

Ali

THE
MANIFESTING
IMAM

Brig. (R)

Syed Ahmad Irshad Tirmazi

SI (M)



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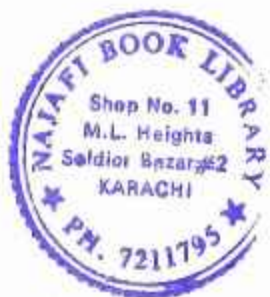
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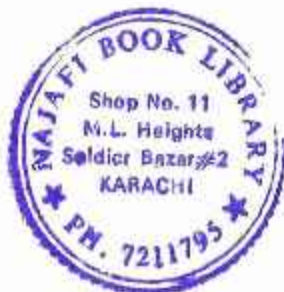
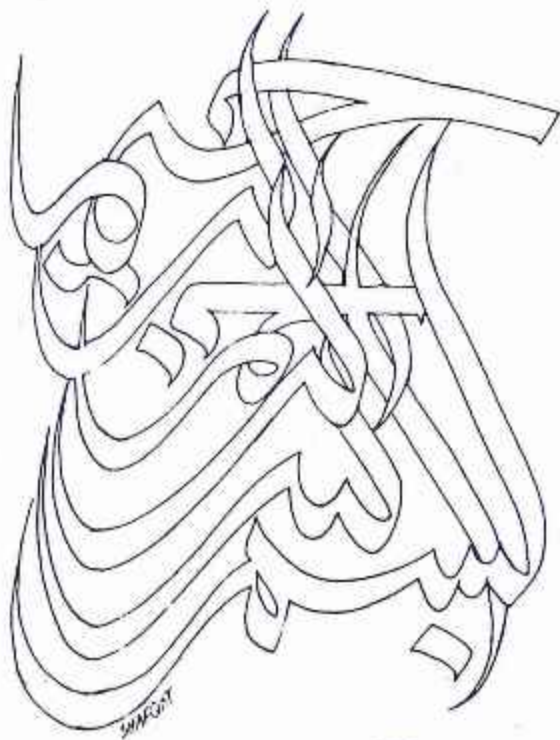


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Brigadier (Retired)
Syed Ahmad Irshad Tirmazi
S.I. (M)

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Dedicated to my father

Syed Ahmad Hussain Tirmazi

and to my mother

S. Fatima Tirmazi

GRATITUDE

I am deeply indebted to all those ladies and gentlemen who have helped me in the compilation of this book. While some have provided me with reference books, others have opened new vistas of thoughts for me and some friends have edited it at various stages.

I must also thank those from whose works I have taken help and pray for those who have inspired me and are not among us, particularly, Dr.Allama Mohammad Iqbal, Dr. Ali Shariati and Ustad Mutahari. May Allah in His infinite mercy bless them and rest their souls in eternal peace.
Amen

“Fear of people should not prevent he who knows the truth from speaking it, for it will neither bring death nearer nor will it distance him from wealth He should speak the truth or recall the Almighty ”

Prophet Mohammad (PBUH&HD)

امامِ ظاہر و باطن، امیرِ صورت و معنی
علی، ولی، اسد اللہ، جانشینِ بنی ہے
(غالب)

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The Author's Notes

One night, in my dream, I saw a very handsome person, dressed in black, standing near a horse and talking to another gentleman. This person had a charming smile on his divinely purified face. I was fascinated with his charismatic personality but could not pick up the courage to go near him. While I was engrossed in my thoughts, I heard a voice saying, "He is Imam Hussain (AS)." This dream lasted for only a few seconds. However, I was mighty pleased that I had seen Imam Hussain (AS) in my dream. It was a strange spiritual experience.

A few days later, again in my dream, I found myself standing in a desolate desert of utter wilderness. The atmosphere was horrifyingly quiet and silence seemed to have wrapped everything in its stony stillness. Even the air seemed to have been terribly afflicted and deeply grieved over something.

On one side there were small heaps of ash as if someone had burnt down some tents here. Maybe, a few days ago there was life here. A caravan must have encamped here for a few days. Some horses must have trampled over these sands and some camels must have passed by. Maybe, a while ago, some great terror must have swept through this valley that killed every living being.

There was no sign of life anywhere. The life seemed to have breathed its last breath here. Now only sadness and nothingness have engulfed even the sand and stones of this desert. Everything seemed afflicted.

In front of me was a canal, not very wide but stretched till the end of the desert. In fact it was merging into the eternal darkness of the horizon. This canal was not an ordinary canal. Instead of water, it was filled with coagulated blood. I was surprised and a little scared too. I was awe-stricken.

From nowhere a voice came: "Imam Hussain (AS) has drawn an indelible line, with his blood, between the right and the wrong. This line is going to stay there till eternity."

I woke up and started to think about the significance of this dream. Was there a message in it? I had noticed that the blood was stagnant; there were no ripples and no waves. Did that mean anything? I am still lost in these thoughts.

A few verses from Dr. Allama Mohammad Iqbal's poem '*Das maani-e-hurriyat Islamia wa sirre hadsa-e-Karbala*' came to my mind and I started to recite these verses. (1)

A couple of years ago, one of my acquaintances, who, I believe, has been gifted with extra sensory perceptions, rang me up and said:

"Orders are that you write a book about Imam Ali (AS)."

I was stunned by these 'orders'. How could I write a book about Imam Ali (AS)? Impossible! I could never measure myself up to such a colossal task." I tried to convince him of my incompetence but he was insistent.

He said:

“I don’t know but orders are orders. You better start and I am sure ‘*Maula*’ himself would guide you.” His argument was quite encouraging.

Since then, day in and day out, I live in these thoughts. In my quest I collected all the books about Hazrat Ali (AS) that I could lay my hands upon and have also tried to study the Qur’an from this angle.

I find that his whole life is an amazing tale of truth, valour, sacrifice, devotion, Wisdom and Knowledge that has been interposed by hate, intrigues, enigma and menace perpetrated by the enemies of Islam.

After the demise of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD), his authority had been challenged, his rights had been usurped and his house had been burned down.

The same house, next to the Prophet’s (PBUH&HD) house, whose door was allowed to remain open into the courtyard of the Mosque. This was an exalted house for Allah’s name was remembered in it day and night. (Qur’an 24:36).

All of his infallible descendents, one after the other, were martyred. His daughters were insulted, humiliated and dragged through the streets of Iraq and Syria.

In the history of Islam that has been dictated from the castles of Syria and Iraq, each word has been written with the blood of those who remained loyal to the house of Hazrat Ali (AS) and Hazrat Fatima (SA).

For those loyalists, it has never been easy to speak out and cry for the implementation of the principles of Justice, *Imamate* (Divine Guidance) and *Khelaphat-e-Ellahiya*.

People know how, we, his lovers and devotees have quietly suffered the pains and the anguish remembering the tragedies that fell upon the *Ahlul Bayt* and the treatment meted out to them. These worldly-wise ignorant people detest our expressions of sorrow and they even do not allow us to mourn for these tragedies.

What I have written is neither a thesis nor a research paper on Hazrat Ali (AS). These are my feelings and these are my thoughts that I have tried to express in the perspective of the Qur'an, *Sunnah* (traditions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD)) and history.

I have dared not to submit these papers to any religious scholar for authentication or to any man of letters to accrue a few words of praise. When it is a matter of love and reverence it needs neither any certification nor an appreciation. And I am in love.

Syed Ahmad Irshad Tirmazi

در معنیء حریت اسلامیہ و سرتر حادثہء کربلا

آن امام عاشقان پور بتوں
سرو آزادی زبستان رسول
اللہ اللہ باے بسم اللہ پور
معنیء ذبح عظیم آمد پور
بہر آں شہزادہ خیر الملل
دوش ختم المسلمین نعم الجمل
در میان آنت آں کیواں جناب
بجو حرف قل حوالہ در کتاب
بر زمین کربلا بارید و رفت
لالہ در ویرانہ ہا کارید و رفت
تاقیامت قطع استبداد کرد
موج خون او چمن ایجاد کرد
بہر حق در خاک و خون غلطیدہ است
پس بنائے لاله گرویدہ است
نقشِ اِلَّا اللہ بر صحرا نوشت
سطر عنوان نجات مانوشت
(علامہ اقبال)



In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Beneficent.

Introduction

*Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth.
The similitude of His light is as a niche wherein is a lamp.
The lamp is in a glass.
The glass is as it were a shining star, lit from a
blessed tree, the olive,
neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil glows
forth (of itself),
though fire did not touch it, light upon light.
Allah guides unto His light whomsoever He wills;
And Allah sets forth parables for people.
Allah is aware of all things.*

*(This lamp is lit) in houses which Allah has
permitted to be exalted,
and His name to be remembered therein;
He is glorified therein in the mornings and in the
evenings.*

*Men whom neither merchandise nor sale diverts
from the remembrance of Allah and constancy in
prayer and paying the poor-rate.
They fear the day when hearts and eyes shall twist and
turn.*

*That Allah may give them the best recompense
r what they have done and may increase for them,*

*out of His grace.
Allah provides sustenance to whomsoever
He wills without measure.*

Qur'an 24:35-38

” When this verse was revealed:

“...And everything have We confined into a Manifesting Imam.” (*Qur'an 36:12*). The people asked the Prophet (PBUH&HD) as to who was this manifesting Imam? The Prophet (PBUH&HD) replied, “There is no branch of knowledge which Allah has not bestowed upon me and I have conveyed that knowledge to Ali-Verily Allah has contained in me knowledge and I have contained it in Ali.”

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) then said, “I am the City of knowledge and Ali is the Gate

Dr. Ali Shariati in his book ‘Fatima is Fatima’ writes: “Ali (AS) is the most manifest of truths and represents the most progressive school of thought which has ever-taken human form. It is not a myth...The house of Ali (AS) is the destination of every heart which understands beauty, freedom, justice, love, sincerity, strength, encourages *jihad* and sacrifices to preserve the lives and freedom of the people.”

The more one reads and thinks about Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (*Alahe-s-Salam*), the more one gets lost in the unfathomable dimensions and depths of his personality. In spite of all that has been said and written about him, one’s quest to know more remains insatiated. Words fall too short. Vocabulary is too limited.

He spent the first thirty-three years of his life in the company Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD); the greatest teacher of Divine Wisdom. Every moment of these thirty-three years he received Knowledge through his eyes, ears, and through his sense of touch, taste and smell. He proved to be such a faithful pupil that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) declared him as the 'Gateway to his City of Knowledge'.

He remains distinguished and unmatched in all aspects of human life. He is the only one who ever threw a challenge to the whole world, "Ask me any question before you lose me."

He is an intellectual whose intellect and wisdom is far beyond human comprehension. He is with righteousness and righteousness is with him.

During his whole life he never erred in the dispensation of justice. He never shirked his responsibilities to uphold the Truth. His magnanimity towards friends and foes remained unmatched. Even as a ruler of a 'Great Kingdom' he mended his own sandals. He was a friend of indigents, orphans and lepers. During his days as a Caliph he dragged the tyrants by their nostrils to recover from them the rights of the poor and the weak that they had usurped.

He is the one who helps the cause of Allah and of His apostles in secret:

*Verily We sent our messengers with clear proof,
And sent with them the book and the scale,
So that men may stand forth (establishing
themselves) in justice; And We sent down iron wherein is
latent (in its use)
mighty power,
As well as many benefits for mankind,*

*And that Allah may prove who helps Him
And His apostles in secret;
Verily Allah is All-powerful and All-mighty.*

(Qur'an 57:25)

He, the 'Lion of Allah' is seen dominating the battlefields of conflict between righteousness and evil. He is the manifestation of Allah's orders:

And fight (endure) ye in (the way of) Allah as it behoveth you to fight (endeavour) for Him. He hath chosen you and hath laid not upon you any hardship in religion; The faith of your father Ibrahim; He (Allah himself) named you Muslims before and in this, that the Apostle may be a witness over you and ye be witness over the people; So establish ye prayer and pay ye the poor-rate and hold ye fast by Allah; He is your Master – How Excellent the Master and how Excellent the Helper!

Qur'an 22:78

Hazrat Ali (AS) spent his nights prostrating in obeisance and standing on his feet, and he took heed of the hereafter and hoped he for the mercy of his Lord.

What! (this or) he who is prayerful during the hours of the night, prostrating in obeisance and standing, and he taketh heed of the hereafter and hopeth he for the mercy of his Lord! Say thou (O' Our Apostle Muhammad!) "What! Can those who know be equal to those who know not? Verily the men of understanding take the warning."

Qur'an 39:9

*

Verily your guardian is (none else but) Allah and His Apostle (Muhammad) and those who believe, those who establish prayer and pay the poor-rate, while they be (even) bowing down (in prayer).

Qur'an 5: 55

"He loves Allah and His Apostle and Allah and His Apostle love him," said the Prophet (PBUH&HD) about Hazrat Ali (AS).

His mother named him *Asad* and *Haider*. The Holy Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon him and his descendants) named him *Ali*, saying that it was the name selected by Allah. Allah gave him one of His own attributes.

He was awarded epithets like *Al-Murtaza* (The chosen one of Allah), *Amir-ul-Momineen* (The Commander of the Faithful), *Imam-ul-Mutaqeen* (Leader of the Pious), *Mazharul-Ajaib* (The Manifestor of wonders), *Imam-ul-Auliya* (The Leader of the saints) and many others. At one occasion the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) titled him *Qul-e-Eman* (The Absolute and Total Faith) and at the other he was declared *Ghare Farrar* (The one who never deserts the battlefield). He is all these at the same time and much more. He is the embodiment of wisdom, justice and truth.

People generally call him *Karrumullahu Wajhahu* (The one whose face reflects the grace of Allah).

*

Professor Mohammad Mustafa Beck Najib of Al-Azhar University says, "What can be said about this Imam? It is very difficult to fully explain his attributes and qualities. It is enough to realize that the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) had named him the Gateway of Knowledge and Wisdom. He was the most learned person, the bravest man and the most eloquent speaker and orator. His piety, his love of Allah, his sincerity and fortitude in following the religion were of such high standard that no one could aspire to reach him. He was the greatest politician because he hated diplomacy and loved truth and justice. His was the policy as taught by Allah. On account of his sagacity and thorough knowledge of human nature he always arrived at correct conclusions and never changed his decision. He was the best judge, and had he no fear of Allah he would have been the greatest diplomat amongst the Arabs. He is loved by all, and everyone has a place for him in his heart. He was a man of such surpassing and pre-eminent characteristics and such transcending and peerless qualities that many learned men were perplexed by him and imagined him to be an embodiment of Allah. Many among the Jews and the Christians loved him, and those philosophers who had come to know of his teachings bowed down before his incomparable vast knowledge. Roman kings would have his pictures in their palaces and great warriors would engrave his name on their swords."

Professor Mohammad Kamil Hatha, also from Al-Azhar University writes, "His life is an agglomeration of pleasing incidents, bloody encounters and sad episodes. His personality is very prominent on account of his transcending and high qualities. Each aspect of his life is so lofty and glorious that a study of one phase would make

you feel that it was the best phase of his character and the most beautiful picture of his personality, while contemplation of any other phase will enchant you more and you will come to the conclusion that no human being can attain that height, and a third aspect will fascinate you equally and you will realize that before you is a personality of such sublime eminence that you cannot fully appreciate its greatness and you will feel that Ali was an Imam in the battlefield, was an Imam in politics, was an Imam in religion, and also an Imam in ethics, in philosophy, in literature, in learning and in wisdom."

Gibbon in his book 'The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire' writes, "The zeal and virtues of Ali were never out-stripped by any recent proselyte. He united the qualifications of a poet, a soldier and a saint. His wisdom still breathes in a collection of moral and religious sayings, and every antagonist in the combats of tongue or of sword was subdued by his eloquence and valour. From the first hour of the Mission to the last rites of his funeral, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD) was never forsaken by this generous friend (Ali), whom he delighted to name his brother, his vicegerent and the faithful Aaron of second Moses."

Masudi another famous historian pays his tributes to Imam Ali (AS) in the following words, "If the glorious name of being the first Muslim, a comrade of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) in exile, his faithful companion in the struggle for the Faith, his intimate associate in life, and his kinsman, if a true knowledge of the spirit of his teachings and of the Book, if self-abnegation and practice of justice, if honesty, purity, and love of truth and if the knowledge of law and science constitute a claim to pre-eminence, then all must regard Ali (AS) as the foremost Muslim. We shall search in vain to find, either among his predecessors except

the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) or among his successors, those virtues with which Allah had endowed him”.

Oelsner, a French Orientalist and author of 'Les Effects de La Religion de Mohammad' comments, "Ali (AS) was an embodiment of chivalry; and personification of gallantry and generosity." He further adds, "Pure, gentle and learned, without fear and without reproach, he presented to the world the noblest example of Chivalrous grandeur of character. His spirit was pure reflection of that of Mohammad (PBUH&HD); it overshadowed the Islamic world and formed the animating genius of succeeding ages."

John J. Pool in his book 'Studies in Mohammanism' says, "This prince (Imam Ali (AS)) was a man of mild forbearing character, wise in council and bold in war. Mohammad (PBUH&HD) had given him the title of 'the Lion of God'. Ali (AS) and his sons Imam Hassan (AS) and Imam Hussain (AS) were truly noblemen - men of righteousness, men of brave, humble, and forgiving spirit. Their lives deserve to be commemorated; for there was a peculiar pathos about them (their lives) which were not spent selfishly or in vain.

"He was so magnanimous even towards his assassin that whenever he saw him, (Ibn Muljim) he said, "I wish him life and virtue while he intends to take my life. I have tender feelings for him while he has become my enemy and nourishes grudge against me."

Did Hazrat Ali (AS) appear at the wrong time and at the wrong place? Did this world, our world, we all not deserve him and we lost him? What a man he was, the one and the only one who, after receiving the fatal blow at his head, said, "By Allah of Ka'aba, I have succeeded." Succeeded

in what and how? No one has ever come to know. Did he succeed in maintaining the divine purity and the sublimity with which he had been blessed and he returned back to his own world? A world where he always belonged? A world free of deceit and hypocrisy? A world without insults and injuries?

He was martyred many centuries ago, but it is a miracle of his personality that makes many feel that he is still around. He listens, he comes and he helps whosoever calls him. To many he is *Mushkil Kusha* (Redeemer of Difficulties) and *Mazharil Ajaib* (The man of miracles).

Nobility, Piety and Chivalry Ali's Ancestral Heritage

Ancestral heritage has a profound bearing on the personality of any person. A person's nobility, psychological traits, attitude and character, by and large, reflect the qualities of his blood, his upbringing and the environments that surround him.

The Ancestral Tree of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) and of Hazrat Ali (AS) shows that they were born Muslims, never worshiped the idols and divinely purified blood runs in their veins. All their ancestors, in their own times, were noble, brave, knowledgeable, generous, truthful and honest men. Each one of them was the follower of the religion of Hazrat Ibrahim (PBUH), ISLAM, and they called people to the path of righteousness.

Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) and Prophet Ismael (PBUH)

Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) was born in Urr Babal, nearly 1081 years after the great floods of Prophet Noah (PBUH). In this territory the people worshipped idols. Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) was one of the favourites and chosen ones of Allah Almighty. He was charged by Allah with the duty of advising these ignorant, arrogant and fussy people against their belief and to invite them to worship Allah. He went from house to house and knocked at every door to spread the true message but the majority of the people refused even to listen to him. One day Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) found these people busy in festivity at a place out

of the city and thinking it to be a good opportunity, he destroyed all the idols except the biggest one:

And indeed gave We unto Ibrahim his rectitude before, and We did know him well.

(Recollect thou O' Our Apostle Mohammad) When Ibrahim said unto his father (paternal uncle) and his people: "What are these images unto which ye (as devotees) cleave?"

Said they: "Found we our forefather worshippers unto them."

Said he: "Indeed ye and your forefathers had been in error manifest."

Said they: "Hast thou brought unto us the truth, or art thou of the jesters?"

Said he: "Nay! Your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, Who created them; And I am unto this (Truth) one of the witnesses."

"And by Allah, I will scheme against your idols after ye go away, turning your back."

So he broke them into pieces, except the chief of them that happily they may unto him return.

Said they: "Who hath done this to our gods? Verily he is of the unjust ones."

(Some others) said: "We heard a youth speak of them, he is called Ibrahim."

They said: "Then bring him before the eyes of the people, that they may bear witness."

Said they: "Hast thou done this to our gods, O' Ibrahim?"

(Ibrahim) said: "Nay! Hath done it he, the chief of them is this (idol) so ye ask them, if they can speak."

Then they returned unto themselves and said, "Verily, ye are yourselves the unjust ones,"

Then they confounded in their heads, (and they helplessly said): "Thou knowest fully well that these (idol) speak not!"

Said: (Ibrahim) "What! Worship ye then besides Allah what profited you not, nor do any harm to you?"

"Fie on you and on what ye worship besides Allah. What! Do you not understand?"

"Said they: "Burn him and help your gods, if you can do (anything at all);"

Said We; "O' fire! Be thou cold, and a safety to Ibrahim,"

And They intended a device against him, but We made them the greatest losers,

And We delivered him and also Lot, (and took them safely) to the land, which We have blessed for all worlds.

Qur'an 21: 51-71

Consequently he was exiled and he and his nephew Prophet Lot (PBUH) came to Palestine. From there he went to Egypt to spread the message of Allah. He got married to Hazrat Sara (SA), daughter of Pharoah Alw'an bin Sanan,

(mother of Hazrat Ishaq (PBUH)) and later he also entered into marital wedlock with Hazrat Hajira (SA). When Hazrat Ismael (PBUH) was born, Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) was ordered by Allah to move with Hazrat Hajira (SA) and Hazrat Ismael (PBUH) to Makkah.

The family had hardly settled there when Gabriel again appeared and conveyed to him that it was Lord's will that, he leave his wife and young son in this wilderness and go back and join Hazrat Sara (SA). Hazrat Ibrahim (PBUH) departed leaving his wife and his child at the mercy of Allah All-mighty. That's the devotion of an apostle and the members of his house. Neither he nor his wife asked him as to how would they survive in this wilderness. There were never any doubts about the Message.

After traveling some distance, Hazrat Ibrahim (PBUH) turned his face towards his family and prayed:

"O' Our Lord! I have housed a part of my offspring in a valley uncultivable, nigh unto Thy Holy House, Our Lord! That they may establish prayer; so make Thou the hearts of some of the people yearn unto them, and provide them with fruits, that they may be grateful."

Qur'an 14: 37

In this wilderness there was no source of water, food or sustenance. After a while the child became very thirsty and the mother started to run between the two hillocks of *Safa* and *Marwa* praying and hoping that may be she finds water somewhere. Tired and exhausted she sat down and saw that, by the Grace of Allah, a spring of fresh clear water started to gush out from the spot where Hazrat Ismael (PBUH) was rubbing his tiny feet. This spring was named

Zam Zam. Gradually providential fertility started to develop.

Caravans from distant places, started to settle here, with the permission of Hazrat Hajira (SA). When Hazrat Ibrahim (PBUH) returned he was very pleased to see the new settlements. The habitation gradually grew into a big flourishing township and Makkah became a busy trading centre.

When Prophet Ismael (PBUH) was still a young boy and had started to go around with his father, Allah put Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) through one more test. He dreamt that he was slaughtering his son Ismael (PBUH) in the name of Allah. He mentioned his dream to his son and Hazrat Ismael (PBUH) replied, "Father, do as you have been directed, surely you would find me among the patient ones."

The narration of this very important episode has also been given in the Qura'n:

So We gave him (Ibrahim) the glad tidings of a son (Ismael) extremely forbearing.

And when (the son) reached (the age of) working with him, said he: "O' my son! Verily I saw in a dream that I sacrifice thee; now what is thy view?" Said he (the son) O' father! Do thou what thou art bidden; If Allah willeth, thou wilt find me of the steadfast ones."

And when they both had surrendered (themselves) to the will of Allah and he (Ibrahim) threw him (his son) upon his forehead,

And We called out unto him: "O' Ibrahim!"

"Indeed hast thou proved true the dream; Verily thus do We recompense the doers of good."

"Verily! This is an open trial.

"And we ransomed him with a Greatest Sacrifice.

"And We shifted (this blessing) on him (who is from) among the generations (to come) in later times."

Peace be upon Ibrahim.

Qur'an 37:101-109

That 'Greatest Sacrifice' from one of his righteous descendents had to be offered. One of his grandchildren had to pay this ransom, in the way of Allah, for which the life of Prophet Ismael (PBUH) was spared.

When Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) and Prophet Ismael (PBUH) were raising the walls of Ka'aba they prayed:
And remember when Ibrahim raised the foundations of the House with Ismael (praying) "Our Lord! Accept (this service) from us; Verily Thou and Thou (alone) art the All-Hearing and All-Knowing.

"Our Lord! Make us (two) Muslims submitting (only) to Thee and our progeny (make a group submissive (only) to Thee And show us the ways of Devotion and return to us (mercifully) for verily Thou and Thou (alone) art the Oft-Returning, the Most Merciful.

Qur'an 2:127 & 128

Allah again put Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) through a test and when he came up to the expectations of Allah, he was declared Imam (leader) of the people. This was such a great honour for him that he immediately asked this for his descendents too. It was granted but only for the righteous ones.

And remember when his Lord tried Ibrahim with certain words then he fulfilled them; He said, "Verily I make thee Imam for mankind;" Ibrahim said, "And of my offspring?" He said: "My covenant reacheth not the unjust."

Qur'an 2:124

Obviously, Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH)'s descendents were to be of two categories. One would be of those who would be infallible, purified and would never bow to idols. The greatest of iniquity is polytheism: **(And when said Luqman unto his son, while he was exhorting unto him: "O' my son! Associate not aught with Allah for verily associating (aught) with Allah is the greatest iniquity."** **Qura'n 31:13**). The Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD) and Imams are from this class of descendents. The others would be of those who would leave Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH)'s path and would start to worship idols. None of them would ever attain that position that Allah has promised.

These righteous descendents of Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) were given the Book, the Wisdom and a Great Kingdom.

Or do they envy the people for what Allah had given them of His grace; But indeed WE have given to Ibrahim's children the Book and the Wisdom and We gave them a Great Kingdom.

So, of them is he who believeth in him (Muhammad) and of them is he who createth obstructions against him; and sufficient (to punish such) is the burning fire (of Hell).

Qur'an 4: 54 & 55

Allah clarifies this point by the example of Hazrat Noah (PBUH). One of his sons was a non-believer and, when the great floods came, he became obstinate and refused to get on the Ark. When he was drowning, Hazrat Noah (PBUH), out of love for his son, prayed to Allah to safeguard his son. Allah very sternly told Hazrat Noah (PBUH) not to ask for the mercy for his son who had abandoned the path of righteousness. So much so that this son of Prophet Noah (PBUH) was declared as the one who was not from his father. Hazrat Noah (PBUH) had to apologize for asking for a favour that he should not have:

*And Noah cried unto his Lord and said; "My Lord! Verily my son is of my family; and verily Thy promise is true, and Thou art the most just of the Judges.
Said He (Allah); "O' Noah! Verily he is not of thy family: Verily he is (of conduct) other than righteous; Therefore, seek thou not of Me that of which thou hast no knowledge; Verily I admonish thee lest thou mayest be of the ignorant ones."*

Said he; "O' My Lord! Verily I seek refuge in Thee from asking Thee that of which I have no knowledge; And if Thou forgiveth me not and have mercy on me, I should be of the losers."

Qur'an: 11:45-47

It is manifestly clear that all those descendents of Hazrat Ibrahim (PBUH) who had left the right path and had started

to worship idols cannot claim to be the descendents of Hazrat Ibrahim (PBUH).

Adnan bin Adu

He was one of the grandsons of Prophet Ismael (PBUH). He was a very brave, intelligent and a handsome person.

He was an excellent horse-rider and an expert in swordsmanship. He had ten sons. He was the first person who covered the Ka'aba with 'Ghilaf-e-Ka'aba'. (*Al-Nisab, Vol.1, p. 15*). Later he decided to migrate to Yemen.

Maad bin Adnan

He migrated back to Hijaz and became the chief of his tribe. His people respected him as he was upright, truthful and courteous to every one. Like his father he was equally brave and an expert fighter. He was never defeated in any battle that he fought. (*Khomes, Vol.1, p. 145*)

Nazaar bin Maad

His mother was Maana binte Joshan from the clan of Bani Jurham. Nazaar was an exceptionally handsome and intelligent person. Somehow his father believed that only a son of Nazaar would have the spiritual, mental and physical qualities to be a prophet. Maad sacrificed one thousand camels and prayed for the long life of his son. (*Khomes, Vol.1, p.145*).

After the death of Maad, Nazaar became the chief of his tribe.

Muzir bin Nazaar

He was equally intelligent. Prophet Mohammad (PBUH&HD) used to often say Nazaar and Muzir were Muslims as they were of the religion of Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH). (*Yaqoobi, Vol.1, p. 226*).

Muzir rebuilt the Ka'aba. He used to advise his sons, "Whosoever shall sow evil would only harvest embarrassment. Good must be performed immediately. Incline yourselves to desires that may lead you to nobility and refrain from the evil that might look very attractive." (*Yaqoobi, Vol. 1, p. 226*)

Ilyas bin Muzir

He became the chief after the death of his father. People of Arabia used to seek his judgment in their mutual disputes. His charismatic personality and his sermons of righteousness left deep impressions on the minds of ignorant tribesmen. (*Khomes, Vol. 1, p. 17*)

Madarka bin Ilyas

He inherited all the piety and the status of his forefathers. (*Khomes, Vol.1, p. 150*).

He was a strong, intelligent and a righteous person.

Khazeyma bin Madarka

He is also known by the name of Abu-ul-Asad. His mother was Salma binte Aslam Qazaya. He too was the chief of the tribe and was a strict follower and propagator of the religion of Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH).

Kanana bin Khazeyma

In addition to all the qualities that he inherited from his forefathers and the fact that Prophet Mohammad (PBUH&HD) was to be from his blood, he was well known for his nobility, righteousness, generosity and hospitality. (*Serat-e-Halibiya, Vol.1, p. 16*)

Nasr bin Kanana

Some historians have recorded that Nasr was the first person to be named Quresh; this could be for a number of reasons. Quresh is a dangerous and wild animal of the water that he once killed. Secondly, would seek out the poor and the needy and always fulfilled their needs. A person who is in the habit of searching is called Quresh in Arabic. Quresh is also used in the sense of 'collector'. He was so generous that every day and every night his tribe regularly got together at his house for meals.

Malik bin Nasr

He became the chief of his tribe after the death of his father. Malik literally means chief. (*Khomes, Vol 1. p. 152*).

Fahar bin Malik

Hasan bin Abd Kalal, king of Yemen, attacked the Ka'aba with the intention of destroying it and transferring the idols to Yemen. Fahar as chief of his tribe organized a strong fighting force and defeated Hasan.

Ghalib bin Fahar

Like his father, he was equally brave and was a Muslim.

Luwai bin Ghalib

One of his achievements was that he dug a well named 'assara' outside *Baitullah*.

Ka'ab bin Luwai

He was well known for his knowledge and eloquence. Friday was previously called 'aroba' but he named it 'juma'a'. On Friday gatherings and during Hajj days, he would deliver very powerful speeches. In his speeches he often indicated that the last prophet was soon due and impressed upon the people to be kind to others, to adopt the habit of forgiveness, to fulfil their commitments and to always speak the truth. (*Al-Nisab-ul-Ashraf, Vol, p. 41*)

His demise was such an event that with it the years and months began to be counted. Those counts remained for 520 years until the incident of Abraha.

Murrah bin Murrah Ka'ab

He continued to follow the traditions laid down by his father.

Kalab bin Murrah

His name was Hakeem but he came to be known as Kalab as he used to hunt with dogs. He too was very generous and always remained concerned about the welfare of the general public, particularly the poor and the deprived. He got three water-wells dug for the public that were named Khum, Rum and Hazro

Qussay bin Kalab

His name was Zaid and was known as Abu Mughayra. His mother's name was Fatima binte Sa'ad. After the death of Kalab she got married to Rabia bin Haram A'azri. The family migrated to Azra leaving behind her elder son Zuhra.

After a number of years, Qussay's mother told him that he was son of Kalab and his clan was in Mecca. Qussay migrated to Mecca and stayed with his brother Zuhra.

At that time Mecca was being governed by Haleel bin Habeesa from Bani Khaza'a tribe. Knowing the nobility of the ancestors of Qussay, Haleel readily accepted Qussay's proposal to get married to his daughter Hubbi. Qussay and Hubbi had four sons; Abd Munaf, Abdul Ezzi, Abdul Qazzi and Abdul Daar.

At the time of his death Haleel declared that due to their nobility, knowledge, bravery, unblemished character and

family background, the management of the Ka'aba was to be the responsibility of the sons of his daughter Hubbi as there was no one else who could match their status. However, Qazzi and Abu Ghabshan shared the keys of the Ka'aba.

One day Qazzi asked his mother that the management of Ka'aba must be transferred to the descendents of Prophet Ishmael (PBUH). Hubbi had no objection but Abu Ghabshan was not ready to handover the keys. However, the keys were taken back forcibly and the management of Ka'aba was entrusted to Abdul Daar. Qazzi became the Chief of the tribe. As all the scattered tribes came under his banner, Qazzi was named as Quresh.

Qazzi also made proper arrangements for the provision of water, food and other necessities for the pilgrims. These duties were entrusted to Abd Munaf. Qazzi was also an excellent orator and some of his messages read: "Any person who appreciates the meanness and debased behaviour of others is a partner in the act. Any one who appreciates evil is an evil doer. A person who will not mend his behavior with words of wisdom, his fate is insult and nothing else. Whosoever desires what he does not deserve achieves nothing. A jealous person is your hidden enemy. Never touch any alcoholic drink, it may temporarily suit your body but would ruin your ability to think right, and affect your power of reasoning and mental capacity. Qazzi died in 480 AD.

Abd Munaf bin Qussay

His real name was Mughera but was known by the name Abu Abd Shams. He had such a charismatic and charming personality that he was nicknamed 'Moon of Bateha'. 'As

he was very generous he was also called Al-Seyyed. He assumed the leadership of Quresh while his father Qazzi was still alive. (*Khomes, Vol. 1, p. 156*)

Abd Munaf continued the management and welfare works that had been started by his father. He had four sons Hashim, Mutalib, Abd Shams and Nofil. Hashim and Mutalib were so handsome that they were nicknamed Al-Badran (pair of moons).

Interestingly enough, Hashim and Shams were twins. At the time of their birth, the hand of one was stuck at the forehead of the other. A surgeon separated the two with a sword and it was then predicted that the two would always remain at loggerheads. Hashim headed the Bani Hashim and Abd Shams was the head of Bani Umayyah.

Hashim bin Munaf

His name was Umro but was also known as Seyyed-ul-Bateha and Abu-ul-Bateha. One of his epithets was Hashim. Once it so happened, that there was a continued drought and food became very scarce. People started to die of hunger. He traveled to Syria and brought back food grain and a number of camels. He slaughtered the camels, prepared breads and started to feed the hungry masses. He also worked with his own hands and would cut the bread into pieces to put into soup. Hashim in Arabic means 'the one who cuts into pieces'. As he had cut the bread into pieces with his own hands, he came to be known as Hashim.

Hashim was a very kind and generous person. He actually expanded his influence due to his unblemished character, high moral values, and helpful attitude. He was known for

looking after the poor and ensuring that the needs of the have-nots were fully met.

He was a trader who taught the ethics of trading across the borders and in that too he acted with utmost honesty and fair dealings. He often took trading caravans to Syria, Damascus, Yemen, and Ankara etc. He was greatly respected by the King of Rome for his acumen and business ethics.

On the repeated complaints from Hujjaj, Hashim demanded the keys of the Ka'aba from the family of Abdul Dar; they were not managing the affairs well. The two contestants got prepared for an armed clash. Bani Asad, Bani Sahara, Bani Tamim and Bani Harris joined Hashim and Bani Makhzan, Bani Saham and Bani Adi came to fight on the side of Bani Abdul Dar. By the intervention of a few local notables the clash was averted, however, enmity between the two families remained.

That was the first clash between Hashim and Umayyah bin Abd Shams. Later, Bani Umayyah, with one pretext or another, kept fighting against Abdul Mutalib and Bani Hashim.

The history of Islam is actually the history of enmity of Abu Sufyan against Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD). Then it was Muaviya bin Abu Sufyan's fight against Imam Ali (AS) bin Abu Talib bin Abdul Mutalib bin Hashim. Afterwards, there was the great tragedy of Karbala, where Yazid bin Muawiya and his forces unleashed so much cruelty against Imam Hussain (AS) bin Imam Ali (AS) and his family and followers, that it still remains unparallel in the annals of the history of mankind.

One night Hashim dreamt of getting married to Salma binte Umro of Yasrab. She was an extremely noble lady. Her father agreed to the proposal on the condition that she would deliver the baby in Yasrab. After a few months Salma was expecting a child. According to the agreement, Hashim left Selma with her parents and went to Syria on a business trip. That was to be his last trip for he died in

Syria. Hashim's death was mourned far and wide. Salma gave birth to a baby boy whom she named Aamir.

Abdul Mutalib bin Hashim.

Aamir was brought up in Yasrab. As per the customs and traditions of those days, Aamir learned the art of horse riding, sword fighting and archery. When he challenged other boys and won, he would say, "Of course, I am son of Seyyed-ul-Bateha." This news somehow reached Mecca and his uncle Abd Mutalib came and, with the permission of his mother and his grandfather, took him back to Mecca. While he was entering Mecca, people thought that Abd Mutalib had brought a servant so they called Aamir as Abdul Mutalib.

According to the wishes of his father, Abd Mutalib handed over the charge of the affairs of *Baitullah* and of his tribe to Abdul Mutalib. Abd Mutalib knew that no one else was worthy of this position but Abdul Mutalib.

Abdul Mutalib had inherited all the qualities of management and leadership that his father and grandfather possessed. He started to improve upon the existing facilities and ensured that the pilgrims were well looked after. He not only would feed the hungry masses but also the wild animals and birds. Like his father he continued the practice of lighting firewood at *Arafat* and *Muzdalfa* so that the

travelers to Mecca would not lose their way in the desert. He was respected far and wide for his kindness and generosity.

During his time, the majority of the people had resorted to worshipping the idols. He advised them to worship Allah Almighty as his great grandfather Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) had said. He prayed a lot and was the first person to go to Mount *Hira* for seeking inspiration and to meditate. Like his forefathers he never bowed before idols. He was a Muslim. He would tell his tribesmen to show kindness to the weak and to fear Allah to whom we all have to return one day.

Before fleeing from Makkah, the ruler from Bani Jarham had closed the fountainhead of *Zam Zam*. People had forgotten even the place from where it had erupted. One night, during a dream, Abdul Mutalib was shown the place of the fountainhead. He re-discovered the long lost and forgotten well of *Zam Zam*.

As tension already existed between Bani 'Umayyah and Bani Hashim, the Zam Zam well also became a subject of dispute. However, Abdul Mutalib allowed them to use the water but refused to accept their sole ownership. Both the parties decided to travel to Syria to get a decision from Bani Sa'ad. During their long journey, Bani Hashim consumed their water and became very thirsty. The men of Umayyah still had water with them but refused to share it with thirsty Bani Hashim.

When death seemed so near, Abdul Mutalib prayed to Almighty Allah and water started to seep out from where his camel was sitting. Finding that Bani Hashim were drinking fresh and clean water, the party of Bani Umayyah

became very jealous. Abdul Mutalib invited Bani Umayyah to take as much water as they liked.

Abraha bin Ashram of Yemen desired that Yemen and not Makkah should become the Centre. He came with a large force, riding elephants, with intentions of destroying *Bait Ullah*. While Abraha's forces were camping in the vicinity, his soldiers took away two hundred camels belonging to Abdul Mutalib. Abdul Mutalib went to Abraha and demanded his camels back.

Abraha said, "It is very strange that I have come to destroy your *Baitullah* and you are not worried about the safety of *Baitullah* but want your camels back."

Abdul Mutalib replied, "I am the owner of these camels so I want these back. As for *Baitullah*, that too has an Owner who would look after it."

He had demanded his camels, which was his right, and as the brave person that he was, he had neither any fears nor was impressed by the forces of Abraha. He went right up to him to demand his rights. Abdul Mutalib refused to beg Abraha to spare the *Baitullah*. It did not behove a person of the dignity and grace of Abdul Mutalib, the grandfather of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD) to bow or to beg mercy from anyone but Allah. He had no doubt in his mind that Allah Almighty would look after His house. He beseeched Allah for help and his prayer was promptly answered.

Abraha was surprised by this bold and confident reply and ordered his soldiers to return the camels.

When Abdul Mutalib came back, he found that the city had already been deserted except for a few men from Bani Hashim who had collected around *Baitullah*. As the forces

of Abraha were forming up to attack, Abdul Mutalib refused to flee and stood against the wall of the Ka'aba and prayed, "O' Allah! I have no forces to fight off this evil. This is Your house and You have to look after it."

The people saw black clouds arising from the horizon. Actually this was a cloud of swallows, armed with pebbles in their beaks and claws, and they stormed the forces of Abraha. Wave after wave these birds appeared and showered pebbles on the soldiers and elephants of Abraha. (Qura'n:92). The pride and the might of Abraha was razed to dust.

It would be pertinent to mention here that during the Battle of Hunain, only a few persons remained with the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and the rest deserted the battlefield. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) and Hazrat Ali (AS) remained steadfast and the Prophet (PBUH&HD) said, "I am a righteous prophet and I am son of Abdul Mutalib." He implied that since his grandfather had not deserted the battlefield against the onslaught of Abraha, he too would never run away.

While digging the well of *Zam Zam*, Abdul Mutalib had only one son who had joined him in this work. Abdul Mutalib prayed to Allah that He should bless him with ten sons to help him in his work He also vowed that if Allah granted him ten sons he would sacrifice one son in the name of Allah.

The prayer was answered. They were named Zubair, Abbas, Zarrar, Abu Talib, Hamza, Maqoom, Abu Lahab, Harris and Abdullah. When the sons grew up he told them of his pledge. All of them volunteered to be sacrificed as their grandfather Prophet Ismael' (PBUH) had offered himself. However, he came to *Baitullah* and drew lots. It

came in the name of Hazrat Abdullah. Abdul Mutalib was as determined to fulfil his vow as Hazrat Ibrahim (PBUH) was prepared to slaughter his son Hazrat Ismael. (*Baharul Anwar, Vol.6, p. 39*)

In fact Hazrat Abdullah was the youngest of his sons and was the most handsome and pious and loved by all. The elders of his tribe intervened and asked Abdul Mutalib not to slaughter his son but to sacrifice camels instead. Once again he resorted to drawing lots and it turned out that he had to sacrifice one hundred camels. The most precious life was saved. Hazrat Adullah lived but not for a very long time. He died when he was out with a trading caravan. His son Muhammad (PBUH&HD) was born as an orphan.

When Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD) was thirty years old, Hazrat Ali ibn Abu Talib (AS) came into this world.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) once said, "On the Day of Judgment, Allah would grant the status of apostles and the dignity of kings to my grandfather Abdul Mutalib. He was an institution in himself." (*Yaqoobi Vol.2, p.14*)

Ancestral Tree

(CHART I)

Ibrahim & Hajira

Ismael
 Quadar
 Humal
 Nebat
 Homeisa
 Azed
 Adu
 Adnan
 Maad
 Nazaar
 Muzir
 Ilyas
 Mudarik
 Khazeyma
 Kanana
 Nazar
 Malik
 Fahar (Quresh)
 Ghalib
 Luwai
 Ka'ab
 Murrah
 I

I
Kalab
(CHART II)

I
Tayum
(CHART III)

I
Adi
(CHART IV)

(CHART II)

Qussay

I

Abd Munaf

I

I

Hashim

I

Abdul Mutalib

I

Abdush-Shams

(CHART V)

I

Abdullah

I

Abu Talib

I

Abbas

I

Hamza

I

Abu Lahab

I

MUHAMMAD

I

I

I

FATIMA

I

ALI

I

I

I

Hassan

Hussain

Zainab

Umme Kalsoom

I

Zainul Abdeen

Mohammad Al-Baqir

Jafar As-Sadiq

Musa Al-Kazim

Musa Ar-Reza

Mohammad At-Taqi

Ali An-Naqi

Hassan Al-Askari

Mohammad Al-Mahdi

(CHART III)

Sa'd
 Ka'b
 Amr
 Amir
 Abu Kahaf
 Abu Bakr

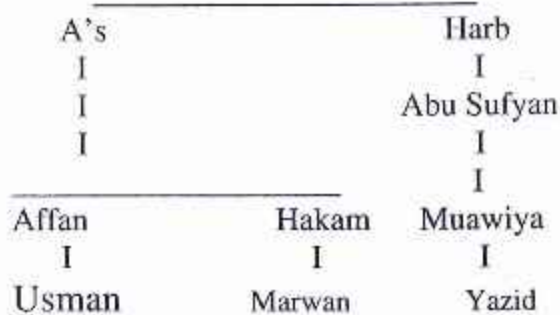
(CHART IV)

Razak
 Qash
 Abdullah
 Riba
 Abdul Uzaz
 Nofail
 Khatab
 Umar

(CHART V)

Abdush Shams

I



The Ka'aba and Ali

On the orders of Allah, Hazrat Ibrahim (PBUH) with his wife Hazrat Hajira (SA), and their son Hazrat Ismael (PBUH) in the company of the angel Gabriel, started to travel towards an unknown destination. When they arrived at a place where the Black Stone '*Hajar-e-Aswad*' lay deposited, he was asked to encamp there.

Hazrat Ibrahim (PBUH) asked Gabriel about this land. Gabriel replied that it was the land of Allah's blessings and bounties and there had stood in that place a House, which was visited and venerated and held sacred by mankind from the ancient times.

It was the will of the Lord that Hazrat Ibrahim (PBUH) and Hazrat Ismael (PBUH) should erect the House afresh. Together the father and the son built the *Ka'aba* and fixed *Hajar-e-Aswad* in one of its walls.

The Ka'aba, also known as Baitullah (House of Allah) stands in Makkah and it is the most sacred and the most blessed place on the face of this earth. Mysteries of millions of years lie hidden under its surface. It was the first house ever built. (*Verily, the First House made for mankind is the one at Makkah, Blessed and Guidance for the worlds: Qur'an 3:95*)

In Makkah, the noble clan of Bani Hashim was held in great reverence by the other clans. During the 7th century AD, Hazrat Abu Talib Ibn Hazrat Abdul Mutalib Ibn Hazrat Hashim Ibn Hazrat Abd Munaf is the chief of the clan of Bani Hashim

Hazrat Abu Talib's wife, Hazrat Fatima binte Asad (SA) is expecting a baby. The day of delivery is nearing but she has made no arrangements. Neither has she called any other ladies for help, nor has she made any preparations. Strangely, she is quite calm and is waiting for the baby or, may be, waiting for the 'orders'.

Her husband, Hazrat Abu Talib also knows that a baby is due but he, along with his nephew Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD) travels to Syria with a caravan of traders.

On that epoch making day, when Hazrat Fatima binte Asad receives the 'message', she quietly gets up and walks towards the House of Allah.

Probably she receives a message as the one that was received by Hazrat Mariyam (SA) before the birth of Hazrat Isa (PBUH) or like the message that was given to Hazrat Musa's (PBUH) mother, and she, with complete faith and confidence, had sailed the cradle carrying her son in the river. These are the divine secrets that are beyond human comprehension. There are no whys or hows.

Hazrat Fatima binte Asad (SA) goes around the House of Allah and prays, "O' My Lord, I have always believed in You and Your apostles and the books that You have sent down. I beg of You in the name of the baby who is in my womb, to make the moments of his birth easy on me."

Hazrat Fatima binte Asad (SA) touches the wall of the Ka'aba with her belly. The wall cracks open and she enters the Ka'aba. The crack closes behind her.

On 13 Rajab, 600 AD, Hazrat Fatima binte Asad (SA) wife of Hazrat Abu Talib, enters this blessed House of Allah and it was here, right in the middle of this House that Hazrat Ali (AS) was born. (*Mustdariq, Vol.3, p. 483, Azala-tul-Khafa, p.251, Abqaryia-tu-Islamiyah, p.863*)

She stays inside the Ka'aba for three days and three nights as a guest. Neither has she brought along any provisions nor any food. All arrangements are the responsibility of the One who has asked her to come to His House. And she knows it. No doubt all arrangements befitting the occasion, the Host and the guest, are there.

At that time Prophet Mohammad (PBUH&HD) asks his uncle Hazrat Abu Talib, "Uncle let's hurry. Allah has blessed you with another son, let's go and see him."

The third day both of them enter Makkah. Hazrat Abu Talib (AS) goes home and the Prophet (PBUH&HD) heads straight for the Ka'aba. He touches the lock, which just falls down. In the meanwhile Hazrat Fatima binte Asad (SA) comes out of the Ka'aba with baby Ali in her arms. She tells the Prophet (PBUH&HD), "My dear son, this baby is not like other babies. Neither has he cried, nor has he opened his eyes nor sucked any milk."

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) takes Ali in his arms. Ali smells the fragrance of prophet-hood, opens his eyes and smiles. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) puts his tongue into Ali's mouth and he starts to suck at it. (*Sitar-e-Nabi, p. 176*)

The first look that Hazrat Ali (AS) casts in this world is at the face of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD), what he smells is the fragrance of the body of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and what he tastes is the pure saliva from the tongue of the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

Happily both aunty and nephew come back home. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) places Ali into the lap of his uncle, "Uncle! He is my brother Ali." Hazrat Abu Talib looks at his son, gives him a loving kiss and hands him back to the Prophet (PBUH&HD). The Prophet (PBUH&HD) gives Ali to his aunt and says, "Mother, now you can feed him on your milk."

His mother takes him in her lap but Ali keeps his eyes fixed at the Prophet's (PBUH&HD) face. His looks reflect immeasurable respect and total devotion for the Apostle. It seems that he knows and he is aware.

The very birth of Hazrat Ali (AS) signifies his purity and piety. Allah Almighty wanted to distinguish Hazrat Ali (AS) right from the moment of his birth. As no prophet had to come after Prophet Mohammad (PBUH&HD), Hazrat Ali (AS) had to share the burden of the Prophet's (PBUH&HD) responsibilities.

Islam needed Hazrat Ali (AS) for the sacrifices that were essential and must be made. Hazrat Ali (AS) was needed as a witness and as vicegerent of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH&HD). He was the Truthful one. Hazrat Ali (AS) was destined to carry and safeguard the message of Allah, in its true spirit.

To train Hazrat Ali (AS) for the mission that he was destined to perform, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) adopted him when he was only five years old. (*Tabari, Vol.2, p.57*)

Abu Talib The Most Caring and Devoted Guardian

The untimely death of Hazrat Abdullah had left Abdul Mutalib as a sad father. He mourned the death of his son more than Prophet Yaqoob (PBUH) had cried for his son Prophet Yousuf (PBUH). Abdul Mutalib had heard from the Christian priests and Jew monks that the last prophet was due to appear any day. He had seen the brightness of a prophet on the face of Hazrat Abdullah but he had gone never to return.

A few days before the birth of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) Hazrat Abu Talib took his sister-in-law to his house and he and his wife, Hazrat Fatima Binte Asad, looked after her. It appears that from the day one, the destiny of the Messenger (PBUH&HD) and the Message has been tied to the house of Hazrat Abu Talib and his progeny

Abdul Mutalib's dwindling hopes brightened up when he heard that his daughter-in-law Hazrat Amina (SA) had given birth to a son. When Abdul Mutalib looked at his grandson, he immediately recognized the symptoms of an apostle on Hazrat Muhammad's (PBUH&HD) face. He was sure that the last Apostle of Allah had appeared. He arranged the upbringing of Hazrat Muhammad (PBHU&HD) in the most befitting manner. So long as he lived, he never left him alone.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) was only 8 years old when his grandfather was touching the 116th year of his life. He

could feel that his time of departure was not too far. He asked the young Prophet (PBHU&HD) in confidence:

“My son, you know that I have grown very old and soon I would return to my Creator. I am most concerned about you. In whose care would you like to be?” Promptly he replied, “Uncle Abu Talib’s.”

Abdul Mutalib knew that not only Hazrat Abdullah and Hazrat Abu Talib were from the same mother but also that Hazrat Abu Talib had always displayed more love and affection towards Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH&HD) than any other member of the family. Hazrat Abu Talib’s wife, Hazrat Fatima binte Asad bin Hashim (SA) was also equally devoted to the son of Hazrat Abdullah. And, he was also the choice of the Prophet himself. Hazrat Abu Talib as a guardian and caretaker of the last Prophet (PBUH&HD) was Allah’s choice too. Allah had wished it so. These were His arrangements.

Abdul Mutalib called Hazrat Abu Talib and said:

“Abu Talib, do you know who is Muhammad (PBHU&HD) bin Abdullah bin Abdul Mutalib?”

“Yes, my dear father, I know Muhammad’s (PBUH&HD) status and you would find me worthy of the responsibilities that you are about to entrust to me.”

“Take very good care of Muhammad (PBUH&HD). May Allah in His infinite mercy bless you and keep you,” were the farewell words of Abdul Mutalib. (Tabqat, Vol.1, P.118)

Abdul Mutalib’s death was mourned for a number of days. Business closed and silence prevailed upon the residents of Mecca. (Sirat-e-Habibiya Vol. 1, p.186)

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD) once said, "On the Day of Judgment, my grandfather Abdul Mutalib would be among the prophets. His face would be shining like a full moon. He was a world and an institution in himself."

Hazrat Abu Talib and his blessed wife Hazrat Fatima binte Asad (SA) took extra care of their nephew. Never for a moment had Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH&HD) felt that he was deprived of the tender care, love and affection of his father and mother. To Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH&HD) Hazrat Abu Talib was a loving father and an ardent guardian. Both uncle and nephew were so fond of each other that they never parted company. Whenever Hazrat Abu Talib had to leave Makkah on any errand, he would take his nephew along.

Prophet Muhammad (PBHU&HD) used to often go to Mount Hira for meditation. Hazrat Abu Talib would himself stand on guard duty outside the cave or detail one of his sons to be on sentry duty.

One day Hazrat Abu Talib did not see Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH&HD) and asked his sons if they knew Hazrat Muhammad's (PBHU&HD) whereabouts. They all showed their ignorance. Hazrat Abu Talib became very up set. He looked everywhere and asked every one if they had seen Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH&HD) anywhere. Not finding Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH&HD) he became very suspicious of the Quresh. He collected men of Bani Hashim and asked them to arm themselves and each one to remain with one person of Quresh. He instructed them:

"I am going to the hills to look for Muhammad (PBUH&HD) and if you see me coming without Muhammad (PBUH&HD), you all must attack and kill the men of Quresh."

After some waiting, they saw Hazrat Abu Talib and Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH&HD) coming together. Everyone heaved a sigh of relief.

When the Quresh realized what was happening around them, they asked Hazrat Abu Talib what was this all about? "By Allah if you had killed my nephew, we would have slaughtered each one of you," replied he. (Tabqat Ibn S'ad Vol.1, p.203)

Hazrat Abu Talib was so devoted to the welfare of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD) and he looked after his nephew so well, that even Allah Almighty praised it and called it as His own act:

Did He not find you an orphan and gave you shelter.

Qur'an 93:6

This was not due only to the love between an uncle and his nephew but Allah, due to the piety, nobility and true faith of Hazrat Abu Talib, had found him fit for this task. Allah had selected Abu Talib for Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD) as He had selected Hazrat Asiya (SA) for Hazrat Musa (PBUH). And Allah knows best. Allah ascribes this act of Hazrat Abu Talib as His own act.

Hazrat Abu Talib's duty did not end here. His children and grandchildren had to make the supreme sacrifice in the service of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and Islam. Hazrat Abu Talib was fully aware of the difficult days and the arduous task that lay ahead. He had willingly accepted the responsibility. Hazrat Abu Talib had accepted that the sword of the enemy may put down any one of his children but no harm must come to Allah's Prophet, His message, or to Islam.

Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH&HD) conducted himself with so much dignity and grace and was so honest that he earned the epithet Ameen, the 'Trustworthy'. Everyone trusted him without hesitation and was confident that the trust would never be betrayed.

In Makkah, there lived a noble and pious lady by the name of Hazrat Khadija (SA), daughter of Khuwalid. She was a wealthy lady who closely supervised her business affairs. She was as virtuous and as pious a lady as Hazrat Mariyam (SA) and Hazrat Asiya (SA). One day Hazrat Abu Talib went to her and asked her to try his nephew Muhammad (PBUH&HD) for taking her trade caravans.

She readily accepted the offer and gave goods to Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH&HD) and asked him to go to Damascus for trading. She was highly impressed by the honesty and fair dealings of Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH&HD) and the profit that he had made. From then onwards Hazrat Khadija (SA) and Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH&HD) became trading partners.

One day Hazrat Khadija (SA) expressed her desire to get married to Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH&HD). The proposal was approved by Hazrat Abu Talib and graciously accepted by the Prophet (PBUH&HD)

Hazrat Abu Talib recited the wedding sermon:

"All praise is to Allah that we are the decedents of Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) and Prophet Ismael (PBUH) and Maad and Muzir (Muslims by birth). We are the custodians of His House where people come for pilgrimage and He has declared it a city of peace."

Pointing towards the Prophet (PBHU&HD) he added: "He is my nephew Muhammad bin Abdullah (PBUH&HD) and he excels every person in wisdom, piety, nobility and character. He is not a rich person but money is like the shadow of a tree and it does not stay. I swear by Almighty Allah that my nephew has a bright future and he is the custodian of the 'great news' that we all are awaiting."

Ibrahim was neither a Jew nor (a) Christian; but upright in faith (he was) a Muslim; and he was not of the polytheists.

Qur'an 3:66

And this did Ibrahim bequeath to his sons and so did Yaqoob: (saying), O' my sons! Verily Allah hath chosen for you the religion (Islam) therefore, ye die not but as Muslims.

Were ye witnessing when death approached Yaqoob? When he said unto his sons, "What will ye worship after me?" They said, "We will worship thy Allah and Allah of thy ancestors, Ibrahim and Ismael and Ishaq, One Allah (alone) and (only) to Him do we submit."

Qur'an 2: 132,133

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Hazrat Abu Talib protected Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD) till his last breath and supported him in spreading the Message. Sensing peril to the precious life of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), he vowed:

"By Allah, so long as even one member of Bani Hashim clan is alive, we will protect the Prophet (PBUH&HD) (Kamil, Vol.1, p. 41)

Ali the Witness

مسلم اول شہ مرداں علی
عشق را سرمایہ ایماں علی

(علامہ اقبال)

Hazrat Ibrahim (PBUH), while raising the walls of the Ka'aba prayed:

"Our Lord! Make us two Muslims submitting (only to thee) and of our progeny (make a group submissive (only) to Thee and show us the ways of devotion and turn to us (mercifully) for verily Thou and Thou (alone) art Oft-Returning, the Most Merciful."

"Our Lord! Raise up amongst us an apostle from them, who shall recite unto them the revelations and teach them the Book and Wisdom and purify them and Thou (alone) art the Mighty, the Wise."

Qur'an 2: 128 & 129

For three whole years after the actualization of the prophetic mission, the Prophet (PBHU&HD) spread his message in secrecy. The minds and thoughts of the Quresh

were too ugly to bear the beautiful truth of Islam. The pollution was too widespread. Utter ignorance had hardened their hearts and blackened their souls. They were captives of the greed and of the gods that they had made with their own hands or had inherited from their ancestors. They were not yet prepared to purify themselves from the corrupt practices of paganism. They liked to continue to pray before the idols by whistling and clapping. They would not bargain their inherent tyranny and barbarism for kindness, human dignity, mutual respect and affection. Some were beyond redemption.

Gradually the Apostle (PBUH&HD), Hazrat Khadija (SA) and Hazrat Ali (AS) started to pray in the open. They would go to crowded places like the Masjid-ul-Haram and Mana and perform the congregational ritual prayers before the eyes of the enemies of Islam.

Afif bin Qays, a merchant from Syria narrated:

"I had gone to Abbas bin Abdul Mutalib on business that I saw a man entering the Masjid-ul-Haram. This man looked up at the sky and stood praying in front of the Ka'aba. A little while later, a lady accompanied by a young boy also came in and joined him in his prayers. I asked Abbas as to what was the religion of these three that I had not heard before? Abbas replied that the man was Mohammad (PBHU&HD) son of Abdullah bin Abdul Mutalib, the lady was his wife Hazrat Khadija (SA) binte Khuwilid and the young boy was Hazrat Ali ibn Abu Talib (AS)." "Abbas further told me, Muhammad (PBUH&HD) says that there is no god but Allah and He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and all that is there and that he is His Apostle. At present he had no followers other than these two." (Tabari, Vol. 2, p. 65)

One day Allah commanded the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) to invite his close relatives and ask them to believe in one Allah and in his apostleship.

And warn thou thy relatives of nearest kin.

Qur'an 26:214

After consulting his uncle Hazrat Abu Talib, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) asked Hazrat Ali (AS) to make arrangements for the *dawat dhil ashira* (dinner) and invite their close relatives for this dawat at the house of Hazrat Abu Talib. Hazrat Ali (AS) went around and invited all the relatives. Nearly forty persons came to attend the feast.

There was a piece of meat, a few pieces of bread and one cup of milk that Hazrat Ali (AS) served to all the guests. Everyone ate but could not finish this meager quantity of meat and milk. Abu Lahab got up saying that these two cousin brothers were magicians. All the other guests followed Abu Lahab and departed. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD) could not say what he had been ordained to say.

The next day these gentlemen were again invited to dinner (*dawat dhil ashira*) and the same quantity of meat, milk and bread was served to them. After the dinner, they had the same comments to offer:

“This was nothing else but magic and charm.”

They were about to get up when Hazrat Abu Talib shouted:

“No one should dare move from his place. Keep sitting every one. Listen to what my nephew has to say. You may agree with him or not is your choice.”

They all sat down quietly. The Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) stood up and said:

“O’ sons of Abdul Motalib, Allah has assigned me the responsibility to warn you of the painful torments of the wrongdoers and give you the good news of His reward to the pious believers. Embrace Islam and follow me to achieve salvation. I swear by Almighty Allah that among all, I do not know anyone who has brought his people anything better than what I have brought for you. I have brought for you prosperity and salvation both in this world and in the hereafter. Allah the most Gracious has commanded me to call you all to worship Him and not the idols.”

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) asked, “Now which one of you is willing to help me in this task? Anyone who announces to help me will be my brother, my successor and the executor of my will.” (Tabari, Vol.2, p. 63)

There was complete silence. No one responded. Only Hazrat Ali (AS) promptly stood up and testified:

“O’ Apostle of Allah I believe in your righteousness and I will help you in your mission in every manner.” (*Ibn Hisham: Vol. 1, p. 245, Tabari, Vol.2, p.56, Masudi ; Muraj, Vol.2, p. 283*)

Hazrat Ali (AS) was not speaking out of love and affection for his noble cousin but out of firm conviction and total understanding of the Message and what it implied. He had been endowed with Knowledge and he was the witness:

Those who disbelieve say: “You are not the messenger sent (by Allah).” Say (O’ Muhammad): “Allah is sufficient as

witness between me and you, and he who has the Knowledge of the Book."

Qur'an 13: 43

Allah (Himself) witnesseth that there is no god but He, and (so do) the angles and those possessed of knowledge, standing firm for justice; (there is) no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise."

Qur'an 3:17

Is he then (like unto him) who hath a clear proof from his Lord and followeth him a witness from Him, and proceeded by the Book of Musa, a guide and a mercy (testifying it)? These believe in it; and whosoever of the parties (of the idolaters) disbelieveth in it, the (Hell) fire is the promised place; so be thou not in doubt about it; verily it (Qur'an) is the truth from Thy Lord; but most of the people believe not.

Qur'an 11:17

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) repeated his call two more times, looked at every face with a mixed feeling of hope and despair but no one spoke. Hazrat Ali (AS) stood up at every call and testified to the righteousness of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD).

When a number of the so-called elders and worldly wise men were still suffering from the terrible disease of bigotry and ignorance, Hazrat Ali (AS) proved that he was wiser, had firm faith in the righteousness of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) and had been endowed with Divine Wisdom and the Knowledge of the Book.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) embraced Hazrat Ali (AS) and declared, "This is my brother, my vicegerent and executor of my Will among you. Listen to him and always obey him." (Tabari, Vol.2, p. 63; Ibn Sad; Vol. 12, p. 171.)

Many historians are of the opinion that it was a momentous declaration in front of an august gathering of the sons of Abdul Mutalib. It was an occasion organized on the orders of Almighty Allah. Allah knew the results of this invitation. It would have been a total fiasco if Hazrat Ali (AS) had not stood up and testified to it. It was the first great service done to the cause of Islam by Hazrat Ali ibn Abu Talib (AS). Hazrat Abu Talib was mighty pleased with the conviction and courage of his youngest son.

Carlyle opines, "Though all the people gathered there, were not the enemies of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), yet most of them were dead against the concept and some were just not interested. To them the whole thing (an adult person preaching a new religion and a young courageous youth offering his services vehemently) looked like a big farce. They laughed at both of them and dispersed taunting Hazrat Abu Talib to obey his youngest son from that day onward. But these two people [Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH&HD) and Hazrat Ali (AS)] proved to the world that there was nothing laughable in their declaration and that they had the wisdom and tenacity to make it a success."

He further adds, "Young Ali had such a personality as could be liked, loved and venerated by everyone. He was the man of excellent character, loving and lovable, so intensely brave that if anything stood against his bravery it was consumed as if by fire, yet he was so gentle and kind that he represented the model of humility. Hazrat Ali (AS) had a faith whose superlative degree cannot be determined.

The only other example of this devotion is of his son Imam Hussain (AS), the conqueror of the Battle of Karbal."

*

Verily the religion with Allah is Islam.....

Qur'an 3:18

Say (O' Our Apostle Muhammad!) (unto the people) "We believe in Allah, and in what hath been sent down to us and what hath been sent down to Ibrahim and Ismael, and Ishaq and Yaqoob and the Tribes, and in what was given to Musa, and to Isa and the Prophets from their Lord, we make no difference between any of them, and we unto Him are Muslims.

Qur'an 3:83

And when Allah took the pledge of the prophets, "Verily what I have given you of the Book and (of) Wisdom – then cometh a Prophet unto you confirming that which is with you; You shall surely believe in him and help him"; He said: "Do you affirm and accept to take up (on these terms) my burden (which I lay upon you)" ; They said, "We affirm;" He said: "Bear ye then the witness (among yourselves) and I am a witness with you."

Qur'an 3:80

From that day to his last breath, Imam Ali (AS) sincerely, bravely and nobly acted as the defender of Islam. This was the service and training of Hazrat Abu Talib that his sons, grandsons and great-grandsons spilt their blood and strengthened Islam to a degree that now it flourishes in every corner of the world.

On this historic day when the people were openly invited to say, "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad (PBUH&HD) is His Prophet." Ali distinguished himself in a number of ways:

- He displayed that he was above and beyond the ordinary. He was certainly unreachable and his philosophy was beyond the comprehension of the Bedouins of Hijaz.
- Hazrat Ali's (AS) father's house was selected to be the high pedestal from which the people were invited to the path of righteousness.
- Hazrat Ali (AS) was the one who made all arrangements and was the first to invite people to the congregation where, "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad (PBUH&HD) is His Prophet," was declared.
- Hazrat Ali (AS) was the first man who joined the Prophet (PBUH&HD) in his prayers. He attested to all that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had declared. (Ibn Hisham , Vol.1, p.262.; Khateeb Bagheladi, Vol.4, p.333; Asteyab Vol.2, p.458.)
- Hazrat Ali (AS) was the first person who vowed to help the Apostle (PBUH&HD) in his mission. It was not as simple an allegiance as it sounds. On that day Hazrat Ali (AS) not only committed himself but also his sons, daughters, brothers and grandsons to remain steadfast on this path and to offer supreme sacrifice whenever the Prophet (PBUH&HD) or Islam needed it. History bears witness that during trials and turbulence, in hard times and difficult periods, when Islam and the

person of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) was in danger, Hazrat Ali (AS), his brothers, his sons and grandsons were there to fight and die for Islam.

- The Prophet (PBUH&HD) declared Hazrat Ali (AS) as his brother, successor (Caliph) and the executor of his message 'wali' (Custodian).
- It was made mandatory on all Muslims to listen to what Hazrat Ali (AS) ever said and to obey him. Thus, obedience to Hazrat Ali (AS) became part of the faith. (Ali un wali Ullah, wasey-e-Rasool Lullah, wa Khaliphat-a-ho bila fasl). Whosoever disobeyed Ali disobeyed the Prophet (PBUH&HD). Whosoever disobeyed the Prophet (PBUH&HD) has disobeyed Allah.
- Hazrat Ali's (AS) spiritual status was raised above everyone else present in this congregation and those who were to join later.
- By rising three times on the call of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) Hazrat Ali (AS) demonstrated that Muslims must answer the call of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) whenever he calls for help. Once is not enough; every call must be responded to.

Abu Talib An Ardent Defender

The world was overcast with thick black clouds of ignorance. Tyranny, corruption, sins, blood feuds, superstitions and false gods were ruling the society. It had become common to worship idols, cows, fire, stars or the sun. Bloodshed, murder, plunders, savagery, treachery and oppression was rampant. The rich and the strong exploited the weak and the hungry masses.

The violent and arrogant Bedouins were enchanted by inordinate desires. Uncontrolled sex and home brewed wine fascinated them. They followed the worst of beliefs. Every person had created his own god whom he worshipped. Their lifestyle and dwellings were as filthy as their minds and thoughts. Women were treated like animals and traded as a commodity. Slaves were beaten and often starved to death. People refused to listen to a good piece of advice or pay any attention to a word of wisdom.

By Allah! Indeed sent We (Our) apostles unto people before thee, but Satan made them their fair seeming, so he is their guardian today, and for them shall be a grievous chastisement.

Qur'an 16:63

To have a daughter born in the family was considered a matter of shame. Daughters were buried alive.

*And when is announced unto (any) one of them a daughter,
black becometh his face and he is filled with wrath.*

*He hideth himself from the people, of the evil for the tidings
given to him, (he pondereth whether) he shall keep her with
disgrace or bury her (alive) in the dust? Behold, (how) evil
it is what they decide.*

Qur'an 16:58&59

To reform such a society and to establish the writ of Allah on His earth, a reformist of a different kind and status was required. He had to be one who is the personification of wisdom, purity, justice and truth at its ultimate - one who looks like a human being but is actually above the dwellers of the earth. The one above who is only Allah. One who had to serve as a medium between human beings and the Creator of the universe. The one who takes directly from Him and conveys to His people without an iota of error. He would set a personal example and be a model for others to follow. He would speak only what has been revealed to him and would not be assailed by his human wants and desires.

The one who had been created before any creation. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) once said, "I was a Prophet when the process of the creation of Adam was still in the stages of mud and water." He was first endowed with Knowledge and Wisdom and then sent by Allah on the mission.

*(Allah) The Beneficent,
Taught He the Qur'an,
He Created man,
He taught him expressions.*

Qur'an 55:1-4

The birth of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) was the fulfillment of the prayers of Hazrat Ibrahim (PBUH):

"Our Lord! Raise up among them an apostle from them, who shall recite unto them Thy revelations and teach them the Book and Wisdom and purify them for Thou and Thou (alone) art the Mighty, the Wise."

Qur'an 2:129

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD) brought the greatest revolution that mankind has ever known. It is a revolution of the body and the soul; a revolution for the emancipation of mankind. Islamic revolution was brought about by love, affection, kindness and wisdom. It gave people the courage to stand-up for their rights. No other person has ever achieved so much with so few and in as short a time as the Prophet (PBUH&HD) has achieved. His message is a message of peace, brotherhood, justice and truth.

He was bold, strong and fearless against the ferocity, cunningness and the strength of pagans and idolaters. Hazrat Ali (AS) was there with him at every step and at every turn of the corner. Hazrat Ali (AS) was there fighting against his enemies in every field. Hazrat Ali (AS) was and would ever remain an integral part of Allah's Message.

"O' People! Will you believe in me if I tell you that your enemy intends to attack you unaware at dawn or at night?" That was the voice of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD).

They all said, "We have not heard a lie from you throughout your life."

The Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) then said, "O' people of the Quresh! I warn you to fear Allah's punishment. Save

yourself from the hellfire. My position is the same as that of the watchman who sees the enemy from afar and warns his people of the danger of their enemies. Does such a person ever lie to his people?"

This voice of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) echoed through the length and breadth of Makkah. Everyone heard it. Everyone paid attention. It concerned everyone. Every man, woman and child was interested in what the Apostle was saying:

"Impossible! Muhammad, this orphan of Bani Hashim, calling himself a Messenger of Allah? Impossible! Never shall we accept him as a Messenger. Why has this apostleship not come to one of us who are rich and strong?" remarked those who felt the threat to their wealth and authority.

"Did you hear that? Did he actually say that a slave is equal to his master? Did he? Did he?" Was the anxious question of the slaves and the oppressed.

Famous persons like Abu Lahab (father of the flame), Abu Jahl (The Ignorant one), Abu Sufyan, and Aswad bin Abd Yaghwan, Aus bin Wali, Utbah, Shaiba, Walid bin Mughirah and Aqiah bin M'ayyat were among those who opposed Islam tooth and nail.

Whenever the Prophet (PBUH&HD) would collect the people to give them a sermon, Abu Lahab would appear and interrupt the proceedings. He would shout, "Give our oath to you? Have you gathered us all here to tell us such words? No, never ever. You would never have our allegiance. How can we digress from the path of our elders? How can we stop worshipping our great idols Lat and Hubbal and start worshipping your Allah whom we do not see? Why should we trust in your words that you are

His Apostle? Why? Why?" Addressing the gathering Abu Lahab would say, "O' people! This nephew of mine has either gone mad or he is a liar. Do not pay any attention to what he says. Disperse and get busy in your work."

He was one of the uncles of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and during *dawat dhil ashira* he had flared up and had shouted some derogatory remarks at the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD), and had walked out.

He and his wife Umm Jumail, sister of Abu Sufyan had made it their business to torment the Prophet (PBUH&HD). She took pleasure in carrying thorny bushes and strewing them in the sand where she knew that the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) was sure to walk barefooted. She is referred to as bearer of the wood.

Abu Lahab and his wife were cursed for their evil doings towards the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD). Allah revealed this *Sura* that severely reprobates Abu Lahab and his wife:

May perish both the hands of Abu Lahab

May he (too) perish.

Shall avail him neither his wealth nor what he earneth.

Soon shall he burn in flaming fire, And his wife, the bearer of firewood, around her neck shall be a halter of twisted rope.

Qur'an III

Threatened by the gradual success of the mission of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), the Quresh elders often came with complaint to Hazrat Abu Talib:

"Abu Talib, do you hear what your nephew is saying? He is asking us to leave the path of our forefathers, not to worship our idols but to worship one Allah whom we do

not see? You better tell him. If you do not stop him we would," they threatened Hazrat Abu Talib.

Hazrat Abu Talib would listen to their complaints and dismiss them by telling them that he would discuss it with his nephew. He was very much a part of the mission and had an important role to play in the advent of Islam.

As the Prophet (PBUH&HD) continued his mission, the elders from Quresh again came to Hazrat Abu Talib:

"Abu Talib, tell your nephew to stop his activities. Our slaves have started to disobey us. We are losing on our authority. Ask him, what does he want? Leadership? Money? Beauties? We would give him all that he desires, but he must stop calling our gods as false gods and preaching his religion."

Hazrat Abu Talib replied, "He has told me that Walid bin Mughira has offered him his wealth, Shaiba bin Utba has offered his beautiful daughter to him and you all are unanimous in accepting him as your chief, this verse has been revealed to him:

"For this then invite on thou (them to the truth) and be steadfast (on the right way) as thou art commanded; and do follow thou not their vain desires and say thou (O' Mohammad): "Believe I in what Allah hath sent down of the Book; and I have been commanded to do justice between you. Allah is our Lord as well as your Lord: For us (is the responsibility) of our deeds and for you (that of) your deeds. No contention (need there be) between you and us. Allah will gather us together; and to Him is the ultimate return."

Qur'an 42:15

The Quresh were surprised to know as to how their scheme had reached the Prophet (PBUH&HD) before they had even proposed it. They left flabbergasted and blaming each other for disclosure.

The Holy Prophet's (PBUH&HD) eloquence, logic and kind words convinced many listeners. The Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) called their idols as worthless stones and wooden toys. He said, "What do you people want from these soulless objects?"

In spite of the tyranny and cruelty of the Quresh, Islam started to take roots in the hearts and the minds of the people. The number of Muslims started to swell.

Having failed in their earlier efforts, once again the chiefs of the Quresh assembled and came to Hazrat Abu Talib and asked him to forbid his nephew from activities against their belief. Their speaker said, "Abu Talib, you have a high status among all of us and we accept you as our chief, master and our lord. We all have great respect for your high position. You are well aware that the activities and the utterances of your nephew are totally against our faith. We have already asked you a number of times to stop your nephew from ridiculing our idols but you have disappointed us. We swear by our gods Lat and Hubbal that we would tolerate him no more. If you cannot stop him we would fight him and also fight against you."

Hazrat Abu Talib remained steadfast in his resolve. Every time that the Quresh came to him with a complaint, he dismissed them politely.

One more time the Quresh attempted to take hold of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). This time they took Ammarat ibn

Walid along and said, Abu Talib, we have come with a proposal.”

“What is this time?” he asked them.

They said, “This boy Ammarat is strong and handsome. We will give him to you to adopt him as your son and in return ask you to handover your nephew Muhammad (PBUH&HD) to us.”

Hazrat Abu Talib suddenly flared up and said, “How naive of you and how ridiculous is your proposal. You ask me to take good care of Ibn Walid and give you my son Mohammad (PBUH&HD) so that you can kill him? Get out from here and never ever imagine that Abu Talib would ever abandon his son Muhammad (PBUH&HD). He is a trust of Allah and a trust of my father Abdul Mutalib to me. You would never be able to lay your hands on him. Nay, never.”

He further added, “So long as the whole clan of Bani Hashim is not finished we shall neither surrender him to you nor withhold assistance from him.”

Disappointed, they all left the house of Hazrat Abu Talib.

