophet (a.s) he took the flag and ran way from the battle“ [with infidels. And this day he has come with the flag to fight against the Muslims.”[۲۶

The intention of `Amr ibn al-`As was to make a show of the standard to impress on the people that during the time of the Prophet (a.s) he had the honor of being given the standard by him and was coming to the battlefield now with the same standard. Then he would do the publicity that his stand in the conflict was just. But Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s), before any misunderstanding spread, clarified the position and proved that only getting the standard from the hands of the Prophet (a.s) is not the proof of one’s superiority until the person fulfills the requirements of that honor in totality. Therefore, if any minds were confused seeing the standard, they were removed. The .men did not give it any importance

When `Amr came into the battleground, Ziyad ibn al-Nadr came out with cavalry and `Ammar ibn Yasir with footmen among whom were Muhajirūn, Ansar and the warrior in the Battle of Badr. `Ammar went decimating the rows of the enemy troops and told his companions

O People of Iraq! Do you want to see the person (Mu`awiyah) who is an enemy of Allah and His Prophet (a.s) and fought battles with them, gave air to rebellion against the Muslims and sided with the polytheists. When he saw that Allah had given strength to Islam and gave control to the Prophet (a.s), he came to him and embraced Islam. We know that he has embraced Islam out of fear and he had no interest in Islam. When Allah took away His Prophet (a.s) from the world then, By Allah, he became the enemy of the Muslims and friend of the infidels. Therefore, remain steadfast in fighting him and battle with him. He wants to extinguish Allah's radiance [and strengthen the enemies of Allah.] [۲۷]

Then taking his companions, `Ammar, attacked with such intensity that the Syrians lost their footing and `Amr, who had come proudly waving his black flag, left his position and disappeared in the back rows

Ziyad ibn al-Nadr, with his men, attacked the Syrian horsemen. One rider advanced to combat with him. Ziyad asked who he was. He said that he was Mu`awiyah ibn `Amr al-`Aqili. Hearing his name, Ziyad was hesitant to attack him because he was his mother's son. Their mother was a woman, Hind, from the tribe of Zubayd. He thought (it not proper to fight and withdrew taking permission from Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s

On the fourth day, Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah came with his men to the arena. From the other side, `Ubaydullah ibn `Umar came with a large patrol. Both arranged rows of men opposite one another. The hands advanced towards the spears, the swords came out of the sheaths. And the sparks of fighting started flying. `Ubaydullah ibn `Umar challenged Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah for a combat. Hearing this, he advanced swiftly. Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) asked who was that? They said that it was Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah fighting with `Ubaydullah ibn `Umar. The Imam's filial emotions arose. He put his foot in the stirrup of his steed and moved near Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah. He dismounted, gave the reins to his son, and telling that he would come to him soon went away. Then he went near Ibn `Umar. When he saw the Imam (a.s) instead of Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah, the color of his face fled. He said that
.he would not fight with him and went to the back rows

Ali (a.s) returned, and when he came near his horse, Ibn al-Hanafiyyah said, "O Baba!` Why did you stop me from fighting? If you had allowed me, I would not have returned without killing him." The Imam (a.s) said, "I expect the same from you! But I was not fully sure if you would kill him and come back. That is the reason I had to go myself." Muhammad said, "Baba! I had no courage to stop you. Otherwise I would not like your
"going to fight with that accursed person

On the fifth day `Abdullah ibn `Abbas went with his men to the arena. From the other side, al-Walid ibn `Uqbah came with his horsemen and footmen. When he saw Ibn `Abbas he shouted invectives at Banū-`Abd al-Muttalib. He told Ibn `Abbas

O Ibn `Abbas! You have done injustice! You have killed your Imam (`Uthman) and “ [failed in fulfilling your vows!”[۲۸

Ibn `Abbas asked him to stop making false accusations and fight with him. But he had no courage to come forward. He shouted invectives for sometime and then sat quietly. Ibn `Abbas attacked the Syrians along with his men and the fight went on until .the time of 2uhr Prayer

The same day, Samarah ibn Abrahah al-Himyari, along with a group of the reciters of the Holy Qur'an, left the ranks of the Syrian army and joined the army of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). Mu`awiyah was very upset with this because it was a proof of the .unfairness of his stand

On the sixth day, from the Iraqi side Qays ibn Sa`d al-Ansari and from the Syrian army Ibn Dhul-Kila` al-Himyari came to the arena and the fight continued until .midday

On the seventh day, Malik al-Ashtar from Amir al-Mu'minin's army and from the other side Habib ibn Maslamah stood opposite each other in the arena. Hijr al-Sharr al-Kindi from the Syrian forces came astride a horse and challenged for a combat. The person who came in response too had the same name, Hijr ibn `Adi who was known as Hijr al-Khayr. Both attacked each other. But suddenly one person from the Syrian army, Khuzaymah ibn Thabit al-Asadi jumped in the arena and broke the spear of Hijr al-Khayr. Seeing this, the Iraqi troops killed Khuzaymah al-Asadi and Hijr al-Sharr escaped saving his life. After some time he once again came to the arena shouting for .combat. Al-Hakam ibn Azhar came forward to fight with him

The fight went on for some time and then al-Hakam was killed. After al-Hakam, Ibn Ummi-Rafa`ah ²alim al-Himyari, seeing al-Hakam fall, came angrily and attacked Hijr al-Sharr and killed him. When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) saw this, he thanked Allah that
.the killer of al-Hakam ibn Azhar was killed

The swords were clashing in the arena and the Iraqis and Syrians were attacking each other when an Iraqi soldier Abū-Ayyūb attacked the Syrians and came out of their rows when he noticed a Syrian was returning after attacking the Iraqis When they came near to each other, both raised their swords and attacked each other. Abū-Ayyūb hit at the Syrian's neck with such intensity that the sword cut through it and the head was severed but it remained on the body. People thought that the attack went futile. But when the horse moved, the head fell to the ground. When the Iraqis saw this, they shouted slogans and praised the swordsmanship of Abū-Ayyūb. When he
:returned Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s), recited the following couplet

,Our ancestors have taught us swordsmanship

”!And we shall teach this to our sons

In the midst of this gory conflict, it was always the wish of the Imam (a.s) to bring it to an end as soon as possible and some way to establish peace was found. Although seeing the stubbornness of Mu`awiyah there was little chance of peace without a major conflict, even then the Imam (a.s) took a copy of the Holy Qur'an and addressed his troops, “Who is there amongst you who will take this Book to the
”?Syrians and invite them to accept the verdict of the Holy Qur'an

One youth came in front of the Imam (a.s) and offered to go. The Imam (a.s) announced once again, but none other than the youth came forward. Then he gave the Book to the youth and sent him forward. The youth reached the rows of the enemy troops and said, “O people! Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s) invites you to follow the teachings of the Holy Qur’an! Come, let us resolve our conflicts on its verdict and avoid the unnecessary bloodshed!” But none paid any heed to what he said. He met the same end as did Muslim al-Mujashi`i during the Battle of the Camel. Some Syrians .surrounded the youth and killed him

Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s) thought that the war of attrition would continue and the blood of Muslims will continue to be shed. Therefore, to bring the battle to an end, he announced that he was challenging Mu`awiyah for a person-to-person combat. He stood between the two armies and told at a high pitch, “Where is Mu`awiyah! “When Mu`awiyah heard this, he asked his men to ask what the Imam (a.s) wanted. The Imam (a.s) added, “Ask him to come in front of me. I want to talk with him!” Mu`awiyah took `Amr Ass with him and came to the front. Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s) said, “O Mu`awiyah! You are shedding the blood of people unnecessarily! Come on, we both shall fight and the one who wins shall be deemed to have won the battle and occupy the seat of the caliphate! “`Amr said, “`Ali (a.s) has said the truth. Both of you are the nucleus of the conflict! You may fight and come to a decision yourself!” :Mu`awiyah told `Amr

You have not tried to be just! You know it pretty well that whoever came to combat “
[with him, he killed the person!”[۲۹

Amr said, “I do not want that you avoid combat and fall in the estimation of the` people! “Mu`awiyah said, “Do you think that you will tempt me to lose my life! Do you wish that I get killed and you become the ruler?” Saying this, Mu`awiyah turned back and slowly went towards the last row of his troops. Mu`awiyah was already angry at the impertinence of `Amr. He called the person and shouted at him. To cool his temper `Amr said, “If you do not want to fight with `Ali (a.s), I shall do that! Therefore, he decided to go for the combat. At one point of time he went to the arena and challenged `Ali (a.s) for a combat. The Imam (a.s) spurred his horse and came fast to the arena. When he raised his sword, `Umar Ass purposely fell down from his horse and put his legs up. Thus, his private parts were exposed. When the Imam (a.s) saw this contemptible act of `Amr, he turned away his face. `Amr got up dusting his cloak :and ran towards his people. When Mu`awiyah heard about this episode, he told `Amr

[O `Amr! Thanks to Allah that you saved your life because of your private parts!”[۳۰“

One commander of the Syrian army, Abrahah ibn Sabbah al-Himyari also was affected with the destruction of the war and said that the best way to stop the unnecessary bloodshed was to have a man-to-man combat between `Ali (a.s) and Mu`awiyah. Therefore, he addressed his tribesmen saying, “O people of Yemen! For how long we should expose ourselves to the swords and arrows! Do something to stop this war! Insist on `Ali (a.s) and Mu`awiyah that they fight themselves and bring about a conclusion! Whoever comes out the winner between the two, we shall join with him!” When Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) heard this, he said, “By Allah! For me nothing could be more welcome than both the armies uniting and Mu`awiyah and me fight to come to a final decision!” When Mu`awiyah heard about the suggestion of Abrahah, he was scared and slowly, step by step, he went backwards and reached the back rows of his army! He told his sycophants, “It seems Abrahah has lost the balance of his mind!” The people said, “It is not like that! He is wise and intelligent! Nor is he behind anyone in bravery and valor. Why do not you say that you do not have courage to fight face-to-face with `Ali (a.s)!” Mu`awiyah kept quiet but `Urwah ibn Dawūd got

angered. He said, "If the emir does not want to fight with `Ali (a.s), I shall combat with him!" He then stood between the two armies and shouted his challenge to `Ali (a.s) for personal combat. The Imam (a.s) came forward to punish the impertinent challenger. Some people asked him not to fight with that impertinent person and ask someone else to fight. But the Imam (a.s) personally went and with one strike of his sword, the person's body was cut vertically into two! The people who witnessed this shivered in their footwear! When `Urwah was thus killed, a cousin of his attacked the Imam (a.s) in anger. He avoided his attack and hit him with his spear. The spear was stuck in the .person's chest and he fell dead

When Mu`awiyah saw two of his men die like this, he was in a state of utter confusion. He asked, "Who among you will fight with the killer of `Urwah and his cousin or kill him at any opportunity?" al-Walid ibn `Uqbah said, "It would be better if you yourself go and personally fight with him." He replied, "He has already challenged me! But what use this army that I have to go and fight in place of my fighting men? I need not go personally to fight!" `Uqbah ibn Abi-Sufyan said, "Your decision is right. Even if he challenges, you should not go to fight!" When after repeated calls by Mu`awiyah there was response from none to go and fight with the Imam (a.s) he asked Busr ibn Artah if he would go and fight with `Ali (a.s). Busr said, "It would be better if you yourself fight with him. But if you insist, I shall go to fight." A close relative of Busr told him, "If Mu`awiyah dies, he will have some successor for his kingdom! Why do you want to get killed?" He said, "I have given my word and I must go for the fight now!" When the person heard this, he recited the following couplets to Busr

If you were of his caliber, you should certainly fight with him; otherwise, remember
the tiger eats away the sheep

O Busr! It seems you are ignorant of `Ali's exploits of valor or on purpose you pretend
ignorance

Busr said, "I shall have to die one day! Why should I die the death of a coward! I shall certainly combat with him!" Therefore, he proceeded towards the arena. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) holding the hand of Malik al-Ashtar was going round in search of a promontory when Busr, in full armor, came near him and challenged him for a combat

The Imam (a.s) coolly went near him, pierced his spear in the armor and pushed him down. When Busr saw that he would be killed, he exposed his private parts in emulation of `Amr Ass! (a.s) turned his face way. Malik al-Ashtar recognized him and said, “O (a.s)! This is the enemy of Allah, Busr ibn Artah!” The Imam said, “Allah’s curse on him! After he has done the shameful act, let him go!” Busr got up swiftly, hiding his private parts, ran away. Mu`awiyah, knowing of his misadventure, told him, “You need not be ashamed! `Amr ibn al-`As too saved his life the same way

Mu`awiyah rarely came out in the field because he was scared that if the Imam (a.s) came face to face, he will find it difficult to save his life. Whenever he came out, he ensured that (a.s) not in the place. Once he came out and attacked the right flank. The Imam (a.s) chanced to be in that area. When he saw Mu`awiyah, thinking that he might escape seeing him, he exchanged his armor and the horse with another person and came out of the row. Mu`awiyah advanced with the intention of attacking when he recognized the Imam (a.s). He turned his horse back, spurred it and ran away! Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) chased him for sometime, but Mu`awiyah disappeared in the maze of his troops

Mu`awiyah used to send his slave Harith in his disguise to the arena to give an impression that he was actively participating in the proceedings of the war! Therefore, when he used to be out in Mu`awiyah’s armor and guise, people used to think that it was Mu`awiyah himself! Mu`awiyah had warned him that his life was precious and at any cost he should not take the risk of fighting with `Ali (a.s). At that time `Amr told the slave that Mu`awiyah did not want him to fight `Ali (a.s) to deny him the singular honor of matching his strength with the champion of the Quraysh! He added that if he was Qarashi, Mu`awiyah would willingly have allowed him to go and fight

Al-Harith was angered when `Amr told this. And said that he would not miss the opportunity of fighting with `Ali (a.s). Therefore, he went forward and challenged the Imam (a.s) to combat with him. The Imam (a.s) was advancing with a troop of men. He heard the challenge of Harith and put his hand on the scabbard of his sword. Without giving him any respite, he struck the slave such a blow that he was cut into two pieces! When Mu`awiyah learnt about the killing of Harith, he was very sad and chided `Amr Ass that because of his tempting him the slave lost his life. Now people also knew that .Mu`awiyah, in his cowardice, used to send Harith in his own disguise to the front

Mu`awiyah's practice was that he sent others to the front disguised as himself. On the other side, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s), used to enter the arena in the guise of `Abbas ibn Rabi`ah and others, to ensure that the enemy fighters did not get scared and ran away without combating. Therefore, once `Abbas Ibn Rabi`ah himself came out to the arena, with full armor, riding on a horse. Qarazah ibn Adham invited him for a combat. `Abbas said that he would dismount from the horse and asked the opponent to dismount as well therefore the chance of either of them running away from the fight will not be there! Therefore, they both dismounted and the fight started. The swords were clashing with swords, with the shields and with the armors. Both were trying hard to overwhelm the adversary, but neither succeeded. In that time, `Abbas .noticed that the armor of Qaraz was loose at one place

Cleverly, he pierced the tip of his sword at that point and sliced the armor apart. Then he attacked with such dexterity that Qarz fell to the ground face down with his sword piercing the ribs of the Syrian. As soon as he fell, he was dead. The Iraqis loudly shouted the slogan of “allahu-akbar”! When Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s) heard this slogan, he asked whose valor the men were praising? The people said it was `Abbas ibn Rabi`ah. (a.s) was angry and he asked `Abbas that he was asked not to leave his post He said, “O Amir al-Mu’minin! How could I resist the call to combat when it was addressed to me?” The Imam (a.s) said, “Fighting the enemy was not as essential as is the obedience of the commands of the Imam (a.s)!” Then he added, “O Allah! Bless
”! `Abbas for his good deed! I have forgiven him, You too forgive him

When Mu`awiyah learned about the killing of Qarz, he was very angry and asked his men if there was someone amongst them who could kill `Abbas. At this, two swordsmen of the tribe of Lakhm rose and challenged `Abbas for a fight. When he heard the challenge, his blood boiled. But he could not have left his post without the permission of the Imam (a.s). He asked the challengers to wait for a while so that he will take the permission of his leader for the fight. He then went to the presence of the Imam (a.s) and sought his permission. The Imam (a.s) said, “By Allah! Mu`awiyah wants not a single soul of Banū-Hashim to remain alive on the face of the earth! He wants all those beacons of knowledge and learning and the world sank in the morass of ignorance! Notwithstanding all this, Allah will keep His radiant for all time!” Then he asked `Abbas to remove his armor and give to him. The Imam (a.s) wore his armor and rode on his steed to the theatre of the battle. Seeing him the two swordsmen from the Lakhm thought that it was `Abbas because the Imam (a.s) was using his armor and the horse. They asked, “Have you taken your Emir’s permission to fight
:with us?” The Imam (a.s) recited this verse in reply

أَذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلَمُوا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ.

Permission to fight is given to those upon whom war is made because they are“
”(oppressed, and most surely Allah is well able to assist them. (٢٢/٣٩

Now one of them came forward and attacked with his sword. The Imam (a.s) evaded his attack and struck him so hard that the person was divided into two Then the other, in acute anger, rushed to attack. The Imam (a.s) killed him as well. He returned the armor and the horse to ` Abbas and asked him to inform whenever he was challenged
for a fight

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) felt that the arrogance of the Syrians was increasing by the day. As long as their evil designs were not crushed with full force, the battle of attrition would go on for very long. Near sunset, the Imam (a.s) addressed a sermon to his
:men

See! You will have to battle with the enemy tomorrow! Therefore, spend tonight in“
prayer and supplication. Recite the Holy Qur'an and pray for Allah's succor Pray to Allah for patience and steadfastness. Clash with the enemy with full vigor and sense.
[Then you will be really on the Straight Path!]"[٣١

Footnote

Al-Akhabār al-Tiwāl, Page ١٤٢ [١]

Tārīkh al-Islām, Vol ٢, Page ١٤٨ [٢]

Al-Akhabār al-Tiwāl, Page ١٤١ [٣]

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Al-Akhabār al-Tiwāl, Page ١٥٨ [٥]

Al-Akhabār al-Tiwāl, Page ١٥٨ [٦]

Al-` Iqd al-Farīd, Vol ٣, Page ١١٧ [٧]

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Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٣, Page ١٤٥ [١٤]

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Murūj al-Dhahab, Vol ٢, Page ٣٨ [١٦]

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(THE BATTLE OF SIFFIN (Part ۲

(THE BATTLE OF SIFFIN (Part ۲

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was busy the whole night in preparation for the battle and arranging the rows of the men. He organized the right and the left flanks. And the men too checked their arms. They sharpened their swords and put the tips of the spears to order. By dawn, they were all ready to attack the enemy

With this announcement of `Ali (a.s), Mu`awiyah was really scared. He ordered the commanders to arrange their formations and to report to him thereafter. Therefore, Abul-A`war al-Salami with the contingent from Hims, Ibn `Amr al-Salami with men from Jordan, Zafar ibn al-Harith with the contingent from Qinnasrin and al-Dahhak ibn Qays al-Fahri with the fighters from Damascus reported to Mu`awiyah. Then contingent after contingent was arriving and in no time, a crowd of Syrians was occupying the horizon. They assured the Emir of Syria to fight with bravery and valor

With the dawn, both the armies had their flanks fully organized. The Imam (a.s) gave the command of the right flank to `Abdullah ibn Badil. The left flank was given to `Abdullah ibn `Abbas. The Imam (a.s) stayed at the heart of the formation. He took the sword in his hand, sat on the horse and spurred it on and in no time reached the rows of the enemy formations and ordered `Abdullah ibn Badil to attack. Ibn Badil wearing double armor, having two swords hanging from his girdle, took the right flank of the army and attacked the left flank of the enemy. Army and destroyed row after row. With this heavy onslaught, the right wing of the Syrian Army was totally dislodged. When Ibn Badil saw the right flank of the enemy getting defeated, he attacked the heart of their formation. Where Mu`awiyah was stationed with all the protection. Although around him there were five units of men like a steel wall, They were scared of the army advancing towards them. They left their positions and moved backwards. With them, the heart of the formation to went backwards. Then the right flank of the Syrians reorganized after the first defeat and along with the men in the heart of the formation attacked the right flank of the Iraqis. This attack was so severe that it uprooted the feet of the troops. They ran helter-skelter for shelter. With Ibn Badil only three to four hundred men remained steadfast. They stood back to back with each other and like a wall impregnated with lead they fought the enemy. Ibn Badil, with this limited force, moved towards the tent of Mu`awiyah. From that side the bows started twanging. And there was a barrage of arrows. But these valiant were not deterred with the intense attack. They kept moving cutting across the hordes of enemy troops. In the end, they were surrounded by the enemy on all the .sides

When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) saw his right flank getting dislodged, he felt the gravity of the situation. He asked Sahl ibn Hunayf to go ahead and help the right flank. But the Syrian cavalry pushed him back. Now, with the disorganization of the right flank, the heart of the formation where the Imam (a.s) was located was badly exposed to the enemy onslaught. When the Imam (as) saw this predicament of the heart of the formation, he moved towards the left flank of the army. He was neither wearing the armor nor had a helmet on his head. He only had a spear in his hand. Imam al-Hasan, Imam al-Husayn (a.s) and Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyah were shielding him. The arrows were flying on all the sides. The shining swords, the vibrating spears and the flying arrows could not stop his movement. At that time one freed slave of Banū-Umayyah, Ahmar, came up. He was known as an expert swordsman. The Imam (a.s) wanted to attack him. when one of his slaves, Kaysan, rushed towards Ahmar. He fought with him for sometime and was martyred. Now Ahmar wanted to attack Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). Before he could attack, the Imam (a.s) lunged forward, put his hand under the armor of the slave and pulled him off the horse with force. He hit him to the ground with such force that his bones shattered and he died at the spot

With unconcern for the huge numbers of the enemies and the danger lurking around him, the Imam (a.s) moved fast forward. Sensing the increasing onslaught of the enemy, Imam al-Hasan (a.s) said, "Baba! Would it not be better if you stayed with the heart of our formation instead of rushing on in their direction?" The Imam (a.s) said

Son! By Allah! Your father does not care whether he is moving towards death or“
[death is moving towards him!”[1]

When the Imam (a.s) reached near the right flank, he saw the fluttering flags and asked as to whose flags they were. He was told that the flags belonged to the tribe of Rabi` ah. The Imam (a.s) said that the flags belonged to the party of Allah! The party whose feet did not shake in adversity and despite the hardships of the battle they remained steadfast. Then the Imam (a.s) called close to him the youth, Hudayn ibn al-Mundhir, who carried a red flag and asked him, “With this flag you do not move forward the distance of a hand!” The youth said, “Yes! What is the distance of one hand! I can move the distances of ten hands as well!” Saying this, the youth came forward. When he was going dangerously forward, the Imam (a.s) asked him to stay back. He prayed to Allah for Blessing the youth! Seeing the Imam (a.s) amidst the people of the tribe of Rabi` ah said, “O people! Even when only one of you survived and the Imam (a.s) suffered the slightest hurt, you will be shamed in the entire Arabia!” Then they stood up and continued to attack the enemy formations with spirit
.and gusto

After the right flank and the heart of the formation were disturbed, the Imam (a.s) was in the left flank. Then he saw Malik al-Ashtar coming towards him. When he came near, the Imam said, “O Malik! You give a call to those who have left their positions and tell them that if the days of the transient life are over, then the flight will not save them from death!” Malik went forward and announced, “O people! I am Malik al-Ashtar! Where are you running away leaving the field of operation? The enemy is fighting you only because he is against the Faith! He wants to obliterate the Sunnah and bring back the days of ignorance! He wants you to revert to the beliefs that you had abandoned with vision and guidance! Prepare to give your life for the Faith!
”!Remember! Flight will bring you shame in this world and Retribution in the Hereafter

At this call of Malik, the tribe of Mudhhiij returned and said that they would do whatever they were asked to. Malik said that they had shamed themselves by running away and must make amends for that and give him support to hold his head high before Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s)! These persons, in the company of Malik moved towards the left flank. Which had almost disintegrated with the onslaught of the enemy. Although everyone was shaken up in the left flank, the tribe of Hamdan remained steadfast in their positions. They were the last to leave and a lot of their men fought with great bravery. When one hundred and eighty of their men were martyred and eleven standard-bearers too perished one after another, their feet too shook. Among those standard-bearers were Kurayb ibn Shurayh, Shurahbil ibn Shurayh, Murthid ibn Shurayh, Hubayrah ibn Shurayh, Huraym ibn Shurayh and Samir ibn Shurayh. These were six brothers who valiantly held their standard and fought until the end of their lives. Then the other standard-bearers who sacrificed their lives were Sufyan ibn Zayd, `Abd ibn Zayd and Kurayb ibn Zayd. These three brothers too laid down their lives fighting for the cause of the Faith. After them, `Umayrah ibn Bashshar and al-Harith ibn Bashshar were the standard-bearers and both brothers were martyred

After them when Wahab ibn Kurayb took hold of the standard, one of their tribesmen said, "Under this standard many persons are perishing. You must take this standard and move away from the arena and save the lives of your tribesmen and your own life. Otherwise, none of you will go living from here!" He felt that with the truncated unit, the onslaught of the Syrians could not possibly be stopped. He withdrew and with him, the remaining men too started moving away. They said that if they got a group who pledged that they would die fighting, and not leave the arena at any cost, they too would join such a group. When they passed near Malik al-Ashtar, he heard their talk. And said, "Come! We make a pledge that we shall not leave the arena until we are killed or finish the enemy!" After making the pledge they joined the group of men with Malik. Malik arranged the flank afresh and a new spirit came about in the men

Malik was busy fighting when he saw men carry an injured trooper. He asked who he was. They informed that the person was Ziyad ibn al-Nadr al-Harithi who was in the division of `Abdullah ibn Badil. When Ibn Badil was badly surrounded by the enemies, he raised the standard and was badly injured. Then they saw that another person was brought by men. They said that it was Yazid ibn Qays who had raised the standard after Ziyad ibn al-Nadr

Malik said, "By Allah! This is their patience and courage and a proof of their valor! People who run away from the battle to save their lives, instead of giving their lives fighting are cowards." Saying this he moved forward and breaking the enemy rows he reached the place where `Abdullah ibn Badil was lying semi conscious with his companions having suffered many severe injuries. When Ibn Badil and his companions saw their own men. Their hopes and courage revived. They got up like fresh persons and started towards the camps of Mu`awiyah. Malik tried to stop them, but they did not. The Syrian troops tried to obstruct them, but they advanced like a flood. Whoever came in front of them, they killed him. Killing seven persons they reached the entrance to the tent of Mu`awiyah

When Mu`awiyah saw them he told his men that if they were unable to stop them with swords, lances and arrows, they must throw stones at them to prevent their coming closer. Therefore, stones started raining at them. With the injuries from the stones, Ibn Badil and his men were very tired. The Syrians then tried to come closer to them and finish them with the swords. But these men got up to fight. However, they could not contain the increasing onslaught of the enemies `Abdullah Ibn Badil and some of his men were martyred fighting and some saved their life and ran away. The Syrians tried to chase those who were escaping. But Malik sent one group under Jamhan al-Ju`fi who fought with the Syrians and chased them away. The survivors went and joined the contingent of Malik al-Ashtar

Malik al-Ashtar attacked from the other direction and under his banner were Banū-Madhhij and Hamdan. They were raining the swords over the heads of the enemies. When they jointly attacked, the Syrians ran in such a manner as the flocks of sheep and goats run helter-skelter. Then they went after the group that was encircling the camp of Mu`awiyah. Malik and attacked the rows that had formed a circle to protect the camp of Mu`awiyah. When only one protective circle, of the five, remained, Mu`awiyah put his feet in the stirrup of his horse and planned to escape from the theatre of war, but again he gathered some courage and gave up the idea of flight

When the men of the tribe of Rabi`ah came flailing their flag, from the side of the Syrians al-Himyari of the al-Himyari tribe and `Ubaydullah ibn `Umar with four thousand Reciters of the Holy Qur`an from Syria came to attack. This was such a severe attack that people with weak hearts could not bear it. Those who were steadfast kept fighting but became weak in comparison with the enemy troops. When Ziyad ibn Khasfah felt that the Syrians were dominating the fighters from the tribe of Rabi`ah, he told the people from the tribe of `Abd al-Qays that Dhul-Kila` and `Ubaydullah Ibn `Umar were decimating the men from the tribe of Rabi`ah. He asked them to rise and help, otherwise all of them would perish. The men of the tribe of `Abd al-Qays took up arms and spurring their horses fast came to the help of Rabi`ah. In no time, they dominated the proceedings of the battle. With the coming in of `Abd al-Qays, the morale of the men of Rabi`ah got a boost and they fought with redoubled courage. Dhul-Kila` and `Ubaydullah ibn `Umar were fighting with great vigor. But with this new onslaught, their morale nose-dived! The tribe of Himyar too was crestfallen. In this battle, from the army of Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s), Abū-Shuja` al-Himyari addressed the tribe of Himyar, "O group of Himyar! May Allah put you to shame and blacken your faces! What has happened to you that in support of the traitorous rebel you came to fight with `Ali (a.s)! You thought that Mu`awiyah is better than `Ali (a.s)" Then he addressed Dhul-Kila` and said, "O Dhul-Kila`! We thought about you that you had spirit of the Faith, But do you too think that Mu`awiyah is
"?(superior than `Ali (a.s

He said, "I do not consider Mu`awiyah superior to `Ali (a.s) but I have to fight with him
"for the qisas of `Uthman's blood. I do not want that `Uthman's blood goes waste

Dhul-Kila` did acknowledge `Ali's superiority but the craze for the qisas took him away so much from sensible thinking that even after hearing the Prophet's tradition about the depravity and mischief of the Umayyads his vision and thinking did not guide him aright. Therefore, during the battle he heard the tradition from `Amr ibn al-`As, and earlier too he heard the tradition, that the killer of `Ammar would be from a rebellious group. Because of this tradition, he was confused for some time and wanted to know the stand of `Ammar about the battle. Therefore, in the army of `Ali (a.s), he was searching for a person from his tribe, Abū-Nūh al-Himyari, to inquire
from him about `Ammar

When he met Abū-Nūh, he asked, "I wish to ask you something, though you are from the opposing army, because I have faith in your truthfulness." "You may ask!" the man said. He asked, "`Amr Ass narrated this tradition during the time of `Umar that two groups of Syria and Iraq will clash with one another and the group in which `Ammar
"ibn Yasir was there will be the righteous group. Is `Ammar there in your army

The man replied, "By Allah! `Ammar ibn Yasir is in our army! He is determined to kill each and every person of the Syrian forces!" He asked Abū-Nūh, "Can you take out a little time and come with me to the tent of `Amr ibn al-`As and tell him that `Ammar is in your army. Perhaps the fight could possibly stop because of this." Abū-Nūh said, "I can certainly go. But I have doubt that I might become victim of your treachery and deceit!" Dhul-Kila` said, "In the name of Allah and the Prophet (a.s)! I promise that no harm will come to you! You just tell `Amr that `Ammar ibn Yasir is in your army!" Now
.both of them proceeded to the tent of `Amr

When he saw a stranger with Dhul-Kila` , he asked, “Who is this person? To me he looks like Abū-Turabi!” Abū-Nūh said, “My face radiates the felicity of the Prophet (a.s) and the friends of the Prophet (a.s) and your face reflects the images of Abū-Jahl and Pharaoh.” At this Abul-A`war al-Salami put his hand on the scabbard of his sword and said, “This person is abusing us on our face. We shall teach him a lesson!” Dhul-Kila` said, “He is my cousin and I have given him my protection. If you lift your hand, I shall break your nose! I have brought him here to tell you about `Ammar.” `Amr ibn al-`As asked, “Is `Ammar there in `Ali’s army?” Abū-Nūh said, “Why are you asking about him?” `Amr said, “I have heard the Prophet (a.s) say, ‘`Ammar will be killed by a rebellious group” Abū-Nūh said, “By Allah! `Ammar is in our army and he will destroy you and your army!” When Dhul-Kila` was convinced about the presence of `Ammar and the veracity of the tradition, he said, “You are that rebel group!” `Amr said, “What
”if he is in `Ali’s army! In the end he will come to our side

This reply was only to appease Dhul-Kila`. Superficial minds might accept such talk, but not convincing for a person with vision. What was the reason that made `Amr say that `Ammar would change sides and come to them in the end? Did they establish any communication with him? Were they carrying on some secret parleys with him? Or his actions gave any indication of such intention? When all this was not there, then what `Amr said was nothing but one of his tricks! Allah knows whether what `Amr said was convincing for Dhul-Kila` or not But in practice he continued to be with the forces of Syria. Although one person from the Syrian Army, `Abdullah ibn `Umar al-`Anzi, hearing about the incident, advised Dhul-Kila` to move away from the Rebellious Group. But he did not follow the advice. Perhaps, he might have convinced his heart
.that `Ammar would ultimately join their group

However, `Abdullah ibn `Umar al-`Anzi left Mu`awiyah's army and joined the forces of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). At that time, he composed a few couplets. A couple of them
:are mentioned here

After this Tradition, I shall not fight against `Ammar until the Trumpet (of the
Resurrection Day) is blown

!I have left Ibn al-`As and his rebel group. O friend! I cannot help leaving them

When Mu`awiyah heard of this event, he was very angry on `Amr ibn al-`As. `Amr said, "I had only recounted the Prophet's Tradition. It is not my responsibility if
".someone goes away

Dhul-Kila` kept looking for `Ammar and in the battlefield he was killed fighting with Farad Khandaf al-Bakri of the tribe of Bakr ibn Wa'il When Dhul-Kila`'s son learned of his father's death, he sent word with someone to al-Ash`ath ibn Qays seeking
.permission to remove his father's remains

Al-Ash`ath said that if he gave permission, `Ali (a.s) would become suspicious of him. He asked him to request the permission from Sa`id ibn Qays al-Hamdani who was present in the right flank of the formation. He said that if Sa`id gave the permission, no one can make any objection. Ibn Dhul-Kila` sent a person to Sa`id for the permission. He said that Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) does not object about who comes and
.who goes