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Islam became the talk of Makkah and the surrounding settlements. People started to discuss what the Message was and what all it implied. The oppressed and the deprived found hope, justice, respect and warmth in it. They were happy that they were equal to their masters and exploiters. The selfish and cruel idol worshippers found their authority and extortion being challenged by Islam. They refused to accept a religion in which their slaves were

slaves no more but their equals. They were scared of the slogan of one Allah, of human values, of honesty and fair dealings. They hated the very concept and the spirit of the Message that meant equality and cessation of exploitation of the helpless and of the weak.

The message of Islam directly clashed with the interests of the wealthy oppressive class of the Quresh. They could not tolerate anyone standing against them or challenging their inhuman and corrupt practices. They wanted their wealth, slaves and concubines that were considered a mark of honour, prestige and pleasure. Human dignity and the basic human rights has always been alien to ignoramuses. The rich and the strong were not to be bound by any moral code.

From the moment the Prophet (PBUH&HD) invited the people to the path of righteousness, a cool and soft breeze of peace and tranquility started to blow. Hope was kindled in the weak and frightened hearts of the slaves and the poor. Huge structures of arrogances started to crumble against the resolve of the deprived and the downtrodden. The tyrants tried to drive off the soothing voice of '*Ahad*' (Allah in one) by inflicting lashes at the naked bodies of the slaves. With every lash the cry '*Ahad*' became louder. Weak hearts became stronger and the Faith firmer.

Yassir and his wife Sumiyyah were tortured to death on the burning sands of Makkah. Their last breath was '*Ahad*'. Their son, Ammar Yassir, who had witnessed the pains and the sufferings of his parents proved to be a great soldier of Truth, Justice and righteousness.

Ziad bin Harith was tortured beyond human endurance. He too lived to serve Islam till his last breath.

A kindhearted companion of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) rescued Bilal from the cruelties of his master. Bilal attained the distinction of being a *Moazzan* (one who gives the call for prayers.)

The difficult and arduous journey of the spread of Islam progressed against all odds.

At the other end of the spectrum The Prophet's (PBUH&HD) kind words of Divine Wisdom and recitation of Qur'anic verses were met with stone-pelting youngsters and garbage-throwing women of Quresh.

Hazrat Abu Talib was there as a strong protective shield. True to his words he and his son Ali (AS) stood like a rock between the hostile Quresh and the Prophet (PBUH&HD). So long as Hazrat Abu Talib was alive, no one dared harm the Prophet (PBUH&HD). There were only a few mean people and petty slaves who at the instigation of their masters would insult, pelt stones or try to humiliate the Prophet (PBUH&HD)

Hazrat Ali Ibn Abu Talib (AS) was there to take every stone on his body, chase away the youngsters and pick up every petal of Wisdom that fell from the noble mouth of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH&HD).

Hazrat Ali (AS) was performing multifarious duties. He was a bodyguard, an intelligent pupil and an obedient devotee who would invite the people to come and listen to what the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) had to say. He too would intently listen to the sermons of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) and not only would he remember each and every word of it, but would also understand the spirit and the philosophy behind the message.

Hazrat Ali (AS) would keep awake the whole night and with tender care arrange every word of Wisdom that he had heard during the day. Justice and Truth had long been imbedded in his soul. He always spoke the truth and never compromised on *anything*, which was against the teachings.

As more and more people started to breathe the sublime and cool comfort of Islām, the fury of ignorance increased in ferocity. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) advised some of the Muslims to migrate to Habsha where the Christian King was a kind person and would give them asylum. About seventy persons under the leadership of Hazrat Jafar ibn Abu Talib quietly slipped away to Habsha.

Barbarism has no borders. Quresh sent Umro A's and Ammar ibn Walid with gifts to Habsha and to bring these immigrants back. They failed in their arguments against the recitation of the Qur'an by Hazrat Jafar. The King of Habsha refused to hand them over to the tyrants. He was an enlightened Christian who recognized that whatever Hazrat Jafar (AS) had recited was surely the word of Allah.

Hazrat Ali (AS) and his father Hazrat Abu Talib could see that strong tides of enmity were rising against the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and were becoming stronger and ever more dangerous. Threat to the life of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) was increasing with each passing day. Ali (AS) was already on duty and Hazrat Abu Talib also stopped to travel out of Makkah lest any harm came to the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

Hazrat Abu Talib had a great responsibility. He was a noble trustee of the life and welfare of the most noble and the greatest person on earth. He had the conviction and the courage and never for a moment was he found wanting in the discharge of his duties. He put his everything, including

his sons and his business interests, at the service of Islam and the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD).

Hazrat Khadija (SA) put her money at the disposal of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD). That money was mostly spent to alleviate the sufferings of the poor and also to purchase slaves from the Quresh who were then set free. The cunning Quresh raised the price of each head and the financial position of Hazrat Abu Talib and Hazrat Khadija (SA) started to deteriorate.

With each passing day the opposition by the Quresh got stronger and more ruthless. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) did not permit the Muslims to pick up arms. Peace is the soul of Islam.

The Quresh realized that, if the people continued to accept the new religion, their authority over the people would soon end. They would not be able to further exploit the poor masses. So they decided to strangulate Bani Hashim through economic means.

They all got together and wrote out an Agreement on which eighty elders of the Quresh put down their signatures. This document was sealed and handed over to Umm-ul-Jalas, an aunt of Abu Jehl. By the spirit of this Agreement no one would do any business with Bani Hashim, there would be no exchanges of goods, no intermarriages etc. There was to be a total social and economic boycott of Bani Hashim.

In fact the sanctions imposed by the Quresh were so tough that, they were confident that for mere survival of Bani Hashim, Hazrat Abu Talib would abandon the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and leave him at the mercy of the Quresh.

Hazrat Abu Talib came to know of the Agreement and realized that the Quresh would not stop at this but could also resort to physical violence against the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD). It was then decided that they migrate to a place where the defense of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) could be made impregnable.

Hazrat Abu Talib collected a group of devout families of Bani Hashim and migrated to a narrow pass between two hillocks outside Makkah. Among all these men, women and children (group of Abu Talib) there was none whom fear would ever overtake - none who would betray the trust and none who would ever give up.

Hazrat Abu Talib so arranged the camp that the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) was protected from all directions and at all times. To further ensure the safety of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), Hazrat Abu Talib would ask Ali (AS) to change his bed with the Prophet (PBUH&HD). Hazrat Abu Talib ensured that if there was any surprise attack, his son Ali (AS) or any other person of Bani Hashim should be killed and not the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

These devotees stayed in this wilderness (*Shaib-e-Abu Talib*) for three long years. The boycott started on the first of Muharram of the seventh year of the declaration by the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

By then, a number of rich and well-to-do persons had accepted Islam and later they often boasted that they were among the first ones to become Muslims. On that account, they would claim their superiority over the later converts but, at that time of test of faith and devotion, none of them came to the help of Bani Hashim or made any effort to alleviate their sufferings. None summoned up the courage. None showed any pity. None was prepared to risk his

safety, security, the family's wealth and the luxury they were enjoying being on the side of Abu Jehl and Abu Lahab. They would not sacrifice their aristocracy for the sake of Islam or for the 'love' of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). They only watched who wins the game.

Bani Hashim consumed whatever little food they had brought along. They reached a stage where they had to boil the leaves of trees and grass and eat it. The children of Bani Hashim used to cry due to hunger and thirst but no one dare supply them with any items of food. The Quresh and the Muslims of Makkah listened to the cries of the children of Bani Hashim but they remained unmoved. However, a few noble men, namely, Abu-ul-Aas bin Rabih, Hakeem bin Hazam and Hashaam bin Umro, who were not Muslims, did at times send their camels loaded with foodstuff towards *Shaib-e-Abu Talib*.

Hazrat Abu Talib and his family suffered untold atrocities but never accepted the demands of the cruel Quresh. These sacrifices were being made in the name of Islam.

And those who migrate (in the cause of Allah) after they are oppressed, certainly We will give them good (recompense) in this world: and certainly the reward in the hereafter is much greater, if they only know (this)

Those who endured patiently and on their Lord (only) do they rely.

Qur'an 16:41 & 42

So their Lord did respond to them (saying) "I will not suffer the work of any of you that worketh to be lost, be he male or female, the one of you being from the other. They, therefore, did migrate and were turned out of their homes

and suffered in My way and who fought and were slain, I will most certainly blot out their sins from them, and I will most certainly admit them into gardens beneath which flow streams; A reward from Allah! Verily with Him (only) is the Excellent Reward.

Qur'an 3:194

After three years of the boycott, one day, the Quresh saw Hazrat Abu Talib coming towards them. Physically he had gone too weak but was ever courageous and stronger in Faith. In the style and the family tradition, Hazrat Abu Talib addressed the Quresh the way his father Hazrat Abdul Mutalib had addressed Abraha bin Ashram of Yemen. (Qur'an:92)

"O' men of Quresh! My nephew Muhammad (PBUH&HD), who has never told a lie, has asked me to inform you that the 'Agreement' that you people had drawn-up has all been eaten up by termite and nothing is left of the paper except the name of Allah. Get that Agreement. If Muhammad (PBUH&HD) is telling the truth then you should refrain from acting against him. If it turns out to be untrue, which I do not think, I shall hand him over to you. Then you could treat him the way you like."

They got the Agreement and saw that what the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had said was true. Truce prevailed but enmity persisted.

Bani Hashim returned to their homes but found their houses and hearth looted, ransacked, depleted and in shambles. These scars of enmity reflected the mentality of the Quresh and the hatred they harbored for the Message.

Hazrat Abu Talib was an old man now. The hardships suffered during the episode of *Shaib-e-Abu Talib* had a terminal effect on his health. A few weeks later he bid farewell to this world.

A few days later Hazrat Khadija (SA) also died.

The year 620 AD was the year of loss and grief for the Prophet (PBUH&HD). In the history of Islam this year is remembered as *Am-ul-Hazin* (the year of grief).

Ali Surrenders Himself

For thirteen years the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had been spreading the message of Islam in and around Mecca under the aegis of Hazrat Abu Talib. Hazrat Abu Talib was unwavering and unrelenting in the discharge of his duties. He was an uncompromising defender of the Faith and a conscientious caretaker of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD). Even in the adverse of circumstances he displayed total devotion and unflinching courage. He never succumbed to pressures, sufferings and pains like an ordinary mortal. He was not an ordinary mortal. He was Ali's father. He was larger than life.

When Islam and the Prophet (PBUH&HD) were deprived of the two great pillars of moral and material strength, Hazrat Abu Talib and Hazrat Khadija (SA), it became very hazardous for him to continue his mission in Makkah.

Each day was an ordeal. He, along with Hazrat Ali (AS), would travel to neighbouring villages and stay there for a day or two. Makkah, the city of peace, had become a city of hostilities, intrigues and conspiracies against the Muslims and particularly, against the person of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) himself. The Quresh were never hesitant of shedding blood or inflicting punishment on the poor Muslims. They were determined to crush Islam. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) tried to stay in Taif but there too the people pelted stones at him and he had to return back to Makkah.

Some elders from Yathrib (Medina) met the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) and invited him to migrate to Medina and bring about peace and tranquility among their tribes who were always fighting among themselves. The Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) advised the Muslims to gradually migrate to Yathrib (Medina) and they started to depart in small groups. The Quresh apprehended that if the Prophet (PBUH&HD) also migrated, the Muslims could pose a serious challenge to the Quresh of Makkah. An urgent meeting of the leaders of Quresh was called at *Dar-un-Nadva*, where the Makkans used to meet whenever they had to take a collective decision or had to discuss important issues concerning the community.

Among those who attended the meeting was Abu Sufyan, Utba and Shaiba from Bani Abdus Shams, Taimma bin Adi, Jubber bin Muta'am, and Haris bin Aamir from Bani Nofil, Nassr bin Haris from Bani Abdul Daar, Abu Bakturi bin Hisham, Zama' bin Aswad and Hakeem bin Hazzam from Bani Assad, Abu Jehl bin Horsham from Bani Makhzum, Nabiya and Munbah sons of Hajjaj from Bani Saham and Umayyah bin Khalaf from Bani Jamma. The Satan joined the meeting in the guise of Sheikh-e-Najdi.

A's bin Wail, Umayyad bin Khalaf and Abi bin Khalaf suggested that the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) be kidnapped and confined to a solitary prison cell where he would die a miserable death. The suggestion was not accepted on the grounds that Bani Hashim could always attack and get the Prophet (PBUH&HD) out of prison. Utba, Shaiba and Abu Sufyan proposed that the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) be exiled to a far off land.

Abu Jehl disagreed with all these suggestions. He proposed that one young and strong man be selected from each tribe and together they should attack the Holy Prophet

(PBUH&HD) during the night and kill him. He further argued, "The charge of the murder will be laid equally on all the tribes and Bani Hashim cannot afford to fight all of them. If worse comes to worst all tribes would pool up the blood money and pay it to Bani Hashim."

They all agreed with his plan and forty young and strong men were selected for this mission.

The Messenger Angel Gabriel came and cautioned the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) about the nascent scheme of the Quresh. He further conveyed that Allah commands that Ali ibn Abu Talib should sleep in his bed and he should escape to Medina during the night.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) asked all the Muslims in Makkah not to come out of their houses that night. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) apprised Hazrat Ali (AS) of what the Angel Gabriel had conveyed. Hazrat Ali (AS) readily accepted to offer his life for the safety of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). Hazrat Ali (AS) slept in the Prophet's (PBUH&HD) bed and covered himself with the same green mantel that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) usually used. (*Khomais, Vol. 1, p. 325*)

It was because of his implicit faith, courage and spirit of self-sacrifice that he slept in the Prophet's (PBUH&HD) bed with the utmost peace of mind. Under the familiar mantel and on the bed of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), he looked exactly like the Prophet (PBUH&HD). At night the Quresh would-be assassins surrounded the Prophet's (PBUH&HD) house and kept peeping to ensure that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) was still asleep.

Hazrat Ali (AS) had surrendered himself to Allah as his great-grandfather Hazrat Ibrahim (PBUH) had surrendered:

And remember when his Lord said unto him, "Surrender (thyself to me)" he said, "I have surrendered (myself) to the Lord of the worlds."

Qur'an 2:131

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) stealthily escaped and hurried towards Medina. He knew that as soon as the bloodthirsty Quresh would find out that he had escaped, they would hunt for him on horsebacks and fast running camels. He quickened up his pace as much as he could. In the meanwhile he heard the sound of footsteps as someone was following him. He looked back and saw that Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA) was following him. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) took him along. (*Tabari, Vol. 2, p. 100*)

The Quresh fighters kept the vigil for the whole night. At dawn, on a prearranged signal, they all jumped over the wall, rushed towards the bed of the Prophet (PBH&HD) and pulled the mantel. Khalid bin Walid raised his sword to strike, but Hazrat Ali (AS) caught him by his wrist and snatched the sword from his hand. To their great annoyance and utter disappointment, they saw that it was Ali (AS) and not the Prophet (PBUH&HD). They asked Hazrat Ali (AS):

"Where is Muhammad (PBUH&HD)?"

Cool and composed, surrounded by a horde of determined killers, Hazrat Ali (AS) replied:

"Had you appointed me as a watchman over the Prophet (PBUH &HD)? Why ask me?"

During the hours of darkness, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) could only travel up to the cave *Thaur* where he decided to

take shelter. As soon as they entered the Cave, a spider weaved its web over the mouth of the Cave. A pair of pigeon laid eggs on the entrance and a thorny bush also grew near the entrance. The web, the nest, the pigeon's eggs and the growth of a thorny bush, all happened in a matter of moments. That was the second part of Allah's scheme. The Cave gave a look as if no one had passed this way in years.

And when they planned against thee, those who disbelieved, that they might imprison thee, or slay thee or drive thee away; and they devised plans and Allah (too) hath a plan; and Allah is the best of the planners.

Qur'an 8:30

The Quresh mounted a hectic search for the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and a party of horsemen did come up to the Cave. Thinking that it was impossible for anyone to enter the Cave they did not look into it. When Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA) heard them talking at the entrance of the Cave, he thought that they had been discovered and now he too would be killed with the Prophet (PBUH&HD). He got so frightened that he started to cry:

If you do not help him (the Holy Prophet), (it does not matter), for Allah did indeed help him when those who disbelieve expelled him. He was the second of the two, when they were in the cave (and) when he said to his companion: "Do not fear, verily Allah is with us." So Allah sent down tranquility upon him, and strengthened him with hosts (of angels) you did not see, and made the word of those who did not believe abject. More exalted is Allah's word, for (verily) Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.

Qur'an 9:40

The Quresh failed to locate the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and the third day they called off their futile search.

As to the first part of Allah's scheme, He appreciated the totality and the absoluteness with which Hazrat Ali (AS) had surrendered himself to the will of Allah. Almighty knew that Hazrat Ali (AS) would never betray the confidence and the trust reposed in him. He was selected by Allah to play the pivotal role in the execution of Allah's scheme and the subsequent spread of Allah's chosen faith. Allah Almighty duly rewarded him:

And among men is he who sells his 'self' to get in exchange the pleasure (discretion) of Allah; Allah is affectionate to His servants.

Qur'an 2:207

Surely Hazrat Ali (AS) had purchased the discretion of Allah and from now onwards he could exercise His discretion on His behalf.

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On the fourth day the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA) came out of the cave and resumed their journey towards Medina. During their journey they were encountered by Sarqa bin Malik but he could not follow them as his horse kept sinking in the loose sand and he too was forced to abandon the chase.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) reached Umro bin Auf's hutments called Quba on the out skirts of Medina. He was given a hearty welcome and was invited to enter the city

but he decided to stay outside Medina and awaited the arrival of Hazrat Ali (AS).

The next morning Hazrat Ali (AS) announced in Makkah that all those who had left their valuables in the custody of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), should collect these from him. The claimants came and Hazrat Ali (AS) handed-over to them their valuables in the same shape and quantity. No one ever complaint that anything was missing or was wrongly delivered or less delivered. Hazrat Ali (AS) proved to be as trustworthy as the Prophet (PBUH&HD) himself.

Hazrat Ali (AS) then wrapped up the affairs in Makkah and on the fourth day he left Makkah, escorting Hazrat Fatima (SA) binte Muhammad (PBUH&HD), his own mother Hazrat Fatima binte Assad (SA) and Hazrat Fatima binte Zubair.

When the Quresh realized the consequences of Hazrat Ali's (AS) departure they tried to take him and the ladies as hostage. Eight men were sent after this small caravan. They caught up with these emigrants near Zajnan Mountain. The Quresh asked them to return to Makkah and threatened to use force. Hazrat Ali (AS) had no intentions to fight but the Quresh became too insolent. Jina, a slave of Hara ibn Omayyah pulled out his sword and attacked Hazrat Ali (AS). Hazrat Ali (AS) also pulled out his sword and with one stroke cut Jina into two. That was the first sword drawn in the service of Islam. The others did not muster enough courage and withdrew.

After this ugly encounter, this small caravan of refugees resumed their journey towards Medina. Through out the journey Hazrat Ali (AS) and these three ladies spent their days and nights offering prayers. The hazards and the

fatigue of the long and arduous journey did not deter them from fulfilling their basic obligation.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) warmly welcomed Hazrat Ali (AS) and the three noble ladies and together they entered Yathrab.

The Muslims of Medina proved to be excellent hosts. They served them in every manner and together they lived as one big family. To further strengthen this bond of brotherhood and fraternity, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) declared about fifty of them as brothers to each other. This relationship was mainly governed by the spirit of Islamic brotherhood as also by their temperaments, habits, psychological affiliations, knowledge and states of mind etc.

Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA) was declared brother of Kharaja bin Zaid, Hazrat Umar (RA) to Atban bin Malik, Hazrat Usman (RA) to A's bin Sabit, Abu Obaida to Sa'd bin Ma'z, Zubair to Salma bin Salama, Talha to Ka'ab bin Malik, Ammar bin Yassir to Qais bin Sabit, Hazrat Salman Farsi to Abu Darda, etc. For Hazrat Ali (AS), he said, "Ali you are my brother in this world and in the next." (*Asteyab Vol.2, p. 237*)

For seven months the Prophet (PBUH&HD) stayed as a guest at the house of Abu Ayub Ansari. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) decided to build a mosque and a house for himself. He purchased a piece of land that belonged to Bani Najjar. Adjacent to the mosque, two houses were constructed. One of these was for the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and the other one for Hazrat Ali (AS). Other emigrants also built their houses around the mosque.

For the sake of their convenience, a number of emigrants kept one door of their houses to open into the mosque.

Gradually, this facility of coming to the mosque for prayers and only after abolition was abused. It became a free passageway and thereby, the sanctity of the mosque was violated. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) ordered that all the doors opening into the mosque be closed except for his own door and the door of Hazrat Ali (AS). Some of the companions of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) objected to this decision but the Prophet (PBUH&HD) replied:

“Neither have I ordered the closure of your doors nor have I permitted Ali (AS) to keep his door open but Allah Almighty has directed so.” He added, “As Allah had ordered Hazrat Musa to build a mosque which should always be kept purified and no one else but Hazrat Musa, Hazrat Aaron and his two sons could reside in it, similarly, Allah has ordered me to build a mosque that must always be kept purified and no one but myself and Ali (AS) and his family can reside in it.” This signified the infallibility of Hazrat Ali (AS) and of his family. (*Sahih Tirmezi Vol. 2, p.214; Khasais Nasaie p.37, Hakim, Vol. 3, p.117*).

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When Hazrat Fatima (sayyeda-tul-nisa-e-almeen) reached the age of puberty, a number of well-known and rich persons asked for her hand but the Prophet (PBUH&HD) rejected them all. One of them came with a lot of gold and silver as wedding gifts for her. When he proposed, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) picked up a few pebbles from the ground and these pebbles turned into gold. This gesture of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) implied that the gold and silver was the dust of this earth and his daughter was not to be weighed against gold and silver but was to be measured against nobility, piety and virtues. One by one all the aspirants were made to realize that the Prophet's

(PBUH&HD) daughter had a very special status and none save the most virtuous man would be her husband.

Divinity had brought Hazrat Ali (AS) and Hazrat Fatima (SA) at one place to share the same destiny. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) was brought up in the tender care of Hazrat Abu Talib and Hazrat binte Asad. Hazrat Ali (AS) played in the loving lap of Hazrat Khadija (SA) and the Prophet (PBUH&HD) himself.

Hazrat Ali (AS) and Hazrat Fatima (SA) grew up together under the same roof and became the part of the divine mission. Together they were endowed with the blessings of the Faith and together they suffered the difficulties and pains that Ignorance brought against the Message and the Messenger (PBUH&HD).

One day Hazrat Ali (AS) went to the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and quietly sat in a corner of the mosque. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) asked him:

“Ali, have you come to say something?”

Hazrat Ali (AS) said, “Yes, but I cannot find the right words to express myself.”

“Still, say what you have in your mind,” asked the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

Gathering all the courage, Hazrat Ali (AS) said, “O’ Prophet (PBUH&HD), you have brought me up and have always been so kind to me. Now I have come to ask you for another favour that would have been asked by my father, on my behalf, if he was alive. I have come to ask you for the hand of your daughter Fatima.”

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) was already waiting for this proposal. He was glad to hear Hazrat Ali (AS) asking for the hand of his daughter.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) said, "Wait a minute and let me ask my daughter."

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) went to his daughter and asked her if she would approve of the proposal? In reply, she did not move her lips but her silence gave the signal that she would accept Hazrat Ali (AS) as her husband.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) came out and declared, "Ali, congratulations, your wish has been granted. Now go and prepare for the wedding."

Hazrat Ali (AS) replied that he had no money and his only assets were a camel, a sword and a coat of mail. He was asked to sell his coat of mail. With the sale proceeds of the coat of mail a few items of household were purchased. The wedding took place on the Second day of Zeqad 2 Hijrah.

All the companions were invited and served with dates. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) himself recited the wedding sermons. Hazrat Fatima (SA) moved to the house of Hazrat Ali (AS). Her dowry consisted of a hand mill, a wooden bowl and a cotton rug.

Hazrat Ali (AS) fathered four children from Hazrat Fatima (SA). Hassan, Hussain, Zainab and Umme Kalsoom.

[The Holy Prophet's (PBUH&HD) son from Hazrat Khadija (SA) had died at a young age and he had no other male issue. Persons like Omar bin A's and Hakam bin A's used to taunt the Prophet (PBUH&HD) that he was issueless. The birth of Hassan and Hussain proved that they

were wrong and that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) would have children and grandchildren from his daughter. Surely the Prophet's (PBUH&HD) progeny would continue and those who had called him as issueless would remain nameless.]

Both the sons of Hazrat Ali (AS) and Hazrat Fatima (SA) are known as sons of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). Allah Almighty also said so:

Verily We have given you (O' Muhammad) Kausar (abundance)

So, pray to your Lord and offer sacrifice.

Verily it is your enemy whose line (progeny) shall be cut off.

Qur'an: 108

Al-Kausar has also been interpreted as glad tidings of the greatest amount or the highest degree of the grace of Allah, bestowed upon the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

Al-Kausar is also expressed as a stream of super excellence and a reward that is exclusively meant for the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and the righteous ones. When the Prophet (PBUH&HD) was interpreting this verse to his followers, he put his hand on the shoulders of Hazrat Ali (AS) and declared, "Ali, you would be the distributor of the water of this stream." Since then Hazrat Ali (AS) was also called '*Saqi-e-Kausar*' the distributor of the *Kausar*.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) also said, "On the day of judgment a number of my companions will be driven, like animals, away from the *Al-Kausar*. I would ask why they are being driven away. An answer would come, "You know

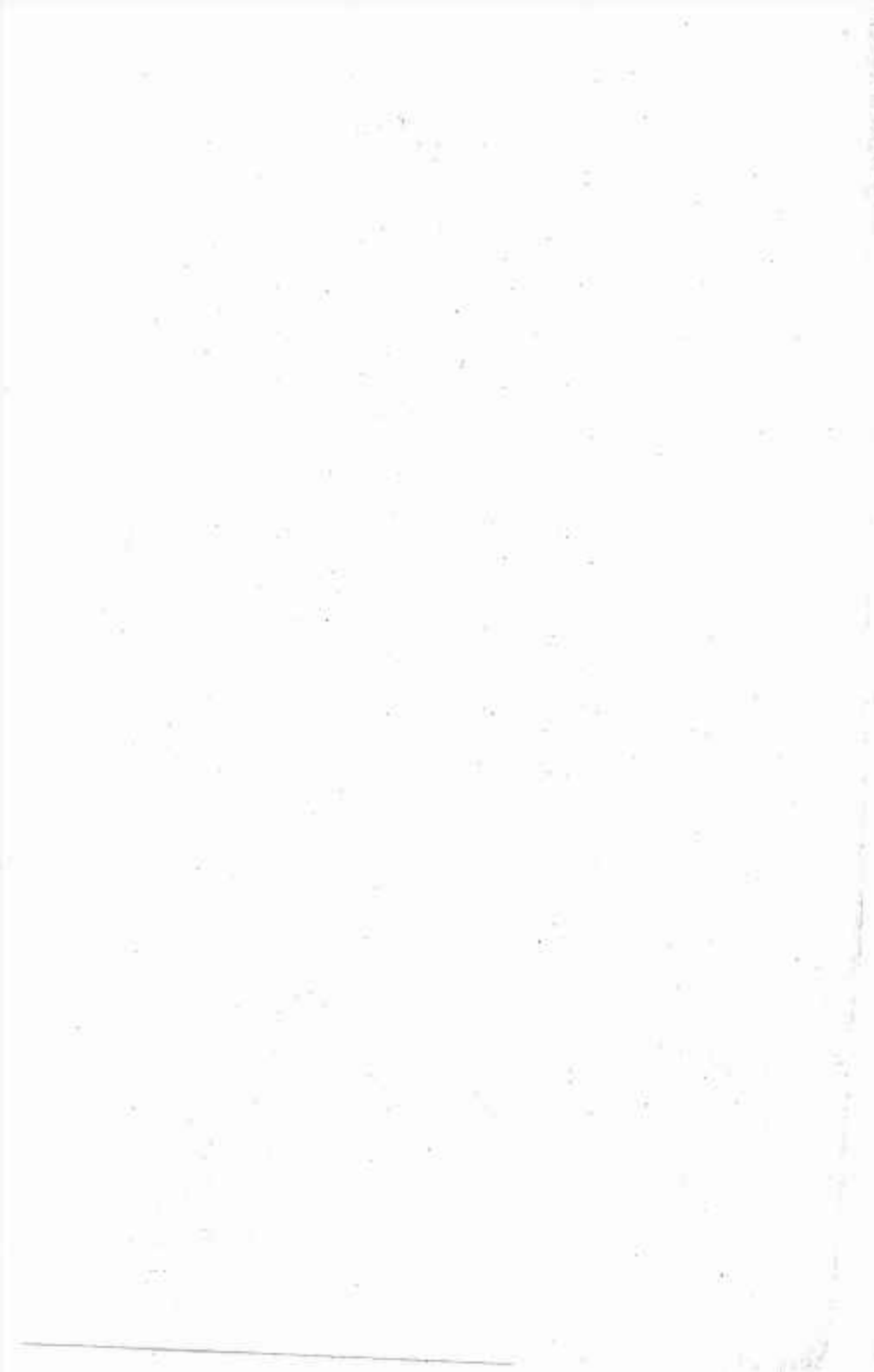
that after your departure from the world, these people turned away from the truth and introduced innovations in the Faith.”

The Holy Prophet's (PBUH&HD) grandson Imam Hussain (AS) had to become *zibhe azeem* 'the greatest sacrifice' for whom the life of Prophet Ismael (PBUH) was spared. First the Prophet (PBUH&HD) himself and later Hazrat Ali (AS) trained and prepared this son for that epoch making day.

On that day, the blood of the son of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and of seventeen other members of Bani Hashim and their devotees was spilt but the Standard of Islam was raised never again to become the victim of innovations.

This greatest sacrifice was offered by Imam Hussain (AS) in the Battle of Karbala and accepted by the Almighty. Imam Hassain (AS) went through this in such a magnificent manner that there is no parallel in the history of mankind.

Unfortunately most of the murderers who participated in this massacre were those who had often seen Imam Hussain (AS) being carried by the Prophet (PBUH&HD) on his shoulders and showering kisses on him. Many a time they had heard the Prophet (PBUH&HD) saying from the Pulpit, "Hussain is from me and I am from Hussain." Still they murdered him. Verses from the Holy Qur'an and slogans like *Allah-o-Akbar* were engraved on the swords raised against this son of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD).



The Battle of Badr "Fight Against Those Who Fight You"

The conspiracy of the Quresh to kill the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) while he slept in his bed was defeated by the sound sleep of Hazrat Ali (AS), a pair of wild pigeons, the delicate web of a spider and a thorny bush. Allah Almighty has His ways to humiliate the tyrants.

The safe escape of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) from Makkah and the warm welcome accorded to the emigrants in Medina infuriated the Quresh. Abu Jehl was very angry. The Quresh realized that the people were accepting the new faith in great numbers and as the trade route to Syria passed through Medina, the Muslims could pose a serious threat to their trade caravans too. Strategically the Muslims were located at a much advantageous position.

The Quresh had the choice either to live in peace and harmony with the Muslims or to fight and defeat them. They were also aware of the fact that with the help of the *ansar* (locals of Medina), the Muslims would soon become a force to reckon with and would pose a serious challenge to their authority and their religious beliefs and social practices that would seriously jeopardize their economy and racial superiority. Abu Jehl, the archenemy of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and of the Message of Islam was not prepared to accept this position. He chose to fight the Muslims and finish them before they got any stronger.

The pagans were also aware that soon the Muslims would come to cleanse the Ka'aba of the ugly idols. Muslims were destined to restore the original sanctity of the Ka'aba. The Ka'aba must return to the righteous descendants of Hazrat Ibrahim (PBUH) and Ismael (PBUH). The strength of the faith and the conviction of the Muslims sent tremors into the luxurious and treacherous castles of Ignorance.

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During the month of March 624 AD, Abu Sufyan was coming back with a trade caravan from Syria. Abu Sufyan was apprehensive that the Muslims could attack his caravan when he passed through Medina. He sent a word to Makkah for help. Abu Jehl, who was already looking for an excuse to attack Medina, set out with an army of one thousand soldiers.

Abu Sufyan cleverly changed the route of the caravan and safely reached Makkah. He sent a message of his safe arrival and asked Abu Jehl to return. Abu Jehl would have nothing of this. Bitterness of the past fifteen years was driving him mad. He went ahead with his plan to attack Medina.

An ideological conflict was about to take an ugly turn. The Quresh were confident that they would finish off the Muslims and bury Islam in the sands of Arabia. The Jews of Medina who were also concerned about the increasing influence of Islam had already sent messages to Quresh that they would help them in their fight against the Muslims. In fact they acted as fifth columnists and provided minute-to-minute information about the Muslims to the Quresh.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) was forewarned of the plans being hatched by the Quresh and of the treachery of the Jews who had even signed a peace deed with the Muslims. The local Jews had informed the Quresh that the Muslims were least prepared for an armed conflict. They had just a few weapons and their means of sustenance were almost negligible. Now was the time to finish them.

There were neither any natural barriers nor any geographic boundaries had been drawn to separate Medina from Makkah. There were no missiles or weapons of mass destruction to act as deterrent. Only a vast stretch of inhospitable and hot desert lay between the Muslims and the Quresh.

Encouraged by the military inferiority of the Muslims and the secret help promised by the Jews, the Quresh structured an excuse to attack Medina. One thousand strong and a fully armed force of Quresh started to advance towards Medina with the mission of annihilating the Muslims. The Muslims who wanted to reach out to the Quresh and the Jews in peace, fraternity and a promise of brotherhood were being drawn into a bloody battle.

The Messenger of Peace was sent as a mercy to the world: *(We sent you not but as a mercy unto the worlds. Qur'an 21:107)*. The one who had come as a blessing and had always wanted peace, harmony, love and affection among the people, was suddenly confronted with a situation for which he was least prepared.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) could already hear the battle rhymes, the clinking of the weapons and the horses coming towards Medina in an ugly aggressive mood.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) was in a very pensive mood. Must blood flow and heads roll on the hot sands of Arabia? Was there no decent human choice? He detested the whole scenario of a battlefield.

The Quresh were too arrogant. They were not prepared to give any quarter.

He was lost in these thoughts that Allah's *amr* (order) was revealed:

And fight in the way of Allah against those who fight you, but do not be aggressive; (for) Allah does not love aggressors.

Qur'an 2:190

If blood had to flow, it must flow. The Faith must be defended. How many men of Bani Hashim would be sacrificed at the altar of this Truth? The question need not be answered now. It was a crisis situation. Force had to be met with force. Strong or weak was not the criterion. *Jihad* (Holy war) had been made mandatory for the defence of the Faith.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) collected his companions and told them about the enemy's intentions. He looked left and right with a questioning eye. He wanted to know the opinion of his companions. *Jihad* is always voluntary. No one can be forced to fight in the way of Allah. One must carry out *Jihad* out of conviction and with firm faith in his heart.

The cowards and the ignorant who loved to live and did not want to part with the luxuries of life, were first to raise their voice in dissent. They spoke too loud for every one to hear.

They tried to demoralize others too. They argued that the enemy was too strong and the Muslims were too weak. They suggested that, whatever the terms, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) must enter into a peace treaty with the Quresh.

In their opinion, fifteen years of the Prophet's (PBUH&HD) hard labour and sufferings were of little value. They still carried the yoke of ignorance around their necks. Still they were oblivious to the significance of martyrdom. They remained unaware of the importance of *Jihad* and the status of a martyr. For them this world was too attractive and too glamorous to be exchanged with a mere promise of the life and blessings of the hereafter.

Earlier, some of them were tempted to attack the caravan of Abu Sufyan and to loot it. They were not allowed to do that. When they were ordered to fight in self-defence most of them got scared:

Hast thou not seen those unto whom was said: "withhold your hand (from war) and establish prayer and pay the poor-rate," but when fighting was prescribed for them, lo! a party of them fears men as (it should be) the fear of Allah, or even (with) a greater fear and say: "O' Our Lord! why hast Thou ordained upon us fighting, wherefore didst Thou not grant us respite to a near end;" Say (O' Our Apostle Muhammad!) "The provisions of this world is scant, and the hereafter is better for him who guards (himself against evil), and you shall not be wronged (even to the extent of) the small skin in the groove of a date-stone.

Qur'an 4:77

There were also those who had the faith and the conviction. They spoke too, "Any thing and every thing for the Prophet

(PBUH&HD). Desert or sea, we will fight till Allah's message prevails and the evil ceases to exist." They were the ones whose hearts had been washed clean of the greed for the worldly gains and its treacherous charms. An honorable death was preferred to a miserable life. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) blessed them.

Even so thy Lord caused thee out of thy house with the truth, though a party of the believers was certainly averse.

They dispute with thee about the truth after it had been manifest, as if they were (helplessly) being driven unto death while they see it.

And when Allah promised unto you one of the two (enemy) parties that it should be yours and ye loved that the one unarmed should be yours, and intended Allah to establish the truth with His words, and to cut off the roots of the infidels.

Qur'an 8: 5-7

An ill-equipped rag-tag band of some three hundred and thirteen Muslims, some reluctant and some enthusiastic, was ordered to march to meet the enemy outside Medina. The enemy had already travelled more than half of the distance. The Muslims contacted the enemy at the well of Badr. (*Tabari, Vol.2, p.133*).

Hazrat Ali (AS) who was only twenty-two years was appointed as the Standard Bearer of the army of the Muslims. (*Al Badaiya wal Nihaiya Vol.7, p .223.*)

The enemy had occupied the hard ground and the Muslims were forced to stay on the soft sand. The ground was as

deceptive as the enemy. A night before the battle it rained and the treacherous sand became hard.

Remember when He caused slumber to cover you as a security from Himself and sent down water from heaven that He might cleanse you with it and take away from you the uncleanness of Shaytan, and make strong your hearts and plant your feet firmly therewith.

When your Lord revealed to the angels (saying): "Verily, I am with you, so make firm those who believe, soon I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve, therefore, strike above their necks; and strike off all their fingertips."

This is because they opposed Allah and His messenger (Muhammad) and whosoever opposeth Allah and His Apostle then verily Allah is severe in punishment.

This, then you taste it, and (Beware!) that for the infidels is the torment of the (Hell) fire.

O' you who believe! When you meet those who disbelieve (to attack) in battle, do not turn your backs to them.

And whosoever turns his back to them on that day, except it be in a tactics of fighting, or for the purpose of joining (his own) contingent, then he deserves the wrath of Allah, and his abode is hell; and what an evil destination!

Qur'an 8:11-16

Next morning, 17 Ramadan 2 Hijra, the good and evil came face to face near the well of Badr.

Utba bin Rabbia, his brother Shaiba and his son Al-Walid came out and challenged the Muslims. Auf bin Harith, Maoaz bin Harith and Abdullah bin Rawaha accepted the challenge and came out against the challengers.

Utba who was too proud of himself refused to fight against the Ansars whom he considered racially inferior. To him their blood was not worthy of his sword. He wanted blue-blooded Hashemite. The Quresh knew that Islam meant Bani Hashim. If the Quresh could kill men of Bani Hashim, Islam would die its own death. The noble blood of Abdul Mutalib was what they wanted to spill. Utba shouted:

“Muhammad! Send those men against us who are our equals.”

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) recalled the three Ansar and ordered:

“Arise Ali, arise Hamza, and arise Ubayda. The Quresh have brought their falsehood to extinguish the light of Allah. Fight for the Truth with which Allah has sent your Prophet (PBUH&HD).”

They arose and arrayed themselves against the infidels. Utba said, “Speak if you are our equals then would we fight you.”

One by one they introduced themselves.

“I am Ali ibn Abu Talib bin Abdul Mutalib”, said Hazrat Ali (AS).

“I am Hamza bin Abdul Mutalib, the Lion of Allah and the Lion of His Apostle (PBUH&HD), said Hazrat Hamza

(AS). "I am Ubayda bin Harith bin Abdul Mutalib," declared Hazrat Ubayda.

Utba said, "Noble equals."

Hazrat Ali (AS) did never initiate any fight. He asked Al-Walid, "Accept Islam." He flatly refused. Hazrat Ali (AS) again asked him, "Turn away and save your life." He retorted with a taunt. Then Hazrat Ali (AS) asked him, "Attack."

Movements of the contestants started. Swords started to flash. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) was watching every move of his soldiers and praying for their success.

Al-Walid was soon dispatched to Hell.

As Hazrat Ali (AS) looked around, people shouted, "Ali, Utba is dominating Hamza." Hazrat Ali (AS) saw that fierce hand-to-hand fight was going on. Shields had been broken and swords had become blunt. Hazrat Ali (AS) attacked Utba and his head rolled on the sand. Ubayda had been badly wounded. Hazrat Ali (AS) and Hazrat Hamza (AS) attacked Shaiba and finished him.

The Quresh were stunned. Their best three fighters had fallen.

Tai'ma bin Adi challenged Hazrat Ali (AS). Soon he was seen on the ground with blood gushing out of his neck. Then Hanzala bin Abu Sufyan and Aas bin Saeed stepped out to fight. In no time Hazrat Ali (AS) dispatched both of them to Hell.

"Allah-o-Akbar," shouted the Muslims.

Now it was free for all. Quresh fell upon the Muslims. Swords, lances and arrows were exchanged. Abu Jehl, his brother Aas bin Hisham and Nawfil bin Khuwyalid had also been killed. The Quresh were defeated and they took to their heels.

Of, course, Allah is sufficient for the Muslims through the Commander of the Faithful:

Allah turned back the disbelievers in their fury; they did not gain any advantage. Allah sufficed for the believers in the fighting. Allah is All- Powerful, All Mighty.

Qur'an 33:25

Historians record that Hazrat Ali (AS) Commander of the Faithful, killed thirty-six infidel including Al-Walid bin Utba, Aas bin Said, Tuayma bin Adi bin Nawfil and Nawfil bin Khuwaylid, he killed Zama bin Al Aswad, Aqil bin Al Aswad, Al Harith bin Zama, Ai Nadr bin Al Hrith Abd al-Daar, Umar bin Uthman bin Ka'ab bin Taym (uncle of Talha bin Ubayd Allah, Uthman and Malik bin Ubayd Allah (brothers of Talha, Masu'd bin Abi Umayya bin al-Mughira, Abu Qays bin Fakih bin al-Mughira, Hudhayfa bin Abi Hudhayfa bin al- Mughira, Hanzala bin Abu Sufyan, Amr bin Makhzum, Abu al-Mudhir bin Abi Rifa'a, Munabbih bin al-Hajjaj al-Sahmi, Al-As bin Munabbih, Alqama bin Kalda, Abu al-As bin Qays bin Adi, Mu'awiya bin al-Mughira bin Abi al-As, Lawdhan bin Rabi'a, Abd Allah bin al-Mundhir bin Rifa'a, Mas'ud bin Umayya bin al-Mughura, Hajib bin Sa'ib bin Uwaymir, Aws bin al-Mughira bin Ladhan, Zayd bin Mulis, Asim bin Abi Awf, Sai'd bin Wahb, Muawiya bin Abd al-Qays, Abd Allah bin Jamil, Al-Sa'ib bin Malik, Abu al-Hakam bin al-Akhnas and Hashim bin Abi Umayya bin al-Mughira. (*Mufti Jafar Hussain 'Seerat-e-Ameer-ul-Momneen'*)

As the Faith was striving hard in the way of Allah, the greed was also sprawling around. The battle had still not been completely won that the greed overtook some of the Muslims. They resorted to plundering and looting. Those who had collected a lot of booty wanted to keep it all. They held-on* to it with both their arms. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) ordered it to be equally distributed among all the participants and a share was also kept for the families of those who had been martyred. Fourteen Muslims had laid their lives.

They ask you concerning the anfal (the spoils of war). Say Mohammad: "The anfal belong to Allah and set right (the matters) among yourselves, and obey Allah and His messenger, if you are believers."

Qur'an 8:1

Before the battle, the Prophet (PBUH&UD) laid the ground rules, "No killing of prisoners of war, old, sick, unarmed, women or children. No desecration or mutilation of dead bodies. No destruction of enemy property, no cutting of trees in the areas conquered, no destruction of fields, foodstuff or killing of animals."

Some of the companions were so scared that they did not fight and only watched. Their swords had not lost their luster, as these had not been used in the battle. Before anyone took any notice of it they put these back in their sheath. However, they were very vocal in advocating that the prisoners of war should be killed. (*Tabari Vol.2, p.151*).

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) knew their hidden motives. He ordered that no prisoner should be harmed or tortured. They had to be treated with dignity and were to be released on

payment of ransom. Some were set free for teaching the Muslim children how to read and write.

The Battle of Uhud

The Muslims are put through a Test

What! Do people imagine that they will be left off on (their) saying: "We believe!" and they will not be tried?

And indeed We did try those before them, so Allah certainly knoweth those who are true, and certainly knoweth He the liars.

Qur'an 29: 2 & 3

The events and opportunities of successes and failures, victory and defeat, gain and loss, joy and sufferings were there as tests to distinguish between those who had joined Islam for worldly glory and gains and those who had unwavering faith in Allah.

Through such tests and trial Allah distinguishes between those who are there only for material gains but cannot face unfavourable situations and those who remain steadfast and bravely face the adversary.

Such trials and tests were essential, as many had joined Islam for the privileges that it promised but had remained infidels at their hearts. Hypocrites who were the worst enemies of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) and of the Muslims had joined the ranks in the garb of devotees professing a close companionship to the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

The Battle of Uhud clearly exposed the faces of those (men and women) who stood fast and remained with the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and of those who deserted him and exposed what was in their hearts.

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Abu Sufyan was unaware of the debacle that had happened at Badr. He had safely returned from Syria with his caravan of one thousand camels and that is what he had wanted. He had made huge profit on the goods which he had traded-in. The whole city was in a mood of jubilation and festivity as the occasion promised prosperity for every one. However, these celebrations were short lived.

A fast rider entered the town and started to shout and wail in distress. The beat of drums started to die down, singing and dancing ceased, and the Meccans gathered around him. The messenger who had come from Badr announced the tragedy that had befallen the Quresh army.

Happy and cheerful faces of the Quresh went pale. Every one was anxious to know the names of those who had been killed or injured and the names of their killers. Abu Sufyan and his wife Hind also heard the news.

To their utter surprise, the names of Abu Jahl, Sheiba, Waleed, and Hanzala were announced among the dead. Seventy Quresh had been killed and another seventy had been taken prisoners. Hind had lost her uncle (Sheiba), brother (Waleed) and son (Hanzala). Out of those seventy who were killed, seventeen were from Bani Makhzum, the tribe of Khalid bin Waleed. Ikrama had lost his father, Abu

Jehl. The Battle of Badr had spelt complete disaster for the Quresh.

As the names of the dead and the wounded were being announced, the Quresh noted the frequency with which the names of Hazrat Ali (AS) and Hazrat Hamza (AS) were being mentioned. Hazrat Ali (AS) alone had killed thirty-six infidels. Hazrat Hamza (AS) had killed four and had shared the killing of another four with Hazrat Ali (AS).

The beaten and defeated remnants of the Quresh army reached Mecca after a number of days and narrated the tales of the valour, courage and invincibility of Hazrat Ali (AS). They said that Hazrat Ali (AS) was seen fighting at every place. He was fearless and his sword struck the infidels like lightning from one end of the battlefield to the other. He had become a myth.

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Abu Sufyan, who was now the leader, called out an assembly. They vowed to avenge the humiliating defeat and the loss of a number of notables of the Quresh. Blood for blood: The most venomous among those seeking revenge was Hind, Sufwan bin Ummaya, Ikrama bin Abu Jehl and Khalid bin Walced. It was also decided that the profit, which had come from the business, would also be spent on strengthening the army and would not be distributed among the shareholders. Frantic preparations for the attack on Medina began. Camels, horses, shields, swords and lances were purchased in large quantities.

Abu Sufyan also sent emissaries to the neighbouring tribes and asked them to join the Quresh as they too had their business and religious interest at stake. The route of their trade-caravans had to be secured and the threat posed by the Muslims had to be eliminated once and for all.

An army of three thousand soldiers was raised. Out of these, seven hundred were with coat of mail, two hundred horsemen and there were three thousand camels with provisions. For spiritual inspiration and good luck, Abu Sufyan also brought along the idol of Habul mounted on horseback.

Hind, wife of Abu Sufyan, raised a troupe of fourteen women to accompany the Army. Among them was the sister of Khalid bin Waleed, Rayt, wife of Umro bin A's, Umme Hakim, wife of Ikrama bin Abu Jehl, Qatela, wife of Sufyan bin Auf, Umrah, wife of Aazab bin Sufyan, Salafa, wife of Talha bin Usman, Ramla, wife of Harith bin Sufyan, Birra, wife of Safwan bin Ummaya and Amra binte Alqama. They were to dance and sing battle rhymes for the motivation of the soldiers. (*I.A. Akram 'Sword of Allah'*)

Jubair bin Mutim whose uncle had been killed by Hazrat Ali (AS), announced to his slave named Wahshi (savage) bin Harb, "If you kill Ali or Hamza, I shall free you." (*Ibn Hisham Vol.2, p. 61-62*).

Wahshi was a huge black Abyssinian who was an expert in the use of the javelin. Wahshi liked the deal. During the journey, he saw a camel closing in on him. From this litter-carrying camel Hind exposed her face and asked Wahshi to come closer. Then she spoke to him, "Wahshi, I hear you are an expert in the use of your javelin. Let's see how brave and good you are. If you kill Ali or Hamza I will give you all the jewellery that I am wearing." She added, "O' Father

of Blackness! Heal, and seek your reward." (*Ibn Hisham Vol.2, p.61-62*).

Wahshi cast a greedy look at her ornaments. His black face started to glow with the thoughts of his freedom and the possession of these ornaments.

Hazrat Abbas bin Abdul Mutalib, uncle of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD), secretly dispatched a fast rider to go and inform the Prophet (PBUH&HD) of the impending danger, the composition of the force including their weapons and the intentions of Abu Sufyan.

On March 20, 625 AD, the Quresh reached near Medina and camped a few miles away in the wooded area west of Mount Uhud.

In Medina, the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) got his companions together and informed them of the enemy intentions and capabilities and also asked for their opinion. (*Tabari Vol.1, p.241; Ibn Hisham Vol.3, p.7; Ishaq p.371*)

Once again, the Muslims were divided. Hot discussion ensued. Those weak in heart and weak in Faith suggested that the confrontation must be avoided. They argued that the Muslims lacked even the minimum strength to face an army of three thousand Quresh armed to the teeth and smitten by the fire of revenge. Some opined that the Quresh should be lured into Medina where the Muslims would fight them in the streets. Some, of course, were with the Prophet (PBUH&HD) wholeheartedly and awaited his orders.

Some of the hypocrites tried to put the fear of the enemy in the heart of Hazrat Ali (AS). They were under the false illusion that if somehow they could dissuade Hazrat Ali

(AS), the battle could be avoided. When they spoke to Hazrat Ali (AS) and other devoted companions, they retorted, "We are with the Prophet (PBUH&HD) through thick and thin. If he decides to fight in the desert, mountains or the sea, we are with him."

Allah also noticed this vain venture of the hypocrites. Allah, of course, knows what each one of His creatures is doing, saying or harbouring in one's own heart:

Those unto whom said the people, "Verily have the people mustered (strong) against you, therefore fear them!" It only increased their faith; and said they, "Allah is (quite) sufficient for us and the most excellent protector is (He)."

They returned, therefore, with the favour from Allah and (His) Grace. Without any evil even touching them and they followed the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is the Lord of Mighty Grace.

It is only that Satan frighteneth his friends (against supporting the Prophet). Fear them not! But fear ye Me! If ye be (true) believers.

Qur'an 3:172-174

Hazrat Ali (AS) added, "Remember, anyone who tries to run away from death is in fact running towards one's death. Allah also makes it clear that death and life is in His hand."

It is not for any soul to die except by Allah's permission, (according to) the Book that fixes the term (of life): he who desires (his) reward in this world, We give him thereof and he who desireth (his) reward in the hereafter, We give him thereof! And shortly we shall reward the grateful ones.

Strangely enough, in the Quresh ranks there was one voice and all were united behind Abu Sufyan and the idol of Habul. As opposed to this, in the camp of the Muslims, there were many voices and many divergent opinions. Hypocrites and cowards were speaking the loudest and were putting up various arguments and excuses to prove their viewpoint. The opinion of some of the companions was so intimidating that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) just turned his face away.

100,101

The Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) left the assembly and went into his house. After a little while he emerged, fully attired for battle. He said, "It is not befitting a prophet that once he has put on a coat of mail, he should put it aside until Allah decides between him and his enemies." (*Ishaq p.372; Waqidi p.167*).

He announced his decision:

"We will fight and fight out of Medina."

On March 21' 625 AD, the Muslims, one thousand men strong out of whom only one hundred had coats of mail and with only two horses with them, left Medina.

For the night they camped at Sheikhein and the next morning they resumed their journey towards Mount Uhud.

Abdullah bin Obay, a known hypocrite, declared that as his plan of fighting had not been accepted, they stood little chance of winning the battle. He along with his three hundred followers returned to Medina. The Prophet (PBHU&HD), with the remaining seven hundred men, continued to advance towards the battlefield.

Before the battle was joined, men from the clans of Bani Salama and Bani Haritha also wanted to go back but Allah, through His mercy, turned their hearts and they decided to remain with the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

And when thou didst set forth from thy family at early dawn that thou may prepare for the believers the encampment for the battle; and Allah is the Hearer, The knower,

(Remember O' Our Apostle Mohammad!) When two groups of you had thought to flinch and Allah was the Guardian of both; in Allah (alone) should the believers trust.

Qur'an 3:120 & 121

In view of the comparative strength of the two forces, the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) placed his troops keeping the Mount Uhud at their backs. This tactical deployment was superbly conceived; it largely neutralized the advantage of the numerical superiority and also of the cavalry, which the enemy enjoyed. However, there was a forty feet high and five hundred feet long spur Eileen that caused concern. Since the Eileen spur was an important tactical feature and commanded the area immediately around, it was critical that the enemy be denied an attack from this direction.

The right flank was safe but the left flank could be turned from beyond Eileen. To guard against this possible flanking attack, a force of fifty archers under the command of Abdullah bin Jubeir was placed there. (Ishaq p.373)

The Prophet's (PBUH&HD) orders to this detachment were:

"Keep our back covered. Use your arrows against the enemy cavalry. So long as you hold your position we have

no danger from the rear. Under no circumstance you must abandon this position. If you see us winning do not join us. If you see us losing do not come to our help." (Tabari Vol.2; p.65-66; Waqidi; Maghazi p.175)

It was the morning of Saturday, March 22' 625 AD (7 of Shawwal, 3 Hijri) that, in the valley of Uhud, seven hundred Muslims faced three thousand Quresh.

Abu Su102-105

fyān moved his troops forward and arrayed them facing the Muslims. He deployed the infantry in the center and his cavalry on the right and the left flank. Khalid bin Walid was in command of the right wing and Ikrama bin Abu Jehl of the left. Amr bin A's was appointed as the coordinator of the cavalry.

Abu Sufyan placed one hundred archers in the first row for the initial engagement. Abdullah bin Rabi was commander of the Archers. Just behind the Quresh main body were these dancing girls who carried tambourines and drums.

The Muslims repeated to themselves the Quranic verse; *"Sufficient for us is Allah, and what a good protector He is."*

The Quresh raised a slogan of Habul and the women started singing and dancing to urge the men to fight. When these women finished singing, the archers began to shoot arrows. A number of salvos were fired from both sides. Under the cover of these arrows, Khalid tried to advance from the left to attack the right flank of the Muslims; however, he was driven back by the archers.

Next began the phase of individual duels by champions from both sides. Talha bin Usman, the standard bearer of

Quresh advanced and challenged, "I am Talha bin Usman would anyone fight me?" (*Waqidi Maghazi p.176*)

Hazrat Ali (AS) looked towards the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) to seek his permission. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) nodded. The permission was granted.

Hazrat Ali (AS) strode out and announced, "I am Ali ibn Abu Talib, and I invite you to embrace Islam." Talha was too proud to accept this offer. Then Hazrat Ali (AS) said, "Go back and save your life." The answer was again in the negative. Then Hazrat Ali (AS) invited him to attack. He attacked with full force. Hazrat Ali (AS) parried his attack, delivered a strike and cut both of his legs. Talha fell with the standard. Hazrat Ali (AS) raised his sword to finish him but Talha had become naked during the fall. Hazrat Ali (AS) turned his face away from this miserable and ugly scene. Someone else later killed Talha during the battle.

As Talha fell, another infidel came forward and picked up the Standard. Hazrat Hamza (AS) killed him. At this point, Jubair indicated to Wahshi, "This is Hamza."

Abu Sufyan also rode up to duel and was faced by Hanzala bin Amir. Before Abu Sufyan could deliver a blow, Hanzala struck at the forelegs of his horse and he came crashing down. He shouted for help and a few Quresh came to his rescue. Hanzala was martyred and Abu Sufyan withdrew to the safety of his troops. After this episode, Abu Sufyan did not gather enough courage to challenge anyone. He kept directing his fighters.

As the Quresh had lost a number of their champions, they started the general attack. Hazrat Ali (AS) rushed towards the center and attacked the standard bearer. One after the other nine persons picked up the Standard of the Quresh

and one after the other they were killed by Hazrat Ali (AS). When no one from the tribe of Abd Dar came forward to pick the Standard, a slave named Sawab picked it up. With one stroke Hazrat Ali (AS) cut Sawab into two.

*

Hazrat Hamza (AS) was fighting on the left flank of his troops. As he was fighting against Saaba bin Abdul Uzza, Wahshi came up within the striking range of his javelin. When Saaba fell, Wahshi hurled his javelin towards Hazrat Hamza (AS), which struck him in the abdomen and pierced through his body. The 'Lion of Allah and of His Apostle' fell roaring like a lion. (*Waqidi: Maghazi p.225*)

Wahshi waited behind a rock till all movements from Hazrat Hamza's (AS) body ceased. He then approached the corpse, wrenched his javelin and quietly walked away. He had done his job. He had already secured his cherished freedom and the jewellery of his dreams. He did not have to fight any more.

When the Prophet (PBUH&HD) heard the news that Hazrat Hamza (AS) had been martyred, he became extremely sad and prayed for the soul of his noble uncle. When Hazrat Ali (AS) heard the news, he said, "Verily, we are Allah's and verily unto Him shall we return." This spontaneous reaction and absolute submission to Allah was appreciated in Qur'an:

Who when, misfortune befalleth them, say, "Verily we are Allah's and verily, unto Him shall we return."

Those are they on whom are the blessings from their Lord and (His) Mercy; and they are the ones that are (rightly) guided.

Qur'an 2: 156&157

The Muslims proved much superior in swordsmanship than their enemy. Their attacks were also more fierce and determined. Hazrat Ali (AS) had dominated the whole battlefield. Anyone who came against him met a quick and sure death.

When no one came forward to pick up the Standard, the Quresh lost heart and started to retreat. Soon this withdrawal was turned into a rout. The idol of Habul fell on its face and Abu Sufyan gave a kick to his horse towards Makkah.

The women of the dancing troupe wailed when they saw their men running away in panic. They also took to their heels. All the women ran except Amra, the wife of Azab bin Sufyan. She did not move from her place.

As in the battle of Badr, greed soon gripped a number of Muslim soldiers. Instead of chasing the fleeing enemy or attacking the contingents of Khalid and Ikrama, they started to plunder and loot the Quresh camp. There was no discipline and no one seemed to be in command. No one paid any attention to the troops of Khalid and Ikrama, which were still intact and were looking for an opportunity to strike. Khalid and Ikrama were in complete control of the horsemen that they commanded. They displayed immense patience and discipline which paid off a little while later.

When the archers placed at Einein saw the Quresh running away and the Muslims looting the ~~camp~~ they thought that the battle had been won. They told their commander, Abdullah bin Jubeir that the battle was over and that they too must go to claim their share in the loot. Abdullah was very firm and said

"You know very well the orders of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). We must not abandon our position till we receive orders from him. Stay everyone and wait for the orders from the Prophet (PBUH&HD)."

A number of them started to argue with Abdullah. Abdullah kept on reminding them about the orders of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) but their greed proved stronger and it dragged most of them towards the Quresh camp. (*Ibn Sa'd p.545,551; Ibid p.178-9; Tabari Vol.2, p.193*).

Abdullah was left with only nine faithful persons who remained steadfast and firm at Einein.

And indeed hath Allah made good to you His promise, when ye were extirpating them by His permission, till when you flinched and disputed about the command, and ye disobeyed, after that (He) had showed you that which you loved; Of you some desire this world, and some hereafter, Then ye turned away from them (ran away), so that He may test (prove) you (in sincerity of your faith): and (in spite of this) He hath forgiven you; and verily Allah is the Lord of Grace for the believers.

Qur'an 3:151

Khalid got the chance of his life. He made a flanking movement, came to the rear of the Einein and attacked the archers. Ikrama followed him. Abdullah and his men gallantly faced the onslaught of the combined force of Khalid and Ikrama. A number of them were wounded and the rest were killed. Abdullah bin Jubeir held his position and fought till Ikrama martyred him.

Now Khalid was in complete control of the situation. The two squadrons wheeled left and charged at the Muslims

from the rear. While Khalid pushed towards the Quresh camp, that the Muslims were looting, Ikrama came towards the post where the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) had placed himself.

While a number of the Muslim soldiers lost their nerves at this surprise attack, but some picked up the courage and engaged these horsemen. There was total chaos and confusion in the ranks and files of the Muslims. Command and control had totally broken down. Every man was for himself.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) was still there and the Standard of Islam was still fluttering in the hands of Hazrat Ali (AS) but only a few got together where the Prophet (PBUH&HD) was standing.

Amra who had not deserted the battlefield, picked up the Quresh Standard and started to wave it. Abu Sufyan saw the Standard raised and he correctly assessed that the battle had been reversed. He reorganized his men and jumped into the arena shouting their battle slogan, "O' for Uzza! O' for Habul." (*Waqidi; Maghazi p. 18, Ibn Sa'd p.545*).

The Muslims were now caught between two groups, Khalid from the rear and Abu Sufyan with his infantry from the front.

The Muslim soldiers, who were still left in the field, got divided into small groups, each one fighting to save the day. The situation was becoming desperate for them. The victory which they had achieved a little while ago, was lost to the lust of some and the disobedience of the Prophet's (PBUH&HD) orders by others. Habul was again seen riding a horse and the Faithful were being mutilated under the hooves of the horses of the Quresh.

Whereas Ikrama's group with some infantry was attacking the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD), Khalid was launching assault after assault on the few Muslims who had refused to run away. Khalid mainly used his lance and in each run he would kill one Muslim. The tables had turned on the Muslims and a number of them deserted the battlefield.

*

In the Battle of Badr, Ubbay's son Abdullah had been taken prisoner and Ubbay had come to pay ransom and get his son released. Once the deal had been finalized, Ubbay had challenged the Prophet (PBUH&HD), "O' Mohammad, I am rearing a strong horse and in the next battle I shall come riding that horse and I shall kill you." The Prophet (PBUH&HD) had replied, "No Ubbay, you shall not kill me but I shall kill you while you are riding that horse, if Allah wills." (*Ibn Hisham Vol.2, p.48*)

Observing that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) was being attacked, Ubbay bin Khalf remembered what he had vowed. Mounted on that powerful horse that he was rearing for this day, he detached himself from Ikrama's squadron and advanced towards the Prophet (PBUH&HD). Ubbay shouted, "O Muhammad! I have come. Now it is either you or I."

A party of thirty Faithful formed a ring around the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD). These men were determined to defend him at all cost. Among them was Hazrat Ali (AS), Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas, Talha bin Ubeidullah, Abu Obeida, Abdul Rehman bin Auf, Abu Dajana Ansari and Mus'ab bin Umeir.

These Muslims could have easily killed Ubbay or it was enough to tell Hazrat Ali (AS), "Ali kill him," and that man would have been as good as dead. When Hazrat Ali (AS) set out to kill a man, nothing could save that man. (*I. A. Akram 'The Sword of Allah'*) However, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) told them to get aside. "Let him be," said the Prophet (PBUH&HD) (*Ibn Hasham Vol.2, p.84*).

Ubbay had thrown a challenge and Mohammad (PBUH&HD), as an honorable and chivalrous member of Bani Hashim clan, had to face that challenge alone. Our Prophet's (PBUH&HD) kindness was so overwhelming that very few people knew that physically he was also very strong.

The Muslims left the way for Ubbay to come closer to the Prophet (PBUH&HD). When Ubbay came closer, he observed that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had broad shoulders, strong arms and hands. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) was holding a spear that looked as light as a feather in his hand. As Ubbay lifted his sword to strike, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) pushed his spear into Ubbay's chest. Ubbay ran back and shouted, "Mohammad has stuck me, now I will die." He died on his way to Mecca. (*Ibn Hisham Vol.2, p.84*).

*

The situation started to become critical for the Muslims. Only a few Muslims were seen in the battlefield. Many of them had deserted, some were martyred and a few were trying to defend the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

Abu Sufyan and Khalid both wanted a quick decision as the battle had gone on for a long while. The Quresh pressed

their attack harder with the intent of killing the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

Abdullah bin Shahab, Utba bin Abu Waqqas, bin Qamiya Lacy, Abi bin Khulf and Abdullah bin Hameed came towards the Prophet (PBUH&HD). Abdullah bin Shahab pelted a heavy stone at the forehead of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). Utba bin Abu Waqqas hurled a stone at the face of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and injured his two teeth and his lips. The Prophet's (PBUH&HD) life was in jeopardy.

Again there was a little respite and the Prophet (PBUH&HD) regained his strength, wiped off his blood from his face and stood up. He said, "How can a people prosper who colour the face of their Prophet with his blood, while he calls them to their Lord." (*Waqidi; Maghazi p. 191; Ibn Hisham Vol.2, p.80*).

Umme Eiman, a lady who had once nursed the Prophet (PBUH&HD) in his childhood, moved by love and respect, came up to the Prophet (PBUH&HD) to serve him in this difficult situation. Haban bin Al Arqa set an arrow in his bow and shot it towards her. The arrow struck her in the back and she fell. Haban laughed as he found the incident comical enough. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) became angry. He gave an arrow to Sa'd and commanded him, "Shoot that man." Sa'd, who was an expert in this field, fired at Haban hitting him in the neck. (*Waqidi; Maghazi p. 189*).

Abu Dajana who had broken a number of swords in this battle, also broke the one that was in his hand. He looked around but could not find one. He came to the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and said, "O' Prophet of Allah, I have no sword." The Prophet (PBUH&HD) handed over a sword to

him, to which he tied a piece of red cloth and rejoined the battle.

Despite the fact that out of thirty defenders sixteen had been martyred, the Quresh could not reach the Prophet (PBUH&HD). They withdrew to a distance and started to throw arrows. Abu Dajana Ansari placed himself in front of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and took all the arrows on his body.

Bin Qamiya attacked and martyred Masa'ab bin Umair. As he fell, a brave lady named Umme Umara picked up a sword and rushed at Qamiya. She hit Qamiya on the shoulder. As her strike lacked the necessary strength, Qamiya turned back and struck her with his sword. Umme Umara fell on the ground.

Hazrat Ali (AS) continued to fight incessantly and had broken a number of swords. He also came to the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and said, "O' Messenger of Allah, can I have a sword?" "You are the Lion of Allah, He would arrange a sword for you," replied the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

By the orders of Allah Almighty, Messenger Angel Gabriel announced, "*La fata illah Ali, La Saif Illa Zulfiqar*" (there is no victorious youth save Ali and there is no sword save *Zulfiqar*). The Quresh as well as the Muslims heard that divine voice. Then Iron (sword named *Zulfiqar*) descended from the heavens.

Indeed sent We Our apostles with clear proofs, and sent We down with them the Book and the scale that people may establish themselves in justice; and sent We down iron wherein is latent (in its use) mighty power and also benefits for mankind and that Allah may prove who helpeth Him

and His apostles in secret; Verily Allah is All-Strong the Ever-Prevalent.

Qur'an 57:25

In the conduct of Hazrat Ali (AS) and of his selected descendants, there is an irrefutable proof that these infallible personalities helped the cause of Allah and His apostles and they had devoted their lives to the benefit of mankind by inviting them to the path of righteousness and justice.

*

Ibn Qamiya, somehow, managed to close up to the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and strike him with his sword. A part of the chains of the Prophet's (PBUH&HD) helmet pierced through his jaw. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) fell into a shallow ditch just behind him. As the Prophet (PBUH&HD) fell, Ibn Qamiya announced that he had killed the Prophet (PBUH&HD). The rumour demoralized the Muslims further and they started to run for life. Some dashed towards Medina, some ran away to far off places and some climbed up the Uhud mountain and stayed there and watched. Later when these people were asked as to why had they deserted the battlefield and had run away? They put up the excuse that when the Prophet (PBUH&HD) was dead there was no point in continuing the fight.

Allah turned down this lame excuse:

And Mohammad is not but an Apostle, (other) apostles have already passed away prior to him; Therefore if he dieth or be slain, will ye turn upon your heels? And he who turneth upon his heels will by no means does harm to Allah in the least, and shortly will Allah reward the grateful ones.

Qur'an 3:143

Allah also tells the Muslims that none of the apostles had fought with big armies. Still they neither lost their hearts nor did they demean themselves before their enemies. They only prayed and were amply rewarded.

How many a prophet hath fought with whom were myriads of Godly men, and they lost not heart at what befell them in the way of Allah nor did they weaken, nor did they demean themselves (before their enemies); and Allah loveth the steadfast ones.

Qur'an 3:145

As Hazrat Ali (AS) heard the rumour that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had been martyred he rushed to the place where he had last seen the Prophet (PBUH&HD). He saw that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had fallen in a shallow ditch. He lifted up the Prophet (PBUH&HD) from the ditch, raised him on his hands and cried, "O! Muslims, here is the Prophet (PBUH&HD). He is well and alive. Come back, come back." No one paid any heed.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) also repeatedly called the Muslims who had deserted him but no one responded. Those who were on their way to Medina, did not turn back to see what was happening. Those who had climbed up the Uhud heights, could not gather enough courage to return and join the fight. Some, of course, had run too fast and had gone too far away.

Remember when ye ran off precipitately on the heights and (even) looked not back any one, while the Apostle (Mohammad) calling you from the rear! So He had

inflicted (upon) you with anguish after anguish, that ye might (learn) not to grieve at what ye lose, or at what befell you; and Allah is fully aware of what ye do.

Qur'an3:152

Some of them wished if they could only get a messenger whom they could send to Abdullah bin Obay and request him to intercede and recommend them to Abu Sufyan that they are forgiven.

History has recorded that one of the deserters shouted at the top his voice, "Muhammad is killed, return ye to your brethren and your original creed (idolatry)." Anas bin Nazr shouted back at the coward, "So what if Muhammad has been killed? Allah of Muhammad is alive, never to die and if Muhammad has been killed let's also die for the Truth." None of the deserters returned. However, Anas was martyred while fighting the infidels.

Those who had remained steadfast and had fought hard, had some rest and sleep. That was a blessing from Allah. Those who had run away and were hiding behind the big boulders of Uhud had thoughts of ignorance.

Then after the anguish Allah sent down security upon you: (in the form of) slumber overcome upon a group of you, while the other group of you who cared only for their own selves - thinking quite unjustly about Allah; thoughts of ignorance; Say they "Is there anything for us in the authority?" Say (O' Our Apostle Muhammad!) Verily the authority resteth wholly with Allah." They hide in their selves what they would not reveal unto thee, Said they "Had we had anything in the authority, we would not have been slain at this place:" Say (O' Our Apostle Muhammad!) "Had ye remained in your homes they who

were decreed to be slain would have gone forth to the places where they (now) lie; and that Allah might test what was in your breast and He might purge what was in your hearts; for verily Allah knoweth what is (hidden) in your breasts.

Qur'an3:153

Allah tells the cowards and hypocrites that if they had remained steadfast, had the strength of Faith in their hearts and had asked for help from Allah, He would have surely helped them with five thousand angels as he had helped them in the Battle of Badr with three thousand angles. However, Allah held that help back only to distinguish the Faithful and expose the faces of the hypocrites and the cowards.

Indeed Allah hath succoured you at Badr when ye were contemptibly weak; so take shelter in Allah, so that you may be grateful.

(Remember O' Our Apostle Muhammad!) When thou say to the believers, "Doth, it not suffice you that your Lord should help you with three thousand angels sent down (from heavens)?"

Aye! if ye be steadfast and take shelter in Allah and if the enemy come upon you in this very dashing manner, your Lord will help you with five thousand angels distinguished who will be (fully equipped).

Allah did not effect this but as good tidings for you, and thereby your hearts might rest assured; and (there) is no succour but from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise.

That He might cut off part of those who believe not or cast them down so that they may retire disappointed.

Nothing of the authority is for thee at all, whether He turneth unto them (mercifully) or chastiseth them, for verily, they are transgressors.

Qur'an 3: 122-127

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From that moment onwards, Hazrat Ali (AS) stood closer to the Prophet (PBUH&HD) for his defence. As any group of the infidels advanced to attack the Prophet (PBUH&HD) he called Hazrat Ali (AS) for help, "Ali stop these men", he ordered and Hazrat Ali (AS) fell upon them. The attack was repulsed. Another group of horsemen approached the position and again the Prophet (PBUH&HD) asked Hazrat Ali (AS), "Ali, attack those men." Again Hazrat Ali (AS) drove them back and inflicted casualties. (*Tabari Vol.2, p.197*).

However, from whichever direction the enemy came Hazrat Ali (AS) was there for the defence of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). In these skirmishes, Hazrat Ali (AS) killed Shaiba bin Malik Amri and Abu Sha'asa, Khalid, Abu-ul-Hamra and Kharab sons of Sufyan bin Auf.

Abu Sufyan ordered his troops to stop fighting and to think of the next plan. He knew that so long as Hazrat Ali (AS) was alive, no one could kill the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and so long as the Prophet (PBUH&HD) was alive there was no victory for the Quresh. Hazrat Ali (AS) was invincible. During the day he had received sixteen sword wounds.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD), escorted by these companions started to move up the spur. On climbing a safe distance up the defile, he stopped to rest his body and to have a look at his wounds. Hazrat Ali (AS) brought the water and Hazrat Fatima (SA) dressed her father's wounds.

*

The battle was virtually over. Now the Quresh started to loot the camp of the Muslims. They moved through the dead bodies and started to recognize who was who. Abu Sufyan actually looked for the corpse of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD).

Abu Sufyan came towards the spur where the Prophet (PBUH&HD) was resting and loudly called:

“Is Muhammad alive?”

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) asked his companions to keep quiet. No one replied. However, Abu Sufyan could see some men there and then he said, “Glory to Habul! Glory to Uzza.”

The Muslims replied, “Glory to Allah! Most High and Mighty.” This was followed by an exchange of slogans.

Abu Sufyan, “We have Uzza and Habul. You have no Uzza and Habul.”

The Muslims: “We have Allah as our Lord. You have no Lord.”

Abu Sufyan: “The deed is done. This was our day for your day of Badr. The destiny of war is not constant. We shall meet at Badr again next year.”

The Muslims: "We shall meet you at Badr. You have our pledge."

Having said this he turned and came back to his troops.

Wahshi led Hind to the dead body of Hazrat Hamza (AS). She had a close look at him, gave her jewellery to Wahshi and asked him to split open the chest of Hazrat Hamza (AS). Then she tried to pierce her fingers into his liver, pull it out to chew it. However, by the Grace of Allah, it had hardened to a stone and she could not take a bite. Then she cut his ears, nose and lips, made a necklace of these organs and put it around her neck. Some other women also followed suit and made garlands for themselves by mutilating the bodies of a number of other martyrs.

Then these women sang the song of their victory:

"We have repaid you for the day of Badr
One bloody day after another.
 I could not bear loss of Utba,
 Or of my uncle, my brother, my son.
 Now my heart is cooled; my vow fulfilled;
 And the Savage has driven the pain from my heart.
 The Savage shall I thank you so long as I live,
 Until my bones turn to nothing." (*Ibn Hisham Vol.2, p. 91*)

Next morning Abu Sufyan gave the orders to the Quresh to move back to Makkah. Ikrama was in an aggressive mood. He argued that the Muslims were not in a position to put up any fight and that it offered a good opportunity to seek them again and crush them once and for all.

Sufyan bin Umayyah replied, "Enough is enough. We have won the battle and this victory should be sufficient for us. If the Muslims are in a bad way we too are not in any good

shape. Most of our men and horses are wounded. In the next battle, if we fight with our present strength, we might not be as lucky as we were yesterday. (*Ibn Hisham Vol.2, p.104; Waqidi;Maghazi p. 231, 232 & 263*)

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) asked Hazrat Ali (AS) to go and see how the Quresh were mounting? On camels or on horses?"

Hazrat Ali (AS) went and reported back that they were riding camels and leading their horses. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) concluded that the Quresh had no attention to attack Medina but were headed back for Makkah. Had they mounted the horses, it would have indicated that they were still in a mood to continue the fight. (*Ibn Hisham Vol.2, p.94*)

With the Muslim army having been so badly shaken and mauled, the Quresh could have easily ransacked Medina and even killed the women and children. In fact Allah had cast terror into their hearts. They had heard Angel Gabriel calling, "There is no victory but for Ali. There is no sword but *Zulfiqar*."

We will cast a dread into the hearts of the disbelievers because they have associated with Allah, that for which He hath sent down no authority and their abode shall be fire: And how bad is the abode of the unjust.

Qur'an 3: 150

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) had heard about the treatment that had been meted out to the corpses of some of the martyrs including that of Hazrat Hamza (AS). He came to the site, looked at the body of his brave uncle and bitterly cried. One by one the burial prayers were performed and

the martyrs were buried. Then the Muslims returned to Medina.

*

Next morning the Prophet (PBUH&HD) got up, went to the mosque and asked Bilal to give a call for the battle. The faithful, in spite of their wounds and limps, gathered at the mosque. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) told them that he intended to chase Quresh and to fight them. They all followed him. When the Muslims reached Hamrat-ul-Asad, they found it deserted. After staying there for four nights they returned to Medina. The Prophet's (PBUH&HD) aim was to demonstrate that though they had lost the battle but they still possessed a strong will to fight.

(As for) those who did respond to the call of Allah and the Apostle (Muhammad) (even) after wounds inflicted on them; such of those who do good (to others) and guard (themselves) against evil, shall have a great reward.

Qur'an 3:171

This battle has been discussed in details in Qur'an. There are those who have been clearly distinguished for their conduct and also those who have been reprimanded. There are also lessons and advice for the Muslims and for those who wish to learn from history.

And Allah may purge those who believe and destroy the infidels.

Qur'an 3:139

Every sincere and honest seeker of truth must recognize the faces of those who remained steadfast, faced the stronger

enemy and protected the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) at the peril of their lives and of those who left the Apostle. Among those who ran away were some who returned to Medina after three days of the debacle. The battle distinguishes the truth from the falsehood and sincerity from hypocrisy.

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Allah exposes the face of hypocrisy:

And of the people (are some) who said, "we believe in Allah and in the Last Day (of Judgment)", (while in fact) they are not believers (at all)

They (intend to) deceive Allah and those who believe, while deceive not but themselves but they perceive (it) not.

In their heart is a disease, and Allah increaseth their disease, for them is a painful chastisement, because of the lie they were saying.

And when it is said unto them, "make ye not mischief in the earth" say they, "Verily, we are only the well-doers." Beware! Verily, they are the mischief-mongers but they perceive (it) not.

Beware! Verily, they are the fools, but they perceive (it) not.

When it is said unto them, "Believe ye as the (other) people did believe, they say, "Shall we believe as the fools did believe?"

And when they meet with those who believe, they say, "we believe" but when they go apart to their devils, they say, "Surely we are with you. Verily, we did but mock."

Allah mocketh at them and He only alloweth them to continue bewildered in their rebellion;

These are they who purchase error for guidance, hence their transaction profiteth them not, neither are they guided aright.

The likeness of them is like unto one who kindleth a fire, and when it lighteth all around him, Allah taketh away the light and leaveth them in darkness, they see not.

(They are) deaf, dumb and blind; hence they will return not (from their darkness).

Or like a rainstorm from heaven fraught with darkness, thunder and lightning, they put their fingers in their ears against the thunderclaps for fear of death; and verily, Allah encompasseth the disbelievers.

The lightning well nigh snatcheth away their sight (from them) as often as it gleameth for them, they walk therein and when it getteth dark for them, they halt; if Allah willed, He could take away their hearing and their sight. Verily, Allah hath power over all things.

Qur'an 2: 8- 20

شاہ مرداں، شیر یزداں، قوت پروردگار

لافتے اللہ علی، لاسیف اللہ ذولفقار

The Battle of Khandaq

Ali and Ali Alone Saves the Day

In Medina there were three tribes of Jews namely Bani Qainqa, Bani Nazr and Bani Qureiza. When the Muslims had migrated to Medina, these tribes had accepted them without any reservations. Each tribe had entered into a peace or a non-aggression pact with the Muslims. It was also agreed that if one of the parties were attacked, the other would not help the aggressor in any manner.

However, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) was never too sure about the behaviour of the Jews and had asked some of his companions to learn their language and to keep an eye over their hostile activities.

The Jews observed that the Muslims, who had migrated to Medina as a poor and oppressed lot, were now gradually settling down to an organized, progressive and dynamic socio-political and economic system. These Bedouins who, through centuries, had lived in ignorance and had suffered from various prejudices, superstitions, corruption, and exploitation were now behaving in a civilized manner. There was an increased awareness of the human values and rights. Men from all races, languages, colour, creed and economic conditions were all treated equally.

The supreme leadership of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and the dynamism of the Message became a matter of great

concern for the Jews. As a nation they felt threatened by the philosophical moorings of Islamic brotherhood:

And hold ye fast by the cord of Allah All together, and be not divided (among yourselves) and remember the bounty of Allah bestowed upon you, when ye were enemies (of each other) He united your hearts together with (mutual) love, and thus by His favor ye have become brethren and (while) ye were on the brink of a pit of Hell-Fire then He delivered you there from; Thus doth Allah clearly explaineth His signs for you, so that ye may be guided.

Qur'an 3:102

Truly the faithful are brothers.

Qur'an 49:10

The sixth Imam, Imam Jafer-e-Sadiq (AS), explains it further: "A believer is the brother of and guide of another believer. He does not betray nor oppress him nor does he ever cheat his brother. A believer never breaks his promise."

It was very surprising for them that the Messenger of peace and blessings ("*...And We have not sent you but as a blessing to the worlds.*" *Qur'an 21:107*) could also take his followers to the battlefield and win. The philosophy of martyrdom had made the Muslims fearless. The quiet revolution was after all not so quiet.

Conceptually the Jews found Islam in obvious conflict with their concepts and interests. Sooner or later a clash was inevitable. Bani Qainqa took the initiative and resorted to mischief mongering. However, they were subdued and forced to migrate to Syria.

The next tribe to break the pledge was Bani Nazr. They secretly planned to kill the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) but he was informed of their ugly designs. They too were asked to migrate but they became obstinate and refused. (*Ibn Athir*)

The Bani Nazr were instigated by Abdullah bin Obay not to leave and he assured them that if threatened, he would come to their aid with two thousand men. As a consequence, Bani Nazr decided not to leave and informed the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) accordingly. They continued with their mischievous and nefarious activities.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) then organized a small force against them. The Jews went into their forts and sent frantic messages to other Jewish tribes as well as to Abdullah bin Obay for help. They awaited the arrival of aid from Abdullah bin Obay, Bani Ghatfan and Bani Qarciza, but none came. As they were not in a position to put up a fight, they decided to vacate Medina. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) was kind to them. They were allowed to take with them all their possessions except weapons. They loaded their stuff on six hundred camels and peacefully left Medina. Some went to Syria but some stayed in Khayber.

Bani Nazr could not swallow the humiliation of leaving their ancestral land and after the summer of 626 AD, a delegation from Khyber headed by the chief of Bani Nazr, Huyayy bin Akhtaband accompanied by Kinana bin Rabiyy, Salam bin Mushq and Salam bin Abi Haqiq went to Mecca and talked to Abu Sufyan regarding the strategic threats that the Muslims could pose. Huyayy explained to Abu Sufyan that if the Muslims ever reached Yamama, the Quresh trade routes to Iraq and Bahrain would be blocked.

Abu Sufyan asked him, "Tell me, O' son of Akhtab, you are also one of the people of the Book. Is, in your opinion, the new Faith of Mohammad better than our religion?" Huyayy replied, "As one who knows the Book, your religion is better than Mohammad's. You are in the right." (*Ibn Hisham Vol.2, p.214*)

Abu Sufyan was impressed by Huyayy's emotional talk and they readily shook hands in agreement. Abu Sufyan assured Huyayya of a joint expedition against the Muslims. Quresh who had more or less accepted their loss of trade with Syria and were content with their trade with Iraq, Bahrain and Yemen, decided to join hands with the Jews and have a showdown against the Muslims.

Huyayy's delegation also visited Ghatfan, Solaim, Bani Qais and Bani Asad and extracted similar promises from them too.

Preparations for the armed expedition started in real earnest. In early February 627 AD, the Quresh who had the largest force of four thousand men, three hundred horses, and fifteen hundred camels, departed Makkah.

Uyein bin Hisn of Ghatfan came with two thousand men and Bani Solaim sent seven hundred warriors. Soldiers from Bani Asad joined under the command of Tuleiha bin Khuweilad. A number of fighters from Bani Fazarah, Bani Aamira and Bani Ashjah marched directly towards Uhud.

By February 24' 627 AD (I Shawwal 5 Hijri) all the parties converged at a camp near Uhud. This force of more than ten thousand infidels under the supreme command of Abu Sufyan started to advance towards Medina.

They had planned to launch a surprise attack but an informer from Bani Khaza'a had informed the Prophet (PBUH&HD) of the intentions and strength of the Quresh and of their allies. The Muslims were hardly prepared to defend themselves against such a big fighting force. They had always been numerically inferior but they could never imagine that the enemy could gather such an overwhelming strength and challenge them. Some of the Muslims had still not forgotten their experience of Uhud.

While various tactical options were being discussed Hazrat Salman Farsi (RA) came up with a brilliant tactical concept. He explained that whenever the Persian army had to fight a defensive battle against a numerically superior army, they would dig a wide and deep ditch to neutralize the enemy's numerical advantage. He said that this tactic was the brainchild of Manochegar, grandson of Freedom. The Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) approved of the scheme. The women and children were settled in the neighbouring localities and he left Médina with three thousand soldiers.

The ditch was marked on the ground. It had to start from Sheikhein to the hill Zubab and from there to the hill Jabal Bani Ubeid. Deployment on high ground with a ditch in front could provide a tactical advantage to the defenders.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) distributed the area at the rate of forty cubits per ten men and ordered that digging be commenced forthwith. As it was an unfamiliar idea, the hypocrites were critical and reluctant to get down to this laborious task of digging. The Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) got hold of a pick and started to dig. As the work had to be completed within a limited time frame, there was little time to rest and the rations were also in low supply. Salman Farsi was to supervise the work as he knew the right

dimensions. When completed, the ditch was three and a half miles long, fifteen feet wide and fifteen feet deep.

As a great tactician, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) deployed his soldiers in such a manner that he could move his troops on interior lines and quickly gain numerical superiority at any threatened point. It was decided to keep the bulk of his army, uncommitted, in the center near Sil'a hillock. A force of five hundred fighters was to patrol the entire length. The front was lightly held with two hundred archers occupying the commanding ground at some intervals. Their task was to keep the enemy at bay by shooting arrows.

*

Abu Sufyan, who was sure of his victory, became very disappointed when he found that the Muslims were not only prepared to face the combined force of Jews and Quresh but they had also built a formidable obstacle in front of their positions. He was totally surprised and frustrated. The Arabs did not know how to negotiate the ditch. Abu Sufyan exploded, "By Allah, such stratagems are not the ways of Arabs." (*Ibn Hisham Vol. 3 p. 235*).

However, the Quresh and the Jews moved up and deployed their troops along the ditch and laid a siege. For the next twenty-three days nothing happened but the periodic exchange of arrows by the archers. Khalid bin Waleed made a few attempts to jump across the Ditch but each time he was chased away by the archers.

Each side waited for a move from the other so that counteraction could be taken. The Muslims were, in any case, on the defensive and took no initiative. Abu Sufyan was getting weary of the stalemate.

The winter was severe and the stocks of rations were also limited. The Quresh could, somehow, manage to procure the food and fodder from the neighboring settlements but the Muslims could not leave their positions and there was no source of supply. In fact a siege of that duration was never predicted and no logistical arrangements had been made for this eventuality. The Muslims came on half of the normal daily ration and after a few days it had to be reduced to one fourth. The test was just starting and some of the Muslims were already getting weary and critical of the decision taken by the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

The very strength of the enemy cast terror in the hearts of the hypocrites and the cowards. They were really shaken.

There were tried the believers and they were shaken a tremendous shaking.

Qur'an 33:11

While the ditch was being dug, the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) broke the good news to the Muslims that soon they would destroy the mighty powers of Rome and Persia. As the days passed, hypocrites among the Muslims became very vocal in their criticism of the person and of the predictions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD). They would say, "Muhammad had promised that soon the treasures of Caesar and Chosroes would be in the hands of Muslims and now he cannot get us out of this predicament." (*Ibn Hisham Vol.3, p.222*).

And when began to say the hypocrites and those in whose hearts was disease that: "Promised us not Allah and His Apostle but (it was only) a deception.

Qur'an 33:12

The true believers and the faithful ones remained firm in their Faith in Allah and His Apostle (PBUH&HD). The strength of the enemy or the hardships of the battlefield did not bother them at all. Instead, the more the hardships the firmer they became in their resolve:

And when saw the believers the allies, said they: "This is what Allah had promised unto us and His Apostle and Allah and His Apostle had spoken the truth;" and it increased in them but faith and submission

Qur'an 33:22

Morale started to sag in the enemy camp too. The weather and the wait started to weigh heavily upon them. Abu Sufyan was under pressure either to think of an offensive strategy or to call it a day. He had to come out with a plan or his leadership was at stake.

Abu Sufyan took a cunning initiative. On the night of March 7, he sent Huyayy to Bani Qureiza to persuade them to break the pact and to join their brother Jews for a common cause. Huyayy knocked at the door of their chief, Kab bin Asad. Kab could guess what Huyayya must have come for and refused to admit him. Huyayya started to work on his sentiments, asked him not to violate the traditional hospitality of Arabs and to allow him to come inside. However, after some wrangling, he was admitted into the house. Huyayy wanted Kab to join the majority and rise against the Muslims. Kab rebutted that he had experienced nothing but kindness and respect from Mohammad (PBUH&HD), therefore, he would not break the pact.

He argued, "In any case you are not certain of your victory. If we join you and you are defeated, the idol-worshippers

would go back to Makkah, you people would retreat to your settlements and we would be left alone to bear the brunt of the wrath of the Muslims.” (*Waqdi: Maghazi p. 292*)

However, after a long discussion, begging and bargaining, Huyayy was able to convince Kab to join the battle. Bani Qureiza had their settlement and their forts two miles southeast of Medina. It was decided that they would attack from this direction and that would divide the Muslim army and they would be forced to fight on two fronts.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) got the details of this meeting from his intelligence sources.

Another small incident took place in Medina. One day Hazrat Safiyya (RA), an aunt of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) saw that a fully armed Jew from Bani Qureiza was stealthily moving around the fort where she was residing. She immediately realized that he was trying to reconnoiter the route around the wall of the fort. She picked up a club, went down and hit the Jew with such a force that he fell dead. (*Ibn Hisham Vol. 2, p. 228*).

When this news reached the Muslims they were in no doubt regarding the treachery of Bani Qureiza.

There was a near panic in certain quarters of the Muslims. A number of them wanted to rejoin their old faith and break all ties with Islam. Some were already halfhearted and now they had the excuse that their families were in danger. They asked the Prophet's (PBUH&HD) permission to go back. Allah revealed to His Apostle (PBUH&HD) that those asking for permission to go back were liars. There was no threat to their families. It was further revealed that even if they were with their families and came under attack, they would join the enemy.

And when said a party of them; "O' ye the people of Yathrib! There is no place for you to stand, so return ye," and a party of them asked the permission of the Prophet saying: "their houses are exposed (to destruction)," and they were not exposed (to destruction); they only intended to flee away.

And had the entry been made upon them from all sides (of the city) and had they been incited to treachery, they would certainly have brought it to pass; with only a short time had they stayed.

Qur'an 33:13 & 14

On Saturday March 15th seven of the best fighters from the enemy ranks succeeded in jumping across the ditch, right in front of the Muslim camp, which was nestled at the foot of Sil'a. They included Ikrama bin Abu Jehl, Amr bin Abd Wud Aamri, Hassal bin Umro, Mumbah bin Usman, Zarar bin Khatab Fehri, Noafil bin Abdullah and Habirah bin Abi Wahb. On this wondrous achievement, Abu Sufyan and Khalid bin Walid started to regroup and rearrange their fighters so that as soon as a bridgehead was secured across the Ditch, they would also jump across.

The stage was now set for one of the most remarkable duels in history.

Amr bin Abd Wud was a huge man of tremendous strength and bulk. Sitting on his big horse he looked like a giant. No doubt he was a very strong and an experienced fighter. To some he was a legend of fearlessness, bravery and swordsmanship. He came nearer to the camp of the Muslims and scornfully looked at the frozen figures. Then he took a full deep breath, raised his head and shouted, "I am Amr bin Abd Wud. I am the greatest warrior in Arabia. I am Aamad Arab and Persia Yalyal. I have never been

defeated. I am invincible. Is there anyone among you who has the courage to meet me in personal combat?"

When came they upon you from above you and from below you, and were turned the dull eyes, and reached to the throats the hearts and ye did imagine about Allah diverse thoughts.

Qur'an 33:10

Silence prevailed upon the Muslims. With their heads bent they looked at each other and at the Prophet (PBUH&HD) from the corners of their eyes. Some companions started to narrate tales of bravery and fearlessness of Amr bin Abd Wud. One of the companions of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) said:

"O' Apostle of Allah! You ask us to face the one going against whom means sure death. Once I was with him in a trade caravan. When we reached a place called Yalyal, we were intercepted by one thousand highway robbers. We all were so scared that we left our camels and ran for our lives. Amr faced all of them alone. He is so strong that he lifted a calf with his left hand and used it as a shield in the combat. He killed a number of the robbers and the rest ran away. This one man is considered equal to one thousand fighters." *(Mufti Jafar Hussain 'Seerat Amir-ul-Momneen' Vol.1, p.218)*

Such praises of the enemy by some were quite demoralizing for many.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) asked aloud, "Who among you would shut the foul mouth of Amr?" This voice echoed through the valley and everyone heard it.

The Muslims remained silent and Amr laughed with contempt. The Quresh and Jews laughed and jeered at the

Muslims. They could see the Muslims sitting with their heads bowed. Hazrat Ali (AS) left his place and came to the Prophet (PBUH&HD) to seek his permission to engage the challenger and to silence his insolent tongue once and for all. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) did not grant him the permission.

“Sit down, there are many brave and experienced fighters among us. Let me see their guts and the strength of their Faith,” said the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

Again Amr uttered some blasphemous remarks and taunted the Muslims. Again the Prophet (PBUH&HD) asked if anyone would get up and fight him but none moved. The laughter from across the Ditch became more contemptuous and more insulting remarks were hurled at the Muslims.

Hazrat Ali (AS) came again and asked:

“O’ Apostle of Allah! Do I have your permission to punish him for what he is saying?”

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) denied the permission to Hazrat Ali (AS) and again asked and looked at the companions who kept sitting with their heads bowed.

The laughter and the remarks of the Quresh were very insulting. The fear on the faces of Muslims and their silence became agonizing for the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD). He sadly thought of the tragic outcome of his eighteen years of sufferings and faithfully conveying the message of Allah Almighty.

All the known companions were present in the battlefield but their conduct, save that of Hazrat Ali (AS), was most unbecoming. Those who had deserted the battlefield of

Uhud and had later repented had made a covenant with Allah that never again they would turn their backs. They had solemnly promised to fight for Islam. Allah says that those cowards who had refused to face the enemy and had displayed lack of courage and conviction would be made accountable for the treachery and deceit that they had displayed in this battle. (The name of each and every coward is written in the history books).

Indeed they had made a covenant with Allah before that (battle of Uhud) that they would turn not there; and the covenant with Allah shall be inquired of.

Qur'an 33:15

Then Amr said, "So there is no one among you who has the courage of a man? And what of your Islam and of your Prophet and of his promises?" More laughter and more taunts from the Quresh and the Jews.

Amr continued, "Where is your paradise? I am distributing your paradise, come and fight me and I would dispatch you soon to your revered paradise or you send me to hell. Come, come quick, and I shall dispatch you to the paradise that you all wish to attain." He Muslim soldiers were sitting silent, motionless, with heads bowed and holding their breaths. They were being booed by the infidels.

He advanced closer to the camp of the Muslims and threw a javelin that landed near the Prophet (PBUH&HD). Amr shouted, "I am shouting hoarse and there is no reply from your side. I am fearlessly asking for a duel and no one is accepting my challenge. Bravery and generosity is the hallmark of a 'man'. Is there no 'man' among you Muslims?" No one volunteered. The very meaning of being a 'man' was put to shame.

Now Hazrat Ali (AS) came up the third time to the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and asked his permission. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) could see the shine and determination in Hazrat Ali's (AS) eyes. Amr had gone too far. Ali (AS) could take it no more. The Lion of Allah could not be restrained any longer. Ali (AS) the Man was the only person on whose shoulders lay the responsibility of saving the honour of Islam at this most critical juncture of history.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) fondly looked at Hazrat Ali (AS), took off his turban and wound it around Hazrat Ali's (AS) head, girded the sword *Zulfiqar* around his waist and prayed, "O' Allah! Help him." (*Ibn Sa'd p. 572*)

Hazrat Ali (AS) with measured steps and with full confidence advanced towards Amr. At that instant, the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) declared, "Total and absolute Faith is going to face absolute infidelity."

Hazrat Ali (AS) stood facing him and said:

"Amr, I have come to answer your challenge. I am the righteous, I have the vision and I am determined to dispatch you to Hell. I will give you such a blow that it would be remembered throughout the ages."

Amr was taken aback at these bold words from a young man and nearly one fourth of his hulk. Amr recomposed himself and tried to laugh as if a man would laugh when challenged by a boy but his confidence was surely shaken.

As seven infidels had come across, six Muslims quickly got up and stood behind Hazrat Ali (AS).

According to Arab traditions, Amr asked, "O' young man, introduce yourself."

"I am Ali ibn Abu Talib," replied Hazrat Ali (AS).

Amr was shocked to hear that name. The name was so well known and respectably mentioned in every house of the Quresh and the Jews. The tales of Hazrat Ali's (AS) valour and invincibility in the battles of Badr and Uhud were still fresh in their minds. They knew that to face Hazrat Ali (AS) in a battle meant sure death. Amr who had already been shaken by the confidence displayed by Hazrat Ali (AS) was further demoralized to hear the name.

He asked, "Is there no one else among the Muslims to fight me? Ali! I have known your father as a trading partner and I have also eaten at his table, I do not want to kill the son of a friend of mine."

Hazrat Ali (AS) replied, "I have never known your father and I am so anxious to kill an insolent infidel. (*Ibn Hisham Vol. 2, p. 225*)

When Amr realized that there was no way he could escape Hazrat Ali's (AS) *Zulfiqar*, he prepared himself for the duel.

Hazrat Ali said, "O' Amr, I have heard that you have made a vow before thy Idol deity that if any challenger offers you three conditions, you would accept at least one?"

Amr was amazed at that statement as he had made this vow secretly in his heart only, but proudly exclaimed, "Yes."

Hazrat Ali (AS) said, "I exhort thee to embrace Islam."

"Out of the question. How can I accept a religion that I am determined to wipe off?" replied Amr.

“Then turn back to your people and save your life,” was Hazrat Ali’s (AS) second condition.

“No way,” he replied rudely.

“I am on foot and you are mounting a horse that is not fair. Dismount and then fight me,” said Hazrat Ali (AS).

“I accept. That’s fair,” replied Amr. He jumped down from his horse and in anger hamstringed his horse.

Hazrat Ali (AS) said, “That’s a bad omen for thee O’ heartless tyrant.”

Amr now enraged and terribly spirited asked Hazrat Ali (AS) to attack.

Hazrat Ali (AS) remained calm and replied, “We of the family of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) never initiate any offensive, and we only meet it. Attack you first, for it is thou who hast challenged, and then thou will be replied.”

The historical duel was on. Twenty six thousand eyes were following every move and every action. Hazrat Ali (AS) was too agile for the hulk.

Amr struck at Hazrat Ali (AS) many a time but every strike of his was either stopped or parried or Hazrat Ali (AS) would just step aside. Amr was red in his face, panting and baffled. No one had ever lasted against him that long and now this young son of Abu Talib was playing with him and also had a smile on his face. Amr’s attacks became more fierce but all in vain.

Then something happened so suddenly that no one could really follow the sequence. Amr was flat on his back on the

ground and Hazrat Ali (AS) was riding on his chest with one hand on Amr's throat and a dagger in the other ready to cut his throat. Amr, using all his strength, arched his back and tried to get out of Hazrat Ali's (AS) grip or to push him from his chest. He could not move an inch and Hazrat Ali's (AS) grip was becoming tighter. Everyone watched in amazement.

Hazrat Ali (AS) brought his dagger closer to Amr's neck and said, "Amr accept that victory and defeat belongs to Allah. Still there is time, embrace Islam and I will spare your life and as a Muslim you would enjoy the blessings of this world and also of the next."

Then everyone saw that Hazrat Ali (AS) quietly got off Amr's chest and stood at one side. He had not cut Amr's throat. Amr was even more bewildered. The Muslims, Quresh and the Jews, all were equally surprised. A number of jealous Muslims immediately became critical of Hazrat Ali's (AS) gesture. They questioned the Prophet (PBUH&HD), "Look what Ali has done? He has lost such a good opportunity to finish Amr." The Prophet (PBUH&HD) replied, "Ask him when he comes back." "How would he come back now? He would certainly be killed by Amr," some of the Muslims announced their prediction.

Amr found himself weaker than Hazrat Ali (AS) and his throat was at the mercy of Hazrat Ali (AS) but Amr, instead of being grateful or ashamed, resorted to meanness. Amr collected some spittle in his mouth and threw it at Hazrat Ali's (AS) face. Hazrat Ali (AS) got off from Amr's chest. (I.A. Akram *'The Sword of Allah'* p.69).

Amr was a devil. He quickly got up, picked up his sword and attacked Hazrat Ali (AS) with the heaviest stroke he

could muster. Hazrat Ali (AS) was no less agile. He had enough time to pick up his sword and his shield to stop his attack. It was such a forceful strike that the shield of Hazrat Ali (AS) was cut into two and Amr's sword hit at Hazrat Ali's (AS) head. The Prophet's (PBUH&HD) turban was soaked in blood and so was Hazrat Ali's (AS) face.

Now *Zulfiqar* fell like a thunderous lightning blinding Amr and all the on-lookers. Amr fell with a thud. When the dust settled, the people saw his severed head in Hazrat Ali's (AS) hand. How it had happened no one could really connect the movements.

The hill of Sil'a shook with the collective cry of *Allah-o-Akbar*, which came out of the dry and choked throats of three thousand Muslims.

Hazrat Ali (AS) and the party of six now went for the party of Ikrama who had come across the ditch. Ikrama was successful in getting back. Nofal was not so lucky. He fell in the ditch and the Muslims started to pelt stones at him. He shouted, "O' Arabs! Surely death is better than this." (*Tabari Vol.-2, p. 240*) Hazrat Ali (AS) got down into the ditch and finished Nofal.

Hazrat Ali (AS) came and put Amr's head at the feet of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). The Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) embraced Hazrat Ali (AS) and declared:

"This one stroke of Ali on the day of *Khandaq* (The Battle of the Ditch) is superior to all the supplications of both the worlds (the seen and the unseen)." (*Mustadrik Hakim Vol.3, p.32*)

The jealous critics of Hazrat Ali (AS) had not forgotten their question. One person asked, "Ali when you were on

his chest and could easily cut his throat, why did you leave him?"

Hazrat Ali (AS) replied, "Do you not know that we are fighting only in the way of Allah? When I was on his chest, he threw his saliva on my face. I became very angry. If I had killed him then, it would have been more due to my anger and personal vengeance than for Allah. I left him and waited for my anger to subside."

The other one asked, "Ali when you had killed him why did you not take his coat of mail?" Hazrat Ali (AS) replied, "It is not gentlemanly to undress your enemy." That was Ali ibn Abi Talib.

If the siege had continued any longer, the Muslims would have been the victims of hunger and the severe cold weather. In this hour of trial many could have flinched and become even more sinister in their criticism of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). If Hazrat Ali (AS) had not been there to answer the challenge of Amr bin Abd Wad, the Muslims would have surrendered to Amr. Hazrat Ali (AS) upheld the honour of Islam and of the Muslims. However, the hypocrites remained unfaithful and whenever, they got an opportunity they betrayed the Faith and the Faithful.

Being niggardly unto you, but when cometh fear, thou wilt see them looking up to you, their eyes rolling like the one on whom death hath cast shadows and when passed away the fear, they smite you with sharp tongue, being niggardly of the good things; They have believed not, and, so Allah hath made their deed in vain: and this for Allah is easy.

Qur'an 33:19

After the death of Amr and Nofal no one had the courage to throw a challenge of individual combat. Khalid bin Walid did make a couple of vain efforts to cross the ditch with his cavalry squadron but was chased away by the Muslim archers.

On March 18, the area was lashed with torrential rains and cold winds. The storm appeared to strike at the enemy camp with a vengeance. Fires were put out, cooking pots were knocked down and the tents were blown away. Nature was furious, unkind and harsh to the infidels.

Abu Sufyan could take no more. He got up and shouted at his men, "This is no proper abode for us. Men and animals have suffered grievously from exposure. The Bani Qureiza have turned out to be pigs and monkeys and have betrayed us in our hour of need. The storm has ravaged our camp. Fires have been put out. Our tents have been knocked down. Let's return to Makkah Lo! I am the one who goes." (*Ibn Hisham Vol. 2, p. 232*)

Having made this speech he jumped on his camel and rode out with his men hoping to get away from the storm as quickly as possible. The storm was also persistent. It punished them till the dawn. Bani Ghaftan and the other tribes followed suit and also abandoned the battlefield.

The next morning the Muslims found only the cold winds howling in the area where the Quresh and Jews had camped to annihilate them. One strike from Hazrat Ali (AS) had crushed the pride of the rude Quresh and the Jews.

O' ye who believe remember ye the bounty of Allah unto you when came upon you the hosts. Then sent We upon them a strong wind and hosts that ye saw them not; and seeth Allah what all you do.
Qur'an 33:9

Hudaibiyya The Victory

Verily We have caused victory for thee a manifest victory.

Qur'an 48:1

In the sixth year of the Emigration (April 628 AD), guided by a dream, the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) decided to go to Makkah for pilgrimage. It was announced that the intention was not to fight but to perform a religious duty peacefully. Only fifteen hundred Muslims desired to accompany the Prophet (PBUH&HD). They were told that they would carry no weapons but only swords and sacrificial animals. Only one of his wives, Hazrat Umme Salma (SA), accompanied him.

In spite of the care and preparations that were made for this occasion, the enemy became suspicious of the journey of this party of Muslims towards Makkah.

As a preemptive measure, the Quresh deployed strong contingents of fighters under Khalid bin Walid and Ikrama bin Abu Jehl, six miles out of Makkah to intercept this caravan of Muslim pilgrims.

Khalid bin Walid, with three hundred horsemen, took up a blocking position at Kura-ul-Ghameem, fifteen miles south of Usfan. Basr bin Abi Sufyan Ka'abi informed the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) of the movement and deployment of the Quresh army. As the intention of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) was to avoid fighting, he asked the scouts to keep in contact with Khalid's troops and ordered the rest of

the contingent to change the route. He marched through a difficult terrain and reached Hudaibiyya, about fifteen miles west of Makkah, and camped there.

The Quresh sent Badeel bin Warqa of bani Khaza'a to tell the Prophet (PBUH&HD) that he was not permitted to enter Makkah. Badeel was told that the Muslims had no intentions to fight but had only come for pilgrimage. The Quresh were adamant that under no circumstances would they allow the Muslims to enter Makkah.

A number of emissaries were sent and messages were exchanged but the Quresh were in no mood to allow the Muslims to visit the Ka'aba. Soon the Muslims discovered that not only were they stuck in wilderness, but also there was no water to drink. All the wells had been choked up due to neglect. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) pushed a stick into a dry well and the water gushed up. Everyone drank and continued to use the water from this well till the camp lasted.

Orwa, one of the messengers from Quresh told the Prophet (PBUH&HD) that it would be better that he changed his mind and went back as the Quresh were not ready to budge. He added, "O' Muhammad I know that if there is a battle, most of your companions would run away leaving you at the mercy of the enemy." At his remarks, hot words were exchanged between Orwa and some of the companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD). However, a fight was averted. One of the companions said, "O' Quresh! No doubt we are from opposing camps but we had not entered into any agreement regarding the visit of pilgrims to Ka'aba." (*Tabari Vol.2, p.276*)

The Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) sent Kharrash bin Omyya as his emissary and he was unkindly treated by the Quresh.

Even his camel was killed but he, somehow, managed to escape. The Quresh who were already hostile became violent in their behaviour. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) gathered his companions under a tree and took a pledge from them that if there was a fight no one would run away. It is called 'Pledge under the tree' and has been mentioned in the Qur'an:

Indeed Allah was well pleased with the believers when they pledged their fealty unto thee under the tree, as He did know what was in their hearts, so did he send down tranquility on them and rewarded them with a near victory.

Qur'an 48:18

After a lot of discussion among the emissaries, it was decided to draw up a treaty. The Quresh sent Sohail bin Amr, with a few other representatives, with their terms and conditions. The Prophet (PUH&HD) did not consult any of his companions as to the terms and conditions that Sohail had brought and asked Hazrat Ali (AS) to pen down the Treaty as he dictated. He well knew that if he asked the opinion of the companions, there would be many different voices and many divergent opinions. It was beyond their intellect to comprehend the strategic and far reaching advantages that would accrue from this Treaty.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) started to dictate:

"Bismillah hir Rehman nir Rahim."

(In the name of Allah the Beneficent and the Merciful)

Sohail objected to these words saying that the Quresh did not know what *Rehman* and *Rahim* meant. It should start, "*Bismika Allahomma*" (In thy name of Allah). The Prophet (PBUH&HD) asked Hazrat Ali (AS) to write as Sohail

says. Hazrat Ali (AS) wrote as had been directed by the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

Then the Prophet (PBUH&HD) spoke, "This Treaty is being drawn-up between *Muhammad Rasoolullah* (the Apostle of Allah) and Sohail bin Amr." Sohail again interrupted, "Had the Meccans acknowledged thee O' Muhammad as the Apostle of Allah, they would not have arisen against thee. Replace the word *Rasoolullah* with your father's name." The Prophet (PBUH&HD) asked Hazrat Ali (AS) to delete the word *Rasoolullah* and replace it with his father's name. Hazrat Ali (AS) had already written *Rasoolullah* and said, "What Sohail is saying, is his faith. What you have dictated and I have written is my faith. How can I go against my faith?" The Prophet (PBUH&HD) took the pen from Hazrat Ali's (AS) hand and deleted the word *Rasoolullah* and instead wrote, "Son of Abdullah."

Addressing Hazrat Ali he said, "O' Ali! One day you would also be confronted with such a situation." (*Kamil Vol 2, p.138*)

The terms of the Treaty were:

- There shall be no aggression on the part of any of the parties for the next ten years. Neither of the parties shall attack the other or any one of the allies.
- Other tribes could join on either side and would be bound by the same terms.
- If anyone of the Makkans who goes to the Muslims and is claimed back by his guardian, he shall be sent back, but if any of the followers of Muhammad returns to Makkans, he shall not be sent back.

- Muhammad and his followers shall go back this year without entering the holy precincts.
- Next year Muhammad and his followers may visit Makkah for three days, when Makkans shall retire there from. But he may not enter it, with any arms save those of a traveler (sheathed swords).
- If any party violates any article of the Treaty, it would not remain binding on the other.

Both the parties signed the Treaty and a copy was handed over to Suhail. A number of the companions of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) were upset at the terms and conditions of the Treaty and started to criticize the decision of the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

Some hotheaded Muslims objected to this Treaty, particularly its clause 3. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) explained to them the long-term advantages of this clause. He said, "When anyone wishes to join us, Allah will devise means for him to do so." (*Waqdi; Maghazi p.310*)

The Peace Treaty of Hudaibiyya was a great triumph of Truth over falsehood. It was a very challenging and testing battlefield where vision and wisdom was required and not the sword. Like many other achievements of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD), the significance of this victory was also lost on a number of Muslims. Some of the Muslims disagreed with the Prophet (PBUH&HD) on the terms of the Treaty and some questioned the very judgment of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). False claimants of a strong Faith and of total commitment were exposed. Hypocrites were separated from the true believers.

Two tribes living in and around Makkah also joined. Bani Khaza'a joined on the side of the Muslims and Bani Bakr on the side of the Quresh.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) asked his followers to slaughter the sacrificial animals they had brought along and to get their heads shaved off. In spite of the fact that he repeated his orders three times, no one except Hazrat Ali (AS) got up and went towards his sacrificial animal. Their faces reflected disagreement, disobedience, defiance and doubts.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) was extremely disappointed and distressed at the behaviour of the majority and went back to his tent. Hazrat Umme Salma (SA) recounted that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) bitterly cried because the majority of the Muslims had refused to obey him and had doubted his wisdom.

He heard a number of his companions shouting and discussing the terms that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had agreed upon. And now that he had ordered them to slaughter their sacrificial animals and shave off their heads as is done after *Hajj* (pilgrimage). Some of them remarked, "Is that the *Hajj*?" Has the *Hajj* been performed that we should shave off our heads and slaughter the sacrificial animals?" "Is Hudaibiyya Mecca?" "What about the dream? Was it true or only hallucination?" Some were so enraged that they considered turning away from the faith. (*Tabari Vol.2, p. 281*)

Such remarks indicated that many companions, even among these 1500 chosen ones, had not yet attained that degree of Faith. These loud voices and the remarks by some were very painful for the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

After a little while he came out of his tent and saw that only Hazrat Ali (AS) had slaughtered his animal and had shaved off his head. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) slaughtered his sacrificial animal and got his head shaved off. Then everyone followed suit but some did not get their heads shaved off but cut only a few hair from their crowns. The caravan of peace returned to Medina.

When questioned about the dream he replied, "Yes, I did say that we would enter Mecca and perform *Hajj* but I did not say that it would be done this very year. We will enter Mecca when Allah wishes."

This Treaty proved to be a milestone in the efforts to spread Islam:

- People were able to see the kindness; forgiving and peace loving character of Islam and the Quresh were exposed as stubborn, perverse, arrogant and cruel.
- The Muslims were able to freely interact with heathens and the party of Abu Sufyan clearly saw the human values, respect, equality and fraternity being practiced and preached by the Muslims.
- Those who were convinced of their free will were able to follow the practices and teachings of Islam without any fear of persecution from their Quresh masters.
- It was proven that Islam was a religion of peace and not of war as propagated by the Quresh.
- This period of peace enabled the Muslims to preach their religion in an atmosphere free of all opposition or threat of an armed conflict.
- In only two years following the Treaty, the number of Muslims doubled than before the Treaty. (*Tabari Vol.2, p.283*)

- Hazrat Ali (AS) distinguished himself in this field as well as he had done in the battlefields of Badr, Uhad and Khandaq. He proved that not only he understands the philosophy and wisdom of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) but also he was also his most ardent and faithful follower.
- Hypocrites were exposed.
- This ultimately led to the peaceful conquest of Makkah. No blood was shed and no heads rolled. Makkah was cleansed of the idols earlier than was expected by many.

Khayber Ali Displays Divine Power

ہاتھ ہے اللہ کا بندہ مومن کا ہاتھ
غالب و کار آفرین کارکشاکار ساز

(علامہ اقبال)

Strategically the battle of Khayber was a continuation of the Battle of Khandaq. The Battle of Khandaq had ended in the defeat of the combined forces of the Quresh and the Jews. Each party blamed the other for the failure and also for losing a golden opportunity to finish the Muslim might.

Over and above, the Quresh had signed the peace agreement of Hudaibiyya and the Jews thought that the Muslims would now turn against them. They also felt guilty regarding their treachery and a retaliatory move from the Muslims was certain.

Khayber is located about 80 miles from Medina near the Syrian border. It was inhabited by around ten to fifteen thousand Jews. The land was very fertile and all types of fruits, grains and vegetables were grown here. Due to rich agricultural yield, the Jews had become very prosperous and had also built up their military capability.

To defend themselves against the Muslims, they constructed seven strong forts named, Na'im, Katibah, Shaque, Natah, Watech, Salalam and Qamoos. The

Qamoos was the strongest fort and had been constructed on the Qamoos hillock.

As the news of the Hudaibiyya Peace Treaty reached the Jews, they thought that the Muslims had neutralized the Quresh now they would turn against them. The Jews started to prepare for a battle and sent emissaries to other tribes to negotiate alliances.

On his return from Hudaibiyya the Prophet (PBUH&HD) received the intelligence that the Jews were getting together at Khayber and were preparing for an attack on Medina. He decided to preempt their attack and ordered that only those fifteen hundred Muslims who had accompanied him to Hudaibiyya were to prepare for the expedition. Within twenty days this force left Medina for Khayber.

As the Muslims landed near Khayber they quickly reduced the six smaller forts but the Qamoos fort proved to be a hard nut to crack. For a few days there was only exchange of arrows and that produced little results.

Later, under the instructions of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), every day a strong party of Muslims fighters, under the command of one of the companions, would go towards the fort and challenge the Jews to come out and fight. The Jews would send out their fighters and the Muslims would retreat without causing any dent in the enemy's strength or in their resolve. The Muslim soldiers were getting frustrated over the inabilities and cowardice of their commanders, whereas the commanders were blaming the soldiers for putting up a bad show. Every day more and more Muslim fighters were becoming weary and demoralized and the Jews were getting bolder.

O' Ye who believe! Whoever of you turneth away from his religion, soon will Allah bring (forward) a people, whom He loveth and they love Him, lowly before the believers, mighty against the infidels, striving hard in Allah's way, and they fear not the censure of any censurer; This is the Grace of Allah, He giveth it to whomsoever He desireth, Verily, Allah is Ample-Giving, All-knowing.

Qur'an 5:54

One by one, all the noteworthy Companions tried to reduce the fort of Khayber but failed. Muslim soldiers were getting disheartened. The defining moment arrived. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) announced:

"Tomorrow I will give the Standard to the man who will strike repeatedly and he will not run away from the battlefield. He is the one who loves Allah and His Apostle and Allah and His Apostle love him."

The person who would be selected tomorrow had to be a man of excellence. The one, who is brave and fearless, would not turn his back upon the enemy, a real gentleman in peace and war. The one who would strike repeatedly at the enemy and would not run away from the battlefield under the enemy pressure. Surely he will achieve success.

Every one of the companions hoped that, may be, he was the man destined to achieve victory and was the beholder of all these distinctions. There was no harm in hoping but those who had deserted the battlefields in earlier engagements, and who had even tried their hands here and had returned unsuccessful, had little hope. The third qualification was that he loves Allah and His Apostle and, in return, Allah and His Apostle love him too. (*Khomaini Vol.2, p. 53*).

Now that was a very tough condition and most of the aspirants within their hearts stood disqualified. Everyone knew that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) loved Ali the most and Ali's divine love for the Apostle and for Allah was quite clear to everyone.

Still, each one of the companions hoped that, may be, he would be the man destined to achieve victory and the distinctions. (*Kamil Vol.2,p.69*) Knowing within their hearts that none of them, save Hazrat Ali (AS), possessed these qualities, some of the companions still had hope as Hazrat Ali (AS) was unwell.

The next day the Prophet (PBUH&HD) came out of his tent with the Standard in his hand. All the companions stood up and looked towards him. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) asked, "Where is Ali?" Prompt came the reply, "He cannot even take one step. His eyes are very bad." "Go someone and get him," said the Prophet (PBUH&HD). That was enough to put everyone in his place.

Salama bin Akoo went and escorted Hazrat Ali (AS). The Prophet (PBUH&HD) asked him to put his head on his thigh. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) applied his saliva on the eyes of Hazrat Ali (AS) and also prayed, "May Allah keep you safe from the ill effects of heat and cold."

It worked like a miracle and Hazrat Ali's (AS) eyes were cured. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) handed over the Standard to Hazrat Ali (AS) and said, "Go, surely Allah will grant you victory if He wills."

Hazrat Ali (AS) dashed towards the gate of Khayber fort as he had a date to keep and a destiny to meet. After advancing a few steps, he halted and asked the Prophet (PBUH&HD), "How long should I fight?" "Till they do

not accept the Faith," replied the Prophet (PBUH&HD). The mission was crystal clear.

The Jews who were observing from the watchtowers of the Fort and from the windows remarked, "Here comes another one. Let's see how long he lasts before he too runs away." That was the reputation that the Muslims had gained in so many days.

When Hazrat Ali (AS) came nearer, one person remarked, "Well this commander of the Muslims is advancing in a different style. Seems he is not one of those who had been running away in earlier engagements."

As soon as Hazrat Ali (AS) reached the gate, he nailed his Standard in the earth and challenged the Jews. One of them said, "Who are you?" Hazrat Ali (AS) replied, "I am Ali ibn Abu Talib."

One of them remarked, "He is the same Ali ibn Abu Talib, the conqueror of Badr, Uhad and Khandaq." His very name sent shock waves in the Fort. They knew that to face him meant certain death. So it was decided to send seven soldiers under the command of Harith.

Hazrat Ali (AS) made a quick job of Harith, Antar, Murra and the other four soldiers who had come out to fight.

Then their commander Marhab stepped out and said, "I am Marhab and the whole of Arabia knows me that I am the best and the bravest. And who is my challenger?"

"I am Ali ibn Abu Talib and my mother has named me Haider," replied Hazrat Ali (AS).

The duel started. Marhab attacked first but Hazrat Ali (AS) stepped aside. Then Hazrat Ali (AS) raised the *Zulfiqar* and aimed it at his head. The strike was so powerful that it went through his body neatly cutting him into two. Marhab fell and Hazrat Ali (AS) jumped across the ditch, pushed his hand into the gate of the fort and pulled it out from its hinges. He stretched it like a steel bridge over the ditch so that the Muslims could come across the ditch. (*Suyuti 'Tarikhul Khulafa' Ibn Athar 'Tarikh Kamil' and 'Tabari'*).

The Muslims, who were waiting behind, rushed the Fort Qamoos and reduced all resistance in just a few hours time.

After the battle some of the companions asked Hazrat Ali (AS), "How was it possible that you pulled out such a heavy gate from its hinges?" He replied that he did not pull the gate out with human strength but it was the spiritual power granted to him by Allah for the fulfilment of His missions. (*Khamais Vol.2, p.51*)

If a person with a bit of the knowledge of Al-Kitab could bring the throne of Queen Sheba to Hazrat Solomon in the twinkling of an eye, how could this be difficult for Hazrat Ali (AS), as he had been endowed with power of the whole of Qur'an (Al-Kitab). The gate of Qamoos Fort was just like a feather in the hand of Hazrat Ali (AS).

Said he with whom was some knowledge (of a part) of the Book: I will bring it unto thee before thy eye twinkleth and when saw (Solomon) the thrown settled besides him, he said: This is be the grace of My Lord that He may try me if I am grateful or am ungrateful; and he who is grateful, verily he is grateful for his own self, and whoever is ungrateful, then verily my Lord is Self-sufficient, Bounteous."

The news of the success so pleased the Prophet (PBUH&HD) that he came out of his tent to receive the victor. He embraced Hazrat Ali (AS) and said:

“Ali! Had I not been afraid that Muslims would start regarding you as the Christians regard the Christ, I would have said things about you which would have made the Muslims venerate you and to consider the dust of your feet as something worth venerating; but it will suffice to say that you are from me and I am from you. You will inherit me and I will inherit you. You are to me what Aaron was to Moses. You will fight for my cause. You will be nearest to me on the Day of Judgment. You will be next to me on the fountain of *Kauthar*. Enmity against you is enmity against me. A war against you is a war against me. Your friendship is my friendship. To be at peace with you is to be at peace with me. Your flesh is my flesh. Your blood is my blood. Who will obey you will obey me. Truth is on your tongue, in your heart and in your mind. You have as much faith in Allah as I have. You are door to my Knowledge. (*Ana medina tul ilme wa Ali-yuni babo-ha*)As per orders of Allah I give you the tidings that your supporters will be rewarded in Paradise and your enemies will be punished in Hell.”
(*Gibbon 'Decline and Fall of Roman Empire Vol.5, p.365*)

This victory had far reaching effects over the mission of Islam. The infidels among the Quresh who till then were quite confident of their ultimate success, surrendered themselves and the city of Mecca to the Prophet (PBUH&HD). Mecca was occupied without any resistance and the Prophet (PBUH&HD), accompanied by Hazrat Ali (AS) cleansed the Ka'aba of the idols and fulfilled the obligation of Hazrat Ibrahim (PBUH) and Hazrat Ismael (PBUH):

And remember when We made the House a resort for mankind and a Sanctuary (saying) 'Take ye the station of Ibrahim a place of prayer (for you); and covenanted with Ibrahim and Ismael (saying) purify ye two My House for those who make circuit, and for those who abode in it and pay devotion and for those who bow down, and for those who prostrate (adoring).

Qur'an 2:125

The conquest of Khayber also brought prosperity to the Muslims. So much had come that those who were not allowed to join became very jealous:

Soon will those who stayed behind when ye go forth unto the gains to take them: "Let us (too) follow you;" desire they to change the word of Allah. Say thou (O' Our Apostle Mohammad!): "never shall ye follow us (for) thus hath (already) said Allah before." But they will say: "Nay! Ye are jealous of us." Nay they understand not but only a little.

Qur'an 48:15

Surprisingly some of the wives of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) desired more share from the booty than what they had been given. However, they were certainly not ordinary ladies who should desire the luxuries and comforts of life. Allah had bestowed upon them the virtuous status of being the wives of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). They were the mothers to the whole of Muslim *Ummah* and they were supposed to confine themselves to their abode and listen to the signs of Allah and wisdom.

O' Our Prophet (Muhammad!) Say thou unto thy wives: "If ye desire (the enjoyment of) the life of this world and its

adornment, come then I will provide for you and allow you to depart (separation) a goodly departure."

And stay ye in your abodes....

And remember ye what is recited in your abodes of the signs of Allah and wisdom; verily Allah is benignant, All Aware.

Qur'an 33:28, 33 &34

Return to *Baitullah*

After the Treaty of Hudaibiyya, Bani Khuza'a had joined the Muslims and Bani Bakr had joined the Quresh. These two tribes had their feud from the pre-Islamic era and had continued to engage each other oft and on. Taking the advantage of the calm that had prevailed after Hudaibiyya, one night Bani Bakr attacked Bani Khuza'a and killed a number of persons from that tribe. Ikrama bin Abu Jehl, Safwan bin Omayyah and Sohail bin Umro had participated in this massacre on the side of Bani Bakr.

A delegation from Bani Khuza'a, headed by their leader Umro bin Salam, came to Medina and reported the matter to the Prophet (PBUH&HD). The Prophet (PBUH&HD) declared that due to the flagrant breach of the truce by the Quresh, the Treaty did not remain binding upon the Muslims. Abu Sufyan was alarmed by this declaration. Knowing that the Quresh were not in a position to face the Muslims, he dashed to Medina to say that the Treaty did still exist and was binding upon both the parties.

Upon reaching Medina he tried to seek a recommendation from his daughter Umme Habiba, now a wife of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), and advice from Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA) and Hazrat Umar (RA) but returned disappointed. Then he knocked at the door of Hazrat Ali (AS) and said:

"Ali, you are so wise a person, please advise me what should I do?"

Hazrat Ali (AS) advised him, "Go to the mosque and declare a unilateral truce and go back to Mecca."

"How would that help," he asked.

"O' Abu Sufyan! You are a leader of the Quresh, your statement would show that you are not arrogant and that you wish peace and not war. Keep peace and that would save a lot of bloodshed," explained Hazrat Ali (AS). (Ibn Hisham Vol.2, p.396-7)

The next day he went to the mosque, addressed the Muslims, declared unilateral peace and went back to Makkah.

The Quresh who were eagerly awaiting his arrival asked him, "What good news do you bring us, Abu Sufyan?"

He told them what had happened in Medina and what had he done to avert the impending disaster. This infuriated his tribe who were expecting a better deal. Even his wife Hind was angry and got hold of him from his beard and started to curse him. However, there was nothing that anyone could do. They had to face the consequences of violating the truce.

As the Prophet (PBUH&HD) was never eager for shedding blood, he kept the mission secret and decided to enter Makkah in a manner that would surprise everyone.

A few of the companions who did know of the Prophet's (PBUH&HD) intentions were asked to keep it a secret.

Meanwhile Khalid bin Waleed came and embraced Islam. He was forgiven.

*

The move of the Muslim army from Medina started on January 1' 630 AD (10 Ramazan, 8 Hijri). On the way, a

number of tribes joined in and the number of the warriors swelled up to ten thousand.

When the Prophet (PBUH&HD) reached Sanit-ul-Uka'ab, he decided to camp here for the night. There, his uncle Abbas, who was travelling to Medina with his family, met him. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) was quite happy that his uncle had joined him. Abbas sent his family to Medina and decided to accompany the Prophet (PBUH&HD) towards Makkah.

When they reached Marr-uz-Zahran, he asked the Prophet (PBUH&HD) if he could allow him to go ahead and warn the Quresh of the serious consequences should they decide to put up any resistance. As a matter of fact it was a psychological offensive to break the will of the Quresh and to prevent the bloodshed. As the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had always desired peace, he permitted Abbas to go ahead with his plan.

Abbas hurried towards Makkah and just short of the town he was met by Abu Sufyan, Hakeem bin Hazzam and Badeel bin Warqah who were on a reconnaissance patrol to see if Muslims were coming from any direction.

Abu Sufyan asked Abbas, "What news do you bring?"

"The Messenger of Allah (PBUH&HD) is advancing with a force of ten thousand warriors," replied Abbas.

"Then what do you suggest," asked Abu Sufyan.

"If you put up any resistance, your head will surely roll and a lot of blood will be spilt in Makkah. Come with me and ask for forgiveness from the Prophet (PBUH&HD). I shall

also put up my recommendation that Quresh should be forgiven for their past deeds," suggested Abbas.

Abu Sufyan quickly mounted the horse behind Abbas and both of them rode to the Muslim camp.

Abu Sufyan, reluctantly and with a heavy heart embraced Islam.

Then Abbas asked the Prophet (PBUH&HD), "O' Messenger of Allah! Now he will go back to Makkah and announce to his clan that he had embraced Islam, please give him some concessions for being a chieftain."

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) told him about his intentions and added, "Whosoever enters your house is safe." Abu Sufyan's face brightened up. Then the Prophet (PBUH&HD) added, "Whosoever remains in his house and locks his door from inside will be safe. Whosoever takes shelter in Masjid-ul-Haram will be safe."

Abu Sufyan hurried back to Makkah. He was terrified and nervous. He gathered his people and announced:

"O' Quresh! Muhammad is advancing with ten thousand fighters and we cannot match the strength of the Muslims. However, I have brought you some good news. Whosoever takes shelter in my house is safe."

"How many people can be accommodated there?" they asked him.

He added, "Whosoever remains in his house and locks his door from inside will be safe. Whosoever takes shelter in the mosque will be safe too."

This put the people at ease but his wife Hind was still venomous and hated the very name of Islam. She jumped at him, held him from his beard and screamed, "This old mule has gone mad. He brings us nothing but shame and humiliation. We shall never submit to Muhammad or to his army. Kill this fat fool." (Ibn Hisham Vol.2 p. 402-5; Ibn Sa'd p.644; Waqdi Maghazi p. 327-31)

Abu Sufyan pushed her aside, "O' you debased woman. You know nothing. If ever you refuse to embrace Islam you shall be killed too. Learn to obey."

*

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) entered Makkah on January 11th 630 AD (20 Ramadan 8 Hijri). The operation was peaceful except for a small skirmish that Khalid had fought. Those people who had left no stone unturned to insult and harm the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and were guilty of torturing the poor converts, all gathered around the Ka'aba and waited for the word from the Prophet (PBUH&HD). As the Prophet (BUH&HD) circumambulated the Ka'aba seven times, he saw his former enemies waiting for him.

He asked them, "Remember what had you been doing against us and then tell me how I should treat you?"

"Kindly, O' noble brother and son of a noble brother," the crowd spoke in unison."

"Then go, you are forgiven," announced the Prophet (PBUH&HD). (Ibn Hisham Vol.2, p.412)

Peace and justice prevailed upon the whole of the Muslim world and normality was brought about in the society.

Next the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and Hazrat Ali (AS) entered the Ka'aba and saw three hundred and sixty idols of different shapes and sizes placed in and outside the Ka'aba. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) began to break these idols with his stick. There were some idols that had been placed beyond the reach of the Prophet's (PBUH&HD) stick. He asked Hazrat Ali (AS) to get on his shoulders and break those idols. The Ka'aba was cleansed of these false gods. Truth returned and falsehood vanished.

And say thou, "The truth hath come and the falsehood hath vanished; Verily falsehood (a concept that by it's nature) is vanishing."

Qur'an 17:81

Al Ghumeisa Ali the Healer

Say the desert Arabs "We believe." Say thou (unto them): "Ye believed not, but say ye, "We submit, for faith hath not yet entered your hearts; and if ye obey Allah and His Apostle, He will lessen not aught of your deeds; Verily Allah is Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful."

Qur'an 49:14

A large number of the people had embraced Islam but many had not yet gone through the mental and spiritual transformation. They had not yet understood the philosophy and the true significance of the Message. There were very few who were sincere and truthful. Some became Muslims due to the political, social and economic constraints. Some of them embraced Islam through sheer helplessness, as they had no alternative. Some accepted to become Muslims as it ensured their personal safety and economic wellbeing. Some found the promise of glamour and adventure. Naturally some actions and reactions of the Muslims from these categories were neither morally justifiable nor permissible under the noble values of Islam. The streak of ignorance, in the conduct and the behaviour of some the Muslims, was quite visible and at times very disturbing for the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

Soon after establishing order in Makkah, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) started to send his companions to the tribes

and settlements around Makkah. The Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) would brief every contingent and emphasize that neither coercion nor force must be employed to convert the people.

No compulsion be in religion; Indeed truth has been made manifest distinct from error; therefore, he who disbelieveth the rebels (false deities) and believeth in Allah, hath indeed laid hold on the strongest handle no break is for it; and verily Allah is all-Hearing, All-Knowing.

Qur'an 2:256

During January 630 AD, one such expedition of peace was organized under Khalid bin Walid to proceed to Tihama. Khalid bin Walid was a brave fighter but he had to be tamed and trained as an emissary too. He was given 350 horsemen and other companions like Abdul Rahman bin Auf, Abdullah bin Omar and Abu Qatada as advisors. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) instructed him, "Khalid you are not being sent to conquer a territory. Your mission is to convince the people with sound reasoning and personal example. No blood shall be shed."

When this contingent reached a well at Al-Ghumeisa, they decided to camp there. This well was under the occupation of Bani Jazima. As soon as they saw armed men entering their territory, they picked up arms. When they found out that the troops were Muslims, they shouted, "We have already submitted. We are all Muslims, we have built a mosque and we establish prayers."

Khalid said, "If we are all Muslims then why these weapons? Lay your arms and I assure you that no harm would come to you."

The demand seemed very reasonable and they started to discuss it among themselves. The consensus was that arms may be laid. Hajdam from Bani Jazima announced, "O' men of Bani Jazima, don't you know who Khalid bin Waleed is? How can you trust him? He will sure disarm you, when you are helpless and at his mercy, then he would tie your hands behind and order your general massacre. Do not lay down your arms. Don't trust him. You would repent."

During the days of ignorance, a few young men of Bani Jazima had murdered the father of Abdul Rahman bin Auf and Fakiha bin Mugheera, uncle of Khalid. Abdul Rahman bin Auf had later killed the murderer of his father but the blood of Fakiha still remained to be avenged. However, as Muslims, old blood feuds had been forgiven.

Bani Jazima discussed Khalid's proposal among them and the consensus was, "When we are Muslims, why should our Muslim brethren kill us? As the blood feuds of the days of ignorance had all been forgiven and forgotten, why would Khalid avenge the blood of Fakiha?" They disagreed with Hajdam and laid down their arms.

After disarming them, Khalid did exactly what Hajdam had anticipated. Their hands were tied behind their backs and general massacre was ordered. Abdul Rahman bin Auf and Abdullah bin Omar objected to his action but they were rudely over ruled. A number of tribes also refused to obey him. Only Bani Suleim obeyed and killed all those who were present. Abu Qatab hurried back to Makkah and reported the matter to the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) was greatly disturbed at this horrifying and terrible news. He raised his hands and

exclaimed, "O' Lord! You well know that I am not responsible for what Khalid has done." (Tabari Vol. 2, p.342)

Khalid had embraced Islam for his personal aggrandizement, glory, wars and bloodshed. Intellectual enterprise, peace and propaganda were not in his style of life. For the time being he was still ignorant of the nobility and higher spiritual values of Islam.

On his return, Khalid was asked by the Prophet (PBUH&HD) to explain his action. Khalid said, "I presumed that they were not real Muslims. They had taken up arms but I very smartly got them disarmed and killed them. I thought I was doing it in the way of Allah."

Abdul Rahman interrupted, "You lie. In spite of our protests you killed them knowing they were Muslims. You are a murderer."

Khalid made a lame effort to fix Abdul Rahman and said, "I avenged the murder of your father."

"You lie again. I avenged the murder of my father long time ago and you know it. You avenged the murder of your uncle Fakiha," retorted Abdul Rahman. (Yaqoobi Vol.3, p.47; Tabari Vol 2, P.342)

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) sternly put Khalid in his place.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) then called Hazrat Ali (AS), the embodiment of Wisdom, Justice and Truth and told him, "Ali, take the money and the gifts that have come from Yemen. Go to Bani Jazima at Ghumeisa, make good their losses and pacify them so that they remain on our side."

Hazrat Ali (AS) went to Ghumeisa and called the people of Bani Jazima. He generously paid indemnity to the relatives of all those who had been killed by Khalid and his men.

Then he announced, "Is there anyone who has any claim?"

They all acknowledged that they had been duly compensated for their losses and that no one had any further claim.

Hazrat Ali (AS) declared, "I am still left with a number of gifts. On behalf of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), I distribute all these among you people." Thus the aggrieved party was compensated beyond their expectations.

The mission was well accomplished and highly praised by the Prophet (PBUH&HD). (*Yaqoobi Vol.2, p.47*)

The Battle of Hunëin Ali Turns Defeat into Victory

Gradually Makkah was becoming a settled, organized, and a constitutional State. Various institutions necessary for governance were formed that started to function under the directions and supervision of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). Law and order was restored. Justice and human values were preached and practiced. Prosperity was visible everywhere.

Contingents were sent to various tribes and settlements for preaching Islam and inviting the people to adopt Islam and live in peace and harmony with each other.

The existence of Muslims as a prosperous and fast growing State was considered a threat by a number of the neighbouring tribes. The first to react were the tribes of Bani Howazin who lived in the northeast of Makkah and Bani Saqeef from Taif.

Malik bin Auf Nasri, the Chief of Bani Howazin invited the people of Bani Jashn and Bani Nasr to join them against the Muslims. Bani Saqeef, who had pelted stones at the Prophet (PBUH&HD) during his earlier visit to Taif, also decided to participate in the offensive.

A strong force of nearly four thousand warriors was gathered for the offensive. Malik bin Auf was the Commander and Abu Jarwal was the Standard Bearer of this force. For expert advice they had also brought along venerable Harab Dureid bin As-Simma. Dureid was 120 years old and blind but was considered a wizard in the art of warfare. Malik also ordered the women and children and their flocks to accompany the soldiers so that they would not run away even under the adverse situation.

When this force was passing through the valley of Autas, Dureid asked them to halt. Gauging from the sound and the echo of the hoofs of the horses he decided that the terrain was ideally suited to the type of an offensive that he had contemplated to launch.

As he began to give instructions for the deployment, he heard the voices of women and children and animals. He asked Malik from where this noise of settlements was coming? Malik replied, "I have ordered the families and flocks to accompany the men that they would fight with determination and not abandon the battlefield."

"Men fight with spirits and swords and not with women, children, camels and sheep. Put them at a safe place behind the front line. If we win they can join us but if we are defeated, at least they are safe and not humiliated," stated Dureid. Malik took this as a challenge to his strategic wisdom and asked Dureid not to interfere, as he had grown senile with age.

Then Dureid asked, "Have Bani Ka'ab and Bani Kallab also joined us?"

"No. They are not with us," replied Malik.

"Then you do not have enough strength to launch an offensive. Return to your own areas and if attacked, fight a defensive battle, and you may be successful," advised Dureid. Malik refused to pay any heed to what old Dureid was suggesting. From then on, Dureid allowed Malik to have his way.

Malik addressed his officers, "As you attack, attack as one mass. As our attack begins let all scabbards be broken. (*Ibn Hisham Vol.2, p.438-9*) This tradition of breaking

scabbards was practiced by Arabs to signify the determination to 'fight till death.'

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) was quite upset by the news of this impending offensive. He had no intentions of indulging in any armed conflicts or in the expansion of this Muslim State by the sword. He was never for bloodshed or aggression. The basic fundamental of his philosophy was spreading the noble values of Islam by logic and conversion of the people by conviction. However, he was faced with a situation where he was left with no choice and had to call his followers to arms.

On January 27' 630 AD (6 Shawal 8 Hijri), a twelve thousand man strong army of Muslims set out from Mecca. As they started their advance towards Hunein, one of the companions of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) remarked, "We have a strong army, we can never be defeated."

This remark indicated pride in their strength and lack of faith in Allah Almighty. It was a remark of Ignorance that was instantaneously registered by Allah and later quoted as a lesson.

The advance was led by a contingent of seven hundred horsemen from Bani Suleim, operating under the command of Khalid bin Waleed. During the evening of January 31' the Muslims reached the valley of Hunein and decided to camp there for the night.

Hunein is a valley which runs from Sharai-ul-Mujahid, which is eleven miles east north east of Makkah, to Sharai Nakhla, which is seven miles further east. The valley continues eastwards for another seven miles and then turns north towards Zeima. The valley is generally two miles

wide but as it approaches Zeima, it narrows down to half a mile and at places even quarter of a mile.

Malik's force reached the valley earlier than the army of Muslims. He studied the lay of the land and decided to use it to his tactical advantage. During the night he moved his troops into the defile of Hunein that allowed no room for manoeuvre. His men took positions on both sides of the track and hid themselves behind boulders and broken ground. A few miles in the rear was a narrow pass to which Malik could withdraw in case the battle did not go according to his plan. Malik had devised a masterly plan to ambush the Muslim army and to take them by surprise.

Early in the morning the Muslim army started to advance towards Autas with the hope of taking the enemy by surprise. As they entered the defile two miles short of Zeima, the enemy archers suddenly opened up with arrows and stones. Arrows came upon the Muslims like a hailstorm. Khalid was the first to receive the shock. There was complete panic and the horsemen of Bani Suleim bolted backwards. They fell upon each other like huge waves of sea. Khalid was also swept away like a straw in this storm of fleeing men and horses.

As the Bani Suleim fled they ran into their own units who were following them. Those units also turned around and ran towards their camp. Command and control broke down. No one exactly knew what had happened but twelve thousand Muslims were running back for their lives. Surprisingly among these were also those fifteen hundred Muslims who had taken the oath 'under the tree' at Hudaibiyya.

Most of the new converts enjoyed the sight of this terrible setback. Abu Sufyan remarked, "Now these Muslims will

not stop till they reach the safety of the sea." Kuldah bin Hunbal said, "This will surely expose the sorcery of Mohammad." Another Quresh hypocrite remarked, "Our gods Hubal and Lat have avenged their insult."

Sufwan snapped at Abu Sufyan, "May Allah break your mouth we would rather see a man of Quresh ruling over us than a man of the Howazin." (*Ibn Hisham Vol.2, p.443-5*)

Only ten men were left with the Prophet (PBUH&HD). They were Hazrat Ali (AS) bin Abu Talib, Abbas bin Abdul Mutalib, Fazal bin Abbas, Abu Sufyan bin Harith, Rabbiya bin Harith, Abdullah bin Zubair bin Abdul Mutalib, Ayman bin Obaida and Atbah and Ma'atab sons of Abu Lahab.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) shouted at the fleeing Muslims, "O' Muslims, I am Muhammad, I am son of Abdullah bin Abdul Mutalib, I am Messenger of Allah, I am here, come back. O' companions of *Bai'at-ul-Rizwan* where do ye flee?"

No one responded. The rout continued without anyone looking backwards or paying any heed to what the Prophet (PBUH&HD) was saying. (*Mufti Jafar Hussain 'Seerat-e-Amir-ul-Momneen, p.270*)

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) said, "I am the righteous Apostle. I am son of Abdul Mutalib."

Then he asked Abbas to stand at a high ridge and call the Muslims back. Abbas was a huge man with a very loud voice. He shouted, "O' Muslims, the Messenger of Allah is here. Come back, come back. O' '*Rizwan Ullah*' (those who had pledged under the tree that they would never leave the side of the Prophet (PBUH&HD)), where are you?"

Remember your pledge. Come back. O' Companions...O' son of..." He called them by tribes and even some prominent companions by their names but there was no response.

The Muslims who had fled away heard the call but only looked at each other and preferred to stay behind the safety of rocks and stones.

Most certainly did Allah help you in many (battle) fields, and on the day of Hunein, when made you vain your great numbers, but they availed you nothing, and was straitened the earth against you with all its extensiveness, then you turned back in retreat.

Qur'an 9:25

The ten companions who had remained with the Prophet (PBUH&HD) made a protective ring around him and Hazrat Ali (AS) continued to push back the attackers.

The Howazin were on the offensive and repeatedly attacked these Muslims and tried to reach the Prophet (PBUH&HD) but their attacks were fiercely repulsed.

Ayman bin Obaida was the first martyr during this battle. Hazrat Ali (AS) attacked one soldier who was chasing the fleeing Muslims and killed him.

Like lightning, Hazrat Ali (AS), piercing through the enemy lines came face to face with Jarwal, the Standard Bearer of Howazin. He cut the tendons of Jarwal's camel. As Jarwal fell, Hazrat Ali (AS) attacked him and his head rolled on the ground. The death of Jarwal demoralized the Howazin.

They started to pull back and their attack gradually lost its intensity.

The Muslims observed that the Howazin were gradually retreating and those hiding behind the rocks gradually started to rejoin in ones and twos. Now the Muslims were getting reorganized and attacking the retreating enemy.

Then did send down Allah His tranquility upon His Apostle and upon the believers, and did send down hosts which ye did not see, and chastised those who believed; and that is the recompense of the infidels.

Qur'an 9:26

Malik had very intelligently used the ground to his advantage and had also achieved the element of surprise, but tactically he had committed a grave mistake for which he was about to pay. His archers had opened up on the advance guards. If they had held their fire till the main body was in the defile, the results of the battle would have been quite different. Secondly, his archers only caused confusion and panic but did not kill anyone. The Muslims were much more superior in the art of swordsmanship and as soon as they got their chance, they proved their worth.

Malik realized that his men were under immense pressure. He decided to put his withdrawal plan into effect. Leaving the Saqeef to fight the rearguard action, he pulled Howazin back to the Pass. The strength of the Muslims was now nearly one thousand and they increased their pressure on the withdrawing Howazin and the Saqeef. Soon the Saqeef turned and took to their heels.

By now Malik had deployed Howazin on the mountain pass and so long as they could hold the pass their families and flocks were safe.

By this time most of the Muslims had rejoined their groups. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) organized a strong cavalry group under Zubeir bin Al Awwam and asked them to clear the valley and maintain pressure against the Howazin. After a short and brisk engagement, the Howazin were driven off the pass and the valley was cleared of the enemy resistance.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) asked Zubeir to deploy his troops along the pass and hold it as a firm base and sent another force under Abu Amr towards Autas. The Howazin took up positions to defend their families and flock camped at Autas. A fierce clash took place here. Abu Amr was martyred and the command of the Muslims was taken over by his cousin Abu Musa who fought till the bitter end. The Howazin fled leaving their families and flock at the mercy of the Muslims.

The enemy coalition had now completely disintegrated. The Howazin and other tribes fled in disorder to their respective settlements. Bani Saqeef led by Malik hastened to Taif.

Only four Muslims were martyred and seventy infidels were killed. Out of these seventy, Hazrat Ali (AS) alone killed forty.

Once again, history credits Hazrat Ali (AS) for turning the defeat at Hunein into victory. He remained steadfast, defended the Prophet (PBUH&HD), attacked on all sides, killed Abu Jarwal and pressed fiercely against the enemy. His courage, valour, fortitude, unflinching faith, commitment and above all his love and divine devotion for

the Prophet (PBUH&HD) encouraged some to remain steadfast and the deserters to rejoin. Every day and at every occasion he gave a new lease of life to Islam as Allah had willed so.

صدقِ ظلیل بھی ہے عشق، صبرِ حسین بھی ہے عشق
 معرکہ وجود میں بدر و حنین بھی ہے عشق

(علامہ اقبال)

Taif

Malik bin Auf and Saqeef withdrew to Taif. Malik was young but a very smart and wily commander. He did not take any chances. They barricaded themselves in Taif fort and were prepared for a long and an enduring siege.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) also decided not to give him any respite to recover and to reorganize against the Muslims. He left all the prisoners of war, men, women and children and the flock under the care of Badeel bin Waq'a Khazai at Jirana and marched towards Taif.

The terrain was hilly and the Muslims were advancing cautiously with scouts in the lead lest they run into another trap. From Autas the column was ordered by the Prophet (PBUH&HD) to march through Nakhla Valley and then to turn south into Wadi-ul-Muleih. From this valley they went through Wadi-ul-Qarn, which led them seven miles northwest of Taif. Leaving the obvious route of advance, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) shifted the axis and went through Nikhb and Sadeira. By following this route, the Muslims appeared in the rear of Taif.

The Muslims got to Taif on February 5th 630 AD (15 Shawwal 8 Hijri) and laid a siege around Taif. Both sides resorted to the exchange of arrows during which the Muslims suffered some casualties. A number of companions made some determined attempts to break through the defences of Taif but failed.

Salman Farsi (RA) advised the Muslims to construct catapult to hurl stones into Taif that might cause some casualties and force Bani Saqeef to come out and fight,

however, the hurling of stones had little effect on the defenders.

Then he advised them to manufacture *tostado* (a strong cover manufactured with cowhides under which a group of attackers could safely advance to the gate and break it open or set it on fire) A number of *tostados* were manufactured and the Muslims tried to close in but failed.

Had Hazrat Ali (AS) been ordered by the Prophet (PBUH&HD) to conquer Taif, he would have done it the same day, however, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) asked his other companions and they all failed. The purpose could be that the Muslims would finally acknowledge the spiritual and physical superiority of Hazrat Ali (AS) over all the other companions and seek his guidance and leadership in all difficult situations. It must be accepted that Ali Ibn Abu Talib (AS) is *Maula Mushkil Kush* and *Mazhar-ul-Ajaib* (the leader who is the Remover of Difficulties and the one who can bring about miracles).

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) asked Hazrat Ali (AS) to take a few men with him, go into the neighbouring settlements of Taif and invite the people to accept Islam. Hazrat Ali (AS) first went into the settlement of Bani Khasa'm. Here a well-known fighter challenged the Muslims. Hazrat Ali (AS) asked if anyone of the Muslims would like to face him but they showed their reluctance. Hazrat Ali (AS) accepted his challenge and dispatched him to Hell with one stroke of *Zulfiqar*. No one else dared challenge Hazrat Ali (AS). Those who accepted Islam, they destroyed their idols

Hazrat Ali (AS) returned and reported to the Prophet (PBUH&HD). The Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) took Hazrat Ali (AS) to one side and talked to him in confidence for a long time. This was not the first time but the Prophet

(PBUH&HD) often used to speak to Hazrat Ali (AS) in confidence and passed on to him his wisdom and knowledge and guidance for the future. Some of the Companions felt jealous for having been sidelined and asked the Prophet (PBUH&HD) what had he told Hazrat Ali (AS) in confidence? The Prophet (PBUH&HD) replied, "Almighty Allah had a message exclusively for Ali and that was what I conveyed to him. It was not meant for anyone of you." (*Sahih Tirmezi p.477*)

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The siege of Taif lasted for eighteen days without any prospects of success. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) knew that time was running out and he had a host of affairs of the new State to attend to. He consulted his companions and asked them if the siege should continue or should it be lifted. They all agreed that Taif was beyond them so they should return home. On February 23, 630 (4 Zu Qad, 8 Hijri) the siege was lifted. The Muslims had lost twelve men and a number of them had been wounded. The Saqeef remained defiant. However, ten months later, Malik visited Medina and he, along with his tribe, embraced Islam.

Yemen Ali the Preacher

Soon after his return from Taif, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) sent a delegation under Khalid bin Walid to Yemen to spread Islam. They stayed there for six months and tried their level best to convert the people to Islam but no one paid any heed to what they said. (*Tabari Vol.2, p.389*)

When the news of the failure of this delegation reached the Prophet (PBUH&HD), he sent for Hazrat Ali (AS) and asked him to replace Khalid. While bidding farewell to Hazrat Ali (AS) the Prophet (PBUH&HD) placed his hand on the chest of Hazrat Ali (AS) and prayed, "O' Allah! Strengthen Ali on the path of righteousness and may he commit no error." (*Asteyab Vol. 3, P.36*)

On reaching Yemen, after his morning prayers, Hazrat Ali (AS) addressed the people of Bani Hamdan and read out to them the letter that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had given him.

The contents of the letter were so convincing, and the style of delivery of Hazrat Ali (AS) was so appealing, that the whole clan accepted Islam the same day. It proved beyond a shadow of doubt that Hazrat Ali (AS) was as good a preacher as he was a soldier. (*Tabari Vol. 2, p.390*)

Although the whole clan of Bani Hamdan embraced Islam, they needed further education on a number of intricate

religious, social, economic and judicial issues. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) appointed Hazrat Ali (AS) as his deputy in Yemen. On behalf of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), and on his directions, Hazrat Ali (AS) managed all the affairs of the State as a governor.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) in the presence of a number of his companions declared, "O' Ali! After me you would adjudge the disputes arising among the people of my Ummah." (*Mustadrik Hakim Vol.3, p.122*)

The Valley of Ramal

Some outlaws gathered in the valley of Ramal and started to plunder the travellers coming and going to Medina. They were well-armed and well organized and their activities created a panic in and around Medina.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) received the news and asked Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA) to take a few men and chase these rogues away.

As the Muslims reached the valley, the outlaws hid themselves in the broken ground. The Muslims became complacent and thought that the outlaws had dispersed merely at the arrival of the Muslim army.

The Muslims decided to relax and have a good sleep. They spread themselves on comfortable patches of the ground and slept. The outlaws suddenly attacked them. The Muslims were taken by complete surprise and some could not find even their weapons to defend themselves. A number of the Muslims were killed and the remaining ran towards Medina to save their lives.

The next day the Prophet (PBUH&HD) sent Hazrat Umar (RA). Hazrat Umar (RA) committed the same tactical mistake. The Muslims reached the valley as the night was falling and could not find the outlaws. They too decided to rest. As they were resting the outlaws attacked during the darkness and wreaked havoc on the Muslims.

The third day Umro bin A's asked the Prophet (PBUH&HD) to allow him to punish the outlaws. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) agreed. He too failed miserably.