He said they may come and take away the remains of Dhul-Kila`. Ibn Dhul-Kila` went to the right flank of `Ali's army and searched for his father's cadaver. While searching his eyes fell on one tent. He saw that Dhul-Kila`'s body was lying there tied to the rope of the tent. He asked the people in the tent to allow him to take away his father's body. They said he was permitted to take it and apologized with him and sought Allah's forgiveness. They said if his father were not traitorous to the Imam (a.s), he would not have been lying there in that state. Ibn Dhul-Kila` and his slave tried to lift the body. But it was very heavy. They asked the people in the tent to give a helping hand. Khandaf al-Bakri asked them to move backwards. They said that if they moved

backwards, how he would lift the body all alone. He said that the one who rendered him to that state could also lift him. Therefore, Khandaf put the body on the mule and tied it with a rope

With the killing of Dhul-Kila`, the al-Himyari's desire for revenge increased further; they therefore joined with `Ubaydullah ibn `Umar. At that time, `Ubaydullah played a trick and gave a message to Imam al-Hasan (a.s) that he wanted to tell him something. When the message reached him, he crossed over to the enemy camp and asked Ibn `Umar what he wanted to say? He said, "The Quraysh had received many hardships from `Ali (a.s). They might accept you as the Emir but cannot bear to be under him. Cooperate with us to remove him from the caliphate. We promise that the caliphate will be transferred to you!" Hearing this, Imam al-Hasan (a.s) looked at Ibn `Umar with contempt and said, "O `Ubaydullah! You are bound to be killed. If not today, it will be tomorrow! Satan has tempted you to come to this state! Is it possible that I take part in a conspiracy against Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s)? You have given an example of your evil nature by making the suggestion to me!" When Ibn `Umar heard this, he went away with a crestfallen face

Now Ibn `Umar organized his forces and attacked at the rear of right flank of `Ali's army. The fighters of the tribe of Rabi`ah were alert in that flank. They raised their swords and penetrated into the enemy forces. From noon until sunset, severe fighting took place. The Iraqis fought with such bravery and intensity that the flank of the Syrian army got scattered. But in the darkness of night they all reassembled. The tribe of Rabi`ah again attacked and scattered them. Only a thousand men remained under the Syrian flag and came forward for a last ditch effort. The whole night the fighting continued and piles of dead bodies were created. In this fighting, the times for prayer came and went. Instead of the prayers, they just recited the "Takbir". When the dawn arrived, the adhan was sounded in the Imam's army. `Ali (a.s) hearing the adhan said

”Blessed be those who say but the truth, and welcome to the prayer“

In this fight `Ubaydullah ibn `Umar was killed at the hands of Hani' ibn al-Khattab or Muhriz ibn Sahzah or Jabir ibn al-Hanafi. The Syrians offered ۱۰,۰۰۰ dirhams for handing over the cadaver of Ibn `Umar. But the Imam (a.s) turned down this offer and said

[These are the remains of a dead dog and it is not legitimate to sell it!]"[۲“

In the end his two wives, Bahriyyah bint Hani' and Asma' bint `Utarid, came to take his body. Some persons told them that they were incapable of carrying away the body and, if they wished, they would tie it to the tail of the mule and push it to your tents. At that moment Ziyad ibn Khasfah came out of his tent and Bahriyyah bint Hani' requested him for taking away the body. He got it loaded on a mule and the two widows took it along. The body was hanging on the mule in such a manner that his hands and feet were touching the ground

After the killing of Dhul-Kila` and `Ubaydullah, Mu`awiyah was under a spell of fear. He told `Amr ibn al-`As, “Allah knows what the Iraqis are planning to do now.” `Amr said, “You have already seen the attacks of the tribe of Rabi`ah. If they gather around `Ali (a.s) and attack, the Syrians would not be able to hold on against them. “Mu`awiyah said, “Instead of giving me courage, you are frightening me.” He said, “I am telling you what I am foreseeing

When Mu`awiyah saw no hope of success, he sent word to Khalid ibn Mu`ammar who was commanding the forces of the tribe of Rabi`ah that if he withdrew from the conflict, he would give him the governorate of Khorasan after the war was over. He promised that he would be in that position for life. Therefore, when the forces of Rabi`ah were advancing with ferocity, he pulled them back

Overwhelmed with greed, Khalid turned his face away from the Hereafter. But even the world was not in his fate. When Mu`awiyah sent him the edict for appointment as the governor of Khorasan, he died while traveling to take charge of the position

During the heat of the fighting, a swordsman of the Syrian army, Kurayb ibn Sabbah al-Himyari came to the arena and challenged for a combat. From the troops of Iraq Murtada ibn Waddah al-Zubaydi came to fight with him. But he was defeated and martyred. Kurayb once again challenged for a fight. Now al-Harith ibn Jahah came to fight with him. He too was martyred

When he challenged the third time, `Ayid ibn Masrūq al-Hamdani came to the arena. He was also killed. After martyring the three persons, pride went to the head of Kurayb. He piled the dead, one over the other, and sitting over them threw a conceited challenge once again. Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) saw this demonstration of conceit and he thought it better to go himself to combat with the person instead of sending anyone else. Reaching near him the Imam (a.s) said, "O Kurayb! Remember! The son of Hind, the cannibal who chewed the human liver, will consign you to the flames of the Hell. I invite you to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet (a.s)." He replied, "We have been hearing such talk since long! You have seen my prowess at the use of the sword. If you have the courage, fight with me

The Imam's visage changed. He went forward and attacked Kurayb. The blow was so fierce that Kurayb fell to the ground, rolled, and died. After killing him, the Imam (a.s) asked for another combatant from the Syrian army. Al-Harith ibn Duwahah al-Himyari came to the arena. (a.s) threw him dead on the ground. He challenged for another combatant. This time Muta` ibn al-Muttalib al-`Absi came to fight. The Imam (a.s) dispatched him as well. He then spoke to the Syrian troops, "If you had not started the :fight, we would not have followed suit! Then he recited the following verse

الشَّهْرُ الْحَرَامُ بِالشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْحُرُمَاتُ قِصَاصٌ فَمَنْ اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَاعْتَدُوا عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ.

The Sacred month for the sacred month and all sacred things are under the law of" retaliation; whoever then acts aggressively against you, inflict injury on him according to the injury he has inflicted on you and be careful of your duty to Allah and know that "Allah is with those who guard against evil. (٢/١٩٤)

When we consider about this incident, a picture of rights and justice comes before us. There is hardly any such example in the history of warfare. After killing three swordsmen the Imam (a.s) held his hand. Generally, in such circumstances, when a warrior has achieved so much success, he goes overboard and challenges the opponents with conceit and pride as if he is invincible in the manner Kurayb behaved earlier. After settling the score with the Syrians, the Imam (a.s) could have continued asking for more combatants. But he never let the norms of right and justice escape his attention. He killed the same number of opponents as the lives he lost from his .group

During this episode, `Ammar ibn Yasir could not have remained a silent spectator. He was a well-known warrior. He had participated in Badr, Uhud, Khandaq and other campaigns. Although his limbs had started shaking on account of old age, he had wrinkles on his face, his back was bent and had already seen ninety-three summers, but he was as active as a youth could be. He had a wheatish visage and a wide chest. His eyes were large, he was tall of height. Ever since he got the news about his impending martyrdom from the Prophet (a.s), he was keenly looking forward to the day. Seeing the rebels of Syria, he remembered the Prophet's saying that he would be martyred by a rebellious group. He came to the presence of the Imam (a.s), with the sword in his shaky hand, to seek permission for jihad. The Imam (a.s) looked at him and said, "Wait! May Allah be kind on you

When `Ammar felt that the Imam (a.s) was hesitant of allowing him to go for jihad, he said, "The Prophet (a.s) has already given me the tiding of martyrdom! Now I am in the twilight of my life. I have the arena of martyrdom in front of me! Give me your consent!" When the Imam (a.s) saw `Ammar's determination, he reluctantly allowed him to go and do jihad. `Ammar wore the armor, took his arms, mounted his horse and spurred it on to the arena. He lifted his head towards the sky and said

O Allah! You know it well that if I know you want me to jump into the sea, I would do that! O Allah! You are aware that if I know you want me to keep the tip of the sword on my chest and bend so much that it pierced through my body; I would not hesitate to do it. I do not consider any act more worthy of your pleasure than doing jihad with the hypocrites. If I had known that any other act would bring more pleasure to you, I [would not have hesitated doing that!]"[۲

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) prepared a group of men to fight under `Ammar. The standard was given to Hashim ibn `Utbah Mirqal. The Imam (a.s) told him smiling, "O Hashim! "!"For how long you will keep breaking the bread! Rise and do jihad with the traitors

After taking the Standard in his hand, Hashim looked at Mu`awiyah's army and pointing towards one unit of troops, he asked who they were. He was told that they were the people from the tribe of Dhul-Kila`. He pointed towards another unit of men and inquired about them. He was told that they were a mix of the Quraysh and people of al-Madinah. Then he turned in the other direction and asked who the people around the dome shaped tent were? He was told that was Mu`awiyah and the men guarding him. He asked that even in the rear of the tent there were some people. He was told they were `Amr, his sons and retainers. When the armies were ready, `Ammar ibn Yasir addressed them and said, "O valiant! Rise and fight with those mischief mongers who have started the war on the pretext of seeking retaliation for the blood of `Uthman. To hoodwink the people they say that `Uthman was killed as an oppressed person and that they are claiming the qisas. This was just a ploy to start the war. They took hold of this excuse and tricked people into mobilizing for the battle. The purpose for this war for them was to grab power. They were not interested in the Faith nor did they care for the Truth. They wanted to enjoy material benefits and luxuries" After this talk by `Ammar, Hashim waved the standard and both of them started together towards the rows of the enemy formation. Whichever side `Ammar .went, the Companions followed surrounding him

When Mu`awiyah saw this crowd moving towards his formations, he sent fresh troops under the command of Abul-A`war al-Salami. `Ammar saw `Amr al-`As in the Syrian army. He told him, "Shame on you! For the governorate of Egypt, you have sold your Faith. But this is nothing new. You had always rebelled against Islam." `Amr said, "We are avenging the blood of `Uthman!" `Ammar retorted, "You have not taken this step to please Allah! I had fought against you earlier on three occasions as a part of the Prophet's army. The aim with which you participated in the earlier battles, you have the same even now. O `Amr! Have you forgotten the Prophet (a.s) saying, 'O `Ammar! You will be martyred by a rebel group. You will be calling them towards the Heaven and they will invite you towards Hell'. Look at me and recognize me! I am .`Ammar!" What reply could `Amr give? He just kept mum

When both the armies were in readiness, they flailed their swords and spears and advanced against each other. The flames of battle started rising. Swords clashed with swords. In this acute fighting, no one has cared for the others. In the melee, `Ammar and Hashim were separated from each other. Despite his old age and shaky hands, `Ammar was fencing his sword and kept moving forward killing the enemy troops. After sometime he noticed that Hashim was standing in front of him He said, "Hashim! Why are you standing here! Move forward and fight with the enemy. Today, the doors of the Heaven are open and it is under the shadow of swords and spears! Even if they push up to the oasis of Bahrain, we shall have the conviction that we are on the side of the Truth and they are the supporters of evil." Hashim waved his sword, like a lightening, and attacked the rows of enemy men. Swords were waving over and severing the heads and the spears were entering the chests of the enemies. Cadaver .after cadaver was falling

When `Amr al-`As saw this he said, "If this person with the black flag kept fighting like he is now, he will finish the entire population of Arabia." With the continued onslaughts of Hashim and `Ammar, three of the five rows of the enemy troops were scattered. When they were about to attack the fourth row, the Syrian army woke up to the reality. From their units, the tribes of Azd and Bahilah attacked the men from Hamdan with intensity. They were forced to climb up a hillock to take shelter. But Bahilah and al-Azd chased and forced them down the hillock. Now the youths of Hamdan made a concerted attack and killed ۳,۰۰۰ enemy men. The remainder of the enemy units was forced to withdraw. `Ammar ibn Yasir, with his men, moved forward and reached .near the groups that were guarding Mu`awiyah

When Mu`awiyah saw him advancing, he asked his men to push him back. Therefore, they advanced swords in hands. Among those persons was `Amr's son `Abdullah too was there. He had one sword in hand and another hanging on his girdle. When `Ammar turned in the direction of `Abdullah, `Amr shouted, "O My son!" Mu`awiyah asked him to be courageous and not to worry. `Amr said, "This is my son! If it was your son, Yazid, I would have seen how patient you would be!" Alas, with the shouts of `Amr, some Syrians went forward and brought back `Abdullah. `Ammar ibn Yasir kept on making attack after attack and in the end he was injured by a Syrian. His strength had totally sapped. One of his slaves gave him a mix of milk and water. He :drank a little of it and said

Every word of Allah and his Prophet (a.s) is true. I shall meet my friends today. I shall meet Muhammad Mustafa (a.s) and his Companions. The Prophet (a.s) had said that
[my last food in the world will be milk mixed with water.]

With milk, his feeble body got some energy. He again rose to continue the fighting. In his heart was the spirit of fighting and laying down his life for the Truth! At every step, he saw the coming martyrdom. One person from the rebel group, Abul-Ghawiyah al-Fazari, hit him with a spear and Ibn Jawn al-Saksaki came forward and cut away his
.head

When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) heard of the martyrdom of `Ammar, he was very sad and tears dropped from his eyes. He went to the body and recited the following
:couplets

O Death! Come and give me tranquility and comfort

.You have finished my friends, you will not spare me

It seems you know each of my friends

!As if someone is pointing them out to you

Then the Imam (a.s) said, "We are Allah's and to Him do we return. One who is not saddened with `Ammar's death is not conversant with the norms of Islam!" Then the funeral prayer was offered and `Ammar was buried at the same place in the clothes
.that he was wearing

The martyrdom of `Ammar created doubts in the minds of the Syrians and one aspect of their attitude, rebelliousness, became evident in light of the saying of the Prophet
:(of Islam (a.s

He will be killed by a rebellious group that will be astray from the Right Path.“

[`Ammar’s last meal will be milk mixed with water.”][٥

On the basis of this tradition, Dhul-Kila` al-Himyari was emotionally disturbed but `Amr al-`As convinced him saying that ultimately `Ammar would be in their group. If Dhul-Kila` was alive, he would have asked `Amr as to what happened to his claim. He might have also exposed the treachery of `Amr in this matter. He might have also moved away from the rebel group with the men of his tribe after the martyrdom of :`Ammar. Therefore, `Amr made the following observation on the killing of `Ammar

I do not know if I am more happy with the killing of `Ammar or that of Dhul-Kila`. By“ Allah! If Dhul-Kila` lived after the killing of `Ammar, he would have moved to `Ali’s [side with the Syrians.”][٦

Khuzaymah ibn Thabit al-Ansari too was in doubt before `Ammar was martyred. And he was not able to distinguish between virtues and vice. When `Ammar was martyred, he said that he had no doubt after the incident that the rebel group was one headed by Mu`awiyah. Then he came to the arena for jihad and was martyred .fighting with the Syrian forces

Abdullah, the son of `Amr ibn al-`As, too had some doubt and told his father, “Today ` we have killed a person whose face the Prophet (a.s) cleaned of the dust with his own :hands and said

O son of Sumayyah! People are lifting one brick each and you are lifting two at a time“ [for the sake of felicity and Reward. You will be killed by a rebel group.”][٧

Ibn al-`As told Mu`awiyah, "Have you heard what `Abdullah has said." Mu`awiyah, to
:dispel the fears of `Abdullah and other men said

[Have we killed him? Killing has been done by the one who has brought him here!]"[^"

When Mu`awiyah said this, every Syrian was heard saying, "`Ammar's killer is one who has brought him here." When `Ali (a.s) heard this interpretation, he said, "Then Hamzah's killer was the Prophet (a.s) because he had brought him to the Battle of
.Uhud

Hashim ibn `Utbah was still in the battlefield. When he saw his men stopping for a respite he chided them saying, "Those of you who want Allah's pleasure and Blessings in the Hereafter, they should move forward to clash with the enemy!" The contingent now moved and advanced with their lances poised towards the enemy troops. In that time, a youth from the tribe of Ghassan came out of the Syrian army and recited the
:following couplet

I have heard this saddening news

That `Ali has killed son of `Affan

Then using invectives against `Ali (a.s) he came forward with the intention of attacking. Hashim understood that the youth was misguided and was under a misapprehension and totally ignorant of the circumstances of the assassination of `Uthman. Fulfilling the duty of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, he told him, "O young man! Reconsider your opinion and fear Allah! Tomorrow you will be accountable before Allah!" The youth said, "Fighting with you, and killing you people, I consider my Religious Duty because you neither pray nor your Emir prays. And it was
"!your Emir who, with the cooperation of your people, killed `Uthman

Hashim said, "What have you to do with `Uthman! He was killed by the Prophet's Companions, their sons, their followers, and the reciters of the Qur'an. These people know the Shari`ah and have a vision of the Faith. I am sure you neither know anything about the Faith nor do you know what is good and what is bad for the

"Ummah

The youth said, "I consider lying as taboo and what you have said is true!" Hashim said, "What you do not know, leave it to those who have the knowledge! Do not grope about in the darkness When you say that our Emir does not pray, the world knows that he was the first ever in the world to offer prayers with the Prophet (a.s)! On the face of the Earth there is none who has a better understanding of the matters of Faith and the follower of the Shari`ah than him! He had the special privilege and honor of the nearness to the Prophet (a.s) that none else had. You have blamed us of not offering prayers. Do not you see that our men spread the prayer mats in the nights, offer prayer and recite the Holy Qur'an. You have been misguided by some evil persons and therefore you are terming vice as virtue and virtue as vice. You are

"blindly following their ill advice and going astray

When the youth heard this, curtains of darkness were raised from his mind and he said, "You seem straightforward and virtuous to me. If I repent, will my repentance be accepted by Allah?" Hashim replied, "It is Allah who accepts repentance and forgives mistakes." Convinced, the youth decided to abstain from fighting, turned back to return. One Syrian told him that he was misled by the Iraqi. The youth said, "Misleading is something and the attraction of the truth is something else! By advising

"me to refrain from vice, he has proved his kindness and concern

Hashim was standing in the battlefield when a patrol of the Syrian troops from the tribe of Tanūkh came forward. Hashim went with his men and attacked them. For sometime swordsmanship went on ٩ or ١٠. Tanūkhis were killed by Hashim. During the same fight, Harith ibn al-Mundhir al-Tanūkhi hit his spear on the stomach of Hashim. He fell down to the ground. The advance of his troops stopped and the men were disheartened. When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) saw the men losing heart, he sent word with a person to Hashim he must take the standard in his hand and move forward. Hashim asked the messenger to look at his stomach. When the person looked at the stomach, he saw that it was cut asunder and the blood was coming out copiously. Hashim was for some time in the pangs of death and then he breathed his last. With Hashim a group of memorizers of the Qur'an from the tribe of Aslam too were martyred. When the messenger returned and conveyed the information about the martyrdom of Hashim, the Imam (a.s)) came to the mortal remains of the martyrs and :recited the following couplets

May Allah Bless this al-Aslami group who were

Radiant of face and died fighting along with Hashim

In that group were Burayd, `Abdullah and Malik's sons `Urwah and Munqidh

.They were those who were counted in the nobility of the Arabs

At that moment Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) noticed a group under the Syrian flag. He asked who the people were. He was informed that they were the people from the tribe of Ghassan. He observed these people were still in the field of battle. He added that until they were attacked ferociously, they would not budge from their place! He turned toward his men and said, "Who amongst you are those who can fight with courage
"?and an eye on the blessings of the Hereafter

At this call, a group of men came forward. He called Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah to take the group with him slowly holding the spears raised towards the enemy force stand near them and await his orders. After sending Muhammad, he asked Malik al-Ashtar to go with another group to the aid of Muhammad and ordered them to attack. Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah and Malik al-Ashtar's groups jointly attacked the enemy formation. When they attacked the people of Ghassan with sheer ferocity, their feet were uprooted. They left their station, suffering lots of casualties, and .withdrew from the arena

In the heat of this battle, one thousand Iraqis were cut away from their formations and were surrounded on all sides by the enemy. This encirclement was so severe that the men were rendered helpless. When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) saw this predicament, he asked his companions to volunteer to go to the rescue of their men. `Abd al-`Aziz ibn al-Harith al-Ju`fi said that he would obey the Imam's orders. He blessed him and asked him to break the encirclement of the Syrians and approach his troops to help them out of the situation. He asked him to tell the men to shout the Takbir from there, which will be reciprocated from his end too. Then they should make a concerted attack on the encirclers. `Abd al-`Aziz al-Ju`fi put on the armor, mounted his horse and, went near the encircling hordes of the enemy, advanced hitting their chests with his lance he reached the encircled Iraqis. When the men saw him, their morale revived. They asked, "How is Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s)?" He replied that he was well and that he had asked them to raise the slogan of Takbir and start attacking and he with, his companions, will raise the same slogans from that end. Therefore, in the din of the slogan the attack was commenced. The attack was so severe that there was panic in the enemy ranks. Seven hundred enemy men were killed in the battle. The encirclement broke and the Iraqis returned to their base. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) .praised `Abd al-`Aziz al-Ju`fi for his valor and said words of praise for him

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was standing near his formation of men when a chief of the Syrians came to the arena wearing armor of chain and shouted, "Abul-Hasan! Where are you?" The Imam (a.s) came in front of him and the man said, "O son of Abū-Talib! You have precedence in accepting Islam over all other men! You have participated in all the ghazawat with great distinction! Stop this bloodshed. We shall leave Iraq for you and you leave the territory of Syria for us!" The Imam (a.s) said

O Person! I have given a serious thought to this matter. For me there is no other alternative than war! Or else I shall have to deny the things that Allah has revealed to His Prophet (a.s). Allah does not like His friends to contravene His Commands on the earth and we sit quiet without exhorting people to virtue and warning them against vice. I feel better facing the hardships of war than going to Hell with manacled hands [and feet.]^[۹]

Swords were clashing in the battlefield and different fighting groups were engaging one another. (a.s) ordered every unit of his army to attack some sections of the enemy formation. Therefore, the entire army entered the arena at the same time. At every nook and corner of the place the flames of fighting were rising. Al-Qa`qa` ibn `Amr says that it appeared as if lightning was striking every moment and mountains were clashing with one other and the Earth was in the throes of a cataclysm. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) sort of submerged in the rows of the enemy troops and emerged after some time when his head and face was red with the gore and the sword too was soaked in blood. In this fierce battle, the standard-bearers could not stand steadfast and the rows of men were scattered. When `Adi ibn Hatam came fighting near the place he had left the Imam (a.s), he did not find him there. On inquiry, he learned that he had gone in the direction where the fighting was the fiercest. Adi went there and finding (a.s) there said

O Amir al-Mu'minin! If you are living, every hardship is small for us! I have trampled“
[the dead under my feet to reach you! Today, none of our chiefs is alive nor theirs!”[۱۰

Sa`id ibn Qays al-Hamdani sent word to the Imam (a.s) from his battlefield, “O Amir al-Mu'minin! We have at this moment acquired ascendancy over the enemy. If any of the units needs our assistance, we are ready to provide it! “The Imam (a.s) told the tribes of Rabi`ah and Hamdan that they were like the spears and the armors for him. He exhorted them to vanquish the enemy and push him out of the arena. At this call, twelve thousand troops got ready for the onslaught. The Imam (a.s) wore the Prophet's black turban on his head and climbed on the Prophet's own horse, Rih. The right flank he entrusted to Malik al-Ashtar and the left to Ibn `Abbas. He himself was at the heart of the formation. Thus they attacked the enemy, with the valiant youths of Rabi`ah and Hamdan, and in no time there were piles of enemy cadavers in the arena. With the intense fighting, the Imam's sword got twisted. He came out of the arena, straightened the sword and said, “If this sword was not twisted, I would not have come out of the arena!” He then immediately reentered the fray! Fighting, he
:reached near the tent of Mu`awiyah and said

I shall hit my sword on those enemies and will not spare Mu`awiyah who has bulging“
”!eyes and a fat tummy

When Mu`awiyah saw this state of affairs he put his foot in the stirrup of his horse and was preparing to escape from the battlefield. But with one person's shout the Syrian troops reassembled and he abandoned the idea of escape. Now the Syrians made a concerted attack, but the youths of Hamdan and Rabi`ah kept advancing and decimating the enemy fighters. Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) praised their valor and said

Leading them along was the man of honor Sa`id ibn Qays

”!The upholders of honor and righteous persons protect honor and prestige

This was Thursday and the ninth day of the war. When the dusk was near, and the sun was about to set, the terrible night arrived that is infamous in the annals of history as laylat al-harir. Everywhere there was pandemonium. With the clanging of swords and the twanging of the bows, the hearts were getting scared. There was a cacophony of slogans and the clapping of hoofs of the horses on the ground that were shattering the drums of the ears of the people. Everywhere there were lying dead and the severely injured persons

Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) sometimes remained in the heart of the formation and at others moved to the left and the right flanks. It appeared that in the arena of the battle he was everywhere! Wherever he saw the enemy gaining ascendancy, he moved to that place. He attacked with such intensity that row after rows of the enemy troops were obliterated. At last, in this arena of battle, the spears broke and the swords went blunt. Some men went to the extent of biting the adversaries when they had no useful instruments of war left with them. At that night, five hundred and twenty-three times the Imam (a.s) was heard calling the Takbir (that he usually call whenever he would kill one of the enemies). In the morning when the count of the enemies killed during the night was taken, it was exactly five hundred and twenty-three! There is another narration that says that in that night more than nine hundred (Syrians were killed by the Imam (a.s

When the dusk came, the war had entered in its last phase. Amir al-Mu'minin's forces under the command of Malik al-Ashtar and Ibn `Abbas still continued to fight with intensity. The Imam (a.s) was at the heart of the formation and on all the four sides, the flames of war were rising. Malik al-Ashtar, on the right flank, with flailing sword, advanced with the left flank in his close proximity. Whenever he brought down his sword, it appeared as if it was raining. Whenever he raised it, its brightness would blind the eyes momentarily. Malik handed over the standard to Hayyan ibn Hawzah al-Nakha`i and took the troops to attack the Syrians. Some men slowed down their advance and he told them, "This is not the wont of men that they keep milking the
"!"sheep and sit with one hand over the other! Move forward with vigor like men

Energy came back in the lazy limbs! The Syrians could not bear these incessant attacks and withdrew backwards with difficulty. When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) felt that the victory was nigh, he sent another troop to support Malik and Ibn `Abbas. They jointly finished whatever resistance was left in the enemy. On one hand the Syrian army was getting decimated, on the other the voice of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was reverberating, "Yes! You are near the destination of victory! The enemy is in his last
"!"throes! Do not rest on your oars before finishing him

This was very difficult time for Mu`awiyah. Iraqis were advancing with determination. There was no hope left that the Syrians would be able to resist them. There was darkness in the eyes of Mu`awiyah. And on his head were the dark clouds of failure and ignominy. He looked at `Amr ibn al-`As with dismay. He said, "There is no need to worry! I have already a plan ready for such a situation!" Mu`awiyah asked, "What is the plan?" Ibn al-`As said, "Raising the Holy Qur'an on the lances we shall make it the arbiter in the dispute. The result will be that a group of the Iraqis will become our supporters and try to stop the war. The other group will insist on continuing the conflict. Thus creating a rift in their ranks we shall succeed in postponing the war!" Mu`awiyah already had the intelligence from his detectives that al-Ash`ath ibn Qays wanted the war to stop before any result was achieved. He was openly telling to the
:men of his tribe

You have already seen the yesterday! How terrible and destructive a battle it was! By “ [Allah! If we fight again tomorrow destruction of the Arab pride and honor is certain!”[1]

Now Mu`awiyah matched al-Ash`ath ibn Qays word for word and said that if the war prolonged, the people of Persia would attack the Arabs and the Romans would attack Syria and will trample our pride and honor under their feet. Therefore, Ibn al-`As's strategy must immediately be put to test and make the Holy Qur'an the arbiter by raising it on the lances. Therefore, from the first rows of the Syrian army five persons raised the Giant Book of the Holy Qur'an of Damascus on their lances. Besides this, as many copies as were available too were raised on the lances. Some persons wrapped pieces of cloth on bricks and raised them on lances! When the copies of the Holy Qur'an were raised, al-Ash`ath ibn Qays who had joined the conspiracy with Mu`awiyah, came to Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) and said that the Syrians had made the Holy Qur'an the arbiter and the people are not ready to accept any verdict other than what the Holy Book gives! He asked his permission to negotiate with Mu`awiyah. (a.s)

”!said, “Talk with him and see

Al-Ash`ath went to Mu`awiyah and asked, “Why the Qur'an was raised on the lances?” He said, “We want the Holy Book to be the arbiter in this dispute!” Since they were both conspiring, al-Ash`ath readily agreed that it was a good proposal. He returned and told (a.s) what transpired between him and Mu`awiyah and he himself stood between the rows of the two armies and stressed on accepting the Book as the arbiter in the dispute. The Iraqis, on the temptation by Mu`awiyah's agents, started insisting that they will abide by the verdict of the Holy Qur'an. When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) saw a web of deceit being weaved with the Holy Book in the front, he said

O creatures of Allah! The path of Truth and Virtue that you were following, keep following! Continue to fight with your enemy! Whether it is Mu`awiyah or `Amr, Ibn Abi-Mu`it or Habib ibn Maslamah, Ibn Abi-Sarh or al-Dahhak! These people are neither persons of Faith nor those who follow the Holy Book. I know them more than you do. During both childhood and youth, I had been with them. They were evil in their childhood and remained so in their youth! By Allah! They have raised the Holy Qur'an [to cover their evil deceit!]"[۱۲

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) tried his best to convince the Iraqis. But al-Ash`ath ibn Qays, and his cohorts, who were hand in gloves with Mu`awiyah, became rebellious instead of seeing reason. Mus`ir ibn Fadki al-Tamimi and Zayd ibn Husayn al-ta'i came forward with ۲۰,۰۰۰ men and told the Imam (a.s), "O `Ali (a.s)! if you refuse to accept the Holy Qur'an as the arbiter, we shall fight with you! You should immediately order cessation of hostilities and send a message to Malik to return forthwith from the arena." When the Imam (a.s) felt that the mischief had taken root, and the people are bent on rebellion, he sent word to Malik al-Ashtar through Yazid ibn Hani' to come to him immediately. Malik was surprised at this message and said, "The enemy will surrender any moment! I shall come to him with the tiding of victory!" Yazid returned and conveyed what Malik had said. The men started shouting and said that he had quietly asked Malik to continue fighting. The Imam (a.s) said, "Whatever I have said was communicated in your presence. Where was the opportunity to convey anything in secret?" They asked him to send Yazid once again and order Malik to withdraw immediately. If there is any delay in Malik returning, the swords that are hitting the .Syrians will turn against you

The Imam (a.s) sent Yazid once again. He told Malik that if the life of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was dear to him, he must immediately return to him. Malik, with a saddened heart, returned to the Imam (a.s) and was very unhappy seeing the confusion around him. But the steps that had been withdrawn could not be advanced again! Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) knew that if the cessation of hostilities was not ordered, his men would rebel. He very unwillingly accepted the proposal of the arbitration

After the cessation of hostilities, `Amr advised Mu`awiyah to kill all the enemy men under detention with him. From amongst the detainees, `Amr ibn Aws al-Awdi heard this and sent word to Mu`awiyah that when the time for killing the detainees came, he should not be killed because he was his nephew. Men from his tribe, Banū-Awd too recommended that he may be released. Mu`awiyah said, "He says that I am his maternal uncle. If he is proved right, I will release him. But if he is lying, then your recommendation is unnecessary!" Therefore Mu`awiyah called him and asked how he was the youth's maternal uncle. He asked, "If I give proof of that, will you release me?" Mu`awiyah replied, "Yes!" The youth said, "Is not the consort of the Prophet (a.s), Ummu-Habibah bint Abū-Sufyan your sister?" Mu`awiyah said, "Yes! She is my sister!" The youth said, "Then! I am her son!" Mu`awiyah said, "None other than you had this idea! You have said the truth!" `Amr ibn Aws was released. In that time, the Syrians who were in captivity with the Iraqis were released and came back to their camps. Then Mu`awiyah told `Amr ibn al-`As, "If I had acted on your suggestion, then none one of these captives would have returned alive!" Then he released all the .Iraqi captives

This battle started on the first of Safar, ۳۷ H and finished on Friday ۱۰ Safar. The two armies camped in Siffin for one hundred and ten days and ninety clashes took place. From Amir al-Mu'minin's army twenty-five thousand persons were martyred of whom eighty were participants in the Battle of Badr and sixty-three from the event of .bay` at al-ridwan. From Mu`awiyah's army forty-five thousand men were killed

This entire episode was because of the greed of Mu`awiyah and `Amr ibn al-`As for power and pelf. Mu`awiyah was ruling the province of Syria since the times of `Umar and `Amr too was the governor of Egypt for some time. Mu`awiyah wanted to save his position at any cost and `Amr wanted once again to get hold of the control of Egypt. It is the nature of power mongers that once they taste power; they try to hang on at any cost. Therefore, to keep himself in power he concocted the story of `Uthman's qisas and misguided the people to put them in the conflagration of war. `Amr Ibn al-`As played all the tricks in his repertoire to get the governorate of Egypt for himself. Despite knowing the truth very well, he took shelter behind falsehoods.

:Therefore, acknowledging his worldly-wise nature he told Mu`awiyah

By Allah! Although I am with you in fighting for the retaliation for the blood of“
`Uthman, whatever is in my heart is there, but you are fighting with the person whose superiority and precedence (in Islam) and his nearness to the Prophet (a.s) is well-
[known to you. But we are only the seekers of this world!”[۱۳

Mu`awiyah made the retaliation for the blood of `Uthman the excuse for achieving his end. He gave an impression to the people that the killing of `Uthman had taken away his sleep and rest. He told them that he will not take rest until he achieved the fulfillment of the qisas. This, despite the fact that during the days he was besieged, `Uthman appealed to Mu`awiyah for help, which fell on his deaf ear. He, however, had a small troop and asked the men to remain outside the ramparts of al-Madinah and not take any action whatsoever. The purpose was to give an impression to others that he tried to help `Uthman with armed men but before it could reach him, he was assassinated! He was thinking that the killing of `Uthman was in his best interests that he will have an excuse to fight a war with `Ali (a.s) and get the power in his own hands. Therefore, he promised the governorate of Egypt to `Amr and made him a strong cohort. He started blaming `Ali (a.s) for the killing of `Uthman and started claiming qisas. He knew it pretty well that the circle of the killers of `Uthman extended from Hijaz to Egypt and Iraq who came crowding to al-Madinah, besieged him and scaling the walls of his house they assassinated him. From the huge crowd of his besiegers it was difficult to identify the real perpetrators of his murder. Those who were present at his house at the time of the killing too were unable to identify any one culprit.

In such a situation terming any one person as the killer and claiming the qisas from him was impossible. There was not any justification for doing a thing like that. There is no justification for putting to death thousands of persons to claim the qisas for one life. Therefore, the Holy Qur'an says the following about the Law of qisas

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَمَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لَوْلِيِّهِ سُلْطَانًا فَلَا يَشْرَفُ فِي الْقَتْلِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مَنْصُورًا.

And do not kill any one whom Allah has forbidden, except for a just cause, and“ whoever is slain unjustly, We have indeed given to his heir authority, so let him not ”(exceed the just limits in slaying; surely he is aided. (١٧/٣٣)

Mu`awiyah was `Uthman's cousin, but his own sons around, he was not `Uthman's wali under any law whatsoever and therefore his claim for qisas was not justified because it is only the right of the successors of the killed person or the government of the day. Mu`awiyah was neither the successor of `Uthman nor was he the caliph of the Muslims. He was just an ordinary citizen as anyone else. At the most, he was the functionary appointed to

govern a province by the caliph. It was required of him to first accept `Ali (a.s) as the caliph, and respecting his rights he could have appealed to him to issue orders for qisas of `Uthman. `Ali (a.s), therefore, had written to him first to owe allegiance to him as the caliph and then talk about the qisas for `Uthman's blood so that a decision .could be made about the claim in light of the Sunnah

In fact, the claim for qisas was a subterfuge of Mu`awiyah to refuse allegiance to `Ali (a.s). The purpose clearly was to put pressure on `Ali (a.s) and obtain from him the approval for continuing with the governorate of Syria. Therefore, he told in clear terms to Jarir ibn `Abdullah al-Bujali that if he was continued as the ruler of Syria he would enter the bay`ah of `Ali (a.s). After this no doubt remains that the refusal for bay`ah was to use it as a leverage for remaining in his position as governor and the claim for the qisas was just a subterfuge. If the emirate of Syria was assured, he would have stopped talking about qisas. If he was interested in the qisas, he would have helped Umm al-Mu`minin `A`ishah, Talhah and al-Zubayr who rose in the name of retaliation for the blood of `Uthman. He did not send any help to them. In fact, he expressed satisfaction at the death of Talhah and al-Zubayr because he knew that these two persons tempted the killers to commit the assassination. His strategy was that Talhah, al-Zubayr and `Ali (a.s) fought for supremacy, and the party that was eliminated in the fight was one headache less for him

He also thought that the survivor of that conflict would become so weak that handling him would not be difficult. Mu`awiyah was thus preparing ground to fulfill his ambition for power! If he was serious about qisas, after the martyrdom of `Ali (a.s), when Mu`awiyah was controlling the entire realm, he could at least have tried to locate the killers of `Uthman to give a semblance of his interest in claiming the qisas. Once `Uthman's daughter, `A`ishah, tried to draw the attention of Mu`awiyah towards the matter of her father's qisas but he avoided the issue. Therefore, Ibn `Abd-Rabbih al-Andalusi wrote in al-`Iqd al-Farid that after the Year of Congregation, when Mu`awiyah came to al-Madinah, `Uthman's daughter `A`ishah, was visited by him. When she saw Mu`awiyah, she started crying and wailing and complained to him that he had forgotten about the qisas for the blood of her father. Mu`awiyah said that those people are now subjugated to us and we have promised amnesty to them. If we act against them, they will carry rancor against us and will start mischief again

They might forsake the bay`ah with start fighting and us. Then, he said, Allah knows, what will be the result of such conflict! He added that if the rule goes out of their hands, what will be the position of Banū-Umayyah. He tried to convince her by saying that she herself was the daughter of a caliph and another caliph's niece

Mu`awiyah gathered a big crowd around him, and in the name of qisas, started a conflict but he knew that the result of the conflict will be either rise or fall, either the crown or the head would roll! But he did not leave any stratagem, fair or foul, to win the war. Therefore, as soon as he set foot on Siffin, the first step was to capture the source of water on the bank of Euphrates and he tried to justify denying access to water for the group of `Ali (a.s) by saying that they too kept `Uthman without water for many days before killing him! In fact Mu`awiyah should not have banned water for `Ali (a.s), and his men as a retaliation for keeping `Uthman without access to water because it was `Ali (a.s) who arranged to send water to `Uthman when he was besieged in his own house! To the contrary, when Amir al-Mu'minin's men captured the source of water, he allowed free access to Mu`awiyah's men to draw water

At that time, the Imam (a.s) said that an evil act could not be replied with an evil act! Similarly, when with the martyrdom of `Ammar, the rebellious attitude of Mu`awiyah was exposed, he immediately put forth an excuse that the killer, of `Ammar, is `Ali (a.s) because he brought him all the way to the battlefield! This statement is such a blatant denial of the fact that it cannot be put even in the genre of an excuse! It is surprising that the people of Syria were getting carried away with the falsehoods of Mu`awiyah. If they had some sense of understanding, the scenario would have been different. They blindly remained attached to the rebel group! If the excuse made by Mu`awiyah that `Ali (a.s) was responsible for the killing of `Ammar because he brought him to the battlefield, then, by the same logic, Mu`awiyah was responsible for the killing of thousands of Syrians who were brought to the war by him! The moot point is that `Ammar was killed by "the rebel group" and that was "Mu`awiyah's Group!"

Despite all these subterfuges, when Mu`awiyah saw defeat staring in his face, he made such a treacherous move that the situation completely reversed. He sent his men to raise the Holy Qur'an on the lances and start shouting slogans for making the Book the arbiter to solve the dispute. He also infiltrated the Iraqi army to instigate the men to stop fighting and force `Ali (a.s) to accept the proposal. The ignorant men did not understand the treachery of

Mu`awiyah that if the Holy Book was to be made the arbiter for the dispute, he should have come up with the proposal before the war commenced. When he saw defeat in front of him, he manufactured this excuse

The reason for the success of Mu`awiyah in all his treacherous acts was that the Syrians were blindly committed to him. Al-Mas`ūdi writes

They were submissive to Mu`awiyah to such an extent that while going to Siffin that " [he made them offer the Friday Congregational Prayer on Wednesday!" [۱۴

The reason for the people of Syria remaining ignorant of the norms of Faith and the Arab culture was that the territory was under the sway of outsiders for long. In the initial period of `Umar, the territory came under his control. Then he made the mistake of imposing the sons of Abū-Sufyan, Yazid and Mu`awiyah, on the people

Yazid died after a short while but Mu`awiyah had a long innings and, with his cunning, entrenched himself and developed vested interest in the province. How could he inculcate the Islamic norms of do's and don'ts in the people when he was himself not bothered about them! Then, he had also his political strategy in mind that if the people got awareness of the norms, he would not be able to rule the way he wanted. He kept the people ignorant of the status of `Ali (a.s) and the Ahl al-Bayt and, in fact, poisoned the people's minds against them. Therefore during the battle of Siffin on Syrian went to the extent of saying that they were fighting with `Ali (a.s) that neither `Ali (a.s) offered prayers nor the men in his army were habituated of praying regularly

The poor soul was repeating like a parrot what Mu`awiyah and his cohorts had drilled into his mind. But when Hashim ibn `Utbah talked to him, the haze in his mind was cleared and he withdrew from the fighting! Besides this nasty propaganda, Mu`awiyah opened the coffers of the state to create a breed of sycophants who promoted his foul plans

There were also people in `Ali's army, who had joined him because of some compulsions, but their minds were not with him. Persons like, al-Ash`ath ibn Qays and Khalid ibn Mu`ammar, had sold themselves to Mu`awiyah. They got an opportunity to misguide people when the talk of making the Qur'an the arbiter for solution of the dispute was raised. Although Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) made it clear to al-Ash`ath that the demand for making the Book the arbiter was a trick of Mu`awiyah, he remained adamant and shouted, "O people! Force `Ali (a.s) to accept the arbiter and stop the killing of men! "It is surprising that when the Imam's forces were on the verge of victory, al-Ash`ath develops sympathy for the dying! If his heart was so much concerned with the deaths, he could have raised his voice before the war commenced! He could have done this to stop the war of attrition when the scale was showing both the parties equal in their gains and losses! But his raising the voice when Mu`awiyah was staring in the face of defeat, definitely proves his complicity with the enemy

There is no doubt that this trick of Mu`awiyah was an act of rebellion against the rightful caliph, but when the act of Talhah and al-Zubayr was dismissed coolly as khata' ijtihadi, Mu`awiyah's evil design too is called a khata' ijtihadi! It is surprising that when the Prophet (a.s) terms this act as rebellion, by calling it error in interpretation they term the perpetrator deserving of Rewards in the Hereafter
:(sic) Are these champions of Mu`awiyah oblivious of the Prophet's saying

Ammar will be killed by a Rebel Group. `Ammar will be inviting them towards Allah` “
[and they will call him towards the Hell!”][۱۵

After this observation of the Prophet (a.s) calling Mu`awiyah's act an error of interpretation (khata' ijthadi) and harping on the calumny that the perpetrator of the act was deserving of Rewards and the Heaven, is beyond the comprehension of any right thinking person. When some people have even termed the assassination of `Ali (a.s) as a khata' ijthadi, there is nothing beyond them. Therefore, Ibn Hazm and his group consider the act of `Abd al-Rahman ibn Muljim as khata' ijthadi. Ibn Hajar al-
: `Asqalani writes

Ibn Hazm has made access to exaggeration by saying that from the imams none has“ denied that Ibn Muljim did ijthad, and had his justification, that he was right in killing
[`Ali (a.s)”][۱۶

Although the Prophet (a.s) had said about Ibn Muljim, “He is the wicked man of the Ummah!” Similarly this group terms the killing of `Ammar ibn Yasir by Abul-Ghawiyah al-Fazari as error in interpretation, despite the Prophet (a.s) saying that the killer of `Ammar and the one who took away his fighting gear would go to the Hell. The killers of `Uthman, to the contrary, are termed by Ibn Hazm, and the men of his ilk, as
!traitors, cruel and heretic. They do not consider their act as khata' ijthadi

Just imagine the man of ijthad, Mu`awiyah, gives expensive gifts to the Caesar of Rome to make an alliance with him to fight against one who had the bay`ah of the Companions of the Prophet (a.s) both Muhajirūn and Ansar! Was this ijthad that he
?was hobnobbing with an infidel to fight against the caliph of the day

The great Urdu poet, Mirza Ghalib Dehlavi too has composed a very interesting
:couplet on this phenomenon

It is a funny ijtehad that an enemy of the Faith
!Comes to fight with `Ali, and they call it an error

Footnote

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۳, Page ۱۵۲ [۱]

Murūj al-Dhahab, Vol ۲, Page ۲۴ [۲]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۴, Page ۲۶ [۳]

Tārīkh Abul-Fidā', Vol ۱, Page ۱۷۶ [۴]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۳, Page ۱۵۸ [۵]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۳, Page ۱۵۸ [۶]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۳, Page ۱۵۸ [۷]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۳, Page ۱۵۸ [۸]

Al-Akhabār al-Tiwāl, Page ۱۸۸ [۹]

Al-Akhabār al-Tiwāl, Page ۱۸۶ [۱۰]

Al-Akhabār al-Tiwāl, Page ۱۸۸ [۱۱]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۳, Page ۱۶۱ [۱۲]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۳, Page ۱۶۱ [۱۳]

Murūj al-Dhahab, Vol ۲, Page ۷۲ [۱۴]

Sahīh al-Bukhārī, Vol ۲, Page ۹۲ [۱۵]

THE AGREEMENT FOR ARBITRATION

THE AGREEMENT FOR ARBITRATION

When an agreement was reached that there will be arbitrations, the reciters of the Holy Qur'an from Iraq and Syria decided that there will be two referees. One will be nominated by the people of Syria and the other by the Iraqis. Both the referees will .(give the verdict in the light of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (a.s

Their verdict will have to be acceptable to both the parties. The Syrians nominated `Amr ibn al-`As and from Iraq, al-Ash`ath ibn Qays, Mus`ir ibn Fadki, Yazid ibn Husayn etc. nominated Abū-Mūsa al-Ash`ari as the referee. He was resident in Syria.

:When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) heard the name of Abū-Mūsa, he said

I have no confidence on the opinion and the discretion of Abū-Mūsa. I want to give“
[the authority for arbitration to `Abdullah ibn `Abbas.”][1]

The persons who suggested the name of Abū-Mūsa said that he, `Ali (a.s) and Ibn `Abbas were the same and it would mean that he was himself the referee in the matter concerning him. They said that they want a referee who is independent and impartial. The Imam (a.s) said that in that event why did not they object to the nomination of `Amr ibn al-`As. They said that they were concerned only about the .referee from their side and not about the Syrian nominee

The Imam (a.s) said that if they object to the name of Ibn `Abbas, he would suggest Malik al-Ashtar, instead. They said that he was the person who gave wind to the fire of war and how could he allow the arbitration to succeed. He will look for further opportunity for conflict The Imam (a.s) then said, “If you insist on having Abū-Mūsa as the referee, I leave the matter to you.” al-Ahnaf ibn Qays said, “O People! If you do not like Ibn `Abbas and Malik al-Ashtar, you may nominate me as the referee. I am well aware of `Amr’s cunning ways and he will not be successful in tricking me. If you do not want me, select someone else. But do not select Abū-Mūsa. Instead of setting
”.right the matters, he will complicate them further

It was a part of the conspiracy that Abū-Mūsa’s name was pushed forward. They adamantly held to their suggestion and Abū-Mūsa al-Ash`ari was nominated as the .referee

After the selection of the referees, when `Abdullah ibn Rafi` started writing down the terms of reference, he wrote the following words as a preamble to the document. "Amir al-Mu'minin `Ali and Mu`awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan has decided that..." `Amr ibn al-`As objected to the word "Amir al-Mu'minin" and said that he might be the Emir of others but not theirs! He therefore asked the word to be deleted from the document. Only his name and the father's name are entered. Al-Ahnaf ibn Qays told the Imam (a.s) that he should not agree to the deletion of the word "Amir al-Mu'minin" even if it caused renewal of the conflict. He added that if this word was deleted today, the Emirate would not ever come back to him. Al-Ash`ath ibn Qays and his supporters were insisting that the word be deleted. In utter unconcern, the Imam (a.s) was sitting quietly in his place and seeing the reflection of the Treaty of al-Hudaybiyah in the events of the day. After a few moments of quiet he said, "When I drafted the agreement of the Treaty of al-Hudaybiyah, I wrote the word "rasūlullah (Allah's Messenger)" in the preamble when the representative of the Quraysh, Suhayl, said that they did not recognize him as Allah's Messenger and wanted me to delete the word and to enter "Muhammad ibn `Abdullah" instead. I was hesitant to score away :the word "rasūlullah". But the Prophet (a.s) said

Write what he wants. One day you too will face a similar situation and you will be [helpless.] [۲

At this `Amr said angrily that he considered them infidel like those people. The Imam (a.s) replied

O son of al-Nabighah! When were you not the friend of the transgressors and the [enemy of the Muslims? You are like the mother who bore you!"]

Ibn al-`As said, "After today, we shall never sit together nor see each other's face
"The Imam (a.s) replied, "I too wish this! May Allah keep my company free of persons
"like you

When the word "Amir al-Mu'minin" was struck off and the writing of the document was re-commenced, the Imam (a.s) was asked if he considered Mu`awiyah and the :people of Syria Muslims? He said

I do not accept Mu`awiyah and his companions are Muslims and mu'min. But "Mu`awiyah is free to write what he wants about himself and his men, admit whatever [he wishes to admit and suggest whatever name he wants to."]

:At last, the agreement was drafted that had the following terms

It will be binding on the referees on both sides that their decision will be based on (١) the Qur'an. If they are unable to arrive at a decision through the Book, they will make .access to the Traditions of the Prophet (a.s) that are acceptable to both

The decision made by the referees shall be binding on both the parties, provided (٢) .the decision is based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah

The referees to give their verdict within the current month of Ramadan. If they felt (٣) .the need to extend the duration, they could mutually decide to do that

.If the referees required evidences for arriving at a decision, they will be arranged (٤)

There will be no hostility until the referees come to a final conclusion about the (٥) dispute. Both the parties will ensure safety of the lives and properties of the referees.

.There will be no restriction on the movement of the parties to the dispute

If, before the verdict, any of the two referees died, his party can nominate another (٦) referee in his place

.The verdict will be announced at a place that lies between Iraq and Syria (٧)

Most of the terms of this agreement concern the administrative requirements and the basic requirement was that the verdict of the referees had to be in accordance to the Qur'an and the Sunnah and that they had no right to arrive at any decision on their personal intuition and thinking. If they did not follow this condition, their arbitration will be void. The earlier events are a proof that making claim for qisas and raising the Qur'an was with the purpose of misleading the people and the demand for arbitration too was an evil subterfuge of the Syrians. The referees neither referred to the Qur'an nor they talked of the relevant Traditions of the Prophet (a.s). One referee tried to defeat the other with futile arguments

Footnote

Al-Akhabār al-Tiwāl, Page ١٩٢ [١]

Al-Sīrah al-Halabiyyah, Vol ٣, Page ٣٣ [٢]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٤, Page ٣٧ [٣]

Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by Ibn Abil-Hadīd, Vol ١, Page ١١٠ [٤]

THE REACTION OF KHAWARIJ AGAINST ARBITRATION

THE REACTION OF KHAWARIJ AGAINST ARBITRATION

The armies of Iraq and Syria were still in Siffin when the terms of reference for the arbitration were decided, when a whispering campaign was started against it. Therefore, when al-Ash`ath ibn Qays went to the different tribes and read to them the terms of reference, the feelings against the arbitration were aroused. The same people, who were strongly talking in favor of arbitration to stop unnecessary bloodshed, started speaking against it. When the tribe of Banū-Anza heard the terms of reference, two brothers from the tribe, Ju`d and Ma`dan, raised the slogan of “There is no referee but Allah”, took swords in their hands, came in the open and died fighting with others. When Banū-Murad heard about the terms, Salih ibn Shafiq said, “There is no arbitrator but Allah, even if it is not acceptable to the hypocrites

When the terms were read to Banū-Rasib, they opposed the arbitration saying, “In Allah’s Faith, men cannot be made the arbiters

The majority of the opponents of the arbitration were from Banū-Tamim. When the terms were read to them, `Urwah ibn Adiyyah al-Tamimi said to al-Ash`ath

Have you appointed men as arbitrators in the matters of Faith? O al-Ash`ath! If this [was to happen, then why our men were killed in the battle?] [1

Then he took his sword and attacked al-Ash`ath. Al-Ash`ath was astride his horse at that time. In escaping from the attack, the sword hit the rear of the horse without any injury to him

Because of the cessation of the hostility and the controversy of arbitration, the unity of the Iraqis was disturbed. When Muhriz ibn Khunays saw the circumstances getting worsened, he came to the presence of the Imam (a.s) and said, “O Amir al-Mu’minin! Is there no way of canceling the agreement? I have a doubt that it might give rise to a great mischief and you will have much difficulty because of that!” The Imam (a.s) said

[Can I breach an agreement after signing it? It is not permissible in any condition!”]

When Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s), did not like to make access to arms after laying them down in terms of the agreement, the germs of rebellion arose and besides the parties of `Ali (a.s) and `Uthman, a third group raised its head and people started joining the new formation. This party was of those who wanted to continue the fight on those who were insisting on imposing ‘the arbitration’. The slogan that two youths, `Urwah and al-`Adiyah, had shouted in their emotional outburst, became the slogan of the new group. When both the armies returned, and Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s) proceeded with his army towards al-Kūfah, the faces of men were glum and the eyes reflected anger. Some had the shock that the battle was abandoned when it was almost won. Others were angry why the arbitration was agreed to. Differences were already there and when they reached near al-Kūfah, a big chunk of ۱۲,۰۰۰ men refused to enter the bounds of the city and stayed at Harawra, a place outside al-Kūfah. They formed a permanent front with the slogan of “There is no referee but Allah!” This group was known as Khawarij or Harūriyyah. They selected Shabath ibn Rab`i as their chief and `Abdullah ibn al-Kawwa al-Yashkuri as their Imam

Despite their headstrong behavior, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) did not take any action against them. He knew that punitive action against the stubborn people would make them more stubborn. Only soft treatment and logic could bring such persons to the right path. Therefore, he tried to convince them through argument and advice. He decided to go personally to them and discuss the matter at length. He sent Ibn `Abbas in advance with clear instructions not to broach the main topic until he himself reached the place. His fear was that the Khawarij might not accept `Abbas's arguments and make up their minds not to talk any further on the subject

When `Abbas reached the midst of the Khawarij, they did broach the subject of the arbitration. They said the punishment in the Shari`ah for adultery was a hundred lashes and for theft cutting off the right hand. This is the command of Allah and none has the right to change this Law. Then how is it legitimate to appoint two persons to arbitrate in the matter of Faith? Ibn `Abbas could not control himself and said that :Allah observes about the persons who hunt while wearing Ihram

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْتُلُوا الصَّيْدَ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرُمٌ وَمَنْ قَتَلَهُ مِنْكُمْ مُتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاءٌ مِثْلُ مَا قَتَلَ مِنَ النَّعْمِ يَحْكُمُ بِهِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِنْكُمْ.

O you who believe! Do not kill game while you are on pilgrimage, and whoever among you shall kill it intentionally, the compensation (of it) is the like of what he killed, from (the cattle, as two just persons among you shall judge. (5/95

The Khawarij said that on the massacre of Muslims qiyas (conjecture) cannot be done and, then, who is `Amr ibn al-`As? Until yesterday, we were considering him as an unjust (unreliable) person and fighting with him. How could he be just today? They said that two persons have been named the arbitrators in the matters of Allah, but when Mu`awiyah and his men rebelled; Allah's Command was to kill them or seek their repentance! Instead of doing either of the two things, you people have made a truce with them although, after the revelation of the verse of Bara'ah, there is no question of truce with the aggressors until they agreed to pay the jizyah

In this time Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) arrived and finding Ibn `Abbas busy in conversation, he said, "I had asked you not to start any argument! "Then he turned towards the Khawarij and said, "Why have you rebelled against us? "They said, "We differ in the matter of the arbitration!" `Ali (a.s) said, "You will remember that when the Syrians raised the Holy Qur'an on their spears, I had told you people that those men neither had anything to do with the Faith nor with the Book. To save themselves from the ignominy of defeat they were taking shelter behind the Qur'an. But you said that you are satisfied with the verdict of the Qur'an and forced me to stop the battle, that I stop fighting and accept the arbitration although I did not like the idea. When I had to accept the arbitration because of your adamancy, I imposed a condition on the arbiters that their verdict has to be only on the basis of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. If they gave a verdict against these conditions, it will be turned down

The Khawarij said, “All this is true, but you should not have agreed with us and rejected the proposal of the arbitration. We do accept that supporting the arbitration we committed infidelity. But we are now repentant about our attitude then. As we have accepted our act of infidelity, you too should accept that you committed infidelity and express repentance! Then we shall enter your bay`ah and obey you!” The Imam (a.s) said, “How I have I become an infidel by accepting the arbitration, when Allah himself has permitted appointment of arbitrators. Therefore, about the differences between husband and wife He says

وَأِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَابْعَثُوا حَكَمًا مِنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَمًا مِنْ أَهْلِهَا.

And if you fear a breach between the two, then appoint judge from his people and a “(judge from her people. (4/35)

Then, are the differences in the Ummah less important than the differences between individuals?” They said, “You must have made the Qur’an the Arbitrator instead of nominating men to resolve the issue!” The Imam said

We did make the Qur’an the arbiter and not the men. But since the Qur’an is between “the two of its bindings, and cannot speak, men have to interpret it.”[۳

When the Khawarij could not reply this, they said, “Because of `Amr ibn al-`As objecting, you had struck off the word “Amir al-Mu`minin” from the document. This meant that you have demitted the position of Emir and caliph.” The Imam (a.s) said, “At the time of the Treaty of al-Hudaybiyah, the Prophet of Islam (a.s) had struck off the word “rasūlullah” from the document of agreement. Does it mean that he was announcing that he was forsaking the prophethood? My action was in complete emulation of what the Prophet (a.s) did at the time of that treaty. He had also told me, ‘O `Ali! You will be faced with a similar situation one day, and you will also have to do what I am doing now!’ “The Khawarij said, “Why did you keep quiet and give them a long rope?” The Imam (a.s) replied, “I wanted people to know the truth and the ignorant become aware and those who know become firm in their knowledge and thus a way for amity between the Muslims was paved!” The Khawarij kept quiet at this point.

Then the Imam (a.s) said, “May Allah be kind on you! Get up and come back to your homes!” The Khawarij were momentarily impressed with the Imam’s argument and offered the 2nd uhr Prayer in congregation behind him and entered the city

These people did return to al-Kūfah, but their minds were still not free of the confusion. When they were asked about the change of their attitude, they said that their stand was the same as it was before. When they were asked about their decision to return to al-Kūfah they said that when (a.s) pointed out that they themselves were championing the arbitration, they admitted that they had committed an act of infidelity by doing that, but they had expressed their repentance for the act and added that if he too accepted his act as infidelity and expressed penitence, they would start following him. They said that the Imam (a.s) had accepted their stand and had asked them to wait for six months for the preparations for war against the Syrians. The Khawarij made access to falsehood to cover their shame. Therefore, Ibn al-Athir writes

[Whatever the Khawarij had said in their false sense of pride was all shame.]“

Although this statement of the Khawarij was false, and became talk of the town, going from mouth to mouth and people started gossiping that the Imam (a.s) had expressed repentance for his sin of acceding to the arbitration and had decided to attack Syria before the verdict of the arbiters was out. To give boost to the mischief, al-Ash`ath ibn Qays told the Imam (a.s), “O Amir al-Mu`minin! People are saying that you consider the arbitration as deviation and insistence on it infidelity.” The Imam (a.s) felt it necessary to refute this. He went to the pulpit and told before a crowd that the person who says that I have recanted from the agreement for the arbitration is a liar. At this declaration of the Imam, the Khawarij were furious. Their lie was exposed. As a protest, they started shouting the slogan of “There is no referee but Allah” Then this slogan was heard from every corner of the mosque. One person addressed the Imam (a.s) and recited the following verse

وَلَقَدْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ لَئِنْ أَشْرَكَتَ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ.

And certainly, it has been revealed to you and to those before you: Surely if you“ associate with Allah, your work would certainly come to naught and you would
”(certainly be of the losers. (۳۹/۶۵

:Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) recited the following verse in reply

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَلَا يَسْتَخِفَّنَكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُوقِنُونَ.

Therefore be patient; surely the promise of Allah is true and let not those who have“
”(no certainty hold you in light estimation. (۳۰/۶۰

As the time for the verdict by the referees drew near, the mischief of the Khawarij too increased. Their faces showed that they were beyond any reform and wanted to be subdued only through the sword. When the time for the departure of Abū-Mūsa came near, they tried to create an excuse for fighting and two of their representatives, Zar`ah ibn Burūj al-ta'i and Hurqūs ibn Zuhayr al-Asadi came to the Imam (a.s) and raised the slogan of “There is no referee but Allah.” Then, Hurqūs, in an impertinent tone said, “You have committed a sin and you must do penitence for that! You must abstain from the arbitration, go to Syria and fight with the enemy.” The Imam (a.s) said, “When you wanted to stop the battle I insisted to carry on with it. But you were adamant for stopping the battle that we were about to win! Now there is an agreement for arbitration, and we are bound by the agreement, as Allah has said

وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ إِذَا عَاهَدْتُمْ وَلَا تَنْقُضُوا الْأَيْمَانَ بَعْدَ تَوْكِيدِهَا وَقَدْ جَعَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ عَلَيْكُمْ كَفِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ.

”(And fulfill the covenant of Allah when you have made a covenant. (١٦/٩١“

Hurqūs said that agreement was sinful and against the Shari`ah. There is no justification for following it. The Imam (a.s) said that the agreement for the arbitration was no sin, but it was the result of the weakness and futility of your thinking. I had warned you people against the arbitration, but you did not agree and stopped fighting the battle. Now Zur`ah ibn Burj said, “O `Ali! If you do not withdraw from the .agreement of the arbitration, then, to please Allah, we shall fight with you

:The Imam (a.s) replied

May harm come to you! You ill-fated person! I am seeing with my eye that you have“
[been killed and the desert wind is piling sand over you!”[٥

Now the Khawarij turned the mosque into a center for intrigue and mischief. Whenever the Imam (a.s) stood up to deliver sermons, they raised noises from all directions. Once they raised their usual slogan and the Imam (a.s) said, “allahu-akbar! What they say is correct but their intentions are wrong! If they remained quiet, we shall continue to do good to them. If they talk against us, we shall quieten them with
”!reasoning and proof. If they attack us, we shall fight with them

At this point one Khariji, Yazid ibn `Asim al-Muharibi stood up disturbed and said, “O `Ali! Why are you frightening us with death? We are sure we shall soon rain the swords on you. We cannot bear with calumny in the matters of the Faith! If we do that we shall be inviting the wrath of Allah.” One day when Amir al-Mu`minin was delivering his sermon in the mosque, shouts and slogans were raised from all sides. The Imam
:(a.s) said

Allahu-akbar! Your slogan is the word of Truth, but your intentions are wrong! As long “ as you remain with us, three of your rights are our responsibility: We shall not stop you from taking Allah’s name in the mosque, if you participate with us in Jihad you will not be deprived of the booty and we shall not battle with you until you start the [fight!”[ع

Instead of taking a lesson from the patience and equanimity of Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s.), the Khawarij were bent on insolence and mischief and increased their nefarious activities against him. Therefore, in the house of `Abdullah ibn Wahab al-Rasibi they met and chalked out their program for the future. He suggested that they must leave the city and go to far away places so that they could plan to fight against the innovations of the cruel people of this city. Hurqūs ibn Zuhayr endorsed this suggestion and agreeing to the proposal, Hamzah ibn Sinan said that this end could be achieved in an organized manner only, therefore select someone from amongst you as the wali al-amr (Supreme Leader) because it is essential for you to have a leader [and guide!][ص

There was general agreement on this suggestion and Yazid ibn Husayn al-ta’i was asked to become their leader. But he refused to accept the responsibility. The one after the others the names of Hurqūs ibn Zuhayr, Hamzah ibn Sinan and Shurayh ibn Awfa al-`Absi were proposed, but all three of them expressed their inability to accept the position. In the end, `Abdullah ibn Wahab was asked to take charge as the leader of the group. He said, “If I become emir, it is not for worldly honor. If I do not accept it, it will not be out of fear of death! If appointment as emir is essential, I cannot shirk ”:from the responsibility

After this selection, they assembled at the place of Shurayh ibn Awfa for further discussions. `Abdullah ibn Wahab said that when they are deciding to leave al-Kūfah, they must proceed to a place where they would be able to enforce Allah's Commands without any let or hindrance. Shurayh said that al-Mada'in would be a suitable place for their purpose. He said that they would force out the inhabitants of that place and occupy it. The people who subscribe to the same creed as them too would be asked to come to al-Mada'in. Yazid ibn Husayn said that if they went to al-Mada'in with the idea of evicting the inhabitants there, they would certainly resist with force.