After the defeat of these three notable companions no one else volunteered to go and fight the outlaws. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) had no choice but to ask Hazrat Ali (AS) to accomplish the mission.

Hazrat Ali (AS) changed his route and decided to travel by night and rest during the day. The Muslims reached the valley before first light and caught the enemy unaware. Now the Commander of the Faithful was in command and it was the enemy who got a surprise. A number of the outlaws were killed while others were captured and brought to Medina,

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) personally came out of Medina to welcome Hazrat Ali (AS) and to congratulate him on the successful accomplishment of the mission.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) said, "Ali I am afraid to say what you are lest people start saying the same about you what they say about Isa (PBUH). They would even pick up the dust on which you walk." (*Sheikh Mufeed p.76*)

Tabuk

Ali is to the Prophet (PBUH&HD)
As Hazrat Aaroon (PBUH) was to
Hazrat Musa (PBUH)

In the middle of the hot summers of 630 AD (9 Hijri), travellers reported that the Romans had concentrated large forces in Syria, had entered Jordan and had planned to attack Medina. Heraclius, the Emperor of Byzantine was reported to be in Emessa. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) ordered the Muslims to prepare for an expedition against the Romans.

The weather had been unusually hot. For the last three years the crop had been the victim of drought but this year there were prospects of a good harvest. Except for a few, the Muslims were by and large, not happy to leave their homes and to deny themselves the benefits of a good crop. The cool shades of their orchards and the comforts of their homes were too tempting. Those who were against the expedition also tried to dissuade the others not to go in this heat.

And came with excuses from the dwellers of the desert that permission may be granted to them, and sat (home) those who lied to Allah and His Apostle; unto those of them who disbelieved shall shortly reach a grievous chastisement.

Qur'an 9: 90

Once again, Tabuk was only a test of Faith, commitment, devotion and obedience to the orders of the Prophet

(PBUH&HD). The Prophet (PBUH&HD) knew that there would be no fighting, therefore, he asked Hazrat Ali (AS) to stay behind and manage the affairs of the State. He also made him responsible for the Mosque and the pulpit. However, he was quite concerned about the reluctance of many a Muslim who had not submitted themselves to his orders. Allah pacified him:

Had they gone forth with you they would not have added to you aught save mischief, and they would have certainly hurried about (to and fro) amidst you, to sow dissensions amidst you and among them are those who hearken for their sake; And Allah knoweth the unjust.

Qur'an 9:47

Some hypocrites had stayed behind with the intentions of plundering Medina. When they learnt that Hazrat Ali (AS) was staying behind, they realized they would not be able to fulfil their evil designs, so they started to taunt him:

“The Prophet (PBUH&HD) has left Hazrat Ali (AS) behind to look after the women and children as he must have considered Ali as a burden.” (*Tabari Vol.2, p.368*)

Hazrat Ali (AS) became quite upset on hearing the taunts of the hypocrites. He picked up his weapons and hastened to join the Prophet (PBUH&HD). Upon seeing him the Prophet (PBUH&HD) asked him as to why had he come? He told him about the taunts of the hypocrites. The Prophet said:

“O’ Ali! Art thou not pleased to be to me as Haroon was to Moses – save that there is no apostle to come after me. Thou art my vicegerent, my caliph and successor. Thy flesh is my flesh and thy blood is my blood.” (*Sahih Bukhari Vol.3, p.54*)

Hazrat Ali (AS) returned to Medina. He was in charge of the pulpit as also of the affairs of the State.

On reaching Tabuk, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) found out that the Roman army had withdrawn from Jordan and, therefore, posed no serious threat to the Islamic State. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) stayed there for 20 days and converted a few clans and a few other tribes including Eilla, Jarba, Azruh, Maqna and Daumat-ul-Jandal who promised to pay *Jazya* (Tax money).

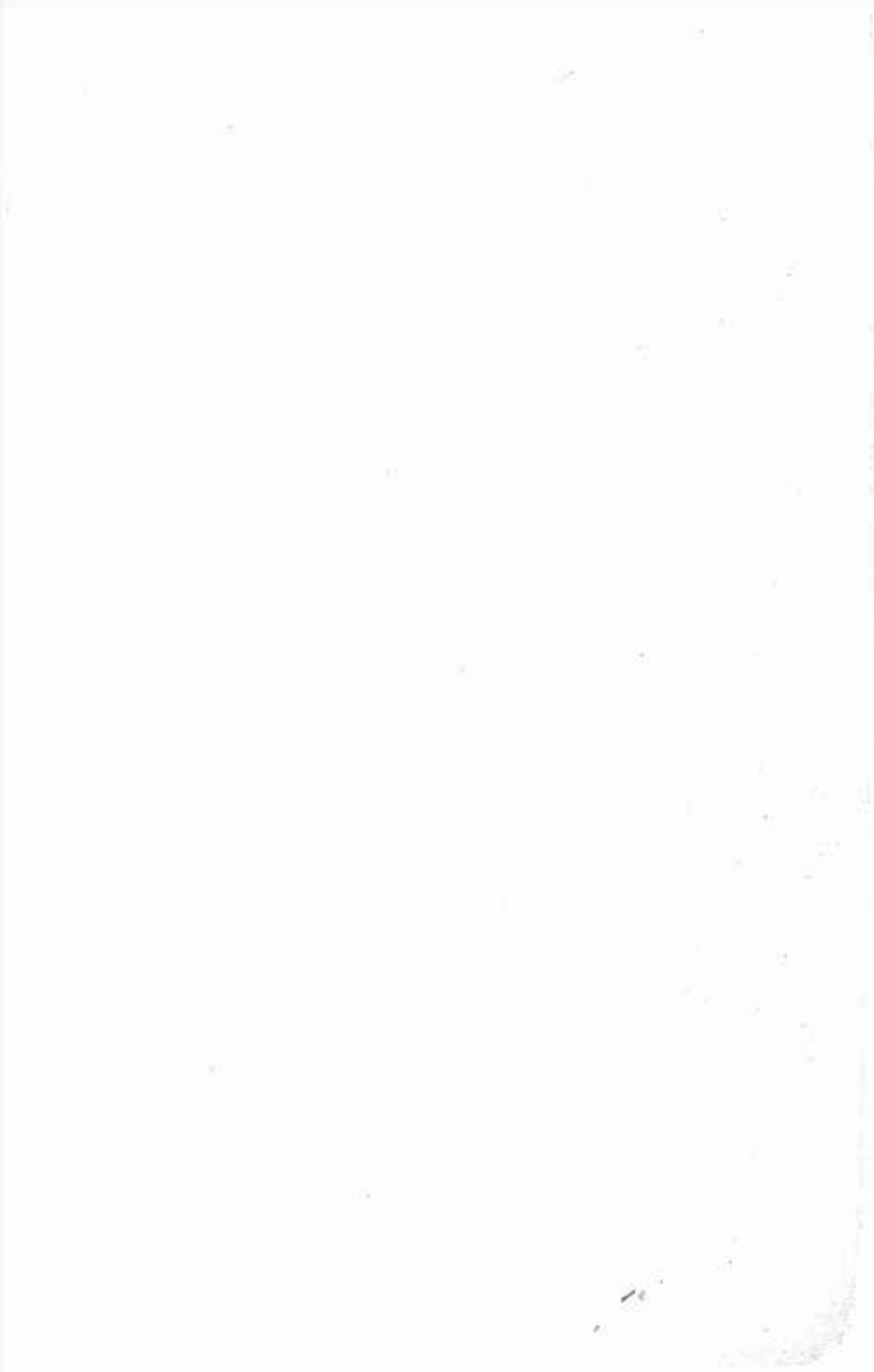
When the Muslims returned the hypocrites who had stayed back began to make excuses. Allah revealed to the Prophet (PBUH&HD):

They will make excuses unto you when ye return unto them (after the expedition): Say thou (O' Our Apostle) "Make ye no excuses (now), by no means will we believe you, Indeed Allah hath informed us of the matter of (the truth) about you; And now Allah will behold your doings and (also) His Apostle, then shall ye be returned unto the Knower of (everything) hidden and the manifest, then ye will be informed of (all) what ye were doing.

They will swear unto you by Allah, when ye return unto them, that ye may turn aside from them; so turn ye aside from them; verily they are unclean and their abode is hell; a recompense for what they did earn.

They will swear unto you that ye may be pleased with them, but (even) if ye be pleased with them, verily Allah is not pleased with people (who are) wicked.

(Qur'an 9:94-96)



Hujjat-ul-Wida (The Farewell Hajj)

During 10 Hijri, Allah Almighty revealed to the Prophet (PBUH&HD) that he must go for Hajj (pilgrimage to the Ka'aba). The Prophet (PBUH&HD) made the announcement and Muslims from all areas and settlements started to converge on Makkah to perform Hajj under the leadership of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). As it was the first and the last Hajj that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) performed, it is also called Hujjat-ul-Wida

*And proclaim thou unto the people the pilgrimage (Hajj)!
They will come unto thee on foot and on lean camels,
coming from every (remote) highway*

Qura'n 22:27

At this time Hazard Ali (AS) was still in Yemen managing the affairs of the State on behalf of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). The Prophet (PBUH&D) sent him a message to come and to perform the Hajj. He handed over the command to one of his subordinates and headed towards Makkah. Before entering Makkah he changed his dress to *ahram* (special dress for Hajj and Umrah) and joined the Prophet (PBUH&HD) at Makkah.

Hazrat Ali (AS) gave a detailed briefing of his activities in Yemen, including the gifts and taxes that he had collected. The Prophet (PUH&HD) asked him to go back and also ask his contingent to join the Hajj ceremonies.

Hazrat Ali (AS) went back and less than half way to Yemen, he met the members of his contingent who were coming towards Makkah. To his horror he saw that the

soldiers had already distributed the gifts among themselves. He asked them as to who had ordered the distribution of the gifts without the permission of the Prophet (PBUH&HD)?

Obviously, it was their personal greed and temptation that they could not resist. He ordered that the gifts be deposited back and no one shall touch these unless these had been presented to the Prophet (PBUH&HD). The soldiers resented these orders but they had no choice but to obey.

Some of these soldiers complained to the Prophet (PBUH&HD) but the Prophet (PBUH&HD) said, "Ali is always right and uncompromising in obeying the orders of Allah and of His Apostle. So do never complain against him." (*Tabari Vol.2, p. 402*).

After the Umrah, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) ordered those who had not brought along their sacrificial animals to change their dress back to normal and come out of *ahram*. He and Hazrat Ali (AS) kept wearing the *ahram* as they had brought their sacrificial animals along. Here again some of the Muslims were reluctant to obey the orders. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) became very annoyed. He lectured to them, "O' People I want to tell you the difference in various types of Hajj and here you are bent upon opposing me only for the sake of opposition. O' Muslims when would you learn to obey the orders and instructions of your Prophet who only says what has been revealed to him by Allah?"

Hazrat Ayesha (RA) recalled, "On the 4th or the 5th Zilhij the Prophet (PBUH&HD) came to my abode and he looked very upset. I asked him as to what the matter was that he was in such a state of mind? He replied, 'Don't you know that I have ordered the Muslims that those who had not brought along their sacrificial animals with them, should

come out of *Ahram* but most of them are reluctant to obey my orders. If I had known I would have also not brought along the sacrificial animals, and would have purchased these from here and changed my dress." (*Sahih Muslim Vol.1, p. 390*)

In his Hajj sermon, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) summarized the salient points of his Ministry. The sermon was not only for the Muslims but also for the whole mankind. He spoke of creating a society based on justice, honesty, equality, fraternity and liberty. A society that is free of oppression, exploitation or tyranny. He not only spelt out the Human Rights but spoke at length of human dignity.

The return journey was resumed on 14th Zilhij.

Ghadeer

Ali Declared *Maula*

The Muslims often asked the Prophet (PBUH&HD) about the 'great news' that he had to tell. Obviously the Prophet (PBUH&HD) could only share the news when he was ordered to reveal it.

Allah revealed:

*Of what they ask one another?
Of the Great News,
That which they therein differ.
Verily! They shall soon come to know.
Verily, verily they shall soon come to know*

Qur'an 78:1-5

Allah revealed that those who ask so enthusiastically about it would turn away from it:

*Say thou, "It is a message of (great) importance
And you are turning away from it.*

Qur'an 38: 67 & 68

Then another message was revealed:

*And when thou hast finished (the duties of thy ministry),
then thou establish it!
And unto thy Lord, return with favour.*

Qur'an 94: 7 & 8

It had been revealed to the Prophet (PBUH&HD) that his physical life on this earth was about to end and, therefore, before bidding farewell he had to appoint his successor. It was not an ordinary announcement. It was the declaration of a successor of not only the last Prophet (PBUH&HD) but of all the one hundred and twenty four thousand Apostles of Allah. Their hard work, their sufferings and sacrifices and Allah's message had to be protected and carried forward till the Day of Judgment. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) awaited the right moment and the place for making this historic and important announcement.

During this homeward journey came the momentous occasion:

(O' Our Apostle Mohammad!) Deliver thou what hath been sent down unto thee from thy Lord; and if thou dost it not, then (it will be as if) thou hast not delivered His message (at all); and surely will Allah protect thee (from the mischief) of men; Verily! Allah guideth not an infidel people.

Qur'an 5:67

The announcement of the 'Great News' could not be postponed any further. As approximately one hundred thousand Muslims had performed Hajj, there would never be a better occasion for breaking the news.

When these Hajis crossed Hajfa, they came into a valley known as Ghadeer Khum. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) asked everyone to halt and camp here. He sent messengers to call back those who had gone ahead and waited for those who were coming up in the rear.

When all the people gathered, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) stood on the pulpit and started his speech. Most of the historians agree with the content of the sermon:

"In the name of Allah the Merciful and Compassionate.

All praise be to Allah who is one and Supreme.

He is all knowing and is nearer than the nearness.

He commands everything and His authority has no bounds.

And His position is unique and in its totality.

His power is unfathomable and everything is in His control.

He is being praised even before the creation of time and would continue to be praised when the time would cease to exist.

In Him there is no decline.

He is the Creator of everything.

One day we all will return to Him.

Whatever He has created will surely return to Him.

He has created every particle of this universe including what all is in the heavens and in the earth.

He created the heavens that are suspended and He created this earth.

He is kind and merciful.

He bestows his blessings on his creatures.

Nothing is hidden from Him but He is obscure.

Human eyes do not have the capacity to have even a glimpse of Him.

He is kind and Compassionate and He is forgiving.

His kindness encompasses everything.

He has bestowed His blessings that are beyond measure.

He is not in a hurry to punish those who transgress.

He is not in a hurry to send His curse upon those who have disobeyed Him.

He knows what ever is hidden and He knows what is in your hearts and your minds.

He is all Knowing and all Powerful.

Nothing is hidden from Him. He is all Knowing and Most powerful.

Every creation reveals that He is the Creator.

He bestowed life on all the living and there is no creator but Him.

He is most wise and there is nothing that is beyond His knowledge.

He is beyond recognition and beyond comprehension.

I bear witness that He is Almighty

No one has any share in His Creations and He is not dependent on anyone.

When he wants to Create, He says BE and it is there.

All praise is to Him.

Allah is Just.”

After the sermon in praise of Allah, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) said, “O’ people, I am only a human being. The time is not too far that a message may come and I would not be among you. Have I not faithfully conveyed to you all the revelations received?” Everyone acknowledged that yes he had. Then he asked, “Am I not the master of the souls of the believers than they themselves?” (Qura’n 33:6) They all said, “Certainly O’ Apostle.”

Then he asked Hazrat Ali (AS) to join him on the pulpit and stand with him. Hazrat Ali (AS) went up the pulpit. The Prophet said, “Allah has ordained that I reveal this message to you without any further delay. He repeated the verse:

(O’ Our Apostle Muhammad!) Deliver thou what hath been sent down unto thee from thy Lord; and if thou dost it not, then (it will be as if) thou hast not delivered His message (at all); and surely will Allah protect thee (from the mischief) of men; Verily! Allah guideth not an infidel people.

Qur'an 5: 67

Everyone was anxious to know the command of Allah that outweighed the whole work of Apostleship?

He raised the hand of Hazrat Ali (AS) and declared:

“To whomsoever I am the *Maula* (the Lord, the Master) this Ali is his *Maula*.

He is my successor and my vicegerent. Obey him and follow his orders. These are the orders of Allah and there is no doubt in His Book.”

He continued, “O' People! Ali is your *Maula* after Allah and His Apostle. He is the one about whom this verse was revealed. You all know that he is the one who had offered poor-rate while bowing in prayers.”

Verily, verily, your guardian is (none else but) Allah, His Apostle (Muhammad) and those who believe, those who establish prayer and pay the poor-rate, while they even be bowing down (in prayer).

Qur'an 5:55

As the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) completed the declaration, the verse was revealed:

....This day have I perfected for you, your religion, and have completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam (to be) the religion,

Qur'an 5:3

The obvious inference from this divine proclamation is nothing but that without believing in the *Wilayat* and *Imamat* of Ali, the faith is incomplete. The 'Great News' had been revealed.

The religion had been completed and perfected. No more Prophets would come. Now it was the job of the *Imams*, (spiritual leaders) who were the heirs to the knowledge of the Qur'an and divine wisdom of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), to lead the affairs of the religion and of the State in all social, political, cultural and military matters. These righteous and infallible *Imams* would establish *Khelaphat-e-Ellahiya* (Divine rule of governance on His earth).

Hazrat Ali (AS) was the first *Imam* after the Prophet (PBUH&HD) that Allah had promised Hazrat Ibrahim (PBUH):

"And remember when his Lord tried Ibrahim with certain words then he fulfilled them; He said, "Verily I make you Imam for mankind." Ibrahim asked, "And of my offspring?" He said, "My covenant reaches not the unjust."

Qur'an 2:124

"Verily Allah did chose Adam and Noah and the descendents of Ibrahim and the descendants of Imran above all the worlds."

Qur'an 3:32

It is His and His authority alone to choose and when He has chosen and has appointed Hazrat Ali (AS) as *Maula* then anyone disagreeing with His decision is the transgressor.

However, after this historical declaration, the sincere friends as well as the hypocrites congratulated Hazrat Ali (AS).

Demise of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD)

After the *Hajja-tul-Wida*, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) began to wrap up his affairs. He had faithfully conveyed all that had been revealed to him. He announced that his days on this earth were numbered.

Some were worried and some others started to consult each other as to how to grab the position of the Caliph. Most of them agreed that although Hazrat Ali (AS) had been nominated by the Prophet (PBUH&HD) himself and was also superior in every respect yet, the position was too tempting.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) could also sense the conspiracies that were brewing up in various quarters. He knew that the majority would challenge the declaration that was made at Ghadeer-e-Khum. In times of crisis and in situations of peril, the majority of his companions had deserted him and had left him at the mercy of the enemy. Now that he was leaving for good, there were many who would return to the life of comfort and luxury rather than following the dictates of Allah and His apostle. There would be dissension, revolt, mischief and perfidy.

Quite a few of those who had profusely showered congratulations upon Hazrat Ali (AS) at *Ghadeer* would become his enemies. After him, there would be lot of trouble for his *Ahlul Bayt*. The burden on Hazrat Ali (AS) and his descendents was going to be too heavy.

The Prophet's (PBUH&HD) health was gradually deteriorating and he spent most of his day in bed.

During Jamadi-ul-Awwal 8 Hijri, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had sent Haris bin Umair Azadi as his envoy, to Busra, Chieftain of Ghassan, a powerful tribe inhabiting Syria and Jordan. The envoy was intercepted and killed by the local Ghassan Chieftain Shurahbeel bin Amr. This was not only against Arab culture but even a violation of recognized tradition of diplomatic immunity that all envoys enjoyed. This barbarous act of the Ghassan outraged the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and he immediately sent an expedition to take punitive action against Ghassan.

Zaid bin Harisa was to be the commander of this three thousand men strong force, and in case of his martyrdom, Hazrat Jafar (AS) bin Abu Talib had to assume the command. If Hazrat Jafar (AS) be martyred, the command would devolve upon Abdullah bin Rawaha. Then the Prophet (PBUH&HD) said, "If Rawaha is also martyred, let the men choose their commander from among themselves." Khalid bin Walid was also included in this force but was given no specific responsibility by the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) further ordered Zaid, "Seek out the murderer and punish him. Invite the people of Mauta to embrace Islam. If they do accept the noble invitation, no harm must come to them."

When this force arrived at Ma'an, the scouts informed the Commander that Heraclius, the Eastern Roman Emperor, was there with a force of one hundred thousand Romans and had been joined by one hundred thousand Christian Arabs mainly from Ghassan.

The Muslims stayed in Ma'an for two days and debated about their next move. Some were in favour of sending a

message to the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and seeking his fresh orders regarding this surprise situation. However, Abdullah bin Rawaha spoke in favour of implementing the original plan, which was accepted.

When the Muslims reached near Balqa, a large force of Christian Arabs challenged them. Finding the ground unfavourable for a battle, the Muslims turned towards Mauta. The enemy followed them to Mauta and here they decided to fight.

Zaid deployed his force in the traditional manner with left wing, right wing and center. Malik bin Zalfa, the commander of the Christian force, faced the Muslim in a mass formation. The respective commanders fought at the head of their troops holding their Standards. This was mainly a battle of guts rather than any tactical skill.

After a short while, Zaid was martyred and Hazrat Jafar (AS) quickly took up the Standard. Hazrat Jafar (AS) received several injuries and the Standard waved a little when his one hand was severed. He held the Standard till his second hand was also severed. Hazrat Jafar (AS) fell with the Standard. The Muslims were demoralized as Hazrat Jafar (AS) was held in great esteem as a cousin brother of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), as a gallant fighter and as a great orator. He was the one who had first migrated to Habsha and had convinced the Christian Chieftain with his knowledge of the Qur'an and his strength of conviction.

Bin Rawaha quickly picked up the Standard and the Muslims continued to fight the enemy who was five times stronger than they. The Muslims would have easily subdued the enemy if they had been two or three times stronger. When Rawaha fell, the Standard was picked up by

Sabit bin Arqam and he shouted, "O' Muslims, agree upon a commander so that I can hand over the Standard to him."

He offered the Standard to Khalid but he showed his reluctance to accept this responsibility under the adverse situation. However, knowing the fighting skill of Khalid, all Muslims agreed that Khalid should be their commander.

Khalid reorganized his troops and the Muslims attacked fiercely. The hand-to-hand combat became increasingly desperate with both sides trying to gain ground. Suddenly Qutba broke ranks and dashed towards Malik bin Zalfa and killed him. This resulted in a setback to the enemy and caused the Christian force to pull back.

Khalid used his tactical skill and asked the Muslims to break contact. He wanted breathing space to plan his next move. So far the Muslims had lost only twelve warriors but the enemy must have suffered considerable casualties.

Khalid was a brave fighter and a tactician of repute and, according to his appreciation, the situation was too grave to be retrieved. He, therefore, decided to withdraw during the hours of darkness and return to Medina. When this force returned to Medina, the people of Medina welcomed them with shouts of 'cowards, cowards' and also threw dust upon them.

When the Prophet (PBUH&HD) was told of this defeat and the manner in which Muslims had fought, he prayed for the martyrs and commended the bravery of Hazrat Jafar (AS) and said, "Jafar is in the heavens, Allah has replaced his hands with wings and he flies from one place to another like a bird." Since then he has been named as *Jafar Tayar*.

The reverses suffered at Mauta had not been forgotten. At this stage the Prophet (PBUH&HD), now ailing, ordered a large expedition to be prepared for the invasion of Jordan. Usama bin Zaid bin Harisa was made the commander of this expedition. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) ordered him, "Go to the place where your father was martyred. Raid those territories. Go fast; send your scouts ahead of the main body."

Usama was a young man but the Prophet (PBUH&HD) appointed him as the commander much to the dismay and disappointment of a number of senior companions. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) named each companion who must go under the command of Usama. That included Hazrat Abu Baker (RA), Hazrat Umar (RA), Ubaida bin Jarrah, Sa'ad bin Abi Waqas, Said bin Zaid, Qatada bin Nauman and Salama bin Aslam bin Harish and a number of others. (*Tabqat Vol. 2, p.190*)

Initially, the Muslims vehemently objected to the appointment of Usama on the grounds that he was young and inexperienced. Some of them also remarked that they belonged to the elite class whereas Usama was the son of a slave. When the Prophet (PBUH&HD) heard these remarks, he was greatly disappointed, as some of his companions were still captives of the illusion of the class system practiced during the days of Ignorance. Supported by Hazrat Ali (AS) and Abbas, he came out and addressed his companions:

"Earlier you people had also objected to the appointment of his father. By Allah, his father Zaid was very competent and I consider Usama more competent for this appointment than anyone else whom I have nominated to go on this expedition." (*Sahih Muslim Vol.2, p.283*)

He insisted that young Usama, son of a slave, was to be the commander of an army in which the elite of Quresh had to serve as common soldiers. Those elders and seniors whom the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had trained for so long just disobeyed his orders. They refused to leave Medina, however, they moved out and camped at a distance of three miles from Medina and awaited the demise of the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

The Prophet (PBUH&HD), on his deathbed would agonizingly ask, "Has Usama's expedition left for Mauta?" Each time the reply came in the negative. That negative reply pained him immensely.

This blatant disobedience of the Prophet's (PBUH&HD) orders was a direct challenge to his wisdom, his decision and his authority which he drew from Allah. He saw a bleak future for the people after his death.

One day a number of his companions gathered around his bed, he asked them, "Give me a pen and parchment so that I can write my Will and you would not go astray after my death." One of the companions remarked, "The Prophet (PBUH&HD) is not in his right frame of mind so pen and parchment should not be provided to him."

Not proceeding to battle under Usama and these remarks were against the spirit of Qur'an:

Erreth not your Companion (Our Apostle Mohammad) nor is he led astray;

And nor he speaketh of (his own) inclination.

It (the wording) is naught but a revelation revealed (unto him).

Taught Him the one Intense in power,

Denying him the pen and the parchment resulted in a hot discussion among the Prophet's (PBUH&HD) wives and those present around his bed. Hazrat Ali (AS) remained quiet and just listened to both the sides. When the quarrel became intolerably loud, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) asked them to get out and leave him alone.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) found the majority of his followers challenging his decisions and creating confusion that would lead some of them astray except those chosen ones who had been endowed with Knowledge.

"Last night of his sickness before his demise, in the middle of the night, alone with his man helper, he goes to the graveyard and spends a long time whispering to the silent corpses, with the greatest of pain, saying: 'May Allah bless you all. How lucky you are to be dead and, therefore, not facing this present situation.'" (Dr. Ali Shariate 'Fatima is Fatima')

Then he called Hazrat Ali (AS), and continued to whisper into his ears some of the divine secrets that were being revealed to him on this his last day on the earth.

A short while before he passed away, he handed over his sword and his ring to Hazrat Ali (AS). He then said, "Ali, I had taken some loan from such and such Jew. Please pay it back to him. Ali you would give me the bath and coffin, no one except you should see my naked body. I should be buried here in my house." When the Prophet (PBUH&HD) breathed his last breath, his head was between the hands and chest of Hazrat Ali (AS). (*Riazul Nasrah Vol.2, p.237; Tabqat Vol.2, p.263*)

Dark clouds of sorrow engulfed the Muslims. The family and friends of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) were crying and wailing. Hazrat Umar (RA), for reasons best known to him, pulled out his sword and threatened those present in the mosque:

"I will kill anyone who ever says that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) has died. He has been only lifted to the heavens. He will surely return." (*Tabari Vol.2, p.442; Abul Fida Vol.1, p.156; Bdaiul Nahya Vol.5, p.242*).

The public was flabbergasted at what Hazrat Umar (RA) was saying. In the meanwhile, Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA) came and saw for himself that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had passed away. He went out and quietly told Hazrat Umar (RA) the facts. Then he addressed the crowd and said, "Anyone who worships Allah must know that Allah never dies but those who worshipped the Prophet (PBUH&HD) should know that he is no more with us." Then he recited the verse; (*And Mohammad is not but an Apostle, (Other) apostles have already passed away prior to him; Therefore if he dieth or be slain, will ye turn upon your heels? And*he who turneth away upon his heels will by no means does harm to Allah in the least, and shortly will Allah reward the grateful ones. Qur'an 3:143*). (*Tabari Vol.2, p.443*)

Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA), Hazrat Umar (RA) and some other companions quietly left the Mosque and went to *Saqeefa Bani Sa'ada*. This meeting at *Saqeefa Bani Sa'ada* must have been prearranged.

Only Bani Hashim and those companions who had no political clout or influence like Hazrat Salman Farsi, Abu Zar Ghafari, Ammar Yassir, Bilal, Miqdad etc. remained to participate in the burial rituals of the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

Hazrat Ali (AS) gave the bath and Hazrat Abbas and Usama supplied the water. When Hazrat Ali (AS) and Hazrat Abbas were busy in the burial rituals of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), Hazrat Abbas said, "Ali there is a conspiracy going on at *Saqeefa Bani Saada* to appoint a Caliph so that the *Khelaphate* does not come to you. Extend your hand and I will declare allegiance and announce in the public that you have been accepted as Caliph."

Hazrat Ali (AS) said, "Is there anyone else who can aspire to be a Caliph?" It implied that how the Muslims could so soon forget all the verses and the declarations about him and about his status. How anyone who had not been endowed with the Divine Wisdom and Knowledge could lead the *Ummah*? Well! It did happen.

After the ablution, he was given the coffin. Hazrat Ali (AS) said the burial-prayers. Then he asked those who were present in the mosque to go in and say their burial-prayers. Of course, those who had known that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) was dead and had assembled at *Saqeefa* did miss the burial-prayers.

Zaid bin Sahal dug the grave, Hazrat Ali (AS), Hazrat Abbas bin Abdul Mutalib and Usama bin Zaid were there to lower the body of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) into the grave. Some of the *Ansars* (original inhabitants of Medina) demanded that one of them be included in this noble task. Hazrat Ali (AS) permitted Owais bin Kholi to come in and participate.

On the fateful day of 28 Safar 11 Hijri, this golden age of revelations, faith, pains, sufferings and successes ended on a very tragic note. Even during the last moments of his life, he was disobeyed and his orders were flouted. The Usama

expedition did not leave. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) was not provided with a pen and parchment and he could not write his will for the guidance of the Muslims.

The senior companions nominated by the Prophet (PBUH&HD) were just not prepared to leave Medina. At this crucial time and juncture of history, they wanted to stay and control the post-demise events. The others only waited vacantly.

Hazrat Ali (AS) and Hazrat Fatima (SA) observed that within hours of the demise of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), his house had assumed a strange look. They went to their own house next door. Hazrat Fatima (SA) opened the window of her house and looked at the window of her father's house that he used to knock every morning and every night to greet his loving daughter. That window was closed shut. She stood and stared at the window for a long time. It will never open again.

As for the payment of claims, at every Hajj season, Hazrat Ali (AS) would announce that if anyone had any claim upon the Prophet (PBUH&HD) he should receive it from him (Hazrat Ali (AS)). This was announced every year during Hajj days till Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS) was martyred. (For fifty years). (*Tabqat Ibn SA'd Vol.2, p.319*)

Guidance

Allah wants to bestow His blessings upon the people in this world and the next. To earn His blessings, one must follow the right path.

Guide us (O' Lord) on the Right path. The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed Thy bounties not (the path) of those inflicted with Thy wrath, nor (of those) gone astray.

Qur'an 1: 6 & 7

Allah has not left people without guidance. The Qur'an is all comprehensive and complete in all respects. The Qur'an, the Book of Allah is the best guide, if one may try to understand it and follow it.

This Book, this holy Qur'an is 'kareem' which means Honourable, Charitable, Beneficent and Liberal. It is the Word of the Gracious and Beneficent Lord of the Universe. It consists of the manifest signs. The holy Qur'an is a treasure that is concealed, hidden and duly protected. It is on *Louhe Mahfooz* (the secured and Guarded Tablet) – in which case the book in our hands is a recital form of the Holy Qur'an. The actual Book is 'Kitab-e-Maknoon (The Hidden Book).

"Verily we have made it an Arabic Qur'an that ye may understand.

And verily it is in the 'ummul kitab' that is with Us, the Most Exalted, (it is) full of Wisdom."

Qur'an 43:3& 4

The Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) was endowed with the knowledge of the Book and the Wisdom to lead the *Ummah*. Allah Almighty taught His *Kitab-e-Maknoon* to the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD).

"Taught him the One Intense in Power."

Qur'an 53:5

Thus does Allah, All Mighty and All Wise, reveal to you as (He did) to those before you.

Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His. He is most high and supreme.

Qur'an 42:3&4

And with Him are the keys (of the treasures) of the unseen – knoweth it not any one but He; and He (alone) knoweth what is in the land and the sea: and (there) falleth not (even) a leaf (of a tree) but He knoweth it, nor a grain in the darkness (in the deepest place) of the earth, nor anything wet or dry but (it is) in a clear Book.

Qur'an 6:59

He it is Who hath sent down to thee (O' Our Apostle Mohammad!) the Book of it there are (some) verses decisive these are the basis of the Book, and others are having more than one meaning; But those in whose hearts there is perversity, they are after that which is ambiguous and seeking to interpret (to suit their own motives) while none knoweth its (hidden) interpretation except Allah and those firmly rooted in Knowledge; say they: "We believe in it, all is from our Lord" but none heeds (this) save those endowed with Wisdom.

Qur'an 3:6

Allah has also appointed *Ahlul Zikr* and guides, endowed with Wisdom and Knowledge for the correct interpretation of the Qur'an:

And We sent not before thee but men (as our apostles), We revealed unto them: So ask ye the people of Zikr (the Book) if ye know not.

Qur'an 16:43

"...And everything have We confined into a Manifesting Imam."

Qur'an 36:12

People asked the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) as to who was this Manifesting Imam and he replied:

"O' people there is no leaf of knowledge that Allah has not bestowed upon me and I have conveyed that knowledge to Ali."

The Knowledge has been firmly rooted in the hearts of these *Ahlul Zikr* (Guides) and they have also been endowed with divine wisdom through the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD). These guides call the people to the right path. It is, therefore, mandatory for those who are in the quest for His blessings and the path of righteousness to follow His Book and the Guides endowed with the Knowledge of the Book and have been appointed by Him.

Hazrat Ali (AS) said, "Ask me about the Holy Qur'an, for I know when each and every verse of it was revealed, for

whom it was revealed in particular and to whom it applies in general.”

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) testified to this statement of Hazrat Ali (AS), and declared “*Ana Medina tul ilme wa Ali un babo ha*” [This saying of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) is generally translated as ‘I am City of knowledge and Ali is its Gate.’ Here to translate *Medina* as ‘city’ and *bab* as ‘gate’ would not be entirely correct. ‘City’ and ‘Gate’ depict as places with restricted dimensions. Howsoever big a city one might imagine it would still have its geographical and physical boundaries. The Prophet’s (PBUH&HD) knowledge is certainly limitless. The other languages fall short when trying to convey the full meanings and the spirit contained in this saying of the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

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Allah does not appoint an apostle, a caliph, an Imam or a leader unless He has bestowed Knowledge and Wisdom upon him.

Before Allah appointed Hazrat Adam (AS) as His caliph on His earth, He taught him and He tested him:

(O Mohammad) when your Lord said to the angels: “Verily I am going to appoint a vicegerent in the earth,” they said: “Will You (O our Lord) place one in it who will make mischief and shed blood, while we celebrate Your praise and extol Your holiness?” He said: “Verily I know what you do not know.”

And He taught Adam the names, all of them, and then set them before the angles and said: “Tell Me the names of these if you are truthful.”

They said: "Glory be to You (O Lord)! We have no knowledge save what You have taught us. Verily You alone are the All-knowing, the All-wise."

He said: "O Adam! Inform them of their names." And when he informed them of their names, He (the Lord) said: "Did I not say to you that verily I know the secrets of the heavens and the earth and I know that which you declare and that which you conceal?"

Qur'an 2:30-33

*

Imamate (leadership)

Verily Ibrahim was an Imam (leader in religion) (for the people), devoutly obedient to Allah, upright, and he was not of the polytheists,

Grateful for His bounties; He (Allah) chose him and He guided him on the right path.

Qur'an 16:120 & 121

Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) knew that the apostleship would end but the guidance and the guides / leaders (Imam) would be required to lead the mankind on the path of righteousness. So he wished that Allah would select Imams from his descendents.

This honour, this leadership of mankind, this *Imamate* did not come easily to Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH&HD). He had to go through a rigorous test. As a reward of his devotion, dedication, and piety and for fulfilling his commitments, Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) was rewarded with *Imamate* (Divinely commissioned Guidance). This *Imamate*

(leadership) is not the leadership for a clan or of the Muslims alone or is restricted by time but it is a leadership for the entire universe and till eternity. It indicates that in addition to *Risalat* (Apostleship), *Imamate* (leadership) is also an honour from Almighty Allah for His chosen ones. Like *Risalat* (Apostleship), *Imamate* is also an integral part of the Faith. Imam is the leader and the promised guide so that at any age or time, people do not go astray. When awarded or rewarded with this honour, Hazrat Ibrahim (PBUH) immediately asked for the same for his descendents.

And (remember) when his Lord tried Ibrahim with certain words, and he fulfilled them, He said: Verily, I make you an Imam (leader) for mankind." He (Ibrahim) said: "And my off-springs?" He said: "My covenant will not include the unjust."

Qur'an 2:124

It clearly signified that the leadership would remain in his progeny but only for a selected few. It was only for the righteous and the just ones. Only those who are infallible, purified and devoted to Allah as He ordains. And above all, they are divinely guided and not those who indulged in idol worshiping or have had doubts.

It was the purest and the noblest blood of Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) that flowed through generations and reached Abdul Mutalib. From Abdul Mutalib it travelled to his sons Hazrat Abdullah (PBUH) and Hazrat Abu Talib. From these two, to their sons Prophet Mohammad (PBUH&HD) and Hazrat Imam Ali (AS) respectively. From Hazrat Ali (AS) and Hazrat Fatima (SA), daughter of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), it was transferred to their eleven infallible descendents. So the *Imamate* came to the Prophet

(PBUH&HD) and Hazrat Ali (AS) and his eleven descendents who all were endowed with the Divine Knowledge, Wisdom and they had never worshipped idols.

And thy Lord createth whatever He willeth and (also) chooseth too: it is not theirs to choose; Hallowed is Allah and Exalted High is He (far) above them what they join (with Him).

And thy Lord knoweth what they concealeth in their hearts and what they declare.

Qur'an 28:68 & 69

Allah also clarified it in the case of Hazrat Noah (PBUH). When the water of the storm was rising and the selected few had got on board, one of his sons refused to get on the Ark. When he was drowning Hazrat Noah said, "O' Allah! Please save him, he is my son." Allah said, "He is not your son":

And Noah cried unto his Lord and said: " My Lord! Verily my son is of my family; and verily Thy promise is true, and Thou art the most just of the judges."

Said, He (Allah): "O' Noah! Verily he is not of thy family; Verily he is (of) conduct other than righteous; Therefore, seek thou not of Me that of which thou hast no knowledge; Verily I admonish thee lest thou mayest be of the ignorant ones."

Said he: "O' My Lord! I seek refuge in Thee from asking Thee that of which I have no knowledge; And if Thou forgiveth me not and have no mercy on me, I should be of the losers."

Qur'an 11: 45-47

Even if the son of an apostle turns away from the path of righteousness, he cannot claim the rights of being a descendent.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) and his *Ahlul Bayt* and the infallible Imams are the manifestation of the supplication of Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH).

These selected descendents of Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) were bestowed with the Book, the Wisdom and a Great Kingdom so that they could guide the people. The others, out of jealousy, digressed.

Or do they envy the people for what Allah hath given them of His grace; but indeed We have given to Ibrahim's children the Book and the Wisdom and We gave them a Great Kingdom.

Qur'an 4:54

And that there should be among you a group who call (mankind) unto virtue and enjoin what is good and forbid wrong; and these are they who shall be successful.

And he is not like those who got divided and disagreed after clear evidences have come unto them; and these for them is a great torment.

(On) the Day when some faces will be bright and some faces will be "black! And as to those whose faces will have turned black; (it will be said unto them) "What! Did you disbelieve after believing? Taste ye, then, the chastisement for what ye were disbelieving."

And as to those whose faces shall have become white they shall be in the Mercy of Allah; therein shall they abide.

These are the signs of Allah, We recite them unto thee in truth; And Allah intendeth not injustice to mankind.

Allah is whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth: and unto Allah (only) shall all matters return.

Qur'an 3:104-109

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The Prophet (PBUH&HD), at *Ghadeer-e-Khum* once again declared Hazrat Ali (AS) as the *Maula* (*Guardian, Lord, Master, Commander, Leader*) of the people along with the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD). He declared that Hazrat Ali (AS) is his heir. So Hazrat Ali (AS) and his descendant *Imams*, being the heirs of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH&HD) and of Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH), are the heirs to the Book, the Wisdom and they rule this Great Kingdom that had been bestowed upon the children of Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH).

After this declaration the religion Islam was completed. (*Qur'an 5:3*)

Thus the belief in the institution of *Imamate* became an integral part of the Faith. This religion Islam was only declared to be perfect and complete after the declaration and acceptance of *Imamate*; Hazrat Ali (AS) is the *Maula* (*Guardian*) after the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD). All Muslims must follow him and obey him.

It is a historic fact that Hazrat Ali (AS) paid the poor-rate while he was bowing down in prayers.

Verily, Verily, your guardian is (none else but) Allah and His Apostle (Mohammad) and those who believe, those who establish prayer and pay the poor-rate, while they be (even) bowing down (in Prayer).

Qur'an 5:55

To further distinguish Hazrat Ali (AS) and *Ahlul Bayt* once, after evening prayers, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) told his companions, "At dawn, tomorrow, a star will descend on the earth from the heavens. On whosever's house it would descend upon will be my heir, my successor and he is the divinely commissioned guide. The star descended on the house of Hazrat Ali (AS).

The Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) said, "O' Ali! By the One who has sent me as His apostle, I say that for thee has been assigned by Allah, to be my heir, my caliph and Imam."

The hypocrites, who could not swallow this distinction, commented that the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD), in his love for Ali (AS), had gone astray. On this occasion, these verses were revealed:

*By the star when it goeth down,
Erreth not your Companion (our Apostle Mohammad) nor
is he led astray;
Nor he speaketh of (his own) inclination;
It (the wording) is naught but a revelation revealed (unto
him).*

Qur'an 53:1-4

For our guidance Allah tells us, with examples, that only those guided by Allah can be the leader and also admonishes us for not following His dictates and

establishing conjectures. No doubt our Prophet Mohammad (PBUH&HD) is the best guide, therefore, we have been ordained to follow him. His guidance is with wisdom, justice and truth. Obey his orders, take what he gives you and refrain from what he forbids because he speaks not but the word of his Lord.

"What! Is he who goeth along groveling on his face, better guided, or he who walketh upright on the straight path."

Qur'an 67:22

"Say thou (O' Our Apostle Mohammad!) "Of your associates is there any one who can guide unto truth?" Say thou! "It is Allah alone Who guideth unto truth; Is then He Who guideth unto truth more worthy to be followed or he who himself goeth not aright unless he is guided? What then hath befallen you? How (ill) ye judge?"

"And follow not most of them (anything) but (their own) conjectures; verily conjecture cannot avail anything against the truth; verily Allah knoweth all what they do."

Qur'an 10: 35 & 36)

"O David We have made thee Caliph on earth, so do thy rule (Judge) among mankind with Justice."

Qur'an 38:25

The people had also objected to the appointment of Hazrat Talut (Saul) when he was appointed as a ruler over them. Allah has provided us clear signs that He alone has the authority to appoint and none else:

And their Prophet said unto them "Verily Allah hath risen up for you Talut (to be) the king (over you)." They said,

"How can the kingdom be his, over us, whereas we are more rightful for it than he while he is not gifted with abundance of wealth;" He said, "Verily, Allah hath chosen him over you and hath increased him in knowledge and physique; and verily, Allah granteth His kingdom unto whom so He pleaseth; Allah is Omniscient and All-Knowing.

Qur'an 2:247

The following points are clear from the above verse:

- The divine law is that a ruler of the people be he a mere temporal ruler, is chosen not by the people but by Allah Himself.
- One chosen by Him to rule over His people is endowed with divine knowledge and godly strength of the body and the mind.
- The Kingdom is of Allah alone, and it is granted only by Him and it is granted to whomsoever He likes, whether or not people like it, and the Kingdom of Allah extends to the universe as a whole, and the authority to rule His Kingdom on His behalf will always be only with the one whom Allah Himself grants it.

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Allah ordains those who believe that they must obey Allah His Apostle and *Ullil Amr* (one vested with authority) among you. These men of authority are not those who are in authority as rulers or the heads of state, but the ones who have been given divine authority by Allah.

"O' you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the messenger and those vested with authority (from) among you..."

Qur'an 4:59

These *Ullil Amr* (persons with divine authority) are present all the times. They receive guidance from Allah and guide the people:

*In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful
Verily We sent it (the Qur'an) down in the night of Qadr
(grandeur or power)*

What shall you know what the night of Qadr is?

The night of Qadr is better than a thousand months. The angels and the (holy) spirits descend therein by the permission of their Lord, with (decrees) for all affairs.

(It is all) peace, till the break of the dawn.

Qur'an 97

These angles and holy spirits descend on '*Sahiban-e-Amr*', (the purified souls with authority) who further implement Allah's orders. This happens every year and at every place. No spot is left where His *Amr* (orders) are not conveyed.

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Imamate is Allah's covenant. All the twelve Imams have never committed any sin. They remained infallible from their birth to their martyrdom. They had no formal education at hands of any mortal in this world but were divinely educated of all the knowledge and wisdom from the same fountainhead. Everyone, even their enemies, acknowledged that they were perfect as human beings and as guides.

Imamate is an institution, a school, a philosophy, a beacon and a symbol. *Imamate* is boundless in time and space. An Imam is an Imam in all states of his presence or absence. He is an Imam on a pulpit. He is an Imam even when bound in chains and thrown behind iron bars. He is an Imam when he is a ruler and an Imam when he is a subject. He is an Imam if tilling the lands and he is an Imam even when he is mending his old sandals. At no stage and by no means his Wisdom, his Knowledge of The Book or his Manifestation can be taken away from him. He is an Imam every moment and at every place.

Imam is a man but he is a man apart. He is a perfect person. He has attained the parameters of perfection, which have been laid by the Almighty Himself. He is not a superman but a man with super qualities. He is human but does not become captive of human needs. He is not a victim of greed. Desires of comfort and luxury do not overcome him. He is neither self-indulgent nor prone to self-preservation.

To follow an Imam is not hero worship. Instead, an Imam leads his followers towards the heights that human beings have always desired and craved for. He tells them how far a man can reach. He demonstrates how a man can progress in his qualities and in the achievement of his ideals. He guides them not to worship any real or manufactured hero but to worship Allah Almighty.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) and Imams all have been taught and guided to lead the Muslim *Ummah*. *Ummah* is more than a nation. *Ummah* is dynamic, it must continue to move forward, and it must progress and must have a common objective. The direction and the right path has also been made manifestly clear.

In modern political philosophy, the political leader, the party or the system is supposed to be good and successful that arranges to provide all possible comforts, safety, economic prosperity and security of life and property to its subjects. Everything that the people desire must be available in abundance and available to everyone. People must lead a luxurious and a carefree life.

A man of modern times is usually not aware of the concepts of sacrifice for others. His own self, his worldly possessions and his means of comfort are dearer to him than anyone or anything else. He is a pitiable victim of self-preservation and the pursuit of domination over others. He has no other philosophy, no other guiding principles. He has no Imam Hussain (AS) to teach him the secrets of attaining an everlasting spiritual empire. A modern 'civilized' person knows that he has only but a limited time and fleeting moments, therefore, he must collect as much wealth as he can and lead a life free from all worries. He thinks, "Let me draw as much pleasure from today because tomorrow I shall be no more."

The comfort, luxury and fulfillment of all instinctive and materialistic desires are bound to bring stagnation and moral corruption in the society. With so much luxury that has come to him without effort often leads to moral bankruptcy. Life becomes aimless. The nation becomes useless, fatuous, and imbecilic.

This is not the case with *Ummah*. In the *Ummah* there is dynamism, an urge to progress, and an endeavor to attain ever-rising heights and goals, as well as the enhancement of spiritual values.

An Imam does not aim at pleasing people or meeting their wish list. The Book guides him. Allah has endowed him

with the Knowledge and Wisdom of *Kitab-e-Maknoon*. He infuses a spirit of dynamism in the *Ummah* and he does not allow them to stagnate and rot. There is a quest, a resolve and a constant progress towards the ultimate goal.

It is the duty of an Imam to establish a society based on justice and equity for all. Islamic society must be free of human exploitation and there must be respect for human rights, values and dignity. People are to be provided with all opportunities to progress in the attainment of knowledge, as well as schooled in harnessing the forces of nature to put them in the service of humanity. In addition, the Imam is also responsible for the development of character and the human soul. Man must be pulled out of the pit of ignorance and raised to the higher pedestals that distinguish him from the animals.

Our Prophet and Imam Hazrat Mohammad (PBUH&HD) did not spend a single moment of his life in comfort or luxury. In spite of being a ruler of a country he ate only a few dates or a piece of barley bread and slept on a wooden plank. As a leader and Imam he laid the foundations of a progressive society where all people had equal rights and were justly treated. He infused dynamism in the *Ummah*, and set the pace and pattern of progress of the human soul, mind and thought. He taught the constitution of the Book.

His lifestyle was most simple and his house had only one bedroom. He was not in favour of building luxurious castles and his mosque had mud walls and a thatched roof without a sky rising minaret. He vehemently condemned the conduct, mentality and living style of the Egyptian, Roman and Persian Emperors.

For the comfort of these Pharos and emperors, castles were constructed for their living as well as their dead family

members. Thousands and thousands of hungry human beings toiled for years to move and lift heavy stones to construct their castles and the tombs. Is there a count of the lashes that were inflicted on the naked and underfed bodies of these laborers who had been transformed into beasts of burden? Is there any sign or recompense for those who perished in this endeavour?

High rising Roman style castles, silks and perfumes and *Harems* with slaves and concubines came into the lives of Muslims when they stopped listening to the Holy Imams. The voices of righteous Imams were strangled and all the Imams, one after the other, were martyred as they asked the rulers to be just and kind to their subjects and not to introduce innovations in the religion.

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Imam on the Day of Judgment

It is essential that every person seeking salvation and who has the desire for achievement of the ultimate objective of the faith and life, i.e. learning the true interpretation of the Book, must recognize his Imam, follow him and seek his guidance. We need an Imam to follow him for life on this world and we will need him on the Day of Judgment.

Everyone's deeds on the Day of Judgment will be manifested in a clear and visible form. Every one of us will appear, on the Day of Judgment with the Imam (Guide, Leader) whom he has been following and obeying during one's life on this earth. Everyone will be called to account for his faith and deeds. Blessed are those who follow the

Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) and his Holy *Ahlul Bayt*, the purified ones.

And remember the Day (of Judgment) when We will summon every people with their Imams (Leader); then whosoever is given his book in his right hand, these shall read their books (with pleasure), and they shall not be dealt with (even) a shred unjustly.

And whosoever is blind in this (life), he shall in the hereafter (also) be blind and gone further astray from the (right) path.

Qur'an 17:71 & 72

The righteous Imams not only lead their followers in this world and the next but they have the Almighty's permission even to intercede on the Day of Judgment:

But We would drive the guilty ones, unto Hell like (the thirsty) herd (to the watering place).

They shall own not any intercession, save who hath taken a promise from the Beneficent Allah (to do so).

Qur'an 19:86 & 87

Of course, there will be a few misguided ones who will also claim to be the Imams (leaders) but they only lead their followers to the hellfire:

And We made them Imams who invite to the (Hell) fire and on the day of resurrection they shall not be helped.

Qur'an 28:41

And those who lead to the Right Path – Paradise:

And of them We made Imams (Leaders) to guide (the people) by Our command as they were steadfast and they of our signs were quite certain.

Qur'an 33:24

Hazrat Ali (AS) as a witness (Qur'an 11:17) had been especially permitted by Allah to intercede. By selling his soul while he slept in the bed of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) on the night when he migrated to Medina, Hazrat Ali (AS) had obtained Allah's pleasure (Qur'an 2:207).

And those whom they call besides Him, own not any power of intercession, save he who beareth witness of the truth and they know (the truth).

Qur'an 43:86

Hazrat Ali (AS) had the wisdom and was known for spending his nights in supplication of Almighty Allah. How can he be compared with anyone else:

What! Is he who is prayerful during the hours of night, prostrating in obeisance and standing, and he taketh heed of the hereafter and hopeth he for the mercy of his Lord! Say thou (O' Our Apostle Mohammad!) What! Can those who know be equal to those who know not? Verily only the men of understanding take the warning."

Qur'an 39:9

On several occasions the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) told his companions:

- *I am the city of knowledge, and Ali is the gate. (Hazrat Ali (AS) said, "The Prophet (PBUH&HD) opened a thousand gates of knowledge for me, and I, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, further opened a thousand gates from every gate.")*
- *Whoso obeys Ali obeys me, and whoso obeys me obeys Allah.*
- *Behold! This is Ali, he is always with the Qur'an and Qur'an is always with him.*
- *Ali is the guide of the righteous. He who pays attention to him wins, and he who turns his back on him goes astray.*
- *After me, whenever there is discord and lawlessness, Ali will carry the message, and show the right path, in theory and practice.*
- *Allah revealed it to me that Ali is the sign and symbol of guidance. He is the light to lead and bind my followers to the path of Allah.*
- *Ali is the wisest among you, the most honest and reliable judge, who perceives and expresses the difference between the truth and the falsehood.*
- *Ali is from me and I am from Ali.*
- *My Ahlul Bayt amongst you are like Noah's ark. He who sails on it will be safe, but he who turns his back, will perish.*
- *Ali is an Imam in this world and an Imam in next world.*
- *He who pays attention to the words of Ali, reserves for himself an abode in the everlasting land of bliss.*
- *Ali is to me as Aaron was to Moses, save that prophet hood terminates with me.*
- *After me follow Ali, he will always guide you to the true purpose, never away from it.*
- *There is among you only Ali, who will truly explain the meaning of the Qur'an and make the verse*

understandable, just as I explained to you the revelations.

Hazrat Ali (AS) has the following epithets:

- *Maolud Ka'aba (one who is born in Ka'aba)*
- *Nafas al Rasool (The 'self' of the Messenger)*
- *Kullu Eman (The total and absolute faith)*
- *La Fata (The one who can never be defeated)*
- *Karar Ghayra Farrar (The unconquerable attacker who never runs from the battlefield)*

- *Al Murtaza (The chosen by Allah)*
- *Bab ul Ilam (Gate way to the wisdom of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD))*
- *Ameer ul Momineen (The commander of the faithful)*
- *Imam ul Mutaqeen (The leader of the pious)*
- *Tajdar-e- hal ata (In praise of whom sura Al Dahr was revealed)*
- *Mazhar al Aja-ib (The manifestor of wonders)*
- *Asadullah-ul Ghalib (The ever victorious with the strength bestowed upon him By Allah)*
- *Lisanullah (The tongue of Allah)*
- *Yadullah (The hand of Allah)*
- *Aynullah (The eye of Allah)*
- *Wajihullah (Whose face reflects the grace of Allah)*
- *Waliyyullah (A close friend of Allah)*
- *Akhi-e-Rasoolullah (The brother of the Prophet (PBUH&HD))*
- *Siddique Akbar (The most truthful)*
- *Farooq al Azam (The greatest distinguisher between truth and falsehood)*
- *Abu al-Imama (Father of all the eleven Imams)*
- *Abu Turab (The father of the earth)*
- *Saifullah (The sword of Allah)*

- *Ba of Bismillah (The essence of the Qur'an)*
- *Maula (The leader, master)*

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Ahlul Bayt

After the demise of The Prophet (PBUH&HD), the Qur'an was not left as an orphan that anyone could 'play' with its text or its interpretation. The *Ahlul Bayt* and their righteous descendents were declared as the heir to the Qur'an.

To ensure that the people stayed on the path of righteousness and did not fall victim to the conjectures, Allah also asked the Prophet (PBUH&HD) to ask the Muslims to show their gratitude. That gratitude was nothing else but *muwadat* (*Muwadat* encompasses not only love and regards but is much more and beyond; to hold them in reverence, to try and establish spiritual communion with them for guidance, follow them, obey them, love Allah as He is loved by the *Ahlul Bayt*).

"There is the glad tiding which Allah gives to His servants who believe and do good. Say (O' Mohammad): "I do not ask of you any recompense for it (the toils of spreading the Truth) save muwadat of (my) relatives;" and whosoever earns good, We increase for him (more and more) good therein. Verily Allah is oft-forgiving, appreciator (of good).

Qur'an 42:23

The ignorant and the hypocrites who loved to live in comfort and to enjoy the luxuries of this world detested this

decision of Allah. They were not true Muslims but only wanted to keep the cloak of Islam over them:

They were not divided until after the knowledge had come to them, through rivalry among themselves. Had not the word gone forth from your Lord (giving them respite) for an appointed time, the matter would have surely been decided between them. Verily, those who were made inheritors of the Book after them are disquieting doubt about it.

Qur'an 42: 14

And remember the bounties of Allah on you, and His covenant by which He has bound you when you said: "We have heard (Your commandment) and we have obeyed (it sincerely);" and fear Allah; verily Allah Knows whatever is (hidden) in your breasts (hearts).

Qur'an 5:7

Allah knows best who sincerely and honestly believe in His words and are grateful for His bounties. He also knows those who are hypocrites.

Our Prophet (PBUH&HD), before his demise further clarified the guidance:

"I leave behind me amidst you two great things, The Book of Allah (the Holy Qur'an) and my *Ahlul Bayt* (the members of my family viz, Ali, Fatima, Hassan and Hussain). Should ye be attached to these Two, never, ever shall you get astray after me, for verily these Two will never be separated from one another until they meet me at the spring of '*Kauthar*'."

He added, "The likeness of my *Ahlul Bayt* is that of the Ark of Noah, whosoever gets into it is saved and whosoever turns away from it gets drowned and will perish."

Who were these righteous, truthful and the infallible *Ahlul Bayt*? They are mentioned in a number of places and in a variety of manners in the Qur'an. There should not remain any doubt regarding their identity after the spiritual Contest (*Mubahila*) that was held with Christians.

Ideologically, Islam is in direct conflict with the belief of the Christians who believe that Hazrat Isa (PBUH) was the son of Allah. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) tried to convince them that Allah has no son. He was the Creator and could not be like human beings. At one occasion the Christians of Najran asked the Prophet (PBUH&HD) as to why he did not accept that Christ was the son of Allah? In reply to their question, this verse was revealed:

Verily, the likeness of Isa with Allah is as the likeness of Adam; He created him out of dust, then He said to him: "Be" and he was.

Qur'an 3:59

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) tried to explain to them that the birth of Jesus was similar to the birth of Hazrat Adam (PBUH). Hazrat Adam (PBUH) was created from clay and Hazrat Mariyam (SA) gave birth to Hazrat Isa (PBUH), without any male partner. It happened so because Allah willed it and it was in His power and all His powers are not within the comprehension of the human mind.

They were not convinced. Confusion continued to exist in their minds. During 10 Hijri, when the Prophet (PBUH&HD) returned from Tabuk, he sent a message to

the Christians of Najran to accept Islam or to pay tax and join the Islamic State. A delegation of 60 Christians of Najran, headed by their Chief Abdul Mashih, came and engaged the Prophet (PUH&HD) in discussion on the same point. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) put forward a number of arguments but they remained as adamant in their belief as ever. Then this verse was revealed enjoining upon the Prophet (PBUH&HD) to call the Christians to *Mubahila* (a spiritual contest invoking the curse of Allah upon the liars).

"And say to him who disputes with you therein after the knowledge has come to you (O Mohammad) "Come let us summon our sons, and your sons, and our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves, and then let us humbly pray and invoke the curse of Allah on the liars!"

Qur'an 3:61

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) collected Hazrat Ali (AS), Hazrat Fatima (SA), Imam Hassan (AS) and Imam Hussain (AS) and said, "O' Allah! These are my *Ahlul Bayt*." (*Sahih Muslim Vol.2, p.278*)

It was a very strange type of war. In this war of words, the warriors had to be men, women and children who are pure and infallible. Those who had never and would never tell a lie in their whole life. They have never and would never indulge in any vices and had never worshiped idols. Only the chosen *Ahlul Bayt* (people of the House of the Prophet (PBUH&HD)) could qualify to fight this war and invoke the curse of Allah on the liars.

....Verily, verily Allah intendeth but to keep off from you all type of uncleanness O' ye people of the House, and purify you a thorough purification.

The next day a number of Christian men, women, and children came to the place earmarked for *Mubahila*. They thought they were in the right and would enjoy the site of Allah's curse falling on the Muslims. A number of Muslim men and women also considered themselves worthy of participating in this Contest and had prepared themselves for this great occasion.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) collected all his companions and his wives and firmly ordered them that no one must approach the ground of the Contest otherwise the curse would also fall upon those Muslims who had ever told a lie, had indulged in any vice or had worshipped the idols. That put everyone in his or her right place.

Early next morning the Prophet (PBUH&HD) went to the place appointed for the Contest with young Imam Hassan (AS) and Imam Hussain (AS) in the lead, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) himself carrying the Standard of Truth and Purity in the center, his daughter Hazrat Fatima (SA) behind him and Hazrat Ali (AS), the Commander of the Faithful behind her. (*Yaqoobi Vol.2, p.66*)

At the appearance of these godly souls with the halos of the divine light radiating from their holy faces, the chief Bishop exclaimed, "By Allah! I see the faces which, if they pray to Allah for mountains to move, the mountains will move." (*Tafseer Kashaf Part 3*)

Then addressing his people he said, "O' my brethren of Nazareth, I tell you to refrain from entering into a Contest with these godly souls. If these souls call for Allah's curse to fall upon us, we would be wiped off the face of this earth."

All the people present there, Muslims and non-Muslims saw the holy halos around these pious warriors of Truth. The Christians readily submitted and entered into an agreement with the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

Thus it was unquestionably established and proven in the presence of a huge crowd of Muslims and non-Muslims that Imam Hassan (AS) and Imam Hussain (AS) represented as sons of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), his daughter Hazrat Fatima (SA) was the most pious lady on the face of this earth, and the Commander of the Faithful represented the self of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). They and they alone were the *Ahlul Bayt* (People of the House of Prophet) and they were the divinely purified ones.

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The resentment on the orders of Allah to follow the *Ahlul Bayt* continued in the hearts of many people. There were still doubts (*Verily, those who were made inheritors of the Book after them are disquieting doubt about it.*) Though Allah had promised that those who followed them, their deeds would be increased many fold, there was whispering in dissent.

Allah has invited every person, every believer, every Muslim and *Munafiq* to think for himself or in twos what Allah has ordained. Each one must earnestly and sincerely commune within oneself without any prejudices. One would admit that what the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had conveyed was not his sentimentality and the recompense that he has asked for, (*love of his Ahlul Bayt*) was for the good of the people and is not for the benefit of the Prophet (PBUH&HD):

Say (O' Our Apostle Mohammad!) "I exhort you only to one thing, that rise up ye for Allah's sake in twos and

singly, then ponder ye: your companion (Our Apostle Mohammad) is not possessed, he is none but a warner (sent) unto you, before a severe chastisement."

Say thou: "Whatever recompense I have asked of you, it is only for yourselves; my recompense is (to be expected) from Allah (alone) and He is witness over all things."

Say thou: "Verily my Lord doth hurleth (out) the (light of) Truth, The Greatest Knower of the unseen.

Qur'an 34:46-48

The *Ahlul Bayt* were the best group to lead the people to the path of righteousness but alas, many did not follow them:

Ye are the best group that had been brought forth for mankind: Ye enjoin goodness and ye forbid evil, and ye believe in Allah; and if the people of the Book had (also) believed (similarly) it had surely been better for them; of them (only some) are believers and most of them are perverse.

Qur'an 3:109

Allah ordains us all to be with the truthful ones:

O' ye who believe! Fear ye Allah and be ye (always) with the truthful ones.

Qur'an 9:119

Ahlul Bayt were the *Reminders* and the people of *Zikr* (the Book), and if anyone did not know, he had to ask them:

And We sent before thee, but men unto whom We did reveal, so ask ye of the Reminder if ye know not.

Qur'an 21:7

And We sent not before thee but men (as Our apostles), We revealed unto them: So ask ye the people of Zikr (the Book) if ye know not.

Qur'an 16: 43

These are whom Allah hath guideth, therefore, follow their guidance; Say (O' Our Apostle Mohammad) "I ask not any recompense from you on it (the apostleship); it is naught but a reminder to the worlds."

Qur'an 6:91

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Seeing the condition of the people and the way innovations were being introduced in the religion, Imam Ali (AS) tried to put a word of wisdom in the ears of the rulers belonging to Bani Umayyah, hoping that maybe someone would pay heed to his advice:

A wise person seriously realizes the ultimate end of his existence. He soberly ponders over the ups and downs of life. The Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be upon him and his descendants) has called the people to Allah, and wherever you may be, he is watching over you like a shepherd tending the herd. Accept His invitation and try to attain and secure the protection offered by Him.

Men have sunk again into the depths of impiety and vice; they have given up the ways and traditions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) and have taken to innovation and schism. The true followers are observing a forced silence, and wicked liars are loud in declaring their views.

Remember that we are the Ahlul Bayt (chosen descendants of the Holy Prophet). We are his true companions, we are trustees and treasurers of the Knowledge granted to him, and we are the doors through which one can reach this storehouse of wisdom and learning. It is unlawful to enter a house but through its door, and he who disregards this principle is a trespasser or a thief.

They (Ahlul Bayt) own and possess by their deeds and words, the excellence and nobleness, which the Holy Qur'an preaches. They are the treasure-houses of Mercy and Benevolence of Allah, and they are the sources, from which Wisdom and Knowledge destined for man by Allah could be obtained.

Their speeches contain nothing but truth. If they do not speak about any subject, it is not because they do not know anything about it or that someone else could speak better, but simply because it is advisable not to speak then. It is imperative that the person, who has been destined by Allah to guide the humanity to explain things correctly and truly to his followers, utilizes his wisdom for their well-being, think more of the next world, and teaches people to attach more importance to it, because they are coming from there and are destined to return there.

A man with vision and foresight deeply ponders over the pros and cons of his action, and undertakes and continues performing such deeds as are useful and abstains from those which are harmful and injurious. If a man does not know how to do a thing and tries to do it, he will never achieve success. He is like a traveller who does not know the way and takes up the journey; owing to his ignorance the more he goes on, the further he will be away from his destination. And one who has full knowledge of the thing, is like a man who knows where to go and which road to take.

He will take the right course and would attain his goal. A man of prudence and perception should carefully watch whether he is keeping the end in view or he is going astray.

Remember! For outward appearance of everything or deed there is an inner identity and if the outward appearance possesses sincerity, nobleness and sanctity then the inner self is also sincere, noble and pious, and if the external aspect is vile and vicious, then the internal identity is also wicked and sinful. The truthful Prophet of Allah (peace of Allah be upon him and his descendants) has declared that the Merciful Allah loves His creatures but He loathes their evil deeds (because they are done with evil intentions) and He dislikes unbelievers, but He appreciates their good deeds (because they are done by noble intentions). Know it well that no plant will grow without water and the varieties of plants nourished with pure and fresh water will bring forth delicious and sweet fruits, and plants which subsist upon brine or filthy water will produce sour and unwholesome fruits.

*Imam Ali(AS)
Nahjul Balagha,*

In this sermon Hazrat Ali (AS) briefly describes the attributes of Ahlul Bayt:

They give life to knowledge and do their best to remove ignorance. The depth of their patience points to the depth of their knowledge. Their words vivre deep knowledge and learning in them. They do not oppose truth nor do they falsify it. They are pillars to support Islam. They are the real defence where Islam can find a refuge. Because of them religion got its proper place amongst human beings, and ignorance and falsehood were looked

upon with contempt and abhorrence. They understood the real spirit and significance of Islam by carefully carrying into practice its precepts. Among men there are many who preach good and great things but a very few would be found to act upon what they preach (The Progeny of the Holy Prophet practiced what they preached.)

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

Allah bestowed upon His Prophets the sublime mission of carrying His message to humanity and selected them to receive His revelations. He assigned them the august duty of proving to mankind the universality of truth and religion so that humanity may not have the plea of having been left ignorant and uneducated. At the end of the long succession of messengers He sent our Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be upon him and his descendants) to finally disclose before man the ultimate truth about the Creator and His creations and to invite mankind towards the path of His religion.

Allah fully knows the limitation of human intelligence and understanding. He did not send His Prophets to find this out, but to test the good ones who deserved to be endowed with His Blessings, and the wicked upon whom his wrath descended.

Where are those people who pretend that they and not we (Ahlul Bayt) have the full knowledge of the Holy Book, know everything about the creation, and possess Divine Knowledge? These pretenders and impostors lie against truth, and commit treachery to the cause of Allah and man. They lie against us and covet our position because the

Merciful Allah exalted our status and made them inferior to us. He conferred upon us the eminence which He denied them. He allowed us the entry to a transcendental sphere to understand the meanings of Divine Revelation which was denied to them.

Remember that guidance could be acquired and ignorance could be dispelled through us only. Undoubtedly the Imams shall be from the Quresh (but it means) from the descendants of Hashim (son of Abd Manaf). The Divine appointment has been made for this August Progeny as no one else deserves this sublime and sacred rank.

These Umayyahs preferred this vicious world to the Realm of Allah. They chose the filthy waters of this world to the celestial nectar. I feel as if I am looking at one of their wicked and unholy caliph. He is a profligate and pervert; he will adopt an immoral life and would relish it and he would derive pleasures only out of sin and perversity. He would pass his vicious life till his hair would turn grey in wickedness and corruption, and evil habits would become his second nature. Then he would turn towards the world passionately desiring for more and more, foaming and frothing at his mouth, in spite of oppositions and disrespecting the rights of humanity. In satisfying his vicious desires and exploiting human rights he would be like a river in floods which does not care what it drowns or like a blazing fire which relentlessly consumes everything that it comes in contact with.

Where are those people, who have lighted the lamps of their wisdom with Divine Light, and have improved their vision through piety and righteousness? Where are the hearts devoted to the cause of Allah, who have taken a vow to obey Him implicitly? Let them see how these Umayyahs have fallen on worldly gains and how they are fighting among

themselves for power to commit more sins and vices. Though they had been fully initiated into secrets of Paradise and hell, they have refused to hear the call of Allah and have turned towards the Devil and has accepted his invitation.

Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha

*

Verily We have shown man the Right way, let him now follow thankfully or ungratefully reject it.

Qur'an 76:2

در شرح

(2)

اسرارِ آسمانی علی مرتضیٰ

از رُخ او فال پیغمبر گرفت
ملت حق از شکوہش فر گرفت
قوت دین میں فرموده اش
کائنات آئیں پذیر از دودہ اش

مُرسل حق کرد نامش بو تراب
 حق یدالله خواند در اُمّ الکتاب
 شیر حق این خاک را تسخیر کرد
 این گل تاریک را اکسیر کرد
 مرتضیٰ کز تیغ او حق روشن است
 بو تراب از فتح اقلیم تن است
 هر که در آفاق گردد بو تراب
 باز گرداند زمغرب آفتاب
 زیرپاش اینجا شکوه خیر است
 دست او آنجا تقسیم کوثر است
 از خود آگاہی یداللهی کند
 از یداللهی شهنشاهی کند
 ذات او دروازه شیر علوم
 زیر فرمانش حجاز و چین و روم
 می کند از قوت خود آشکار
 روزگار نوکه باشد سازگار
 (علامه اقبال)

Succession

After the demise of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) some of the companions assembled at *Saqeefa Bani Sa'ada* to decide who should be the next Head of the State. After much discussion among various groups, proposals and counter proposals, it was decided that Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA) should be the *Ameer* (ruler). In the circumstances prevailing at that time, this was claimed to be a democratic way of choosing a Head of the State.

Hazrat Umar (RA) forced the people to swear allegiance to Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA). Then they came in a procession to the Mosque and those present there were asked to vow their allegiance to Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA). The whole mood of grief that had prevailed at the time of the demise of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) changed into a sort of celebrations and congratulations for the triumph of Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA).

Under what rules or instructions this process of electing / selecting a successor to the Prophet (PBUH&HD) was adopted, only those who paved the way for it and those who accepted it would know. Probably in terms of the modern political terminology it was the 'Law of Necessity' and the article of the Constitution (Qur'an) was abrogated. Or was it an '*ijma*' and that too in the absence of Bani Hashim who were busy in the burial rituals of the Prophet (PBUH&HD)?

The Qur'an rightly claims that there is nothing in the heavens or the earth that has not been mentioned in this Book. The Qur'an mentions the rights of people, the law of inheritance, the law of wedlock, things one is permitted to eat and things forbidden, prayers and taxes etc. How is it

possible that an important subject like governance has not been mentioned in it?

Surely the Qur'an mentions it clearly and the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had also told the people openly, however, that rule was not followed.

Obviously the procedure of electing / selecting a successor that was adopted in *Saqeefa* has neither been given in Qur'an nor in any *Hadith* of our Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD). It could only be justified through conjectures.

It is a matter of great agony that the dead body of the Apostle of Allah who was endowed with the excellence of all the apostles together and was the last Apostle, still remained to be buried and a number of the companions went away to select the next Head of the State. Is it not an act of utter ungratefulness for all the blessings that our Prophet (PBUH&HD) brought?

No guidance seems to have been taken from the Qur'an on this very important issue. Did we not advance towards proving the Qur'an correct that the Muslims really abandoned it?

And shall say (out) the Apostle (that day) "O' my Lord! Verily my people have held this Qur'an as a vain forsaken thing!"

Qur'an 25:30

The all embracing book of Wisdom and Guidance, the Qur'an, tells us:

Nor were they divided until after had come unto them the knowledge, out of rivalry between themselves; and had not the word gone forth from thy Lord (to give them respite) to a fixed time, and certainly, the affair had been decided between them; and verily those who were made the heirs to the Book after them are certainly in disquieting doubt about it.

Qur'an 42:14

Literally Islam means total (heart and soul), complete and unconditional submission to the All-Supreme and the Absolute Sovereign authority of the Lord of the universe. In short, total submission of the individual will, to the Universal will of the Lord.

"Say! Verily my prayer and my sacrifice, my life and my death, (are all, only) for Allah, the Lord of the worlds."

Qur'an 6:163

"Verily the religion with Allah is ISLAM (submission to Allah's will); and those whom the Book had been given did not differ but after the knowledge (of the Truth) had come unto them, out of envy among themselves; and whosoever disbelieveth in the signs of Allah, then, Verily, Allah is quick in reckoning."

Qur'an 3:18

"Yea! Whosoever submitteth his self (entirely) to Allah and is a doer of good, for him there shall be his reward with his Lord, on such shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve."

Qur'an 2:112

"And who is better in religion than he who resigneth himself entirely unto Allah and is righteous, and follows the

creed of Ibrahim, the Upright One? And Allah took Ibrahim for a Friend."

Qur'an 4:125

Anyone who digresses or introduces innovations and does not follow the righteous creed of Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) is surely out of the ambit of Islam.

Hazrat Ali (AS) was the only person to be with the Prophet (PBUH&HD) in his last moments and to have performed the last rites. (*Tabaqat Ibn S'ad Vol. 2, p 51&61; Mustadrak Hakim Vol.3, p.139*)

When Hazrat Ali (AS) and his uncle Abbas were busy with the burial rituals of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), Hazrat Abbas said, "Ali, I have heard that some people have gathered at *Saqeefa Bani Sa'ada* to decide about the succession. Extend your hand, I will swear allegiance and declare you as the successor to the Prophet (PBUH&HD)."

Hazrat Ali (AS) replied, "Is there anyone else who aspires to be a caliph? Why should we do it in private? However, our first and foremost duty is the burial of the body of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). All other things are secondary."

Some historians have also commented upon the episode of *Saqeefa Bani Sa'ada*:

Washington Irving says, "Hazrat Ali (AS) was cousin-german of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD) and husband of Hazrat Fatima (SA), his beloved daughter. The right of succession, in order of consanguinity, lay with Hazrat Ali (AS); and his virtues and services eminently entitled him to it. On the first burst of his generous zeal, when Islamism was

a derided and persecuted faith, he had been pronounced by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD) his brother, his vicegerent; he had ever since been devoted to him in word and deed, and had honoured the cause by his magnanimity as singally as he had vindicated it by his valour."

Professor Sedillot in 'History des Arabs' says, "Had the principle of hereditary succession (in favour of Ali) been recognized at the outset, it would have prevented the rise of those disastrous pretensions which engulfed Islam in the blood of Muslims. The husband of Fatima united in his person the right of succession as the lawful heir of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) as well as the right of election. It might have been that all would submit themselves before his glory, so pure and so grand. But it was not to be."

In his famous judgment dated July 20' 1938, in Jaunpur, Uttar Pradesh, India, Pandit Thakur Prasad observes, "It cannot be denied that Hazrat Ali (AS) was one of those men who stood by the Prophet (PBUH&HD) all his life in everything he did and wanted to be done. As I gather from history written by the Muslims and non-Muslims alike, Ali was the Prophet's (PBUH&HD) constant shadow. He was the Boswell of a Johnson in his dealings with the Prophet (PBUH&HD). Hazrat Ali (AS) can rightly be said to be the chief builder of the Prophet's (PBUH&HD) power (wise in council-chamber and a valiant warrior in the battlefield was he). To his sword had fallen the momentous victories of Khandaq, Uhud, Badr and Khayber. But for these, Muhammad's (PBUH&HD) Mission would have perished in its very inception, and the world would have lost a reformation unequalled in man's history. The consolidation of the temporal power of Muhammad (PBUH&HD) by Hazrat Ali (AS) made it possible for the Message of Islam to be delivered in an unbelieving age. It would thus appear that Hazrat Ali (AS) was the most

highly entitled and the best deserved for succession to the *Imamat* of Islam, both on the strength of his family relationship to the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and on the ground of his merits, being the sincerest friend and follower of the Prophet (PBUH&HD).”