.Therefore, he suggested going to Nahrawan instead of al-Mada'in

After general agreement on this suggestion, it was decided that instead of going as a large group, they would go in twos and threes so that unnecessary attention of others was not attracted and no one tries to prevent them from going. Therefore, as planned, they started moving away from al-Kūfah to Nahrawan. They deputed `Abdullah ibn Sa`d al-`Absi to al-Basrah to apprise the like-minded persons there about their move to Nahrawan and to motivate them to join them there. The men in

.al-Basrah agreed and promised to proceed to Nahrawan at the earliest

Among those who moved to Nahrawan was `Adi ibn Hatam's son, turfah. On reaching Sib, he joined the group of Yazid ibn Husayn. When `Adi learned of his sons' escape from al-Kūfah, he was much worried and went in his search to al-Mada'in. But there he found none of the Khawarij. Then he thought of returning to al-Kūfah. When he arrived at Sabat, he chanced to meet `Abdullah ibn Wahab, who wanted to cross the river at `Aqūl to reach Nahrawan. Finding `Adi alone, `Abdullah ibn Wahab wanted to kill him. But `Amr ibn Malik al-Mabhani and Bishr ibn Yazid al-Bawlani intervened to save him. `Adi asked the governor of al-Mada'in, Sa`d ibn Mas`ūd to intercept the group of the Khawarij. Sa`d left his nephew, al-Mukhtar ibn Abi-`Ubayd in charge at al-Mada'in and preceded in search of the Khawarij. `Abdullah ibn Wahab had only thirty horsemen with him. He got suspicious, and changing his route headed towards

.Baghdad

However Sa`d chased and caught up with him at the place of Karkh around sunset. The groups fought for sometime and then Sa`id's men decided to let them go thinking that Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) had asked them not to start any fight by themselves. They wanted to inform Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). If he asked them, they would chase the persons, or else allow them to go wherever they wished to go. But Sa`d wanted to fight with them. It was night and fighting could be done only with sunrise. They slept near the place where the Khawarij were sleeping. `Abdullah ibn Wahab took advantage of the darkness of the night and they quietly crossed the river and reached Jawkhi and from there they moved to Nahrawan. The other Khawarij were camping near the bridge of Nahrawan waiting for `Abdullah ibn Wahab and his men. They were thinking of appointing Hurqūs ibn Zuhayr or Yazid ibn Husayn as their emir when `Abdullah ibn Wahab arrived. From al-Kūfah, al-Qa`qa` ibn Qays al-ta'i, `Abdullah ibn Hakim, Salim ibn Rabi`ah al-`Absi and some more persons were planning to join the group of Khawarij, but the people at their homes stopped them from going. Salim .ibn Rabi`ah was called by Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) and prevented from going

From al-Basrah, five hundred Khawarij, in the leadership of Mus`ir ibn Fadki al-Tamimi started for going to Nahrawan. When the governor of al-Basrah, Ibn `Abbas, knew about this, he deputed Abul-Aswad al-Du'ali in their pursuit to convince them to come back. When Abul-Aswad reached near the Khawarij, it was already night. The Khawarij gave him an impression that they intended to halt at Jasr for the night. Abul-Aswad too camped there for the night. But the Khawarij escaped in the darkness of the night and reached Nahrawan. The Khawarij from al-Kūfah, al-Basrah and the .environs assembled in Nahrawan and made it the epicenter of mischief and rebellion

Because of this congregation of the Khawarij, some sincere companions of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) wanted to renew their bay`ah with the Imam (a.s). Therefore, they came to the presence of the Imam (a.s) and said, "We owe our bay`ah to you on the agreement that whoever is your friend, we shall befriend him and those who are your enemies, we shall be inimical to them!" The Imam (a.s) took bay`ah from them, and told Rabi`ah ibn Abi-Shaddad al-Khash`ami, who was with the Imam (a.s) in the battles of Jamal and Siffin, "You too owe bay`ah in the light of the Qur'an and the Sunnah!" He said, I shall owe bay`ah to you in the light of the Sunnah of Abū-Bakr and `Umar!" The Imam (a.s) asked him, "Do not you accept the Book and the Sunnah of the prophet (a.s)? If the Sunnah of Abū-Bakr and `Umar is against the Book and the Prophet's Sunnah then there is no reason for making the condition!" Again, the Imam (a.s) looked at him with changed demeanor and said

By Allah! I am visualizing the scene with my eyes that you have gone out with the " [Khawarij and the horses are trampling you under their hooves.] [^

It is true that practical behavior is a reflection of the state of the mind. Then the Khawarij were the victims of their own mental upheaval. They not only accepted the arbitration but they also forced Amir al-Mu'minin to accept it. But when he agreed for .the arbitration, they came up with the slogan of "There is no referee but Allah

The Khawarij had based their slogan on the Qur'anic verse “The judgment is only Allah’s

They formed the idea that the state is for Allah and that the bay`ah too is for Allah and there is no other ruler than Allah. Thus, this slogan became the forerunner a new concept of governance. The Khawarij, under the shadow of this Verse, started saying that they wanted to establish the divinely commissioned government or the Divine Rule! They have never given the matter a thought that the divinely commissioned government does not do away with the concept of the Emirate. But it means that the norms of the divinely commissioned government are propagated and implemented by the just Amir and his representatives. Against such an Amir, and his representatives, none has the right of commenting. Therefore, giving meaning to the verse, “The judgment is only Allah’s” that the state and the rule cannot be of anyone else than Allah and that for the religious and Worldly organizations there is no need for an Emir :is not right. This verse is about Prophet Jacob and the full text is as follows

وَقَالَ يَا بَنِيَّ لَا تَدْخُلُوا مِنْ بَابٍ وَاحِدٍ وَاذْخُلُوا مِنْ أَبْوَابٍ مُتَفَرِّقَةٍ وَمَا أُغْنِي عَنْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِنَّ الْحُكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَعَلَيْهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ.

And he said: O my sons! Do not (all) enter by one gate and enter by different gates“ and I cannot avail you aught against Allah; judgment is only Allah's; on Him do I rely, ”(and on Him let those who are reliant rely. (١٢/٤٧

In this verse, the event is mentioned when Prophet Jacob (a.s) sent his sons to Egypt he told them, “You must enter through different doors so that you save yourselves from evil eyes. It is not necessary that if you use different doors you will certainly remain safe, because only Allah’s Order is supreme. Whatever He decides to happen, that happens! Against His wishes, others’ desires do not fulfill. But even then, you must exercise care!” This is the purport of the verse. But the Khawarij saw neither the occasion about which the Verse was revealed nor did they consider its full meaning. They attached the meaning to a part of the Verse that there cannot be any Emir in the world and it is only on Allah’s Orders (Hukm) that world must run! About this wrong notion of the Khawarij, Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s) has said, “It is right to say, that no doubt, it is Allah’s prerogative to ‘Order’ for things to happen but their intent in applying the Verse is wrong. They say that the rule too is Allah’s

However, for people it is necessary to have a Hakim or Ruler”. Therefore, this concept of the Khawarij only remained a concept and it could not be implemented at any time in human history. Even the Khawarij could not implement this impracticable concept when they had the opportunities and kept on choosing Emirs to govern them! It is an established fact that from the political and administrative point of view it is essential to have the head of state, whether the state is run by an individual or a group of persons. If there is no governance the state cannot be organized properly. If the slogan of the Khawarij was on the basis of honesty and good intentions, they could have said that appointment of “Hukm” is justified, as the Prophet (a.s) did in the matter of Banū-Qurayzah appointing Sa`d ibn Mu`adh as the arbitrator, but when the enemy was trying to cheat through the institution of the arbitration it was not desirable. If they did this, their protests could have been justifiable to a certain extent. But what they did was to make the arbitration an excuse to create mischief and disorder and under the slogan of Divine Government, they intended to bring back the tribal anarchy that prevailed in the Days of Ignorance in Arabia

The Divine Government is based on the norms and Commands of the Shari`ah that have been constituted in the light of the Divine Revelations by the Prophet (a.s) and .have to be implemented by a just and fair ruler

Footnote

Al-Akhabār al-Tiwāl, Page ١٩٤ [١]

Al-Akhabār al-Tiwāl, Page ١٩٧ [٢]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٣, Page ١٤٤ [٣]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٣, Page ١٤٤ [٤]

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A LOOK AT THE KHAWARIJ

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The germs of Kharijism had already formed during the time of the Prophet (a.s) and were latently growing and spreading. These people, in the garb of Islam, created intrigue against the Creed. They took part in the destructive activities with great gusto. Their impertinence was of such order that they did not abstain even from attacking the justice and fairness of the Prophet (a.s). Therefore, when, in the battle of Hunayn, the Prophet (a.s) distributed the booty at the Valley of al-Ju`ranah and, as an incentive to the new Muslims he gave them more share from his khums, a person of that group, Dhul-Khuwaysirah al-Tamimi, said in an impertinent tone to the Prophet (a.s) that he should be just and fair At this, the Prophet (a.s) said, “If I do not do justice, then who else will do it?” `Umar too was angry on the person and said, “O :Prophet of Allah (a.s)! Should we not kill this person?” The Prophet (a.s) said

Leave him! There are many like him! If some of you compare their prayers with your“ prayers, and your fasting with their fasting, you will find yourself far behind them.

[They will escape from the Faith as the arrow pierces through the game!”[۱]

Outwardly such people were sticklers for the norms of the Religion and regular in prayers, fasting and the recitation of the Holy Qur’an. But they were unaware of the Spirit of Islam and the Reality of the faith. Therefore, the Prophet of Islam (a.s) had :said about them

My Ummah will be divided into two groups. And another group will spring from one of“ the two. The people of this group will shave their heads, clip their moustaches and will wear their loincloth half way to the knees. They will recite the Qur’an, but the Qur’an will not go beyond their throats. They will be killed by the person who is most dear to [me and Allah.”[۲]

Their outward appearance, their prayers and the large calluses on their foreheads would attract people and beguile them; their prayers were so intense that even the Sahabah used to be impressed. Therefore, once the Prophet (a.s) saw Dhul-Khuwaysirah in prostration. The Prophet (a.s) finished his prayer and Dhul-Khuwaysirah was still in his prostration. The Prophet (a.s) turned to Abū-Bakr and said, “You go and kill Dhul-Khuwaysirah. Abū-Bakr saw him praying with great dedication and did not like to kill him and returned. Then the Prophet (a.s) asked `Umar to execute him. He too saw him offering prayer and returned and said that he is a pious person and he could not kill him. In the end the Prophet (a.s) deputed `Ali (a.s), but by that time Dhul-Khuwaysirah had already left from there. The Imam (a.s) returned and reported to the Prophet (a.s) that he had gone away. The Prophet (a.s) said that if he was killed today the mischief could have been nipped in the bud. He is a member of that group who will get out of the faith in a manner the arrow escapes from the bow

The Khawarij were the nomads of Arabia who naturally had all the traits of the Bedouin. By instinct, they were agitators and liked to fight and kill. After the Prophet (a.s), they were pushed into many a war. Thus, they were so much involved in fighting that when there was no battle to fight, they would fight amongst themselves. These warlike activities did not give them time to study the niceties of the Faith or to take any effect of the moral values promoted by it. After the conquest of Iraq, when the foundation for the cities of al-Kūfah and al-Basrah were laid with the purpose of guarding the boundaries of the realm, these rough Bedouin people were settled in these places. They settled down here for better prospects but despite coming to live .in the cities, they continued with their old diehard traits

When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) wanted an army to fight against the enemy, these people, who were veterans of many a battle, rose to a man on the call of the Imam (a.s). Their willingness was not on the basis of principle or for upholding the Truth. .Their motivation was only their instinct and craving for fighting and material gains

Among the Khawarij mostly there were men from Banū-Tamim and the gallivants of Arabia. Therefore, `Abdullah ibn Abaz, `Urwah ibn al-`Adiyah, Mustaradd ibn Sa`d, Abū-Bilal Mirdas ibn al-`Adiyah, Mus`ir ibn Fadki etc belonged to the tribe of Banū-Tamim. Before Islam, the Banū-Tamim were fire worshippers and because of penury and hardships they used to bury their daughters alive. Therefore, Qays ibn `Asim al-Tamimi said to the Prophet (a.s) on embracing Islam, "O Allah's Messenger (a.s)! During the days of ignorance I have buried eight of my daughters alive!" Even after accepting Islam their wild instinct remained latent in their psyche and came out from time to time when the occasion demanded. Turmah has rightly said about the habits :of Banū-Tamim

Banū-Tamim cannot forget the ways of depravity the same way that a bird cannot “
”.forget its way. They will go astray even if they come to the righteous path

When Banū-Tamim came to al-Madinah as a delegation, and went to the presence of the Prophet (a.s) to embrace Islam, one of them shouted, “O Muhammad (a.s), come out!” Because of this way of addressing, the following verse was revealed concerning
:Banū-Tamim

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُنَادُونَكَ مِنْ وَرَاءِ الْحُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ.

As for those who call out to you from behind the private chambers, surely most of “
” (them do not understand. (٤٩/٤

After the Prophet (a.s), a majority of them recanted the Faith. The infamous claimant of prophethood, Sujah bint al-Harith, was from this tribe. She created rifts amongst the Muslims and encouraged mischief. It can therefore be said about Banū-Tamim that in their hearts Islam was not etched and their intrinsic hypocrisy came out either in the form of apostasy or rebellion. It was their instinct of mischief that made them
.(rise against Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s

One group has termed the Khawarij as Shi`ah to create an impression that the Shi`ah had converted the victory of `Ali (a.s) into failure and then forsook him and later on they came to fight with him. They present this episode as his political ineptitude. No doubt, these people were in the army of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s), but calling them the Shi`ah of `Ali (a.s) and blaming Shi`ism is not right. In the army of the Imam (a.s), there were not men of one sect only. Certainly there was a group who believed his Imamate was through Nass and, because of his being the Vicegerent of the Prophet (a.s), they considered it their bounden duty to obey him and his disobedience as Haram. These people never changed sides nor left him under any circumstances. There was another group that was larger considered his caliphate as the result of the support of the majority the way they had accepted the earlier caliph. In the same order they accepted him as the fourth in the lineage of the caliphs. They were
 .attached to others before `Ali (a.s) became the caliph

After he assumed the caliphate they left Mu`awiyah and came to his side. From them one group, when they felt that `Ali (a.s) would not approve of their ways, found an excuse and veered away from the Imam (a.s). These people were never sincere with Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) and were not Shi`ah of `Ali (a.s) that they broke away from him. The people who are opportunists by nature are fair weather friends. They vanish in times of adversity. These people were not interested in the caliphate of `Ali (a.s) and came to him out of compulsion and left him in the same way. Some were interested in seeing al-Zubayr as the caliph and others were in favor of Talhah. When they saw that neither al-Zubayr nor Talhah were in sight of getting the caliphate, they came towards `Ali (a.s). An army that had such elements, it was the sagacity of `Ali (a.s) that he kept together for such a long time. These elements were in the habit of getting bought and sold. The result was that when victory was almost complete, they joined hands with the enemy and almost turned the tables

Footnote

Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol 4, Page 134 [1]

Tarikh Baghdad, Vol 1, Page 160 [2]

THE VERDICT OF THE REFEREES

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The Agreement of the arbitration was executed on 13 Safar 37 H and during Sha`ban 37 H both the referees, Abū-Mūsa al-Ash`ari and `Amr ibn al-`As met at the place of al-Adhruh lying between Ma`an and Wadi-Mūsa. As agreed earlier, four hundred men from each of the two groups also reached that solace. The chief of the Syrian delegation was Abul-A`war al-Salami and the Iraqi team was led by `Abdullah ibn `Abbas and Shurayh ibn Hani'. Ibn `Abbas was leading the prayers and Shurayh was leading the delegation and had brought a message for Ibn al-`As from `Ali (a.s). Therefore, he met `Amr ibn al-`As and told him that Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) had sent him the message that the best person is one who moves away from the path of vice and comes to the ways of virtue. This he did, in spite of the fact that there are worldly

benefits in vice and hardships in adopting virtue. Therefore, he exhorted him not to close his eyes to the Truth and make compromises for the sake of power and pelf. He said that whatever he acquires in the world, is bound to go away from him one day. He added that the day was not far away when he will be on the death bed, biting his hands, saying how he wished he had not cooperated with the unjust and had not given the wrong verdict accepting bribes. When `Amr heard this message, he said, “Did ever an occasion came when `Ali had given me advice and I had accepted it? Or [ever I acted on his suggestion? Or given any weight to his suggestions?”[1

Shurayh said, “O son of al-Nabighah! I you did not consider Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s) worthy of advising you, then how is it that Abū-Bakr and `Umar would not do anything important without taking his advice? Certainly, they were better persons than you! `Amr said, “A person of my status does not like to talk with you!” Shurayh rejoined, “This pride and conceit in you is because of your descent from al-`As ibn Wa’il or it is because of the infamy of your mother!” Saying this he stood up and came away from him

Before this meeting, Mu`awiyah wrote to `Abdullah ibn `Umar, `Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr, Abū-Jahm ibn Hudhayfah and `Abd al-Rahman ibn `Abd-Yaghūth that they did not take part in the battle of Siffin, but they must attend the meeting at al-Adhruh as delegates from him. Therefore, the persons reached the venue before the proceeds of the meeting commenced. Besides them, there were `Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi-Bakr, Sa`d ibn Abi-Waqqas and Mughirah ibn Shu`bah Mughirah met Abū-Mūsa and `Amr separately before the meeting commenced, took their opinion and returned to Mu`awiyah in Damascus

Mu`awiyah asked Mughirah that he must have studied the circumstances and might have made his own assessment as to whose favor the verdict would go. He said, “I had met Abū-Mūsa and `Amr separately I feel from Abū-Mūsa’s talk that he wants to remove `Ali (a.s) from the caliphate and hand over to such a person who have kept away from fights. His ideal is that only those persons will be beneficial for the people who had not sided with any of the two contending groups nor their hands were red with the blood of the Muslims. I think his leaning is more towards `Abdullah ibn `Umar and you know the bent of mind of `Amr ibn al-`As. His point of view is diametrically opposite to that of Abū-Mūsa. He thinks that remaining neutral at the time of war id not justified. He himself wants to be the caliph or promote his son, `Abdullah, to the position. He considers none else capable of holding the position than himself or his son!” Mu`awiyah was worried when he heard this. When he established contact with `Amr he removed the doubts from the mind of Mu`awiyah

Before declaring the verdict, the referees had to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution. Therefore, they sat at a predetermined place and the discussion started. `Amr ibn al-`As told Abū-Mūsa, “What is your opinion about `Uthman? Was he killed as an oppressed person? “Abū-Mūsa said, “Yes! He was assassinated as an oppressed person and his killing cannot be justified!” `Amr said, “Mu`awiyah is his successor and :inheritor, and the Qur’an says

وَمَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لَوْلِيَّهِ سُلْطَانًا فَلَا يُشْرَفُ فِي الْقَتْلِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مَنْصُورًا.

And whoever is slain unjustly, We have indeed given to his heir authority, so let him“
”(not exceed the just limits in slaying; surely he is aided. (١٧/٣٣)

Amr added, “Besides this, the superior pedigree that Mu`awiyah has is not hidden` from you. He was a Companion of the Prophet (a.s) and the writer in the Court of the Prophet (a.s) and the brother of Umm al-Mu`minin Ummu-Habibah. We should keep these points in mind when we arrive at a decision about the verdict. You also know that the benefit that would accrue if he gets the position, they cannot be expected from anyone else.” After hearing `Amr, Abū-Mūsa said, “When you say that Mu`awiyah is `Uthman’s ‘wali’, it is not tenable with the sons of the deceased being around. `Uthman’s ‘wali’ is his son `Amr. How will it be possible for us to overlook the early Muhajirūn and nominate a person as caliph who neither has precedence in acceptance of Islam nor he has any apparent superiority in him to qualify for the position. You speak of his pedigree. If we make that the yardstick for the selection of the caliph, we must look for the progeny of Abrahah ibn Sabbah because he will be from the descendants of the kings who were ruling the entire East and the West of the world! As far as the questions of benefits are concerned, I cannot take bribes and sell myself! In my opinion, the most suitable person for the caliphate is `Abdullah ibn .`Umar! We can perpetuate the name of `Umar by bringing him to the caliphate

Amr said, “In that case, my son `Abdullah would be an ideal candidate. He is a man` of learning and piety and has also been a companion of the Prophet (a.s) and he had the privilege of Migrating when the Prophet (a.s) ordered movement of the Muslims to al-Madinah!” Abū-Mūsa said, “But his hands are red with the blood of Muslims! He had participated with you in the unnecessary battles! I still think that `Abdullah ibn `Umar is the best candidate because he has kept away from conflicts and internecine wars.” `Amr said, “Power can be vested in a person who not only takes care of himself, but
”.has concern for the needs of others as well

Abū-Mūsa said, “The Muslims have entrusted to us this matter to us after a bloody war. We shall have to address the issue with due diligence and care, lest some new problem raises its head.’ `Amr said, “Then, tell me what we shall do?” Abū-Mūsa said, “I have one idea in my mind. We shall depose both Mu`awiyah and `Ali (a.s) and leave the choice to the Muslims to decide on the most suitable candidate to be their caliph through a Shūra.” `Amr said, “This suggestion is not bad. I agree with it.” Therefore,
.both the referees decided to announce this to the delegates

When both the referees separated after the meeting, Ibn `Abbas told Abū-Mūsa, “O Abū-Mūsa! I feel that the decision you have mutually arrived at, `Amr will not abide by that. He is a very cunning person and he will certainly trick you. Therefore, when the time for the announcement came, you must ask him to talk first and then you must make your announcement. If you do not take this caution, remember, he will trick you in such a manner that you will not be in a position to show your face to anyone. Abū-Mūsa, the matter on which we have reached unanimity of opinion, in that there is no chance of trickery or deceit. When the day following the meeting, the referees and all the observers from Iraq and Syria assembled in the Masjid, `Amr told Abū-Mūsa,
”.“You make the first announcement

Amr was, throughout these negotiations, giving precedence to Abū-Mūsa as if he` was doing it in deference to the age of the person. Because of his simplicity, Abū-Mūsa was getting carried away. He neglected the advice of Ibn `Abbas and very humbly got up and went to the podium. He first delivered a sermon praising Allah and the Prophet (a.s). Then he addressed the crowd in these words, “In view of the welfare of the Ummah we have decided, after much deliberation, that we both shall depose `Ali (a.s) and Mu`awiyah and hand over the matter of the selection of the caliph to the Shūra. Therefore, I remove both `Ali (a.s) and Mu`awiyah from the .positions they are holding. Now you can select anyone to be the head of the realm

This announcement was very shocking for the Iraqis. But they kept sitting with great patience to hear the same announcement reiterated by `Amr ibn al-`As. `Amr stood at the podium and uttered some words of praise for Allah and said, “You have heard whatever Abū-Mūsa has said! He is the referee nominated by `Ali (a.s). He has removed `Ali (a.s) from his position! I too remove him in a similar manner. But I retain Mu`awiyah because he is the wali of `Uthman and is seeking qisas for his blood. He is deserving of being the successor of `Uthman!” At this statement, the Syrians started shouting slogans of joy and the Iraqis were dumb-founded and looked at each other in surprise. The shouted at this treacherous announcement, but what had happened, had happened! Abū-Mūsa, who was responsible for what happened, was numbed with surprise at the deceit of `Amr ibn al-`As. He told `Amr, “May Allah take away the capabilities from you! You kept me in the darkness and had cheated me! You are like the dog which shivers and keeps its tongue out, whether you hit it or leave it!” `Amr too forgot all the good manners and respect for the old man that he was showing a :while ago. He said

[You are like the ass on which books have been loaded!]"[۷“

Shurayh ibn Hani' could not control himself at this act of treachery and deceit and going forward he whipped `Amr ibn al-`As. He too picked up his baton. Some persons :intervened and separated them. Shurayh used to say after this event

I never repented for anything that instead of the whip, why not I used my sword on“
[`Amr!"[۷

Abbas too very angrily told Abū-Mūsa, “You have seen the result of not heeding my ` advice. It is none of your mistake! Only such things can be expected from you! It is the fault of those persons who, despite your incapability, nominated you for the very ”.important task

:Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi-Bakr said`

[It would have been better for Abū-Mūsa if he died before that day!"[۷“

Similarly other persons too expressed their surprise and displeasure at the simplicity and vulnerability of Abū-Mūsa. But the arrow had been shot and who would go into the details of how the verdict was manipulated. The Syrians moved towards Damascus singing and dancing in procession. Reaching there congratulated Mu`awiyah for the honor of caliphate that came his way! The Iraqis trudged towards al-Kūfah sad and crestfallen. Abū-Mūsa too hid his shamed face and proceeded towards al-Madinah

Abū-Mūsa and `Amr had a binding that their verdict will be only according to the Qur'an and, if they were not able to arrive at a conclusive decision through the Book, then they could make access to the Sunnah of the Prophet (a.s). But none of the felt the need of making access to the Qur'an and the Sunnah According to which Verse of the Qur'an or the Tradition of the Prophet (a.s), `Amr suggested the name of his son, `Abdullah, to be nominated as the caliph? Abū-Mūsa similarly proposed the name of .`Abdullah ibn `Umar

They were both making proposals contrary to their terms of reference. When the early Muhajirūn were alive, how could they come up with the names of much younger persons. These two persons did not have any superiority of piety and learning as well. The son of Ibn al-`As is the person who, at first, warns his father not to go near Mu`awiyah because of his greed for the world. Then he himself joins the ranks of Mu`awiyah's men and fights with `Ali (a.s) in the battle of Siffin. `Abdullah ibn `Umar was the person whom his own father, `Umar, considered incapable of becoming the .caliph because he was unaware of the procedure and requirements for divorce

When he constituted the Shūra of six persons, he did not include the name of this son in the list. Then, what right had the referees to nominate a caliph? Or to depose Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) from the caliphate and hand it over to Mu`awiyah? The people who crowded round Mu`awiyah, had come to him for the purpose of seeking qisas for `Uthman's blood. They participated in the war because Mu`awiyah had drilled it into their minds that the responsibility for the assassination of `Uthman was on `Ali (a.s). They did not participate in the war to put Mu`awiyah on the seat of the caliphate, but these referees totally forgot about the qisas and made the caliphate the topic of discussion! The caliphate was neither in dispute nor had anything to do with the arbitration. They should have discussed about the assassins of `Uthman and should have decided whether Mu`awiyah was entitled to claim retaliation for the blood of `Uthman or is it the right and duty of the center? But when the minutes of this meeting are studied in detail, not a single reference has been made of the suspected assassins of `Uthman nor did they bother to mention about the qisas. However `Amr said once that `Uthman was assassinated in oppressive circumstances and that Mu`awiyah was his wali and the claimant for qisas. But then, this talk too ends up with the mention about the caliphate and it is used as Mu`awiyah's qualification for the caliphate. Ibn Hajar al-Makki, and the historians of his ilk, tried their best to prove that Mu`awiyah's heart was free of the greed for the caliphate. They have stressed that he was not fighting for the caliphate and his battle was only for seeking the retaliation :for the blood of `Uthman. Therefore, he writes

The belief of al-sunnah wal-jama`ah is that the wars fought between Mu`awiyah“ and `Ali (a.s) were not because Mu`awiyah was fighting with `Ali (a.s) for the [caliphate. For the caliphate the consensus (majority decision) was already there!”[۱۵

If Ibn Hajar meant that Mu`awiyah had no dispute with `Ali (a.s) about the caliphate, was accepting his caliphate, then it is only a shallow claim that has no proof. If he had accepted the caliphate of `Ali (a.s), then what was the need to refuse owing allegiance to him? Denying to extend one’s hand is bay`ah is certainly tantamount to denying acceptance of his caliphate. If he says that Mu`awiyah was not aiming at elevating himself to the caliphate, the events of those days prove quite the contrary. If he was not aiming at the caliphate, how could he fulfill his promise of giving the -governorate of Egypt to `Amr ibn al

As! On what strength Mu`awiyah offered the governorate of al-Basrah or al-Kūfah` to Ziyad ibn Khasfah, a commander of `Ali’s army as a bribe? On what basis he offered Khorasan to Khalid ibn Mu`ammar and Iraq to Qayl ibn Sa`d. All these were the prerogative of the caliph, and Mu`awiyah was angling for that position. It is clear all these promises could have been met only after assuming the seat of Caliphate! All these conflicts were the precursor of the ambition to establish the Umayyad hegemony

Mu`awiyah’s came about against the “consensus” and because of the treachery of `Amr ibn al-`As. It was decided by both the referees that both `Ali (a.s) and Mu`awiyah must be deposed from their positions. But `Amr contravened the understanding and announced that `Amr ibn al-`As upheld the removal of `Ali (a.s) and announced that Mu`awiyah was not deposed from his position. A caliphate that was based on this treacherous act is compared with the caliphate that had the consensus of the people is something ridiculous that has happened in the annals of the history of Islam. In the view of the scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah, when there is one caliph in position, there cannot be bay`ah for the selection of another person in :his place. In fact, there are several traditions of the Prophet (a.s) in this regard

[When a situation arise that there is bay`ah for two caliphs, kill the latter claimant.]“[۶

The part played by Abū-Mūsa about the arbitration cannot be expected of a person with average intelligence. First he tried to place `Ali (a.s) and Mu`awiyah at the same level made the move of deposing both from their positions. This would mean that both were equal and claimants for the caliphate and that he had been entrusted the duty to make a decision about that! However there was no question of deposing Mu`awiyah was not there because he was neither a caliph nor the candidate for the position! Amir al-Mu'minin's caliphate was having the consensus of the people of Hijaz, Egypt, Yemen, Khorasan and his selection was also backed by the Senior .(Companions of the Prophet (a.s

Treating them on par in the matter of the caliphate is something very ridiculous. If this was not the result of the Umayyad intrigue, then what was it? Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) knew this and therefore he was opposing the nomination of Abū-Mūsa as the referee. He had also experienced his actions during the Battle of the Camel as well. This responsibility too goes to the weak shoulders of the persons who insisted on his selection although they knew that Abū-Mūsa carried hatred against the Imam (a.s) in .his heart

Abū-Mūsa also knew that in the event of `Ali (a.s) succeeding, he would not get any benefits from him However, success of Mu`awiyah would bring him some position of importance or other. Therefore, When Mu`awiyah came to power, Abū-Mūsa wore a big cap and addressed him with the appellation, “Peace be upon you, O Allah's Trustee.” Mu`awiyah understood that he had come to get the gratification for his :services. When he was out of sight, Mu`awiyah told his courtiers

This reverend old man has come that I appoint him governor to some province. But,
[by Allah! I shall not give him any position!]"[۷

Because of the lopsided decision on the arbitration, the differences remained as they were. In fact, It gave rise to a second front against him in the shape of the Khawarij
!on one side was Syria and on the other the mischief of the Khawarij

Footnote

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۳, Page ۱۶۷ [۱]

Al-Akhhbār al-Tiwāl, Page ۲۰۰ [۲]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۳, Page ۱۶۸ [۳]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۳, Page ۱۶۸ [۴]

Al-Sawā`iq al-Muhriqah, Page ۲۱۶ [۵]

Jāmi` al-Usūl, Vol ۴, Page ۴۴۲ [۶]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۴, Page ۲۴۵ [۷]

THE BATTLE OF NAHRAWAN

THE BATTLE OF NAHRAWAN

Abū-Mūsa announced the deposing of `Ali (a.s) and with this `Amr ibn al-`As announced the appointment of Mu`awiyah. The way they played with the norms set by the Qur'an and Shari`ah, is a part of the history. Those who could not defeat Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) in the battlefield, scored a point in stealth and treachery. They turned their faces from the truth and honesty and became an instrument to comply
.with Mu`awiyah's demands

The verdict of the referees was not a surprise for `Ali (a.s). He knew that the referees would do everything to protect the interests of Mu`awiyah. Although the Khawarij were forcing the Imam (a.s) to declare a war before the decision about the

arbitration, he patiently awaited the outcome. The referees bypassed their terms of reference and, instead of limiting their work to the inquiry about the killing of `Uthman, they pronounced their verdict about the caliphate. Further, they neither referred to the Holy Qur'an nor the Traditions of the Prophet (a.s) for their deliberations and decisions. In these circumstances Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) had to decide to renew the fight with the Syrians. For the Imam (a.s), they were only two alternatives—either to bow down his head to the forces of evil or to attack Syria once .again. His duty demanded that he should adopt the second alternative

When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) decided to wage a war against the Syrians, he wanted to register the cooperation of the Khawarij who were themselves keen to settle scores with Syria. Therefore, he wrote to `Abdullah ibn Wahab and Yazid ibn Husayn, "The two persons whom we had accepted as the referees, acted against the norms of the Qur'an and were overwhelmed with their selfish motives. They neither made access to the norms of the Qur'an nor the Sunnah of the Prophet (a.s). Now our position is the same as was there before the arbitration. Therefore, you must cooperate with us and we shall make a joint and concerted move towards the enemy, until Allah decides
"between us and them; and Allah makes the best decisions

The Khawarij wrote in their reply that he was now preparing for the fight to satisfy his own psyche and not to please Allah. They added that if he confessed about his infidelity and expressed his penitence, they would then consider cooperation with him. They also threatened that if he did not express penitence, they would fight with him. When the Imam (a.s) saw that the Khawarij were adamant, he ignored them and
:started mobilizing his army. He addressed a sermon to the people of al-Kūfah

O People of al-Kūfah! Remember! One who does not take part in jihad will certainly“ be confronted with destruction and damnation! Rise and tighten your belts to fight with those who are the enemies of Allah and His Prophet (a.s). They want to extinguish the Radiance of Allah. They are unjust, wayward and deviants from the Right Path. They neither understand the Qur'an nor the Shari`ah! They are not qualified for the caliphate. By Allah! If they come to power, they will trample the Islamic norms and establish the Herculean and Khusrowite system! Rise and fight those enemies of the Faith! We have sought military help from al-Basrah as well. As
".soon as it arrives, we shall march towards Syria

The Imam (a.s) wrote to the governor of al-Basrah, Ibn `Abbas, that he was starting for war with the Syrians. He asked him to mobilize men and come expeditiously to al-Nukhaylah, their cantonment for the mobilization of troops. On receiving this message Ibn `Abbas and al-Ahnaf ibn Qays informed the people of al-Basrah about the Imam's decision and asked them to get ready for departure. At this call, ١,٥٠٠ men volunteered to join. When Ibn `Abbas saw this meager number of volunteers, he arranged a meeting of the people of al-Basrah and told them, "O people! I have advised you the command of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s)! He has ordered you to come for fighting with the enemy. I am disappointed that from this big city where sixty thousand warriors live, only ١,٥٠٠ have volunteered to join! If you shirk participating in the war and keep sitting at home, you will repent your inaction! I have nominated Jariyah ibn Qudamah al-Sa'idi for the mobilization of troops. Gather under his flag." With this exhortation a further one thousand and seven hundred persons reported. This small contingent of three thousand and two hundred men marched towards al-Kūfah

When this contingent arrived, the elite of al-Kūfah came to the presence of the Imam (a.s). He told them that the cooperation extended by the people of al-Basrah was before them. You are my supporters and protectors. Every chief from you must persuade his tribe to come for fighting the jihad. Every able-bodied man must join. At this point Sa`id ibn Qays al-Hamdani, `Adi ibn Hatam, Ziyad ibn Khasfah, Hijr ibn `Adi and other chiefs said that they will extend the fullest cooperation in mobilizing men for the war. Therefore, at their instance, they could mobilize ٩٥,٠٠٠ men. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) wrote to Sa`d ibn Mas`ūd, the governor of al-Mada'in to raise troops Thus ٧٠,٠٠٠ (men were mobilized under the standard of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s

When all the preparations for war were over, some people said that it would be better to deal with the Khawarij first, before proceeding to Syria. The Imam (a.s) said it would be better to leave the Khawarij alone at the moment and proceed towards Syria. He said that if they got busy elsewhere, Mu`awiyah would get more time to strengthen himself further. The people said that he should do what he thought was the best. They again assured that they were with him. Sayfi ibn Fasil al-Shaybani said, "O Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s)! We are in your group and your strength! We are the friends of those who are your friends and the enemies of those who are your enemies! You will, Allah willing, find no dearth of friends and supporters and there would not be any diminution in our determination. "Muhriz ibn Shihab al-Tamimi said, "O Amir al-Mu'minin! We are under you and your followers! For your succor we have become one! Whether you attack the Khawarij or the Syrians, we shall not hesitate to fight with your enemies! Battle with your enemies is a great jihad and will bring wondrous
"rewards

In this time, the mischief of the Khawarij had assumed serious proportions. They had become brigands and attacked all the travelers who passed their way. Whoever came across them on the way, they would ask him about the arbitration. If the person expressed his unhappiness about it, they would leave him. Otherwise, they would kill him. However, they left the non-Muslims unmolested saying that they were Dhimmi. They considered that beating a pig was a sin and killing a Muslim an act of piety. Al-Mubarrad writes in al-Kamil that Khawarij found a Christian and a Muslim on the way to Nahrawan. They killed the Muslim and left the Christian saying that the Prophet (a.s) has termed the Christians as Dhimmi and harming them is a sin and a transgression of the agreement made by the Prophet (a.s) with them. If someone wanted to save his life from them, the only way was to pretend that he was a Dhimmi or a polytheist. Wasil ibn `Ata called himself a polytheist and escaped from their harm. The story goes that Wasil and some of his companions came across a band of Khawarij. Wasil warned his men that they were faced with Khawarij and must maintain their silence and that he would speak on their behalf. Saying this he went near the Khawarij and said, "We are polytheists and want to seek your protection and to learn about the do's and don'ts of the Qur'an and act according to them." Wasil said

that they believed him and started teaching about the norms of the Qur'an and they kept nodding their heads. When Wasil and his men agreed to what the Khawarij talked about, they said that now they were brothers and could go wherever they wanted to. Wasil said that Allah has observed

وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ أَبْلِغْهُ مَأْمَنَهُ.

And if one of the idolaters seeks protection from you, grant him protection till he“
” (hears the word of Allah, then make him attain his place of safety. (٩/٦)

.Therefore, you must guide us safely to our home

The Khawarij looked at each other in surprise and said, “Their demand, in the light of the Qur’an is right. Therefore, we must take them until their homes.” They therefore guided Wasil’s group safely until their destination. Thus, he acceded to taqiyyah to
.save his and his companions’ lives

Similarly, `Abdullah, the son of the Prophet’s companion Khabbab ibn al-Aratt came across the Khawarij with a copy of the Qur’an tied to his neck. They asked who he was. He said that he was the son of the Companion of the Prophet (a.s), Khabbab. They said that if he was frightened coming across them, he should chase away the fear. They said that they wanted to hear the traditions narrated by his father.

: `Abdullah said that his father had heard the Prophet (a.s) say

A mischief will rise when the hearts of men will be dead and the bodies inanimate;“
men will be mu’min in the evening and by the morning they will be infidels. Again by
[the evening they will become mu’min.”[١]

The Khawarij said that they wanted to hear the same tradition from him. They asked him, “Now tell us what do you say about `Ali (a.s) when he accepted the idea of the arbitration?” He replied, “He understands Allah more than you and is very careful in
”.the matters of the Faith and has a perfect vision

They said, "You are a worshipper of personalities, and instead of deeds, you look for names. By Allah! We shall punish you for following the demands of your psyche! We shall kill you in such a manner that none else was ever killed that way." Saying this, they tied him up with ropes. Then they took him and his pregnant wife near a date palm. One date fell down from that tree which one Khariji picked and put in his mouth. Others shouted, "Haram! Haram!" The person immediately threw away the date. Then a pig passed that way and one Khariji killed it. The other Khawarij said that what he did was mischief and until they convinced the owner of the pig, they were restless. When `Abdullah saw this attitude of the Khawarij he said, "When you exercise such great care in small matters, I have no fear of harm from you because I am a Muslim and have not committed any crime to deserve to be killed!" But they did not pay any heed to his words and throwing him to the ground killed him heartlessly. They slit the .stomach of his pregnant wife and killed her too

They also killed three women of Banū-al-ta'i and Ummu-Sinan al-Saydawiyyah. After these heartless murders, they wanted to buy the fruits of a date palm from a Christian. He said that he did not need any payment and they could take the fruits if they wanted. They said that they would not take a Dhimmi's material without paying for it. The Christian said that he was surprised that they had killed a good person like Ibn Khabbab for no sin of his and do not want at the same time to even take the fruits of a tree without paying for it

Seeing these acts of barbarity, it was not possible to leave them any more to their scruples. Further, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) had the program of leaving al-Kūfah for Syria. With little protection there, the Khawarij could take advantage of the situation. It was possible that they occupy the capital and commit massacre of the innocents there. In the army of the Imam (a.s), the majority was of the men from al-Kūfah and their families would be vulnerable to attack in their absence. It was therefore thought necessary to deal with the Khawarij before proceeding to Syria. Therefore, the Imam (a.s) ordered his army to move towards Nahrawan. When the army started its journey, Musafir ibn `Afif al-Azdi said, "O Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s)! I know about the movement of the stars and this is not auspicious time to start the journey. There may
 "be great harm in store for us

The Imam (a.s) said, "Can you tell me what is inside the belly of my horse?" He said, "I can calculate and say!" The Imam (a.s) said, "One who believes in what you say, will be
 :denying the writ of the Holy Qur'an. The Holy Book says

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَيُنزِلُ الْغَيْثَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْأَرْحَامِ وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ مَّاذَا تَكْسِبُ غَدًا وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ.

Surely Allah is He with Whom is the knowledge of the hour, and He sends down the“ rain and He knows what is in the wombs; and no one knows what he shall earn on the morrow; and no one knows in what land he shall die; surely Allah is Knowing, Aware.

”(31/34)

Then the Prophet (a.s) chided the astrologer and told his troops that they should not give any cognizance to such words of superstition and trust on Allah

When the army moved towards Nahrawan, they learned that the Khawarij had crossed the canal of Tabristan somewhere between Halwan and Baghdad. When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) knew about this, he said, "It cannot be! They are still on this side of the river and will be killed on the land of Rumaylah." At that moment a trooper of the advance guard came running and said, "I have seen with my own eyes those men crossing the bridge." The Imam (a.s) asked for his confirmation thrice and every time he swore that he had seen the Khawarij crossing the bridge to the other side. The Imam (a.s) then said

By Allah! They have not crossed the bridge! Their place of death is this side of the bridge! By Allah! Even ten of your men will not be killed and even ten of them (the [Khawarij] will not survive." [Y

On the one hand there were messages that the Khawarij had crossed over to the other side and here Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was insisting they will meet their end only this side of the canal. With these exchanges, some people started getting doubts in their minds. One youth knit his brows and said, "If the Khawarij have already crossed the canal, I shall aim my spear at the chest of the Imam (a.s)! Now he has started predicting about the things to come

When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) saw this state of mind of the people, he spurred his horse and galloped fast towards the canal. When he reached near the bank, he found the Khawarij camped this side of the canal. In that time, the army too reached the spot. When they found the Khawarij on their side of the bank, they raised the slogan of :“allahu-akbar”! The Imam (a.s) addressed his army

[By Allah! Neither have I told a lie nor was a wrong message at all given to me!”[۱۳“

The Imam (a.s) established his camp at a distance of three miles from the camp of the Khawarij. When the Khawarij saw the Imam's army, they started raising slogans of “There is no referee but Allah”. They sent a word to the Imam (a.s) that he still had the time to repent, and then they would enter into his bay`ah. As a second alternative, he should demit his office of caliph to enable them to select an imam of their choice. The Imam (a.s) sent them word to hand over the killers of his men, otherwise his army would claim qisas for their blood. He also informed them that if they agreed to this offer, they would be left alone until the army returned from Syria. In that time, they could think over and decide to seek forgiveness for their past misbehavior. The Khawarij replied, “We have all killed your men. We all consider it legitimate to shed
”their and your blood

Instead of getting angry over this reply, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) tried to make them see reason by sending Qays ibn Sa`d al-Ansari to ask them to shun mischief. He reached the camp of the Khawarij and told them, “O people! You are committing a grave sin. Unnecessarily you are calling us infidels. Beware of thoughtless killing of men! Join with us to do jihad against the enemy. “At this `Abdullah ibn Shajarah al-Salami said, “Now the curtains have been raised from our eyes! The darkness of vice has vanished! The radiance of the Truth is everywhere. We cannot cooperate with you now at any cost! “Qays said, “I plead with you in the name of Allah! Do not indulge in mischief and do not cause your own deaths!” After him Abū-Ayyūb al-Ansari went to their camp and tried to stop them from doing mischief and said, “We do not understand what is the cause of your enmity for us? Why are you determined on fighting and battling?” If you are so fond of fighting, come, we shall together fight with our common enemy! “The Khawarij said, “If we side with you, you might once again impose on us the

”arbitration

p: 78.

Abū-Ayyūb said, “You must first look to the present and then you can bother about the future!” But the Khawarij remained adamant. All efforts at putting sense in them went futile. In the end Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s) himself went to their camp. And said, “O people! For lack of vision and understanding, you have veered away from us. Because of your false emotions, you have gone astray from the Right Path. I want to warn you! You will be killed in this valley and the turnings of this valley! The Ummah will demean you and there will be comments against you from all sides. Your stand was certainly wrong. And your ire unreasonable. You might remember that I had warned you against accepting the arbitration and said that it was a trick. But you did not listen to my repeated appeals and stopped fighting. If I had accepted the arbitration, it was under pressure from you people. Even then, I did not accept it with closed eyes. I had taken a commitment from the referees that their verdict must be only in the light of the Holy Qur’an and the Prophet’s traditions. But they ruled against the Book and the Prophet’s Sunnah. Therefore, we have rejected their verdict

The Khawarij said, “No doubt! We did accept the arbitration and because of that act, we rendered ourselves infidel. But we have repented. You too must express penitence for accepting the arbitration and thereby becoming an infidel. Then we shall enter your bay`ah and fight with the enemy.” The Imam (a.s) said, “After embracing the Faith with the Prophet (a.s), migrating from Makkah with him, taking part with him in the ghazawat that he fought do you want me to accept that I committed an act of infidelity? How is it possible?” At this juncture, Khuraj raised noises and said, “If you do not confess that you committed an act of infidelity, we do not want to talk any more with you!” The Imam (a.s) said, “By making senseless noises matters cannot be resolved! Let us decide in this manner. You send a representative to me to discuss the matter. If he convinced me, I shall agree that the act of accepting the arbitration was infidelity and I express repentance for that. But if I convince him, then you must shun
”.the adamant attitude

In the beginning, the Khawarij were reluctant. But in the end, they relented. They appointed `Abdullah Kava as their mouthpiece. The Imam (a.s) told Ibn al-Kawwa, “On what matter you are upset that earlier you had very willingly owed your allegiance to me? You also fought with my opponents in the Battle of the Camel.” He said, “At that point the need for the arbitration had not arisen.” The Imam (a.s) said, “O Ibn al-Kawwa! Is my decision more correct or that of the Prophet (a.s)?” Ibn al-Kawwa said, “Certainly the Prophet’s decision!” Then the Imam (a.s) asked, You must :have heard these words of Allah

فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَنَا وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ.

But whoever disputes with you in this matter after what has come to you of knowledge, then say: Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our near people and your near people, then let us be earnest in (prayer, and pray for the curse of Allah on the liars. (3/61)

Did Allah ask the Prophet (a.s) to do Mubalahah because he had any doubt about the Prophet (a.s) being truthful and those Christians the liars and He wanted to remove the doubt?” Ibn al-Kawwa said, “Neither Allah had any doubt nor His Prophet (a.s). It was just a protest against the Christians.” The Imam (a.s) said, “Then the arbitration too was a protest” Ibn al-Kawwa said, “Your agreeing to the appointment of the referees was a proof that you had a doubt whether you are on the right or not! Although the war was fought on the basis that you were on the right and the Syrians were wrong. Therefore, you had said in clear terms to Mu`awiyah, ‘If the Book of Allah decided in our favor, you follow us and if It decided in your favor we shall follow you. What other meaning could be attached to this that you yourself were doubtful whether you were right or not. When you yourself had a doubt, then we too are justified to doubt about you

The Imam (a.s), “This agreement was conditional that when an agreement is conditional, there is no question of our doubting the stand we had taken. Even the Prophet (a.s) had made such conditional agreements. Therefore, the Holy Qur’an says

قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِكِتَابٍ مِّنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ هُوَ أَهْدَىٰ مِنْهُمَا أَتَّبِعُهُ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ.

Say: Then bring some (other) book from Allah which is a better guide than both of“
”(them, (that) I may follow it, if you are truthful. (٢٨/٤٩

Ibn al-Kawwa said, “This is true. But by agreeing to the appointment of the referees, you had entrusted Allah’s work to others and thus you committed infidelity.” The Imam (a.s) said, “I had only appointed Abū-Mūsa as the referee.” Ibn al-Kawwa said, “Abū-Mūsa is an infidel!” The Imam asked, “Since when he is an infidel? When he was
”?appointed a referee for the arbitration or when he gave his verdict

Ibn al-Kawwa said, “When he gave the verdict!” The Imam (a.s) said, “Then you have accepted that when he was appointed as a referee he was a Muslim and you had expected that he will give the verdict according of the Commands revealed by Allah.
”.Therefore, it was right to appoint him as a referee

Ibn al-Kawwa said, “But when he gave the verdict he did become an infidel!” The Imam (a.s) said, “If the Prophet (a.s) sent a Muslim to some infidels to invite them to the Faith and, instead of preaching Islam, he started preaching them wrong things,
”?will the Prophet (a.s) be responsible for the person’s act

Ibn al-Kawwa said, “No!” The Imam (a.s) added, “Then! If Abū-Mūsa turned an infidel, why do you blame me? What justification you have to keep the swords over your shoulders and keep killing the Muslims? As far as the second referee, `Umar ibn al-`As is concerned, he was appointed by Mu`awiyah. How could I name him arbitrator?

”.If `Umar ibn al-`As had his way, he would even kill me

Now Ibn al-Kawwa asked, “Then, how did you agree to one Muslim and the other infidel referee in the arbitration?” The Imam (a.s) said, “Allah has said the following permitting appointment of an arbitrator in the matters of dispute between man and wife

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَابْعَثُوا حَكَمًا مِنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَمًا مِنْ أَهْلِهَا.

And if you fear a breach between the two, then appoint judge from his people and a “ (judge from her people. (4/35

If a Muslim marries a Jewish or Christian woman and differences arise between them, then it is natural that the man will have a Muslim referee from his family and the woman an infidel referee from her family! Then, from the Holy Qur’an, is it not proved “?that while one referee is a Muslim, the other can be an infidel

When the Khawarij saw that Ibn kava was not able to give satisfactory arguments, they sent word to him to terminate the discussion and go back. He therefore left the talks half way and went back to his people. Although Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s) proved his point, there was no change in the adamant attitude of the Khawarij. Now there was no other alternative than fighting with them. The Imam (a.s) arranged his troops in proper formations The right flank was in the command of Hijr ibn `Adi and the left under Shabath ibn Ruby. The cavalry was under Abū-Ayyūb al-Ansari and the footmen under Abū-Qutadah al-Ansari. The men from al-Madinah, who were ٧٠٠ or ٨٠٠ in number, were put under Qays ibn Sa`d al-Ansari. The Prophet (a.s) himself took position at the heart of the formation. The Khawarij too organized their rows

When rows were arranging opposite rows, (a.s) gave a white banner to Abū-Ayyūb al-Ansari and sent him with a contingent of two thousand men to go towards the Khawarij. He went ahead with his men and announced, “O people! Amir al-Mu’minin says that those of you who decide to come under this banner, or return to al-Kūfah or al-Mada’in, or leave company of that group, there is amnesty for them! “The effect this announcement had was that Farwah ibn Nawfal al-Ashja`i, who was among the elite of Khawarij, started telling to his tribesmen, “By Allah! I do not know with what justification we have decided to confront `Ali (a.s)? Neither we have any proof to justify this conflict, nor there any reasonable justification for fighting. We shall stay
”!away from these people and can later on decide on our course of action

Saying this, he moved away from the Khawarij with his five hundred tribesmen and went to Bandnajin. Another group went towards al-Kūfah. A hundred persons came under the flag of Abū-Ayyūb joining the Imam’s army. This was a proof of the just
.stand of the Imam (a.s) and his spirit of forbearance and peace

Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s) talked to the rest of the Khawarij about the terrifying effects of war. But they were adamant on their stand. Now only the Khawarij had to make their initial strike for the battle to commence because the Imam (a.s) had instructed that his men should not be the first to start fighting. At last one Khariji came out and killed three men from the Imam’s army. The Imam (a.s) moved forward and attacked him.
”!When the sword hit him, the man said, “How sweet is going to the Heaven

When `Abdullah ibn Wahab heard this, he said, “By Allah! I do not know if you are going to heaven or the Hell!” When one Khariji of Banū-Sa`d heard this he said, “I have come here at the temptation of `Abdullah ibn Wahab and even he does not know whether our stand is right or not and is not sure whether fighting for this cause we go to Heaven or the Hell?” Then along with the men from his tribe, he moved away from the ranks of the Khawarij. Instead of combating man-to-man, the Khawarij very soon started general fighting. Therefore, they broke the sheaths of their swords, put arrows in their bows, put up the spears and shouting the slogan, “No judgment except Allah’s” started a concerted attack. It was such a severe attack that the feet of the .cavalry were uprooted

They moved back a little and consolidated their positions once again. (a.s) told his men, “O youth! Move forward and fight like tigers!” Saying this he too stood up. Now, when the army attacked as a single unit under his command, there was blood everywhere. With this concerted attack, the rows of the enemy troops got uprooted. The Imam’s sword got twisted with the intensity of use. He had to straighten it putting on his knee. His army was moving forward killing the enemy troops until they surrounded the Khawarij from all sides. Now there was no way of escape for them. Four hundred Khawarij were severely wounded and not fit for fighting. Nine persons escaped and saved their lives. Out of them two went to Oman, two to Sajistan, two to Kirman two towards al-Jazirah, and one reached Taymūrin in Yemen. The rest of the Khawarij were killed. From the chiefs of the Khawarij, `Abdullah ibn Wahab was killed by Ziyad ibn Khasfah, Yazid ibn Husayn al-ta’i by Abū-Ayyūb al-Ansari,, Hurqūs ibn Zuhayr by Jaysh ibn Rabi`ah al-Kinani, `Abdullah ibn Shajarah al-Salami by `Abdullah ibn Zahr al-Khawalani and Shurayh ibn Awfa was killed by Qays ibn Mu`awiyah. Only eight persons were killed from the army of Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s). They were Rawbah ibn Wabar al-Bujali, Sa`id ibn Khalid al-Subay`i, `Abdullah ibn Hammad al-Ajni, Fayyad ibn Khalil al-Azdi, Kaysūm ibn Salamah al-Juhani, `Ubayd ibn `Ubayd al-Khawalani, Jami` ibn Jath`am al-Kindi and Habib ibn `Asim al-Asadi

When Amir al-Mu'minin's men saw that most of the Khawarij were killed, they said, "Now! They have been obliterated from the face of the Earth!" The Imam (a.s) said "Not at all! They are still there in the backbones of men and the wombs of women." Whenever any group of them rises, it will be cut off until the last of them turn into [thieves and brigands.]"[۴

When the battle was over a search was made for a person, Dhul-Thadiyah, from the ranks of the Khawarij because Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) used to say before their :rebellion

One group will veer away from the Faith in a manner the arrow goes piercing" through the game. Their sign is that among them there will be a person with a [maimed hand.]"[۵

Some persons searched for him among the dead, but were unable to find his body. They returned to the Imam (a.s) and said, "We have searched all over and have failed to find the body of the person." The Imam (a.s) said, "By Allah! His body is there among the dead!" Saying this he took Sulayman ibn Thumamah al-Hanafi and Rayyan ibn Sabrah to search for the body. When they reached the bank of the canal, about fifty bodies were lying in a ditch. When they removed some of the bodies, they found the :body of Dhul-Thadiyah. The Imam (a.s) told his companions

Allah is the Greatest! I neither told a lie nor was false information given to me. If I had" not the doubt that you will turn your faces from action, I would have informed you about those who fought invisibly with the Khawarij and the right on which we are, they recognize it. I would have also informed you of the blessings that Allah has [promised through the Prophet (a.s).]"[۶

While returning through the piles of dead Khawarij, the Imam (a.s) said, “Pity on you! One, who beguiled you, has harmed you!” People asked, “O Amir al-Mu’minin! Who has beguiled them? “The Imam (a.s) replied, “Satan and their own baser instinct! These two had spread the web of guile for them and gave them false hopes. It was
”etched on their minds that they would succeed in their nefarious designs

After success in this battle, the Imam (a.s) reminded his men about the astrologer’s forecast that the moment of their departure for the campaign was inauspicious. The
:Imam (a.s) said

If we had started at the moment the astrologer had recommended, the ignorant“
[people would say that the victory has come because of the astrologer’s advice!”[y

The attitude of the Khawarij was very surprising. In the battle of Siffin they put down their swords almost at the moment of victory and paved the way for the swords to kill them ultimately. They themselves insisted on the arbitration and they turned against it. They shattered the unity of people through mischief. Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s), who was a paragon of virtue, closeness with him was termed infidelity by the Khawarij. They wanted him to break the agreement of the arbitration and fight with Mu`awiyah. If that was their intent, they should have fought in the battle of Siffin instead of supporting the idea of the arbitration initially and then turning against it
.immediately once an agreement was reached

The intention of the Khawarij was only to oppose Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s). They created mischief and rebellion against him and made all sorts of false accusations. The Imam (a.s) tried his best to reform them. He neither caused them any hardships nor did he stop the stipends to their families. But when they went out of control totally and started harming and killing innocent persons, action against them became necessary. Even in the battleground, the Imam (a.s) made a final effort to bring them back to the
.right path. But to no avail

During this battle, and earlier, the Imam (a.s) had made several predictions that proved true. All these were matters about which he had received information from the Prophet (a.s). It was as if his eyes were piercing through the future and seeing the events that were to take place. Here some of his predictions are mentioned

The Imam (a.s) told Zar`ah ibn Burūj al-ta`i that he would be killed and told (١) Rabi`ah ibn Shaddad al-Qasimi that his cadaver would be trampled under the hoofs of horses. Therefore, both these persons were killed during the battle and Rabi`ah's was trampled under the horses feet. Qubaysah says that when he saw that Rabi`ah's face and head was trampled under the hoofs of the horses he "remembered `Ali's word when he (Qubaysah) said 'What to say of Abul-Hasan's virtues that whenever he said anything, that came out true

About the Khawarij the Imam (a.s) said that they would die on a particular side of (٢) the canal and would not cross it to the other side. Therefore, they met their end on the side of the canal that is called Rumaylah

The Imam (a.s) informed that not more than ١٠ persons from his army would be (٣) killed in the battle and not even ten will survive from the army of the Khawarij. Therefore, eight persons died from his army and nine Khawarij escaped alive

The Imam (a.s) said about Dhul-Thadiyah that he will certainly be killed and his (٤) body was found lying in a heap of the dead enemies

The Imam (a.s) had said that the Khawarij were not totally finished and that they (Δ) would raise their heads again. Therefore, after the battle of Nahrawan they continued their minor skirmishes and were killed by the army of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). They again rose during the Umayyad and Abbasid regimes and al-Muhallab ibn Safrāh kept fighting with them for twelve years and creating rifts amongst their rank and file rendered them very weak. They scattered and went towards Oman and parts of Africa. They still are there in Muscat and Zanzibar

The Imam (a.s) predicted that they would keep raising their heads like brigands (ϕ) and dacoits. Ibn Abil-Hadid writes

This prediction of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was proved right that the Khawarij will end up as brigands and highwaymen. Therefore, the movement of the Khawarij became weak and their youth were exterminated. Their condition deteriorated so much that their new generations became waylayers who used to commit evil acts and cause [mischief.] [Λ]

Footnote

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٣, Page ١٧٢ [١]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٣, Page ١٧٤ [٢]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٣, Page ١٧٤ [٣]

Nahj al-Balāghah [٤]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٣, Page ١٧٥ [٥]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ٤, Page ٣٦٦ [٦]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ٣, Page ١٧٣ [٧]

Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by Ibn Abil-Hadīd, Vol ٥, Page ٢٤٨ [٨]

After The Battle of Nahrawan, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) had the plans of proceeding to Syria. He told his troops, "Allah has given you victory over the Khawarij. Now rise to proceed against the Syrians and achieve victory over that veritable enemy. Al-Ash`ath ibn Qays and some other men said, "O Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s)! Our arrows are finished and the swords blunt! Please go to al-Kūfah for some days that we have some rest and to sharpen our swords and make some more arrows. Once we are rested, recuperated and ready, we may proceed for the next campaign." The Imam (a.s) opposed this suggestion and said, "Our destination was Syria and any more delay ".in going in that direction may not be advisable

The Imam (a.s) tried his best but the men did not agree. He was forced to return to al-Kūfah. Instead of entering the city, he camped at al-Nukhaylah and asked the troops too to stay there. He did not want them to get involved with the problems at their homes. They stayed at al-Nukhaylah for some days but then they started making some excuses and going to their homes. After some days, only limited number of persons were there in the camp. Now it was no use staying any more at al-Nukhaylah.

.Therefore, the Imam (a.s) had to close the camp and enter the city

When the Imam (a.s) entered al-Kūfah, the Khawarij started their mischief again. Although a major number of them were eliminated during the battle of Nahrawan, they were not totally exterminated. Many contributing to their thinking were still there in al-Kūfah who did not participate in the battle because of some reason or the other. Now they started showing up. They put their heads together to cause problems in the administration of the realm. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) got engrossed in quelling the mischief of these people and others. This was another cause for some delay in going .on the Syrian campaign

Of these rebel groups, one was under Khirrit ibn Rashid who was the leader of the Khawarij from Banū-Najiyah and was a resident of al-Kūfah. He came one day to Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) with ۳۰ men and said, "By Allah! I shall neither obey any of your orders nor pray in the congregation behind you. From tomorrow I shall quit being with
"?you!" The Imam (a.s) asked, "What makes you so angry

He said, "By agreeing for the arbitration you had made a clear violation of the Commandment of Islam." The Imam (a.s) said, "You are saying this without giving a serious thought to the matter. If you are ready to listen, the matter can be explained to you". He said, "Today I am going away. Tomorrow I shall return sometime and talk to you." The Imam (a.s) said, "Do not get misguided by Satan and before taking any precipitate step come and take my advice. If you are not satisfied with my advice, the course of action will be free for you!" When he reached home, he told his men from Banū-Najiyah, "I have promised to meet `Ali (a.s) tomorrow. But I think I do not need to go to him. Whatever step we have to take, we must go ahead with it. We shall move away from here." The Imam (a.s) waited for him the next day. When he did not turn up, he sent `Abdullah ibn Qayn to Khirrit's house. He came back and told that Khirrit .had left al-Kūfah with the men from his tribe

When the Imam (a.s) heard this, he said, "They will be away from Allah's Blessing like the people of Thamūd! When the spears will be pointed towards their chests and the swords on their heads, they will repent over what they did!" Ziyad ibn Khasfah said, "We should not be unhappy over their going away. But there is one fear that they might misguide those who are obedient so far and try to disturb the prevailing peace! If you permit I shall try to bring them back." The Imam (a.s) said, "How do you know the direction in which they have gone?" He said, "This can be determined by asking .people

The Imam (a.s) said, “My functionaries would certainly report about their movement. You go to Dairy Abi-Mūsa and await my instructions there.” Ziyad went to his house and gathered the men of his tribe, Banū-Bakr ibn Wa’il, and repeated the entire story to them and said, “You are the friends and supporters of Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s)! Support me in this campaign that we stop the enemy from moving forward. And bring him back.” At his call, ١٣٠ men volunteered. Ziyad said that the number was sufficient for controlling the enemy. He took them and went to Dayr Abi-Mūsa and awaited
.instructions from Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s

In the meantime one of the functionaries of the Imam (a.s), Qarazah ibn Ka`b al-Ansari informed him that the men of Banū-Najiyah were proceeding towards Nafar. On the way, they had killed a Muslim trader because of his expressing his allegiance and dedication for you. They also left a Dhimmi alone saying that there was no justification for killing him. When the Imam (a.s) received this intelligence, he sent a letter with a youth, `Abdullah ibn Wa`il, to Ziyad ibn Khasfah informing him that Khirrit and his men were headed towards Nafar and that they had killed one Muslim on the
.way

The Imam (a.s) asked him to chase, apprehend and bring them back to al-Kūfah. If they resisted, he ordered him to fight them. `Abdullah ibn Wa`I must have gone a few steps when he returned and asked, “O Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s)! Do you permit me to join the contingent of Ziyad to fight the Khawarij?” The Imam (a.s) looked at the youth and said, “Yes! You too can join his contingent! I hope that you will remain my helper in
:upholding the Truth and fighting the cruel people.” `Abdullah ibn Wa`I says

By Allah! The words with which he addressed me; I would not exchange them even“
[with the red haired camels!”[1]

When `Abdullah reached Dayr Abi-Mūsa and gave the letter from the Imam (a.s) to Ziyad ibn Khasfah, Ziyad looking at the steed, the arms and the bold look of `Abdullah, said, “How nice it would be if you remain with me!” `Abdullah said, “So is my wish as well and I have taken permission from Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s) for going with your contingent!” Therefore he joined Ziyad and the contingent started forthwith in pursuit of Banū-Najiyah enroute to Nafar. When the pursuers reached Nafar, they were told that Banū-Najiyah had left for al-Jarjariyyah. Ziyad continued the hot pursuit and caught up with them at Mudar, a place lying between al-Basrah and Wasit. He put his camp near where Khirrit had halted. Khirrit came to Ziyad’s camp and asked the
.reason for his coming there

Ziyad said, “We are tired of the journey! After some rest we shall tell you of the reason for our journey!” Ziyad rested for sometime, gave water to the animals and then went to al-Khirrit and asked him, “Why have you left al-Kūfah?” He said, “I do not like the ways of `Ali (a.s)! I am not in favor of his emirate. Now I shall support those who want
”.the caliphate to change hands through Shūra

Ziyad asked, “Can we get a person through selection who has precedence in Islam, is the best scholar of the Qur’an and the Sunnah and is nearest to the Prophet (a.s)?” Khirrit said, “This cannot be ensured!” Ziyad now said, “You have killed a Muslim on the way. What right you had to commit the murder?” Khirrit said, “I have not killed him. One of my companions might have killed him” Ziyad said, “Hand those killers over to
”!us so that we claim the qisas from them.” Khirrit said, “I cannot do that

Ziyad said, "Then you are a party to the crime!" Now both arranged their men in proper formations and raising their lances stood in front of each other. Around midday, the fighting started. The spears started piercing the chests and the swords started hitting heads. When night fell, the Khawarij, leaving behind five of their dead ran away. From Ziyad's contingent two persons, Saved and Wafid ibn Bakr, were martyred and some were injured. Ziyad himself was injured. He moved from there to al-Basrah. From there he wrote a letter to the Imam (a.s), "At Mudar we fought with the Khawarij. Five men of Khirrit were killed. He left behind his dead and escaped towards Ahwaz. His group has increased to ۲۰۰ men. Some of our men have been injured and we have come to al-Basrah for their treatment. I shall await your further
".orders

The Imam (a.s) called Ziyad back and sent Ma`qil ibn Qays al-Riyahi with a contingent of two thousand men towards Ahwaz and wrote to Ibn `Abbas in al-Basrah to send two thousand men towards Ahwaz as a support for Ma`qil. When Ma`qil arrived at Ahwaz commanding the contingent, he stayed there waiting for the men to arrive from al-Basrah. Khirrit registered the cooperation of the infidels, brigands and the Arabs sympathetic to his cause and organized a sizable contingent. He proceeded
.towards the hills of Ramhurmuz

Ma`qil thought that further waiting for reinforcements would be futile. He therefore went in pursuit of Khirrit. He might have covered a days journey when the men from al-Basrah arrived under the command of Khalid ibn Ma`din al-ta'i. Both the contingents combined and proceeded further. When they reached near the hills of Ramhurmuz, they noticed Khirrit camping there with his men. Ma`qil organized his men in rows. When the rows were arranged, both the armies attacked each other and
.severe fighting commenced. Ma`qil's army made a severe display of swordsmanship

When three hundred men of Khirrit's contingent were killed, he went towards the coast of the sea where people of his tribe were inhabited. Here too he started instigating people against the Imam (a.s) and managed to mobilize a sizable contingent.

After defeating Khirrit, Ma`qil wrote to the Imam (a.s) that a large number of Khirrit's men had been killed and he had escaped from the battlefield. The Imam (a.s) called a meeting of some important persons and discussed the matter with them. They advised that he should ask Ma`qil to pursue Khirrit and kill him or force him out of the boundaries of the realm. Otherwise, he will not abstain from mischief. Therefore, Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) wrote to Ma`qil that he must chase Khirrit until his group is totally routed. When Ma`qil got these orders he proceeded towards the coast of the sea.

When Khirrit learned of this pursuit, to increase the numbers, he asked the Khawarij with him that he has the same beliefs as they had and `Ali (a.s) had no authority to appoint Hukm. When his own Hukm deposed him, what right he had to be the emir? He also told the fans of `Uthman that he subscribed to their thinking that `Uthman was assassinated under oppression and that `Ali (a.s) was responsible for that. He told the Dhimmis that they should stop paying the tributes and spend the money on their own men. Thus, he flattered the population there and was able to gather men around himself. When the newly converted Muslims saw the disparate group of Khirrit, they said that their previous Faith suited them better than at least they stuck together. When Khirrit learned that they were going back to Christianity he warned them that they had forfeited their right to life because of recanting from Islam. He told them that the only way to save themselves and their families was to join his army and fight along with him.