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After performing the burial rituals of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), Hazrat Ali (AS) and his family came back to their own house. Immersed in grief and broken at this terrible loss, Hazrat Ali (AS) sat in a corner of his house and was trying to put his personal affairs and the responsibilities of Ummah in some order that he was informed of the details of the proceedings and the outcome of the assembly that was held at *Saqeefa Bani Sa'ada*.

As an Imam and heir to the Book, he was shocked. He just could not believe that the Muslims had started to introduce innovations in the religion so soon after the demise of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). How anyone who had not been endowed by Allah with the Wisdom and the Knowledge of the Book, could possibly lead the Ummah?

The words that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had whispered into his ears during the last moments of his life, started to ring with a deafening resonance.

He lost touch with the world around him. Sitting in this corner he was oblivious to the happenings outside. He was wondering about the implications of the *Saqeefa* episode. The decision violated the basic principles and the philosophical moorings of Islam.

The decision reached at *Saqeefa Bani Sa'ada* had far reaching and devastating effects. From then onwards the

divine Wisdom and Knowledge was not the criterion to be a caliph. Anyone who had political clout, money and clan / social influence could become a caliph and that is exactly what happened.

No one cared to take advice from the holder of the Book and the Wisdom that Allah had bestowed upon the righteous children of Hazrat Ibrahim (PBUH) (Qur'an 4:54). No one bothered to consult the heir of the Qur'an. In the hustle bustle of *Saqeefa Bani Sa'ada* no one remembered Allah's covenant and that there will be righteous Imams in the progeny of Hazrat Ibrahim (PBUH) who would lead the people after the Prophet (PBUH&HD) (Qur'an 2:124). No one tried to find out who was the Imam after the Prophet (PBUH&HD). No one was there to follow the creed of Hazrat Ibrahim. (Qur'an 4:125). No one remembered the *Ghadeer* declaration.

The Institution of *Imamate*, the Allah's covenant, was crushed under the hoofs of the horses of the architects of *Saqeefa Bani Sa'ada*.

Hazrat Ali (AS) was still lost in these thoughts of the future of the Ummah that his house was burnt down and his wife, the dearest daughter of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), was subjected to insult and fatal injuries.

He was jolted out of his thoughts when Hazrat Umar (RA), his friend of yesterday, forcibly entering his house, put a cloth around his neck and dragged him before Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA).

He asked Hazrat Ali (AS) to vow allegiance. Hazrat Ali (AS) responded, "What if I do not pay homage to him?"

“By Allah, we shall kill thee if you dost not do as others have done,” was the answer.

“What! Will ye kill a man who is a servant of the Lord and a brother of the Apostle of the Lord?”

Hazrat Umar (RA) replied, “We do not admit that thou art a brother of the Apostle of the Lord.” And looked at Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA) to speak out his (Hazrat Ali’s (AS)) fate. Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA) kept quiet.

Hazrat Ali (AS) went straight to the grave of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and cried out, “O’ my brother! Thy people now treat me with contempt and are bent upon killing me.”
(*Abul Fida, Aqdal, Ibn Qatida*)

“Hazrat Umar (RA) was the first person to congratulate Hazrat Ali (AS) as *Maula* on the eve of Ghadeer. Incidentally he did not quite remember it after the death of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). And these are all honourable men.” (*S. Ockley ‘History of the Saracens’*)

A number of companions were pained to see how Hazrat Ali (AS) had been insulted and humiliated. They asked him as to why did he not stand up and fight for his rights?” He replied:

O’ people! When you see revolt and anarchism raging like storms, try to find a way out of their injurious effects. Avoid the ways of hatred and malice, and do not let superiority complex drive you towards a class-war. Remember only those, who have followers and helpers can achieve success. Others should not vie for power and supremacy; it is the safest course for them.

This ruler-ship is like dirty water, not fit for consumption. It is like a morsel, which chokes the person trying to swallow it. Any struggle at this stage is as foolish as picking raw fruits or trying to cultivate barren land.

I was put in a dilemma; if I declare my just claims, people will start saying that I have become avaricious and greedy for power and wealth, and if I sit quiet, they will say that I have grown weak and timid and that fear of death is restraining me from asserting my just rights.

Alas! Do they not realize that I have never been afraid of death; I have faced it so often and have passed through so many phases of dangers and perils. I swear by Allah that Abu Talib's son Ali is as fond of death as a suckling baby is fond of its mother's breast. Death does not frighten me from claiming my rights, but there are such deep secrets and hidden knowledge as has been revealed and entrusted to me that if you know them you will tremble like a rope dangling in a deep well.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

Abu Sufyan came to Medina and went straight to Hazrat Ali (AS) and said:

"I have come to know that a great injustice has been done to you. You have been deprived of your legitimate right. Order and I shall call thousands of my soldiers to fill the streets of Medina and we shall snatch back your rights."

Hazrat Ali (AS) replied, "Abu Safyan, your intention is only to create chaos. You have always wanted to harm

Islam. I desire neither your assistance nor your advice.”
(*Tabari Vol.2, p.449*).

Everyone knows that Abu Sufyan and his family had never accepted Islam out of conviction or sincerity. He had accepted it only as a matter of convenience and political expediency as he had no other choice. He, as the chief of his tribe, had opposed the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) throughout his life and had led a number of expeditions against the Muslims. Now, sitting among the Muslims, he looked for an opportunity to sow seeds of dissension and discord among the Muslims. Hazrat Ali (AS) refused to provide him with that chance.

Abu Sufyan joined the other party. In return, his son Yazid was appointed Governor of Syria and was later replaced by his other son Muawiya who laid the foundations of the rule of Bani Umayyah.

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Irrespective of the genuineness or otherwise of the manner of voting, this so called institution of democracy innovated at *Saqeefa Bani Sa'ada*, could not sustain itself. Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA), a few hours before his death, nominated Hazrat Umar (RA) as his successor.

Hazrat Umar (RA), before his death, appointed a committee of six persons to decide among themselves as to who should be the next Head of the State. Thus the *Saqeefa Bani Sa'ada* brand of so-called democracy died its own death.

The institution of *Caliphate* that was established after the demise of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) was not the *Khelaphet-e-Ellahia* (the vicegerent of the Prophet (PBUH&HD)). This is always bestowed by Allah Himself

and never can be at the choice of a few people. The *Caliphate*, the idea of which was conceived at *Sqeefa Bani Sa'ada*, was the political leadership. Even Hazrat Moses (PBUH) could not appoint his brother Hazrat Aaron (PBUH) as his caliph. He had to request Allah and He granted the wish of Hazrat Moses (PBUH).

Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA) was on his deathbed and he called Abdul Reman bin Auf and Hazrat Usman (RA) for consultations. Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA) was in favour of nominating Hazrat Umar (RA) as the next Head of the State. He directed Hazrat Usman (RA) to write down his Will. He had only dictated half of his Will when he fainted. Hazrat Usman (RA), knowing the mind of Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA), completed the Will. When he regained his consciousness he asked Hazrat Usman (RA) as to what had he written? Hazrat Usman (RA) replied, "I have written all you had wanted me to write." However, he read it out to Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA) who approved it.

Then he called Hazrat Umar (RA), handed over to him the Will and asked him to take an oath from the people that they would abide by this Will. As Hazrat Umar (RA) had been nominated as the next ruler, the so-called democracy had been transformed into nomination.

Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA)'s rule lasted for two years, three months and ten days. He died on 22 Jamadi-us-Sani 13 Hijri.

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Hazrat Umar's (RA) rule lasted for ten years and four days. On that fateful day, Abu Lulo Feroze, slave of Mughira bin Shaiba, stabbed him with a dagger. His companions visited him and seeing that he would not be able to recover from

the stab wounds, asked him about the next Head of the State.

Hazrat Umar (RA) said, "If I nominate my successor, no one should object to it because I was also nominated by my predecessor. However, I have thought over this issue and have decided to form an assembly to choose the next Head of the State. Then he asked for Hazrat Ali (AS), Hazrat Usman (RA) bin Affan, Abdul Rehman bin Auf, Sa'ad bin Abi Waqas, Zubair bin Awam and Talha bin Abdullah and spelt out the methodology of selecting his successor from among these six gentlemen.

A heated discussion ensued and a number of other companions, who were present at this occasion, became claimants to this coveted post. However, he asked Abu Talha to call these six gentlemen at the residence of Hazrat Ayesha (RA) and within three days they should be able to agree on one person.

Hazrat Umar (RA) could survive his wounds for only three days and then he bid farewell to this world. Soon after his burial, a number of persons gathered at the residence of Hazrat Ayesha (RA) and the meeting began. The discussion went on and on but no decision could be reached. Finally Abdul Rehman addressed Hazrat Ali (AS) and said:

"If you make a pledge that you would rule according to the Qur'an and *Sunnah* and also follow the practices of your two predecessors we shall accept you as Caliph." (*Tabari, Vol.3, p.297*) [Obviously it implied that Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA) and Hazrat (RA) had introduced practices contrary to the Qur'an and *Sunnah*, otherwise there was no point in insisting on the continuation of these practices.]

Hazrat Ali (AS) had known Abdul Rehman bin Auf for many years. Other members of the so-called 'council' were also not strangers to him. He well knew their mentality. He also knew why this condition of following the practices of his two predecessors had been incorporated. Hazrat Umar (RA) and Abdul Rehman also knew very well that Hazrat Ali (AS) would never agree to this proposition and their scheme to keep him out would succeed.

For any politician this could have been a golden opportunity to grab the chair. There was only a small distance between yes and no but factually it meant crossing a wide ocean of hypocrisy. Anyone who craved for power, 'yes' was the obvious choice. Hazrat Ali (AS) was neither power hungry nor a prince of Machiavelli's making. He was righteous. He was an Imam. He was Ali ibne Abu Talib. He preferred to continue suffering quietly and face the miseries that the time had in store for him, his family and his friends. His polity was the polity of an Imam who is the embodiment of absolute purity and infallibility. Imam is an ideal that serves as a beacon of light for humanity. He is divinely guided and divinity knows no compromises. Hazrat Ali (AS) would not mix right with wrong for gaining any worldly favours or temporary advantages. Justice is what Hazrat Ali (AS) stood for. Sufferings were acceptable to him but not the deceit.

Hazrat Ali (AS) replied:

"I will rule by the Knowledge endowed unto me." (*Tabari Vol.3, p.297*)

Then Abdul Rehman made the same proposal to Hazrat Usman (RA) who readily accepted the condition. Hazrat Usman (RA) was declared as the successor to Hazrat Umar (RA). Abdul Rehman and company were pleased at their

apparent success but remained ignorant of their strategic defeat and moral bankruptcy. It was 1 Muharram 24 Hijri.

Thanks to *Saqeefa Bani Sa'ada*, the practices of Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA) and Hazrat Umar (RA) took precedence over the Knowledge endowed by Allah.

In one of his sermons (*Khutba Shakshkayah*) Hazrat Ali (AS) referred to this occasion and said:

"...I swear by Allah that the people were misled and they went astray. They missed the straight path of religion. I accepted the inevitable without reproving. I bore the long and painful period of the devastation of human rights and Islam, till the second person also died. However, before his death, he left the question of the caliphate to the decision of a select committee and nominated me also to be on the panel of that committee.

O Allah! What had I to do with this Committee? I had nothing common with any of its members. Was there any doubt about my superiority when compared to the first that now I would accept to be a member of the body of persons far inferior? However, in the interest of humanity and Islam I accepted to be a member of this Committee. I decided to go along with them.

One member of this Committee turned against me because he hated me (Talha) and one member (Abdul Reham bin Auf) turned against me due to kinship (he was brother-in-law of Hazrat Usman (RA)). Consequently the third proudly took charge of the caliphate, as if it was his private grazing ground,

With bloated stomachs he, and members of his clan (Bani Umayyah) started plundering the wealth of the Muslim

world in the same gluttonous manner as characterizes a camel when it devours the lush-green fields of grass.

Ultimately the time arrived that, due to his greed, he fell on his face.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

Solitude

After suffering the injuries of insult and humiliation, Hazrat Ali (AS) quietly sat home. The Gateway to the City of Knowledge had forcibly been shut down. The Ummah was deprived of the light of the Divine Wisdom and the Guidance from Imam.

The politicians of the time were not content at the results of *Saqeefa Bani Sa'ada*. In their hearts they knew that Hazrat Ali (AS) was still the greatest in all respects.

He had always stood like a rock against the enemies of Allah's Messenger and His Message. His nobility and superiority in every field and all the wonderful impressions of his personality had to be erased from the public mind. He had to be pulled down to the level where those who were inferior to him felt comfortably equal to him. Towards this end, a vicious propaganda campaign was unleashed against Hazrat Ali (AS).

All his merits were turned into demerits and his struggle in the service of Islam was brought against him as a charge sheet:

- He had killed maximum number of Quresh and Jews and was, therefore, disliked by the majority.
- In the Battle of Badr, those who were scared when the orders to fight were received (Qur'an 4:77)

embraced those who were with Abu Jahl. Hazrat Ali (AS) was an 'enemy'.

- In the Battle of Khandaq (Ditch) those whose heads remained bowed when Amr bin Abd Wud was challenging them to a duel and hurling insults on the Muslims, shook hands with those who were across the Ditch. Hazrat Ali (AS) had killed Amr so he was not acceptable to Abu Sufyan's friends and family who were the lifetime enemies of the Prophet (PBUH&HD).
- Those at the helm of the affairs opined that Hazrat Ali (AS) was an ambitious young man, therefore, not fit to be a caliph.
- To create hatred and a spirit of vengeance against him, anyone who had lost a relative in any of the battles, was told that Hazrat Ali (AS) was the killer.

The propaganda against him was so vicious and had gone so far that he was even buried secretly lest his grave is dug out and his body is desecrated. Even the site of his grave was kept secret for over one hundred years. When the news of his martyrdom, in the mosque, reached Syria, the Syrians were surprised and would ask each other what was Ali doing in the mosque? Was Ali a Muslim? Did he ever say his prayers?

One day Hazrat Fatima (SA) asked him, "O' Abu-ul Hassan! I have heard that people do not pay their salutation to you."

He replied, "Fatima, it is not only that, when I say *salam-o-alakum* to anyone, he does not even reply.

To economically strangulate him, the land of Fadak that had been inherited by Hazrat Fatima (SA), during the life time of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), was confiscated.

At the occasion of *dawat-e-dhill asheer* Hazrat Ali (AS) had made a commitment and vowed to share the burden of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and to take forward Allah's message at all times and under all circumstances:

*And We took off from thee thy burden.
Which weighed down thy back.*

Qur'an 94:2, 3

Hazrat Ali's (AS) word of honour had changed the course of the history of Islam. Hazrat Ali's (AS) commitment was not only for the person of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD), but for the entirety of Islam. His solemn pledge did not end with the last breath of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD). In fact, with the demise of his Master, his responsibilities increased many fold. He and his sons and daughters stood firm against unholy designs of some and carried forward the Message.

In the absence of the institutions of *Imamate* and Justice, ordinary people were going through many hardships. Hazrat Ali (AS) quietly suffered the agony of the deprivations that the Muslims were going through. He felt on his body the pain of every lash that was being inflicted upon the bodies of noble companions like Abu Zar Ghafari, Ammar Yassir, and Abdullah bin Mas'ud and others who had the courage to raise their voice against the injustices.

Some of the 'noble' companions had been purchased. Some migrated to other places and some had been exiled. Some confined themselves to the secluded corners of the mosques.

All voices of opposition were strangulated. Hazrat Ali (AS) was left alone and helpless. Can anyone ever imagine or

realize the pains that Hazrat Ali (AS) went through? He could only cry in the wilderness and he often did cry. This phase lasted for twenty-five years. For twenty-five long years Hazrat Ali (AS) suffered quietly and had neither been able to take forward Islam nor could he redeem the sufferings of the Muslims. *Khelaphat-e-Ellahiya* was put in the cold storage. *Imamate* and Justice had been taken off the list of the Principles of Islam.

For twenty-five years Hazrat Ali (AS) remained a silent spectator. These were the times of his tests and trials and he went through this period as told by the Prophet (PBUH&HD)

کبھی تنہائی کوہ و دامن عشق
 کبھی سوز و سرور و انجمن عشق
 کبھی سرمایہ محراب و منبر
 کبھی مولا علی خیر شکن عشق

(علامہ اقبال)

Hazrat Fatima-tuz-Zahra
(*Slawat-ullahi-Alayha*)

*Verily We have given thee (O' Our Apostle Mohmmad!)
The 'Kausar'.*

So pray thou unto thy Lord! And offer sacrifice.

Verily, thy enemy shall be the one cut off (in his progeny).

(*Qur'an 108*)

Historically a strong rivalry existed between the Bani Omayyah and Bani Hashim. Bani Omayyah who already controlled the wealth also wanted to break the spiritual hold of Bani Hashim, which had come to them from the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD).

Out of the wedlock of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD) and Hazrat Khadija (SA) only one daughter, named Fatima, was born. They were happy that 'Muhammad (PBUH&HD) is cut-off'. Allah says, "No, We have given you (O' Our Apostle Muhammad) *Kausar*, your enemy is cut-off."

Whereas Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD) is heir to all the previous Apostles of Allah, Fatima-tuz-Zahra (SA) is heir to her father Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD). As she grew, she became the inheritor of all the honours of her father. It was the nobility, blessings and the glory that she inherited, but also shared the pains and sufferings that her father, her husband and her children had to go through in the service of Islam. The entire burden of keeping Islam alive fell upon her frail shoulders. She was aware of her status and also of her responsibilities.

The beginning of her life was the beginning of the Great Mission that ultimately revolutionized the human society. In her whole life there was never a moment that she spent in comfort. Never did a day pass when she could feel carefree and playful like other children. There was never an occasion in her life when she could smile or be happy.

As a young child, she had often witnessed her father speaking kindly and softly to people and, in return, her father being humiliated, insulted and tortured by the ignorant Quresh. Standing at a distance she would just cry and beg the Quresh not to pelt stones at her father. Every day when her father came home she would wipe off her own tears and also help her father wash his face. What an agony her innocent mind and her frail hands had to suffer.

Her father was a unique father; he had never brought any toys for his only daughter. And she was also one little girl who had never asked for anything from her father.

It was a unique relationship of divine love, affection, respect and responsibility. As a loving father Prophet Mohammad (PBUH&HD) would kiss her hands, always rise up to receive her and would make her sit close to him. He could see the purity and innocence in her face as well as the dark shadows of pains that had still to engulf her. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) demonstrated to the world the status of his daughter and hoped that perhaps the people would understand and hold her in reverence.

Hazrat Fatima-tuz-Zahra (SA) also suffered and lived through the difficult years of *Shaib-e-Abu Talib*. Hazrat Abu Talib had migrated, with a few families of Bani Hashim, to a hot dry valley. This had become necessary for the protection and safety of his nephew Hazrat Mohammad (PBUH&HD). This little girl weathered through the rigors

of hunger and thirst without ever complaining. Hazrat Fatima (SA) took her old and ailing mother into her tender care and also looked after her father. Surprisingly she was never hungry, never thirsty or tired of serving her parents. Only her innocent face reflected her sufferings. She was fully aware of the noble mission of her father.

Just her one complaint to Allah could have changed the fate of the whole world but she never even complained to Allah. She knew what role she, her children and grandchildren had to play in this world of ignorance, disloyalty and deceit. She never did complain.

During the hard days of *Shaib-e-Abu Talib*, whenever a child cried of hunger, an old or sick person reached his or her final limits of tolerance, this child, Fatima was there with her father to console them. She was a source of inspiration and her courage provided inner strength to the failing hearts. Her affectionate words brightened up the blood-drained faces of the dying men and women.

Whenever a little food arrived, she was there to distribute it with her father. In the end, nothing would be left for her father, mother or herself. She would cut tree leaves and bark into small pieces and boil these so that the family could easily chew these. She never heard her mother complaining how rich and comfortable she had been. Hazrat Khadija (SA) always told her daughter how lucky she had been that she was selected by Allah Almighty to be the wife of His most noble person.

After spending three years in this state of hunger, darkness, and loneliness, one day they were free to return to their homes. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD) had proved to the Quresh that he was the truthful and the righteous Apostle of Allah.

The days of freedom brought little joy for the Bani Hashim. Soon after this episode, Hazrat Abu Talib and Hazrat Khadija (SA) died within a few days after each other. Hazrat Abu Talib had been a father, a friend, and a lion-hearted protector of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). His sufferings in the service of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had been immense and his reward has been the love that he got in return from his nephew and the pleasure of Allah.

In the absence of Hazrat Abu Talib and Hazrat Khadija (SA), the burden of increased responsibilities fell on the shoulders of Hazrat Fatima (SA). She realized how much her father needed her and how dependent he had become on her. Enmity and hatred of the Quresh against the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and his followers was increasing every day.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) quietly migrated to Medina and Hazrat Ali (AS) followed him escorting and protecting the noble ladies including Hazrat Fatima (SA).

Divine fate brought Hazrat Ali (AS) and Hazrat Fatima (SA) together in wedlock. They had immense respect for each other too. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) knew of their glory.

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The revelation of *Sura Ad-Dahr* is said to be in praise of *Ahlul Bayt*. At one time Hazrat Hassan and Hazrat Hussain, the two grandsons of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) were ill and the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) went to his daughter's house to enquire about the health of the children. He suggested to Hazrat Ali (AS) and Hazrat Fatima (SA) that they make a vow to keep fast for three days for the recovery of the children.

Accordingly Hazrat Ali (AS), Hazrat Fatima (SA), Hazrat Hassan and Hussain and their maidservant Hazrat Fizza fasted. Hazrat Fatima (SA) prepared five loaves of oat and just when they sat to eat, a man cried at the door and said, "O' people of the House of Apostle of Allah, I am a poor man and I am hungry, please feed me." They voluntarily gave away their breads to the beggar.

The second day again they fasted and when they were about to eat again a beggar cried, "O' people of the House of the Apostle of Allah, I am an orphan, hungry, with nothing to eat, please feed me." He was fed and the people of the House of Apostle of Allah slept hungry.

On the third night the voice came, "O' people of the House of Apostle of Allah, I am a helpless captive, hungry, please feed me." The hungry captive was fed with the five loaves that had been prepared for their meals.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) came to their house and conveyed that the *Sura Ad-Dahar* had been revealed in their praise:

They who fulfil their vows, and fear the day the woe of which stretcheth far and wide.

And (while needing it for themselves) they gave away food, out of love for Him, to the poor and the orphan and the captive,

(Saying) "We feed you only for Allah's sake; we intend not of you any recompense, nor (even) thanks (thereof)!"

Verily we dread from our Lord, a stern day of distress.

So will Allah guard them, from the evil of that day and cause them to meet freshness and pleasure;

And shall recompense them, for what they endured with patience, with garden (to abide) and silk (to wear),

Reclining therein on exalted couches, they shall find not therein (the excessive heat of) the sun, nor any (intense) cold.

And close low over them (shall be) its shades, and the clustered fruits thereof (shall be) bowing down (in easy reach);

And shall pass round among them vessels of silver and goblets of crystal (glass),

Bright as glass, made of silver; measure they to a well measure.

And they shall be supplied with the drink therein of a cup tempered with Zanjabeel (ginger)

(It is the water of) a spring therein named 'Salsabeel' (The Soft Flowing).

And around them in their service shall be boys (graced) with eternal youth; when thou seest them thou wilt deem them as pearls scattered about.

And when thou seest there, thou shall see bounties (abundance) and a kingdom magnificent

Upon them shall be robe of fine green silk, and rich brocade, and they shall be adorned with bracelets of silver, and their Lord give them to drink a drink pure and (wholesome).

(Saying unto them) Verily this is unto you recompense, and your endeavour accepted (with appreciation) thou shall see bounties (abundant) and a kingdom magnificent.

Qur'an 76:7-22

Hazrat Fatima (SA) served Islam in the battlefields and, as a warrior of Truth, she delivered a deadly blow to the Christians in the battlefield of *Mubahila*.

Hazrat Fatima (SA) was also chosen by Allah to serve as a link between the Prophets and the Imams.

Hazrat Fatima (SA) and Hazrat Ali (AS) have four children namely, Hassan (AS), Hussain (AS), Zainab (AS) and Umm Kulsoom (AS).

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) loved these children. He often played with them and would give them a ride on his shoulders. Once while he was saying his prayers, his grandson Hazrat Hussain (AS) entered the mosque and sat on the back of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). The Prophet (PBUH&HD) prolonged the prostration till Hazrat Hussain (AS) got down himself. It was not for the love of a grandfather for his grandson or that the grandson was in a playful mode.

It was a demonstration of the stature of Hazrat Hussain (AS) in the eyes of Allah. Hazrat Hussain (AS) as the protector of the Faith and the protector of prayers deserved this. Apostles and Imams, how young or old they may be, they never play around. All their actions are indicators of one or the other divine message.

Hazrat Fatima (SA) bravely lived through the painful experience when her father was spending his last moments in his bed. How agonizing it was for him to know that his orders were being defied. His companions had refused to go to the battle under Osama. Her father being the greatest man on earth could move heaven and earth with his little finger, but, during his last moments of life, those who had pledged their lives to him were disobeying his orders. Hazrat Fatima (SA) cried bitterly at this disrespect that was being shown to her great father. Politics had pushed aside the faith and the pledge of submission from the hearts of the people.

Her father fixed his eyes on her. He could see what fate held in store for her, for her husband, her children and her grandchildren. He knew that one after the other all her children would be martyred for guiding the people to the righteous path. He also knew that one by one they would become the heir to all the knowledge, wisdom and piety of all the Messengers of Allah. And one by one they would be imprisoned, poisoned or slaughtered.

He could also see that his loving daughter would not be able to take it. She had already taken too much upon herself in the way of Allah. He called her near to him and whispered into her ears:

“Fatima, you, my daughter, will be the first person among my family who will come after me and join me.” What a parting gift of a loving father to his devoted daughter!”

Then he added:

“Are you not happy that you will be the leader of all the women in heaven?”

Hazrat Fatima (SA) found the inner strength to bear this terrible loss. All too sudden she realized that expressions on many faces had changed. Everything had turned around. Her father had been buried. This house, her father's house had assumed a strange posture. It was time for her to go to her own house and live with her own sorrows and the solitude of her husband.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) had often said:

"The best women in the world are four: Mariam, Assiya, Khadija and Fatima."

"Allah is happy when Fatima is pleased and He becomes angry from her anger."

"If she is pleased I am pleased, her anger is my anger. Whosoever loves my daughter Fatima, loves me. Whosoever makes Fatima happy, makes me happy. Whosoever makes Fatima unhappy, makes me unhappy. Fatima is a part of my body. Whosoever hurts her has hurt me, and whosoever hurts me, hurts Allah."

After the demise of her father, all his sermons and teachings were sacrificed at the altar of greed. In spite of all the honour that Allah Almighty and the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had bestowed upon her, she was hurt a lot. Fatima, his Fatima had been hurt beyond measure.

Only two days after she had buried her father, miscreants attacked her house. They were carrying burning wooden logs and they set her door on fire. Someone flung it open and it fell on her. She was mortally hurt and she lost the baby that she was carrying in her womb.

That house which was permitted by Allah to be exalted and in which His name was mentioned day and night (Qur'an 24:36) was desecrated and trampled upon.

Such treatment was meted out to her by some of companions of her father that within three months of the demise of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), her back got arched, her hair turned grey and she bade farewell to this world.

Before her last breath she said:

“So many insults and humiliations have been inflicted upon me that if these were to fall on the brightness of the day, it would turn into darkness of night.”

She also asked Hazrat Ali that all those who had insulted her and had made her suffer should not accompany her coffin to the graveyard.

At the time of her burial Hazrat Ali (AS) said:

O' Prophet of Allah! Please accept my salams (salutations) and those of your daughter who is being buried, not very far from you, and who has joined you so soon. O' the chosen Messenger of Allah! The passing away of your dear daughter has left me without patience and solace. I have lost my self-restraint and power of endurance.

After having endured your separation, I have to bear this catastrophe also so patiently. O' Prophet of Allah! I laid you down in the grave with my own hands; your soul departed from your body while your head was resting between my hands and my chest. Surely we belong to Allah and towards Him is our return. Your trust (your daughter) that was entrusted to me has been taken back from me. Sorrow now abides with me and happiness has taken leave

of me. This grief is so overwhelming that it engulfs and swallows all other sorrows, and it has left me with sleepless nights and joyless days. From now onwards my life will be a continued heartache till Allah joins me with you both in the Realm of His Favour and Peace.

O' Messenger of Allah! Your dear daughter will tell you how your followers have behaved towards her and how they have ill-treated her. You may please ask her all the details of what has happened to her during such a short period (barely three months) after your departure to Paradise. This period of separation from you was so short that people still remember you and were still talking about you.

Please both of you accept my farewell Salams and regards. It is the wish of a sincere heart that has loved and will always love you both. This heart will cherish and will carry your tender and loving memories to its grave. Good-bye, O' daughter of the chosen Messenger of Allah! May you rest in peace which mankind has refused to you in this world. If I leave your grave to go to my place, it is not because I am tired of your company; I wish I had it to the end of my life. And if I make a permanent abode by your grave it will not be because I know that Allah has reserved the reward for those who bear sorrows patiently. Good-bye! May Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon you."

*Imam Ali(AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

As to her husband, children and grand children:

Hazrat Ali (AS)

A Kharajite, Abdul Rehman Ibn Muljim murdered Hazrat Imam Ali (AS).

Hazrat Imam Hassan (AS)

He was the eldest son of Hazrat Ali (AS) and Hazrat Fatima (SA) and he succeeded his father as a Caliph. However, Muawiya continued with his intrigues, conspiracies and mischief and it started to hurt the interest of the general public. Hazrat Imam Hassan (AS) accepted to step down on following conditions:

- Muawiya will follow the Holy Qur'an and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) in word and action.
- Muawiya will stop abusing Hazrat Ali (AS), which had continued from the pulpits of the mosques, even after the martyrdom of Hazrat Ali (AS).
- Muawiya will ensure protection of life, property and honour of those who are the devotees of Hazrat Ali (AS).
- Muawiya will not appoint any one as his successor.

Syed Ameer Ali in his book 'The Spirit of Islam' comments: "Muawiya's animosity pursued him even there, and before many months were over he was poisoned to death.

"The star of Hind's son was now in ascendancy, and Abu Sufyan's ambition to become the king of Makkah was fulfilled on a grander scale by Muawiya. Thus was the son of the two most implacable foes of the Holy

Prophet (PBUHHD), by the strangest freak of fortune recorded in history, seated on the throne of the Caliphs.

"Lest it be considered our estimate of Muawiya's character is actuated by prejudice, we give the words of a historian who cannot be accused of bias in favour of either side. 'Astute, unscrupulous, and pitiless,' says Osborn, 'the first Khalif of the Omayyahs shrank from no crime necessary to secure his position. Murder was his accustomed mode of removing a formidable opponent. The grandson of the Prophet he caused to be poisoned; Maleke-al-Ashtar, the heroic lieutenant of Hazrat Ali (AS), was destroyed in a like way.

To secure the succession of his son Yezid, Muawiyah hesitated not to break the word he had pledged to Imam Hassan (AS), the surviving son of Hazrat Ali (AS). And yet this cool, calculating, thoroughly atheistic Arab ruled over the regions of Islam, and the sceptre remained among his descendants for the space of nearly one hundred and twenty years. The explanation of this anomaly is to be found in two circumstances, to which I have more than once adverted. The one is, that the truly devout and earnest Muslim conceived that he manifested his religion most effectually by withdrawing himself from the affairs of the world. The other is the tribal spirit of the Arabs. Conquerors of Asia, of Northern Africa, of Spain, the Arabs never rose to the level of their position. Greatness had been thrust upon them, but in the midst of their grandeur they retained, in all their previous force and intensity, the passions, the rivalries, the petty jealousies of the desert. They merely fought again on a wider field 'the battles of the Arabs before Islam.'"

"With the rise of Muawiya, the oligarchic rule of the heathen times displaced the democratic rule of Islam.

Paganism, with all its attendant depravity revived, and vice and immorality followed everywhere in the wake of governors and the Syrian soldiery.

Hijaz and Iraq groaned under the usurper's rule ; but his hold on the throat of Islam was too strong to be shaken off with immunity. The wealth, which he pitilessly extracted from his subjects, he lavishly spent on his mercenaries, who in return helped him to repress all murmurings. Before his death, he convened the chief officers of his army and made them take the oath of fealty to his son Yezid, whom he had designated as his successor to the throne. This was Yezid's title to the Caliphate ! On Muawiya's death, the Domitian of the house of Omeyyah ascended the throne which was founded by his father on fraud and treachery."

Imam Hussain (AS)

"As cruel and treacherous as Muawiya, Yazid did not, like his father, possess the capacity to clothe his cruelties in the guise of policy. His depraved nature knew no pity or justice. He killed and tortured for the pleasure he derived from human suffering. Addicted to the grossest of vices, his *boon* companions were the most abandoned of both sexes. Such was the Caliph - the Commander of the Faithful.

"Imam Hussain (AS), the second son of Hazrat Ali (AS), had inherited his father's chivalric nature and virtues. He had served with honour against the Christians in the siege of Constantinople. He united in his person the right of descent from Hazrat Ali (AS), with the holy character of the grandson of the Apostle. In the terms of peace signed between Muawiya and Imam Hassan (AS), his right to the Caliphate had been expressly reserved.

"Imam Hussain (AS) had never deigned to acknowledge the title of the tyrant of Damascus, whose vices he despised, and

whose character he regarded with abhorrence; and when the Muslims of Kufa besought his help to release them from the curse of the Umayyah's rule, he felt it his duty to respond to the Iraqis appeal for deliverance. The assurances he received, that all Iraq was ready to spring to its feet to hurl the despot from his throne the moment he appeared on the scene, made him to decide for Kufa with his family. He traversed the desert of Arabia unmolested, accompanied by his brother Abbas, a few devoted followers, and a timorous retinue of women and children; but as he approached the confines of Iraq he was alarmed by the solitary and hostile face of the country, and suspecting treachery, the Omayyah's weapon, he encamped his small band at a place called Karbala near the western bank of the Euphrates." (Syed Ameer Ali *'The Spirit of Islam'* p.299-300)

Imam Hussain (AS) along with his 71 companions and relatives were martyred, hungry and thirsty, in the deserts of Karbala, by the forces of Yazeed bin Muawiya.

When all the captives of Karbala were produced in the court of Yazeed ibn Muawiya, he recited a verse from one poet Abdullah Ibn Zabar'a which meant: 'Played Hashimites with the kingdom as otherwise neither came any News nor did descend any revelation from heaven.'

Hazrat Zannab (SA), sister of Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS) recited this verse from the Qur'an:

Then evil was the end of those who wrought evil, for belied they the signs of Allah, and then they used to mock.

Qur'an 30:10

"In the distant age and climate the tragic scene of the death of Hussain, will awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader."

Edward Gibbon

Imam Ali Ibn Imam Hussain (AS)

He was poisoned by the orders of Walid Ibne Abdul Malik Ibne Marwan bin Hakam.

Imam Mohammad Ibn Ali Al Baqir (AS)

Agents of Hisham son of Abdul Malik poisoned him.

Imam Jafar ibn Mohammad As-Sadiq (AS)

An agent of Mohammad ibn Abu Jafar Mansur poisoned him.

Imam Musa ibn Jafar Al Kazim (AS)

He was martyred on the orders of Haroon Rashid.

Imam Ali ibn Musa-Ar- Riza (AS)

He was poisoned on the orders of Mamooson son of Haroon Rashid.

Imam Mohammad ibn Ali At-Taqi (AS)

An agent of Mo'tasim son of Haroon Rashid poisoned him.

Imam Ali ibn Mohammad An-Naqi (AS)

Mo'tasim also martyred him by poisoning him.

Imam Hassan ibn Ali Al-Askari (AS)

Mo'tamad son of Mutawakkil poisoned him.

Imam Mohammad Al-Mahdi (AS)

Soldiers of Mo'tamad had come to kill him but Allah willed it, as He had willed in the case of Hazrat Isa (PBUH) and Hazrat Mahdi (AS), the twelfth Imam disappeared. It is believed that he along with Hazrat Isa (PBUH) would descend on the day fixed by Allah.

That was the 'love' and recompense that was paid to the Prophet (PBUH&HD) for his work. And that was the obedience to Qur'an and they still claimed themselves as successors to the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

Distinguished Companions

مثایا قیصر و کسریٰ کے استبداد کو جس نے
وہ کیا تھا؟ زور حیدر فقر بوذر صدق سلمانی

(علامہ اقبال)

What! Have they not travelled in the earth and seen how was the end of those before them? They were more (in number) than those and mightier in strength, and greater are their relics (of power) in the earth, but availed them not what they were earning.

Qur'an 40:82

A brief history of the treatment that was meted out to some of the noble companions of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) is of value to understand the degree of digression and diversion.

Hazrat Abu Zar Ghafari (RA)

He was a devoted, loyal, sincere and a truthful companion of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD). A bold, fearless and a vocal soldier who is known for his unflinching loyalty and for carrying out *Jihad bil lisan* (holy war by words of outh) till his last breath. He is one of those few

companions who launched a ruthless, determined and loud attack against nepotism, corruption, violation of human rights, hoarding and luxurious living. He is the manifestation of Allah's message of '*calling the people unto virtue and enjoin what is good and forbid wrong*' (*Qur'an 3:103*). Abu Zar could neither be bought by any amount of gold and silver nor could he be silenced by physical torture.

He had a clear vision of the teachings of Islam and would not hesitate to speak out the truth in front of anyone. He had a sharp cutting tongue and he would point out the violations committed by the highest authority of the State. He would boldly and loudly indicate the right path and would ask everyone to refrain from infidelity. The more he was punished and tortured the more his attacks grew sharper. From the day one that he met the Prophet (PBUH&HD) he started to convey the message of Islam to the people and he continued to do so until he was exiled to the Rabza desert where he died of hunger and thirst.

Abu Zar's real name was Junadah bin Qays bin Saghir bin Hazam bin Ghafar and his mother was Ramla daughter of Waqi'ah Ghafaria. Ghafaria is located between Makkah and Medina and this tribe was notorious for looting the trade caravans passing through their area.

The story of his conversion to Islam is a tale of dawn of divinity penetrating the dark clouds of ignorance, a story of vision and gift from Allah.

For a number of years it had not rained in Ghafaria. The people thought that they had come under the curse of the gods and to win the blessings of the gods, they must pray and offer sacrifices. One day all the village folks decided to move out, spend one night under the sky and ask for

forgiveness from their idol *Manat*. Abu Zar was not interested. His soul had already embarked upon the arduous journey of quest for Truth. He only needed a guide and a leader and he was destined to find one sooner than later.

He was reluctant to beg from the idol *Manat*. Doubts had begun to rise in his heart about whether this idol of stone could really help them, however, persuaded by his brother Unais he did accompany the tribe.

After the worship, when the people went to sleep, he got up and threw a stone at *Manat* to see the reaction. Nothing unusual happened. Abu Zar was convinced that these gods were not only stones and these idols neither had any powers nor could they lead them to salvation. He realized that there must be a supreme authority, a real Creator and an Almighty. His heart craved for knowing his Creator and to bow and prostrate before the Almighty. That was three years before he met the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

One day he heard that a person had appeared in Makkah who had declared that there is no god but Allah. He sent his brother Unais to Makkah. Unais heard this person telling the common folks:

"O, people! I have brought for you the blessings of this world and of Hereafter. Say there is no god but Allah, so that you may get deliverance. I am a Messenger of Allah and have come to you to warn of the punishment of the Day of Judgment. Remember that nobody will get deliverance except the one who comes to Allah with a humble heart. Neither your wealth would be of any use to you nor can your children help you. Fear Allah, Allah is Merciful and Beneficent. I say your forefathers had deviated from the right path in worshipping these idols and you are also following in their footsteps. Remember these idols of wood

and stone that you have carved with your own hands cannot benefit you or harm you.”

Unais went back and told Abu Zar what he had heard and seen. He added:

“This person, Mohammad, speaks kindly but he has no followers except his wife and his cousin brother Ali ibn Abu Talib. Some slaves and poor people do gather around him and like to listen to him but most people pelt stones at him.”

Abu Zar became anxious to meet the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and he travelled to Makkah to find out for himself what the truth was.

He was a stranger in Makkah and did not know where to find this person who had claimed to be an Apostle. He sat near the Ka'aba not knowing what to do and from whom to ask about Mohammad. Hazrat Ali (AS) came to him and asked him who he was and what brought him to Makkah? He told him that he had come to meet Mohammad, the Apostle.

Hazrat Ali (AS) took him to his house and looked after him as a guest. Hazrat Ali (AS) told him that he would take him to the Prophet (PBUH&HD) tomorrow morning. The whole night Abu Zar questioned Hazrat Ali (AS) and the whole night Hazrat Ali (AS) kept telling him about the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and the Message. The more Abu Zar heard the more excited he became to meet the Prophet (PBUH&HD). As the moments crept towards the dawn Abu Zar's anxiety increased. After the morning prayers he was taken to the Prophet (PBUH&HD). Abu Zar immediately fell in divine love with the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and listened to his message.

Abu Zar was so inspired that he went straight to the mosque and repeated what the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had told him. The Quresh started beating him up till he fell unconscious and was rescued by Abbas Ibn Abdul Mutalib.

Next day again he took the Message from the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and started to deliver the same in the mosque. Again he was beaten black and blue by the infidels.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) advised him to go back to his clan and convert them to Islam and join the Muslims when they migrate to Medina.

On reaching Ghafaria he first converted his brother Unais and then his mother Ramala. Gradually the whole tribe embraced Islam.

When Abu Zar heard that his beloved Prophet (PBUH&HD) had been through so many battles, he felt embarrassed and came to Medina. In Medina he was in the brotherhood of other Muslims but had no house so he would sleep in the mosque. Often the Prophet (PBUH&HD) would invite a few companions, including Abu Zar, to his house for a meal. Barley bread, milk or a few pieces of meat was often a normal dinner. On certain days it was only dates and water. That was a part of Abu Zar's training.

During 9 Hijri he joined the expedition to Tabuk. His camel was very weak and he started to fall back from the rest of the people. Gradually he was left so far behind that a few companions informed the Prophet (PBUH&HD) that Abu Zar had returned home. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) remarked, "Leave Abu Zar to himself. He would join us if he has any truth in himself."

Abu Zar abandoned his camel and started to follow the caravan on foot. It was very hot and the sun seemed exceptionally unkind. Abu Zar was thirsty and he had no water. He continued his journey until he came across a little ditch where there was water. He tasted it. It was sweet and cold. He filled up his water container but thinking that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) might also be thirsty, he did not drink the water.

When the Muslims saw Abu Zar approaching the camp, they told the Prophet (PBUH&HD) that Abu Zar was coming alone on foot. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) said, "May Allah be kind to Abu Zar. He is coming alone, he would die a lonely person and he would be raised on the Day of Judgment all by himself." (*Tabari Vol. 2, p. 371*).

He was almost half dead with thirst when he reached the camp. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) asked that water be immediately provided to Abu Zar but he said that he was carrying a sufficient stock of sweet water with him.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) asked him, "Abu Zar! If you had water with you why did you not drink it? You could have died of thirst?"

"My Master, I thought probably you had not taken any water and you too were thirsty, so I must not drink till you have taken this sweet water," he replied.

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) praised his devotion and prayed for him. After a little while the Prophet (PBUH&HD) said, "Abu Zar, you have been distinguished by Allah for the divine love that you have for Him and His Apostle. Abu Zar, it is very tragic that after me you will live alone,

remain alone and die a miserable death and you would be buried by Iraqis."

Abu Zar happily asked, "Would my sufferings be in the service of Islam?"

"Yes, of course, all your sufferings will be in the path of righteousness," the Prophet (PBUH&HD) told him. He was satisfied and happy.

In the company of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), Abu Zar excelled in piety, abstemiousness, truthfulness, simplicity and contentment.

From the very first day that Abu Zar had met Hazrat Ali (AS) in Makkah, he had developed special affiliations and reverence for him. While also in Medina, he would keep the company of Hazrat Ali (AS), the Gateway to the City of Knowledge. Hazrat Ali (AS) passed so much knowledge to Abu Zar and developed his character to such a degree that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) titled him as one of his *Ahlul Bayt* (a member of his family).

After the demise of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) Abu Zar observed, with a heavy heart, how different had Medina become. To his great annoyance, many developments reflected innovations and deviations. Hazrat Ali (AS) counselled restraint.

During the reign of Hazrat Usman (RA), he observed that the influence of Bani Umayyah was increasing in the affairs of the State. The property of the State was being distributed among some of the favourites. The practices of the days of ignorance were returning. Bani Umayyah had started to lead a life of comfort and luxury at the cost of

sufferings and deprivations of the poor masses. Ignorance had reappeared in the cloak of Islam.

Hakam and his son Marwan, whom the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had banished from the Islamic State for being the most undesirable personalities, were brought back. Marwan bin Hakam was appointed as Prime Minister and the property of Fadak (that had come to Hazrat Fatima (SA) as inheritance but was later confiscated) was gifted to him.

In fact, after the Battle of Khayber, the Jews gifted Fadak to the Prophet (PBUH&HD). In compliance with orders of Allah, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had given it to Hazrat Fatima (SA) as she was his only heir.

Then give thou to the near of kin his due, and to the needy, and the wayfarer; this is best of those who desire the pleasure of Allah, and these it is who are successful ones.

Qur'an 30:38)

However, after the demise of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), this land was confiscated and declared as property of the State.

Zubair, Talha and Abdul Rehman bin Auf were also provided with state land. Abdullah bin Abi Sarah, Harith bin al-A's, Zayed bin Thabit, Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas and a number of other persons from Bani Umayyah were favoured with land, gold and silver coins that belonged to the people. The poor and the needy were denied their due share. The Islamic State had assumed the characteristics of a kingdom. The word of the ruler was the law.

Seeing all this, Abu Zar went to the mosque and recited these verses:

O' ye who believe! Verily many of the divines and the monks eat away the properties of men falsely, and obstruct (others) from the way of Allah; and those who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in Allah's way; announce thou unto them a painful chastisement.

On the Day (of judgment) when it shall be heated in the fire of hell, then shall be branded with it their foreheads, and their sides and their backs; (saying unto them) "this is what you hoarded up for yourselves, taste ye then what ye did hoard up."

Qur'an 9:34 & 35

Abu Zar seeing what was happening to the public exchequer would often gather people around him and speak to them:

"Such things are taking place as were never heard of previously. I swear by Allah that such acts are neither sanctioned by the Qur'an nor supported by *Sunnah*. I swear by Allah that I see that truth is being suppressed and falsehood is being encouraged. Things that are right and true are being refuted and impious persons are being preferred. Some people have adopted silken curtains and soft cushions and have become habituated to sleeping in *azrabi* silk whereas the Prophet (PBUH&HD) used to sleep on a mat. They spend State money lavishly and eat and drink freely whereas the Prophet (PBUH&HD) did not eat even barley bread to his fill."

Hazrat Usman (RA) summoned Abu Zar to explain his conduct. Abu Zar replied:

"I am only reminding you and Marwan what is written in the Qur'an. You should be grateful to me that I am trying to

save you from the hellfire and am showing you the way to salvation.”

Abu Zar continued to deliver his speeches in the mosque, outside the mosque, in the streets and market places.

It is not righteousness that ye turn your face towards the East and the West, righteous is rather one who believeth in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Book, the apostles, and giveth his wealth out of love for Him to the kindred and the orphans and the poor and the wayfarer and the needy and for those in bondage; And establish prayer and payeth the poor-rate; And those who fulfil their promise when they make a promise and the patient ones in distress and affliction and in the time of war these are they who are the Truthful and these are they who are the pious.

Qur'an 2:177

Hazrat Usman (RA) was infuriated and ordered that anyone talking to Abu Zar or sitting in his company or listening to his sermons would be severely punished. However, Abu Zar continued to talk loudly about the acts of the ruling party regarding the violations of the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Hazrat Usman (RA) got so fed up with him that he ordered that Abu Zar be exiled to Syria and instructed his Governor Muawiya to be tough with him.

On reaching Syria Abu Zar observed that the lifestyle of Muawiya was even more luxurious than Marwan and the elite of Bani Umayyah. Muawiya was building a grand palace with blue granite and his court reflected the culture of the Roman and Persian Emperors. There was nothing Islamic.

He went to Muawiya and said, "O' Muawiya! If you have built this palace by spending the property of Allah then it is a breach of trust and if it is being done with your own money it is extravagance."

Abu Zar would often visit the court of Muawiya and recite verses from the Qur'an but Muawiya used to just turn his face away.

And when are recited unto him Our signs, he turneth back proudly as if he had heard them not, as though in his ears were heaviness; so give thou unto him the tidings of a painful chastisement.

Qur'an 31:7

People often gathered around Abu Zar to complain how miserable the conditions were and how their rights had been usurped.

Abu Zar would stand on the pulpit and recite:

And let not those who are niggardly in giving what Allah hath granted them of His grace, reckon it is good for them; Nay! It is bad for them; that which they have been niggardly of, shall shortly be clung to their necks on the day of Resurrection; and Allah's (alone) is the heritage of the heavens and the earth, And Verily Allah, of what ye do, is fully aware.

Qur'an 3:170

He would say: "By Allah, I see that the teachings of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* are being flouted. I see the wrong replacing the right. I see the sinners being rewarded for committing sins and the sincere people being neglected. O' Muawiya! O' the aristocrats! O' those who hoard money and gold and silver and do not spend it in the way of Allah,

have you forgotten that on the Day of Judgment, that is sure to come, your foreheads, sides and backs will be branded with the fire of this gold and silver.”

“I wonder as to why a person who has nothing in his house to eat, does not draw a sword and attack those who have usurped his rights and have brought him to this level of indigence.”

“When poverty proceeds towards a town, infidelity asks it to take it with itself.”

More and more people started to gather around him and listen to him. Abu Zar continued his mission unremittingly. Muawiya tried to silence Abu Zar by offering him gold and also by threatening him of dire consequences but nothing could stop Abu Zar from speaking out the truth.

The spies of Muawiya faithfully reported about the activities and the speeches of Abu Zar. Muawiya wrote to Hazrat Usman (RA) that if Abu Zar continued in this manner, the public of Syria would soon revolt and suggested that he (Muawiya) be permitted to assassinate Abu Zar. Hazrat Usman (RA) thought that if Abu Zar was killed, there could be a revolt against him so he asked Muawiya to send Abu Zar to Medina under tough guards.

Abu Zar was provided with a camel with a wooden saddle and four cruel guards drove him to Medina non-stop. By the time he reached Medina, he was half dead and bleeding from his thighs.

Abu Zar was produced in the court and Hazrat Usman (RA) asked him:

"Now, what should I do with you? Can't you keep your mouth shut? Why are you instigating people to revolt against me? I must send you away. Where would you like to be exiled?"

Abu Zar opted for Makkah, Syria, Kufa or Egypt but was not permitted to go to any of these places. Marwan suggested that he should be exiled to the Rabza desert so that he could not contact the public. Rabza was an inhabitable piece of desert on the route from Mecca to Kufa. Iraqi pilgrims used this route.

Hazrat Usman (RA) readily agreed and asked Marwan to personally escort him and leave him there. He also announced that no one must come out of his house to bid farewell to Abu Zar. No one was allowed to talk to this distinguished and honorable companion of the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

Marwan arranged a camel without a saddle for Abu Zar and set out for Rabza. When this news reached Hazrat Ali (AS), he cried bitterly at the treatment being meted out to Abu Zar. He along with his sons Hassan (AS) and Hussain (AS), his brother Aqeel, and Ibne Abbas went after them. Marwan tried to stop Hazrat Ali (AS) from talking to Abu Zar but Hazrat Ali (AS) did not care and they all accompanied him to Rabza. When they reached Rabza, they sat with him for a while and Hazrat Ali (AS) said:

"O' Abu Zar! Since your indignation and anger against the enemies of Allah was for the sake of Allah and to secure His pleasure, you may rightly expect His Blessings. People are afraid of you because they would lose their worldly possessions (on account of you speaking out the true interpretations of the Qur'an and you were afraid that Islam would suffer on account of their acts and deeds.)"

Now leave with them what they feared to lose on your account (vicious and sinful worldly possessions and power) and take away in your safe custody that which you were anxious that it might not suffer at their hands a serious loss (true teachings of Islam). In fact they are really and truly in need of that which you are taking away with you (peace and blessings bestowed by religion) and you can very conveniently do without that which they want to hold at any cost (worldly power and wealth), and in the near future (on the Day of Judgment) you will know who has been benefited by this transaction and who is being envied for this gain.

Even when the doors of Paradise and earth are closed against a man and he sincerely and piously prays, the All Merciful Allah will confer upon him Blessings of both the worlds.

Abu Zar! Love only truth and justice and hate only falsehood and impiety. Impious people are such that they will befriend you only when you accept their ways of life, and will take you under their protection, if you enter their fold. (They will not come to your help merely on philanthropic grounds or because you rightly deserve help and protection)."

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

Abu Zar's wife, his son and his daughter were also sent to live with him. This poor family continued to suffer untold miseries and hardships in the wilderness of Rabza. They all died one after the other.

When Abu Zar became too weak to walk, he asked his wife to escort him to the track. He hoped that may be, some travellers would pass this way who could bury him. His

wife said that no one would come this way as all the caravans of Hujjaj had already gone back. Abu Zar said:

“No, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) cannot be wrong. He had told me that a party from Iraq would bury me. Surely some one will come.”

After some time she saw a few horsemen and she beckoned them by waving her hands. When they came near she told them:

“Brothers, this is a Muslim dying in this wilderness. I am too weak to dig his grave and I do not have even a sheet to shroud him. Will you please shroud him and bury him? Allah will recompense you.”

“Who is he?” they asked.

“He is Abu Zar Ghafari, a distinguished companion of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), she replied.

They said, “What! Is he really Abu Zar? We cannot believe that Abu Zar Ghafari can die such a miserable death in the wilderness of Rabza.”

Abu Zar was going through the pangs of death. With great difficulty he gathered his last few breaths and told them:

“Anyone who has ever been in the pay of Usman, Marwan or Muawiya should not shroud me.”

They all could not believe that Abu Zar had so much hatred for the rulers that he did not want to have even a shroud from the money paid by them. One young man said: “I have a mantle whose cotton I purchased with my hard earned money and its threads have been spun by my mother

and she has given it to me to use it as *ahram* (pilgrim's garb).

"May Allah recompense you." Abu Zar breathed his last breath.

George Jordac in his book 'The Voice of Human Justice' comments: "One may ask as to how it happened that Hazrat Ali (AS) saw Abu Zar being subjected to torture and oppression but took no steps to save him from the tyranny of the caliph of the time? Abu Zar was a distinguished companion of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and a great supporter of Hazrat Ali (AS) and was opposing the caliph not for any personal gain but to ensure the welfare of the people. Then why did Hazrat Ali (AS) remain quiet?

If he had so desired he could restrain Hazrat Usman (RA) from banishing Abu Zar and could use all his resources to make the people stand up in opposition to Bani Umayyah. And there is no doubt about the fact that the Muslims would have supported Hazrat Ali (AS) whole-heartedly. Then what was the reason for this silence of Hazrat Ali (AS)?

Just as this question occurs to everybody's mind, it occurred to my mind also. I thought that whereas one aspect of Hazrat Ali's (AS) remaining quiet on this occasion is quite clear and evident and the other is very intricate and not understandable by everyone.

The intricate aspect is that Hazrat Ali's (AS) time was not the present one. He lived more than 1400 years ago. Circumstances and conditions, which existed at that time, cannot be assessed properly in the present twentieth century nor can we understand all their aspects. Probing the real causes has not been possible in spite of deep investigations

conducted by many researchers. Hazrat Ali (AS) knew and understood many subtleties of his own time, which were not visible to others, and his line of action was based on the exigencies of the time, which were known to him only.

However, the aspect of his quietness, which is quite evident, is that the spirit of sacrifice was present in the very nature of Hazrat Ali (AS) and he was prepared to suffer any hardship for the sake of the welfare of the people. He was so mindful of the safety of Islam that he did not care for anything except that. The more deeply we study the conduct and character of Hazrat Ali (AS), and examine all aspects of his life, the more we are convinced of this reality. He could not tolerate that the advancement and propagation of Islam should slacken in the least. He knew very well the mentality of Bani Umayyah before and after their embracement of Islam, but he was afraid that if the Muslims arrayed themselves against them dissensions would take place among the followers of Islam and that would be harmful for the religion.

“Hazrat Ali (AS) knew that Bani Umayyah wanted to kill all the true believers who constituted the real support for Islam so that they might free themselves from the restrictions imposed by Islamic law and there should be none left to object to their activities.

“Is it not a fact that Marwan bin Hakam instigated Hazrat Usman (RA) to kill Hazrat Ali (AS) and other distinguished companions (like Abu Zar and Ammar)? His object in making this suggestion was that with the removal of these persons from the scene Bani Umayyah should be free to do what they liked, because while these pious and dauntless companions of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) were present Bani Umayyah could not create mischief and act as despotic rulers.

“Had Marwan’s desire been fulfilled it cannot be assessed how much trouble Bani Umayyah would have created. It was, therefore, the height of Hazrat Ali’s (AS) foresight and prudence that he expressed only so much resentment in the matter of injustice done to Abu Zar as he had expressed in connection with the oppression to which he himself was subjected.

“He did this so that the Muslims might not become enemies of one another.

“This had happened earlier also on the occasion of *Saqeefa*. Hazrat Umar (RA) came to Hazrat Ali’s (AS) house and dragged him at point of sword to take an oath of allegiance to Abu Bakr (RA). The Muslims were gathered round Hazrat Ali (AS) at that time. Some of them were astonished whereas others were beside themselves with rage. All were expecting a hint from him so that they might fight for his defence. No doubt Hazrat Ali (AS) was the pillar of Islam, the citadel of justice, and the Imam of all the people, but what did he do for himself? He only kept quiet.

“When the people saw Hazrat Umar (RA) taking Hazrat Ali (AS) before caliph at the point of the sword, they were much surprised. However, when they looked at his face they did not find any sign of anger on his face. He neither incited the people nor raised his voice, nor allowed them to draw their swords when a few moments later they saw Hazrat Ali (AS) standing before them i.e. Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA) and Hazrat Umar (RA). He was calm and composed and argued his case in a convincing manner. None dared to open their mouth in reply. Hazrat Ali (AS) was justified in proving his rights through protests and arguments, and was also justified in showing patience, calmness, forbearance and forgiveness. He knew himself very well.

The supporters of Hazrat Ali (AS) were surprised at the attitude adopted by him. But there was one thing, which Hazrat Ali (AS) knew, but others did not know. And that was the thing, which Hazrat Ali (AS) aimed at and which was the source of his peace of mind. This refers to the fact that he had worked with the Prophet (PBUH&HD) to lay the foundations of Islam. He equally shared the responsibility of propagation of Islam. How could he tolerate that this religion should suffer destruction? That was the reason why he sacrificed his own rights, and he acted in the case of Abu Zar in the same manner in which he had acted in his own case.

It is pertinent to mention here what he had told Abbas ibn Mutalib immediately after the *Sqeefa bani Sa'ada* episode:

"I have such secrets in my heart that if I tell you will start trembling like a rope hanging in a well."

Certainly he was acting on the instructions of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), which he must have given him during the last moments of his life. No one else knows these and Hazrat Ali (AS) never disclosed these to anyone except, probably to his sons Hassan (AS) and Hussain (AS).

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When the news of the demise of Abu Zar Ghafari reached Hazrat Ali (AS) he was sitting amongst his close companions and relatives and he had the following discourse:

The sway of tyrants was long, so that their tyranny and oppression could be fully exposed and their infamy and disgrace could be unmasked. They deserved the fate, which

overtook them. They were destroyed and annihilated, and the people were rescued from calamities and destruction, and were relieved of war and bloodshed, which were brought about by the tyrants. The pious people, who bravely passed through those days, patiently bore the sufferings and gave their lives for the cause of justice and Islam. They humbled themselves before Allah; they never for a moment magnified their patience and bravery, and never imagined that they were obliging Allah and His Religion. Then Allah ordained that the times of trials and afflictions should come to an end. They were given permission to defend their faith with the help of their swords; they obeyed the commandments of Allah according to the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD).

Things continued like that till Allah called the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be upon him and his descendants) back. Then many became apostate or turned towards paganism; they were doomed by the perversity of their minds and waywardness. They put faith in their relatives, who were misguided, or the instigators, who were pagans. They discarded the medium (the Progeny of the Holy Prophet) that they were ordered to love, to respect and to follow, and who would have kept them within the bounds of the true religion. Thus they undermined the foundation of the true religion and tried to introduce schism and heresy in Islam. They became storehouses of sins, and sources of all vices. They became wayward; they were intoxicated with power, arrogance and wickedness. They adopted the ways of Pharos and his people, were attached to earthly powers and pleasures and drifted away from the true religion.

Hazrat Abdullah bin Mas'ud (RA)

Georgé Jordac, in his book 'The Voice of Human Justice' writes:

"All those persons who disliked the financial and administrative policies of Bani Umayyah and criticized them sincerely became the target of Hazrat Usman's (RA) wrath on the suggestion of Marwan and his other associates and advisers. One of those persons who opposed these policies and methods was Abdullah bin Mas'ud, a distinguished companion of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). In order to explain how much the people were grieved on account of the oppression to which this companion of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) was subjected, it appears necessary to give a brief account of his life history.

"Abdullah bin Mas'ud was one of those persons who embraced Islam first of all. It is said that his number was sixth on the list. He had the honour of migrating twice in the first instance to Ethiopia and then to Medina. He always remained in the company of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). He was one of those whom the Prophet (PBUH&HD) loved and respected for their truthfulness, honesty and piety.

"The Muslims of the early era considered Ibn Mas'ud to be one of the greatest scholars. It was on account of his profound knowledge that Hazrat Umar (RA) sent him to Kufa to guide and educate the people of that city, although he himself needed his advice in Medina. While sending him to Kufa Hazrat Umar (RA) sent a letter to the citizens of Kufa. He wrote: 'I am sending Abdullah bin Mas'ud to educate you. By sending him to Kufa I have given you preference over myself. You should acquire knowledge from him'.

“Many Kufans benefited from Ibn Mas`ud. The number of his pupils increased day after day and they became renowned scholars. The famous Tabe`i (companion of the companions of the Prophet (PBUH&HD)) Said bin Jaybar used to say: ‘The pupils of Abdullah bin Mas`ud were the lamps of this city’. (i.e.Kufa)

“All the Muslims acknowledged Abdullah bin Mas`ud to be an erudite scholar. So much so, that during the time of Hazrat Umar (RA), it was he to whom the Kufans referred their religious problems and only his judgments were accepted by them.

“In the matter of exegesis also he was one of the topmost authorities, and his rank was almost equal to that of Abdullah bin Abbas. He had many pupils who distinguished themselves in this branch of learning, such as Qatada and Maasrooq ibn Ajda`.

“In short Abdullah bin Mas`ud was the most respectable personality of his time. He was honoured in all Islamic cities more than any other companion of the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

How did Hazrat Usman (RA) behave towards this distinguished companion? Ibn Mas`ud was one of those distinguished companions who openly disapproved and fearlessly criticized the policies and the modus operandi of Bani Umayyah. On every Friday he would say in Kufa: ‘The most correct word is the Book of Allah and the best guidance is that provided by Prophet Mohammad (PBUH&HD) and the worst things are innovations. Every innovation is deviation and every deviation leads one to Hell’.

The above statement of Ibn Mas'ud contained a clear criticism of Hazrat Usman (RA) and the actions, which he took for the benefit of only Bani Umayyah and the wealthy and influential persons ignoring the welfare of the common man.

“He said many things criticizing Hazrat Usman (RA), for example, he said: ‘In the eyes of Allah Hazrat Usman (RA) does not bear even as much value as the wing of a fly’.

“Walid bin Uqbah, the Governor of Kufa, resented very much the remarks of Ibn Mas'ud regarding Hazrat Usman (RA). This Walid was a brother of Hazrat Usman (RA) from his mother's side and was a great drunkard and a licentious person. Hazrat Usman (RA) had appointed him as the Governor of Kufa notwithstanding the displeasure of the residents of that city’

“Walid wrote to Hazrat Usman (RA) informing him that Ibn Mas'ud criticized and abused him (Hazrat Usman RA.). Hazrat Usman (RA) asked him to send Abdullah to him. It has been narrated that when Abdullah left Kufa for Medina many persons came to bid him farewell. Every one of them begged him not to leave Kufa and assured him that they could not let him suffer any harm. He, however, responded, ‘There is something which must happen soon’.

“Abdullah bin Mas'ud reached Medina on Friday night. When Hazrat Usman (RA) learnt about his arrival he made the people gather in the masjid and from the pulpit he said, ‘Just see a mean animal is coming towards you who tramples on his food, vomits and excretes’.

Ibn Mas'ud said, ‘I am not like that. Of course, I am a companion of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). I was with him

in the Battle of Badr and also participated in *Bait-al-Rizwan* (the oath of allegiance taken under a tree at Hudaibiya).’

“Hazrat Ayesha (RA) said loudly from her house: ‘Usman! You are saying these words about a companion of the Prophet (PBUH&HD)’. Others also disliked these remarks and expressed their resentment.

“As ordered by Hazrat Usman (RA) his officials and slaves turned Ibn Mas`ud out from the masjid in a very rude manner. They dragged him to the gate of the masjid and there they threw him down on the ground. Then they beat him so mercilessly that they broke his bones and from there he was carried home like a dead body.

“Hazrat Usman (RA) was not satisfied with the beating and insulting to which this great companion of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) was subjected.

“He stopped the stipend which Ibn Mas`ud received from the Public Treasury and deprived him of all his sources of livelihood. He also ordered the people not to visit him to enquire about his health. Eventually Ibn Mas`ud passed away and Ammar Yassir offered his funeral prayers and a few of his friends buried him secretly.

Ammar Yassir (RA)

He was one of the early converts. His father, Yassir, was from Yemen and his mother, Sumayyah, was a slave. They were one of those lucky people who embraced Islam when many others were still probing in the darkness. To convert them back to polytheism their master used to punish them every day. His mother was the first martyr, and shortly

after, his father too died repeating '*Ahad, Ahad*' (Allah is One).

The Prophet (PBUH&HD) held Ammar in very high esteem for not only resisting the torture but for also thoroughly learning and understanding the Qur'an and following in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD). One day, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) predicted:

"When dissensions take place among the people, son of Summayya (Ammar) will be on the side of righteousness and would be slain by a party of dissidents."

He grew up as a good Muslim and was especially attached to Hazrat Ali (AS). He had a divine love for Hazrat Ali (AS) and learnt from him the Qur'an and the lessons of spiritual and moral revolution. He was well known for his great merits, virtues and piety. Like many other companions he too was saddened by the way the land and the trust of Allah had become a plaything in the hands of Bani Umayyah.

Ammar would often visit Hazrat Usman (RA) and try to tell him to do justice and show kindness to the general public. Hazrat Usman (RA) never paid any heed to such an advice.

George Jordac in his book '*The Voice of Human Justice*' has following comments to offer:

"He was one of those great personalities of Islam who are well-known for their virtues, high morals and piety. His worth and value was best known to the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and he knew what great merits he possessed. That is why he paid him glowing tributes, which he amply deserved. For example he said about him: 'When

dissensions take place between the people the son of Sumayyah (i.e. Ammar) will be on the side of righteousness.'

"Many differences arose between the Muslims during the early days of Islam and Ammar always sided with Hazrat Ali (AS). It was on account of these qualities and virtues that the Muslims loved him and Bani Umayyah and their supporters were his sworn enemies.

"The first action of Hazrat Usman (RA) which Ammar disliked was that he made wealth a plaything in the hands of the affluent persons. As explained by Ammar himself he often met Hazrat Usman (RA) and advised him to administer justice, avoid nepotism and refrain from making Bani Umayyah the overlord of the people. Consequently Hazrat Usman (RA) got annoyed with him, as he was annoyed with other virtuous persons.

"It has been narrated that there was a casket in the Public Treasury which contained ornaments and gems. Hazrat Usman (RA) removed this jewellery from the treasury and gave it to one of his wives to wear. The people objected to this and criticized him severely, which made him furious. Speaking in a public gathering he said: 'I shall take whatever I like out of the war booty, and damn care if some one dislikes it'. Thereupon Hazrat Ali (AS) said: 'In that event you will be restrained from doing so and a wall will be raised between you and the Public Treasury'.

"Ammar said: 'I call Allah to witness that I am the first person to dislike this misappropriation'.

"Thereupon Hazrat Usman (RA) said: 'O Ammar! How dare you speak against me? Arrest him'.

“Suddenly Marwan got up and said to Hazrat Usman (RA): ‘O’ Commander of the Faithful! This slave (Ammar) has instigated the people against you. If you kill him others will learn a lesson’.

“Hazrat Usman (RA) immediately got ready to act on Marwan’s suggestion. He picked up his stick and started to beat up Ammar mercilessly. His slaves and other members of the Umayyah family also joined in. Hazrat Usman (RA) also kicked him in a very insulting manner and inflicted so many kicks on his belly below the navel that he developed hernia. Thereafter he was thrown on the road while it was raining and thundering, and he became almost dead.”

A few friends took him to his house and he remained in bed for a long time.

As predicted by the Prophet (PBUH&HD) Ammar was martyred during Saffin, fighting on the side of Hazrat Ali (AS).



Downfall of Hazrat Usman (RA)

Many pages of the history of mankind are smeared with the history of the oppressors and the oppressed, conflicts between the rich and the poor. The rich and the strong have usually exploited the poor and the weak. The strong have often deprived the poor of their earnings and have filled their own coffers. The lords have employed the weak as beasts of burden. Luxury and comfort of many is at the cost of the miseries and discomforts of the poor.

In Egypt the poor were employed for lifting and moving heavy stones to build the pyramids for the preservation of the dead bodies of Pharaohs. Hundreds of thousands of labourers died and many generations perished while serving the dead Pharaohs.

Even the so-called civilized white man of Europe and America, captured slaves from Africa and other poor lands and employed them for bringing prosperity to the white-skinned master. To keep the black man under control he was usually chained, beaten and starved. The white man prospered and the black man suffered degradation.

The Arabian society was no different. The weak had no rights but they were kept alive to serve the tyrant master. Human beings were sold and purchased like animals. The slaves must strain their arms and legs with their heads bowed. Mercy, forgiveness and kindness were expressions never heard off. No slave could ever express pain or agony of indignation. A whisper for pity invited more pain. The sufferings, humiliation and pain of the poor seemed eternal and everlasting.

Then a period came when the weak started to be exploited in the name of the religion. To please the gods and goddesses, they had to move heavy stones for building the huge places for worship or for carving the statues. How many were crushed under the heavy stones and how many died building these high structures, no account was kept. Once the places of worship and the statues were in place the poor men, women and children were slaughtered at the altar of these gods and goddesses to earn their blessings. These gods and goddesses were lavishly served with blood of the weak and poor. Never a rich man's son or daughter was sacrificed to earn the blessings of the gods.

The so-called 'noble' religious philosophers had their own philosophy of tyranny and exploitation. They would comfort the poor by telling them that their blood must flow to please the gods and the goddesses, as they were the favourites. These slaves had heard the bishops, monks and priests and even philosophers like Aristotle, saying that the Lord had created some men as rulers and masters and some as slaves. That was the decision of destiny that could not be changed. It was the destiny of the ruler to live in luxury and in high rising castles. And those whose destiny had made them slaves must continue to build these castles for their lords. The poor and the deprived must accept their destiny and resign to their fate.

In this bleak and cruel wilderness of utter ignorance an orphan from the Bani Hashim clan stood on mount Sina and declared, "O' people! Our Creator has designated me. He is One and He has asked me to tell you that He has created all human beings equal. There is no slave and no master. It is only the piety, wisdom and knowledge that distinguish one person from the other.

When the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) invited his close relatives to accept the Oneness of Allah and to accept him (Mohammad) as His Apostle, they jeered at him, and then they threatened him. Efforts were also made to purchase him but his opponents failed.

The laughter and the jeers of the Quresh lords gradually turned into anger against him. He was detested by the lords, insulted by Quresh women and stoned by their children.

The black slaves, the downtrodden and the weak were attracted towards his sweet and serene voice. They were surprised that how could this man, an orphan from Bani Hashim clan; bring about equality between a master and a slave. That was something unheard of. The slaves would ask each other, "What was Mohammad talking about? Was his Allah a different Allah than the one who had created us as slaves and destitute?"

However, these indigent and downtrodden slaves readily accepted His Message and broke free from their chains of slavery and prison cells.

They all gathered around him. They were punished for betraying the trust of their gods and their masters. The more they were tortured, the firmer became their faith and the louder they said, "*Ahad, Ahad* (Allah is one, Allah is one)."

This healer of injured souls and this embodiment of kindness was forced to abandon his house in Makkah and he migrated to Medina. In Medina he consolidated his spiritual kingdom. One by one he defeated the false gods and their followers in every field.

When he ruled over a large territory, neither he built castles for himself nor his mosque was decorated with gold plates. This emperor of all emperors, this holy of the holiest, lived in a small mud hut, slept on a wooden plank and his food was a few palm-dates, or dry barley bread.

In his 'Kingdom of Faith' there were no kings and no queens, no slaves and no masters. No one was humiliated and no one was exploited. Nobility and virtues were respected and not the wealth. Bilal, once a slave, held the coveted appointment of a *muezzin* (one who calls to prayers). Salman (RA) of Persia became a favourite advisor. Poor Abu Zar Ghafari was honored as the most truthful person. Zaid bin Haris and his son Usama became the Commanders. Summaiya's son Ammar was one of the most respected companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD).

During his lifetime none of his descendents or companions hoarded money or collected gold and silver. He did not permit his honourable wives even to desire more than what was the minimum essential for their daily needs.

[After the conquest of Khayber, one or two wives of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) desired some share in the booty and he recited what was revealed to him: "O' Our Prophet (Mohammad!) Say thou unto thy wives' "If ye desire (the enjoyment of) the life of this world and its adornment, come then I will provide for you and allow you to depart a goodly departing. (Qur'an 33: 28)

As soon as Hazrat Usman (RA) became the ruler, he looked towards his clan Bani Umayyah for political strength.

"Hazrat Usman's (RA) amiability and easy good nature made him a pliable tool in the hands of his kinsfolk. The

venerable Caliph surrounded by his hungry kinsmen, the provinces crying for redress, and the general body of the Muslims sullenly watching the proceedings of the Head of the State, form an instructive though sad picture of the times.

"The character of the deluded Pontiff has been graphically portrayed by Dozy. 'The personality of Hazrat Usman (RA)'s did not justify his election to the Caliphate. It is true he was rich and generous, had assisted Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD) and the religion by pecuniary sacrifices, and that he prayed and fasted often, and was a man of amiable and soft manners. He was, however, not a man of spirit, and was greatly enfeebled by old age. His timidity was such that when placed on the pulpit he knew not how to commence his sermon. Unhappily for this old man, he possessed an inordinate fondness for his kinsmen, who formed the Makkan aristocracy, and who, for twenty years, had insulted, persecuted, and fought against Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD).

"Soon they dominated over him completely. His uncle, Hakam, and especially Hakam's son, Marwan, in reality governed the country, only allowing the title of Caliph to Hazrat Usman (RA), as well as the responsibility of the most compromising measures, of which he was often wholly ignorant. The orthodoxy of these two men, especially of the father, was strongly suspected. Hakam had been converted only when Makkah was taken. Having betrayed state-secrets, he had been disgraced and exiled. Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA) and Hazrat Umar (RA) had maintained the order passed (by the Prophet). Hazrat Usman (RA), on the contrary, not only recalled him from his exile, and compensated him with a hundred thousand pieces of silver from the public treasury and a piece of land belonging to the State. He made

Marwan his secretary and vizier, and married him to one of his daughters and enriched him with the spoils of Africa.' (*Dozy, Hist. des, Mussulmans dans l'Espagne, Vol. I, p.44*).

"He confirmed Muawiya, the son of Abu Sufyan and Hind, who had fought against Mohammed with such ferocity at Uhud, in the governorship of Syria; and his foster-brother, Abdullah ibn Sa'd ibn Surrah, with the satrapy of Egypt.

"This Abdullah was at one time a secretary to the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and when the Master dictated his revelations, he would change the words and "denaturalize" their meaning. His sacrilege being discovered, he fled, and relapsed into idolatry.

"Walid, the half brother of the old Caliph, was made governor of Kufa. His father had often ill-treated Prophet Mohammed (PBUH&HD), and once nearly strangled him. An abandoned debauchee, and a profligate drunkard, his life was a scandal to the Muslims. He appeared in the mosque at the time of morning-prayers helpless from intoxication, falling prostrate on the ground as he attempted to perform the duties of an Imam, or leader of prayer; and when the by-standers hurried up to assist-him to his feet, he shocked them by demanding more wine, in a husky and stammering voice. These were the men whom the Caliph favoured!

"They fastened upon the provinces like famished leeches, heaping up wealth by means of pitiless extortion. Complaints poured into Medina from all parts of the empire. But the complaints were invariably dismissed with abuses and harsh words. (*Ibn ul-Athir, Vol. 3, p.125*)

"A deputation, consisting of twelve thousand men, headed by Mohammed the son of the Caliph Abu Bakr, came to the capital to lay before Hazrat Usman (RA) the grievances of

the people, and to seek redress. Sore pressed at their demands for justice, he had recourse to the intervention of the son-in-law of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) whose advice he had hitherto persistently refused to heed. Hazrat Ali (AS) persuaded the delegation to depart to their homes, by giving them a pledge that their complaints would be conveyed to Hazrat Usman (RA). In fact Hazrat Ali (AS) did not want any lawlessness in the State.

"On their way back, and hardly at a day's journey from Medina, they intercepted a letter written by Hazrat Usman's (RA) secretary, which bore the Caliph's own seal, containing a mandate to the unscrupulous Muawiyah to massacre the whole group. Enraged at this treachery, they returned to Medina...." (*Syed Ameer Ali 'The Spirit of Islam' P.394-395*)

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Hazrat Usman (RA) tried that the people should become subservient to the young men of Bani Omayyah, whom he had appointed as governors of all the States. The capitalist class that was crushed by the Islamic jurisprudence reemerged as politico-religious polity. The obvious result was that the rich and the influential became richer and the poor class was deprived of even two square meals.