Ma`qil put his standard near the camps of Khirrit and established his own camp there. He announced that those who had joined Khirrit newly should stay away and they will have amnesty. The effect of this announcement was that excepting the men from Banū-Najiyah all others moved away. Among Banū-Najiyah there was a group of Christians, one group was of those who had accepted Islam because of some compulsions and were not truly Muslim, there was also a splinter group who had refused to pay the tribute. All these disparate groups stayed with Khirrit

Khirrit organized his men in rows and so did Ma`qil. Ma`qil addressed his men briefly and his men attacked the opposite formation. Severe fighting took place. Al-Nu`man ibn Sahban al-Rasibi attacked Khirrit with his spear. Khirrit fell from the horse to the ground and started fighting with his sword. Al-Nu`man evaded his advance and hit him so hard with his sword that Khirrit fell down dead. There was total confusion in his army and one hundred and seventy men were killed. The others fled

Ma`qil made men, women and children captive. Those who agreed to owe allegiance to the Imam (a.s), he took their bay`ah and released them. Those who had recanted from Islam he invited them to embrace the Faith once again. Barring one old man, Ramahas ibn Mansūr, all others came back to the fold of Islam. That old man was executed because he was an apostate (a person who recanted after embracing Islam). The number of persons taken captive after the battle was five hundred. When Ma`qil reached Ardshirkhurd with the captives, they started pleading with the governor there, Masqalah ibn Hubayrah al-Shaybani, to buy and free them. Masqalah sent word to Ma`qil through Dhuhayl ibn al-Harith to sell the captives to him. Ma`qil sold the captives to Masqalah for five hundred thousand dirhams and said that the amount may be sent to Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s). Masqalah said that he would send some amount immediately and send the rest in installments. When Ma`qil returned to al-Kūfah and made a detailed report to Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s), he appreciated him very much. For some time he waited for the ransom money to come from Masqalah. But when the delay was much, they started wondering how he will send such a big amount? He sent a message through Abū-Jarrah al-Hanafi to Masqalah to either remit the amount or come to al-Kūfah himself. Masqalah came to al-Kūfah and paid

two hundred thousand dirhams. He was still in al-Kūfah where he called Dhuhāḥ ibn al-Harīth and told him that Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was demanding for the balance and he was not in a position to pay that amount. Ibn al-Harīth said that Masqalah could arrange the balance amount in a week's time. Masqalah said that he would not like to burden others for the amount. Then he said, "If Mu`awiyah was there at this time, he would not have pressured me to pay up! Even if `Uthman was there he would have written off the demand! He used to give one hundred thousand dirhams of the tribute from Azerbaijan to al-Ash`ath ibn Qays!" Dhuhāḥ said, "This is `Ali (a.s)! He will not leave even a dirham from the Muslim's funds!" Hearing this, Masqalah left al-Kūfah unannounced in the night and went away to Mu`awiyah! The Imam (a.s) heard about this and said that if he had explained his problem, we would not have demanded immediate payment of the balance. His act of releasing the captives was noble but his escape was like that of a slave! Mu`awiyah received Masqalah with great fanfare and made him the emir of Tabristan. He sent a letter through a Christian, Halwan, to his brother, Na`im ibn Hubayrah, that if he came away to Damascus, Mu`awiyah had promised to give him an important assignment. Malik ibn Ka`b intercepted this letter and gave it to the Imam (a.s) and brought the Christian to his presence. As a punishment for his offence of perfidy his hand was chopped. The man died of that injury. His tribe, Banū-Taghlib learned about the killing of Halwan and they surrounded Masqalah and said that he was the cause of the death of the man. He should either bring him back to life or pay the blood money for his death. He paid the .blood money and escaped from that trouble

In addition to Khirrit, there were other smaller groups of Khawarij that were creating trouble from time to time. But the Iraqi troops controlled them

During Rabi` II, ۳۸ A.H., Ashras ibn `Awf al-Shaybani raised the standard of rebellion at Daskarah and started for al-Anbar with a contingent of ۲۰۰ men. Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) sent ۳۰۰ men under Abrash ibn Hassan to quell this rebellion. Ashras was killed and the remnant of his force scattered

During Jumada I ۳۸ H Hilal ibn Alfa and his brother Mujahid rebelled with a group of ۲۰۰ men. The Imam (a.s) sent Ma`qil ibn Qays in their pursuit. They fought a battle at Masbudhan where Hilal and Mujahid were killed and thus the rebellion was crushed

During Jumada II, ۳۸ A.H. al-Ashhab ibn Bashshar rebelled along with ۱۸۰ men. He first went to Masbudhan where Hilal ibn Alfa and his companions were killed. He offered the funeral prayer for the death and buried many of the dead in the battle. Then he moved out to create mischief and disturbance. Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) sent Jariyah ibn Qudamah to teach him a lesson. He met the rebel in the environs of Jukhi at al-Jarjariyyah. Both the parties took out their swords and al-Ashhab, along with his companions, was killed

During Rajab ۳۸ H Sa`id ibn Qufi al-Tamimi raised the standard of rebellion at Bandanayjin and with ۲۰۰ men created havoc at Zanjan. The emir of al-Mada'in, Sa`d ibn Mas`ud fought with him and killed the rebels

During Ramadan ٣٨ H Abū-Maryam al-Tamimi rebelled in the town of al-Zawr. He had with him two hundred or four hundred men of whom were mostly non-Arab gallivants and only six Arabs were there. He established camp at a distance of five Farsakh from al-Kūfah and planned to plunder the city. When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) learned about this, he sent one person to ask acquaint him with the consequences of rebellion and to persuade him to enter into the bay`ah of the Imam (a.s) and come to al-Kūfah. But Abū-Maryam said that they were there to fight and not to owe their allegiance! When the envoy returned, the Imam (a.s) sent a contingent of seven hundred men under the command of Shurayh ibn Hani'. When the contingent had not even settled down the Khawarij made a preemptive attack. Five hundred men under Shurayh ran helter-skelter and he had only two hundred steadfast with him who took shelter in a settlement nearby. Out of the deserters some went to al-Kūfah and some rejoined their contingent. When the Imam (a.s) heard about the predicament of the contingent, he sent Jariyah ibn Qudamah to the Khawarij to frighten them and force them into obedience. Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) too went behind Jariyah and explained to the rebels the consequences of rebellion. Even this had no effect on them and they refused to abide by the advice given to them. When it was impossible to bring them round, (a.s) asked his men to fight. Most of the Khawarij were killed in the fight. Only ٥٠ survived who applied for amnesty. Among the amnesty seekers ٢٠ were injured men who were brought to al-Kūfah and treated there. This was the most intrepid group of the .Khawarij that was destroyed

THE DEFEAT OF EGYPT**THE DEFEAT OF EGYPT**

It has been mentioned while writing the profile of Qays ibn Sa`d that as long as he remained the governor of Egypt, the administration of the territory was properly run and the fans of `Uthman did not get the opportunity to raise their heads. When he was deposed and Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr took over, he was an inexperienced youth of twenty-eight years, and very early in his tenure he called the fans of `Uthman of Kharbata to owe their allegiance to the Imam (a.s) and live like law abiding citizens. Otherwise, he asked them to go in exile out of the realm. They neither agreed to owe their allegiance nor they left their place in exile and said that until the circumstances are improved they would not owe their allegiance to anyone. Not only this, they surreptitiously started intrigue and mischief. When they heard about the agreement of the arbitration, they started open rebellion and wanted to disturb the law and order of the province. When Muhammad saw their rebellious activities, he sent Yazid ibn al-Harith al-Kinani and Ibn Hambahan to ask them to stop their intrigue and mischief. But they killed both the persons. Then Muhammad sent Ibn Muzahim al-Kalbi and he too was killed by them. Mu`awiyah ibn Hudayj al-Kindi, who was quiet until now, found the atmosphere congenial, and started open intrigue demanding retaliation for the blood of `Uthman. The people of Kharbatah were already with him. Now he was able to register support from other areas as well. The law and order was affected because of these developments and it became difficult for Muhammad to contend .with the situation

When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) learned about the situation in Egypt, he observed that the territory could be handled either by Qays ibn Sa'd or Malik al-Ashtar. He wanted to keep Qays with him until the verdict of the arbitration was announced. And he had been nominated as the governor for Azerbaijan. His other choice was Malik al-Ashtar and he wrote to him, "I had made Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr the governor of Egypt. But people have started intrigue and rebellion against him. He is still young and has little experience in warfare. You appoint Shabib ibn `Amir al-Azdi as your deputy to the governorate of Nasibahin and immediately report to me." Malik reached to the presence of the Imam (a.s) expeditiously. The Imam (a.s) briefed him about the situation in Egypt. He asked him to proceed to Egypt and handle the situation to the best of his ability and discretion

When Mu`awiyah got the intelligence that Malik al-Ashtar was nominated the governor of Egypt, he got worried because he had promised the governorate to `Amr ibn al-`As and was under the impression that Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr could easily be defeated to effect the changeover. But handling Malik al-Ashtar would be a harder nut to crack. He thought of getting Malik killed before he reached Egypt. Therefore, he sent a message to Jayastar, chief of his tributary Qulzum

Malik al-Ashtar has been appointed the functionary for Egypt. If you remove him“ [from the way, until you and I live, I shall not take any tribute from you!”[۱]

The question about the implication of the Shari` ah here is not important. The question arises where the person respects and follows the norms of Shari` ah. Where power and pelf is the only objective, Shari` ah is secondary! Jayistar reached the Red Sea to comply with the orders of Mu` awiyah. When Malik al-Ashtar reached there on his way to Egypt, he welcomed him with much fanfare and after entertaining him served a beverage of honey that was laced with poison. He drank a little of that beverage when the poison had its lethal effect on him and he died shortly thereafter. When :Mu` awiyah was informed of this, he went to the pulpit and said

Ali (a.s) had two hands; one was severed in Siffin (meaning ` Ammar ibn Yasir) and ` “[the other has been cut away today (meaning Malik al-Ashtar).”[۲

When Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) got the news, he said “We are Allah and to Him do we return,” and added, “What to talk of Malik, he was an exemplary person in himself! May Allah bless him. He fulfilled his promise and reached the Presence of Allah! For us the biggest calamity was the demise of the Prophet (a.s) and thereafter we ”!accustomed ourselves to forbearance at every step

Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr was unhappy over his being deposed from the governorate. When the Imam (a.s) learned of his feelings, he wrote to him, “I have not effected this change with any feeling that you were not performing properly. I wanted to place you in an area where you will have less pressure. The person whom I had sent to replace you as the governor of Egypt was our friend, well-wisher and a great swordsman. May Allah be kind on him that he is no more! We were happy with him, and Allah too will be happy with him! You remain firm to meet the onslaught of the enemy! Allah will ”!help you

Muhammad replied, "I value your satisfaction more than anything else! Whatever commands you give, I shall abide by them! I shall meet the enemy with all the energy
"at my disposal

Mu`awiyah, after eliminating Malik al-Ashtar, had a conclave with his advisers `Amr ibn al-`As, Habib ibn Maslamah, Busr ibn Abi-Arta'ah, al-Dahhak ibn Qays, `Abd al-Rahman ibn Khalid, Abul-A`war al-Salami and Shurahbil ibn Samt al-Kindi and told them, "You know for what reason I have called you today?" They said, "Only you must know what you have in your mind to communicate to us!" `Amr said, "Perhaps the purpose of calling a meeting today is to ask for our opinion about Egypt." Mu`awiyah said, "Yes! I have called you for that purpose only!" `Amr said, "Our opinion is not hidden from any one! We think that if Egypt is annexed, it will enhance your prestige
"!and our prestige as well and we will raise our standard higher

Mu`awiyah asked others of their opinion and everyone agreed with `Amr's opinion. Mu`awiyah said, "We have our friends and supporters in Egypt. We shall strengthen our ties with them offering gifts and gratifications. We shall have to frighten our opponents out of their wits that they are left with no courage to face us. How nice it will be that we succeed in this campaign without fighting!" `Amr said, "Fight will be
"!inevitable! There is no other route to success than that

After this discussion, Mu`awiyah wrote a letter to Maslamah ibn Mukhallad al-Ansari and Mu`awiyah ibn Hudayj al-Sakuni and sent it with his slave to Egypt. He appreciated their efforts in the letter and asked them to be more active. He tempted them with offers of giving them important positions in the governance of the Province. Maslamah ibn Mukhallad wrote back, on his and on behalf of Ibn Hudayj, that they would take this step to improve there Hereafter. They required neither position nor power. He exhorted Mu`awiyah to send his troops fast. The opponents' morale was at very low ebb. He said that if the help arrived in time, Allah would help them to succeed! Mu`awiyah got this letter in Palestine. From there only he sent a contingent
.of ٤,٠٠٠ troops under the command of `Amr towards Egypt

When `Amr reached near Egypt the fans of `Uthman gathered around him. `Amr was carrying a letter from Mu`awiyah addressed to Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr, which he sent him. He had written in the letter, "You were one of those who besieged `Uthman. You will be punished for that!" `Amr himself wrote a letter to Muhammad, "The people of Egypt have turned against you! No one is willing to support you! Therefore, you must save your life and escape from Egypt

Muhammad sent both the letters to Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) and wrote to him, "`Amr ibn al-`As is camping outside the city with his contingent! I do not find any spirit of combat in my men. Therefore, please send reinforcements urgently so that we are able to fight with the enemy!" The Imam (a.s) wrote back to him, "Mobilize as many men as you can! Try to boost the morale of your men! I shall send reinforcements soon

Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr mobilized ٤,٠٠٠ troops and divided them into two groups. On one group, he appointed Kinanah Ibn Bashshar as the commander, and on the other he was himself in command. When Kinanah advanced to fight, `Amr started sending one patrol after another to fight. But Kinanah pushed back all the advances of `Amr's men. Then `Amr thought that the contingent of ٤,٠٠٠ men was insufficient and he sought reinforcements from Mu`awiyah ibn Hudayj. Mu`awiyah brought his men and together with `Amr's men they besieged Kinanah's contingent

When Kinanah saw that his contingent was surrounded, he alighted from his horse and his men too came to the ground. They jumped towards the enemies with swords in hands. But they were unable to break through the circle. When Muhammad saw this predicament of Kinanah, he rushed to his help with his contingent

When Muhammad's men saw the predicament of Kinanah's troops, they started deserting. The men under siege were attacked and killed by the enemy. Now Muhammad had no way other than somehow escaping from there. Therefore, he fled and hid himself in a ruin. When Mu`awiyah ibn Hudayj learned that Muhammad had escaped, he himself went in his search. He saw some men at a place and asked them if they saw someone passing that way. One of them said that he had seen a person enter the ruin near there. Ibn Hudayj thought it must certainly be his quarry. Therefore, he peeped into the ruin and found that Muhammad was there. He asked him to come out, tied him up and took him along. When `Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi-Bakr, who was in the Syrian army learned about the arrest of his brother, he asked `Amr ibn al-`As to order Ibn Hudayj not to kill him. `Amr sent word to Ibn Hudayj to send Muhammad to him. Ibn Hudayj said that you people have killed my cousin Kinanah ibn Bishr and want to rescue Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr. He will not escape from my hands now. When Muhammad saw that death was hovering over his head, he asked his captor to give some water to quench his thirst. Ibn Hudayj refused to give him water .and said that they had kept `Uthman thirsty for days before killing him

He said, "May Allah not quench my thirst if I give you a drop of water! I shall kill you thirsty and Allah will quench your thirst with boiling water and pus in the Hell!" Muhammad said, "O son of a Jewess! This is neither in your control nor in the control of `Uthman! Allah will satiate his friends and will keep such persons as you are thirsty! By Allah! If I had a sword in my hand it would not be in your power to take me captive" Ibn Hudayj said, "Now you are under my captivity. I shall first kill you and then keep your body in the skin of an ass and burn you

Muhammad said, "If you do such a thing, it would not be strange. You have been treating the friends of Allah in this manner! I hope Allah will cool that fire on me the way He did for Prophet Ibrahim (a.s)! He will consign your friends Mu`awiyah and `Amr ibn al-`As to the Hellfire. He will increase the flames when they started to go down. At this Ibn Hodayj hit Muhammad with his sword that fell down to the ground unconscious. There was still some life in him when they put him inside the skin of a .dead ass and burned him

When Umm al-Mu'minin `A'ishah heard about the killing of her brother, she cried .inconsolably. She used to curse his killers after every prayer until she died

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) had written to Muhammad that he was making arrangements to send reinforcements of troops. Therefore, when `Abdullah ibn al-Qayn and Ka`b ibn `Abdullah brought Muhammad's message, he asked the people of al-Kūfah to go to Egypt and asked them to assemble at Jar`a, a place between al-Kūfah and al-Hirah, the next day. The next day Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) himself reached there and waited for the men the whole day. But the number of arrivals did not cross even a hundred. Disheartened, the Imam (a.s) returned. In the night he gathered the elites of al-Kūfah and said, "When I give you an order, you turn away your faces! I am now disgusted with your company. You have neither the national spirit nor that of the Faith! When Mu`awiyah calls for people, they come in hordes! But when I call you your tongues become dumb although you are intelligent people!" Ka`b ibn Malik al-Arhabi said, "O Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s)! I am ready to go on this expedition!" He told the people of al-Kūfah, "O people! Fear Allah! Say 'labbayka' at your Imam's call and come out to fight the enemy!" When Ka`b expressed his willingness to go on the Campaign, the Imam (a.s) asked his slave, Sa`d, to make a general proclamation that the people should gather under the standard of Ka`b and reach out to support Muhammad expeditiously. But the men took a month to mobilize. When Ka`b started with a contingent of ۲,۰۰۰ men, the Imam (a.s) said that he had no hope that they would .reach in time to help Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr

Only two to four days after the contingent left for Egypt, when al-Hajjaj ibn Ghaziyah al-Ansari, who was in the army of Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr, came to al-Kūfah and brought the sad tiding that Egypt was captured and Muhammad was killed. `Abd al-Rahman ibn Shabib returned from Syria and said that the people were never so happy like when they learned that Egypt had been conquered and they heard of the killing of Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr. The Imam (a.s) said that he was much sadder than those people were happy over the killing of Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr. Seeing the Imam (a.s) sad, some people asked him, “O Amir al-Mu`minin! Why are you so sad over his :killing?” The Imam (a.s) said

Why should not I be sad? I had brought him up and he was the brother of my sons! I“ [am his father and he considered himself as my son.”[۳

Now there was not any need to send a contingent to Egypt. The Imam (a.s) sent `Abd .al-Rahman ibn Shurayh to go and ask Ka` b ibn Malik to bring back his contingent

Mu`awiyah wanted to keep his hold on Syria and to capture Egypt. On this basis he had promised to make `Amr ibn al-`As the governor of Egypt. He thought that if the people of Iraq and those of Egypt stood up together, Syria would become like .something between the two stones of the grinder

He though that Syria was not save until Egypt was annexed. Besides this, Egypt was a very fertile area and the tribute from there was much more than that from other provinces. Whether Mu`awiyah's sights were on the tribute from Egypt or not, he wanted to deprive `Ali (a.s) of the revenue from there and weaken him economically. .That would help him to subdue him in time

Although there were supporters of `Uthman in Egypt, they were only about ۱۰,۰۰۰ who were concentrated in Kharabta. Generally the Egyptians were against the supporters of `Uthman. Therefore, on the initiative of Muhammad ibn Hudhayfah the largest number of persons rose from here against `Uthman who had besieged him. In these circumstances, the fall of Egypt was the consequence of poor administration. Mu`awiyah had very cunningly made efforts to make the administration weak before attacking it. Therefore, Muhammad ibn Hudhayfah, who had become the emir of Egypt by removing `Abdullah ibn Abi-Sarh, was killed treacherously. Then he tried to win over Qays ibn Sa`d by offering gratifications. When he did not agree to his temptations, he wrote counterfeit letters and got him deposed from the governorate of Egypt. Then he used very mean methods to poison Malik al-Ashtar who was on his way to take charge of the governorate of Egypt.

Although Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr was young and inexperienced, he did everything possible to adopt strategies of warfare to meet the enemy. He sent half his force to meet the enemy outside and kept the other half with himself to join them at the proper time. But when his men left him alone, he had no other alternative than trying to save himself by hiding in some place. While the men of Muhammad are blamed for this defeat, the character of the people of al-Kūfah too is under a cloud. If they had responded on time, the result could have been different.

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۳, Page ۱۷۸ [۱]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۳, Page ۱۷۸ [۲]

Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by Ibn Abil-Hadīd, Vol ۶, Page ۳۰۲ [۳]

IBN `AMIR IN AL-BASRAH

When Mu`awiyah captured Egypt, he thought of attacking al-Basrah and annexing it. Therefore, he called `Abdullah ibn `Amir al-Hadrami and told him that the people of al-Basrah still have the wish to seek retaliation for the blood of `Uthman. They want someone to come forward and they would join him to fight with the killers of `Uthman. He said that he, `Abdullah ibn `Amir, was suitable for the purpose. Therefore, he asked him to go to al-Basrah and stay with Banū-Tamim. But he asked him to beware of the tribe of Rabi`ah because they were Turabiyyah or Shi`ah of Abū-Turab. Ibn `Amir readily agreed to this suggestion

When Mu`awiyah found him willing, he wrote to `Amr ibn al-`As that he wanted to send `Abdullah ibn `Amir to al-Basrah so that he could revive the movement for the qisas. He sought `Amr's opinion about the move. `Amr agreed with the suggestion .and Mu`awiyah sent Ibn `Amir to al-Basrah

When Ibn `Amir arrived at al-Basrah, as instructed, he stayed with Banū-Tamim. One group of people of al-Basrah too assembled who were of the same opinion. He addressed them, "You know that `Uthman was assassinated in oppression! The responsibility of this killing rests with `Ali (a.s). You people had cooperated in the matter of seeking retaliation for the blood of `Uthman. Allah will reward you for this act! Many important persons from your place were killed claiming for the qisas. Rise and take revenge on the killers. We shall always be ready to give help to you." Al-Dahhak ibn `Abdullah told `Amir, "May Allah put you in trouble! You are again trying to ignite the mischief that had died down! This was the mischief that was raised by Talhah and al-Zubayr and instigated us against Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) although we had already owed our allegiance to him. We were all united people, but the two came

here and created rifts in every household and made us fight with one other. We are paying for that mistake until now! You have come up again with the message of destruction. We are under the bay`ah of the Truthful Imam (a.s)! He has forgiven us our mistakes! He has even forgiven his mortal enemies! You want us to come out with swords and cut each others' necks so that you get a position from Mu`awiyah! By Allah! One day of `Ali (a.s) is more valuable than a hundred years of Mu`awiyah and
his family

At this, `Abdullah ibn Khuzaym al-Salami said, “Keep quiet! You are not competent to interfere in these matters!” He turned to Ibn `Amir and said, “We are your supporters and friends! We shall be with you in the matter of the qisas!” al-Dahhak said, “You son of the Abyssinian woman! What are you and what is your status? By Allah! One whom you support is without any support! And the one, whom you oppose, need not have
”!any fear

At this, both started using invectives against each other. `Abd al-Rahman ibn `Umayr al-Tamimi said, “We have not assembled here to fight with one other. We must have unity between us. My suggestion is first to listen to the letter sent by the emir of Syria. If it sounds useful, act on it!” Therefore the letter from Mu`awiyah was read to them. He wrote, “O people of al-Basrah! You have seen the style of functioning of `Uthman. He was a peace loving and gentle mannered person. He was a supporter for the weak and friend of the oppressed. Some cruel persons besieged him and killed him hungry and thirsty. We invite you to claim the qisas for his blood and take responsibility that the verdicts will be based on the Book and the Sunnah of the Prophet (a.s). We shall
”!also pay half yearly pensions to the people of al-Basrah

When this letter was read, most of the gathering supported the suggestion. Al-Ahnaf ibn Qays kept quiet and said that he was not concerned with the matter. However, one person from the tribe of `Abd al-Qays, `Amr ibn Marhūm said, “O People! You remain firm on your previous bay`ah! Do not create rift in the society by breaking the bay`ah! If you break the bay`ah at the call of this person, then you will meet with calamity and destruction! “`Abbas ibn Sahar al-`Abdi, who was inimical to the Imam (a.s) against the opinion of his tribe of `Abd al-Qays, said, “We shall support him in our
”!words and our deeds and will not leave anything aside in helping him

When Muthanna ibn Makhrabah al-`Abdi heard this, he told Ibn `Amir, "Do not be carried away by what Ibn Sahar has said! It is better you go back from where you have come! Otherwise, we shall send you back with our swords, spears and arrows! Should we recant from our support to the Prophet's cousin and enter into the bay`ah of a rebel! By Allah! It shall never happen!" When Ibn `Amir heard the emotional outbursts of the opponents, he told Sabrah ibn Shayman al-Azdi, "O Sabrah! You too are of the same opinion as us and are a great personality of the Arab World and the chief of your tribe! Help me and promise me amnesty!" Sabrah said, "If you get up from Banū-Tamim and come over to me and stay at my home, we shall help you and provide you amnesty!" `Amir said, "I am supposed to stay where I have been ordered to stay!" When Sabrah heard this, he went away angrily

The governor of al-Basrah, `Abdullah ibn `Abbas was in al-Kūfah at that time to give his condolences on the demise of Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr and the governorate was in the hands of Ziyad ibn `Ubayd. On the arrival of Ibn `Amir, Ziyad was worried because Banū-Tamim, and others who wanted the qisas, were in favor of Ibn `Amir. He called Hazin ibn al-Mundhir and Malik ibn tasmah to the governor's house and told them, "O people of the tribe of Bakr ibn Wa'il! You are counted amongst the supporters of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s)! I am concerned about the interference and mischief of the enemy. Until the instructions for action are received from Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s), give me protection." Hazin ibn al-Mundhir said, "If you are asking for protection, I am ready to give it!" But Malik said, "I cannot tell anything without asking my men." When Ziyad felt that Malik was trying to evade the issue of protection he sent word to Sabrah ibn Shayman al-Azdi to give him protection and protect the bayt al-mal. Therefore, overnight Ziyad shifted to his place and the bayt al-mal and the .pulpit too were shifted there

When the governor's house was vacant after Ziyad shifted, Banū-Tamim and their cohorts wanted to keep Ibn `Amir there. Therefore, they proceeded towards the governor's house with Ibn `Amir. When Banū-Azd saw this, they too came with their horses and said that we shall not allow an undesirable person to stay in the Dar al-Imarah. When insistence started from the other side, the situation worsened and al-Ahnaf ibn Qays intervened and told the companions of Ibn `Amir that they did not have more right than the others on the governor's house nor it was right to force a person on them whom they consider undesirable. With the persuasion of al-Ahnaf, they went back to their homes

Ziyad wrote to `Abdullah ibn `Abbas that Mu`awiyah had sent Ibn `Amir al-Hadrami who was staying with Banū-Tamim. He was instigating people to start claiming retaliation for the blood of `Uthman once again. Lot of people from al-Basrah have joined him. He wrote that he had taken shelter with Sabrah ibn Shayman al-Azdi and the bayt al-mal too was shifted to Banū-Azd. He wrote that the Shi`ah of `Ali (a.s) were visiting him and the Shi`ah of `Uthman were going to Ibn `Amir. The Dar al-Imarah was lying vacant. He asked `Abdullah ibn `Abbas to inform about the situation to Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) and communicate his instructions

Ziyad remained hidden with Banū-Azd for one day. But they insisted that hiding like that would not serve any purpose. They forced him to lead the Friday Prayer and give the Sermon. Therefore, Ziyad led the Friday Congregation and giving the Sermon said, "If I had taken shelter with Banū-Tamim and Ibn `Amir had your support, I would not have been able to subdue Ibn `Amir! And now that I have your protection, Ibn `Amir cannot subdue me nor the son of the 'Chewer of Human Liver', Mu`awiyah, would be able to overwhelm Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s), the Muhajirūn and the Ansar. O people of Banū-Azd! I have witnessed your valor at the Battle of the Camel. You had demonstrated patience and bravery on that momentous day in support of the forces of evil. I am sure you will show the same fortitude and bravery in support of the Truth now!" At this point Shayman, the father of Sabrah, said, "O people of Banū-Azd! As a result of the Battle of the Camel, you got only insult and infamy! If I were present at that time, I would never have permitted you to fight. If you were against `Ali (a.s)

then, wash the black mark on your reputation by siding wholeheartedly with him now! If Banū-Tamim bring their chief in the battlefield, you too must take your chief there and fight with them. If they seek reinforcements from Mu`awiyah, you too must seek reinforcements from `Ali (a.s)! If they seek for peace, you too should agree for peace!” Then his son Sabrah stood up and said, “We do not have any fear from `Ali (a.s), but we do not trust Mu`awiyah! Therefore, stand up with your arms and justify
”.the shelter that you have given to Ziyad

The men of Banū-Azd said in one voice, “We are under your command! Whatever orders you give us, we shall follow without asking any questions!” Ziyad asked, “O Sabrah! Tell me, if you have any fear that you will not be able to fight with Banū-Tamim?” Sabrah said, “There is no question of any such fear! If they bring al-Ahnaf, we shall put forward Abū-Sabrah. If they bring Habbah, I shall fight with him. If they bring their youths, we do not have shortage of youths with us!” When Banū-Tamim saw that Banū-Azd were backing Ziyad and were ready to fight, they sent a message to them that they need not fight. Instead of that they would send Ibn `Amir and from the other side Ziyad should come and fight to decide who is the winner. Whoever of the two won, everyone should accept to obey him. Abū-Sabrah replied that this claim could be accepted when we had not given shelter to Ziyad. Now sending him out to fight and killing him are both the same

When Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) learned about the worsening situation in al-Basrah, he told Banū-Tamim of al-Kūfah to go to al-Basrah and convince the men of their tribe to abstain from mischief. But none of them agreed to go. The Imam (a.s) asked them what prevented them from going to meet the men of their own tribe. You give your brothers and your sons advice to do good. If they disagree, fight with them. Ayn ibn ʿAbyah al-Tamimi stood up and said that he was willing to do the task. He said either he will kill `Amir to finish the story or push him out of the environs of al-Basrah. The Imam (a.s) sent him to al-Basrah and wrote to Ziyad that he was sending `Ayn ibn ʿAbyah to convince the head-strong people of his tribe to disburse. If the Banū-Tamim remained stubborn, do jihad with them taking along your supporters. He asked Ziyad to keep them engaged until the army of Islam arrived. When Ibn ʿAbyah reached al-Basrah he first went to Banū-Azd and gave Amir al-Mu`minin’s letter to Ziyad and said that he hoped to bring back the conditions to normalcy. Then he assembled the Banū-Tamim and told them, “O people of my tribe! Why do you give your lives by joining the mischief mongers? By Allah! To crush you the contingent has already been mobilized! If you come to the straight path, the contingent may not come here. But if you remain adamant to create unrest, then remember your death and destruction is certain! “Ibn ʿAbyah tried to convince them the whole day and explained to them the serious consequences of recanting from the bay`ah. In the

end, they said that they would listen to what he advised. But when he started to go back to his residence in the evening, ten persons followed him and killed him
.mercilessly

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Ziyad informed the Imam (a.s) of the sincere efforts of Ibn ʿAbyah and about his killing. The Imam (a.s) sent Jariyah Ibn Khadhmah al-Saʿidi along with fifty men of Banū-Tamim to al-Basrah with instructions that they should be cautious against the enemies lest they were attacked the way Ibn ʿAbyah was. On reaching al-Basrah, Jariyah first met Ziyad and then went to Banū-Azd and read the Imam's letter which was addressed to the people of al-Basrah, "O people of al-Basrah! Because of your rebellious acts you did not deserve any concessions. But I have pardoned your criminals and did not punish those who laid down the arms. You had owed your allegiance to me willingly. If you remain on my bayʿah and make faithfulness your habit, I shall treat you according to the norms of the Qurʾan and the Sunnah. But if you demonstrated lack of intelligence and adopt rebellious attitude, I will be forced to act severely. Then you will be faced with such a battle that you will forget the hardships of the Battle of the Camel. I am sure you will not pave the way for your destruction with
".your own hands

When this letter was read, Sabrah ibn Shayban stood up and said, "We shall listen to every word of Amir al-Muʾminin (a.s) and act on it! We shall battle with those people, with whom he fights! The people with whom he makes peace, we too shall make peace with them! O Jariyah! If you can deal with the enemy using your men, it is well and good! Otherwise, we are ready to assist you in all ways." After him the others too assured Jariyah of their cooperation. Now Jariyah went along with his men to Banū-Tamim and explained to them the pros and cons and tried to bring them to the right path. But none gave ear to him and started misbehaving. When Jariyah saw the situation, he sought help from Ziyad and Banū-Azd. Ziyad addressed Banū-Azd, "O Banū-Azd! Those who were friends yesterday are enemies today! And those who were enemies yesterday are friends now! Jariyah needs our help. Therefore, rise and help him against the enemy!" Therefore Banū-Azd armed themselves and Sharik ibn al-Aʿwar, who was a Shiʿah of ʿAli (a.s), and a friend of Jariyah, too joined the men. On the other side Ibn ʿAmir appointed ʿAbdullah ibn Khuzaym al-Salami as the chief of the horsemen. Both the parties brought their men to the battlefield. For some time there was fierce battle. In the end Ibn ʿAmir and his men fled and took shelter in the Palace of Zanbil around which there was a protective moat. Among these fugitives

was `Abdullah ibn Khuzaym. When his mother, `Ajla, learned that her son has been besieged, she went running and shouted for her son. He looked at his mother from the top of the palace and asked her why she had come. She asked him to come down and go home with her. He refused to go with her. `Ajla, who was a black Abyssinian woman, removed the scarf from her head and said that if he did not come down she .would become totally naked

Ibn Khuzaym was thus forced to come down. And went away with his mother. After Ibn Khuzaym went, Jariyah and Ziyad laid siege of the palace. When no efforts to vacate it of the enemies succeeded, Jariyah set fire to the building and Ibn `Amir, along with his companions, was killed in that conflagration. Some were crushed under the crumbling walls and the others were killed trying to escape. Among those who were killed were `Abd al-Rahman ibn `Umayr al-Tamimi and Dharih ibn Badr

Ziyad sent a letter with ʿAbyan ibn `Umayr to Amir al-Muʿminin (a.s). He wrote that they had achieved victory and the enemy was finished at the hands of Jariyah. The Imam (a.s) expressed satisfaction at the crushing of that rebellion and asked ʿAbyan where his house was located in al-Basrah? He told about the location of his house. The Imam (a.s) asked him to build a house on the out-skirts of al-Basrah and shift there. He added that al-Basrah will always be under fire and water and will submerge in a manner that except the minarets of the Mosque, nothing else will be visible! Therefore, al-Basrah was submerged twice. Once during the period of al-Qadir billah, the `Abbasid ruler, and the next time again when al-Qa'im bi-amrillah was ruling and the flood level was so high that only the minarets of the Mosque were above the water level

This act of Mu`awiyah was the result of his greed for power, arrogance and enmity for peace. In the end his designs were abjectly defeated. The same tribe of Banū-Azd on whom he was banking, supported Ziyad and proved an important weapon in the hands of Jariyah. They crushed the enemy in such a manner that they left no trace of them in al-Basrah. Mu`awiyah's step was not without any purpose and planning. The reasons behind the move were

Mu`awiyah, after capturing Egypt, thought that the military strength of the Imam (١) (a.s) had gone down in Iraq, otherwise he would have sent reinforcements from al-Kūfah to help Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr. He thought that when there was no force available at the center, how could there be sufficient numbers in al-Basrah to resist .attack

Abdullah ibn `Abbas, who was the relative of the Imam (a.s) and his staunch` (٢) supporter, was then away in al-Kūfah. His deputy, Ziyad, was holding temporary charge and would not have jeopardized his life to fight back the attack. There was a .strong likelihood that he would put down arms and surrender

Al-Basrah was already the theater of the Battle of the Camel recently and the (٣) people of that place had supported Talhah and al-Zubayr claiming retaliation for the blood of `Uthman. There was no scarcity of people in that city who still felt the need for the qisas. Even if they did not side with the attackers, they would not also help the !defenders

Innumerable persons from al-Basrah were killed by `Ali (a.s) and his men. The (٤) survivors of those who were killed had the fire of revenge burning in their hearts.

.They would certainly support Mu`awiyah's troops to fight the Imam's troops

Al-Basrah was located in the neighborhood of Persia. If this place was conquered, (٥) !it would serve as a launching pad for other conquests to follow

THE AGGRESSIVE ATTACKS OF THE SYRIANS

THE AGGRESSIVE ATTACKS OF THE SYRIANS

After the ignominy of al-Basrah, Mu`awiyah realized that attacking the Iraqi cities and achieving success was difficult. However, making raids on suburbs and remote hamlets to frighten and terrorize the people was to his advantage. Therefore, he started attacking the border habitations and the army barracks and in no time the pleasant habitations were rendered into veritable ruins. There was a flood of the blood of innocents everywhere. The purpose of these nefarious activities was to .spread disturbance and unrest in the realm

The Imam (a.s) did not get any respite from handling these disturbances to give his attention to reform and development, as he would have wished to do. In ۳۹ H Mu`awiyah sent al-Nu`man ibn Bashir with ۲,۰۰۰ troops to attack `Ayn al-Tamr. There Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) had an arms depot. Malik ibn Ka`b al-Arhabi was in charge of this depot. Under him ۱,۰۰۰ troops always used to be there. When Malik heard of al-Nu`man's move, he had only ۱۰۰ men with him and the rest had taken permission and had gone to al-Kūfah. He wrote to Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) that a contingent of ۲,۰۰۰ Syrians was headed to attack him and the men present were not sufficient to meet the onslaught. He therefore requested for urgent reinforcement. The Imam (a.s) told al-Harith al-Hamdani to proclaim, in al-Kūfah that all people must urgently assemble at al-Rahbah. The next morning the Imam (a.s) went to al-Rahbah .after the Morning Prayer. He found about ۳۰۰ men assembled there

When he saw the lack of interest in the people, he said, "O people of al-Kūfah! I had called you to rise to the help of your brothers! But when the troops of the Syrians hover over your heads, you shirk from fighting. `Adi ibn Hatam, finding the Imam (a.s) disturbed, said, "O Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s)! In my tribe of Banū-tay there are ۱,۰۰۰ strong fighters. If you order, I shall take them to teach a lesson to the enemy" The Imam (a.s) said, "I do not like that to face the enemy, people from only one tribe volunteer. This gives an impression that the other tribes are not interested in taking part in the campaigns. You go to al-Nukhaylah and invite others to participate as well" Therefore he went and talked to the people and in addition to Banū-tay he raised another ۱,۰۰۰ men. `Adi ibn tay was about to start with his contingent when a message came from Malik ibn Ka`b that they were able to force the enemy away and

they were no more in need of the reinforcements. It happened that Malik thought it would take time to get help from al-Kūfah and he took the precaution of sending `Abdullah ibn Hawzah al-Azdi to Qarazah Ibn Ka`b and Mikhnaf ibn Salim and sought help from them. Qarazah said that he was stationed for collection of the tribute and the men under him were not suitable for battle, but Mikhnaf ibn Sulaym sent ٥٠ men under the command of his son, `Abd al-Rahman. When around the time of `Asr Prayer the group reached near Ayn al Tamr, they found that Malik and his men were standing with their backs to the wall and, having broken the sheaths of their sword, they were ready to fight unto death. When al-Nu`man saw this small group he thought this must be the front guard and the larger contingent must be coming from behind. He immediately turned back his troops and ran away. Malik chased them and .killed three of their men

In the same ۳۹ H Mu`awiyah sent ۶,۰۰۰ troops with Sufyan ibn `Awf al-Ghamidi to attack al-Anbar and al-Mada'in. He ordered him to destroy the army cantonments of the Imam (a.s). Sufyan first went to Hit. The governor of Hit, Kumayl ibn Ziyad al-Nakha`i heard that at Qarqisiyah some troops of the Syrians had assembled and had plans to attack Hit. He therefore left the city to meet the invaders, although he was instructed not to leave the place. The result was that when Sufyan's contingent reached Hit, there was none in the city to defend it. He proceeded to al-Anbar without any resistance at Hit. At al-Anbar there was stationed a group of ۵۰۰ men but when the Syrians arrived, there were only ۲۰۰ present and the rest were not there. Sufyan .wanted to gather intelligence about the number of troops there

They caught hold of a few local youths and asked them. They said that presently there must be about ۲۰۰ men there. When he knew that the number of defenders was very small, he became bold. He advanced with his contingent. From that side, Ashras ibn Hassan al-Bakri, who was the chief of the men, came out to fight with his small group. When the men saw the huge contingent, more than half of the ۲۰۰ men fled. And the rest fought with the enemies from the street corners playing the game of hide and seek! When Ashras saw that it was difficult to save their lives through the tactics of hide and seek, he shouted his instructions, "Those who wish to give their lives in the way of Allah, and they should come out in the open and fight with the enemy!" At this call thirty men came out and fighting with great bravery they were martyred! Now there was none to stop the atrocities of the Syrians. They looted each and every house, snatched jewelry from the women and gathered whatever they .could lay their hands on

When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) knew about the events, he wrote an angry note to Kumayl ibn Ziyad and warned him against leaving the city unprotected without the unit of the guards. H gave a sermon from the pulpit and invited the people to do Jihad and go in pursuit of the enemy. But there was hardly any response from the gathering. When he saw them quiet and in a mood of avoiding the battle, he stood up angrily and decided to go alone and pursue the enemy. Now the people felt ashamed and they went behind the Imam (a.s). When they reached the valley of al-Nukhaylah, they said, "O Amir al-Mu'minin! You may go back! We are sufficient to deal with the enemy." When their insistence increased, he went back to al-Kūfah and under the command of Sa`id ibn Qays a contingent of ٨,٠٠٠ troops went in hot pursuit of the Syrians. When this army reached `Anah via Euphrates, Sa`id sent Hani' ibn al-Khattab al-Hamdani to reconnoiter for the enemy troops. He went until the limits of Qannisrin but Sufyan's contingent had gone far ahead and there was no sense in further pursuit

When Sa`id ibn Qays returned to al-Kūfah, the Imam (a.s) gave a sermon about the importance of jihad and exhorted those who were reluctant to battle with the enemy. On this Jundub ibn `Afif al-Azdi stood up and said, "O Amir al-Mu'minin! I can speak on my behalf and on behalf of my nephew, `Abd al-Rahman ibn `Abdullah! Whatever command you give us, we shall abide by it implicitly

The Imam (a.s) said, “What I want cannot be done by only two persons!” The Imam (a.s) wanted to punish the people who played havoc at Hit and al-Anbar in such a way that they should not have courage to make incursions into the Iraqi borders in the future. After the return of Sa`id, the Imam (a.s) kept quiet for some time. And again he gave a sermon to the people of al-Kūfah, “O People! You are much more in numbers than the Ansar of al-Madinah! They gave shelter and protection to the Prophet (a.s) and the Muhajirūn. They bore hardships but did not stop supporting Islam and the Muslims, until the Standard of Islam started flying all over Arabia! “At this a mischievous, tall person stood up and said, “You are neither Muhammad (a.s) nor are we the Ansar! Please put on us weight that we might bear

The Imam (a.s) said, “Understand the talk, and then speak! When did I say that I am Muhammad (a.s) and you Ansar! I gave the example that you too tread the path of the Ansar and create in yourself the spirit that they had and protect the Realm of Islam from the depredations of the enemy!” At this another person stood up and said, “Today Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) must have felt the need of the people of Nahrawan whom we killed with our own hands

Now voices were raised from different directions and there was a sort of pandemonium. One person said, “If Malik al-Ashtar was here today, these persons would not have dared to behave in this manner!” The Imam (a.s) said, “Pity on you! Malik al-Ashtar had right over you as any other Muslim has a right over another Muslim! My rights are far greater which you have to guard as a bounden duty!” In the end Sa`id Ibn Qays and Hijr ibn `Adi said, “Whatever commands you give us, we shall not disobey them in any manner even if we have to forego our lives and properties in abiding by them!” The Imam (a.s) said, “You stand up for the punishment of the enemy and crush him!” He then came down from the pulpit and went to Bayt al-Sharaf, his home. Some of his sincere companions too followed him. He continued discussion with them and said, “Who is the person in your opinion who is himself very active and can also enthuse the Iraqis to agree for warfare. We must mobilize the army under the command of such a person

Sa`id ibn Qays said, "O Amir al-Mu`minin! For this campaign none other than Ma`qil ibn Qays al-Tamimi is better. He is your sincere friend and is a valorous warrior." The Imam (a.s) said, "Yes! He is the right person for the job!" Then Ma`qil was called and entrusted the command of the campaign

During the same year Mu`awiyah sent `Abdullah ibn Mas`adah al-Fazari with ١,٧٠٠ troops towards Taymah. He ordered him to keep advancing towards Makkah and al-Madinah and collect zakat and sadaqah from the settlements that fall in his way. Those who refuse to pay must be immediately executed. Therefore, he started on his journey and the people of his tribe gathered under his flag. When the Imam (a.s) heard about this, he sent Musayyab ibn Najbah al-Fazari with ٢,٠٠٠ troops to fight with them. When Mas`adah reached Taymah, killing and looting the people on the way, the troops of the Imam (a.s) too reached there. Both the contingents took out their arms and the fight started. The fight went on from morning until midday. Musayyab, who was also from the same tribe, attacked Mas`adah lightly with the sword, and asked him quietly to escape. Therefore, he took a small troop of men and locked himself up in a small fort nearby

The remaining contingent escaped towards Syria. The camels that had been collected by Mas`adah as zakat and sadaqah were taken away by the nomads. When three days since passed Mas`adah locked himself into the fort, it was decided to set fire to the fort. Therefore, firewood was put near the door and the fire was lighted. Ibn Mas`adah said, "O Musayyab! You are burning the persons from your own tribe!" Musayyab ordered the fire to be put out. After the fire was put out, he told his troops that he had intelligence that a bigger contingent of men was coming from Syria. His men assembled at one place. Ibn Mas`adah got an opportunity and escaped in the night with his men towards Syria. When news spread about his escape `Abd al-Rahman ibn Shabib said that they must chase and capture Mas`adah. But Musayyab did not agree to that suggestion. At this `Abd al-Rahman said, "You have sold yourself to the enemy against Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) and your attitude is certainly indicative of

"hypocrisy

In the same year, ۳۹ H, Mu`awiyah sent al-Dahhak ibn Qays al-Fahri towards al-Hirah and asked him to kill the nomads who had owed their allegiance to `Ali (a.s) and plunder their goods. Therefore, he went on destroying habitations on the way and reached Salabiyah. He attacked one caravan of Hajjis and looted them. Then passing through Waqasah and Sharaf he proceeded towards Qatqatanah. There he killed `Amr ibn `Umays and Ibn Mas`ūd and their companions. When Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) got news of these atrocities, he asked his men to pursue him. But the men did not show any interest. The Imam (a.s) expressed anger at their attitude and tried to stir their conscience! In the end a contingent of ۴,۰۰۰ men under the command of Hijr ibn `Adi went in pursuit of the enemy and reached Samadah. Here Hijr met the father of Rabab—the consort of the Master of Martyrs—as well as `Imarah al Qays ibn `Adi and some men from his tribe went along to guide the contingent to the cisterns of water and the way. When they reached the environs of Tadmur, they found the camps of al-Dahhak. When they came across each other, the swords were drawn and the fighting started. In this battle, al-Dahhak lost ۱۹ men and two men were martyred from the army of the Imam (a.s). In the darkness of the night al-Dahhak ran away with his men. Hijr went back with his men to al-Kūfah

The same year Mu`awiyah sent Yazid ibn Shajarah to Makkah during the Hajj period. To act as the emir for the Hajj and chase away the functionaries appointed by Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) and take bay`ah from the people for Mu`awiyah. He started with ۳,۰۰۰ men for Makkah. When the functionary at Makkah, Qathm ibn `Abbas heard about the arrival of this contingent, he went to the pulpit and informed the people that the army of Syria was coming to the Holy Land to cause bloodshed. You must take up arms and stop the enemy before he comes here. But except Shaybah ibn `Uthman al-`Abdari, everyone else took his word lightly. When Qathm ibn `Abbas saw that the people of Makkah were not concerned, he wanted to go out to the hills and take shelter and inform Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) to seek help from him. Abū-Sa`id al-Khidri, on learning that Qathm was thinking of leaving Makkah, opposed his plans and asked him to await the arrival of the Syrian forces. He advised that if it was felt possible to fight with them, they could fight. Otherwise they could then leave Makkah. Qathm agreed with this suggestion and wrote to the Imam (a.s) for help. Amir al-Mu`minin

(a.s) sent one contingent of men on the first of Dhul-Hijjah in which Abul-tufayl and Rayyan ibn Samarah were there. Yazid ibn Shajarah reached Makkah two days prior to the Day of Tarwiyah with his army. He asked Abū-Sa`id al-Khidri to tell Qathm to stop leading the prayers and acting as the Emir of Hajj and that he too would demit his office. Then they should give the people choice to select the successors. Qathm ibn `Abbas showed some reluctance But realizing his own helplessness, he agreed to quit. Other people suggested the name of Shaybah ibn `Uthman for leading the prayers and emirate of Hajj. He was thus selected for the position. When the Hajj was over, Ibn Shajarah went towards Syria. In that time the contingent sent by the Imam (a.s) reached Makkah. When they learned that the Syrian army had left, Ma`qil ibn Qays took the lead of the contingent in his hands and went in pursuit of them and after crossing the Valley Al-Qira, they came face to face with it. The Syrians tried to .escape but Ma`qil's men took captive some of the Syrians and returned to al-Kūfah

When Yazid ibn Shajarah reached Syria, Mu`awiyah learned about some of his men becoming captive. He sent al-Harth ibn Namr al-Tanūkhi towards al-Jazirah, where there were people who had owed their allegiance to the Imam (a.s), to capture some of them and bring as captives. He reached al-Jazirah and captured seven men of Banū-Taghlib. When these persons reached the court of Mu`awiyah, some men of Banū-Taghlib who had left the camp of the Imam (a.s) and joined Mu`awiyah, came to him and pleaded for the release of their tribesmen. But Mu`awiyah did not agree. At this, Banū-Taghlib were unhappy with him and left his side. Mu`awiyah wrote to `Ali (a.s) that Ma`qil had made some men from Yazid ibn Shajarah's army captive. He suggested they could be exchanged with the men from Banū-Taghlib who were with him. (a.s) agreed to this suggestion and the exchange was affected

The same year Mu`awiyah sent `Abd al-Rahman ibn Qabat to plunder the habitations of the area of al-Jazirah. When the governor of al-Jazirah, Shabib ibn `Amir, learned about this, informed Kumayl ibn Ziyad, who was the governor of Hit, and sought help from him. He took ٤٠٠ men with him and went towards the area of al-Jazirah. The enemy troops under `Abd al-Rahman ibn Qabat and Ma`an ibn Yazid salami came across him. Kumayl fought with them with his small contingent and killed a good number of the enemy troops. From his side two men were martyred. Now the enemy was not able to bear the onslaught and his men fled the scene. He ordered that the fleeing men need not be pursued nor the injured be killed. After defeating the Syrians, he informed Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) of his success. The Imam (a.s) was very happy with his performance and the mistake that he had made of abandoning his post in the past .was condoned

When Shabib ibn `Amir arrived with his contingent from Nasibahin, he found that Kumayl had defeated the enemy. He congratulated Kumayl and proceeded in pursuit of the enemy force. He crossed the river Euphrates and reached until Ba`labak. When Mu`awiyah knew about this, he sent a contingent under Habib ibn Maslamah, but it could not get near the contingent of Shabib. Now, instead of pursuing the enemy, Shabib attacked al-Riqqah, a settlement of the supporters of Mu`awiyah. He confiscated their arms and horses and took away other livestock. When he returned, he wrote in detail to the Imam (a.s) about his campaign. The Imam (a.s) replied, "You have a right over the arms and the animals that the enemy uses during the battle. But you have no right to confiscate the livestock". Then appreciating his valor the Imam :said

May Allah be kind on Shabib. He went attacking for a long distance and did not“
[abstain from contending with the enemy.]”[۱]

In the same year Mu`awiyah sent Zuhayr ibn Makhūl al-`Amiri to the town of al-Samawah, which was under the Imam (a.s), for collecting the zakat and sadaqah. When the Imam (a.s) knew about this, he sent Ja`far ibn `Abdullah al-Ashja`i, `Urwah ibn `Ushbah al-Kalbi and Jallas Ibn `Umayr al-Kalbi to collect taxes from the tribes of Banū-Kalab and Banū-Wa'il. When these persons reached there, they had a confrontation with the men of Mu`awiyah. Ja`far ibn `Abdullah was killed. Ibn `Ushbah was given a horse by Zuhayr and he escaped. He became a suspect in the eyes of the Imam (a.s) He reprimanded the person. Ibn `Ushbah moved over to the camp of Mu`awiyah. Jallas too escaped. On the way, he exchanged his expensive cloak with the cloak of a shepherd to avoid identification. Thus he reached al-Kūfah .with difficulty

During those days, Mu`awiyah sent Muslim ibn `Uqbah Mari to Dawmat al-Jandal. The people there owed their allegiance neither to `Ali (a.s) nor to Mu`awiyah. When the Imam (a.s) learned about the movements of Muslim, he sent Malik ibn Ka`b al-Hamdani with a patrol of troops. When they came face to face, there was fight that went on for the complete day. In the end, `Uqbah ran away. After he went, Malik asked the people there to owe their allegiance to the Imam (a.s). They did not agree .and said that unless there is total consensus they will not accept anyone as the caliph

It can well be imagined from these events that while there were sincere friends of the Imam (a.s) in al-Kūfah, there was no shortage of hypocrites who had Khariji tendencies. They used to spread rumor and dissent and always tried to make the administration weak. On the one hand were these traitors and on the other were the machinations of the Syrians. The way he managed the affairs despite all the odds is a .proof of his political and administrative acumen

Footnote

.Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۳, Page ۱۹۱ [۱]

THE ATROCITIES OF BU SR BIN ARTA'AH

THE ATROCITIES OF BU SR BIN ARTA'AH

Yemen was under Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) but there was a sizeable number of fans of `Uthman as well. Although they had entered into the bay`ah of the Imam (a.s) their hearts were elsewhere! Their attitude with the governor of Yemen, `Ubaydullah ibn `Abbas too was inimical. When Muhammad ibn Abi-Bakr was killed in Egypt, and the guerilla attacks on the Iraqi territory by the Syrians continued at regular intervals, the inimical element in Yemen too started their act. They started instigating people to claim the retaliation for the blood of `Uthman. When `Ubaydullah ibn `Abbas knew about this intrigue, he called some important persons and told them what he was hearing about them. They said what he had heard was right. They said that from the very beginning they thought that the killing of `Uthman was a calamity and that those who had killed him, and those who created the circumstances for the killing, must be

.punished

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When `Ubaydullah felt that the intrigue was rising in the province, he put those persons under house arrest. They sent messages to the army men who subscribed to their thinking to create a revolt in their ranks and remove the chief, Sa`id ibn Nimran. Therefore, they revolted and snatched away the command from him. The army was totally demoralized and splinter groups were formed. Since the martial strength was affected, the civilian unrest started raising its head. Those who were quiet until then started airing their views openly. And even those who did not subscribe to their views, joined with them to avoid paying the zakat and the tribute

Ubaydullah ibn `Abbas, Sa`id ibn Nimran and important Shi`ah met to decide the` strategy to face the situation. They decided to inform about the situation to Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) in detail and act on his advice. They thought that if they themselves started hostilities with the fans of `Uthman they did not know what will be the consequences. Therefore, the details were communicated to the Imam (a.s). When he read their report, folds appeared on his forehead. He wrote to `Ubaydullah and Sa`id, "Whatever has happened is because of your poor politics! Otherwise they were not important enough to be given any importance! Neither they are more in numbers nor .do they have any power

You must talk and convince them to be the men of piety. If they come back to the Right Path, we shall thank Allah! If they want to fight, we shall be ready to fight as
"well

The Imam (a.s) simultaneously sent a letter to the fans of `Uthman of Yemen with a person from the tribe of Hamdan, "I have been informed of your rebellion and headstrong attitude! Abstain from rebellion and go back to the peace of your homes! If you hesitate in doing this, an army is coming to teach you a suitable lesson and crush you." But those people remained adamant. When the courier found them reticent, he told them that the Imam (a.s) readied an army under Yazid ibn Qays al-Arhabi which is waiting for me to inform about your reaction. If you do not change your attitude, the troops will rush for Yemen. When they understood that this was not just a threat, they said that if `Ubaydullah and Sa`id were removed from there, midst they will become obedient to the Imam (a.s). This was their trick to save time. They would not have remained content only with the change of the functionaries. They had already sent a message to Mu`awiyah asking him to send out a contingent to deal with the Shi`ah of Yemen. They promised to cooperate with the army in its .operations

Mu`awiyah, who was carrying on his guerilla operations on various towns of Iraq, could not have kept quiet at this initiative of the Yemenis. He immediately called Busr ibn Artah, who was a tyrant of much ferocity, and sent him with a contingent of ۳,۰۰۰ troops to proceed to Yemen via al-Madinah and Makkah. He had instructions that whichever place he passed through, he should force the people to owe allegiance to Mu`awiyah. Those of the Shi`ah of `Ali (a.s) who refuse his call must be executed forthwith and plunder their homes and hearths. Therefore, commanding the contingent he started for al-Madinah. On the way, wherever he came across a source of water, he confiscated the camels of the people who were there to water their animals. When he reached near al-Madinah terrorizing and looting the people enroute, the tribe of Banū-Khuza`ah welcomed him and slaughtered camels to feed his contingent. When he entered the environs of al-Madinah, Abū-Ayyūb al-Ansari, the governor went out of the city awed by seeing the huge contingent of troops and escaped towards al-Kūfah. There was none there to resist him. Busr went straight to the mosque and threatened the people who assembled there. He frightened them so much that they thought that death would come to them any moment. Some people asked Huwaytib ibn `Abd al-`Uzza, in whose house Busr's mother lived, to do

something to save them. He told Busr, "These people are the companions of the Prophet (a.s). They are neither the killers of `Uthman nor did they have anything to do with the conspiracy of killing him! Leave them alone!" Busr did not agree. When they agreed to enter the bay`ah of Mu`awiyah, he allowed them to go home. But those on whom he had doubt that they would not owe allegiance to Mu`awiyah, he got their homes burned down. These were the homes of Abū-Ayyūb al-Ansari, `Abdullah ibn Sa`d, Rafa`ah ibn Rafi` al-Azraqi and Zurarah ibn Harūn

At the arrival of Busr, many people abandoned their homes and fled. Among them was Jabir ibn `Abdullah al-Ansari who left his home and took shelter elsewhere. When Busr did not see Jabir, he told a branch of Banū-Salamah that if they did not produce Jabir in front of him, the safety of their lives and property could not be guaranteed. When Jabir learned that the lives of the people of his tribe were in jeopardy, he went in the darkness of the night to Umm al-Mu`minin Ummu-Salamah and told her, "I have come to you to take your advice! What should I do in these circumstances?" She said, "For you there is no other alternative than owing allegiance to Mu`awiyah and saving the lives of your men and your own! Although this bay`ah is sheer deviation, I have also advised my son `Umar ibn Abi-Salamah and my son-in-law `Abdullah ibn Zum`ah to save themselves by entering into it" Therefore Jabir very unwillingly went .to Busr and entered into the bay`ah of Mu`awiyah

All the days that Busr was in al-Madinah the clouds of terror and fear were hovering over the place and people were forced to owe their allegiance to the tyrannical force of Busr! Busr spared their lives and said, "O people of al-Madinah! You did not deserve that even a single person here should be allowed to live because in front of your eyes `Uthman was killed and you did not do anything to help him. Although I am forgiving you in this world, I hope that you will be deprived of Allah's Blessings in the Hereafter! I am appointing Abū-Hurayrah as the governor of al-Madinah on behalf of the government of Syria. Beware! Do not act against his orders!" Then he proceeded towards Makkah. When he reached near Makkah, spreading terror at all the places on the way, the governor of Makkah, Qathm ibn `Abbas quietly left the city. Most of the inhabitants of Makkah had left the place. Among these people was Abū-Mūsa al-Ash`ari as well. When Busr heard that even Abū-Mūsa had run away because of fear, he said that at least he should not have any fear! One who had deposed `Ali (a.s) despite being his own nominee, he cannot be killed! Busr threatened and frightened the people of Makkah and addressed them thus, "We thank Allah that He has given us control and authority! Our enemies have been shamed by Him! Look at Ibn Abi-Talib! He is sitting in an insignificant corner of Iraq! The areas of his own realm are shrinking for him! Allah has given retribution for his sins! His companions too are abandoning him! Today, the leader of the Muslims is Mu`awiyah who is the successor of `Uthman

and the standard-bearer for claiming the qisas for his blood! There do bay`ah with
”!him and do not put your lives in jeopardy by turning away from him

The people were already in fear and confusion. Seeing the bloodied swords they agreed to owe their allegiance to Mu`awiyah. After the bay`ah he appointed Shaybah .ibn `Uthman as the governor of Makkah. Now Busr moved towards Ta'if

When Busr went some distance, he sent one Qarashi to Nabbalah saying that there were many Shi`ah there and he must kill them one by one. The man went there and made them captive. They said that they were from his own place and tribe. They wanted some respite to send a person to Busr to request him for amnesty. If he gave us amnesty in writing, it would be fine. Otherwise, you will be free to kill us. The man gave permission and Munih al-Bahili went to Ta'if where Busr was waiting for the return of the Qarashi. Munih made the request for amnesty with Busr. Some important persons of Ta'if too supported him. He agreed to give amnesty because of their recommendation but was hesitant to write down his approval. When he thought that his man must have already killed all the other persons in al-Nabbalah, he wrote the order and gave to Munih. When he went to the house of the woman where he was staying, he found that she was not there. He did not want to delay his departure anymore and, instead of the saddle he put a sheet of cloth on the back of the camel and started for his place, al-Nabbalah. There the people were losing hope of his returning in time to save their lives. The Qarashi and his men had already brought the .persons to the ground for the execution

In fact, the sword was used on the neck of one person, but it had broken. They talked with one another that to make the swords work they must be swung around. When Munih reached al-Nabbalah after spending one day and one night on camel back, he saw the swords shining from a distance. He thought that some fighting was going on. He speeded up his camel and waved his white shawl to indicate that he was coming. The person on whose neck the sword was about to fall was Munih's own brother. He .rushed and gave the letter to the Qarashi and their lives were saved just in time

Busr left al-Ta'if and went towards the habitations of Banū-Kinanah where two young sons of `Ubaydullah ibn `Abbas, Qathm and `Abd al-Rahman and their mother, Ummu-Hakim Hūriyyah bint Kurayz al-Kinaniyyah were living. Busr sent his men to bring the children for killing them. `Ubaydullah ibn `Abbas had left the children in the care of al-Kinani. When he saw that Busr wanted to kill them, his conscience would not allow him to see the children, who were in his care, getting killed before his eyes. He took out his sword and was ready to kill or to be killed. Busr said that they had nothing to do with neither him nor any need for them to kill him. He asked him to keep away and leave the children alone. He said that the duty of guardianship is more precious than his own life. Saying this he attacked the enemies and died fighting valiantly. Busr searched Qathm and `Abd al-Rahman and killed them with great barbarity. When the women of Banū-Kinanah heard this, they came out of their homes. One lady said, "Until this day men were seen executed. Even during the days of ignorance children were never executed! This tyrannical rule will not exist for long which is based on cruelty and barbarity! A rule in which there is no consideration even for small children and old persons!" Busr said, "By Allah! I wish to kill all these women with my sword!" The woman said, "Allah knows! If you do that the pain of our hearts would be relieved!" when Ummu-Hakim saw her children immersed in dust and their own blood, she was disconsolate with sorrow. She went round as if she was searching for her little children. During the days of Hajj thereafter she used to make the pilgrims
!cry with her couplets full of pathos

When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) heard of the sad ending of those children, he was very
:sad and cursed Busr in these words

[O Allah! Snatch away the Faith and wisdom from him!]"[١٤٠

And really it did happen like that! A time came when he lost his mental capacities. But even in this lunacy he used to utter the word, "Sword! Sword". In the end, he was given a sword made out of wood and a sheepskin filled with air was placed in front of him to hit with his wooden sword! He used thus to quench his thirst for tyranny until he
.died

Coming back to the narrative, Busr reached Najran killing and maiming people along the way. In Najran he killed `Abdullah ibn `Abd al-Mudan al-Harithi and his son Malik. After troubling and torturing the people of Najran, he went to Arhab and killed Abū-Karb who was an ardent Shi`ah of `Ali (a.s) and a chief of the tribe of Hamdan. Then Busr proceeded to San`a', the capital of Yemen. `Amr ibn Arakah al-Thaqafi, who was the deputy of `Ubaydullah ibn `Abbas in his absence, valiantly fought with the men of Busr with the remnants of his troops and was martyred in the process. Busr entered the city and ordered general massacre and killed hundreds of innocent persons. During this whirlwind tour Busr destroyed complete towns, looted materials and indulged in wholesale arson. Thirty thousand Muslims were the victims of his
.unparalleled barbarity

Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) asked the people of al-Kūfah to give a befitting reply to the atrocities of Busr. But they exhibited their disinterest and avoided pursuing the enemy. After repeated proddings by the Imam (a.s), Abū-Buradah ibn `Awf al-Azdi said, "If you go commanding the troops, we are ready to go!" The Imam (a.s) said, "Your suggestion is not proper! It is not good that I leave the head quarters and keep chasing a marauder and brigand all over the realm!" Jariyah ibn Qudamah al-Sa`idi said, "O Amir al-Mu'minin! I am ready to go in the pursuit of the enemy!" The Imam (a.s) said, "You take a contingent of two thousand troops from al-Basrah and chase him in Hijaz and then up to Yemen and give him punitive punishment!" Wahab ibn Mas`ūd al-Thaqafi said, "O Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s)! I shall take a contingent of two

thousand men from al-Kūfah to teach a lesson to the enemy! “The Imam (a.s) gave him the permission as well. Both of them started on the campaign. After they went, the other persons felt that they did not respond to the call of Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s). Therefore, some important persons came to the presence of the Imam (a.s) and said, “O Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s)! We are really sorry that we tried to avoid fighting with the enemy! It is the result of our shortcomings and lethargy that the enemy could take courage in his hands to attack our territory. Order us! We shall prepare an army and
”!chase the enemy and finish him

The Imam (a.s) said, "I have sent a person who will not return without chasing the enemy out of the borders of the realm! However, you must prepare for a result-oriented war instead of these chases! That will totally eliminate the repeated incursions by the enemy! Rise and prepare to fight with Mu`awiyah ibn Abi-Sufyan and finish that mischief for all time! "Sa`id ibn Qays al-Hamdani said, "O Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s)! We are in your service and my tribe shall always be at your beck and call! We can fight with the enemy within our borders and away from our realm! We shall shatter the idols of ignorance and treachery!" The Imam (a.s) said, "May Allah
"!bless you! What you have said is very correct

Then Ziyad ibn Khasfah too assured of his whole-hearted cooperation. Seeing the sangfroid of the people of al-Kūfah, the Imam (a.s) ordered Ma`qil ibn Qays to arrange for men and materials of war. Then he addressed in a general gathering of the people of al-Kūfah in this manner, "O People of al-Kūfah! I am mobilizing troops to fight with the Syrians. Those of you who want to do jihad in the way of Allah should report to join the contingent." The people of al-Kūfah sharpened their swords and getting together other arms joined the army in large numbers. The number of troops rose to ٤٠,٠٠٠ men. On a contingent of ١٠,٠٠٠ men the Imam (a.s) appointed his son Husayn (a.s). Another ١٠,٠٠٠ troops were put under the command of Qays ibn Sa`d, and ١٠,٠٠٠ under Abū-Ayyūb al-Ansari. In this manner different contingents were
.under the command of different persons