Sadiq Arjun of Egypt writes in his book 'Usman' some details of the gifts that Hazrat Usman (RA) bestowed upon his relatives:

- One fifth of the war booty received from the conquest of African countries was given to his cousin Marwan bin Hakam. Fadak, which was the inherited property of Hazrat Fatima (SA), was also allotted to him. He was also favoured with one

hundred thousand dirhams from the Public Treasury.

- Abdullah bin Khalid bin Usayed was given one hundred thousand dirhams.
- Hakam bin A's, the sworn enemy of Islam, and whom Prophet (PBUH&HD) had declared persona non-gratia and had banished him from Medina, was favoured with one hundred thousand dirhams.
- Mehzool bazaar of Medina which was endowed by the Prophet (PBUH&HD) upon the Muslims was given to Haris bin Hakam.
- The pasture around Medina that were declared by the Prophet (PBUH&HD) as a common land for grazing the animals of the Muslims, was reserved exclusively for the grazing of the animals of Bani Umayyah.
- All the taxes received from African countries, from Egypt to Tangiers, were given to Abdullah bin Sarah.

When a daughter of Hazrat Usman (RA) got married to Haris bin Hakam, he gave him one hundred thousand dirham, a number of camels and he was also permitted to collect zakat (poor rate) from Bani Qaza'ah and to keep it for meeting his day-to-day expenses.

Two hundred thousand dirhams were given to Abu Sufyan bin Harb.

- Talha bin Abdullah built magnificent palaces in Kufa and Medina. He received a large sum of income from Kufa and Sirat.
- Abdul Rehman bin Auf erected a number of palaces. He also had a number of stables and in each stable there were one hundred horses. In addition, he had one thousand camels and ten thousand goats and sheep and three thousand gold coins.
- Zaid bin Sabit left so much gold in his personal treasury that it had to be cut with an axe to be distributed among his heir.
- Laila bin Umayyah left behind half a million gold coins.
- Zubair bin Awam built splendid palaces in Basra, Kufa and Alexandria. He had one thousand slaves, one thousand slave-girls, one thousand horses and fifty thousand gold coins.
- Hazrat Usman (RA) himself owned property in Qura and Hunein that was worth millions. He also had one hundred thousand dirham in cash and gold coins.
- Hazrat Umar (RA) kept jewellery that had come after the conquest of Persia in the Government Treasury but during the days of Hazrat Usman (RA) it was seen around the necks of his wives and daughters. Hazrat Usman (RA) had built a palace in Medina and its doors were made of teak wood.

One day Zaid bin Arqam, the treasurer, came to Hazrat Usman (RA) and, with tears in his eyes, threw the keys of the Public Treasury before him. Hazrat Usman asked, "Why are you crying? I have shown regard to these persons on account of our kinship." Zaid said, "Even if you had given one hundred dirhams to Marwan it would have been too much, but you have given him one hundred thousand dirhams!" Hazrat Usman (RA) responded, "Let these keys remain here. It will be possible for me to find many treasurers."

According to Dr. Taha Husayn:

"The first trouble that arose of this practice was that capitalism spread in Iraq and other provinces on a large scale. This practice benefited those who were big capitalists and could purchase the property of the persons belonging to the less privileged class. Thus Talha and Zubair purchased large properties. From then onwards began the practice of purchase, sale, mortgage, lease of property etc. A class of rich rulers came into existence. A few persons became extremely rich and people with smallholdings were forced to sell their lands at throwaway prices to the big landowners.

"The second trouble that arose was that these land lords started to purchase slaves who would work on their lands. This leisure and luxury gave birth to innovations for further corruption and the fulfillment of their licentious desires. False stories and *ahadis* (sayings of the Prophet (PBUH&HD)) started to be sold and purchased in the open market."

The general public was also very resentful regarding the ugly and cruel treatment that had been meted out to some distinguished companions of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) like

Abu Zar (RA), Abdullah bin Mas'ud (RA) and Ammar Yassir (RA). In these circumstances, some migrated, some took to various corners of the mosques and, of course, some others sold their loyalties and got integrated into the whole corrupt system.

The end result was that unethical politico-economic practices and evil social customs were permitted and were freely being exercised in the society. It was a violation of the basic code of conduct that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and his righteous companions had sacrificed so much to establish.

Seeing how the teachings of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* were being trampled upon, Hazrat Ali (AS) could not restrain himself. He went to Hazrat Usman and advised him:

"..... Conditions now have taken a similar turn, teachings of the true religion have been forgotten; blind faith is the order of the day; commands of Allah are being disobeyed; the Satan is appreciated and religion has been ignored in such a way that its tenets are falling apart; its dogmas are being altered; its precepts are being effaced and eclipsed; and its paths are being obliterated.

Satan is being obeyed; his ways are being followed, and he is filling their minds with vicious ideas; these ideas have become his army and are rising, his standard to promote vicious and sinful disorders. The slaves of Satan in their turn have become masters of the situation, crushing the society, subjugating everybody, and holding the realm under its sway.

The masses, being uneducated, have fallen easy prey to him and are now standing confused. Such is the condition of the best realm of the world which is now populated with wicked

persons, who waste their time and weep over the losses; it is a realm where the learned have to keep their mouths shut and the uneducated and the ignorant rule."

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

Hazrat Usman (RA) did not pay any heed to the advice of the Manifesting Imam. No measures were taken to improve the situation or redress the grievances of the general public.

Hazrat Usman (RA) went out of his way to shower all kinds of favours on the members of Bani Omayyah. All his policies were dictated by Marwan who permitted his friends, family members and favourites to squeeze the masses as much as they could. Any one who questioned their conduct was severely punished. The honest and well meaning people were never allowed access to Hazrat Usman (RA). Even if anyone did complain, it was dismissed and Marwan's opinion was always upheld.

Hazrat Usman (RA) was a simple person. He had tried to build up his strength on the edifice of undue favour and latitude that he provided to Bani Umayyah. He never listened to the complaints made against any of his governors and, instead, inflicted severe punishments on some of the noble companions of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). His perceptions proved to be wrong and ill founded. He trusted those who were not trustworthy and listened to those who harboured ulterior motives.

In fact, persons like Muawiya and Marwan, were never sincere to him and secretly aspired to take over from him when he became too weak to rule or was removed from the scene. These officials never gave him any honest advice or assisted him in any crisis situation. None of them came to

his rescue when the public had laid a siege around his palace. They were happy when he was assassinated.

Another aspirant to occupy the 'throne' was Talha bin Ubaidullah. He was actively involved in organizing, instigating and directing a number of renegades to get rid of Hazrat Usman (RA) so that he could take over as Head of the State.

Zubair bin Awwam was also hopeful of becoming a caliph. Before the commencement of the Battle of Camel, Hazrat Ali (AS) asked him as to how he had come there and he replied, "You have been the cause of my coming here. I do not consider you fit to be a caliph nor do I consider anyone else to be more deserving for this office than myself." It was *Saqeefa Bani Sa'ada* speaking.

A stage reached that even Hazrat Ayesha (RA) became very vocal against the system of governance perpetrated by Hazrat Usman (RA) and his coterie. She started to actively instigate the people to revolt against Hazrat Usman (RA). She would often take out the shirt of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and say, "O, Muslims! The shirt of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) has not yet worn out and Usman has corrupted his *Sunnah*." She was of the opinion that her cousin Talha would be a better choice.

There were many other 'dignitaries' who actively or behind the scene participated in the murder of Hazrat Usman (RA). Umro bin A's who had migrated to Palestine once remarked, "Not to talk of the dignitaries and the chiefs, I instigated even the herdsmen to rise against Usman."

For eleven long years people suffered the oppressive rule of Marwan. The discontentment of the people started to take the shape of collective protests and demonstrations against the elite class. They all blamed Hazrat Usman (RA) for the misconduct of his officials. To deal with this situation, Hazrat Usman (RA) called a conference that was attended only by the advisors from Bani Umayyah. They suggested to Hazrat Usman (RA) that he should come down with a heavy hand on the general public and if he showed any leniency it would be taken as weakness on his part.

On one occasion people became so furious that they surrounded his castle and demanded their rights. Hazrat Ali (AS), as an Imam, went to Hazrat Usman (RA) and tried to tell him that he must alleviate the sufferings of the common folks, fulfil their basic needs and remove the corrupt officials.

Hazrat Usman (RA) argued, "I have done nothing wrong. I have only been kind and generous to my relatives."

Hazrat Ali (AS) retorted, "You have gifted wealth, land and animals to your relatives and have given so much out of the State Exchequer which they do not deserve. These poor masses are only asking for their bread that you have denied to them. Allah has fixed their share in the *Bait-ul-Mal* (public exchequer) too. Give them their rights and continue to rule."

Seeing no improvement in the administration, some people again came to Hazrat Ali (AS) with complaints. He again went to Hazrat Usman (RA) and said:

"People are waiting for me to bring back your reply. They have sent me to you as a messenger so that I may act as a mediator between you and the masses."

By Allah! I do not know what to tell you. You are as much aware of the situation as I am. You can fully realize how serious it is. I am a non-party man, so I do not know anything of which you are not aware, nor have I heard anything, which has not already been related to you or which I can carry to you as news. I do not want to lead you to new troubles. Of the present exigency, I have seen only as much as you have seen and I have heard only that which you have already been told. But I want to remind you that you have also passed your days in the company of the Holy Prophet (Peace of Allah be upon him and his descendants) along with all of us. You have heard him preaching and you have seen him treating the people. Why can you not act as he taught us? The responsibility of running a State on the principles of equity and justice did not lie more upon the son of Abu Qahafa (Hazrat Abu Bakr, R.A) and son of Khattab (Hazrat Omar RA) than it does upon you.

By Allah I am explaining this to you not because you cannot realize these facts or that you have forgotten them. Ignorance cannot be an excuse in this case because the way laid down by Islam is quite clear, the path is straight and illuminated, the canons as dictated by the Holy Prophet (Peace of Allah be upon him and his descendants) are firm, steady, and lasting, and there is no possibility of ambiguity in the commands and interdictions of Allah. Remember! The best man before Allah is a just and benevolent ruler - a ruler who has been guided by Islam and who can guide others towards Islām; who has kept up the traditions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) and who tries his best to race against and fight innovations slowly creeping into the teachings of Islam. Verily, all the traditions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) are quite clear and easily comprehended, and through them the basic principles of good governance are permanently defined; they cannot be altered. Similarly the ways of schism and innovation are

also quite obvious. There is no possibility of ambiguity, the bad cannot be taken as the good. Before Allah, the worst human being is the cruel and erring leader; he himself is misguided and misleads others; he disregards the path laid down by the religion, the teachings imparted by it, and the reforms introduced by it, and he brings back into Islamic society old and bad customs discarded by the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD).

I have heard the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) saying, "The cruel leader will be brought before Allah on the Day of Judgment and there will be no one to plead for him nor anyone will come to his help. He will be sent to Hell where he will be thrown into a whirlpool of one punishment after another till he meets the chastisement which he deserves." I beseech you in the name of Allah not to be such a cruel and malicious leader as to be killed by the oppressed masses. It has been told to us that in Islam a ruler (a leader of Muslims) who with his wrong policy and cruel deeds permanently opens the ways of cruelties, atrocities, ferocities and bloodshed, will be killed. He will create doubts in the teachings of Islam, will introduce innovations in it, and will cause impiety and disbelief to take firm hold of the mind of masses. Owing to his bad influence people will not be able to distinguish between right and wrong, and blaming each other for these calamities, they will find themselves engulfed by hardships and sufferings.

You are fairly old and an experienced person, and at this age and with experience and knowledge at your disposal, do not become like a pet-animal to Marwan, and do not allow him to ride you where he likes and to drag you where he wants.

Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha

Hearing this Hazrat Usman (RA) replied, "Please, Ali! Ask these people to give me time so that I may compensate for what they have suffered and undo the wrong done to them." Thereupon, Imam Ali (AS) replied:

"Why do you ask for time? So far as Medina is concerned, you may issue immediate orders, and as far as outlying provinces are concerned the time for your orders to reach there is at your disposal. Think about it and act in the name of Allah."

As Hazrat Ali (AS) left his house, Hazrat Usman (RA) consulted Marwan on the suggestions of Hazrat Ali (AS). Marwan advised that Hazrat Ali (AS) and his friends must be assassinated as they were a threat to his rule. Hazrat Usman (RA) sent for Ibn Abbas and asked him to request Hazrat Ali (AS) to leave Medina and go to his estate at Yambu.

When this message was conveyed to Imam Ali (AS), he said:

"O' Ibn Abbas! Usman wants to treat me like a camel lifting water from a well, which comes forward and goes backward along with the water bucket. In the early stages of this conflict and hostilities he wanted me to leave Medina and go and stay at Yambu. I did as he desired. He called me back and I came back. Now he wants me to go back again. By Allah! I did my best to remove danger from him but now I am afraid if I act any more as he desires I may become a sinner."

Imam Ali (AS)

Nahjul Balagha

Hazrat Ali (AS), as an Imam, considered it his duty to guide Hazrat Usman (RA) but his every advice was ignored. People were getting impatient and edgy. Hazrat Usman (RA) continued to be dictated by Marwan and Muawiya, who had their own axes to grind.

Gradually the hatred started to grow to an extent that the people became insolent towards Hazrat Usman (RA). Once Hazrat Usman (RA) met Jabla bin Umro Sa'adi who had a chain in his hand and was sitting with some men from his clan. Hazrat Usman (RA) greeted them and they all replied back. Jabla ridiculed his men for returning the greetings. Addressing Hazrat Usman he said, "If you do not get rid of Marwan, Ibn Aamir and Ibn abi Sarah, I shall put this chain around your neck."

The murder of Hazrat Usman (RA) did not happen at the spur of the moment. The activities of the elite of Bani Umayyah and the lenience of Hazrat Usman (RA) towards his relatives had driven the general public to the wall.

In addition to the general public, Hazrat Ayesha (RA), Talha and Zubair got actively involved in instigating and directing the people towards this end. Talha had even snatched the keys of the Public Treasury before the murder of Hazrat Usman (RA). His friends and relatives had become his rivals. He would often cry, "O Allah! Protect me from the evil scheming of Talha Ibn Ubaidullah. I have given him so much and he is still campaigning against me." *(Tabari Vol.3, p.411)*

For the first six years of the ruler-ship of Hazrat Usman (RA), Hazrat Ayesha (RA) had no compliant. She did not object to the way Bani Umayyah were trampling upon the rights of the general masses and collecting wealth by unfair means. She neither displayed any sympathy towards the

public nor ever commented upon the activities of Bani Omayyah.

For some unknown reasons, Hazrat Usman (RA) withheld the special funds that were being given to her by the previous rulers. Her emoluments were brought at par with the other wives of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). (*Yaqoobi Vol.2, p.132*)

Since then she had started to propagate against him. To exploit the sentiments of the general public, she would often bring out a shirt and a pair of sandals of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and call upon the people, "O' people! The Prophet's (PBUH&HD) clothes are still as fresh as ever and Usman has started to violate the *Sunnah*. Rise and kill him. Kill the Na'thal." (*Shrah Ibn Abi Al-Hadid Vol.2, p.404*)

While travelling to Makkah for Hajj, Hazrat Ayesha (RA) contacted Ibn Abbas at Salsal (seven miles out of Medina) and said, "O'Ibn Abbas! You are a very eloquent and a convincing speaker. Please ask the general public not to come to the aid of Usman. Instead, you should try and cause doubt and confusion. Generally the people have become aware of the wrong doings of Usman and now they see the light of the day. People have come from far off places and they seem quite determined for a final showdown. You know Talha Ibn Ubaydullah has taken hold of the keys of the Public Treasury and if he comes into power, he would follow in the footsteps of my father." (*Tabari Vol.3, p. 434*)

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In spite of all the resentment and complaints by the public, Hazrat Usman (RA) did not check Marwan and others. He

called a conference of his governors and advisors that ended without any concrete recommendations. Muawiya also attended the conference and he concluded that a bloody revolution against Hazrat Usman (RA) was just around the corner. He could see that his aspirations of becoming a despotic ruler of the whole Islamic State were about to be fulfilled.

During the twenty-five years of his governorship over Syria, Muawiya had strengthened his army quite a bit. The soldiers were being paid well and the commanders had been allowed to accumulate wealth and property. He ensured that, in return, he received their total loyalty and obedience.

Allama Ya'qubi writes that when the disgruntled public tightened the siege around Hazrat Usman's (RA) house, he wrote a letter to Muawiya asking him to come to his help. Muawiya left Damascus with a large army but left it at the Syrian border and came alone to meet Hazrat Usman (RA). When he met Hazrat Usman (RA), he asked him, "Muawiya, where is the army?" Muawiya replied, "I have left it behind and have come alone to assess the situation and to have consultations with you. Now I will return and lead the army to Medina." Hazrat Usman (RA) said, "O' Muawiya! That is not true. The fact is that you want me to be eliminated so that you can become a ruler." Muawiya went and never came back. He had no intentions to help Hazrat Usman (RA).

Marwan and his friends wrapped up their gold and silver and went underground.

A day dawned when the people finally lost their patience. They surrounded the palace of Hazrat Usman (RA) and demanded that all commitments made to them be fulfilled

and that Marwan, who was the main cause of all their deprivations and miseries, be handed over to them. Hazrat Usman (RA) refused to accept their demands.

The public resorted to rioting and refused to lift the siege till their demands were met. They even cut-off the water supply, to Hazrat Usman (RA)'s residence. When Hazrat Ali (AS) came to know of it, he collected some of his companions and, with their help, supplied water to Hazrat Usman (RA). Hazrat Usman (RA) thanked Hazrat Ali (AS) for his kindness and bravery. Hazrat Ali (AS) again tried to prevail upon him and said:

"Usman, the whole country is up against you. Still there is time, meet the demands of the public."

Hazrat Usman (RA), not knowing that Marwan had already deserted him and the army had absconded, said:

"Never, shall Marwan be handed over to the public."

Hazrat Ali (AS) came out and left Hazrat Usman (RA) to the fate that Allah had in store for him.

Three persons scaled the walls of Hazrat Usman's (RA) house through the house of Muhammad bin Abu Khrram Ansari and murdered Hazrat Usman (RA). His wife Lady Naila started to shout that Hazrat Usman (RA) had been killed. The assailants retreated through the same route. On the news that Hazrat Usman (RA) had been murdered, there was a wave of jubilation in the whole of the Muslim World.

Khelaphat-e-Ellahiya

The period of the reign of Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA), Hazrat Umar (RA) and Hazrat Usman (RA) lasted for good twenty-five years. For twenty-five years Hazrat Ali (AS) remained a silent witness to all the developments. He quietly suffered the agonies of the flagrant violation of the tenets and the values of Islamic justice that he and the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had worked so hard to establish.

During these twenty-five years when others were collecting wealth and building palaces, he spent his time in the compilation and writing of the interpretation of the Qur'an. He also spent a lot of time in educating his children in the secrets of Imamate (leadership) and sacrifices that must be offered for upholding the principles of Islam.

After the death of Hazrat Usman (RA), the whole multitude of the Muslims approached Hazrat Ali (AS) to handle the affairs of the State. Despite the fact that the approach was unanimous from the people who had remained oppressed for such a long time, Hazrat Ali (AS) declined to accept the offer. He asked them to elect someone else and leave him alone.

The people responded, "We neither consider anyone more deserving than yourself nor anyone else was as close to the Prophet (PBUH&HD) as you were." (*Kamil Vol.3, p. 98.*)

He said:

"Leave me alone; go in search of somebody else. You will be shortly facing such debatable subjects and such

controversial problems as will have contradictory solutions and divergent views, and on account of doubts and uncertainties introduced into the true religion (since the death of the Holy Prophet; PBUH&HD) people are not ready to accept true meanings of the message of Allah, because their minds cannot stand the test of severity and sobriety preached therein.

"Can you deny the fact that the clouds of impiety and schism have darkened the prospects of religion, and the bright path of faith is under such a gloom that it cannot be properly discerned?"

"Remember that if I accept your caliphate I shall make you follow the religion according to my own conscience and sense of judgment: I shall not accept suggestions from anybody, nor will I bother about the discontentment and anger of disgruntled persons, because I know that they have neither really and truly understood the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) nor are their minds free from desires of achieving wealth and power.

"If you leave me alone I shall be just like you as an ordinary citizen of the Islamic State, and in that case if the ruler selected by you governs and acts honestly and piously I shall only in worldly affairs be more obedient to him than anyone of you. As a matter of fact I like to guide and advise you more than I would wish to rule over you.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

Hazrat Ali (AS) still did not agree to take over and the people insisted, "We beg of you in the name of Allah. Do you not see our condition? Please take over." (Kamil Vol. 3, p.99)

However, when it became unavoidable and expedient in the interest of the public, he accepted to become the Caliph. If it were not for reestablishing *Khelaphat-e-Ellahiya* and reinforcing the principles of Islamic justice and values, he would never have accepted it.

On 25 Zil Haj 35 Hijri, Hazrat Ali (AS) came to the mosque in his simple dress and sat on the pulpit. The first to swear allegiance were Talha and Zubair. (*Khomais Vol.2, p.276*).

After that the people in large numbers swore their allegiance. However, the strong and influential persons like Haseen bin Sabith, Ka'ab bin Malik, Muslima bin Mukhlid, Abu Saeed Khadri, Mohammad bin Muslima, Nauman bin Bashir, Zaid bin Sabith, Rafa bin Khudej, Fazala bin Obaid, Ka'ab bin Ujrah and a number of other pro-Bani Omayyah persons, did not swear their allegiance.

Hazrat Ali (AS) left the decision to everyone's free will and did not pressurize anyone to swear allegiance to him. He strictly believed in the freedom of opinion and association. Everyone was entitled to hold one's own views and pursue one's individual belief. There was no coercion and no compulsion.

Those who had enjoyed unchecked privileges and had played with ill-gotten wealth during the reign of Hazrat Usman (RA), vowed to oppose Hazrat Ali (AS) at every step and at every front. They hated the ruthless dispensation of justice by Hazrat Ali (AS) and the loss of their public status. All were equally respectable and no one was above the public accountability.

All those who were sincere, truthful and did not have any political clout, nor had any influence in Medina or Makkah joined Hazrat Ali's (AS) camp.

Hazrat Ali (AS) announced that the Book of Allah and the *Sunnat-e-Rasool* (traditions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) and nothing else would guide him. He had to restructure the whole fabric of society on the Islamic teachings of justice. Those who had amassed wealth at the cost of the poor and had purchased properties and built palaces during the reign of Hazrat Usman (RA), had to give an account of their wealth.

Hazrat Ali (AS) very briefly reminded the people of his services that he had rendered in the name of Islam and some of his merits that had become obscure during these twenty five years of hate-campaign that was launched against him. He also spelt out his policies:

"I stood up alone among my contemporaries to welcome the order of Allah while they were keeping back timidly. I boldly came forward to defend the faith while they were nervously hiding their heads under their hoods. I unhesitatingly testified the message of Allah while they were dumb-founded with the fear of unbelievers. I trod the path of truth under the Divine Light, while they stood still under clouds of uncertainty and doubt about religion and Allah, I never spoke aloud of my virtues and never aspired for rewards though I surpassed every one of them in attaining Divine favour.

"Possessing these attributes and distinctions I rose higher than any of them and stood alone at the eminence. My stand was firm like that of a mountain, which neither cyclone could shake, nor tornadoes break. Not a single person has any justifiable cause to blame me or to find fault with me.

"All those, whom society has wronged or unjustly humiliated, are respectable and dear to me, and I

shall secure for them their just claims and rights, while despotic and arrogant usurpers of human rights are contemptible in my eyes and I shall make them give back the rights and privileges wrongly usurped by them."

*Iman Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

Hazrat Ali (AS) immediately set upon replacing the corrupt and voracious governors who had been appointed by Hazrat Usman (RA). When the demands of justice, honour, and integrity had to be met, there was no disputing the removal of those who had proven to be corrupt, usurpers and oppressive and who had no knowledge.

Many 'politicians' including Mughira bin Shaiba and Ibn Abbas, advised him that he should first consolidate his power and then gradually remove the undesirable persons from their posts. Hazrat Ali (AS) was not prepared to tolerate or compromise with tyranny for a single minute. His philosophy of governance was based on the dictates of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* and not on the design of any Machiavellian principles. In this School he had learnt that justice could not co-exist with injustice. Today the people did not ask him to follow the traditions of *Shaikhain* (Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA), Hazrat Umar (RA) and Hazrat Usman (RA)).

What the masses needed most was justice and Hazrat Ali (AS) promised them justice, equity and freedom as ordained by Allah and as demonstrated by the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD).

Not for a moment did Hazrat Ali (AS) tolerate the existence of the signs and symbols of corruption, nepotism and

favouritism. From the day one he started to tear down and destroy the edifice built upon corruption, nepotism, tyranny, oppression and at the cost of the rights of the poor masses.

Governance

پادشاه و کلبه ایران او
یک حسام و یک زره سامان او

(علامہ اقبال)

Freedom was one of the basic and fundamental principles of governance. Freedom from exploitation, forced labour, and slavery, and freedom of religion was ensured. No one could order anyone to do something that he did not like to do himself. If one's personal freedom did not hurt the personal freedom of another and no laws of the land were violated, then one could enjoy one's freedom. Hazrat Ali (AS) ordered, "Anyone who tills the land reaps the harvest. Anyone who digs a well has full rights on its water. Anyone who forces others to work for him and keeps all the benefits of this work to himself is a usurper."

Hazrat Ali's (AS) perception of freedom was much bigger and wider than even what the Statue of Liberty in New York harbour symbolizes.

Hazrat Ali (AS) believed that only through freedom of speech, association, freedom of interaction and mutual consultation, the individuals and the society as a whole would develop towards mutual benefit, blessedness and prosperity.

When Hazrat Ali (AS) accepted to take control of the affairs of the State, he did not force anyone to swear allegiance to him. There were a number of persons who were opposed to his policies and they migrated either to Makkah or to Syria. Neither did he stop anyone from joining the camp of his archrival Muawiya, nor did he put any restrictions on the freedom of movement of any person.

Hazrat Ali (AS) neither did overlook nor tolerate oppression of any kind. Oppression by the powerful on the weak, by the hoarder on the public or by a senior on his subordinate was never permitted. Whenever he came to know that public funds were wrongly spent and / or gifted to one's relatives, these were immediately recovered. Those who had acquired wealth unlawfully or through nepotism, exploitation, corruption or usurpation were asked to account for each penny and return the share of the State to the Treasury.

It was publicly announced:

“Anyone who was allotted property by Usman out of Allah’s property should return it to the public treasury because nothing can annul an old right. If I come to know that a woman was married and the expenses of the wedding were met from the public treasury or the property so granted has been spread over a wide area I would make my utmost efforts to restore it back to where it belonged. Justice covers a wide range, and if justice is hard upon some people injustice shall be harder upon them.”

Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha

Hazrat Ali (AS) tried to develop the society and alleviate

poverty. Strict control was exercised over the Public Treasury and other assets of the State. Everyone was given his share according to his needs and the public work that he performed. Good work done towards the development and welfare of the public was well rewarded and appreciated. Every able-bodied person was provided with the opportunity to work according to his mental and physical capability and preference. Every person was asked to work and benefit from the resources according to the efforts, which he contributed.

Development of land and water resources was one of his top priorities. The State land was allotted to the tillers. No one had the authority or the discretionary powers to award land as a gift to anyone. It was not permitted that one is given a piece of land and instead of working on it himself he would employ others for the manual labour. Whosoever sows, reaps the harvest.

To set a personal example he single handedly dug a well. When the digging was completed and he was pulled out, still covered in mud, he immediately announced, "This well is for public use and my heirs have no exclusive rights on this well." History has never known of any Head of the State performing manual labour in this manner and asking the people to do well to others with sincerity and affection.

Hazrat Ali (AS) did his very best to eradicate the unjust practices that were being followed before him. However, Muawiya and other Umayyah rulers introduced their own innovations, "I am Head of the State, and I will give any thing to anyone I like and shall not give it to anyone whom I do not like to give. If anyone gets annoyed I do not care." That was their justification for nepotism, favouritism and misappropriation of State property.

To Hazrat Ali (AS) there was no injustice greater than the nonpayment of a worker's wages to him. The development of land and payment of full wages, commensurate with the work done, were essential elements of the administration.

Islam has made it incumbent upon the State, as well as on the people, to look after the needy i.e. orphan children, cripples, aged and handicapped etc. The system of payment of the poor-rate is meant exactly for this category of the people. Hazrat Ali (AS) ensured that the poor-rate was collected and that it reached the needy. During the days of his Caliphate no one slept hungry and there was no one who did not have clothes to wear or shelter. He always advised people to be kind and generous to the poor and weak and he said, "No indigent person remains hungry except when a rich person usurps his rights. I have not seen excessive wealth with anyone except that I have seen the right of someone being infringed."

As for his own life style and living standard, he would often sleep on the bare ground with a brick serving him as a pillow. He had only one pair of sandals that he would mend himself. Ali '*Tajdar-e-Halata*, Emperor and heir to the Grand Kingdom that Allah had bestowed upon Hazrat Ibrahim (PBUH), sitting on the ground and mending his sandals, added so much grandeur and magnificence to this 'Great Kingdom' that the castles and the granite palaces of Syria, Egypt, Rome and Persia looked insignificantly small and awfully ugly like the speck of a fly.

It is humanly impossible to comprehend in figurative dimensions the greatness of the kingdom that Allah calls the 'Great Kingdom'. How can anyone ruling over Syria or any other tiny piece of land possibly equate oneself with the Caliph of Allah on whom Allah has bestowed this

'Great Kingdom' and Wisdom, as well as, made him the heir to His Book?

He ensured that all of his subjects, Muslims, Jews or Christians, enjoyed equal rights. Discrimination was never allowed to be made between an Arab and a non-Arab, or between a black and a white man. There was no slave and no master. Honorable was the one who was noble, pious and kind to others and dishonorable was the one who was haughty, arrogant, a usurper, a blackmailer or selfish. Imam Ali (AS) not only spelt out these rules in a more emphatic and meaningful manner but he also ensured that these were not violated.

Human dignity is the hallmark of any society and Hazrat Ali (AS) ensured that it is not violated at any occasion.

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Human Rights

George Jordac in his book 'The Voice of Human Justice' writes:

"The rules laid down by Imam Ali (AS) regarding human rights appear to be better and more useful as compared to the declaration made by the UN on the subject. There is no chapter in the Charter of the UN, which is not running parallel to the rules laid down by Imam Ali (AS). In fact better and more useful things are found in the instructions given by him."

The UN Charter of Human Rights:

- Human beings are equal to one another in the matter of honour and rights. They have been created with the power of reflection to distinguish between good and evil. Hence all of them should behave with one another like brothers.
- Every human being should enjoy all his rights and the liberties provided for in this charter. No discrimination should be made between them on account of differences in race, colour, tongue, political views, country, social principles, affluence, indigence, pedigree and family.
- The rights mentioned in this charter are also available to the citizens of those countries as well as to the citizens of the countries whose governments are subordinate to other governments. Hence the citizens of these regions are equal to the residents of independent countries.
- Every person is entitled to possess means of living and to lead his life in security and peace.
- Slavery is not permissible for mankind. Slavery and dealing in slaves is prohibited in all circumstances.
- It is not permissible to hurt or oppress human beings. It is unlawful to coerce them unnecessarily. Anything, which amounts to aspersion on another's character or reputation, is prohibited.
- Every person has a right that his legal position should be acknowledged in whichever country he may be.
- All human beings are equal before the law. Every person is entitled to seek the assistance of law. There is no difference between human beings. Everyone has a right to oppose the

discrimination, which infringes the contents of this charter.

- Every person has the right to lodge a complaint before a regular court, which is established to take decisions about rights and violations of the law in force.
- None can be arrested, imprisoned and exiled from his town.
- It is not permissible that anyone should interfere with the personal or family life or correspondence of another person without being entitled to do so. None is permitted to attack the honour or reputation of another and every person has a right to approach the law-enforcing authorities in the event of oppression and interference.
- Every person has a right to travel freely in his own country and to settle down wherever he likes. Moreover, every person is entitled to migrate from any town and also to return to it when he likes.
- Every person has a right to seek refuge in another country when he is subjected to tyranny and oppression.
- Every person has possessive rights in his personal capacity or as a partner and none can be deprived of the ownership of his property under coercion.
- Every person is entitled to reflect freely and the governments are not entitled to interfere with the religious beliefs and actions of the people.
- Every person is entitled to hold an independent opinion and to express it, and by implication none can hurt him on account of his opinion.

- Every person is entitled to intervene in the activities of the Department of Public Affairs of the country either directly or through a freely elected representative. Every person has a right to take part in public activities on equal conditions, and self-determination of the people is the origin and basis of the authority of government.
- Every person is entitled to benefit from the natural responsibilities of the members of the society, which they owe to one another. The economic, social and educational rights, which are necessary for a person according to his status, are guaranteed for him and the entire nation with the cooperation of the government who is responsible to protect these rights.
- Every person is entitled to select the profession he likes and to demand sufficient conditions for it, which is compatible with justice. He is also entitled to be helped to get rid of unemployment. All persons are entitled, without any exception, to demand appropriate wages, which are sufficient for his and his family's sustenance and with which he may build his life in accordance with human dignity. If at any time the usual wages are insufficient to support him he should be compensated by some collective means.
- It is every person's right that he and his family should lead their lives with means of welfare and security, especially in the matter of food, dress, lodging, health and social affairs. Furthermore, he / she should be assisted in the event of unemployment, weakness, old age, and widowhood, and in all such circumstances as make it impossible for him / her to earn.

- Every person has a right to acquire knowledge. Education should be free and primary education should be compulsory. The object of education should be the nature of human personality and respect for rights and political freedom. It is also necessary that education should be a means of strengthening mutual reconciliation, forgiveness and friendship between the nations and should assist the United Nations in its mission of peace.
- The individuals owe some duties to the society, which must be fulfilled by them, because the personality of the individuals is built under the auspices of the society.
- The individuals cannot be prevented from demanding their right and enjoying freedom except in matters for which laws have been enacted to protect and respect the rights and freedom of others, or rules have been prescribed by the society for the protection of good morals, administration of government and public welfare. These rights and freedom should not in any circumstances interfere with the aims and objectives of the United Nations.
- The sentences and language of this charter should not be interpreted in such a way that any government, party or individuals may become entitled to react and nullify practically the freedoms provided for in this charter.

The Charter of Human Rights enunciated by Imam Ali (AS) is a beacon of guidance for governance. However, before and after his caliphate the rulers paid no heed to his words. Those words of wisdom were lost in the deafening clink of gold coins and in the loud greed for power and wealth at the cost of the poor and downtrodden. The rich and the powerful grabbed as much as they could. History

has recorded how these rules were violated and abused during the hay days of Bani Umayyah and Bani Abbas. We fell in abyss.

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The rules of governance practiced by Hazrat Ali (AS) are spread out in a number of his letters, sermons, instructions and sayings that he issued at various occasions.

Wherever and whenever Imam Ali (AS) sent his governor to a territory, he also sent a testament with him that was read out to the public. In cases where it was agreed upon, it became the law of the land. From then on, no violation was allowed from either side. Imam Ali (AS) was always available to listen to the grievances and he ordered immediate measures to redress these. He sacked a number of his governors for violating the rules.

Imam Ali's (AS) most comprehensive testament is the letter that he sent to Malike Al-Ashtar when he appointed him as governor of Egypt. No such document has ever been produced by anyone else: -

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

I order you, Malik, always to keep the fear of Allah in your mind, to give priority to his worship and to give preference to obeying His commands over every other thing in life. To carefully follow the commandments and interdictions as are given in the Holy Book and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) because success of man to attain happiness in this world and in the next, depends upon these and a failure to achieve these attributes, brings about total failure in both the worlds.

I order you, Malik, to use your heart, hands, and tongue to help the general public because Almighty Allah holds Himself responsible to help those who sincerely try their best to help Him. Allah has further ordered you to keep your desires under control and restrain yourself when extravagant and ordinate yearnings and cravings try to drive you towards wickedness.

Be it known to you, Malik, that I am sending you as a governor to a country, which has seen many regimes before this. Some of them were benign, sympathetic and good, while others were tyrannical, oppressive and cruel. People will judge your regime as critically as you have studied the activities of other regimes and they will criticize you in the same manner as you have censured or approved other rulers.

You must know that a good and virtuous man is known and recognized by the good that is said about him and the praise, which Allah has destined him to receive from others. Therefore, make your mind the source and fountainhead of good thoughts, good intentions and good deeds. Keeping a strict control on your desires and yearnings, however much they may try to incite and coerce you can only attain this. Remember that the best way to do justice to your inner self and to keep it out of harm is to restrain it from vice and from things, which the 'self' inordinately and irrationally desires. Malik! You must create in your mind kindness, compassion and love for your subjects. Do not behave towards them as if you are a voracious and ravenous beast and as if your success lies in devouring them.

Remember, Malik that amongst your subjects there are two kinds of people: those who have the same religion as you have, they are brothers to you, and those who have

religions other than that of yours, and they are human beings like you. Men of either category suffer from the same weaknesses and disabilities that human beings are inclined to. They commit sin; indulge in vices either intentionally or foolishly and unintentionally without realizing the enormity of their deeds. Let your mercy and compassion come to their rescue and help in the same way and to the same extent that you expect Allah to show mercy and forgiveness to you.

Malik! You must never forget that if you are a ruler over them then the Caliph is the ruler over you and Allah is the supreme Lord over the Caliph. And the reality is that He has appointed you as the governor and tested you through the responsibility of this ruler-ship over them. Never think of raising yourself to such a false prestige that you can declare war against Allah because you cannot ward off His wrath. And you cannot be free from the need of His Mercy and Compassion.

Do not feel ashamed to forgive and forget. Do not hurry into giving punishments, and do not be pleased with or be proud of your power to punish. Do not get angry and do not lose your temper quickly over the mistakes and failures of those over whom you rule. On the contrary, be patient and sympathetic towards them. Anger and desire of vengeance are not going to be of much help to you in your administration.

Never say to yourself, "I am their lord, their ruler and all in all over them and that I must be obeyed submissively and humbly," because such a thought will unbalance your mind, will make you vain and arrogant, will weaken your faith in religion and will make you seek support of any power other than that of Allah. If you ever feel any pride or vanity on account of your sway and rule over your subjects then think

of the supreme sway and rule of the Lord over the universe, the extent of His creations, the Supremacy, of His might and glory, His power to do things that you cannot even dream of doing and His control over you which is more dominating than that which you can ever achieve over anything around you. Such thoughts will cure your mental weakness, will keep you away from vanity and rebellion against Allah, will reduce your arrogance and haughtiness and will take you back to the sanity which you had foolishly deserted.

Take care never to think of bringing yourself at par with Allah, never to think of matching your power with Him and contesting His Glory and never to pretend you possess might and power like Him, because the Mighty Lord will always humble pitiless tyrants and will degrade all pretenders of their power and might.

The Common Man

So far as your own affairs or those of your relatives and friends are concerned, take care you do not violate the duties laid down upon you by Allah and do not usurp the rights of mankind; be impartial and do justice to them, because if you give up equity and justice, then you will certainly be a tyrant and an oppressor. And whoever tyrannizes and oppresses the people, will earn enmity of Allah along with the hatred of those whom he has oppressed; and who ever earns the wrath of Allah loses all chances of salvation and has no excuse to offer on the Day of Judgment. Every tyrant and oppressor is an enemy of Allah, unless he repents and gives up oppression. Remember, Malik! That there is nothing in this world more effective or quicker to turn His blessings into His wrath than persisting in oppression over His people, because the Merciful Allah will always hear the prayers of those who

have been oppressed and He will give no chance to oppressors.

You must always appreciate and adopt a policy, which is neither too severe nor too lenient. A policy, which is based upon equity, will be largely appreciated. Remember that displeasure of common men, the have-nots and the depressed persons outweighs the approval of important persons, while the displeasure of a few big people will be excused by the Lord if the general public and the masses will be happy with you. Remember, Malik! That usually these personages are mentally the scum of human society. They are the people who will be a drag upon you during your moments of peace and happiness and the least useful to you during your hours of need and adversities. They hate justice the most, they will keep on demanding more and more out of the State resources and will seldom be satisfied with what they receive and will never be obliged for the favour shown to them. If their demands are justifiably refused, they will never accept any reasonable excuse or any rational argument and when the time changes, you will never find them staunch, faithful and loyal, while the common men, the poor and apparently the less important section of your subjects are the pillars of Islam. They are the real assemblage of the Muslims and the power and the defensive force against the enemies of Islam. Keep your mind on their affairs, be friendly towards them and secure their trust and goodwill.

Be careful in establishing your contacts with the important persons or the commoners. Keep those people away from you and think them as the enemy of the State who are scandalmongers and who try to find fault with others. You must not try to go in search of those weaknesses which are hidden from you, leave them to Allah and about those weaknesses which come to your notice you must try to

teach them how to overcome them. Try not to expose the weaknesses of the people and Allah will conceal your own weaknesses, which you do not want any body to know.

Do not give cause to the people to envy each other (man against man, tribe against tribe or one section of the society against the other). Try to alleviate and remove mutual distrust and enmity from amongst your subjects. Be fair, impartial and just in your dealings and be careful that your position and favours do not become a source of malice. Do not let any such thing or such person, who does not deserve your nearness and your favour, come near you. Never lower your dignity and prestige.

Remember that backbiters and scandalmongers belong to mean and cunning group, they only pretend to be sincere advisors. Do not make haste to believe the news they bring and do not pay heed to their advice.

The Counsellors

Never take counsel of the miser; they will try their best to keep you away from acts of kindness and from doing well to others. They will make you frightened of poverty. Similarly do not allow cowards to act as your advisors because they will make you timid in enforcing your orders, will prevent you from handling important affairs boldly and will make your enterprises and invasions timid and attempts timorous. At the same time avoid the greedy and covetous person who aspires to the position of acting as your counselor, because he will try to teach you how to exploit the community and how to oppress people to get their wealth. Remember that miserliness, cowardice and greed appear to be different wicked qualities but they all

arise from the same evil mentality of having no faith and no trust in Allah.

Your worst counselor will be the men who have been a counselor to the despotic rulers before you and who had been a party to atrocities committed by them. Such persons should not be taken into confidence and should not be trusted because they have aided sinners and have assisted tyrants and cruel rulers. In their stead you can comfortably find persons who are equally wise and learned but who have not developed a sinful and criminal mentality. Try to find those who have neither helped the tyrant in their tyrannies nor have they assisted them to carry on with their sinful deeds. Such persons will prove the least troublesome to you. They will be most helpful. They will sincerely have sympathies with you. If you take them in confidence they will sever their connections with your opponents. Keep such people with you as your companions in your informal company as well as in official gatherings.

From among such honest and humane companions and ministers some would receive your fullest confidence and trust. They are those who can always speak out the bitter truth to you unreservedly and without fear of your status, can refuse to assist you or associate in the deeds which Allah does not like His good people to commit. Select honest, truthful and pious people as your companions. Train them not to flatter you or to seek your favour by false praises, because flattery and false praises create vanity and conceit and that makes a man lose sight of his real self and ignore his duties.

You should not treat good and bad people alike, because in this way you would be discouraging good persons and at the same time emboldening the wicked to carry on their

wickedness. Everyone should receive the treatment that he deserves by his deeds.

You must realize that a ruler can create goodwill in the minds of his subjects and can make them faithful and sincere to him only when he is kind and considerate to them, redresses their grievances, and never ask them for things which are beyond their power. These are the principles which you should keep in mind and act upon. Let your attitude be such that they do not lose faith in you because, trust upon you will reduce many troubles of administration and will relieve you of many worries and anxieties. Trust only those whom you have tested in difficulties and whom you have befriended. Do not trust those whom you have punished or who have proved themselves undeserving, inefficient or unfaithful.

Do not disregard the noble traditions and do not break those rules which good Muslims have evolved or introduced before you, which have created unity and amity among the various sections of the society and which have benefited the masses. Do not break them and do not introduce innovations because if you do away with those good rules and traditions, the reward of having introduced them will go to those who have evolved them and the punishment of having despoiled them will be your lot.

The Different Classes of People

You must know, Malik, that the people over whom you rule are divided into different classes, categories and grades. The prosperity and welfare of each class of society is interdependent. No one segment of the society can prosper without the support of the other.

Amongst them there are the soldiers of the army of Allah who defend His cause, the next class is that of the secretaries of the State to whom duties of writing out and issuing special or general orders are assigned, the third group is of the judges and the magistrates who administer justice; the fourth is of officers who maintain law and order and guard the peace and prosperity of the country. Then there are common men, the Muslims who pay the taxes levied by the government, and the non-Muslims who pay tax (*jaziya*). Then is the class of men who carry on various professions and trades and last but not the least are the poor and the have-nots who are considered as the lowest class of the society. The Merciful Allah has fixed rights and duties of each one of them. They have been either mentioned in His Book or explained through the instructions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD). A complete code for them is preserved with us.

The Army

As far as the soldiers are concerned, they are by the commands of Allah, a fortress and stronghold to guard and defend the subjects and the State. They are the ornaments to the Ruler and the country. They provide power and protection to the religion. They propagate and preserve peace among mankind. In fact they are the real guardians of peace and through them good internal administration can be maintained. The upkeep and maintenance of an army depends upon the taxes collected by the State out of which Allah has fixed for them a share. With this amount they provide for their requirements, maintain themselves and their arms in sound position to defend the religion and the cause of justice.

Be particularly mindful of the welfare of those in the army, who in your opinion, are staunchly faithful to Allah and the

Prophet (PBUH&HD) and loyal to their chief, and who in the hour of passion can restrain themselves and listen coolly to sensible remonstrance and who can succor the weak and smite the strong, whom violent provocation will not throw into violent temper and who will not falter at any stage.

Keep yourself in close contact with families of established reputation and integrity and with a glorious past, and draw to yourself men brave and upright in character, generous and benevolent in disposition, for such are the elite of society.

Care for them with the tenderness with which you care for your children and do not talk before them of any good that you might have done to them nor disregard any expression of affection which they show in return for, such conduct inspires loyalty, devotion and goodwill. Attend to every little want of theirs not resting content with what general help that you might have given to them, for sometimes, timely attention to a little want of theirs brings them immense relief. Surely these people will not forget you in your own hour of need. It behoves you to select for your commander-in-chief one who imposes upon himself, as a duty, the task of rendering help to his men and who can excel in kindness every other officer who has to attend to the needs of the men under him and look after their families when they are away from their homes, so much so, that the entire army should be united in their joys and in their sorrows. This unity of purpose will give them added strength against the enemy. Continue to maintain a kindly attitude towards them so that they might feel ever attached to you. The fact is that the real happiness of the administrators and their most pleasant comfort lies in establishing justice in the State and maintaining affectionate relation with the people. Their sincerity of feeling is expressed in the love and regard they show to

you, on which alone depends the safety of the administrators.

Your advice to the army will be of no avail, unless and until you show affection for both men and officers, in order that they might not regard the government as an oppressive burden nor contribute to its downfall. Continue to satisfy their needs and praise them over and over again for the services they have rendered. Such an attitude, Allah willing, will inspire the brave to braver actions and induce the timid to deeds of bravery.

Try to empathize with others and not foist the mistake of one another and do not grudge dispensing appropriate regards. See to it, you do not show favours to one who have achieved nothing but merely counts on his family position, and do not withhold proper reward from one who has done great deeds simply because he holds a low position in life.

The Real Guidance

Turn to Allah and to His Prophet (PBUH&HD) for guidance whenever you feel uncertain regarding your actions. There is the Commandment of Allah delivered to those people whom He wishes to aright, *"O people of the Faith! Obey Allah and obey His Prophet (PBUH&HD) and obey those from among you who hold authority over you. And refer to Allah and His Prophet (PBUH&HD) whenever there is a difference of opinion among you."* To turn to Allah is in reality to consult the Book of Allah; and to turn to the Prophet (PBUH&HD) is to follow his universally accepted traditions.

Chief Justice

Select as your Chief Justice from the people, one who is by far the best among them, one who is not obsessed with domestic worries, one who cannot be intimidated, one who does not err too often, one who does not turn back from the right path once he finds it, one who is not self-centered or avaricious, one who will not decide before knowing the full facts, one who will weigh with care every attendant doubt and pronounce a clear verdict after taking everything into full consideration, one who will grow restive over the arguments of advocates and who will examine with patience every new disclosure of fact and who will be strictly impartial in his decision, one whom flattery cannot mislead, and one who does not exult over his position. But such people are scarce.

Once you have selected the right man for the office, pay him handsomely enough, to let him live in comfort and in keeping with his position, enough to keep him above temptation. Give him a position in your court so high that none can even dream of coveting it and so high that neither backbiting nor intrigue can touch him.

Subordinate Judiciary

Beware! The utmost carefulness is to be exercised in its selection, for it is this high office that adventurous self-seekers aspire to secure and exploit in their selfish interests. After the selection of your Chief Justice, give careful consideration to the selection of other officers. Confirm them in their appointments after approved probation. Never select men for a responsible post either out of any regard

for personal connections or under any influence, for that might lead to injustice and corruption.

Of these, select for higher posts, men of experience, men firm in faith and belonging to good families. Such men will not fall an easy prey to temptations and will discharge their duties with an eye on the abiding good of others. Increase their salaries to give them a contented life. A contented living is a help to self-purification. They will not feel the urge to tax the earnings of their subordinates for their own upkeep. They will then have no excuse to go against your instructions or misappropriate State funds. Keep a watch over them without their knowledge. See if they are truly honest and have true concern for the welfare of the public. But whenever anyone of them is accused of dishonesty and the guilt is confirmed by the report of your secret service, then regard this as sufficient to convict him. Let the punishment be corporal and let that be dealt with in public at an appointed place of degradation.

Revenue Administration

Great care is to be exercised in revenue administration, to ensure the prosperity of those who pay the revenue to the State for, on their prosperity depends the prosperity of others, particularly of the masses. Indeed, the State exists on its revenue. You should regard the proper upkeep of the land in cultivation as of greater importance than the collection of revenue. Remember revenue cannot be derived without making the land productive. He, who demands revenue without helping the cultivator, ruins the State. The rule of such a person does not last long. If the cultivators ask for reduction of the land cess for having suffered from epidemic or drought or excess of rains or the barrenness of the soil, of floods damaging their crops, then reduce the cess accordingly, so that their condition might

improve. Do not mind the loss of revenue on that account for, one day that will return to you manifold. Greater prosperity in the land would enable you to improve the condition of your towns and raise the prestige of your State. You will be the object of universal praise. The people will believe in your sense of justice. In consequence, they will readily place confidence in you and would be ready to share your burden. That will prove your strength.

You may settle down on the land any number of people, but discontent will overtake them if the land is not improved. A ruler who is feverishly bent upon accumulating wealth at all costs, out of the fear that his rule might not last long, ruins the cultivators. Such are the people who do not learn from examples or precedents.

Clerical Establishment

Keep an eye on your establishment and your scribes and select the best among them for your confidential correspondence; such among these, as possessing high character and deserve your full confidence – men, who may not exploit their privileged position to go against you, and who may not grow neglectful of their duties, and in drafting of treaties may not succumb to temptation and harm your interests or fail to render you proper assistance and save you from trouble, and who, in carrying out their duties, can realize their serious responsibilities, for he who does not realize his own responsibilities can hardly appraise the responsibilities of others. Do not select men for such work merely on the strength of your first impressions of affection or good faith for as a matter of fact, the pretensions of a good many who are really devoid of honesty and good breeding, may cheat even the intelligence of the rulers. Selection should be made after due probation – probation

which should be the test of righteousness. Make direct appointments from people and enjoy the reputation of being honest for such selection is agreeable both to Allah and the ruler. For every department of administration, let there be a head whom no trying task might cause worry and no pressure of work annoy him.

And remember that each and every lap of scribes, which you may overlook, will be written down against you in your scroll of deeds.

Trade and Industry

You are advised to treat well businessmen and artisans and direct others to do likewise. Some of them live in towns and some move from place to place with their ware and tools and earn their living by manual labour. They are the real source of profit to the State and provider of consumer goods. While the general public are not inclined to bear the strain, those engaged in these professions take the trouble to collect commodities from far and near, from land and from across the sea, and from mountains and forests and naturally derive benefits.

It is this class of peace loving people from whom no disturbance needs to be feared. They love peace and order. Indeed they are incapable of creating discord. Protect them whether they are transacting business at your place or other towns. But bear in mind that a good many of them are intensely greedy and are immured in bad dealings. They hoard grain and try to sell it at a high price and this is most harmful to the public. It is a blot on the name of the ruler not to fight this evil. Prevent them from hoarding, for the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had forbidden it. See to it that trade is carried out at utmost ease, that the scales are evenly held and that prices are so fixed that neither the buyer nor the

seller is put to a loss. And if in spite of your warning should any one go against your commands and commit the crime of hoarding, then inflict upon him a severe punishment.

The Poor

Beware! Fear Allah when dealing with the problems of the poor who have no one to patronize them. They are forlorn, indigent, helpless and distressed. They are the victims of vicissitude of time. Among them are some who are reconciled to their lot and irrespective of the magnitude of their misery, they do not go about begging for alms. It is your responsibility to safeguard their rights and to protect their interests. Assign for their social uplift and well being a portion from the State Exchequer (*Bayt-ul-Mal*). Whether living near or far off, their share must reach them. Irrespective of your other occupations, do not forget their interests. No excuse shall be acceptable to Allah. Do not give any lesser importance to their interests than your own interests and never keep them out of the purview of your important matters. Mark your officials who look down upon them and do not keep you informed of their condition.

Appoint upright and God-fearing officials to keep you updated on their difficulties and requirements.

Make such arrangements for these poor as shall not oblige you to offer an excuse before Allah on the Day of Judgment., for it is this class of the people which, more than any other, deserves benevolent treatment. Seek your reward from Allah by giving each one of them what is due to him. Enjoin upon yourself as a sacred duty the task of meeting the needs of such aged among them who have no independent means of livelihood and are averse to seeking alms. The discharge of such duties can be very trying for some rulers but in a welfare State and in societies gifted

with a feeling for human sufferings, it is a usual practice. It is only such societies and nations that truly carry out their covenant with Allah and discharge their duty towards the poor.

Open Conferences

Meet the oppressed and the lowly periodically in Open Conference and have a heart to heart talk with them. None of your officials or member of the police and intelligence should be present so that the people might openly express their grievances. For I have heard the Prophet (PBUH&HD) saying that no nation or society shall achieve successes in which the strong do not discharge their duty towards the poor. Bear with composure any strong language which they may use, and do not get annoyed if they cannot state their case lucidly. Even so, Allah will open for you His door of blessings and rewards. Give them whatever you can and give it ungrudgingly. And whatever you cannot afford to give them, make clear to them with the utmost consideration.

There are certain matters that call for prompt action. One of these is correspondence regarding the redress of grievances that has remained unanswered due to the carelessness of your staff. See to it that petitions or applications submitted for your consideration are brought to your notice without any delay. Dispose off the day's work that very day, for the coming day will have its own tasks.

Communion with Allah

Every moment of yours is for Him, provided it is spent sincerely in the service of His people, still, do not forget to set apart the best of your time for communion with Allah.

The obligation that you directly owe to Allah, should be included in your over-all duties. Devote some of your time each day and night for prayers so as to be in communion with Allah. Irrespective of physical discomfort that it may involve, your prayers should be as perfect and free from any blemish as possible.

When you lead a congregational prayer, do not bore people by a needlessly long prayer, nor spoil it by unwarranted shortness.

When I was ordered by the Prophet (PBUH&HD) to proceed to Yemen I did ask him how should I lead the congregations there, and he had said, "Perform your prayers even as the weakest among you should be able to offer and set an example of utmost consideration to the faithful."

Aloofness not Desirable

In addition to all what I have said, bear in mind that you should never, for any length of time, keep yourself aloof from the people. To remain aloof is to keep oneself ignorant of the affairs of the people. An ignorant ruler develops wrong perceptions and it renders him incapable of distinguishing between wrong and right, and between truth and falsehood. A ruler is, after all, a human being and cannot form a correct view of anything that is out of sight.

There is seldom a distinguishing sign attached to truth that can enable one to differentiate between different varieties of truth and falsehood. Either you are just or unjust. If you are just, then you must not keep aloof from people, but listen to them and meet their requirements.

If you are unjust, the people themselves will keep away from you. What good is there in keeping yourself unaware of the condition of the general public? You must listen to the complaints of oppression against your officers and listen to the petition for justice. Dispensation of justice should not be irksome to you.

Nepotism

Make it clear to yourself that those immediately about and around you, will like to exploit their position to covet what belongs to others and commit acts of injustice. Suppress such tendencies in them. Make a rule that none of your subordinates can gift even a small piece of land to any of your or his relatives. That will prevent them from causing harm to the interests of others and save you from courting disapprobation from both Allah and man.

Dispense justice squarely regardless of the fact whether one is a relation or not. If any of your relations or companions violates the law, meet out the punishment described by law, however painful it might be to you personally for it will be all to the good of the State. If at any time people suspect that you have been unjust to them in any respect, disclose the facts to them and remove their suspicions. In this manner, your mind will become attuned to the sense of justice and people will begin to love you. It shall also fulfil your wish that you should enjoy their confidence.

Peace and Treaties

Bear in mind that you do not throw away the offer of peace which your enemy himself makes. Accept it for that will please Allah. Peace is a source of comfort to the army. It reduces your worries and promotes order in the State. But

beware! Be on your guard when the peace treaty is signed. For, certain types of enemies can propose terms of peace just to lull you into a sense of security only to attack you again when you are off your guard. So you should exercise utmost vigilance on your part and place no undue faith in their protestations. But, if you have accepted any obligations under a peace treaty, discharge these obligations scrupulously. It is a trust and must be faithfully upheld and whenever you have promised anything, keep it with all the strength at your command, for what ever difference of opinion might exist on other matters, there is nothing as noble as the fulfilment of a promise. This is recognized even among the non-Muslims, for they know the dire consequences that follow from the breaking of the covenant. So never make excuses in discharging your responsibilities. Never break a promise nor cheat your enemy, for breach of promise is an act against Allah and none except the positively wicked acts against Allah.

Indeed divine promises are a blessing spread over all mankind. The promise of Allah is a refuge sought after, even by the most powerful on earth. In it, there is no risk of being cheated. So, do not make any such promise which you cannot fulfil. Do not attack your enemy without ultimatum because none, except a wretched ignorant being, would dare defy Allah who, in His infinite mercy, has made pacts and treaties as tools of utmost sanctity for His creatures. In fact, peace provides shelter under the lively shade of which all seek asylum and in the vicinity of which all listen for a sojourn. A treaty should, therefore, be free from fraud, duplicity and deception.

Never execute a pact open to misinterpretation, but once it is executed don't exploit equivocation, if any, nor repudiate any treaty concluded in the light of Divine injunctions, even in the face of grievous difficulties. As there is a

reward in life hereafter, it is better to face difficulties rather than to violate the treaties with a traumatic sense of accountability on the Day of Judgment.

Beware! Abstain from shedding blood without a valid cause, as it invites the wrath of Almighty, exposes one to His severest punishment, deprives one of His blessings and shortens one's span of life. On the Day of Judgment it is this crime for which one has to answer first. So, beware! Do not wish to build the strength of your State on blood, for it is this blood that ultimately weakens power, undermines authority and shakes its very foundations. Then the power slips into the hands of others.

Murder is a crime that is punishable by death. If, on any account, the corporal punishment dealt by the State for any lesser crime results in the death of the guilty, let not the prestige of the State stand in the way of the deceased's relations claiming blood money.

Also Remember

Shun self-adoration; do not indulge in self-praise nor encourage others to extol you, because of all the ruses to undo good deeds of pious men, Satan relies more on praise and flattery.

Neither over-rate nor indulge in tall-talks about the favours you have done to people. A breach of promise annoys Allah and man alike. Allah, the Most Exalted, says in the Qur'an: *"Allah is much displeased if you do not act upon what you say."*

Do not make haste to do a thing before its time, nor put it off when the right moment arrives. Do not insist on doing a wrong thing, nor show slackness in rectifying a wrong

thing. Perform everything at its proper time and let everything occupy its proper place. When the people as a whole agree upon a thing, do not impose your own views on them and do not neglect to discharge the responsibility that rests on you as a consequence. For the eyes of the people will be on you and you are answerable for whatever you do to them. The slightest dereliction of duty will bring its own retribution. Keep your anger under control and keep your hands and tongue in check. The best way to restrain your rage is to defer punishment till you are calmed and restored to your self. You cannot achieve it unless you remember that you have ultimately to return to your Sustainer.

It is imperative that you carefully study the precepts, which have inspired just and good rulers who have preceded you. Give close thought to the example of our Prophet (PBUH&HD), his traditions, and the commandments of the Qur'an, and what ever you might have assimilated from my ways of dealing with things. Endeavour to the best of your ability to carry out the instructions that I have given here and you have solemnly undertaken to follow. By means of this order, I enjoin upon you not to succumb to the prompting of your own heart, nor to turn away from the discharge of duties entrusted to you.

I seek refuge in Almighty and His unlimited sphere, and invite you to pray with me that He may give us together the grace to surrender willingly our will to His will, and to enable us to acquit ourselves well before Him and His creation, so that mankind cherishes our memory and our work survives. I beseech Allah for His blessings and pray that He may grant you and me His grace and the honour of martyrdom in His cause. Verily, we have to return to Him. I invoke His blessings on the Prophet of Allah and his blessed decedents.

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In addition to the comprehensive instructions that he issued to Malike Al-Ashtar, he also wrote a number of directives as these were necessitated. Some of these are given in succeeding paragraphs:

Tax Collection

Hazrat Ali (AS) would ask his governors to facilitate the development of land and to look into the difficulties of a farmer, rather than only to concern themselves with collection of land revenue. It was the responsibility of the Administration to assist the farmers. No force or coercion was to be employed to recover revenue. If a farmer could not pay his revenue due to a bad harvest, inclement weather, drought etc, it was the duty of the State to help him.

In one of his directives which he gave to the collectors of taxes and revenues, he wrote:

“One who does not care for his salvation, will never think of providing for his life after death with good deeds and, therefore, he will not be able to escape the punishment. Be it known to you that the responsibilities laid down upon you are a few but the Divine reward reserved for you is very high. Allah has prohibited you from tyranny and injustice; and even if there had not been any fear of punishment for these inequities, the mere reward of being just, kind and humane would have been such that there could not have been any excuse for not trying to achieve it. Treat the taxpayers with equity and justice and think over their wishes with patience and kindness because you are the treasurer of the subjects, representative of the people and

the officer on behalf of higher authority. Do not force anybody to forsake his requirements and to do without his necessities (so that he may pay the taxes). In the collection of taxes and revenues do not sell their winter and summer clothing, their slaves or such of their animals as are of service to them; do not resort to whipping; do not touch their property, be they Muslims or non-Muslims, but if you find their armaments or weapons, or horses of the non-Muslims for which there is a danger and a possibility of these being used in war against the State, you may confiscate these. Such things are a threat to the security of the country and should not be left in the possession of unreliable persons.

Be kind to the people, treat the army well, and do not grudge doing your best in helping the subjects and in guarding the religion. These two duties are obligations laid down upon you by Allah, because, in return for the Blessings and Bounties that He has granted us. He wants you and me to be thankful to Him as much as we can, and to help His cause to the best of our ability. You must remember that even our strength and capabilities are His Blessings granted to us."

Army Commanders

In one of his circular letters to his commanders he directed:

This is a circular-letter from Ali Ibn Abu Talib to the chiefs of army and generals of his cantonments.

It is incumbent upon the chiefs of the State that their status and prestige should not make them change their attitude towards the subjects of the State; instead, the favours which the Lord has granted them should draw them nearer to the

people and should make them more sympathetic towards them.

My duty towards you is such that, except for the secrets of war, I do not keep anything pertaining to the affairs of the State hidden from you. Barring religious questions in all other matters concerning your welfare, I should take you in confidence and seek your advice, I should guard your interests and rights to the best of my ability, I should see that you are well-protected and well-looked after and I should treat all of you equally without any favouritism. If you receive such favourable treatment from me then it is your duty to thank Allah for His kindness. Your obedience to me is that you should follow the orders given to you, be good and bravely face difficulties to attain the right path. If you cannot maintain this standard of fidelity and do not behave yourself, then you will lose the straight path of virtue and nobody will be lower in my eyes than you. I shall then punish you severely.

You should make your subordinate officers promise to act accordingly and should give them the same facilities and privileges as are given to you, so that your affairs also run smoothly.

Accountability

Once he appointed his governors and officials he did not leave them to enjoy unbridled freedom of action. Hazrat Ali (AS) had established a wide network of intelligence operators who would directly report to him on the affairs of the public and also report to him regarding the performance and behaviour of his governors towards the general public. He took a very serious view if anyone of them indulged in corruption or malpractices. He would listen to the complaints from the public and take immediate remedial

measures. He had fixed a handsome salary for his governors and other officials so that they were not tempted to take bribes.

- He wrote to one governor, "I understand that you have usurped a piece of land belonging to the Public Treasury and have misappropriated that which was under your feet and have eaten what was in your hand. Send me the details of your accounts." A short and crisp accountability also meant immediate dismissal.
- One commissioner of a province wrongfully occupied a piece of State land. Hazrat Ali (AS) sent him a letter, "I have been given to understand that you have taken possession of State-land and that you have not only brought it under your personal use but you have misappropriated the State treasury too. Will you immediately send the detailed accounts about both of these items? Remember that the reckoning of Allah is far more severe than any audit which man can carry out."
- He was informed about another governor who had misappropriated public property. He wrote to him immediately, "Fear Allah and return the property of the people to them. If you do not do so and then Allah grants me control over you and I shall acquit myself of my responsibilities in the matter and shall strike you with my sword, and who ever has been the victim of it has always gone directly to Hell. By Allah, even if Hassan and Hussain had done what you have done I would not have been lenient to them and they would not have been able to make me accede to any wish of theirs till I had taken back

the right (of others) from them and had effaced the results arising out of injustice."

- Once a governor was invited to a feast. The governor accepted the invitation and participated in the party. When the Commander of the Faithful came to know about this, he reprimanded the governor severely saying, "Entertaining a governor is a bribe. Why was this bribe given? If it was given to establish a right it is the duty of a governor to give the entitled persons their right without taking a bribe, or this bribe was given to validate something invalid. If that be the case it is not lawful for a governor to do any such thing even though the entire world may be offered to him as a bribe.

"The second thing is: why did the governor participate in a feast to which the rich were invited but the indigent were ignored and thus this discrimination was made between the people? Such discrimination pained many persons and also grieved Ali. Of course, if the society is prosperous and the people are well to do there is no harm in inviting only some persons to a party to the exclusion of others. However, when the conditions are such that there are poor as well as rich persons in the society, does the extension of an invitation to a governor to participate in a feast not amount to giving him a bribe?"

- Imam Ali (AS) heard that Zaid bin Abih had accumulated a lot of wealth, was leading a very luxurious life and was not helping the poor, orphans or the widows. He sent his messenger Sa'd to him to bring some money, which was lying with him. When Sa'd approached him and demanded the

money, Zaid misbehaved with Sa'd, refused to pay any money and also rebuked him. Sa'd came back empty handed and reported the matter to Imam Ali (AS). Hazrat Ali (AS) sent a long letter to him and advised him:

"I have been told that you have behaved proudly and haughtily. Don't you know that greatness only belongs to Allah and whosoever is proud of himself, incurs His wrath. I have also been told that you eat lavish food and perfume yourself every day. What harm would it bring you if you keep a fast, eat many times the food that you eat on one day and give some of your wealth as charity in the way of Allah. Use perfume on alternate days and look after the needy and the poor living in your neighbourhood."

Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha

Some of the unique examples of Hazrat Ali (AS) following the dictates of Human Rights:

- There were a number of Kharijites who were thirsty for his blood but he never treated them harshly. They enjoyed the same rights and privileges as anyone else.
- Ibn Muljam, the assassin of Hazrat Ali (AS) had come to Kufa a few days earlier and he was recognized personally by Hazrat Ali (AS) but no action was taken against him. When Ibn Muljam was caught after he had delivered a fatal blow at the head of Hazrat Ali (AS), people asked him as to why did he not arrest Ibn Muljam before hand? Hazrat Ali (AS) replied, "He had committed no

crime till then. How can you arrest anyone before one has committed a crime?"

- Ibn Muljam was arrested by Suhan Ibn Sasa and was produced before Imam Ali (AS). Imam Ali (AS) directed that the rope with which his hands were tied was too tight around his wrists, and it must be loosened immediately. He directed that Ibn Muljam was thirsty, he should be given a glass of milk to drink.
- Marwan was captured after the defeat of the army of Jamal. He repented, asked for forgiveness, and he was forgiven. Still he remained a thankless enemy.
- Schl bin Hanif Ansari, the Governor of Medina reported to him that a number of persons had gone over to Syria to join Muawiya, to which Hazrat Ali replied:

"I understand that some of the persons belonging to your area are secretly joining Muawiya. You need not worry at all about the number of people who have left, and the support, that has been lost. It is sufficient for their going astray and you're being relieved of worry and sorrow that they are running away from truth and guidance towards ignorance and perversion. They are worldly people who have been fascinated by the worldly gains and are running towards it. They saw, recognized, heard and learnt about justice. From equitable distribution of rights they are running towards the place where discrimination is being practiced. Let them go."

The following is an excerpt from the statement of Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, on the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, delivered on December 10th 1997, at the University of Tehran, Iran:

"Imam Ali (AS), the fourth Caliph after Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD), instructed the governor of Egypt to rule with mercy and tolerance towards all his subjects; 'Let the dearest of your treasures be the treasury of righteous action...Infuse your heart with mercy, love and kindness for your subjects. Be not in the face of them a voracious animal, counting them as easy prey, for they are of two kinds: either they are your brothers in religion or your equals in creation.'" (*Department of Public Information, Iran*)

The UNDP has quoted the following sayings of Imam Ali (AS) in its 2002 **Arab Human Development Report**:

1. He who has appointed himself a ruler of the people must begin by teaching himself before teaching others. His teaching of others must be first by setting an example rather than with his words, for he who begins by teaching and educating himself is more worthy of respect than he who teaches and educates others.
2. Your concern with developing the land should be greater than your concern for collecting taxes, for the latter can only be obtained by developing; whereas he who seeks revenue without development destroys the country and the people.

3. Seek the company of the learned and the wise in search of solving the problems of your country and the righteousness of your people.
4. No good can come in keeping silent as to government or in speaking out of ignorance.
5. The righteous are men of virtue, whose logic is straightforward, whose dress is unostentatious, whose path is modest, whose actions are many and who are undeterred by difficulties.
6. Choose the best among your people to administer justice among them. Choose someone who does not easily give up, who is unruffled by enmities, someone who will not persist in wrong doings, who will not hesitate to pursue right once he knows it, someone whose heart knows no greed, who will not be satisfied with a minimum of explanation without seeking the maximum of understanding, who will be the most steadfast when doubt is cast, who will be the least impatient in correcting the opponent, the most patient in pursuing the truth, the most stern in meting out judgment, someone who is unaffected by flattery and not swayed by temptation and these are but few.

Ethics and Tactics of Battle

In the annals of history Hazrat Ali *Mushkilkusha* has been rated as a great fighter. He was the bravest of the brave and the most invincible soldier of his times. He was *Yadullah* (the Hand of Allah) and had a sword named 'Zulfiqar' gifted by Allah to fight in His way. He kept that promise and he stood-by the dictates of Allah. An analysis of all of his battles would prove that these were all defensive in nature and he only killed those who attacked him first. He never killed out of vindictiveness or when he was in anger. Forgiveness and magnanimity was his culture.

He hated nothing more than shedding blood. In every situation he would explore all avenues where war could be avoided and a dispute could be solved in a peaceful manner by negotiations. We shall see when we discuss all the battles that he fought i.e. Jamal, Nahrwan, Siffin etc that he tried his best to avoid war and he fought only when it was imposed upon him or it had become unavoidable.

At various occasions he said:

"Allah has not created you in vain."

"Allah has created you respectable on His earth, and safe among his creation. His bounties have spread the wings of their kindness on your heads and made streams of comfort flow for your sake."

"Almighty Allah has strengthened the tie of love between the human beings. It is the love under whose shadow the

people walk about and in whose lap they seek refuge. This love is an invaluable blessing because it is dearer than whatever price is fixed for it, and is better than every great thing."

"Nothing is worst than fighting and bloodshed."

He hated war but picked up his sword when it became absolutely necessary to suppress mischief, treachery, treason and evil. When his peace efforts failed and all his persuasions fell on deaf ears, only then *Zulfiqar* came out of its sheath. He defended the oppressed and retrieved the rights of the weak from the usurper. Commander of the Faithful fought to establish real peace based on nobility and human values that are free from bondage, humiliation, helplessness, tyranny and injustices.

Whenever conditions prevailed where remaining a silent spectator tantamount to cowardice, laziness and shirking responsibilities, the Commander of the Faithful picked up his sword and proved that he was neither lazy nor careless. He was always capable of discharging his moral and spiritual duties. He proved that he was invincible and the bravest.

Some of pieces of advise that he gave to his soldiers:

- Be bold be courageous and allow your swords to do their duties and to justify your existence. Attack your enemy furiously and bravely and let him feel the full might of your arms and your hands. Impel and drive yourselves towards daring and undismayed use of your armaments. Do not shout but attack with your eyes fixed on every movement of your enemy because this dispels nervousness and cowardice.

- If Allah favours you with success and you inflict defeat on the enemy, then do not attack those who have surrendered. Do not injure the disabled and the weak. Do not assault the wounded. Do not excite the women and do not make them angry with rude behaviour even if they use harsh and insulting words. Do not touch molest or insult women.
- Do not fight against anyone unless he wishes to fight you.
- Do not rush through journey. Travel by easy stages, and do not tire out your army during the journey.
- Keep your orders in mind and act accordingly.
- Do not crave for a combat or aspire for an encounter, but at the same time do not try to avoid your enemy or to evade an engagement as if you are afraid or nervous.
- Help the weak amongst you.
- Keep your army on the hilltop or at the foot of a mountain or on the side of a river so that you can easily watch the movements of your enemy.
- Post your scouts and guards on the high vantage points and along the line of fortification so that the enemy may not take you unawares.
- Do not involve the whole army in the encounter, allow only a few units to take part in the engagement. (Have sufficient reserves to switch pressure from one front to the other).
- Avoid dissensions.
- Do not allow inferiority or superiority complex to take root in the hearts of your officers and your ranks.
- While resting at night, provide same comfort and convenience to every one. Do not let sound sleep overpower you.

In one of his sermons he directed:

"Whoever in a field of battle finds oneself courageous and brave enough to face the enemy and bears the brunt of war boldly, and sees one of his brethren in a nervous state, should try to go to the help of his nervous companion and defend him against his enemies with the same courage and zeal that he exhibits in defending himself. This should be a mark of gratitude for the courage and strength granted to him by Allah. By this example, if Allah so wills, the other person will also muster courage and strength.

"Remember that death is such a quick and greedy seeker that it catches hold of everybody. None is spared; neither the one, who tries to close his doors for it, nor the one, who tries to run away from it. I swear by Allah who is the master of the life of Abu Talib's son (Imam Ali himself) that I feel it nobler to die on a battlefield with hundreds of wounds on my body than to die in bed."

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

Instructing his soldiers on how to fight, how to advance and how to behave in a battlefield he said:

"Those, who have armours on, would be given a place in front ranks, and those, who have not any armour, should be in the rear of the army.

"Be firm, (do not let nervousness make your teeth chatter) because firmness and courage are the best shields against swords of your enemy. Hold your spears firmly because a firm hand makes the movement of spears very effective. Do

not overestimate the strength and arms of your enemy, for true confidence in your numbers and arms will give you courage and will reduce your nervousness and you will feel better equipped for the fight. Do not shout, (and thus lose your breath) for holding of breath and silence will make you more determined and will increase your courage.

"Take particular care of your standards and flags. Do not let them be borne by unsuitable persons. Let your flag-bearers be those brave and experienced soldiers, who can keep them raised against heavy odds and thus keep up the prestige as well as the courage of your army. Do not leave these flags and flag-bearers alone, rally around them when necessary. Let only those, who can patiently face sufferings, and who are skilful and experienced warriors gather round the flags, especially when the battle is raging furiously, and when there is a lot of bloodshed. Remember that experienced persons will neither retreat, surrendering the flags, nor advance leaving them unguarded.

"The one, who feels that he is more than a match for his enemy, must try to help his weak and nervous companion and should not leave him alone to face his enemy single-handed. Gross selfishness and callousness in a battlefield often results in harm to callous persons also, for usually the enemy after vanquishing a weak soldier joins hands with his companions to overcome the strong one also (so the strong ones should remember that selfishness does not pay.)

"By Allah! If you do not face the swords of your enemy today and run away from them, you will never be safe from their swords in future. What is more, being nobles of Arabia and men of rank and status, you should not exhibit cowardice or nervousness.

"Remember that in running away from a battlefield you not only incur the wrath of Allah but also disgrace and humiliation. One who runs away from a battlefield cannot thus enhance the span of his life, because nothing can postpone the day of death (which is predestined).

"Whoever is so anxious to reach the Realm of Allah as a thirsty person is anxious to reach a water point, should remember that Paradise lies under the shadows of those spears, which you face while defending Islam.

"The day that one passes in a battlefield defending Islam, is the day when pious and sincere persons are to be tested for their sincerity in religion and belief in Allah. As for me, I am more desirous of facing the enemies of Islam than of reaching home safe from the battlefield.

"O' Allah! If they refuse to accept the truth, and then please scatter them, do not let them join the forces of evil against You and men, and punish them for their sins.

"Their sinful and vicious life will not cease poisoning human minds, unless their forces are completely overpowered, unless they are completely vanquished and exterminated and unless the centres of their activities are destroyed.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

Revolt
Against
Khelaphat-e-Ellahiya

"The Prophet (PBUH&HD) had often said about Hazrat Ali (AS): 'Enmity against you is enmity against me; a war against you is a war against me; your friendship is my friendship; to be at peace with you is to be at peace with me, your flesh is my flesh; your blood is my blood, who will obey you will obey me...'"