The Imam (a.s) wanted to move with this army on the campaign to Siffin after a week. But a Khariji, Ibn Muljim al-Muradi struck the head of the Imam (a.s) with such ferocity that he was martyred. With this great calamity the conditions in the realm became very uncertain. The rebellious ruler of Syria got the opportunity to play his treacherous tricks. The contingents got together so meticulously were disbursed over night. At the crucial time when arrangements had been made to crush the tyrannical enemy, the accursed Khariji turned everything upside down! On the other side Jariyah ibn Qudamah reached Yemen with his regiment. When the fans of `Uthman of Yemen knew of this, they went into the hills to hide themselves. But Jariyah's men chased and surrounded them. Some of them were killed

Jariyah inquired about Busr and he was told that he had gone towards the habitations of Banū-taym. Jariyah chased him. The tyrants are generally cowards. When he learned that the Iraqi army was in his pursuit, he went towards Yamamah. He ran away even from there, running from place to place to make the Iraqis miss his trail. People were aware of his cruelties. Wherever he went, people used to attack him and Banū-Tamim even looted some of his goods. Jariyah chased him until Haras and the tired contingent rested there for a month. Then they went to Makkah

Jariyah asked the people of Makkah if they had owed their allegiance to Mu`awiyah. They said that they did the bay`ah but they did not have any other choice. Jariyah asked them to renew their bay`ah with the Imam (a.s). They asked, "Whose bay`ah? Amir al-Mu'minin is no more in the world!" He said, "You must owe your bay`ah to the person to whom the Companions of `Ali (a.s) have owed their allegiance." Therefore the people of Makkah pledged their bay`ah to Imam al-Hasan (a.s) and Jariyah proceeded towards al-Madinah. There Abū-Hurayrah had started to lead the congregations of prayers. When he heard of the arrival of Jariyah he went underground. When Jariyah heard about this, he said

[By Allah! If Abū–Hurayrah was caught by me, I would have cut away his head!”[۱۷“

Then he told the people of al–Madinah to owe their allegiance to Imam al–Hasan (a.s). All the people did the bay` ah and Jariyah proceeded towards al–Kūfah. Busr saved his life and reached Damascus and sought encomiums from Mu`awiyah for his dark .deeds

Mu`awiyah ibn Abi–Sufyan wanted to extend his sway as far and wide as possible. For this purpose he was attacking the areas under Amir al–Mu`minin (a.s) and used tyrants like al–Dahhak al–Fahri and Busr ibn Artah for this nefarious purpose. The gangs of Syrians played havoc on the unarmed, innocent civilians for no fault of theirs. Although this nefarious activity was carried out under the excuse of claiming retaliation for the blood of `Uthman, the real purpose was to extend the tyrannical sway of Mu`awiyah. To achieve this, they rendered buildings into ruins, obliterated .habitation after habitation from existence and the survivors had to fly to safer places

The sanctity of Makkah and al–Madinah was compromised by spreading fear psychosis in those holy places. Although Makkah is the place where there is no justification for disturbing the peace or of causing death or injury to any person! The Prophet of Islam (a.s) by declaring general amnesty at the time of conquest of :Makkah had forgiven the worst of offenders of peace and had said

One who has Faith in Allah and the Hereafter, for him it is not legitimate to shed blood“
[and cut trees in Makkah!”[۱۸

Similarly, al-Madinah too is sacrosanct and spreading terror there and torturing the residents there are foul acts. Therefore, the Prophet (a.s) has said

One who frightens the people of al-Madinah as an act of cruelty; on him there will be the curse of Allah, His angels and the entire humankind! Allah will neither accept the [mandatory prayers nor the optional of such a person!]"[۴

Footnote

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۳, Page ۱۹۳ [۱]

Tārīkh al-Tabarī, Vol ۴, Page ۱۰۷ [۲]

Sahīh al-Bukhārī, Vol ۳, Page ۱۶۷ [۳]

Wafā al-Wafā, Vol, Page ۳۲ [۴]

THE MARTYRDOM

THE MARTYRDOM

In ۴۰ H after the Battle of Nahrawan the remnants of Khawarij had a conclave in Makkah and discussing about the loss of lives in their ranks, they put the blame of these killings on `Ali (a.s), Mu`awiyah and `Amr Ibn al-`As. To avenge all those killings, they wanted to do away with all the three. The blood of the Khawarij was already seeking revenge. They unanimously agreed that Bakr ibn `Abdullah al-Sarimi would kill Mu`awiyah, `Amr ibn Barrak al-Tamimi to kill `Amr ibn al-`As and `Abd al-Rahman ibn Muljim to assassinate `Ali (a.s). They also agreed that all the three killings were to be committed on the same day and at the same time. They did not want any of the three to get the wind of the killing of the other and get wary and make the attempts fail. Therefore, they fixed the day and time and sent Barrak ibn `Abdullah to Damascus, `Amr ibn Bakr to Egypt and `Abd al-Rahman ibn Muljim to al-Kūfah

For this difficult task they had fixed 14th of Ramadan and the time was the Morning Prayer. Therefore, Barrak ibn `Abdullah reached the Masjid of Damascus and when the congregation stood up, he took station behind Mu`awiyah in the first row. When Mu`awiyah bent forward in genuflection, he struck a blow with his sword. The wound was small and healed within a few days. The assailant was taken captive. `Amr ibn Bakr reached the Masjid of Egypt on the night of 14th Ramadan with the plan of killing `Amr ibn al-`As during the Morning Prayer, but it so happened that `Amr ibn al-`As suffered from a bout of colic and had deputed Kharijah ibn Hudhafah al-Sahmi to lead the prayer in his place. `Amr ibn Bakr was not able to identify in the darkness that it was not `Amr ibn al-`As. He killed Kharijah in that confusion. The people caught hold of him, bound him in ropes and took to `Amr ibn al-`As. When he realized that Kharijah was killed by him in place of `Amr ibn al-`As, he felt sorry for the failure of his design. `Amr ibn al-`As addressed him and said, "You wanted to kill me, but the death turned towards Kharijah and you have failed in your attempt on my life!" Then .he was killed for killing Kharijah

Abd al-Rahman ibn Muljim arrived in al-Kūfah around the end of the month of `Sha`ban and stayed in the locality of Banū-Kindah with some Khawarij. He did not inform anyone of his plans nor did he give any indication of his intention through his behavior. In that time he developed acquaintance with a Khariji woman, Qatam bint Taymiyah. He fell for her at the first sight. When he knew that she was a spinster, he proposed marriage to her. Qatam's father and brother were killed in the battle of Nahrawan and she wanted to wreak vengeance on `Ali (a.s). But she did not find any way to fulfill her wish. When Ibn Muljim proposed to her, she saw a ray of hope in the proposal. Therefore, she said, "I am willing to marry you but my dowry is ۳,۰۰۰ .dirhams, a male slave, a slave girl and the killing of `Ali ibn Abi-Talib

Ibn Muljim was already having plans for that crime, he had come there for that purpose and now another strong motive presented itself to make him more determined for the act. But outwardly he expressed surprise at the suggestion and he

”said, “Killing `Ali is not an easy task

Qatam said, “You can make a surprise attack and kill him. If you succeed, it is well and good. Even otherwise you will get the Blessings of the Hereafter!” When Ibn Muljim saw that Qatam had the same feelings as himself, he told her that he had come to al-Kūfah with the same purpose and wanted to avenge the deaths of his men in the battle of Nahrawan. Then Qatam told him that he must act with determination and she would talk to dependable persons of her tribe to extend their cooperation. Therefore, she prepared Dardan ibn Mujalid to assist him. Ibn Muljim took Shabib ibn Bajrah al-Ashja`i and al-Ash`ath ibn Qays into confidence and kept waiting for the

.day and time of the act

During that month of Ramadan, `Ali (a.s) was alternately going to the houses of his children and that of `Abdullah ibn Ja`far to break his fasts. His appetite had gone down very much and he used to take only a few morsels of food. When asked about it,

:he would say

[I wish that when my death comes, I should be on an empty stomach!”[`

On the night of 14th Ramadan, the Imam (a.s) went to her daughter Ummu-Kulthūm’s house. She offered him two breads of barley, a bowl of milk and some salt. When he saw the food he said, “In following the foot steps of the Prophet (a.s) I have never had more than one type of food on my spread. O Daughter! There is accountability for the legitimate and retribution for the illegitimate. Do you want your father to stay longer at the station of accountability of the Day of Judgment? Remove one of the two things

”from the spread

Ummu-Kulthūm took away the bowl of milk and Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) ate a few morsels of the bread with the salt. After the meal, according to his practice, he stood up on the mat to offer his prayer. But he was looking up repeatedly at the twinkling stars and said

By Allah! I am not lying nor am I making a wrong statement! This is the night about“ [which promise has been made to me!”[۲

In uneasiness he sometimes recited Sūrah Yasin, sometimes he said “We are Allah’s and to Him do we return,” and sometimes “There is neither might nor power save with Allah, the Most High, the All-great,” and “O Allah! Make death felicitous for me!” When Ummu-Kulthūm saw this, she asked, “Father! Why are you so worried today?” He replied, “I have the Hereafter in front of me! I am going to the Presence of Allah!” Tears welled in the eyes of Ummu-Kulthūm and she said, “Father! Today you should not go to the Mosque! Ju`dah ibn Hubayrah is there. Ask him to lead the prayer!” The Imam (a.s) said, “There is no escape from the Fate fixed by Allah” The night was in its last stages when the Muezzin, Ibn tabaj came and informed about the prayer. The Imam (a.s) rose to move towards the mosque

When he came to the courtyard of the house, the domesticated geese started shouting and swaying their wings. Someone wanted to move them aside, but the Imam (a.s) said, “Leave them alone! After a short time the sounds of crying and wailing would start” Imam al-Hasan (a.s) or Ummu-Kulthūm said, “Father! What sort of things you are saying today!” He said, “This is the truth that has come out of my mouth!” Then the Imam (a.s) told Ummu-Kulthūm, “My daughter! These birds cannot speak! Take care of feeding them! If you cannot do that, then you must free them so that they find their food by going around on the earth!” When he reached near the door, he tied a shawl around his girdle and recited two couplets of Ruhayhah al- Ansari

Fasten you riddle for the death

Because the death is coming before you

When death comes

!Do not show unease

Ummu-Kulthūm bid adieu to her father with tears in her eyes. Imam al-Hasan (a.s) wanted to go to the Mosque with the Imam, but he asked him not to come. When he reached the Mosque, there was darkness there. He offered a few genuflections of prayer in the darkness. After reciting the supplications, the reddish dawn was around. He then went to the place from where the adhan is sounded and called the Faithful to prayer! This was the last time that his voice resounded calling the people to pray and was heard in every household of al-Kūfah. Then he went round calling “Come to prayer! Come to prayer,” waking people for the prayer. Among these people was Ibn Muljim as well. The Imam (a.s) found him sleeping face down and said, “This is the way the Satan sleeps! Sleep on your left shoulder which is the way of the believers or sleep on the right shoulder that is the wont of the scholars, or sleep with you face up that is the way the Prophets sleep! Get up and pray. I know with what purpose you
”!have come here and what you have hidden under the lapel of your cloak

After awaking people, the Imam (a.s) stood in the arch for the prayer. When he raised his head from the first prostration of the morning’s optional prayer, Shabib ibn Bajrah attacked with his sword, but the sword hit the pillar of the Mosque and the attack went in vain. Then Ibn Muljim hit his poisoned sword on the head of the Imam (a.s) that cracked his skull. The Imam (a.s) immediately said, “In the Name of Allah; and on the Religion of Allah’s Messenger. I have really won. I swear it by the Lord of Ka`bah!
”.O People! The son of the Jewess, Ibn Muljim, has killed me

The Imam (a.s) is like the spirit of the world. When the spirit is hurt the limbs and other parts are affected. Therefore, at that time the sky shivered and the earth had a cataclysm! The doors of the mosque dashed against each other. The following words were heard between the earth and the sky, “The pillars of the True Guidance have actually been demolished; and the Firmest Handle has split! By Allah! The cousin of the Prophet has been killed! The successor of the Prophet has been killed! `Ali the Well-Pleased has been martyred!” This sound shook up the people of the city of al-Kūfah. People started arriving at the Mosque in hordes. Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn ran towards the Mosque in panic where the people were crying inconsolably and were shouting, “Amir al-Mu’minin has been martyred!” The sons of the Prophet (a.s) went forward and saw that the arch of the Mosque was immersed with blood and the Imam (a.s) was restlessly turning on the floor in blood and dust. He was picking up the dust :from the floor, putting it on his injured skull and reciting the following verse

مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ وَفِيهَا نُعِيدُكُمْ وَمِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ تَارَةً أُخْرَى.

From it We created you and into it We shall send you back and from it will We raise “
”(you a second time. (٢٠/٥٥)

Seeing the face and the head of Amir al-Mu’minin (a.s) covered with blood, Imam al-Hasan (a.s) said with choking voice, “Father! Who has shed your blood?” The Imam (a.s) lifted his head, looked at Hasan (a.s) and said, “My son! First, offer your prayer!” Therefore Imam al-Hasan (a.s) led the congregation and `Ali (a.s) sat there in prayer. After the prayer, the Imam (a.s) was brought to the courtyard of the Mosque. People had already gathered in large numbers inside and around the Mosque. Every eye was wet with tears and every heart was saddened. When Imam al-Hasan (a.s) inquired about the killer, the Imam (a.s) said, “I have been killed by Ibn Muljim al-Muradi” He pointed towards the door, Bab-Kindah and said that. “He will just be brought through that door!” Some persons were just then seen dragging Ibn Muljim in through that door. People started shouting, “Ibn Muljim has been apprehended!” The crowd was .getting restless with anger and anguish. Every person was cursing him

When he was brought before Imam al-Hasan (a.s) he told the wretch, "O unfortunate accursed person! You have killed Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s)! Is it the return for the kindnesses that he showered on you people?" Ibn Muljim stood there with bowed head and did not give any reply. `Ali (a.s) opened his eyes in delirium and looking at him said, "O Ibn Muljim! Was not I your good Imam? Were my kindnesses worth forgetting?" At this Ibn Muljim said, "Will you get one released who has made the way for the Hell?" Then the Imam (a.s) turned towards Imam al-Hasan (a.s) and said, "O son! If I remained alive, it will be my prerogative whether I punish him or pardon him! If I pass away because of this injury, you must kill him only with one stroke. After killing do not sever his limbs! I have heard the Prophet (a.s) say, 'Beware! Do not do cutting off the limbs of anyone. Even if it is a dog!' During the days of his captivity give him the food that you yourself eat and drink

Now people carried the Imam (a.s) home on their hands. Outside the house there was loud lamentation. Hearing these sounds Imam al-Hasan (a.s) came out and told the people, "Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) is asking you to go to your homes!" Al-Asbagh ibn Nubatah says that the people disbursed but his heart would not allow him to go without seeing the Imam (a.s). He kept standing there. When Imam al-Hasan (a.s) came out again, he said, "O Son of the prophet (a.s)! I would not like to go without .(seeing Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s

Please allow me one glimpse of him!” Imam al-Hasan (a.s) went inside and emerged after some time and took al-Asbagh inside. He saw the Imam (a.s) had a yellow cloth tied around his head His face too had turned yellow with weakness and loss of blood. He could not distinguish between the color of the bandage and the Imam’s face. He .could not control himself and started crying

When the Imam (a.s) saw al-Asbagh crying, he said, “O al-Asbagh! Do not cry! I am going towards the Heaven!” He said, “O Amir al-Mu’minin! I know you will go to the Heaven! But I cry because I am getting separated from you! Now who will take care of us? Who will help the orphans and the widows

Saying this, al-Asbagh stood up and the Imam (a.s) went into a delirium with weakness. He was now alternating between delirium and senses. Imam al-Hasan (a.s) gave him a bowl of milk. The Imam (a.s) drank a little and left the rest. He said that Ibn Muljim too should be given a beverage of milk. In that time the physicians of al-Kūfah had assembled. Among them was the famous surgeon and physician, Athir ibn `Amr al-Sakūni. After inspecting the wound he said it was mortal and that there was not any chance of survival. The poisoned sword had penetrated the brain and the venom had spread. Hearing this, the hearts of the people there started sinking. And tears started flowing from their eyes. The Imam (a.s) spent the nights of 19th and 20th of Ramadan in great pain. When two thirds of the twenty-first night was gone, the condition of the Imam (a.s) became very precarious and droplets of the sweat of death appeared on his forehead. He recited the shahadah and breathed his last! The one who spent his life doing jihad against the forces of evil, ultimately died at the hands of the evil Ibn Muljim

Murder is a serious crime, but the consequences of the murder depend on the status of the victim and similarly the punishment too varies from case to case. An ordinary person's killing is a crime and the killing of a believer is a bigger crime and according to the Nass of the Qur'an the punishment for the perpetrator of the crime is perpetual burning in the Hellfire. Then killing of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was a great calamity and the killer qualified for Allah's curse and perpetual retribution! This was the killing of the person who used to spend his nights in supplication to Allah! The killer neither considered the sanctity of the Mosque nor thought that he did the heinous act when the Imam (a.s) was in his prostration. One sad aspect of this tragedy is that when this happened, the Imam (a.s) had already mobilized a big contingent of troops and was to leave for Syria soon to fight with the forces of evil. It is quite possible if there was a conspiracy behind the assassination. When a tributary could be used to poison Malik al-Ashtar and Ju`dah bint al-Ash`ath too is used to poison Imam al-Hasan (a.s), it is quite probable that the same forces of evil might have used Ibn Muljim to commit this heinous crime. The person, Ibn Muljim, was the most villainous character. The Prophet (a.s) had compared the assassin of `Ali (a.s) to those who killed the she-camel of Prophet Salih. Therefore, Ja`far ibn Samarah says

The prophet (a.s) said to `Ali (a.s), "Amongst the bygone people, the most callous was
".that who killed the she-camel of Prophet Salih

”?The prophet (a.s) was asked by `Ali (a.s), “Who is the most callous in the latter days

[He said, “Allah, and His Prophet know that he is your assassin.”][۳

If the killer of the she-camel of Prophet Salih deserved Hellfire, then how could the killer of `Ali (a.s) escape Hellfire, when both had extinguished the miracles of the prophets and erased the verses of Allah! After this, there is no weight in Ibn Hazm saying that this killing was the result of (error of interpretation). One cannot lighten the sin of the person and term him deserving of Allah’s Forgiveness and Blessings

Footnote

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۳, Page ۱۹۵ [۱]

Al-Sawā`iq al-Muhriqah, Page ۱۳۴ [۲]

Tārīkh Baghdād, Vol ۱, Page ۱۳۵ [۳]

THE BURIAL

THE BURIAL

The twenty-first night of Ramadan was in its last stage. The dull radiance of the moon was pervading the environment, the stars were twinkling and there was silence in the abode of Imamate. On one side were the close relations of the Imam (a.s) and on the other were his Companions. They were all a picture of sadness and pathos. Arrangements were being made for the final bath and giving him the shroud. Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn (a.s) gave him the bath in a way that Imam al-Husayn (a.s) was pouring the water and Imam al-Hasan (a.s) was rubbing the body. According to one narration, Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah was pouring the water and Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn (a.s) were rubbing the body. After the bath, the camphor that was left over after the final bath of the Prophet (a.s) was embalmed on the Imam’s body. Then the body was shrouded with a white cloth. According to the wish of the Imam (a.s), his mortal remains were buried the same night he died. The bier .was taken to the western side of al-Kūfah towards al-Hirah

When it reached Najaf near al-Hirah, the bier was put on the ground and Imam al-Hasan (a.s) led the funeral prayer with five or seven Takbirs. Al-Daynawari writes

[Ali was buried and al-Hasan offered the Funeral Prayer with five Takbirs.]^[1] “

After the funeral prayer, between the white hills, at one place, they removed the soil and found a grave ready. Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn, Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah and Muhammad ibn Ja`far entered the grave and the body was lowered into it. The grave was then closed with bricks and earth was poured over it and brought to the level of the ground

In the desert of Najaf, the body was quietly consigned to the grave and people learned about this when Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn (a.s) and other close persons returned to al-Kūfah. Gossip started among the populace. Some said that he had been interred inside the Dar al-Imarah, others said that he had been buried in the al-Kūfah Mosque. Some were of opinion that the burial was done in al-Rahbah al-Kūfah and many thought that the body was taken to the locality of Karkh in Baghdad. But the correct location of the grave was known only to the sons of the Imam (a.s) and some close Companions who were in the funeral procession. One reason for keeping the location of the grave secret was that they feared barbarous acts from the Khawarij and the Umayyads that was witnessed at the Battle of Uhud when the limbs of the martyrs' bodies were severed by the barbarous Umayyads. When the period of Banū-Umayyah was over, during the reign of Abul-`Abbas al-Saffah, Imam Ja`far al-Sadiq (a.s) came to Iraq and informed about the location of the grave to his Companions, Abū-Basir, `Abdullah ibn Talhah, the freed slave of Ibn Khunays, Yūnus ibn ʿabyan and Zurarah... etc. Then commenced the visits by the Shi`ah from all over the world

Through the confirmation of Imam Ja`far al-Sadiq and other Imams, it is established that the last resting place of Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) is the holy city of Najaf which is a place of pilgrimage from the `Abbasid reign and the scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah too :have mentioned clearly about the location. Therefore, Ibn al-Athir writes

The correct belief is that his grave is the same that is visited by the masses for“ [pilgrimage and is a source of felicity for the people.”[۲

Ibn Abil-Hadid writes that Abul-Ghana`im Muhammad ibn `Ali, who died in ۵۱۰ H, used :to say

In al-Kūfah, three hundred Companions died, but other than the grave of Amir al-“ Mu`minin, the grave of any other Companion cannot be traced. The Imam’s grave is [the same that is visited by people for Ziyarah.”[۳

Footnote

Al-Akhhbār al-Tiwāl, Page ۲۱۶ [۱]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۳, Page ۱۹۹ [۲]

Sharh Nahj al-Balāghah by Ibn Abil-Hadīd, Vol ۲, Page ۴۵ [۳]

SOME IMPRESSIONS

SOME IMPRESSIONS

Amir al-Mu`minin’s martyrdom was a calamitous event in the annals of the history of Islam. Al-Kūfah, where this tragedy took place, was a picture of sadness. In the eyes of the next of kin of the Imam (a.s) the world had seemed dark and desolate. The enthusiasm of the companions of the Imam (a.s) was shattered and their peace of mind was disturbed. Even the enemies acknowledged the personality and character .(of the Imam (a.s

:A few statements of tribute are mentioned hereinafter

:Imam al-Hasan (a.s), giving a sermon after the burial of the Imam (a.s), said

You have assassinated a venerable person in the night on which the Holy Qur'an was revealed, `Isa (a.s) was taken away to the Firmament and Yūsha` ibn Nūn was killed! By Allah! The forbears could not surpass him and those after him will not achieve his [status!]"[۱]

:Abdullah ibn `Abbas said`

By Allah! The world in his eyes was less valuable than the strap of the footwear! He was a tiger in combat and a river (of eloquence) in gatherings; in the company of scholars he was a paragon of wisdom! It is a pity he is no more. But he has achieved "elevated position in the Hereafter

:Sa`sa`ah Ibn Sawhan put his hand on the grave of the Imam (a.s) and said

I plead with Allah to bless us that we tread his foot prints, act on his example; be friends of his friends and antagonists of his enemies! O Allah! May our end be in the party of his friends! The status that he had none else could reach. The place he was in [was not in the fate of anyone else!"[۲]

:When Mu`awiyah heard of the assassination of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) he said

[With the death of Ibn Abū-Talib the Fiqh and knowledge has come to an end."[۳]

:When `A'ishah got the news of the Imam's demise, she said

Now the people of Arabia can do anything! There is none now who could stop them!"[۴]

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۳, Page ۲۰۱ [۱]

Bihār al-Anwār [۲]

Al-Istī`āb, Vol ۳, Page ۴۵ [۳]

Al-Riyāḥ al-Naḥīrah, Page ۲۳۰ [۴]

THE END OF IBN MULJIM AND HIS COHORTS

There were four persons involved in the assassination of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s): `Abd al-Rahman ibn Muljim, Qatam bint Akhdar, Shabib ibn Bujrah, and Wardan ibn Mujalid. When there was pandemonium in the Mosque after the act, and the people advanced towards the arch of the Mosque, Wardan ran away to his house. One of his relatives, on knowing of his involvement in the assassination, killed him with his sword! Ibn Muljim had run out after inflicting the mortal blow on the Imam (a.s). When the people saw him running away, they chased him. He threatened them that he would kill them if they went near him. But one person from the tribe of Hamdan and Mughirah ibn Nawfal succeeded in apprehending him and brought him back to the Mosque. He was kept under captivity until Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) was laid to rest. When Imam al-Hasan (a.s) came back to al-Kūfah after the funeral, he asked for Ibn Muljim to be brought to his presence. He told him, "O enemy of Allah! For what crime you have killed Amir al-Mu'minin? Did he ever ill-treat you?" He said, "I had sworn to Allah that I would kill him. Therefore, I killed him! Now you have the right to claim qisas or to leave me free! If you give me amnesty I shall kill Mu`awiyah and remove your care forever." Imam al-Hasan (a.s) said, "You deserve that you must be executed!" Therefore he ordered him to be executed. Haytham bint al-Aswad al-Nakha`iyyah claimed his body for the last rites. The body was given to her. She lighted a pyre and burned the body. Then the uncontrollable crowd went to the house of Qatam. She was killed; her body was rendered to shreds and burned. Her house was looted

Shabib ibn Bajrah was hiding in the crowds and saved himself. When Mu`awiyah visited al-Kūfah after assuming power, Ibn Bajrah met him. To get into good books of Mu`awiyah he said that he was an accessory of Ibn Muljim in the assassination of `Ali (a.s). When Mu`awiyah heard this he got up in anger and told the people of his tribe that if he saw Ibn Bajrah in al-Kūfah, they will all be executed. He asked them to exile him from al-Kūfah. Hearing this he escaped from al-Kūfah in the darkness of the night. When Mughirah ibn Shu`bah was the emir of al-Kūfah, ibn Bajrah and his companions were killed fighting with the troops of Ibn Shu`bah

SETTLEMENT IN NAJAF

SETTLEMENT IN NAJAF

Najaf is situated five miles to the west of al-Kūfah. There is a legend that long ago there was a mass of water at the place. When the water was totally absorbed by the soil and its substrata, the place was called annajaf or nayjaf, meaning the water had dried up. With excessive use the place came to be called Najaf. Adjacent to Najaf, there was another habitation, three miles from al-Kūfah, that was known as al-Hirah. Between these two places, there was a desert known as maltat. The foundation of al-Hirah was laid by the Caledonian monarch, Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander of Macedonia took part in its renovation and development. After sometime the people of al-Hirah moved to al-Anbar and al-Hirah fell into ruins. Habitations keep coming up and disappearing over periods. After its ruination, therefore, opportunity came for the revival of al-Hirah. Malik ibn Fahham, who had left Yemen fearing its submergence into the sea, came to settle down in Iraq. He succeeded in establishing his kingdom in the new area. After him, his son Judhaymah Abrash came to power. When he was killed by ʿUbbah, the queen of al-Jazirah, his nephew `Amr ibn `Adi, in the year ۲۴۰ A.D., during the times of Shahpur I, succeeded to the throne. `Amr, on assuming power, adopted al-Hirah as his home and thereafter it became the permanent capital of Iraq. Its beauty was enhanced with gardens and oases. Imposing structures like al-khawarnaq and al-sadir were constructed. The people here were dependent on horticulture and agriculture. Being on the borders of Iran, it also provided security to the Iranian caravans of traders and received compensation for the service rendered

to them. When after the conquest of Iraq, the foundations for the city of al-Kūfah were laid, people started moving there from al-Hirah. The bricks and stones of the structures in al-Hirah too were moved to al-Kūfah. This place fell into ruins and became a stretch of sand. When Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s) got his final resting place in the neighborhood of al-Hirah, the people started re-inhabiting the area. This place came to be known as Najaf, Mashhad and al-Ghari. Al-Hirah remained only in the pages of the books of history! The name of the place became al-Ghari because Judhaymah al-Abrash built two huge structures over the graves of his friends, Malik and `Aqil, which were called al-Ghariyyayn. With passage of time, instead of

saying al-Ghariyyayn, the people started calling the place as al-Ghari. Even Najaf in the early days was called al-Ghari because of being adjacent to it

When the Shi`ah of `Ali (a.s) became the attendants of the Shrine, they started constructing shacks and rooms in the surroundings of the shrine for their residence. The population of the place kept increasing and soon it assumed the proportion of a city. From Najaf to Syria there was a desert track and the danger of brigands was always there for the wayfarers. Because of this danger, the emirs and monarchs had constructed imparts around the city. This way renovated and improved as the need arose. Therefore, the first one to construct the Mausoleum of Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s) was `Adud al-Dawlah Fanakhusrow during the years ۳۶۷ to ۳۷۲ H and the boundary wall for the city. In ۴۰۰ H, the vizier of Sultan al-Dawlah al-Daylami, Abū-Muhammad ibn Sahlan, demolished the first rampart and constructed a wider and stronger compound wall. Ibn al-Athir writes

Abū-Muhammad Sahlan fell ill. When the sickness increased he made a vow that if he“ was restored to health, he would build a compound wall around the Mausoleum of Amir al-Mu`minin (a.s). Therefore, he recovered his health and he issued orders for [the construction of the wall. The project was completed the same year, ۴۰۰ H.”[۱

The last time the rampart was renovated in the period of Fath `Ali Shah Qajar (expired ۱۲۵۰ H) by his vizier Nizam al-Dawlah al-Isfahani, but most of this wall has been demolished because of the expansion of the city

The population of Najaf consists of mainly the Shi`ah. A major portion of the population consists of the students of the disciplines of Islamic Studies who come from various countries in the world. Although Najaf had always been the center for learning, but when Shaykh al-Ta'ifah Abū-Ja`far al-tūsi shifted his residence from Baghdad, because of trouble from the people there, to Najaf, the foundations for the Najaf were laid and with the felicity of madinat al-`ilm it remained the center of imparting knowledge

Footnote

Al-Kāmil fit-Tārīkh, Vol ۷, Page ۹۴۲ [۱]

CONSTRUCTION OF THE MAUSOLEUM OF IMAM `ALI

CONSTRUCTION OF THE MAUSOLEUM OF IMAM `ALI

Excepting the Imams (a.s) and a few other persons, no one else knew about the location of the grave of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). There was no way of people knowing about it because the grave was located in a remote place on a desolate hillock. There was neither any sign of the grave nor the tombstone. Its location came to be known by the people when Harūn al-Rashid, the `Abbasid ruler, on assuming power in ۱۷۰. He traveled in the environs of al-Kūfah. The purpose was to hunt the wildlife in the wilderness. When he saw some deer, he started the chase with his hunting dogs. He was surprised to see that the deer had climbed up a hillock and the dogs were scared of going near them. Harūn called a person from al-Hirah and asked him, "What is this place?" he said that the spot was the final resting place of Amir al-Mu'minin (a.s). Harūn gave a gift to the person, visited the grave of the Imam (a.s) and ordered the mausoleum be built. Therefore, a dome was constructed. People started visiting it and [started burying their dead in its neighborhood.]۱

This building was in the shape of a red dome. It had doors on all the four sides. The walls around the grave were made of white bricks

Muhammad ibn Zayd al-Hassani, the Emir of Tabristan, during the period of al-Mu`tadid billah, constructed the four outer walls for the dome and made the Mausoleum in the form of a fortress. There were seventy recesses (taq) in the walls.

The period of al-Mu`tadid billah was between ۲۷۹ and ۲۸۹ A.H

When `Adud al-Dawlah Fanakhusrow ibn Rukn al-Dawlah came to power in ۳۶۷ A.H., he constructed the mausoleum at a huge expense. The walls were clad with teakwood and the dome was done in white stone. Husayn ibn al-Hajjaj al-Baghdadi, died in ۳۹۱ A.H. in his poetic appraisal of the monument has said

O resident of the white dome of the land of Najaf

!One who visits the grave will recover from ailment

At the time of this construction `Adud al-Dawlah had made a will that he should be buried near the Imam (a.s) in Najaf. Therefore, Ibn Khillakan has written

Adud al-Dawlah had constructed the Shrine at great expense and willed that he too “ [should be buried there.”[۲

Therefore, when he died on the eighth of Shawwal ۳۷۲ H, he was buried in the Western side of the Mausoleum

In ۷۵۵ A.H, there was a big fire in the complex and most of the structure was destroyed, but in ۷۶۰ H it was reconstructed

In ۹۱۴ A.H, Shah Isma`il the Safavid, died ۹۳۰ H, built a steel sarcophagus and installed golden lamps inside the Mausoleum

In ۱۰۳۲ A.H, Shah `Abbas Kabir, died ۱۰۳۸, constructed the Mausoleum and extended
.the courtyard

In ۱۰۴۷ A.H, Shah Safi the Safavid, died ۱۰۵۲, started construction at the Mausoleum
.and his son, Shah `Abbas II completed it in ۱۰۷۷ H

In ۱۱۵۴ or ۱۱۵۶, Nadir Shah, after the conquest of India, repaired the Mausoleum with
.glazed tiles of Kashan and clad the dome and the minarets with gold

In ۱۲۰۷ A.H, Muhammad Khan the Qajar and in ۱۲۳۲ A.H. Fath `Ali Shah the Qajar and
.in ۱۲۸۸ H Nasir al-Din Shah the Qajar renovated and beautified the Mausoleum

In ۱۳۶۱ A.H, Mulla tahir Sayfuddin, Chief of Jamaat Bawaheer installed a magnificent
.sarcophagus made of gold and silver

In the middle of the ۱۴th Century of Hegira, an Iranian businessman installed golden
.doors for the Mausoleum

Footnote

Umdat al-Matālib, Page ۴۴` [۱]

Wafiyāt al-A`yān, Vol ۱, Page ۴۱۸ [۲]

About center

In the name of Allah

هَلِيسَتْوَ يَالَّذِيَتَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِيَتَلَا يَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

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Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the .cyberspace

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.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

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:Appreciation

We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable
.friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

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