From the very first day Hazrat Ali (AS) assumed the reins of the caliphate he became busy making reforms. He removed the oppressive and unjust governors and officers from their offices and started investigations regarding the wealth taken by various persons unlawfully from the Public Treasury. In taking these steps he did not care for the enmity of those who were opposed to him and to the reforms which he intended to introduce.

"Hazrat Ali (AS) had been advised by several of his counselors to defer the dismissal of the corrupt governors previously appointed until he himself was sure against all enemies. The Bayard of Islam, the hero without fear and reproach, refused to be guilty of any duplicity of compromise with injustice. This uncompromisingly noble attitude cost him his State and his life; but such was Ali; he never valued anything above justice and truth. With him perished the true-hearted and the best Muslim of whom the Mohammedan history has preserved the remembrance."

(Major Osborne)

“During the period of his caliphate Imam Ali (AS) had to face a very difficult situation. All the influential persons had united against him.

“Same was the case with the self-seekers whose number was very large. Hazrat Ali (AS) decided to fight on both the fronts. He had to establish justice, destroy oppression, and to form a government based on true economic, social, moral and Islamic values. And he fought on these two fronts as caliph of the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

“As soon as the people elected Hazrat Ali (AS) as their leader to reform society, Bani Umayyah and their friends in Medina and other cities, collected their wealth and arms and went underground. Later, as soon as they got an opportunity, they went away to Makkah, where they could indulge in subversive activities against Hazrat Ali’s (AS) government, and instigate the people to revolt against him, and if they did not meet success there, they could also go to Syria and join Muawiya. If these people had thought of public welfare and had not coveted the caliphate, it would not have been at all necessary for them to do all of this planning.” (*George Jordac 'The Voice of Human Justice'*)

Love and hate are two natural phenomena of the human instinct. Every person is loved by some and hated by others. Our Prophet (PBUH&HD) was a blessing for the whole world and he struggled for the elimination of evil from the society yet there were many who were inimical to his message and opposed him tooth and nail. In response to his affectionate words and expression of love he suffered pains. His kindness was rewarded with injury and vengeance. His divine message of love and brotherhood generated repulsion, animosity and antagonism in many hearts. His love was not of hypocrisy or deception but was

the true manifestation of divine affection. Still he could not allure every one into the fold of Islam. He struggled for the glory and growth of humanity to its ultimate heights. For this, only a few held him in reverence and many did not even listen to him. He was a benevolent friend and a noble foe. He preached love, tolerance, justice and forgiveness. In his lifetime he could get only a few loyal and true followers and was opposed by the majority. It was the same for Hazrat Ali (AS). The majority was for the glamour of this world rather than the reward promised for the piety and good deeds.

*By the time,
Verily man is in loss,
Save those who believe, and do good deeds, and exhort one
another to truth and exhort to endure.*

Qur'an: 103

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Hazrat Ali (AS) being the faithful and the most enlightened follower of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) followed in his footsteps with the utmost sincerity. He would neither compromise on the principles nor mix truth with falsehood. There are many who would unhesitatingly lay down their lives in the love of Hazrat Ali (AS) and there are many obstinate enemies who would bite themselves in anger on hearing his name.

A number of the people disliked Hazrat Ali (AS), but strong lines of enmity were drawn as soon as he accepted the office of Caliphate. He remarked:

“When I (Ali) issued decrees of Caliphate, one group betrayed allegiance, the other became Renegade and, the third became recalcitrant and rebellious.”

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

All those who, during Hazrat Usman's (RA) regime, had filled their coffers with ill-gotten wealth, built palaces and usurped the rights of the poor, hated Hazrat Ali (AS) for he was enforcing the principles of *Khelaphat-e-Ellahiya*. As vowed, Hazrat Ali (AS) dragged a number of them by their nostrils and made them account for every penny that they had collected illegally. Power, authority, nepotism and favouritism were replaced with justice and equity. He was aware of the consequences but he did not care. Hazrat Ali's (AS) dispensation of justice was absolute and ruthless. That is what his Master had taught him.

Hazrat Ali (AS) emerged as a great threat to the strength, wealth and influence of those Umayyah governors and officers whom Hazrat Usman (RA) had favoured with unlimited powers over the people. The elite of Bani Umayyah and their friends started to conspire against Hazrat Ali (AS).

Talha and Zubair were the first who had taken an oath of allegiance and had assured Hazrat Ali (AS) of their loyalty. Zubair was Hazrat Ali's (AS) cousin too. His mother was the sister of Hazrat Abu Talib. When Zubair took the oath, Hazrat Ali (AS) warned him:

“Zubair! You are taking oath as a hypocrite. I am certain that one day you would break your oath.”

Zubair had assured him:

"I shall not back-out from my word of honour. Let Allah be the witness to the genuineness of my words."

When Hazrat Ali (AS) took control of the Public Treasury and embarked upon the accountability programme, Talha and Zubair who were expecting preferential treatment, felt very disappointed. They had lost their former status and got their share from the Public Treasury equal to an ordinary citizen.

One day Talha and Zubair came to Hazrat Ali (AS). The Caliph was busy in the job of stock taking of the Public Treasury. They said,

"Ali, you know that we took an oath hoping that we would have a share in the affairs of the State but you have reduced us to the level of an ordinary citizen and you give us from the Public Treasury as much as you give to an indigent that is not acceptable to us. At least give us the governorship of Kufa and Basra."

Hazrat Ali (AS) judged the purpose of their visit from their words as they had addressed him by his first name and not as *Ameer-ul-Momineen* (Commander of the Faithful) as he was known and addressed by everyone. Hazrat Ali (AS) blew out the lamp saying, "The oil that was burning in the lamp had been purchased with public money. Why waste it? We are only talking and we can talk without the light of the lamp."

That was his reply to their demands. Both of them left disappointed and dejected.

This news reached Muawiya who was always on the look out for such influential personalities to allure them into his camp. He wrote a letter to Zubair:

“This letter is from Muawiya to *Ameer-ul-Momineen* (Commander of the Faithful) Zubair; he be informed that I have taken oath of allegiance for his caliphate from people of Syria, not only for his caliphate but also to the effect that Talha will be the caliph after him. The people have agreed to both. They are under my influence and have always obeyed my command. You should take care of Basra and Kufa and should not allow Ali to take hold of these powerful and rich provinces. Once these provinces, as well as Syria come under your sway, what shall be left to Ali will not be big enough to be covered with a mulberry leaf. To gather public support from the inhabitants of Basra and Kufa and to alienate the people from Ali is to start the propaganda that Ali had incited the people to murder Hazrat Usman (RA).”

The proposal and the prospects of governing the two rich provinces proved to be too tempting for them. The charm of kingship dimmed their vision and commonsense. They had to only break this shackle of allegiance that they had sworn to Hazrat Ali (AS) calling Allah as their witness. The oath of sincerity, obedience, loyalty and fealty was thrown over board.

Muawiya had lit the flame and hoped that he would now watch the fire burning down the whole structure of *Khelaphat-e-Ellahiya* that Hazrat Ali (AS) was trying to rebuild.

Driven by greed and riding on the stallion of hypocrisy and deceit both Talha and Zubair again came to Hazrat Ali (AS) and asked, “Please permit us to go to Makkah for performing Hajj.”

“That is a lie. Go to Makkah, you are free to move, but I know your intentions. You are going there not for Hajj but

to gather forces and to fight against me. Go ahead, we shall soon meet," replied he.

When they departed Hazrat Ali (AS) remarked:

These two entered the allegiance with the faces of the sinners and went out of it with the faces of the disbelievers.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

(It implied that whereas other people took the oath of allegiance to Hazrat Ali (AS) so that the matters might be set right, these two took the oath for gaining undue favours.

In another sermon he said:

Each of these two persons (Talha and Zubair) is expecting the caliphate for himself only. They want to usurp it from the True Caliph (the Imam himself). They neither attach themselves to (Islam) the way of life that Allah has ordained, nor do they seek any means of gaining His favour. Each of them is jealous of the other. Their jealousy will be exposed soon. (How true, during the journey to Basra, Talha and Zubair quarrelled over the issue of leading the daily prayers and Ummul Mominin Hazrat Ayesha (RA) had to intervene and patch up the quarrel. She ordered that none of these two should lead the congregation, and instead on one day Zubair's son, Abdullah and the next day Talha's son Muhammad, should lead the prayers, thus they were made to forsake their claim in favour of their sons). By Allah if one gets the caliphate the other will try to kill him and will also be killed in turn.

The rebels (Talha and Zubair and their comrades) are ready to fight against Islam, but where are the persons who would persuade people to follow the commandments of Allah? Let them come forward. Dictates of the religion have already been fully explained to them by the Holy Prophet (Peace of Allah be upon him and his descendants). (He had more often than not told the Muslims that the Holy Qur'an and his Ahlul Bayt are to be followed, they could not and would not be separated till the Day of Judgment and those, who would follow them would never go astray).

Remember that there is a cause for every vice or sin committed (be watchful of those causes); and everyone who breaks a Holy Pledge creates a doubt about his sincerity and piety (carefully examine sincerity and piety of each one who breaks a Holy Pledge).

By Allah! I am neither unaware of nor careless about things posing dangers to Islam and I know how to ward them off. I am not like those who go to offer condolence to the people on the death of their relatives and do not take lessons from it.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

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Opposition started to get together to remove Hazrat Ali (AS) from the Caliphate. They coined the slogan 'revenge of Hazrat Usman's (RA) blood.' On this theme it was easy to invoke the sympathies and the support of the whole clan of Banī Umayyah and of those who had amassed money through illegal means.

If the revenge of the murder of Hazrat Usman (RA) was the aim, why did Muawiya not pursue this issue and chased the

murderers when he had become an undisputed ruler of the whole Islamic World? Why Hazrat Ayesha (RA), who had shouted the loudest 'revenge of the blood of Usman' and had orchestrated the Battle of Jamal, did not once ask Muawiya to avenge the blood of Hazrat Usman (RA)?

A close scrutiny would reveal that the motive of the leaders of this Movement was not the revenge of the murder of Hazrat Usman (RA) but to grab power. If one of them was against Hazrat Ali (AS) because he was imposing Qur'anic justice, the other joined because he thought himself to be more competent to be the caliph. Some others joined as they expected favour and money like they got from the governors of Bani Umayyah, and a host of them had old grudge against him as Hazrat Ali (AS) had killed their ancestors and close relatives during various ghazwat (battles fought during the days of the Prophet (PBUH&HD)). Some wanted to regain the lost glory and power of their clan which was not possible during the Caliphate of Hazrat Ali (AS) and some just hated him for he was Ali ibn Abu Talib.

The aspirants of devilish worldly authority and its glory started to prepare to annihilate the *Khelaphate-e-Ellahiya*. Sabre-rattling started all over the Muslim World.

When Hazrat Ali (AS) was told that Quresh were preparing for a war against him, he remarked:

What concern do I have with Quresh? In the past I had to fight against them on account of infidelity, and now I shall have to fight against them because of their rebellion. For them I am the same Ali ibn Abu Talib today that I was

yesterday.

Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha

“Had Hazrat Ali (AS) been allowed to reign in peace his virtues, his firmness, and his ascendancy of character would have perpetuated the basic principles of good governance and its simple manners. But for his assassination the Muslim world would have witnessed the realization of the Prophet’s (PBUH&HD) teachings, in actual amalgamation of the first principles of true philosophy into positive action. The same passionate devotion to knowledge and learning, which distinguished Prophet Mohammad (PBUH&HD), breathed in every word of Hazrat Ali (AS). With a literary mind – far beyond the age in which he lived – was joined a sincere devotion of spirit and earnestness of faith. His sermons, his psalms, his litanies portray a devout looking towards the source of all Good, and an unbounded faith in humanity.” (*Oelsener, ‘Des Effets de la religion de Mohammad’*)

Talha and Zubair went to Makkah. Other deposed officials and the governors of Bani Umayyah also went to Makkah and joined hands with Hazrat Ayesha (RA). Preparations for a battle against Hazrat Ali (AS) started in real earnest. They lavishly spent money to purchase the loyalties of the people and to procure arms, horses, camels and other equipment for the impending battle.

Hazrat Ayesha (RA) *vis-à-vis* Hazrat Khadija (SA) and Hazrat Ali (AS)

Allama Tabari says that when returning from Makkah Hazrat Ayesha (RA) reached a place named ‘Sarf’. She met a man named Abd ibn Umm Kilab who was a relative of

her's from her mother's side. She enquired from him about the conditions prevailing in Medina. The following conversation took place between them:

Abd ibn Umm Kilab, "The people killed Usman and then waited for eight days."

Hazrat Ayesha (RA): "What did they do then?"

Abd ibn Umm Kilab, "The entire population of Medina found a way out unanimously. All of them agreed to Hazrat Ali (AS) becoming the caliph."

Hazrat Ayesha (RA). "If what you say is true I wish that the sky may fall on the earth. Take me back. Take me back," she shouted at her camel driver.

Hazrat Ayesha (RA): "Usman has been killed unjustly. By Allah I shall avenge his murder."

Abd ibn Umm Kilab, "What is all this? I swear by Allah that you were the foremost in accusing him. You used to say, "Kill Nathal. He has become an infidel." (Nathal was a Jew who was hated by everyone.)

Hazrat Ayesha (RA), "The people killed him after he had repented. I did utter these words but what I am saying now is better than what I had said earlier."

Abd bin Umm Kilab, "O' Mother of the Faithful: It is a very lame excuse."

Here Tabari has quoted some verses of Abd ibn Umm Kilab, who has thrown the entire responsibility for the murder of Hazrat Usman (RA) on Hazrat Ayesha (RA). He says:

"It was you who took the initiative. You brought about the charges against him and all the trouble started from your side. You ordered us to kill Usman. You said that he had become an infidel. We obeyed you and killed him. We hold the view that Usman's murderer is the person who ordered that he should be killed. Neither the sky fell upon us nor were the sun and the moon eclipsed." (*Tabari, Vol. 5, p. 140*).

When Hazrat Ayesha (RA) returned to Makkah, Talha visited her. He told her how Hazrat Ali (AS) had become caliph and what the people had done with him (Talha). He said, "The people took the oath of allegiance to Ali and then came to me and pressed me so hard that I, too, had to take the oath."

Hazrat Ayesha (RA) said, "How can Ali exercise control over us? So long as his government exists in Medina I shall not return to that city."

She started to instigate the people to avenge the murder of Hazrat Usman (RA) and to rise against Hazrat Ali (AS).

Upon close scrutiny of the attitude adopted by Hazrat Ayesha (RA), one can very well realize the grudge she had been nursing against Hazrat Ali (AS) in her heart. To understand her attitude it is necessary to know the reasons for her enmity against Hazrat Ali (AS).

Hazrat Ayesha's (RA) hatred and enmity against Hazrat Ali (AS) was very old, and according to many historians it commenced from the very day on which she entered the Prophet's (PBUH&HD) house as his wife. One great reason for her enmity against him was that he was the husband of Hazrat Fatima (SA). Hazrat Fatima (SA) was the daughter of Hazrat Khadija (SA), and Hazrat Khadija (SA) was the lady who was held in high esteem by the Prophet

(PBUH&HD) during her lifetime as well as after her death for her sincerity, magnanimity, and excellent morals and manners. In spite of all her best efforts Hazrat Ayesha (RA) could not make the Prophet (PBUH&HD) forget Hazrat Khadija (SA).

In this connection the following extract from the magazine 'Al-Azhar' which is the organ of Al Azhar University deserves consideration:

"Besides other qualities which Hazrat Ayesha (RA) possessed she was very courageous and was keen to attain the highest degree of greatness. She was not contented with the superior position which she enjoyed in the heart of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) vis-à-vis his other wives, but wished to find a place in his heart equal to that of Hazrat Khadija (SA) The first truthful one, whom he loved most. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) was never tired of talking about Hazrat Khadija (SA) and praising her. It was on account of her that he also showed consideration to the ladies, who had been her friends. With all her attributes and accomplishments Hazrat Ayesha (RA) made vain efforts to make the Prophet (PBUH&HD) believe that Allah had given him a better wife than Hazrat Khadija (SA). She ought to have acknowledged the superiority of Hazrat Khadija (SA) and should have realized that it was useless to contend with the Prophet (PBUH&HD) on account of the wife who was the greatest amongst all the noble and distinguished women, was the most truthful one, and was the first to embrace Islam. This jealousy of Hazrat Ayesha (RA) did no harm to the name or the respect in which Hazrat Khadija (SA) was held. On the contrary it made her greatness known to the entire world and gave her a lasting fame." *(The Magazine Al-Azhar May 1956).*

“Hazrat Ayesha (RA) herself says, “I never felt as much jealous of any other wife of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) as of Hazrat Khadija (SA), although I had not even seen her. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) talked about her every now and then. At times he would slaughter a sheep and sent pieces of its meat to her friends as presents. I told him many times that from the manner in which he talked about Hazrat Khadija (SA) it appeared that there was none else in the world except Hazrat Khadija (SA). He, however, replied that she had such qualities and she also bore him children.

“Thus Hazrat Ayesha (RA) admits that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) preferred Hazrat Khadija (SA) to all his other wives and this made Hazrat Ayesha (RA) jealous of her. And naturally enough this extreme love from the Prophet (PBUH&HD) for Hazrat Khadija (SA) was the cause of Hazrat Ayesha’s (RA) jealousy against her. She also felt jealous of Hazrat Fatima (SA) and also hated her husband Hazrat Ali (AS) and her sons Hassan (AS) and Hussain (AS).

“Furthermore, it is also a fact that Hazrat Ayesha (RA) was confident that after Hazrat Usman (RA) was murdered the caliphate would return to her own family (i.e. Bani Tayim) and Talha would become the caliph. It has been already mentioned before, how happy she felt on hearing the news of the assassination of Hazrat Usman (RA), hoping that Talha must have been chosen as the caliph in his place.

“Immediately on her arrival in Makkah Hazrat Ayesha (RA) began recruiting an army to fight against Hazrat Ali (AS) and his government. Her open enmity with Hazrat Ali (AS) strengthened the hands of Bani Umayyah as well as those of Talha, Zubair and their supporters. All were united on the issue of waging war against Hazrat Ali (AS). At this point the members of the Umayyah clan, who had gone

underground in Hijaz etc, reappeared. They joined hands with Hazrat Ayesha (RA), Talha and Zubair, and placed at their disposal the wealth that they had grabbed during the period of Hazrat Usman (RA), so that they might utilize it to make preparations for war, and that the *Khelaphat-e-Ellahiya* be nipped in the bud.

“The stand taken by them was that Hazrat Usman (RA) had been killed unjustly and as Hazrat Ayesha (RA), Talha and Zubair had risen to avenge his murder it was necessary to support them. Muawiya considered the situation very favourable to him.” (*George Jordac 'The Voice of Human Justice'*)

Hazrat Ali (AS) called the people of Medina and addressed them in these words:

Almighty Allah has promised forgiveness for the unjust of this nation and success and salvation for those who are obedient and firm. Only that person who cannot bear truth resorts to falsehood. You should know that Talha and Zubair and the Mother of the Faithful Ayesha have combined against my government and Caliphate and have instigated the people towards reformation. So long as I do not feel any danger from them to you and to myself I shall remain patient and so long as they withhold their hands, I, too, shall withhold mine. And I am contenting myself with the news about them which I have received so far.”

I swear by Allah that I will not sit quiet and will not allow these people to do as they like. I will not act like the hunted beast which is lulled and fooled by its hunter and falls an easy prey to his tricks and devices; but, with the help of believers in the truth and justice of Islam, I will try to suppress this revolt against Allah and religion. I declare that with assistance of my faithful followers I will always fight against upholders of schism and hypocrisy and

supporters of injustice and falsehood, till I meet with my death.

There is nothing new to me in this revolt. Since the passing away of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be upon him and his progeny) how often were my rights usurped. And unjust and unjustifiable precedence was given to others, till the situation has now been brought to such gravity that these unholy hordes have resolved to fight against me.

Imam Ali (AS)

Nahjul Balagha

Hazrat Ali (AS) wrote a letter to Hazrat Ayesha (RA):

You have disobeyed Allah and His Prophet (PBUH&HD) by stepping out of your house. You are aspiring for something with which you do not have the least concern. You also claim that you want to reform the people. Will you please tell me as to what women have to do with the command of the armies? You also claim that you want to avenge the murder of Usman. Now Usman was an Umayyad whereas you are a woman of the tribe of Taym Bani Murrah. I swear by Allah that the crimes of those who have tempted you into adopting this course of action and have made you disobey Allah and His Apostle is much greater and more dreadful than that of the murderers of Usman. You did not become indignant yourself but you were made indignant. You did not get excited yourself but other persons have been instrumental in exciting you. Ayesha! Fear Allah and return to your house and remain there. Good wishes to you.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

"And stay ye in your abodes.... And remember ye what is recited in your abodes of the signs of Allah and wisdom; verily Allah is benignant, All-Aware."

Qur'an 33:34&35

Prompt came a reply from Hazrat Ayesha (RA):

"O' son of Abu Talib! No room is left for reconciliation. We shall never submit to you. You may do whatever you like. Peace is upon you."

Commenting upon the hostile attitude of Hazrat Ayesha (RA), Hazrat Ali (AS) remarked:

"....As far as that lady is concerned (Hazrat Ayesha; RA) her womanish mind is boiling with envy, hatred and jealousy. If the ruler-ship had gone to someone else, and if she then had been asked to fight against him, she would not have done so. However, in spite of her malignant and injurious behaviour, I shall maintain the same respect for her as I was doing during the days of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) but she will have to settle accounts of her deeds with Allah."

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

Hazrat Ali (AS) did his very best to avoid this bloodshed. He also wrote letters to Talha and Zubair asking them to repent for breaking their oath of allegiance and to seek forgiveness from Allah. He said, "My respected friends! Give up your present attitude though I know that by declaring the falsity of your position today you stand the

chance of being ridiculed and disgraced, yet by persisting in your wrong and wicked attitude you will tomorrow certainly earn the disgrace in this world as well as the punishment in the next."

Hazrat Ali (AS) wrote a letter to the people of Kufa inviting them to judge for themselves if he was wrong in his attitude. He also asked them to join his forces if they considered him on the right:

"I invite in the name of Allah those whom this letter reaches, to come and see for themselves whether I am in the right or on the wrong. If they find me on the path of truth and justice they may help me and if they find that I am on the wrong then they can reason me out of it."

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

Sir W. Muir, in his annals, writes, "Hazrat Ayesha (RA), spurning the restraints of her sex, prepared to join the campaign and to stir up the people of Busra, as she had stirred up those of Makkah. Hazrat Hafsa (RA), daughter of Hazrat Umar (RA), another wife of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), was with difficulty restrained by her brother who had just fled from Medina, and held aloof from either side from accompanying her widowed sister."

"Hazrat Umme Sālma (RA), another widow of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD), who had repelled the proposals of Hazrat Ayesha (RA) to join her against Hazrat Ali (AS) at Makkah, returned to Medina soon after the departure of the rebels to Busra and informed Hazrat Ali (AS) of the revolt of Hazrat Ayesha (RA), Talha and Zubair." (*Rawdzat-al-Ahbab*).

She said to Hazrat Ayesha (RA), "Do you not remember that day when your father came with Hazrat Umar (RA), so we put on our veils. They came in and spoke about what they wanted to, until they said: 'O' Prophet of Allah we do not know how long you will be with us. If only you were to tell us who will succeed you as Caliph over us, so that there will be after you a place we can turn to.' He said to them, 'As for me, I have seen his position [in front of you]. Was I to do this, you would all fall into disunity as the Israelites dispersed from Aaron?'"

They remained silent and left. After they had departed, we came out to the Prophet of Allah and you, as you were more forthcoming with him than all of us, asked him, "O' Messenger of Allah, who did you appoint as Caliph over them?" He said, "The wearer of the mended shoes." We went out and we saw it was Ali. He said, 'He is the one.'" Hazrat Ayesha (RA) said, 'Yes, I remember that.'

Umme Salma (RA) said to her, "So then, Ayesha, how can you go ahead after all this?" She replied, "I venture forth to reconcile the people."

Hazrat Umme Salma (RA) also said, "Do you remember the day the Prophet of Allah was on his way and we were with him; he turned left from Qadid and sat alone with Ali and whispered to him for a long time? You wanted to force yourself on them; I tried to prevent you but you disobeyed me and intruded. It wasn't long before you returned in tears. I asked, 'What has happened to you?' You said, 'I approached them and they were in conversation, so I said to Ali, 'I get with the Prophet of Allah one day out of nine, so can you not, O' son of Abu Talib, leave me with him on my day'? The Prophet of Allah came towards me and he was red with anger. He said, 'Go back! By Allah, none except those who have abandoned faith can hate him.' Hazrat Ayesha (RA)

said, "Yes, I remember that too."

Hazrat Umme Salma (RA) kept on reminding Hazrat Ayesha (RA) of the disastrous nature of her intentions. She continued, "I also remind you that you and I were with the Prophet of Allah and he said to us, 'Which one of you will be the rider of the trained camel, at whom the dogs of Hawab will bark, and she will have deviated from the right path'? We said, 'We seek refuge from Allah and His Prophet from that.' He touched your back and said, 'don't be that one, O' Humayra.'" Hazrat Ayesha (RA) said, 'I remember that.' (*Commentary of Ibn Abil Hadid, Vol 2, p.77*).

'I wonder whom one of you will be the instigator of the Camel affair, at whom the dogs of Hawab will bark, and she will be the one who has deviated from the straight path. As to you Humayra (Ayesha), I have warned you regarding that.' (*Ibn al-Athir, vol 3, pg 120; Ibn Qutaybah, al-Imamah wa al-Siyasah*).

[When the Army of the Camel travelled towards Basra, they camped for the night at a place which had been named after a lady Hawab binte Kalab ibn Wabra. Hazrat Ayasha (RA) heard the dogs of Hawab barking. She asked someone about the name of the place. She was told that it is known as Hawab. Hazrat Ayesha (RA) became very nervous and remarked, "These dogs are barking at me, take me back immediately." However, Talha and Zubair prevailed upon her and she changed her mind. (*Mufti Jafar Hussain 'Seerat Amer-ul-Momneen' Vol.1, p.507*)]

According to Tabari and Ibn Khaldun, Hazrat Umme Salma (RA) driven by the sincerity of her devotion for Hazrat Ali (AS), said, "O' Commander of the Faithful if it were permitted by law, I myself would have accompanied thee in thy expedition, but I know you would not allow it, so I offer the services of my son, Umar bin Abi Salma, who is dearest to me

than my own life. Let him go with thee and partake of thy fortunes." While Hazrat Umme Salma (RA)'s son was with Hazrat Ali (AS), Hazrat Ayesha's (RA) brother was with Hazrat Ali (AS) as well.

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Hazrat Ayesha (RA), Talha and Zubair wrote letters to some of the dignitaries of Basra to get their support but no one gave any positive response. She wrote one letter to Zaid bin Sauhan:

"From Ayesha, daughter of Abu Bakr, Mother of the Faithful and the beloved wife of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) to her sincere son Zaid bin Sauhan. Rush to my help immediately on receiving this letter of mine. If you do not come, restrain the people from supporting Ali."

Prompt came the reply, "Peace be upon you. Almighty Allah has given you one order and has given us another. You have been ordered not to leave your house and we have been ordered to fight so that evil may be suppressed. You have, however, abandoned what you were ordered to do and are restraining us from doing what we have been ordered to do. Your wishes will not be complied with and your letters will not be replied to. And peace be upon you."

The army opposing Hazrat Ali (AS) led by Hazrat Ayesha (RA), Talha, and Zubair on its way to Busra, camped at Khoreiba.

W. Irving writes in 'Successors of Muhammad: "Talha and Zubair alternately addressed the multitude, and were followed by Hazrat Ayesha (RA), who harangued them from her camel. Her voice, which she raised that it might be

heard by all, became shrill and sharp, instead of intelligible, and provoking the merriment of some of the crowd. A dispute arose as to the justice of her appeal; mutual reviling took place between the parties; they gave each other the lie, and threw dust in each other's faces.

One of the men of Busra then turned and reproached Hazrat Ayesha (RA): "Shame on thee, O' Mother of the Faithful!" said he, "Murder of the Caliph was a grievous crime, but was lesser abomination than thy forgetfulness of the modesty of thy sex. Wherefore dost thou abandon thy quiet home and thy protecting veil and ride forth like a man barefaced on that accursed camel to foment quarrels and discussions among the Faithful?"

Another of the crowd scoffed at Talha and Zubair: "You have brought your mother with you", cried he, "why did you not also bring your wives?" Insults were soon followed by blows, swords were drawn, a skirmish ensued, and they fought until the hour of prayer separated them."

Hazrat Ayesha (RA) directly addressed the people of Basra and asked them to rise against Hazrat Ali (AS). The people were confused and did not understand the reasons for this revolt. Hazrat Ayesha (RA) tried to convince them that Hazrat Ali (AS) was directly involved in the murder of Hazrat Usman (RA), therefore, justice demanded that he be put to death.

Jariyah bin Qadamah Sa'adi replied:

"O' Mother of the Muslims! I swear by Allah that Usman's murder is not at all important as compared to the dreadful situation that a personality like you should step out of her house to fight against the Muslims. You have torn the veil, which Allah had provided you, and have violated the sanctity, which He has ordained. You should just reflect

that whoever decides to fight against you will certainly also intend to kill you. In case, therefore, you have accompanied this army voluntarily you had better return to Medina and if they have brought you forcibly you should seek help against them from the public. I shall then be with you.”
(Tabari, vol 6, p. 482)

Hazrat Ayesha's (RA) army forced its way into Basra and killed a number of those people who were pro-Hazrat Ali (AS). They also entered the house of Usman bin Hanif, maltreated him, beat him up mercilessly, pulled his beard and insulted him. Hazrat Ayesha (RA) ordered that Usman bin Hanif be killed but his mother begged that he had been a noble companion of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), therefore, his life be spared. Hazrat Ayesha (RA) ordered that he be put behind bars.

When the news reached Hazrat Ali (AS), he said:

O' Lord! I invoke Your help and protection against the enmity and antagonism of the Quresh and their supporters. They have broken their ties and relations with me, have usurped my rights, disregarded my claims, and ignored the eminence of my status and authority of my position. They have continually gathered together to fight against me for a thing which was my right, and over which they have no claim. Now they tell me that the truth is that none but I, deserve the caliphate and in the same breath they advise me to give up my right.

Those people (Talha and Zubair and their supporters) left Mecca for Basra in such a way that they drove the wife of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) from place to place like slave-traders driving slave-girls from one market to another. Both of them left their wives safe and secure in their homes and brought out the wife of the Holy Prophet

(PBUH&HD) to serve their unholy and wicked motives. What an undesirable action? She openly came out heading an army of such people as had in the beginning sincerely sworn the oath of allegiance to me and were later instigated by the renegades to rebel against me. When the army reached Basra they attacked my officials, some of whom were taken prisoners while others were killed mercilessly and then they looted the Bayt ul Mal (public treasury). The details of the brutal slaughter that was carried out by them are horrid. Some of the Muslims were tortured to death in prison and some were outright butchered.

By Allah! If they had killed one innocent person without any genuine reason, I would have been justified in ordering capital punishment to every one of them, because they all had joined hands in the crime and had knowingly committed the sin. The situation is that they have mercilessly slaughtered as many defenceless and innocent people as they had soldiers in their army.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

Hazrat Ayesha (RA) conveyed the good news of fall of Basra to Hazrat Hifza (RA) who was in Medina. She was mighty pleased.

On the other hand Hazrat Ali (AS) as Imam and as vicegerent of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) continued to display his magnanimity and kindness. At every step he tried to avoid an armed conflict. At every step he made lengthy speeches, and addressed his army:

"I have called you to assist me against the people of Basra. My only object is reconciliation. If the people of Basra desist from their hostilities my object will be fulfilled.

However, if they persist in their stubbornness we shall deal with them mildly and shall refrain from fighting till they commit oppression and resort to fighting. We shall leave no stone unturned to achieve peace and avoid bloodshed.

"These hypocrites, to gain success, have accepted the devil as their lord and have depended upon his help and support. The devil in turn uses them as his underlings and accomplices. He has poisoned their minds with doubt and suspicion about the truth and with schism and hypocrisy in religion. These vices keep creeping secretly and incomprehensively into their minds gradually establishing a very firm hold there, till these persons reach a stage when they only see what he wants them to speak. He instigates them to every kind of evil and makes every sin and vice appear to them as charming, beautiful and beneficial. They act as they are confederates of the Satan to establish his authority, and they propagate his lies, delusions and deceit."

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

The Battle of Jamal

Hazrat Ayesha (RA) was confident that she would defeat Hazrat Ali (AS), and see Talha as a caliph.

On the day of the showdown the two armies of Muslims arrayed against each other. Hazrat Ayesha (RA), wife of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), commanded the Army of Camel and the other was under the command of Hazrat Ali (AS), cousin brother and son-in-law of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), the Manifesting Imam, the *Imam-ul-Mutaqeen*, Commander of the Faithful and the Righteous Caliph. As Hazrat

Ayesha (RA) was riding a camel, it is known as the Battle of Jamal (Battle of the Camel).

One of the soldiers of *Amir-ul-Momineen*, fell in serious doubt. He looked at both the sides. On one side he saw Hazrat Ali (AS) and other stalwarts of Islam wielding their swords under Hazrat Ali's (AS) command. On the other, there was Hazrat Ayesha (RA), a harem (wife) of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), and about the Prophet's (PBUH&HD) wives the Qur'an decrees: '*His wives are mothers of the Ummah*', and under her command was Talha, a senior in Islam, of happy antecedents, a sharp shooter and a veteran tactician who had a rich record of service for the cause of Islam; moreover there was Zubair with still nobler antecedents than Talha's, who even on the day of *Saqeefa* had been among those who had taken shelter in Hazrat Ali's (AS) house.

This person was greatly confused, "What is this all? After all Ali, Talha and Zubair are among veterans of Islam and have been volunteers of Islam in the worst of odds. Now these noble companions of the Prophet (PHUH&HD) have arrayed against each other? Which one of them is nearer to the truth? What is to be done in this confusing conflict?"

Anyhow, this gentleman appeared before Hazrat Ali (AS) and asked, "Is it possible that Talha, Zubair and Hazrat Ayesha (RA) may concur on untruth. How could personalities like them, from among the old companions of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), err and take to wrong course? Is it possible?"

Hazrat Ali (AS) replied in such a conclusive and authoritative prose, which according to Dr. Taha Hussain, an Egyptian Philosopher, had never been heard elsewhere

since the cessation of the Divine Voice and discontinuance of revelation:

“You have been disillusioned and you have fallen in confusion. Right and wrong are not measured in scales of personalities and statures of individuals. It is incorrect to first hold a personality to be a yard-stick, thereafter to measure Right and Wrong on those standards and then to hold that this thing is Right because such and such persons have acquiesced in it and that thing is wrong because such and such persons are opposed to it. Nay! personalities should not be made the measuring sticks for Right and Wrong. It is Right and Wrong which should be the criterion of individuals and their personalities.”

That means, “You should be cognizant of Right and Wrong. You should not go after persons and personalities. Individuals, whether personality-wise great or small, must be compared with truth. If they are found conformable to it, accept them, otherwise do not. The question is not as to whether Talha, Zubair and Hazrat Ayesha (RA) can or cannot be wrong?”

Here Hazrat Ali (AS) has held Truth itself to be the touchstone of Truth.

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As soon as Hazrat Ali (AS) finished his discourse with this person, another man came forward and asked Hazrat Ali (AS), “O’Commander of the Faithful! How do you say that Allah is one? Some of the soldiers tried to tell him that the battle was about to commence and it was neither the time nor the occasion to ask such a question. However, the Imam (AS) said, “Let me answer his question. He only wishes what we wish for the people.”

Imam (AS), from the pulpit or in the battlefield, only wished to convey the Truth and the Reality. He replied, "Oneness of Allah is not in any way a numerical or countable oneness. It is not permissible to say 'one' while having in mind any numerical conception, for 'that which has no second does not enter into the category of numbers.' (William Chittick 'A Shi'ite Anthology')

"That which has no second. He is a 'reality' which has no 'otherness' – *al Haqq* (Qur'an 41:53)

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The strength of the opposing force was equally balanced - about thirty thousand on each side. Both the armies were equally determined and committed. One army was backing the righteousness and the other was driven by worldly motives.

Hazrat Ali (AS) gave the following instructions to his son Mohammad Hanafiya whom he appointed as Commander:

"Remember my son, mountain may move, and may leave their places, but you, on no account, retreat or run away from the battlefield. Be bold and resolute, and offer your life in the service of Allah. Keep your feet firmly on the ground. Keep your eyes on the last row of the enemy ranks. You must reach there after overthrowing the front rows. You must not overlook the movements of rear ranks and merely concentrate on the front line. Do not waver and do not get nervous. Remember my son! Only Allah can help and He should be trusted upon."

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

Then he raised his hands and prayed, "O' Allah! if we lose, please save us from the humiliation of the vanquished. If You grant us victory, save us from the arrogance and the pride of the victor."

Imam Ali (AS) called one of his officers, handed him over his sword and his spear, and came out in the field unarmed. He called out Zubair, "Zubair come out, I want to speak to you."

Zubair was reluctant to come and face him. Hazrat Ayesha (RA) also advised him not to face Hazrat Ali (AS) as she knew that anyone who had ever gone to fight against Hazrat Ali (AS) had never returned alive. However, seeing that Hazrat Ali (AS) had no weapon with him, Zubair reluctantly stepped forward fully armed and ready for a duel.

Hazrat Ali (AS) embraced Zubair, kept him against his chest and asked him:

"Zubair! Why have you come to Basra? Why have you taken this desperate step?"

"We want to avenge the blood of Usman."

"You know very well that I am not involved. I have nothing to do with it. The murderers are among your ranks."

"I do not consider you competent enough to take over the Caliphate." It was *Saqeefa Bani Sa'ada* speaking.

"Zubair! We both belong to the family of Abdul Mutalib. And do you remember what the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had forecast? I remind it to you now. One day when you had embraced me warmly, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had said

that one day you (Zubair) would come out to fight against me and you would be certainly on the wrong.”

Zubair recalled what the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had said and went back saying, “O *Amir-ul-Momneen!* I will not fight against you.”

He put his word in the sheath and told Hazrat Ayesha (RA) that whatever he had done so far was a deviation. He was in the wrong and would not fight against Imam Ali (AS). Hazrat Ayesha (RA) cursed him and his son Abdullah who was the Chief of the Staff rebuked him and called him a coward. He left the battlefield but was later killed by Umro bin Jarmooz in the valley of As-saba.

Hazrat Ali (AS) immediately conveyed to his troops that no one should fight against Zubair even if he joined the battle.

Hazrat Ali (AS) then called out Talah and said:

“Talha! Shame on you. You have dragged out a noble wife of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) to the battlefield and have left your own wife behind. Did you not swear allegiance to me?” There was no response from Talha.

Hazrat Ali (AS) once again addressed his troops and reminded them of the ethics of fighting:

“We will not initiate the battle and would not attack till attacked. Do not chase the one who runs away from the battlefield. Do not attack the wounded or the unarmed who cannot defend himself. Do not mutilate or desecrate any dead. Do not cut the limbs of anyone. Do not attack or harm any woman.”

Ammar Yassir (RA) addressed the people before the battle: Allah has put you to test whether you obey Allah or her (Hazrat Ayesha RA). (*Sahih al-Bukhari*)

Do the people think that they will be left alone when they say: " We believe, and they will not be tested?"

Qur'an 29:2

The first arrow came from the Army of the Camel and Muslim bin Abdullah Majashi was martyred. Then a second person was martyred and then Abdul Rehman brother of Abdullah bin Badeel was martyred. Hazrat Ali (AS) said: "O Allah! Be a witness that we are not initiating the battle but the enemy has." Then he pulled out his sword (Zulfiqar) and attacked the enemy ranks.

The battle lasted for quite some time. One of the soldiers advanced and cut the legs of the camel of Hazrat Ayesha (RA). As soon as the camel fell, the general route ensued. Marwan shot an arrow at Talha and killed him saying, "There would never be a better opportunity to avenge the blood of Usman and to get back the ruler-ship for Bani Umayyah.

"Hazrat Ayesha (RA) might have looked for cruel treatment at the hands of Hazrat Ali (AS), having been his vindictive and persevering enemy, but he was too magnanimous to triumph over a fallen foe." (*W.Irving, 'Successors of Mohammad'*)

Hazrat Ali (AS) instructed Mohammad bin Abu Bakr to take charge of his sister and protect her from the arrows and spears still flying from all directions. When Mohammad drew near to his sister, and gave her his hand, she loaded him with abuse, demanding what reprobate had

presumed to stretch his hand where none but the Prophet's (PBUH&HD) had been permitted. Mohammad replied that though it was the hand of her nearest in blood, it was also of her bitterest enemy." (*Prince 'Mohammaden History'*)

Hazrat Ali (AS) toured the battlefield. With a heavy heart he looked at every pale face, the dead bodies and severed limbs. Tears started to role down his eyes. He was sad at the innocent idiots who had been subverted and brain washed to adopt a wrong course. He wondered why the people had forgotten the teachings of Qur'an and the sermons of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) so soon. In such an event how difficult it had become for him to save the bloodshed.

His archenemy Marwan was brought before him as a prisoner of war. Marwan humbly besieged Hazrat Ali (AS) for forgiveness. Hazrat Ali (AS) well aware of his past record and future deeds forgave him.

After the defeat of the Army of the Camel, Hazrat Ali (AS) asked Ibn Abbas to convey to Hazrat Ayesha (RA) to leave Basra and return from whence she hsd come. Hazrat Ayesha (RA) replied, "Yes I am returning. Of all the cities, I hate this city the most since this is the one in which Bani Hashim reside." (*Iqbal Fareed*)

The human losses in the battle, in terms of values and lives were very high. "The carnage in the ill-starred Battle of the Camel (for so it came to be called) was very great. The field was covered with over ten thousand bodies and this, notwithstanding the fact that the victory was not followed up, for Ali had given orders that no fugitive should be pursued, nor any wounded soldier slain, nor plunder seized, nor the privacy of any house invaded.

A trench was dug, and into it the dead were lowered, friends and foes alike. Ali encamped for three days outside the city, and performed the funeral service. It was a new experience to bury the dead slain in battle not against the infidel, but Believers fighting against Believers. Instead of cursing the memory of his enemies (too soon the fashion in these civil wars), Ali spoke hopefully of the future state of such as had entered the field, on whatever side, with an honest heart." (*Sir William Muir, The Caliphate, Its Rise, Decline and Fall*).

"Muhammad (PBUH&HD), being the Prophet of Allah, and the 'CITY OF KNOWLEDGE', had the knowledge that dangerous and dark schemes were rife all around him. He knew that a few of his wives, especially Hazrat Ayesha (RA), was playing a potentially perilous role amidst the state of affairs. She bore intense malice and hatred for his successor and vicegerent Hazrat Ali (AS) in particular and his *Ahlul-Bayt* in general. As the formerly quoted references show, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD) was well acquainted with Hazrat Ayesha's (RA) vindictive nature, and the inevitable threat she posed for Islam and his *Ahlul-Bayt*. But, then again, Allah has sent him as '*Rahemat-ul-Alameen*' (Mercy for the Universe), so he was characteristically patient, because he knew that Hazrat Ayesha (RA) was the test that Allah had chosen for his people, the same way He had chosen various tests for the preceding nations.

"So, these tests from Allah are hypocrite (*munafaqeen*) detectors. Therefore, on several occasions the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had warned his people regarding this *fitna* (sedition). Ammar Yassir's (RA) address to the people before the Battle of Camel, "Allah has put you to test whether you obey Allah or her (Hazrat Ayesha (RA)), is also a testimony to the Prophet's (PBUH&HD) warning." (*Sahih al Bukhari*). When he returned successful

from the battle of Jamal, Imam Ali (AS) wrote a letter of thanks to the people of Kufa:

O' citizens of Kufa! May the Merciful Lord reward you on His behalf and on behalf of the Ahlul Bayt for obeying their orders and coming to their help. May He reward you more handsomely than He awards those who obey his commands (because you followed the true path against very heavy odds and in spite of alluring enticements.)

You have done your duty. You heard the call of your Amir, and responded to it; he called you and you obeyed his orders with zeal and enthusiasm.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

Whereas Hazrat Ali (AS) commended the devotion of the people of Kufa, he reprimanded the people of Basra for their unfaithfulness. Some excerpts from the sermon are as follows:

O' people of Basra! You citizens of Muttafeqa! (old name of Basra) you were in the army commanded by a woman and you were the followers of an animal (the camel of Ummul-Momneen) which was used as a banner in the Battle of Jamal. You obeyed the blubbling and braying of the camel and when that camel was killed you routed and ran away. You are wicked and depraved in nature; unfaithfulness and untrustworthy in character; and hypocrites and schismatic in religion, even the waters of your wells reflecting the sourness of your disposition, are brackish.

Those who live among you have forced you to live a life of sin, and those who sever relations with you will receive Blessings of All-Merciful Allah.

As I see the whole city of Basra inundated once again and the Masjid of Basra standing in the midst like a boat on the bosom of the sea, it appears as the curse of Allah has swept you in the form of a flood, submerging everything in its way, low lying areas, as well as, high ground.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

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“When the news of Hazrat Ali’s (AS) martyrdom reached Hazrat Ayesha (RA), she knelt and thanked Allah.” (Al Imama wal Siyasa, vol 3, p 45). Tabari, vol 17, p 224)

Muawiya
Defies
Khelaphat-e-Ellahiya

Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA) had appointed Yazid bin Abu Sufyan as the Governor of Syria. After the death of Yazid, his brother Muawiya was appointed as the governor. He was allowed to continue as governor even by Hazrat Umar (RA) and Hazrat Usman (RA).

It is surprising that all those companions of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) who had distinguished themselves in knowledge, piety, devotion and valour were ignored and persons like Yazid and Muawiya, progeny of Hind and Abu Sufyan, who had opposed Islam and the Prophet (PBUH&HD) throughout their lives, were given preferential treatment.

“When Hazrat Usman (RA) assumed the ruler-ship, Abu Sufyan found a golden opportunity for the realization of his dreams. He approached Hazrat Usman (RA) and addressed him in the following words: “Usman! After Bani Taim (Hazrat Abu Bakr) and Bani Adi (Hazrat Umar), the Caliphate has at last come to you. So roll it like a ball wherever you wish and strengthen its foundation with your own Bani Umayyah as this is an empire, and I do hardly have any faith in the so-called Paradise and Hell.

“Abu Sufyan advised Bani Umayyah to treat the caliphate like a ball and to pass it on from one to another of their clan and never let the ball go out of their possession because, I swear that there is neither punishment nor judgment, neither the Heaven nor Hell, and neither the Resurrection

nor the Day of Reckoning." His son and his clan accepted his philosophy, followed his faith, followed his advice and obeyed his orders." (*Isteeab* by Ibn Abdul Bar: *Khamis Vol 2*, p.97)

Another troubling issue for the Umayyahs was the difference of faith with the Hashimites. Ibn Jurair, Tabari, and Hakim agree that, "Those who changed the religion of Allah with infidelity were Bani Umayyah and Bani Mughairah, the two famous tribes of Quresh." This is explicit in Abu Sufyan's conversation with Hazrat Usman (RA), mentioned earlier in this chapter."

Gibbon says, "The persecutors of Muhammad (PBUH&HD) usurped the inheritance of his children and the champions of idolatry became the supreme heads of his religion and Empire. The opposition by Abu Sufyan had been fierce and obstinate, his conversion was tardy and reluctant, and his new faith was fortified by necessity and interest. The fact that a Prophet was born into the Bani Hashim was hardly bearable to the Umayyah. And as the virtues and piety of the Hashimites spread far and wide through the Prophet's (PBUH&HD) words and deeds, the fire of envy became more nasty and menacing."

"The traditions, regarding Hazrat Ali's (AS) attributes, were quoted from the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) to such an extent that the Umayyahs, in spite of their kingdom and power, failed to erase them from the memory of the world; and were it not for the will of Allah, the records of the excellence of the *Ahlul Bayt* would not have survived the long reign of the Umayyahs due to their intense malice and severe hatred against the Hashimites. And Hazrat Ali (AS) suffered for all of this. He promised and how dearly he paid for the fulfillment of his vow! This fire of jealousy, greed and gruesome enmity that ruthlessly consumed decades of his physical

life, did not stop even with the horrendous massacre of his family and friends in Karbala.

“And this all-consuming gall of viciousness and vengeance is summed up in the ugly and dastardly words of Muawiya's son Yazid after the incident of Karbala, ‘If my ancestors, who had been slain in the battle of Badr, would witness the way I have avenged their blood from Muhammad's progeny, they would admire my deed immensely and would say, Bravo, Yazid! May not thy hands get benumbed, and it was nothing but an imperialistic design of the Hashimites, as neither a Divine Message ever came to Muhammad nor was there any Revelation (*Wahi*).’” (*Waseelat-un-Najaat: Ibne Abi Hadid al-Mutazali*)

These developments indicate that the majority had ignored what was given in the Qur'an and had forgotten what the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had declared about Hazrat Ali (AS) at various occasions. After the Battle of Khayber, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had declared:

“Ali! You would fight for my cause, you will be nearest to me on the Day of Judgment, you would be next to me on the fountain of Kausar, enmity against you is enmity against me, a war against you is a war against me, your friendship is my friendship, to be at peace with you is to be at peace with me, your flesh is my flesh, your blood is my blood, who will obey you will obey me, truth is on your tongue, in your heart and in your mind..” (*Suyuti, Tarikhul-Khulafa*)

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By his characteristic mercifulness, magnanimity and

consideration of human rights, Hazrat Ali (AS) never forced anyone to vow allegiance to him. When he observed dissensions and defiance, he addressed the people:

After his (Hazrat Usman's (RA) death people flocked around me imploring me to take over the Khelaphet. They gathered in such numbers and were so anxious to show their sincerity that both my sons (Hassan (AS) and Hussain (AS)) were almost trampled and my dress was torn. They were simply falling upon me to accept their ruler-ship and leadership. I would have turned down their request but I was afraid that with my refusal they would completely become out of touch with truth and religion.

When I accepted to become the Caliph and made them follow the path of Allah i.e. the same path that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had taught them to follow, they revolted. One par v (Ummul Muslimeen Hazrat Ayesha (RA), Talah and Zubair) broke the oath of allegiance. The second party became apostates (Kharijites) and the third party, coveting the wealth and power, adopted an equally wrong course.

All the three groups behaved in a manner as if they had never heard this verse of the Qur'an:

'Paradise is meant for those who neither create mischief nor do they oppress human beings. Eternal peace and happiness is for those who lead a pious life.' Qur'an 28:33

I swear by Allah that they were made to hear these words of Allah repeatedly and their meanings were explained to them clearly. Still the vicious ways of life fascinated them and its luxuries, power, wealth and its pomp and show enchanted them beyond any measure.

I swear by the Creator of this Universe that had they not sworn unconditional allegiance to me, had they not manifested profound gratitude in my accepting their rulership, had not the presence of helpers and supporters made it incumbent upon me to defend the Faith and had Allah Almighty not taken a promise from the men of knowledge to put a check upon the luxurious and vicious lives of oppressors and tyrants, as well as, to try to reduce the pangs of poverty and starvation of the oppressed and the downtrodden and had He not made it incumbent upon them to secure back the usurped rights of the weak from the powerful oppressors, I would have even then left the rulership of this State as I had done earlier. I would have let this State sink into anarchy and chaos.

To me the glamour, luxury and wealth of this world are worth the sneeze of a goat."

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

Syria was his greatest worry. Hazrat Ali (AS) wanted to replace Muawiya with a more competent person but Muawiya was not prepared to give up. He was an ambitious governor who had always desired the rulership of the whole of Muslim State.

"Prior to the battle of Siffin, Hazrat Ali (AS) gave Jarir bin Abdullah a letter in which he asked, "Muawiya give me bayya and obey me. Do not create 'fitnah' (trouble) in the Islamic State." Muawiya replied, "If Ali makes me governor over the provinces of Egypt and Syria I will give him bayya, on the condition that no one else is given bayya save me." (*Al-Badayah, Vol.8, p.131*)

Jarir's return from Syria was anxiously awaited. He came back after three months with an oral message from

Muawiya. Malike-al-Ashtar accused him of having wasted his time indulging in effeminate pleasures with Muawiya, who most deliberately held Jarir back for so long to consolidate his forces. Jarir took a false offence at Malik's implications and left Kufa to join Muawiya.

Imam Ali (AS) wrote a letter to Muawiya:

"After glorifying Allah and praising the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) be it known to you that you very well know my attitude towards your tribe. In the beginning I fought against you all in the defence of Islam and how and why later on I kept myself aloof from you and from your activities; I had no concern about your tribe till there took place the incident (murder of Hazrat Usman;RA) which could not be prevented. It is a long story and much has been said and is being said about it. However, that was to be. Now take the oath of allegiance to me from the people of your province and come on deputation to me."

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

Instead of replying to the letter, Muawiya started the campaign to implicate Hazrat Ali (AS) in the murder of Hazrat Usman (RA).

When Hazrat Ali (AS) learnt that Muawiya had started a vicious propaganda campaign against him and held him responsible for the murder of Hazrat Usman (RA), he rebutted him with the following words:

"O' Muawiya! I am sure that if you give up self-aggrandizement and self interest, if you forsake the idea of being alive only for personal profits and pleasures, if you cease to be actuated solely by selfishness and if you ponder over the incident leading to the murder of Usman, you will

realize that I cannot at all be held responsible for the affair and I am the least concerned with the episode. But it is a different thing that you create all these false rumours and carry on this heinous propaganda to gain your ulterior motives. Well you may do whatever you like."

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

During his reign Muawiya had consolidated his position by purchasing the loyalties of a number of people. He spent lavishly from the Public Treasury and gifted property to the few opportunists who had gathered around him. His army was also very well paid and well fed. They had been deliberately kept ignorant about the teachings of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. They hardly knew the name of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD) and of his *Ahlul Bayt*. The Syrians were devoid of any light of faith or of benevolence. They were avaricious and driven by the lust for power and amassing riches. Muawiya exploited their ignorance to the hilt.

According to Machiavelli, "To gain political power it is necessary either to be the child of fortune or be born into power, or to acquire power through deceit and conquest." He was of the view that in "destroying enemies within the state, the rule must get rid of them decisively, without mercy lest some individual suffering from minor injuries returns to and revenge."

Machiavelli's philosophy of government is premised on the assumption, "In the absence of virtuous citizens, there are only 'corrupt masses' and since the end justifies the means, they can be controlled by a 'prince' through his deceitful and vicious behaviour. The 'prince' has to be strong and ruthless enough to rule his subjects. He must

have a 'hypocritical' and 'vacillating' personality wearing the face of mercy, faith, integrity, humanity and religion to create a public image, but always contrary to those ideals."

"While he was still viceroy of Syria, Muawiya had created a strong material base for himself, his kin and his military following, becoming a very big landlord by a large scale seizure of land. Muawiya rested on far stronger economic foundations and more trustworthy armed forces than his political opponents. He had become the all-powerful permanent viceroy of the rich and civilized Syria as early as the days of Hazrat Umar (RA), and having spent more than twenty years in this important post, became the recognized leader of Arab tribal aristocracy in Syria." (*E. A. Belyaev in 'Arabs, Islam and the Arab Caliphate in the Early Middle Ages'*)

The Umayyahs were pretty busy in plotting against Hazrat Ali (AS) and doing anything and everything that would disturb Hazrat Ali's (AS) government. Umm Habiba (daughter of Abu Sufyan and sister of Muawiya) was one of the widows of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). It was her idea, which Muawiya acted upon and took the bloodstained shirt of Hazrat Usman (RA) and the severed fingers of his wife Naila to Syria, where Muawiya used these for inciting the mob. (*Masudi, Habib al-Siyar*)

"The bloodstained shirt was kept hanging from the mosque. The furious Syrians were crying out for revenge. This was the heap of evil that was up against Ali and this was the dangerous enemy that Ali had to deal with after he was done with the triumvirate of Ayesha, Talha and Zubair." (*Masudi, Habib-al-Siyar, Rawdzat-al-Safa*).

Hazrat Ali (AS) hated nothing more than spilling blood. He did not lose hope and advised Muawiya:

"You have misguided the whole generation of men around you. Having no faith in the truth of Islam you have led others to go astray. You have thrown them in the depths of ignorance. You have enticed them towards the abyss of disenlightenment and illiteracy. They were out to reach truth but they cannot reach it now, because of you. They have lost the true path of religion. They are becoming skeptics and most of them are returning to infidelity of pre-Islamic days. Theirs is an unfortunate plight. A few wise men from amongst them who have seen your ways and who have realized the intensity of your viciousness and your cunning in turning them away from the ways of Islam, have given you up and have turned towards Allah. They are fortunate and may be blessed.

"O' Muawiya! Fear Allah, do not let the Devil lead you to Hell; throw away its yoke which is tied round your neck; remember that this life will after all come to an end and soon you will have to face the next world."

*Iman Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

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George Jordac, in his book 'The Voice of Human Justice' quotes an episode that shows the level of intelligence that the Syrians had:

"After the army of Hazrat Ali (AS) returned from Basra, a Kufan came to Damascus mounted on his camel. One of the Syrians claimed that this she-camel belonged to him and had been snatched away from him by the Kufan during the Battle of Jamal. The matter came up before Muawiya and the Syrian claimant produced fifty witnesses to prove

that the she-camel was his. Muawiya decided the case in his favour.

The Kufan said to Muawiya: 'May Allah forgive you! It is a he-camel and not a she-camel.' Muawiya said that as the judgment had been given it was not possible to reverse it. When the court was dispersed and there was no one there, he called the Kufan and asked him about the price of his camel. Muawiya paid double the amount and said, 'When you reach Kufa tell Hazrat Ali (AS) that I will bring to fight against him one hundred thousand such persons who cannot differentiate between a he-camel and a she-camel.'

Obviously the people living in such dark depths of ignorance could not be expected to be aware of the teachings of the Qur'an. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) and Hazrat Ali (AS) were strangers to them - never heard of. Muawiya was their master and to him and him alone they would obey and serve.

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When Hazrat Ali (AS) was busy in Basra, the Syrians occupied the cities of Haran, Qarqasa and Ruqa and Muawiya appointed Zahaq bin Qais Fahri as the governor. However, these cities were recaptured without much difficulty.

Hazrat Ali (AS) again asked Muawiya to hand over the charge but Muawiya refused and sent the message that he held Hazrat Ali (AS) responsible for the murder of Hazrat Usman (RA) and would avenge his blood.

Hazrat Ali's (AS) mission as a Caliph was to establish a government based on the teachings of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. As an Imam, he had to guide the people towards

the path of righteousness. He had to create awareness in the minds of the people as to their duties towards Allah and human beings. Morality, nobility, respect for human rights, help the poor and the disabled.

As Muawiya was averse to the dictates of *Khelaphat-e-Ellahiya* and all the noble principles of governance, Hazrat Ali (AS) had insisted that he must resign.

Muawiya was determined to become an independent and a despotic ruler over the territories that he governed. To strengthen his grip over the people, Muawiya had assembled flatterers around him and created a class of rich and influential elite to support him in his designs. The rich and influential were becoming richer every day. They were his advisors, his whip, his swords and his batons to suppress the general public from rising against Muawiya. Many could not accept the discipline and dictates of *Khelaphat-e-Ellahiya* and they too went over to Muawiya and entertained themselves with the breadcrumbs left by Muawiya on his dining table.

"Muawiya asked Umro bin A's to give him *bayya* (an oath of allegiance). Umro stated that if it is in regard to the next world, then Allah would not be with you, if it is in connection with this world then I would like a share in the government. Muawiya said, 'In my world there is an equal share for you.' Umro was no child and he demanded, 'I would like you to put into writing that you will give me Egypt and its surrounding suburbs. Muawiya was reluctant but did write in the agreement that Umro give him *bayya*. Umro replied that it should also be written in the agreement that *bayya* will be subject to the conditions being met by Muawiya. Muawiya tried to get out of it but Umro insisted 'Muawiya! You know I have sold my religion at your hands, avenging Usman's blood was just an

excuse, we are desirous of worldly power.' Upon hearing this Muawiya agreed to hand over Egypt to Umro." (*Dhikr Siffin*, in *Tarikh Kamil*, Vol 2, p. 139)

Hazrat Ali (AS) came to know that the main architect of the policies of Muawiya was Umro bin A's. He thought, maybe he could dissuade Umro from cooperating with Muawiya. He sent a letter to him:

Undoubtedly you have subordinated your religion to the worldly power, pomp and wealth provided to you by a person whose apostation and skepticism are not hidden from anybody. Everyone knows him and his ways. He sullies the reputation as well as the character of those who keep company with him. He tries to deceive sober and sedate people. For the sake of remnants and crumbs of bread left over his table, you have attached yourself to him. You are following him like a dog that follows a tiger, which frightfully looks at its paws and waits to live upon the refuse, which it leaves from its kill.

In this way you have lost your self-respect and honour in this world and your salvation in the next. You have ruined your present and future. Had you followed the true path, you would have secured success in this world as well as in the Hereafter.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

In addition to the slogan of 'revenge for the blood of Hazrat Usman (RA)' Muawiya had also made it mandatory that from the pulpit of every mosque the speaker in his address must innovate and speak derogatory remarks about Hazrat Ali (AS). A number of pseudo-religious scholars were engaged for innovating false *ahadis* (sayings of the

Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD)) against Hazrat Ali (AS). Innovation of such *ahadis* became a lucrative business and a number of people engaged themselves in the sale and purchase of such *ahadis*. So much so that even certain verses from the Qur'an were misinterpreted in a manner that these went against Hazrat Ali (AS) and his family.



When Muawiya thought that he had become militarily strong enough to challenge Hazrat Ali (AS), he wrote a threatening letter to Hazrat Ali (AS) and in turn the Imam (AS) replied:

O' Muawiya! You have threatened that you are coming out to fight against me with a large horde of Muhajirs and Ansar. Do tell me who these Muhajirs are? The door of Hegira (Migration of Muslims to save their lives from the hands of unbelievers of Quresh) was already closed on the day your elder brother, Yazid bin Abu Sufyan was taken prisoner and your father surrendered Makkah and the process of migration had ceased as soon as your paganism ceased. (The Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) had said that there would be no Hegira after the victory of Mecca).

Are you so anxious for a battle? Wait! You may get it to your heart's content. I may come out myself to meet you, which will be a correct gesture on my part because Allah may have destined me to punish you for your inequities. And if you take the initiative to come out to fight then it would mean, as a poet of Bani Asad has said "They are facing those furious summer winds which shower sand, rubble and gravel-stones." Remember that I still hold the sword, which has sent your maternal grandfather, maternal uncle and your brother to the same resting-place, the Hell.

By Allah, I know you too well to argue with you or to advise you. Apostasy and avariciousness have taken a firm hold of your mind. Your intelligence is of inferior order and you cannot differentiate what in the end is good for you and what is not. It is correct to say about you that you have climbed to such dangerous and sinful heights that your fall which is inevitable will lead to an eternal damnation because you are coveting a thing which morally does not belong to you and for which you are religiously most unsuitable and with which you have neither sincere affection nor any affinity or propensity. It had been once usurped from the right person and you now want to retain it for yourself.

How great is the difference between your words and deeds? How much you resemble your maternal and paternal uncles, whose ill luck persuaded them to deny and repudiate the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) and to fight against him and every one of whom was at last doomed to die! You know very well that they could not protect themselves or protect the cause they were challenging to men, who were energetic and brave and were present in every battlefield to defend the cause of Islam.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

When a clash became inevitable, Hazrat Ali (AS) declared:

I swear by Allah that I will not sit quiet and will not allow these people to do as they like. I will not act like the hunted beast which is lulled and fooled by its hunter and falls an easy prey to his tricks and devices; but, with the help of believers in the truth and justice of Islam, I will try to suppress this revolt against Allah and religion. I declare

that with assistance of my faithful followers I will always fight against upholders of schism and hypocrisy and supporters of injustice and falsehood, till I meet with my death.

There is nothing new to me in this revolt. Since the passing away of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be upon him and his progeny) how often were my rights usurped. And unjust and unjustifiable precedence was given to others, till the situation has now been brought to such gravity that these unholy hordes have resolved to fight against me.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

Muawiya prepared his army to launch an offensive against Medina. When Hazrat Ali (AS) came to know of Muawiya's aggressive designs, he addressed the people:

“O’ people! Rise to face the enemies of the Qur’an and the *Sunnah*. Let’s move against the murderers of Mahajirs (immigrants) and Ansars (locals). Move against those people who had reluctantly accepted Islam and who were only accepted as a matter of encouragement to them. Rise to deter them from killing the true followers of Islam.”

The conditions had become impossible. Hazrat Ali (AS) appointed Uqbah bin Umro Ansari as his deputy. Malik bin Habib Yarboi was asked to stay behind and direct those, who join later, to the battlefield. He himself moved towards Nakhla and established his field headquarters there. From there he sent messages to his commanders to come and join him. Abdullah bin Abbas from Basra, Mukhnif bin Salim Ansari from Isphahan, Saeed bin Wahab from Hamadan, Rabi bin Khasim Asadi from Ray and other generals from

various States came and joined Hazrat Ali (AS). The army swelled to about eighty four thousand strong.

The army marched towards Syria in April 657 AD (Zhilhaji 36 AH). Imam Ali (AS) reached Riqqa on the banks of the Euphrates. After crossing the river, he came in sight of Muawiya.

W. Irving in his book 'Successors of Mohammad' narrates an incident, which reads as follows:

"On his way to Syria, Hazrat Ali's (AS) army had to cross the deserts of Mesopotamia. Here the army needed water and water was not to be found anywhere. Hazrat Ali (AS) sent his soldiers, in all directions, in search of water but they all returned disappointed.

"One of the parties came across a Christian hermit who had collected some rainwater in his pots. He confirmed that there was no source of water in this area. Hazrat Ali (AS) said that he knew that some of the Bani Israel prophets of ancient times had their abode in the area and that they had dug wells here. The hermit was surprised at the knowledge of Hazrat Ali (AS) and replied:

'Yes, there were wells but these have since been dried up. A prophet or a representative of a prophet can only locate these. My book also says that one Prophet Mohammad (PBUH&HD) would appear in Mecca and these wells will be located by his rightful successor.' (*Rawdhat-al-Safa Vol.2, p. 292*)

"Hazrat Ali (AS) pointed out a spot and asked his soldiers to start digging. After digging to some depth they came across a huge stone that could neither be moved nor broken. Hazrat Ali (AS) single handedly moved that stone

and the ancient well stood revealed. It contained plenty of sweet water that the army eagerly and gratefully made use of.

“The hermit immediately embraced Islam and said, “No doubt you are the rightful successor of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HD).” (W.Irving: ‘Successors of Muhammad’ p.180)

The Battle of Siffin

An army of one hundred and twenty thousand Syrians advanced and occupied an open tract of land, Siffin, on the western bank of the Euphrates between Raqa and Balas. Malike al-Ashtar also advanced and encamped a short distance away from the Syrian camp.

Malike al-Ashtar did not know that Muawiya had ordered his troops to deny water to the army of Hazrat Ali (AS). When Malik sent a party to fetch water from the River, Abu al-Awar, commanding the detachment deployed on the riverbank, resisted and the party came back without water.

Obedient to the instructions of the Commander of the Faithful, Malik al-Ashtar did not initiate a battle for the water but waited for his Imam to come. The next day Hazrat Ali (AS) arrived and he was told about the water dispute. Hazrat Ali (AS) sent a message to Muawiya asking him to refrain from this inhuman act and allow free access to water to everyone.

Major Price gives the following account: “As Siffin commanded, to a considerable distance, the only access to the waters of the Euphrates, Muawiya had stationed Abul Awar, one of his generals, with ten thousand men, to guard the communication from the troops of

Hazrat Ali (AS).⁸ He had not long placed his army and pitched an advantageous position, when Hazrat Ali (AS) approached and pitched his camp in the same neighbourhood, and his followers soon found that their supply of water was intercepted.

"Under these circumstances, Hazrat Ali (AS) sent a deputation to Muawiya to request that he relinquish an advantage which appeared very inconsistent, assuring him that had he possessed the passage, it would have been equally free to both the armies. Muawiya immediately made known the message to his courtiers, most of whom contended that as 'murderers of Osman had cut off all supplies of water when they besieged his palace, so on the present occasion it would only be just to retaliate.'

"Umro bin A's, however, dissented from this opinion, declaring that Ali would not suffer his army to perish of thirst with the warlike legions of Iraq at his heels and the Euphrates before his eyes. But the first counsel prevailed, and the messenger was dismissed with the reply that Muawiya was resolved not to forego what he considered to be the forerunner of his future victory. The result of this encounter occasioned Hazrat Ali's (AS) considerable vexation and perplexity, till at length the privations became unbearable, and Malike al-Ashtar and Asha Ibn Qais begged to be allowed to open the communication with their swords."

"The fight for the passage to Euphrates ensues and Malike al-Ashtar takes the biscuit. Hazrat Ali's (AS) troops successfully dislodged the enemy thus gaining the waterway. Now the situation was exactly reversed.

"Smarting under the reproaches of Umro, Muawiya now found himself reduced to the necessity of applying to his adversary for the indulgence which he had so recently withheld; but Ali, with the liberality and magnanimity so congenial to his troops allowed his enemy a free access to the

Euphrates, and from this time the soldiers of either army passed and re-passed to the river with equal confidence and freedom of intercourse." (*S. Odeley's History of Saracens*)

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When the two armies were arrayed against each other Hazrat Ali (AS) advised his troops:

- Never begin a war yourself, Allah does not like bloodshed; fight only in defence. (He was not in a hurry to get the title of 'Fateh-e-aazam', so fanatically craved by the others).
- Never be first to attack your enemy, repulse his attacks, but do it boldly, bravely and courageously.
- While declaring yourself and your deeds (a custom amongst hand to hand combatants engaged in a duel) never waste time, and instead of speaking about yourself speak about Allah and the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD).
- Never follow and kill those who run away from the battle or an encounter, life is dear to them, let them live.
- Never kill wounded persons who cannot defend themselves.
- Never strip naked a dead man for the sake of his coat of mail or dress.
- Never cut the nose or the ears of the dead to humiliate them.
- Never loot and arson.
- Never molest or outrage the modesty of a woman.
- Never molest a woman even if she swears at you or hurts you.

- Never hurt a child.
- Never hurt an old and enfeebled person.

(Abul Fida)

Hazrat Ali (AS) sent his emissaries namely Bashir bin Umro Ansari, Saeed bin Qais Hamdani and Shabith bin Rabi Tamimi to go and talk to Muawiya and try to dissuade him from a battle.

Imam Ali (AS) was always averse to shedding blood; hence, he was delaying the commencement of the Battle at Siffin. He tried his best to avoid a battle and to peacefully settle the dispute. On the contrary some of his companions became restive and due to procrastination, they started to whisper among themselves that he (Hazrat Ali (AS)) was feeling nervous and timid. He replied to them in the following words:

It is not right for you to say that I am hesitating to start the war because I am afraid of death. Let Allah be my witness that I never cared whether I approached death or death approached me; and you are equally wrong to say that my delaying the war is due to the fact that I am not fully convinced of the righteousness of my cause and falsity of the claims of Muawiya and his Syrian hordes. By Allah I never delayed war even for a day but with the hope that some of the rebels might come back to me and through me they might be guided towards religion, and seeing the Divine light might try to illuminate their lives with it. I like this better than massacring them or leaving them in the darkness of sin for even death is not going to bring them peace and comfort."

Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha

All the efforts of Hazrat Ali (AS) to avoid a battle failed and the skirmishes began. From the Syrian side came Abdul Rehman bin Khalid bin Walid, Abu Awar Salmi, Habib bin Muslima Fahri, Bin Zikalla Humairi, Ubaidullah bin Omar, Sharjeel bin Samat Kundi and Hamza bin Malik. From Hazrat Ali (AS) army went Malik Ashtar, Hajr bin Edi, Shabath bin Rabi, Khalid bin Moamar, Zaid bin Nasr Harsi, Zaid bin Khasfa Tami, Saeen bin Qais Hamdani, Mo'aqal bin Qais Rayahi and Qais bin Sa'd Ansari.

The fighting continued throughout the month of Zilhajj. The next year (37 A.H.) for the whole month of Muharram, the fighting was at a halt. But Hazrat Ali (AS) continued his earnest endeavours to stop the carnage.

When the last day of the month of Muharram passed and the new moon appeared, Hazrat Ali (AS) sent Marsad bin Harith Jashmi towards the Syrian army. Jashmi addressed them:

"O' people of Syria! The Commander of the Faithful has given you enough chance and opportunity so that you may learn and come towards righteousness. He has apprised you of the truth of the Holy Book and the dictates of the Almighty but you have remained adamant and have not listened to the voice of reason. He has decided to discontinue these negotiations. May Allah be our witness."

The Syrians remained unmoved. They did not know what righteousness Jashmi was talking about. Like idiots they looked at each other with total ignorance and darkness in their eyes.

Early next morning, Safar 1' 37 Hijri, both sides prepared for a battle and organized their troops. Malike al-Ashtar

was overall commander of the Iraqi forces and Habi bin Muslima commanded the Syrians.

Fierce fighting ensued with Hazrat Ali (AS) attacking and moving through the enemy ranks and files like lightning. The heads started to roll and blood gushed out from hundreds of necks.

To quote Price, "In several of these Ali was personally engaged; but his extraordinary strength and skill was so well known to the opposite party, that he was obliged to disguise himself before an assailant would attack him. On one occasion, mounted on the horse and arrayed in the armour of one of his Chiefs, a warrior from Muawiya's army attacked and we are told that with a single sweep of his scimitar, the Caliph severed the upper half of his body from the lower. It is said that such was the keenness and temper of the steel, and the rapidity and, precision of the stroke, that the man thus severed in twain."

When Hazrat Ali (AS) observed that too many people had been killed, he put himself at the head of twelve thousand of his cavalry and made a furious charge towards the pavilion of Muawiya, which was surrounded, by five rows of his loyal bodyguards. Breaking through these ranks he came within the earshot of Muawiya and shouted:

"O' Muawiya ! How long the blood of Muslims shall spill at the altar of your greed and ignorance? Come forward like a man, let us have a duel and let Allah decide between the truth and the falsehood. Remember that in one of your letters you had challenged me to a battle and I had told you that you would have it to your heart's content. Remember that I had also told you that I still hold the sword, which had sent your maternal grandfather, maternal uncle and your brother to the same resting-place, the Hell."

“Fairly spoken,” said Umro bin A’s and he urged Muawiya to accept the challenge. Muawiya became very upset at the remarks of Umro bin A’s and said:

“You want that I should get killed so that you can take over my place? You know that whoever has challenged Hazrat Ali (AS) has never survived,” and withdrew behind the last row of his troops.

Umro said, “It is a pity that you show cowardice in facing Ali and injure the feelings of your well-wishers. I swear by Allah that even if I had to die a thousand times I would not have desisted from fighting against Ali.”

Umro came forward to fight Hazrat Ali (AS). Hazrat Ali (AS) attacked him with his spear and down he came from his horse. As Hazrat Ali (AS) raised his sword for a kill, Umro, a coward that he was, quickly pulled up his shirt exposing his back. Hazrat Ali (AS) just turned his face away. It is against the ethics to look at the private parts of another person even if he is your enemy. Umro quickly got up and rushed into the safety of his troops.

The battle continued for a number of days.

One day, Ammar Yassir (RA) who was ninety-three years old, came to Hazrat Ali (AS) and asked for his permission to go and fight. Hazrat Ali (AS) was quite reluctant but Ammar (RA) said, “Maula! Today is the day for which I have waited for so many years. Please do not deny me the honour.”

Hazrat Ali (AS) asked Hashim bin Utbah Marqal to prepare a force and accompany Ammar (RA). Ammar (RA) and Hashim attacked and penetrating through the enemy lines reached near the tent of Muawiya a number of times.

As he struck the Syrians, he kept saying, "We are fighting you today over the interpretation of the Qur'an just as in the times of our Prophet (PHUH&HD), we fought against you over its revelation. The Apostle of Allah had also revealed to Hazrat Ali (AS), 'O' Ali! Just as I am fighting against the idolaters over the revelation of Qur'an, some day you will fight over its interpretation.'" (*Musnad Ahmad bin Hambal, Hakim's Mustadrak*).

Sadly, one the defenders of Muawiya, Abu Ghawiya Farazi threw a lance at Ammar (RA) and Bin Joan Saksi martyred him.

"Ammar (RA) then ninety three years of age, who was also the commander of the cavalry, was the chief martyr along with Hashim bin Utbah. Hazrat Ali (AS) was highly grief-stricken. This was also a personal loss to him since Ammar (RA) was a sincere companion of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) since his early days.

"With that kindly paternal spirit which was one of the reasons for the devotion of his followers, the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had remarked, 'Poor Ammar! A cruel and unjust people would certainly be the cause of your death.'" It seems probable that the remark was made jokingly, blaming his companions for overworking the willing disciple. But the phrase was remembered as a prophecy. Now on the second day of the battle of Siffin, Ammar (RA) was killed martyred for Hazrat Ali (AS) and calling aloud, 'O' Paradise! How close thou art.'

"Such was the veneration entertained by both armies for the memory of the Apostle, that the martyrdom of Ammar (RA) inspired as much ardour in the Army of Hazrat Ali (AS) as it induced depression in that of Muawiya. The implication of the prophecy was that the party who

would kill Ammar (RA) would be fighting in an unjust cause." (*Sir John Glubb - The Great Arab Conquests*, p. 326, 1963, London).

When Umro bin A's heard of the confusion and dismay that was spreading amongst Muawiya's troops regarding Ammar's (RA) martyrdom, he said:

"And who is it that hath killed Ammar, but Ali the rebellious, who brought him hither." The clever repartee ran through the Syrian post, and did much to efface the evil omen." (*Sir William Muir's Annals* p.382)

On the ninth day, the battle continued even during the night. That night is still remembered as *Laila-tul-Harir*. The sun of the tenth day witnessed the battlefield littered with dead bodies, blunt swords, broken lances, blood splashed all over the place and vultures hovering overhead. Hazrat Ali (AS), Malike al-Ashtar and Ibn Abbas continued to press their troops forward. Syrians were suffering heavy losses and were on the receiving end. They just waited for the command of their commanders to retreat. They were on the verge of collapse and were left with no strength to remain on the battlefield. The victory of the Mujahideen against the Mercenaries seemed only a few steps away.

On the morning of that day, Hazrat Ali (AS) addressed his officers:

O' Muslims! Make a habit of always remembering and fearing Allah. During a battle be calm, self-relying, resolute and bold; only thus you will keep enemy's swords away from you. Keep your arms and armour in order and make certain that your swords can easily and freely come out of the sheaths, keep an eye on your enemies and, while fighting, use your spears and swords freely.

Remember that Allah is watching you and you are fighting under the command of the cousin and son-in-law of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be upon him and his descendants).

Keep on constantly attacking the enemy; do not accept the shame and disgrace of a defeat or a rout, for which you shall be punished on the Day of Judgment (because yours is a jihad in defence of Islam, truth and justice). Death in this battlefield is a death in the cause of Allah, and you must, as true Muslims, face it cheerfully and must advance towards it unfalteringly, unflinchingly, boldly and gladly.

The hordes of your enemy's army are in front of you. Attack them and try to reach the yonder tent. Satan is resting in the shade of that tent, ready either to advance or to retreat. You must fight resolutely and courageously till the Divine Light illuminates your way and success leads you towards glory and Allah. Allah the Almighty is with you and He will not grudge rewarding you generously for your courage and bravery in this jihad.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

“In this sanguinary contest the lawful caliph displayed a superior character of valour and humanity. His troops were strictly enjoined to await the first onset of the enemy, to spare their fleeing brethren, and to respect the bodies of the dead, and the chastity of the female captives. He generously proposed to save the blood of the Muslims by a single combat; but his trembling rival declined the challenge as a sentence of inevitable death. The ranks of the Syrians were broken by the charge of a hero who was mounted on a piebald horse, and who wielded with

irresistible force his ponderous and two-edged sword. As often as he smote a rebel, he shouted '*Allah-o-Akbar*' (Allah is Great) and in the tumult of a nocturnal battle he was heard to repeat four hundred times that tremendous exclamation." (Gibbon, *The Decline and fall of the Roman Empire*)

The moment of decision had arrived. Hazrat Ali's (AS) soldier had four times reached near the tent of Muawiya. The battle had become so fierce that Muawiya left his tent and prepared to desert the battlefield. He mounted his horse and could any time kick his horse towards Syria. He asked Umro bin A's, "Umro! Now what?"

"Don't you worry, my plan is already having an effect. Very soon you will see how I turn the tables on Hazrat Ali (AS). Syrian agents had been secretly passing money and making tall promises to some of the lower rank commanders and Iraqi troops."

At a prearranged signal, a number of Syrians raised copies of the Qur'an on their lances and some others who had no copy of the Qur'an with them, wrapped various objects in pieces of cloth and raised it as the Qur'an. Some even wrapped bricks in pieces of cloth and raised these. They all shouted, "There is the Holy Book between you and us. We would abide by the decision taken keeping this Book as witness."

Ash'ath bin Qais who had already sold himself to Muawiya, asked Hazrat Ali (AS) to order the troops to stop fighting. Masar bin Fidki Tamimi and Zaid bin Haseen Tai also turned around with nearly twenty thousand soldiers and threatened Hazrat Ali (AS) that if he did not order his soldiers to stop fighting, they would fight against him. They also asked him to call back Malike al-Ashtar and Ibn Abbas from the front.

Hazrat Ali (AS) tried to tell his troops that those who had raised the Qur'an on their lances were totally ignorant of the teachings or the meanings of the Qur'an. They had never read or believed in the Qur'an. They were deceivers and liars. The whole thing was a farce. They were only trying to avoid defeat.

In spite of all the persuasion and encouragement to continue fighting, a number of soldiers just gave up. Those who were fighting were flabbergasted.

Hazrat Ali (AS) addressed his troops:

"O' you people on whom dishonest trick has worked and who have been impressed by deceit! You have been duped by the deception and fraud of the deceiver. You have remained intransigent, have followed your whims, have lost the right course and are wandering in the wilderness not knowing your way. The path was clear but you abandoned it and went the wrong way. I swear by Him who split the seed and created the soul that if you had obtained the knowledge from its origin, collected goodness from its proper place, adopted the clear path and traversed the highway of truth, the paths would have welcomed you and the signs of Truth would become manifest to you. Then no one would have been the victim of indigence and none of the Muslims or non-Muslims would have been oppressed."

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

"A great battle was fought at Siffin, a village on the Euphrates. Ali had well nigh gained the day when Muawiya bethought him of a stratagem. He ordered his troops to fix copies of the Qur'an on the points of their lances and to shout, 'Here is the Book of Allah: Let it decide between us!' The miserable trick succeeded. In Ali's

army there were many pious fanatics to whom the proposed arbitration by the Qur'an appealed with irresistible force. They now sprang forward clamorously, threatening to betray their leader unless he would submit his cause to the Book. Vainly did Ali remonstrate with the mutineers, and warned them of the trap into which they were driving him, and this too at the moment when victory was within their grasp. He had no choice but to yield to the demand of the mutineers. Abu Musa Ashari one of the oldest surviving companions of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), was a man of doubtful loyalty. Abu Musa had sold himself to Umro bin A's, whose cunning had prompted the decisive manoeuvre." (R. A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs*, p.192).

"At last in a revolting attitude, they threatened the Caliph, that unless he agreed, they would all desert him, or deliver him into the hands of his enemies, or serve him as Usman was served. Further protest with such determined soldiery being of no avail, Ali said, 'Hold your wild and treasonable language, obey me and fight, but if you are intent upon disobedience, do as you like.' They refused obedience and pressed Ali to call back Malik-al-Ashtar from the field. These men became Sectaries and are known in the history of Islam as Kharijitis.

"Malik al-Ashtar being summoned, at first refused, saying, 'I cannot leave the field as victory is at hand.' On this answer of Malik the tumult of the Kharijites increased, insisting on Hazrat Ali (AS) to call him back at once. He then again sent for Ashtar, saying, 'Of what avail is victory when treason is rife in my own camp. Come back at once before I am murdered or delivered over to the enemy.' Malik-al-Ashtar reluctantly gave in and hurried to the Caliph.

“A fierce altercation ensued between him and the angry soldiery. ‘Ye were fighting’, he said, ‘but yesterday for the Lord, and the choicest among you lost their lives. What is it but that ye now acknowledge yourselves in the wrong, and the martyrs gone to hell?’ ‘Nay,’ they answered, ‘it is not so. Yesterday we fought for the Lord, and today, also for the Lord, we stay the fight. On this Ashtar upbraided them as traitors, cowards, hypocrites, and villains. In return they reviled him, and struck his charger with their whips. Ali interposed. The tumult was stayed.” (*Sir William Muir "The Caliphate, its Rise, Decline and Fall," p. 334*)

Hazrat Ali (AS) realized that the deceit had worked. Ignorance had cunningly out-manoevured the Truth. Damage had been done and could not be reversed. Mutiny by his troops had denied the victory to the Iraqis. Hazrat Ali (AS), finding no way out, ordered that all fighting must cease. Ash'ath and his followers were happy. Cash bribes and gifts of camels and slave-girls offered by Muawiya worked wonders with the army of Imam Ali (AS) in the Battle of Siffin. Except for a few faithful Muslims and loyal followers the rest of the army started clamouring for acceptance of arbitration as proposed by Muawiya. Imam Ali (AS) tried to reason it out and wanted them to realize that the victory was in sight, but corruption had done its worst and they openly rebelled, and he was obliged to agree to arbitration. After the arbitration had worked in his favour, Muawiya refused to share the glory and glamour of this unholy success with those rebels. Except a few top-ranking deserters the rest were treated shabbily. And those who were so treated by Muawiya wanted to lay the blame for accepting arbitration on Imam Ali (AS).

The Battle of Siffin was called off on Safar 10' 37 Hijri. The troops had confronted each other for 110 days and 90

skirmishes had taken place. Fifty thousand Iraqis and forty five thousand Syrians were killed.

"Ninety actions or skirmishes are reported to have taken place; and in these the humanity of Ali was as conspicuous as his valour. He strictly enjoined his troops invariably to await the first onset of the enemy, to spare the fugitives, and respect the virtues of female captives. Not a day passed in which he displayed not some extraordinary feat of personal strength and skill. The bravest leaders of the Syrian host fell in succession by the single prowess of his resistless arm. "For death itself dwelt on the point of his spear, and perdition in the hilt of the sword... The hideous and gigantic Kerreib, who could obliterate with his thumb the impression of a silver coin, he cleft at one stroke from the crest to the saddlebow. Two warriors attacked him in disguise, but with a sweep of his double scimitar he bisected the foremost through the middle with such rapidity and precision that the rider remained fixed on the saddle; the spectators concluding he had missed his blow, until the motion of the horse threw the body in two halves to the ground. This is a mere glimpse of the then sixty-year old Ali." (*Andrew Crichton, 'History of Arabia and its people', p 307*)

Now there was the question of negotiations. Muawiya nominated Umro bin A's as his representative. Asha'th bin Qais, Masar bin Fidki, and Yazid bin Haseen proposed the name of Abu Musa. Hazrat Ali (AS) said that Abu Musa did not have the mental caliber to be entrusted with such a task and proposed the name of Ibn Abbas. (Abu Musa Ash`ari had been bribed by Muawiya and he sold his soul for a few thousand dinars). Asha'th and his friends did not agree.

They said, "There is no difference between you and Ibn Abbas, he would give no concessions." Then Hazrat Ali

(AS) proposed the name of Malike al-Ashtar. They rejected his name too saying that Malik would look for an excuse to resume the fight. These people were adamant that only Abu Musa and no one else was acceptable to them. Hazrat Ali (AS) realized that the conspiracy was too deep rooted and had infected the minds of these people.

Hazrat Ali (AS) addressed them:

"They are (Umro bin A's and Abu Musa) evil-minded tyrants, they are mean and wicked; they have given their souls in the slavery of mean and vicious persons and have surrendered their freedom of will, freedom of choice between good and evil, and courage of conviction to an iniquitous and self-styled master because they are the scum of the society. They have gathered around themselves similar base, mean, impure and hybrid people to create dissension among Muslims and to instigate them to rebel against truth and piety. Those who are misguided by these two vicious persons are so ignorant that what they actually deserve is that they should be taught the real religion and given training to understand and follow truth and persuaded to do good deeds and to lead a virtuous life, (but what they have been actually taught by Muawiya and his party was to worship prosperity, power and pleasure). They deserve to have a good leader who would take them in his kind and benevolent control and lead them towards virtue and piety. They are neither Muhajirs nor Ansar nor of those people who embraced Islam in Medina and built a mosque there before the arrival of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD).

"Consider carefully and see what they (Syrians) have done. They have selected a person from amongst themselves (Umro bin A's) to gain for them a thing, which

they desire most, or something near to it. And you very foolishly want Abdullah bin Qays (Abu Musa Ash'ari) to represent you and to get for you a thing, which was actually hateful as well as, harmful to you. You know already what kind of man he was. Do you not remember how he was instigating and was frightening you on the occasion of the Battle of Jamal? Did he not then tell you that the war was creating friction amongst the Muslims? Did he not advise you to break your arrows, control your nerves and put your swords back in the sheaths? If he was then right in considering you and me as persons responsible for creating dissensions amongst Muslims then he was totally in the wrong to come up to us as our colleague. He was neither forced nor compelled to side with us. (He did that with ulterior motives). If he was a dishonest and an intriguing liar at the Battle of Jamal as you then believed him to be, then his dishonesty and ulterior motives are proven by his later actions. Do not select him as an arbitrator from your side. Let Abdullah bin Abbas take his place. He is the most suitable person to counteract insinuations and deceits of Umro bin A's. Take advantage of the opportunity given to you by Allah and defend properly the cities of this Islamic State. Do you not see that your cities are being attacked and your power and might is being crushed?"

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

However, after a lot of discussion, Umro bin A's and Abu Musa decided that both Hazrat Ali (AS) and Muawiya are deposed and the assembly should elect a new Caliph. They both went to the mosque to announce their decision and soldiers from both sides were present to listen to the announcement. Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas advised Abu Musa that he should let Umro bin A's announce first then

Abu Musa should speak. However, cunningly Umro asked Abu Musa that as he was senior in age he should go to the pulpit first and announce the agreement. Abu Musa, being a simple person thought this to be an honour and announced:

“It has been decided that both Hazrat Ali (AS) and Muawiya be deposed and a new caliph be elected. I hereby, depose Hazrat Ali (AS) from the caliphate.

Umro bin A’s went up the pulpit and announced:

“Abu Musa as a representative of Hazrat Ali (AS) has deposed him, so Muawiya remains to be the caliph.”

Iraqis were very upset at this announcement. It was neither according to the Qur’an nor the *Sunnah* but the damage had been done. No one was prepared to listen to any further arguments. The mutineers had not listened to his advice and suffered the consequences of their folly.

Some Iraqis gathered around Hazrat Ali (AS) and tried to blame him for accepting the arbitration. He addressed them:

O’ people! Till the war did not tire you out you were obeying me and following my orders. But when it exhausted some of you, a weakness appeared in your strength and your morale, and you lost the nerves to see and realize that your enemy was on the verge of sustaining a crushing defeat. If you had-continued to fight for sometime more, the enemy would have been put to a disastrous rout. But you got nervous, you faltered, you lost your faith in Allah and His words, you accepted the ruse, and you lost the war.

What could I do? Till you kept obeying my commands I kept leading you from victory to victory but when you forced me to accept your decisions it was otherwise. Preferring this vicious world to the glories of the next, you

accepted humiliation and disgrace but it was not left in my power to help you. I could not force you to continue a war which you did not like."

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

A treaty was drafted and imposed without consulting Hazrat Ali (AS) for his comments or suggestions. The Syrians were jubilant and while congratulating each other they marched towards Syria. Muawiya did neither listen to the wordings nor acted upon the treaty. He was only interested in averting the defeat, which Umro very successfully did on his behalf.

Hazrat Ali (AS) was justified in rejecting it saying:

When you people decided (against my wish) to select two arbitrators (one from each side), I took promise from them that they would act according to the tenets and orders of the Holy Qur'an, must on no account transgress it, and their minds and their decisions should follow the teachings of the Holy Book. But they deviated from the Holy Qur'an and closed their eyes to the truth, which was staring them in the face. They strayed from the terms of reference. They had no desire to do justice to the cause of Islam, but wanted to serve their ulterior motives. Though in the very beginning it was made imperative upon them that they would decide according to the principles of truth and justice and would not give way to sin and wickedness yet they acted maliciously, went astray from the Holy Book and digressed from the terms of reference. This is the reason why their decision is not accepted."

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

He was lost in the thoughts of the past and recalled that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had also suffered such episodes at the hands of hypocrites and those who had become Muslims for motives other than the Truth. Every moment of the life of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) went through his mind. He recalled that from day one to the last breath of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), there had never been an occasion or an event where his word, the word of Allah, had been accepted unanimously. During Hudabiya even those who had sworn allegiance under 'the tree', the *Bayet Rizwan* had objected to the terms of the treaty. Some even fell in doubt regarding the truthfulness of the dreams in which the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had given the forecast of great victories to the Muslims. He recalled that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had said, "Ali one day you will also be confronted with such a situation."

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Some analysts criticize Hazrat Ali (AS) for missing two great opportunities of winning this war. The first opportunity came when he had captured the waterfront, he should have denied the water to the opposing troops. In war the opposing commanders always employ and exploit even the fleeting moments to defeat the enemy. This was a golden opportunity that Hazrat Ali (AS) did not use to his advantage.

Secondly when he had put Umro down, he should not have hesitated to kill him. After all, it was Umro who had challenged Hazrat Ali (AS). He was a dangerous brute, deceitful, cunning and an influential commander of the Syrian Army. His death would have demoralized the enemy and Muawiya would have certainly suffered a serious set back.

Such criticism is certainly true of ordinary commanders and opportunists or politico-military intriguers. Hazrat Ali (AS) was an Imam and a guide to mankind. He could not be unethical. Near him winning or losing a battle was a secondary issue. His first and foremost duty was to demonstrate what is right and what is wrong. He would not act against the teachings of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. He was destined to live till eternity and certainly he still lives.

Some also think that Muawiya was successful as he was a master of deceit and intrigues. Hazrat Ali (AS) said "I swear by Allah that Muawiya is not more clever than me but he is treacherous and wicked. If I had not despised treachery I would have been the most clever man among the Arabs."

Historians have commented that the Syrians obeyed every order of their leader without question. They stood by their Master and kept dying yet neither doubted Muawiya's wisdom nor disputed with him on any matter. On the other hand, the followers of Hazrat Ali (AS), with the exception of a few, questioned his every order, disputed with him at every step, mutinied against him and even disagreed with him as to who should represent him at the negotiation table.

Such are the moments of the tests and the trials of the *Eiman* (belief) of the honest and faithful believers. Such moments clearly expose the faces of both the seekers of truth and of hypocrites. All the Apostles and the Imams had to go through such tests so that, from amongst their followers, the cheats are sorted out from the steadfast. In the process they had to suffer pains and a number of them were even slaughtered. 'To be stoned is the fate of the prophets'.

Kharijites

In the Battle of Siffin Hazrat Ali (AS) had strongly objected to the arbitration. He had repeatedly tried to convince his soldiers that the raising of Qur'an on lances by the Syrians was only a ruse and should not have been accepted but they did not listen to him. A number of Iraqis had sold their loyalties in the hope of receiving petty rewards from Muawiya and more than twenty thousand of Iraqi troops had mutinied. Hazrat Ali (AS) had to ask his commanders to cease fighting.

At this stage where confusion on the battlefield had been confounded by obstinate behaviour by the Kharijites, one man stood up and asked Imam Ali (AS), "At first you strongly objected to the arbitration and later on you agreed to it. We are at a loss to understand which action was nearer to the cause of truth and justice?" Thereupon he sorrowfully replied:

This confusion has been caused by those who can neither keep their promise nor do they obey the orders of their Caliph.

Beware! As I was commanding you, I had ordered something, which was repugnant to you (to keep on fighting); if you had obeyed my orders, Allah would have given good results to you. If you had constantly remained on the straight path shown by me, I would have guided you to success. I would have corrected ordinary wavering by you and routine punishment would have been the result of disobedience. This would have been the correct course, and

would have brought forth good results. But most of you refused to obey my orders.

I wanted to make you a medium to treat the diseased mentality of the nation and to guide it towards the path of true religion, but you are behaving as you yourselves are suffering from the worst form of disease. Seeking to root out trouble with your help is like trying to eradicate an evil with the help of another evil. I know an evil has the tendency of harmonizing with another evil.

O' Allah! The mental condition of these people is such that those who want to improve it have been sadly disappointed in their expectations, and those who endeavour to lead the country towards betterment feel tired and discouraged.

O' Allah! Where are those people who, when invited to Islam, accepted it sincerely, who read the Holy Qur'an and whole heartedly followed the commands it contains, who loved Islam as a she-camel loves her young' one, and when ordered to fight in defence of Islam, they willingly left their homes and families? Some of them died as martyrs and some survived the ordeals. Success never overjoyed them and deaths never made them miserable. Sights of human misery saddened their lives and constant absorption of their minds and bodies in the performance of their duties towards Allah and man made them look pale and haggard, and humility manifested itself in their behaviour (as against the vanity of pseudo-pious people). They were brethren to me. They have gone (are dead). I am justified in desiring to meet them once again and to be sad on separation from them.

O' people! Satan has made the ways of vice easy and pleasing for you; he tries to untie every knot, with which religion has tied you and groups of people are attached to

one another. He introduces discord and dissention amongst you. Listen then to the advice and instructions of the man who is your leader and guide (the Imam himself); try to understand fully these pieces of advice and never forget them.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

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Hazrat Ali (AS) decided that Muawiya should not be given any respite and the people were asked to prepare to move against him. He desired that Kharijite who were so keen to move against Muawiya be informed of his decision and asked to join him. He wrote separate letters to Abdullah bin Wahab and Yazid bin Haseen:

“I agree with your point of view, as I had tried to tell you in the battlefield of Siffin too that Umro bin A’s and Abu Musa had not taken the decision according to the dictates of the Qur’an and *Sunnah* and that the decision imposed was deceitful but you people never listened to me. Now let’s move against Muawiya. I ask you to cooperate with me and eradicate the wrong. I vow to continue to fight till Allah’s orders prevail.”

The Kharijites rudely replied, “As you had violated the teachings of the Qur’an by accepting these judges and then having accepted their judgment, you had become an infidel. Now your battle against Muawiya will not be for the sake of Allah but for your personal ambitions. First you accept that you are an infidel and ask forgiveness and re-embrace Islam, and then we would come with you.”

He ignored the dubious stand taken by the Kharijites and addressed his followers:

O' people of Kufa! Remember that if anyone refuses to participate in Jihad (holy war) he would face debacle and destruction. Rise and prepare to fight against those who are determined to obliterate the teachings of the Qur'an and have vowed to oppose the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and Allah. They are certainly sinners and have deviated from the right path. I swear by Allah and warn you that if these people become the unchallenged rulers they would establish the governance on the lines of Roman and Persian Emperors. Let us fight against them.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

Hazrat Ali (AS) made known his decision to Ibn Abbas, Governor of Basra and asked him to join. Hanif bin Qais informed the people of Basra but out of a population of sixty thousand, only fifteen hundred volunteered. After great persuasion only three thousand and two hundred men came forward.

He was greatly disappointed at the response given by the people of Basra. He collected his diehard followers namely Saeed bin Qais Hamdani, Moaqal bin Qais, Edi bin Hatim, Zaid bin Khasfah, Hajr bin Edi and others who totaled nearly sixty thousand fighters. Sa'd bin Masood Amil came with another ten thousand soldiers and the strength swelled to nearly seventy thousand fighters.

As this force was preparing to march towards Syria, reports started to come in that the Kharijites had intensified their terrorist activities against the Muslims. They had deployed their men on all the major routes and they would question

everyone passing through these roads about his concept of Islam. The Muslims, particularly pro-Hazrat Ali (AS) ones were being killed and Zimmis and other non-Muslims were allowed to go unharmed. One-day Abdullah bin Irt came across them and they asked him about Hazrat Ali (AS). He replied, "Hazrat Ali (AS) is the most learned and the most pious person on the face of this earth. They killed him and also his wife who was pregnant. (*Kamil Vol.3, p.172*)

Now Hazrat Ali (AS) had to fight on two fronts.

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Battle of Nahrwan

Upon return from Siffin, this group that was later named the Kharijites, did not enter Kufa but went into a near-by settlement called Haroora. They appointed Abdullah bin Wahab as their Imam. (*And We made them Imams who invite to the (Hell) fire and on the day of resurrection they shall not be helped. Qur'an 28:41*) Hazrat Ali (AS) did neither enter into any argument with them nor put them under any pressure. In his domain, every one had the right to choose what one thought appropriate for oneself.

The Kharijites decided that by staying so close to Kufa they were constantly under threat from Hazrat Ali (AS). After mutual consultation they all migrated to Nahrwan and also invited their like-minded Syrians to join them. Masar bin Fidki Tamimi, with his five thousand followers joined them.

Gradually their followers increased in number and their slogan 'Only Allah has the authority to pass orders and no one else,' was changed to 'Governance only by Allah, vow

your allegiance to Allah and no one else but Allah has the authority to rule over His people.' Of course, they did themselves violate this principle of theirs and appointed their leaders to lead them.

In fact, persons of Khariji mentality were present even during the time of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). The Prophet (PBUH&HD) had predicted about them and had told his followers, "These people would appear to be saying prayers and reciting the Qur'an but they would be most ignorant about the teachings and the meanings of the Qur'an. Of course, a person whom Allah and His apostle love most would act against them."

Kharijites were very particular in other rituals of Islam. For example, they would not eat even a date that had fallen from a tree. They offered prayers very regularly and recited the Qur'an every day. There were many among the Kharijites who were *hafiz* (knew Qur'an by heart). Some of them would remain in mosques and pray throughout the night. Though they epitomized the rituals like offering prayers and reciting the Qur'an yet, without intellect, it was only a public display of bitterness and a caricature of true piety.

Some of the people praised them for their long night vigils and intense worship. Their piety, however, was more apparent than real; a zeal of bitterness. When it was mentioned to the Imam (AS), he replied, "Sleeping with certainty is better than praying with doubt. There is no religion for one who has no intellect."

The Kharijites had declared themselves as enemies of Hazrat Ali (AS) and of his followers. However, so long as they lived as peaceful citizens, he never stopped paying them their due share from the public treasury nor did he

prevent them from propagating their brand of Islam. (It a sin to kill a wild boar but it was right to kill a Muslim man, woman or a child even if he/she is still in the womb, who held Hazrat Ali (AS) in reverence and accepted him as the righteous Imam) Freedom of speech is the basic right of every person and Hazrat Ali (AS) would not curb it.

The Kharijites decided to fight against the Imam (AS) and collected an army of nearly twelve thousand soldiers. Instead of putting up an organized resistance, they started to indulge in terrorist activities. They attacked Nahrwan, a town on the bank of Euphrates, killed the governor and his whole family. They even ripped open the stomach of his wife, took out the baby she was carrying and cut it into pieces.

Then they started an orgy of murder and loot, and killed such famous persons as Sinan Saydawi and Harith bin Murra and many other innocent men, women and children. They pillaged many houses at Nahrwan and many towns near it.

When their religious fanaticism turned into terrorism and the Kharijites started to kill innocent men, women and children as a part of their 'faith', Hazrat Ali had to move against them militarily

Hazrat Ali (AS) sent Harith bin Murrah Abdi to them to find out their motives but they killed him too. The terrorist activities of the Kharijites were increasing every day. They had become a threat to the peaceful citizens. Hazrat Ali (AS) decided to eliminate this threat before proceeding towards Syria.

As the Army started to march towards Nahrwan, one astrologer, Musafir bin Afif Azdi, told Hazrat Ali (AS), "I

know the placement and the movement of the stars. If you advance at this time your troops would suffer heavy losses. Delay your move by at least three hours."

Hazrat Ali (AS) replied, "You are too ignorant and have no knowledge of astrology. We would win this battle. We would suffer less than ten casualties and less than ten persons of the enemy would survive." During his advance some scouts reported that the Kharijites had crossed the bridge and were now on the other side of Tabristan Canal. Hazrat Ali (AS) replied, "Your information is incorrect. The Kharijites are still on the home bank of the canal and I can already see Rameela littered with their dead bodies."

Some more informers came and swore that the Kharijites had crossed the bridge. Hazrat Ali (AS) again said, "I assure you that they would be killed on the home bank. We would not suffer more than ten casualties and not more than ten Kharijites would survive." (*Kamil Vol.3, p. 174*)

However, when they reached the canal, they saw that the Kharijites were camping there. Hazrat Ali (AS) said, "By Allah, never a wrong message has been revealed to me and I have never told a lie in my whole life." (*Kamil Vol.3, p.174*)

Hazrat Ali (AS) established his camp three miles away from them. The Kharijites repeated their demand but Hazrat Ali (AS) responded that they should handover to him the persons who had killed innocent Muslim men and women. He further added that after punishing the murderers he would leave them and proceed towards Syria. He hoped that maybe, in this intervening period some better sense would prevail upon them and they might return into the folds of Islam.

They replied that together they had killed these Muslims

and that they were convinced that to kill Hazrat Ali (AS) and his followers was the right thing to do. The tragic dissension from the truth can be imagined from the fact that they were determined to kill Hazrat Ali (AS) and his followers and still called themselves as Muslims.

Hazrat Ali (AS) was most reluctant to fight against those who, at one time, had been his companions. He sent Qais bin Sa'd Ansari to dissuade them from terrorism and to come back to the right path. However, they remained obstinate and would not listen to any word of wisdom or to refrain from terrorism.

Hazrat Ali (AS) personally went to them and addressed them:

"Don't you remember that I had warned you that this raising of the Qur'an on the lances was a deceitful move but you never paid any heed to my warnings? Again I cautioned you not to accept the Tahkeem (Arbitration) as it was not according to the Qur'an and Sunnah but you remained adamant and accepted it."

They replied, "Of course, we were wrong but then we ask for forgiveness. You should also do the same and we shall be with you."

"I am the first man who accepted Islam and my services and sacrifices in the cause of Islam are well known to you all. I have not digressed, so how can I admit that I am an infidel?" he replied. There was no response from their side.

He came to the field and addressed them:

"Were all of you present on the battlefield of Siffin?"

They replied, "Some of us were present while others were not there". Thereupon, he asked them to divide themselves into two parties, one consisting of those, who were present on that battlefield and the other of those, who were not there, so that he might talk to them according to the level of their knowledge of the facts.

They started to discuss among themselves. Hazrat Ali (AS) said:

Be silent for just a while, hear me carefully, pay attention to what I say, and when I ask of you then confirm the facts truthfully and sincerely", saying this he delivered a long address, parts of which follows:

When the army of Muawiya artfully and cunningly hoisted the Holy Qur'an on spears with a view to cheat you out of a sure and certain victory, did you not say that they were your brethren and were followers of the same religion? Did you not say that they wanted the war to come to an end and wanted to take refuge under the Holy Book? Did you not beseech me to accept their request and to give them protection and peace? Did I not tell you that they were pretending Islam, and have the enmity of Allah hidden in their hearts? Did I not tell you that your weakness and show of pity would result in your disgrace and humiliation? Did I not order you to go your way and to continue fighting bravely, courageously and patiently till the enemy was completely vanquished and routed? Is it not a fact that I had already advised you not to pay attention to those braying donkeys (Muawiya and Umro bin A's) because a respond to their call would result in your deviation from the right path. Had you not acceded to their entreaties they would have been defeated and humiliated, but you were bent upon accepting the cheaters, and believing in the words of apostates, and did not rest till the arbitration took

place and your humiliation was confirmed? Are these not the facts?

They all shamefully accepted that these were the facts. Imam Ali (AS) continued his sermon:

By Allah, I am bound in duty to Allah not to accept this humiliation and disgrace and I did not commit any sin in refusing to accede to it. If ever I had accepted arbitration it would have been on the principles taught by the Holy Qur'an, and I would have been fully justified to take such an action. You know fully well that since I took up this Book (Holy Qur'an) I never deserted it.

You know very well that when we went to wars in the company of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be upon him and his descendants) against the enemies of Islam, we unhesitatingly faced and fought against our nearest and dearest relatives, we submitted to the orders of Allah implicitly and sincerely, and bore the pangs and pains of wounds patiently and cheerfully. Our sufferings increased our resolve to succeed and to serve Allah. Today we are fighting against those of our brethren who pretend to be Muslims, but really are apostates and heretics. Sophistication, schism and wrong interpretation of the Holy Qur'an is their practice, and doubts about the truth of its doctrine, have crept into their minds. When we desire peace it is with the hope that Allah may unite us and may bring our enemies nearer to Islam. If this appears to be possible we shall desire peace and not war.

Imam Ali (AS)

Nahjul Balagha

Once again the Kharijites started to discuss among themselves. Some were trying to tell others that Hazrat Ali (AS) was right and that some of them did disobey him. The fanatics among them were just not prepared to see reason. They wanted a fight.

Hazrat Ali (AS) did not wish to shed blood. Just before the battle Imam Ali (AS) once again warned them with the following words:

I want to warn and advise you against this battle. Most of you will be killed. Tomorrow's sun may shed its morning light upon your mutilated and bloodstained bodies strewn along the basin of this river. You and you alone shall be responsible for your death. Here you will die without justifying your action before man and Allah. You have no plausible excuse to declare a war against me. You have been maddened with the lust for grandeur of a sinful life. It has confounded you and has entrapped you in its mesh.

Do you not remember that from the very beginning I was advising you not to accede to the fraudulent proposal of arbitration and truce at Siffin? But you people behaving like a bitter enemy of mine refused to accept my advice. I was, with great repugnance, forced to concede to your demands. Your fickle-mindedness and want of a right sense of judgment was responsible for the loss. Now you want to lay the responsibility at my door and make it a cause of revolt against me. I am and I was always your well-wisher and never suggested to you anything that would have brought harm to you. Mean and contemptible you have been and so you will always remain.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

His sermon had little effect upon them. They remained as adamant as ever. Hazrat Ali (AS) warned them for the last time:

“O people! Your dissension from us has been on the basis of misunderstanding. You have been misguided and have fallen an easy prey to egoism. I again warn you that most of you will be killed in this valley and every right thinking person would condemn your attitude and your corrupt stance.”

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In order to give one more chance to as many people as he could and to save as many lives as possible, Hazrat Ali (AS) sent Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (RA) with a white flag and he announced, “O’ people! Commander of the Faithful has sent me to announce that anyone who comes under this flag is safe and whosoever returns to Kufa or goes to Madain is also safe.”

As a result, Farooq bin Naufil Asjai spoke to his followers, “We have no reason to take a stand against Hazrat Ali (AS). I wonder why we have gathered around here. We have nothing to do with this group. Let’s go back. He left with his five hundred followers. One group went towards Kufa. About four hundred persons came under the flag of Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (RA).

When Abdullah bin Wahab heard this sentence he said, “By Allah I do not know if I would go to heaven or to hell. I am confused.” He, along with his followers also left the battlefield.

Hazrat Ali (AS) waited for the Kharijites to initiate the battle. One Khariji came out and killed three persons from the Iraqi Army. Hazrat Ali (AS) raised his sword and he said, "How sweet it is to go to heaven."

The Kharijites collectively attacked the Iraqi Army and the battle ensued. The Kharijites began to fall like flies. In this short and crisp encounter only nine Kharijites escaped, four hundred were wounded and the rest all were killed. From the side of Hazrat Ali (AS) only eight persons were martyred.

Looking at the battlefield, someone remarked that all the Kharijites had been eliminated. Hazrat Ali (AS) corrected him and said:

"No. By Allah, it is not the case, the Kharijite School of Thought has not come to an end. Many more Kharijites will be born, and whenever they will gather under a leader and a banner, they will be killed, till their last generation will be forced to lead a life as dacoits and robbers."

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Terrorism by Kharijites

After suffering heavy losses in the Battle of Nahrwan the remnants of Kharijites, under the leadership of Khirrit, joined Bani Najia and together they went towards Nafar. There they continued to trace out pro-Hazrat Ali (AS) people and to kill them. Hazrat Ali (AS) dispatched a force under Ziyad bin Khasfa to arrest the terrorists. Zaid caught up with Khirrit at Mazar. In a short skirmish a few Kharijites were killed but Tirrit managed to escape towards Ahwaz.

Hazrat Ali (AS) reinforced his troops with an additional two thousand soldiers and Khirrit was defeated.

In addition to Khirrit a number of other smaller terrorist groups of Kharijites appeared at various places which caused a lot of disturbance and insecurity for the general public.

As predicted by Hazrat Ali (AS), such theocratic fanatics nurtured by the Kharijites School of Thought, wearing the cloak of Islam and carrying the dagger of a criminal, would keep appearing at various times and various places and indulge in terrorist activities against innocent people.

The Ark
Of
Khelaphat-e-Ellahiya
Rocked

Knowing that Muawiya would neither reconcile to the fate that he had met at Siffin nor would he let peace prevail upon the Muslim world, Hazrat Ali (AS) decided to move against him forthwith.

After dealing with the Kharijites, he asked his troops to advance towards Siffin. Some of them asked his permission to rest and recoup.

Reluctantly Hazrat Ali (AS) returned towards Kufa but instead of entering Kufa, he asked his troops to camp at Nokheila. He permitted that every soldier could go on leave for one day and must return the next day. However, whosoever went on leave never returned to the camp and some of the soldiers gradually started to slip out without his permission. When the camp was nearly vacant, Hazrat Ali (AS) also returned and made harangue but that too had little effect on the soldiers.

The Muslims, who were engaged in *Jehad* (Holy War), under the most noble and the bravest *Mujahid* of Islam, returned home and refused to come out. On the other hand, the Syrians who had suffered humiliation in Siffin, got together under Muawiya only for the worldly gains. It was an action replay of the Battle of Uhud. The defeated army of the Quresh quickly reassembled when Abu Sufyan called them and returned to the battlefield. When the Muslims suffered reverses, they deserted the battlefield. The Prophet

(PBUH&HD) kept calling them but they kept climbing up the Uhud hillock like mountain goats and no one returned to answer the call of the Prophet (PBUH&HD).

Truce with Byzantium

"In order to be free to confront his rival (Ali), Muawiya had concluded a truce with Byzantium under which he agreed to pay an annual tribute to the Emperor." (*Sir John Glubb 'The Great Arab Conquests,' p. 338*).

"Before Muawiya succeeded to the Caliphate, when after Siffin he remained in confrontation with Ali, he secured himself on his northern border by a truce with Byzantium, by the terms of which he agreed to pay what was in effect tribute to the Emperor Constantine II, and in 678 towards the end of his Caliphate, and after the failure of the great Arab assault on Constantinople in the so-called Seven Years' War and an attack by the Mardaites on his northern frontier, Muawiya again paid tribute to the Emperor, now Constantine IV. At a later date Byzantine armies invaded Syria and retook Antioch and Aleppo." (*D.M. Dunlop 'Arab Civilization to A.D. 1500*)

"I am just stunned at the appalling disgust of this preposterous audacity! Paying tribute to the emperor of a different state, to secure his own regime, and that too at the cost of every single Islamic value! Actually, beyond the red haze of anger I can see where Muawiya is coming from. The Umayyah have always taken Islam as a perfect instrument for empire building. This is what they thought - that the Muslims were an empire and the Prophet (PBUH&HD) was an ambitious conqueror. In fact they have equated Islam to imperialism, to kingship. These spiritual kids of Lucifer have criminally and perpetually refused to acknowledge that Islam is only and only about

the 'Kingdom of Allah', where His Message is propounded by the Messenger, and the sanctity and truth of it are looked after and taught by the rightful Successors. So, 'with the Qur'an in one hand, and the sword on the other', rather, 'with the Qur'an on the lance-points, and the swords in both hands', they invaded, and looted, and plundered, and carried on coerced conversion, in pushing the territorial boundaries. And this in turn succeeded in its original conspiratorial ambition to show the world that Islam is synonymous with 'fanaticism', 'hatred,' 'greed', 'illiteracy', 'avarice,' 'feudalism' and 'compulsion'." (Anita Rai *An Affair of The Heart* p.78)

Fall of Egypt (38 Hijri)

As Muawiya had promised Egypt to Umro bin A's, his agents started insurgency to upset the government of Muhammad bin Abu Bakr, the governor of Egypt. In 38 A.H. 658 A.D. Muawiya sent Umro bin A's with an army to conquer Egypt. Muhammad requested Hazrat Ali (AS) to send him assistance. Hazrat Ali (AS) knew that the only person who could help save Egypt was none else but Malike al-Ashtar. Therefore, he sent him as the new governor of Egypt, and called back Muhammad to Kufa.

"But neither Malik nor Muhammad ever reached their destinations. Muawiya's agents, in the guise of innkeepers, were waiting to greet Malik at the frontier. They administered poison to him in his drink, and thus did Malik die." (*Abul Fida*)

"Malik could not reach Egypt, he was poisoned on the way by a henchman of Muawiya and he died." (*Tabari, Vol 4, p. 521*).

Muhammad bin Abu Bakr was informed of Malik's death and he had to face Muawiya's forces only with a handful of his men. Mohammad put up a very strong resistance and

gave an excellent account of his gallantry, however, he lost the battle and was captured by the enemy forces. He was encased in the skin of a mule, thrown into fire and was burnt to ashes.

"By the orders of Muawiya, Muhammad's dead body was burnt, and his ashes were strewn." (*Tabari, Vol. 4, p. 592*).

"In those years Umro bin A's conquered Egypt for the Umayyahs, eliminating through poison, Malike al-Ashtar whom Ali had dispatched there as governor. (*Francesco Gabrieli, The Arabs, a Compact History, p. 69*).

"Astute, unscrupulous and pitiless, Muawiya shrank from no crime necessary to secure his position. Murder was his accustomed mode of removing a formidable opponent. The elder grandson of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) he caused to be poisoned; Malike al-Ashtar, the heroic lieutenant of Hazrat Ali (AS), was destroyed in a like way.

"To secure the succession of his son Yezid, Muawiya hesitated not to break the word he had pledged to Husayn (AS), the surviving son of Hazrat Ali (AS). And yet this cool, calculating, thoroughly atheistic Arab ruled over the regions of Islam and the scepter remained among his descendants for the space of nearly one hundred and twenty years. The explanation of this anomaly is to be found in two circumstances, to which I have more than once adverted. One is, that the truly devout and earnest Muhammadan conceived that he manifested his religion most effectually by withdrawing himself from the affairs of the world. The other is the tribal spirit of the Arabs. Conquerors of Asia, of North Africa, and of Spain, the Arabs never rose to the level of their position. Greatness had been thrust upon them, but in the midst of their grandeur they retained, in all their previous force and intensity, the passions, the

rivalries, and the petty jealousies of the desert. They merely fought again on a wider field 'the battles of Arabs before Islam'." (Osborne 'Islam Under the Arabs')

"The acquisition of Egypt immeasurably strengthened Muawiya's hands. They went around plundering, spreading terror and killing. Muawiya attacked the banks of the Tigris in person, and seized the public treasury in Jazirah." (Dr. Hamid-ud-din, 'History of Islam, p.204).

Raid on Basra

Muawiya sent a force of two thousand horsemen, under Abdullah bin Aamir Hazrami, to raid Basra. Hazrat Ali (AS) sent a force under Jariya bin Qidama and the raiders were chased out with heavy losses.

Raids on Medina, Makkah and Yemen (40 Hijri)

After the reversals that he suffered at Basrah, Muawiya changed his strategy and instead of attacking a city, his soldiers started to raid small villages and settlements. That created harassment all along the border and the people started to migrate to cities and towns.

Syrian forces ransacked Hayat, Heera, Anbar and Madain etc. Encouraged by these small successes, Syrians attacked Makkah, Medina and Yemen. A large number of innocent people were killed and their homes and hearth were plundered and reduced to ashes.

The raiders were chased away with heavy losses but the whole structure of *Khelaphat-e-Ellahiya* received serious jolts.

When Muawiya was pursuing hostilities against the Commander of the Faithful, one of his companions from Bani Asad asked him as to the circumstances through which he was deprived of his right to the caliphate and what did he think of Muawiya? He said:

O' Brother from the Bani Asad tribe! You apparently are not well aware of the circumstances, which led to it. But as your tribe is related to the Holy Prophet you have a right to ask such a question. You want to know the truth and to understand the reason as to why my rights were usurped and why such despotism was adopted against me. You know very well that I come out of the best clan of Arabia and I am very closely related to the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD). (It was not because of my being a person of lowly origin or of coming from a distant tribe other than that of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) that his caliphate was usurped). But it was because a certain group of people had the inordinate -desire to snatch away the ruler-ship of the Muslim State while the other group did not attach much importance to it (They were occupied in the burial ceremonies of the Holy Prophet; PBUH&HD). On the Day of Judgment Allah will pass His decision between the right and the wrong.

But O' friend! Drop this subject on which much has been said and on which I have often spoken but look at the irony of events happening now and look at the behaviour of the son of Abu Sufyan. How the world has made me laugh at his foolish antics of running after such rapidly perishable, things as worldly pomp and glory and how it has made me sad at the fatē of Muslims and Islam. Nothing in it surprises me. But what made me wonder at Muawiya is the fact that after wickedly attaining his desires (a despotic ruler-ship of a rich State) he is not satisfied and is constantly busy in introducing innovations and schism in

Islam. This enemy of Allah wants to extinguish the Divine Light, to close the Fountain of Divine Knowledge, to pollute the crystal-clear spring of Islam. If I pass through these periods of trials and seditions successfully I shall try my best to remove these innovations, clear the sources of Divine Knowledge of all pollution, and make Islam guide you towards Allah as I should, but if I fail, do not lose hope. Allah knows what Muawiya and his party are after and Allah will protect Islam against them. (Allah did protect Islam against them through the sacrifices of the noble descendents of Hazrat Ali (AS) and Hazrat Fatima (SA).

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

In this sermon Imam Ali (AS) has given reasons for the missions of the prophets and also the reasons for people envying Ahlul Bayt (descendants of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD)):

Allah bestowed upon His Prophets the sublime mission of carrying His messages to humanity and selected them to receive His revelations. He assigned them the august duty of proving to mankind the universality of truth and religion so that humanity may not have the plea of having been left ignorant and uneducated. At the end of the long succession of messengers He sent our Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be upon him and his descendants) to finally disclose before man the ultimate truth about the Creator and His creations and to invite mankind towards the path of His religion.

Allah fully knows the limitation of human intelligence and understanding. He did not send His Prophets to find this out, but to test the good ones who deserved to be endowed

with His Blessings, and the wicked upon whom his Wrath descended.

Where are those people who pretend that they and not we (Ahlul Bayt) have the full knowledge of the Holy Book, know everything about the creation, and possess Divine Knowledge? These pretenders and impostors lie against truth, and commit treachery to the cause of Allah and man. They lie against us and covet our position because the Merciful Allah exalted our status and made them inferior to us. He conferred upon us the eminence which He denied them. He allowed us the entry to the transcendental sphere to understand the meanings of Divine Revelation which was denied to them.

Remember that guidance could be acquired and ignorance could be dispelled through us only. Undoubtedly the Imams shall be from the Quresh (but it means) from the descendant, of Hashim (son of Abd Manaf). The Divine appointment has been made for this August Progeny, as no one else deserves this sublime and sacred rank.

These Umayyads preferred this vicious world to the Realm of Allah. They chose the filthy waters of this world to the celestial nectar. I feel as if I am looking at one of their wicked and unholy caliphs (some of the commentators think that by this Imam Ali (AS) meant Abdul Malik bin Marwan); he is a profligate and pervert; he will adopt an immoral life and would relish it and he would derive pleasures only out of sin and perversity. He would pass his vicious life till his hair would turn gray in wickedness and corruption, and evil habits would become his second nature. Then he would turn towards the world passionately desiring for more and more, foaming and frothing at his mouth, in spite of oppositions, disrespecting the rights of humanity. In satisfying his vicious desires and exploiting human rights he would be like a river

in floods which does not care what it drowns or like a blazing fire which relentlessly consumes everything that it comes in contact with.

Where are those people, who have lighted the lamps of their wisdom with Divine Light, and have improved their vision through piety and righteousness? Where are the hearts devoted to the cause of Allah, who have taken a vow to obey Him implicitly? Let them see how these Umayyahs have fallen on worldly gains and how they are fighting among themselves for power to commit more sins and vices. Though they had been fully initiated into the secrets of Paradise and Hell. They have refused to hear the call of Allah and have turned towards the Devil to accept his invitation.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

The Commander of The Faithful
and
His Unfaithful Followers

[In 39 A.H. Malik bin Ka`b was the Governor of Aynut Tamr, one of the provinces under Imam Ali (AS). Malik had a very small contingent of about one hundred cavalry soldiers with him. Muawiya without any declaration of war sent an army under Nu'man bin Bashir to invade the province. When the news of this attack reached Imam Ali (AS), he gave a call of *jihad* and asked the Muslims to go to the aid of Malik. Adi bin Hatim Tai came with one thousand warriors from his tribe but most of the Kufans were reluctant and displayed nervousness and timidity. Imam Ali (AS) was still busy collecting volunteers when the news reached that Malik bin K'ab, with his one hundred soldiers had defeated Muawiya's horde of a thousand soldiers. Imam Ali (AS) was quite disappointed at the poor response to his call and he addressed the cowards.]

I am being tried with the government of a people like you who are so lethargic in obeying orders and so indifferent to attend to your duties.

What has become of you? Why have you become so weak and timid? Why do you not rise for the cause of Allah and defend your rights and your faith? What kind of men are you? Have you no religion to bring you together and to make you help one another? Is no sense of honour and shame left in you to arouse feelings of courage and bravery in the service of your Faith?

I am calling you to defend your country and your religion and you do not pay attention to my call and do not get up to obey orders. Your apathy will continue till its evil consequences will become evident to you, and then you will realize the truth and importance of my counsel. But then, it would be too late.

With the assistance of the people like you, it is difficult to avenge the wrongs done to us and impossible to achieve our mission. When I summon you to help your brethren, you start lamenting like a camel suffering from colic, and manifest reluctance like a beast of burden with a wounded back. And those of you, who did turn up in response to my call, are a crowd of confused and timid people behaving so nervously as if they were being dragged to destruction and were actually facing the horrors of a terrible death.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

[In Siffin, before the battle, some of the soldiers were very boisterous about their bravery but when the heads started to role, they proved themselves otherwise. Imam Ali (AS) reminds them about the devotion of the faithful companions of the Prophet (PBUH&HD).]

Those of us who were with our Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) were so selfless and sincere in the service of Islam that while defending our Prophet (PBUH&HD) and our religion most of us fought against our nearest and dearest ones. It was our sincerity which increased our faith in Allah, our desire to willingly and gladly submit to His Will, our earnest wish to follow the right path, our will to bear patiently the sorrows and calamities and our zeal and zest to fight to the best of our ability against the enemies of Allah and Islam.

Often there were single combats. One person from each side would come to fight the other; usually it was a fight unto death; the combatants kept on fighting till one fell dead. Sometimes we succeeded; at other times some of us suffered and embraced martyrdom.

Whenever Allah tested the sincerity of our desire, the honesty of our purpose and the zest of our action, He crowned us with victory and disgraced our enemies till the Muslims became a powerful community, and found a country to live in peace and tranquility. Islam became popular amongst the people.

I swear by my life that if we had behaved as you are behaving now, if we had been as nervous and timid as you are today, if we had been as wavering and lethargic as you are, the pillar of faith could not have been erected and the tree of religion would not have bloomed.

By Allah! Your thoughts and deeds are destroying you and will bring shame and disgrace to you.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

[When Imam Ali (AS) called upon his followers to rise and fight against Muawiya, the response was very poor.]

How far can I caress you as a she-camel with a wounded back? How far can I keep on treating you tenderly as if you are an old cloth which when stitched on one side, gets torn on the other? From your timidity and cowardice it is apparent that if one of the hoards of Syria appears on the horizon, every one of you will, like a desert lizard or a hyena, scamper to your house and will bolt the door from inside.

I swear by Allah that he, who believes in your help, and who

tries to secure a success with your assistance will earn disgrace and defeat. You crowd the city squares but on a battlefield only a few of you can be seen. I know how to force you to submission and obedience, and how to make you work, but I do not want to be a tyrant and a slave driver. I want you to serve Allah and the religion of your own free will.

May Allah disgrace you! Do you not realize that you are drawn more towards falsehood and sin than towards truth and religion, and you do not hate vice as much as you abhor virtue.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

[In this sermon Imam Ali (AS) has censured those Iraqis, who in Siffin, had fallen prey to the deceit of the enemy and had forced the Commander of the Faithful to accept the arbitration. Due to their lack of faith in their Imam, they had turned the victory away from their doorstep. All the blood and the sacrifices of the faithful Muslims had been lost. Islam and the Commander of the Faithful had become so much poorer.]

O' Iraqis! I want to tell you how idiotic your behaviour was! You acted like a woman who bears the sufferings and troubles of carrying a baby for nine months, and just as the time for childbirth approaches she forces an unnatural abortion (resulting in stillbirth of the child and danger to her own life) and then she loses her husband and leads the life of a widow living on the mercies of her distant relatives.

I swear by Allah that I did not come to you of my own free will and choice, but fate has sent me here to

check your rebellious intentions against religion and remove discord and disunity from your society.

I have also been given to understand that you call me a liar. May Allah punish you for thus slandering me. Against whom could I lie? Could I frame a lie against Allah? I swear by Him that I am the first to accept and believe in His Omnipotence and Omnipresence, in His Glory and Lordship and in His Mercy and Kindness. Could I fabricate a lie against the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be upon him and his descendants) while I was the first to acknowledge and accept him as His Prophet and Messenger? I swear by Allah that I never lied against anyone. The fact is that what I speak has been beyond your understanding and comprehension. I am conveying the Divine knowledge and do not want any price for it, provided that you may try to understand and grasp it. Shortly the world will realize the truth and the importance of my teachings.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

[This sermon is in censure and condemnation of those of his unfaithful followers who did not respond when they were called to defend the cause of Islam and of their country.]

If Allah allows time and opportunities to any tyrant, it does not mean that He has lost control over him. He can wait before inflicting His punishment, which nobody can escape, and none can offer protection from death.

I swear by Allah that this group (Umayyahs) will defeat you, not because they are defending justice or protecting truth, but simply because they implicitly and willingly obey their leader even in vice and sin. As against this, when I call upon

you to defend the cause of religion and Allah, your response is clumsy and lazy.

There are people who pass their days under the anxiety and dread of the tyranny of their cruel rulers, but I am passing my days worried and tyrannized by my own followers.

I ask you to defend your religion and faith, but you do not follow my advice. I try in every honourable way to make you listen to truth, but you do not pay attention to it. I have given you the best possible counsel but it falls upon deaf ears.

Your presence before me is no better than your absence. You do not pay attention to what is being explained to you nor do you try to understand and realize it. In all appearances you look like my obedient subjects, but in reality you act differently.

I read to you such passages from the Qur'an as will increase your knowledge, foresight, judiciousness and wisdom, but you do not care to listen or understand. I try to give you the best pieces of advice and very sensible warnings, but you run away from them. When I want to advise you to protect your country, your homes and your religion from the attacks of the rebels against Islam, I find that you scatter away even before I come to the end of my speech.

When you leave me and gather in your assemblies, you deceive one another with wrong suggestions. In the morning I make you see and realize a truth and in the evening, when you come back to me, I find that your minds are as crooked as if they are made to be perverted.

O' people! You behave as if you have bodies and minds

but you are devoid of any intellect. You have divergent views and do not want to gather around and obey an authority. This carelessness and this discord and dissension are bringing calamities, ruin and disgrace to you.

O' people! When your Amir orders you to obey Allah, you disobey him, and when the ruler of Syrians flagrantly commits sins and goes against orders of Allah, the Syrians follow and obey him whole-heartedly. As gold coins are converted into silver currency, so I am willing to make a bargain with Muawiya to change you against Syrians, one Syrian against ten of you.

O' Kufites! You are in difficulties because of three defects that you have developed, and two good qualities that you do not possess. Your one defect is that you have ears but, as for a good piece of advice you are deaf. Secondly, you have faculty of speech, yet where declaration of truth is concerned you act as if you are dumb. Thirdly, you have eyes to see and a mind to understand, yet when you are asked to see facts and realities, you behave as if you are incapable of seeing and unable to understand.

The two good qualities that you are devoid of are; one, you are not brave in time of war and that you cannot be trustworthy companions in times of adversity and calamity, two, you behave like camels who do not have herdsman, if you are collected in a place of safety you stampede nervously and scatter in another direction.

Your picture in my mind's eyes is that of persons who when a war breaks out, will desert me and act like panicky women not knowing how to protect themselves. And yet, by Allah, I am on a perfectly reasonable and clearly distinct path of Allah and easily intelligible traditions of our Holy

Prophet (peace of Allah upon him and his descendants). I am on a bright and illuminated road to truth and piety, which I am trying to explain in details to you.

O' People! I advise you to keep your eyes on the descendents of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) and make it incumbent upon yourself to follow their lead and to act according to their traditions, as they would never misguide or mislead you.

When they order you to adhere firmly to a cause or to stand against an enemy, obey them and do not try to usurp their right of leadership because such an act will lead you astray and do not try to disown them because this will cause your mental and moral death.

I have seen prominent companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) and none of you leads a life like them. They used to spend their nights standing and in prostration praying all the time to the Almighty and in the morning they would leave their place of worship with messed hair and dusty faces. The apprehension of the Day of Judgment kept them restless as if they were rolling on cinders. Owing to their protracted prostrations there was a protuberance in the middle of their foreheads like the knee warts of the cattle. When the message of Allah was mentioned to them their eyes started raining tears till their collars were wet. The fear of punishment made them tremble like a cane-tree during a hurricane and they constantly invoked Allah's Forgiveness and Reward.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

[Imam Ali (AS) narrated this dream an evening before his martyrdom. The next morning he received a mortal wound

when he was engaged in his morning prayers.]

As I was sitting I fell asleep and dreamt that the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) came to me. With a heavy heart I started to complain of the intrigues, enmities and sufferings that fell to my lot from the hands of his followers. He asked me to curse them. And I prayed to Allah to give me better companions than they and to them a tyrant ruler in my place.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

Predictions

Imam Ali (AS) made a number of predictions before his martyrdom. Some of these are appended below:

[What would happen immediately after his martyrdom.]

The disturbances and calamities which shall swoop upon you after my death will be disastrous and will ominously darken your days. No one will be able to face them or to overcome them. They will be fast and furious. People of very low status and humble origin in whom inordinate desires and greed will be driving madly towards terrorism and anarchy shall stir them up. And those, who will stand up to fight against these evil forces and thus serve man and Allah, will be people, who are usually looked down upon by the rich and the arrogant and are humiliated by the society, but they have a lofty and honourable position before Allah and His blessed beings.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

[In this sermon there is a prophecy that Muawiya would rule the Islamic world after the martyrdom of Imam Ali (AS), and would force the people to calumniate the Imam and forsake him. Imam Ali (AS) advises people what to do then.]

Certainly after my death you will be overpowered and ruled by a pot-bellied glutton. He will eat away whatever he will find and will even demand for things which are not available.

Beware! He will ask you to calumniate me and to disown me. So far as calumniation is concerned you can obey his orders because it will save you from his wrath and tyranny and it will vindicate the truth of my cause; but so far as disowning me is concerned you should not do so, because I am a Muslim by birth and I was the first to testify on behalf of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) and to accept the ordeal of confinement with the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) to Shaib-e-Abu Talib.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

[This sermon is a prophecy regarding the way in which the Bani Umayyah would rule the Muslim State after Imam Ali (AS).]

I swear by Allah that these Umayyahs will remain in power and force the people to discard the teachings of Islam so flagrantly that every act forbidden by Allah will be considered and enacted as legitimate and lawful; till every religious and moral obligation will be dissolved; till their tyranny and oppression will enter every house and dwelling, even every tent and hut, carrying calamities and sufferings in their wake; and till the minds of the people will be filled with sorrow, some grieving for the loss of their religion and others over the loss of their wealth.

The condition of the society will so deteriorate that even when the rulers intend to be kind, their behaviour towards you will be just like that of a cruel master towards his slaves (you will not be treated and tolerated like free persons).

In their presence you will obey them and behind their backs you will abuse them. The most pious amongst you will be the worst sufferers.

During these harsh times if Allah grants you peace and security, be thankful for it, and, if He tries you with calamities and sufferings, bear them heroically with courage and patience. Remember that the blessings and rewards of the next world are reserved only for good and virtuous persons.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

[In the same swing of his mood, he predicted the fate of the Muslims in general and of the Arabs in particular. Even in the present century we see the events happening as he had predicted.]

I invoke the help of Allah to repulse Satan and to save me from his waylaying and deceptions. I testify that Muhammad (peace of Allah be upon him and his descendants) is His servant and Prophet, selected, exalted and dignified by Him. Nobody has and will ever surpass him in eminence, and nobody will ever be able to replace him; to lose him, that is, to forsake his teachings, is a loss, which can never be compensated. The world was in total darkness of ignorance, superstitious beliefs and low standards of morality when he illuminated human society with Divine Light. Before him people were accustomed to consider wrong as right and vice as virtue, they scorned intellectuals and ridiculed philosophers. They lived without religion and died as heathens.

O' Arabs! Take care that you may not be engulfed by calamities and misfortunes which are not far from you, do not let power and wealth turn your heads, and keep in mind the intensity of Divine Punishment. Be faithful to your religion when the darkness of paganism and hypocrisy surrounds you, when impiety and wickedness create doubts

(about Islam) in your minds, when disbelief and skepticism secretly and mysteriously creep amongst you, and when disguised sinfulness enigmatically and incomprehensibly comes out of its concealment.

Be firm in your belief when masked paganism establishes itself and spreads all over (the Islamic world). It will appear from hidden and unknown places and will suddenly develop into open viciousness, shocking depravity and ungodliness. Its growth will be like that of a young man, growing with the passage of time and its (far-reaching) effects will be as lasting as rocks. This cruel regime will be handed down from one tyrant to another and it will pass through treaties and pacts and through pledges and bargains from one oppressor to the other oppressor.

Those who will start this unholy revolution will lead the movement, and generations will follow them. Their ambition will be to gain power and pleasure and they will fight for this like dogs fighting over a noxiously putrid carcass. At short intervals the followers among them will be fighting against their leaders and revolting against the dictators. Nations will be constantly carrying on sanguinary wars or adverse propaganda (cold wars) against one another.

This state of affairs will be followed by such a great disturbance and upheaval that it will completely rout civilization. It will have such an unbalancing effect on society that even those, who had till then been following the right path, will give it up; they will forsake peaceful ways of life. During these days of confusion and disorder, humanity will develop very divergent and contradictory views about truth and justice. Whoever tries to fight this anarchy and chaos and improve the situation will be overwhelmed, crushed and annihilated. There will be total

hostility and discord between various factions of society, each trying to harm the other. Religion will lose its hold over human minds; true appreciation of sciences and philosophy will lose their significance and only tyrants and dictators will have power to voice their views (the common man will be tongue-tied).

This upheaval will be especially most injurious to Bedouins and nomads. They will be crushed and massacred, and everywhere individuals, as well as nations will sink in this abyss.

Times like that are bound to come. During these days people will rejoice in massacre, butchery and bloodshed; they will lose faith in religion and will treat it badly. Wise and pious people will try to run away from such surroundings, the vicious and the vile will dictate and enforce their policies. Family ties, family relations and family love will disappear (there will be no family set-up). People in large numbers will give up Islam. Civilization will go in a worldwide conflagration of tribulation, carnage and pogrom. Sober Muslims will be the worst sufferers. They will try to escape from these environments but will not succeed. Most of them will be killed and massacred without retribution. Some fearing such a cruel treatment, will try to obtain some kind of protection but they will be lulled into false security with deceptive promises and treacherous pledges.

During such evil days, take care not to support schism and innovation, and not to join oppression and tyranny, but always try to uphold the right cause. That will bring general well being and peace to masses and always try to follow Islam. Go before Allah as an oppressed and wronged one, and not as an oppressor and tyrant. Be afraid of the ways of the Devil and refrain from revolting against Allah. Do not live on the wages of inequity and sin.

Remember that you are before Allah who has strictly forbidden sin and viciousness. He has prescribed such a course of worship, and devotion to Him, and obedience to religion that it is easy, convenient and natural for mankind to follow.

Imam Ali (AS)

Nahjul Balagha

[Imam Ali (AS) delivered this sermon immediately after he dealt a crushing defeat to Kharijites in the battle of Nahrwan.]

You may now ask me anything you like, before you lose sight of me. I swear by Allah that if you ask me questions about important events that would happen from today onwards to the Day of Judgment, I shall explain them all to you. I shall tell you about such ideologies as will shortly come into existence, and will guide hundreds of people towards truth, and many others which will mislead many hundreds of them. I shall tell you the names of persons who will propagate these ideologies and of those who will guide and support them, and also of the countries from which they will start and of the countries where they will acquire firm holds. I shall even tell you how many of these propagandists will be killed and how many will die a natural death. Beware that if you do not take advantage of my knowledge and foresight and if calamities and sorrows visit you after my death, the people to whom you approach for advice will not be able to offer you good counsel or lead you to safety from dangers and disasters.

This will happen at a time when you are dragged into long wars. You will be forced to defend yourselves without

adequate means; the world will treat you very cruelly and harshly and you will find the days of your trials and afflictions long-drawn, but the Merciful Allah will come to your help and will grant you victory and peace through the few selected and best ones, who will survive amongst you.

Remember! When sinful disregards of religion enter a society they always come in the garb of real virtues, piety and goodness, and having done the worst harm they disclose their realities while departing; that is, vices cannot be easily recognized while approaching, they can only be recognized while departing and after the fulfilment of their vicious objective. They are like hurricanes that strike some societies and leave others untouched.

Remember that I do not consider any schism or vice worse than that which is being introduced by Umayyahs. They are real sinners and they would convert the world around them into a sinful place. They will tyrannize the society but their worst cruelties will be towards Ale Rasool (chosen descendants of the Holy Prophet.) In their regime honest and pious persons will suffer and sinners will prosper.

By Allah! After my death, you will find the Umayyahs despotic and oppressive rulers. They will exploit you, plunder you, terrorize you, and none of you will be left without humiliation and injury, unless he serves their purposes or offers no hindrance to their unholy deeds. They will not rest in peace unless their despotic regime brings you to the status of slaves. Their devilish, dreadful and despotic rule will descend upon you in such frightfully oppressive and disgustingly cruel form that no light of faith will be left for you to be guided with and no hope of truth and justice to seek redress from their oppressive tactics.

Ahlul Bayt, (descendants of the Holy Prophet; PBUH&HD),

will have no concern whatsoever with that despotic régime.

Then Allah the Almighty will bring their unjust and villainous reign to an end. Their sway will be brought to a termination by Him through such people as will drag them to bereavement and sorrow, will make them go through extreme humiliation and ignominy, and will terrorize and kill them. It will be the time when the Quresh will wish to see me and have me back in their midst even for just a few seconds. They will be willing to pay both the worlds for my sight and sound, and for my advice and guidance so that I may accept the whole of it (their leadership and ruler-ship) which they are refusing me today even in part.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

(The later part of this sermon about the Umayyahs is a prophecy which came true word by word. The Umayyahs tyrannical rule started in about 42 A.H., a year and a half after the martyrdom of Imam Ali (AS) and was terminated at about 125 A.H. They ransacked Makkah, stoned and burnt the Holy Ka'aba, and hanged Abdullah bin Zubair on the gallows within its precincts. They pillaged Medina, killed more than ten thousand people in that city, desecrated the mosque of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD) and his shrine, and ran through that city with orgies of murder, loot, arson and rape.

“They martyred Imam Hassan (AS) and Imam Hussain (AS) along with other devout Muslims. They killed many companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH&HD). So far as general bloodshed was concerned one of their governors, Hajjaj bin Yusuf, killed forty thousand followers of Hazrat Ali (AS). When Hajjaj died thirty eight thousand followers of *Ahlul Bayt* were rotting in his jails.

"For a hundred years, however, the Umayyahs ruled with the free help of the sword and poison. They sacked Medina, and drove the children of the Ansars (Helpers) into exile in far-away lands.

"The city which had given asylum to the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and had protected him from the persecution of the idolaters, and which he loved so dearly, the hallowed ground he had trod in life, and every inch of which was sanctified by his holy work and ministry, was foully desecrated; and the people who had stood by him in the hour of need, and had helped him to build up the arch of the Faith, were subjected to the most terrible atrocities, which find a parallel only in those committed by the soldiers of the Constable of France and the equally ferocious Lutherans of George Friedberg at the sacking of Rome.

"The men were massacred, the women outraged, and the children taken into slavery. The public mosque was turned into a stable, the shrines demolished for the sake of their ornaments. During the whole period of the Umayyahs domination the holy city remained a haunt of wild beasts. (Abdul Malik ibn Merwan went so far as to issue an edict-forbidding pilgrims to visit the sepulcher of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) at Medina).

"The paganism of Makkah was once more triumphant. And 'its reaction,' says Dozy, 'against Islam was cruel, terrible, and revolting.' The Makkans and the Umayyahs thus repaid the clemency and forbearance shown to them in the hour of Islam's triumph." (*Syed Ameer Ali 'The Spirit of Islam' p. 303*)

"The Abbasids brought their rule to a bloody termination.

massacring men, women and children with orgies of carnage and manslaughter. It was during this period that the Quresh had wished that somebody were to have the merits of Imam Ali (AS) to guide them. So some went to Imam Ja'far Sadiq (AS), the great-great grandson of Imam Ali (AS) but he refused to have any concern with the despotic rulers and decided not to side with any party.

“And the children of Hazrat Fatima (SA); saints who had submitted to the injustice of man and devoted themselves to intellectual pursuits and the practice of religion, - ruled more firmly over the hearts of their followers, and enjoyed the veneration of the people to a greater degree, than the caliph in his palace, the master of legions.” (Syed Ameer Ali *‘The Spirit of Islam’* p. 305)

[In this sermon there is a prophecy about the condition obtaining in the world when Imam Mahdi (AS) the Twelfth Imam would appear for the guidance of the people.]

These are the people who having given up the straight path of religion and are wandering in the wilderness of error and delusion. Do not make haste in inviting the future nor try to put it off; wait for it, it is inevitable and is bound to come. There are many people, who often eagerly desire for something, and when it reaches them, they wish that it had not come at all. Today is so near to tomorrow. The future is the inevitable result of the present and is inseparably connected with it.

O' people! Remember that the present time is the time when something which has been promised will happen, and events, which you do not know or cannot foresee or forecast, will take place.

During the days of trials and temptations those who

recognize the significance and worth of Ahlul Bayt (descendants of the Holy Prophet; PBUH&HD) will be, like a person walking in the dark with a lamp in his hand and not only go safely through the times, but will be of help to others and will act like pious people.

This will continue till the true Imam of the time (Imam Mahdi) will clear the doubts created by heresy and schism, will free the people from oppression and tyranny, will educate the ill-informed and ignorant, will introduce reforms in the society and will cement the gaps which wickedness and impiety may have created in the true teachings of Islam.

For sometime he will be hidden from the eyes of man in such a way that the greatest searcher of the day will not be able to find a trace of him however hard he may try. But when he will appear, he will educate mankind in such a way that human vision will expand through the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, men will be able to acquire true wisdom, and their minds will be able to rise to a higher level of science and philosophy.

*Imam Ali (AS)
Nahjul Balagha*

The Night Before

Hazrat Ali (AS) knew what destiny had in store for him at the dawn of 19 Ramadan 40 Hijri. The evening breeze was already wailing and moving through the streets of Kufa. It was knocking its head against every door and every window and warning the lazy residents.

Hazrat Ali (AS) was lying in his bed and staring into the wide wilderness of the stars filled sky. His whole life's scroll started to role out in his mind. He remembered how as a toddler he used to put his head on the chest of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and the Prophet (PBUH&HD) would whisper words of Divine Wisdom into his ears. The heavenly fragrance of the body of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) was still fresh and alive in his breath. Every word of Divine Wisdom that he had heard had been embedded in his soul and still ringing in his ears.

He remembered how he had held the Prophet (PBUH&HD) in his arms till his last breath. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) had spent all this time whispering words of Divine Wisdom into his ears. He remembered that those departing moments had been very agonizing for the Prophet (PBUH&HD). His face was wet with tears. His companions had disobeyed him and had refused to go to battle under Osama. The Prophet (PBUH&HD) had also told him what all ordeals he (Ali) and his descendents would be going through after his demise. He had advised him of patience and forbearance.

He cried at the thought of how much he loved the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and how much he missed his guidance.

Once again Hazrat Ali (AS) felt on his body the pain of every stone and the cut of every sword that he had received defending the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and Allah's Message.

He recalled how some of the companions had often objected to every order of the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and had deserted him in various battlefields leaving him at the mercy of the enemy and the fate.

How despicable had been the site when some of them had fallen prey to the temptation of loot and plunder and how they had shouted and quarreled over their share of the booty.

How the ignorance had attacked and overpowered some of them and how the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had dispelled it with kindness and affection. Still many had remained ignorant and instead of idols they had started to worship gold and silver.

Many had bargained the Message and its spirit for the luxuries of life. Allah's Message called for simplicity, piety, justice, discipline and a spirit of self-sacrifice. The glamour of luxury and power had been cruelly attractive to most of them. It often made the people deaf and blind to the words of Wisdom. Most of the people preferred to enjoy the pleasures of this world that they could feel and live-in rather than the sacrifices and the sufferings for the promised paradise.

How great he had felt when he had stood up as a witness and how proud was his father when the Prophet (PBUH&HD) had declared the son of Abu Talib as his brother, successor and vicegerent.

Tears started to roll down from his eyes when he thought of his father. What a great person he was. How loving and how much devoted to the Prophet (PBUH&HD) he was. How he had suffered in defending the Prophet (PBUH&HD) against the Quresh. The days of *Shaib-e-Abu Talib* had left Hazrat Abu Talib frail but he had emerged stronger and more resilient in his resolve to discharge his duty towards the Prophet (PBUH&HD). Even on his deathbed his father had asked the Quresh not to touch his nephew but to listen to him as he was showing them the path to paradise. Hazrat Ali (AS) prayed for his great father.

How lonely had he become after the demise of the Prophet (PBUH&HD). The people had forgotten his valour, his Wisdom and what all that the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and the Qur'an has said about him. How cruelly the people had been forbidden from talking to him or from listening to his words of Wisdom. He had spent many nights crying in the wilderness of Arabia as he had been denied the opportunity to take forward the Message. His mission had remained unfulfilled. He had become a lone voice in this wild world of deceit, conspiracies, treason and fraud.

He also remembered those whom he had considered as his friends but had deserted him because he would enforce the dictates of *Khelaphat-e-Ellahiya*. Many of those with whom he had spent memorable moments had betrayed him and had chased the fulfillment of their voracious desires. They had proved to be turncoats. Many had sold themselves and many had refused to help him out of fear for their lives.

In these distressful hours of loneliness he remembered his friend Abu Zar Ghafari. His friend, a distinguished companion, had been foremost in the fight against

ignorance and injustice. Abu Zar, may Allah bless him, was a man devoted to the cause of humanity. He was always loud and unrelenting in the support of the oppressed and the poor. He cried for Abu Zar as how miserably he had died hungry and thirsty in the wilderness of Rabzah and how helpless Ali had felt as he could not rescue Abu Zar from the world of miseries that he had been pushed into.

He also prayed for his friend Ammar Yassir, who, in spite of his old age and failing health, had come to fight alongside him in Siffin. Ammar had embraced martyrdom only to prove that he was with the Truth.

He really missed Malike al-Ashtar. There was no one to replace Malik.

How had he cried for his son Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakr. How brutally Muhammad, his dear son Muhammad, had been killed.

Many a time he had cried for the poor, the oppressed and the downtrodden whose fertile lands had been snatched away by the tyrants and the usurpers.

He had patiently waited for twenty-five years to impose justice and redeem the pains and sufferings of the poor. He had to deliver what he had been entrusted with. When he did get a chance, gold, greed, intrigues, conspiracies, corruption and dissensions were brought against him to bar his way. Even his followers had also betrayed him at crucial moments. The Message remained the cause of dispute and the poor remained helpless. What a cruel world he had lived in all this while.

He had spent sixty-three years among these people and had pervaded with his whole might, still he had remained a

stranger among his countrymen. Or, maybe, they did recognize him and were afraid of his righteous ways. They were afraid that if Ali did get a chance, those lovers of the world would be deprived of their luxuries and pleasures of life. They did every thing within their means to kill the Prophet (PBUH&HD) and now they were determined to settle the scores with Hazrat Ali (AS) and his family. Still, he and his family stood like a rock against the enemies of Islam.

He cried at the fate that awaited the poor, the weak, the indigent, the orphans and the widows. They would be crushed under the heavy stones of the blue granite castles and under the wheels of Roman Chariots. He cried for those lepers whom he used to feed and dress their wounds every day. Tomorrow they would wait for him and he would not be there.

The thought of what lay for his descendants made him very sad. He sat up on his mat. He knew that they too would not be allowed to spread the Divine Wisdom that they had inherited and were ordained to do. One by one they too would be martyred. His sons would be murdered and his daughters would be insulted and humiliated. Much blood of the sons of Abu Talib and of their friends would flow but they would manifest Allah's message:

And that there should be among you a group who call (mankind) unto virtue and enjoin what is good and forbid wrong; and these are who shall be successful.

Qur'an 3:104

One by one the stars were becoming invisible. It was time for prayers. The moment for him to meet his eternity was approaching. He looked at the sky and said:

"O' dawn! Be a witness that whenever you have appeared,
you have not found Ali asleep."

With measured steps he walked up to the mosque.

Martyrdom

The day Hazrat Ali (AS) became a witness, his martyrdom had been destined. In the very first confrontation of Truth against the Falsehood; at *dawat-e-dhil asheera*, Hazrat Ali (AS) delivered a deadly blow at the pride and arrogance of the 'all-powerful' elders of Quresh.

He had voluntarily and with full conviction stood up and had declared, "I testify that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad (PBUH&HD) is His Apostle." This testimony had changed the history of Islam and added strength to the Revolution. The Quresh of Makkah could never forget the embarrassment of the defeat that they suffered at the hands of this young son of Abu Talib. This humiliation had to be avenged sooner than later.

Hazrat Ali (AS) being a man of knowledge and wisdom had remembered the vow that he had made to Allah and repeated it in the assembly of the elders. The others must have forgotten:

When your Lord brought forth from the children of Adam, from their backs, their descendents, and made them bear witness over themselves, (saying): "Am I not your Lord?" "Indeed," they replied, "We bear witness," lest you should say on the Day of Judgment: "Verily we were not aware of this;"

Qur'an 7:172

All those who, under the leadership of the Prophet (PBUH&HD), had struggled in the way of Allah, had been removed one way or the other. Only Hazrat Ali (AS) and

his infallible descendents remained to challenge and face the enemies of Islam. With unparalleled courage and determination they withstood the onslaught of those who had gone astray. With their blood, sufferings and sacrifices, (as ordained by Allah, His Book and His Apostles) these noble sons and daughters of Bani Hashim saved Islam from the evil designs of the enemies.

It was 19 Ramadan, Hazrat Ali (AS) came to the mosque, went to the pulpit and gave the call for the prayers. Ibn Muljam, his to be assassin was asleep in the mosque.

Hazrat Ali (AS) woke him up and said, "It is time for the prayers. I know you have not come to offer prayers and you have a different mission, still get up."

Hazrat Ali (AS) started his prayers and when he was prostrating, Ibn Muljim gave a deadly blow of his sword at his head. Hazrat Ali (AS) said, "*Fuzto bay Rabe-e Ka'aba.*" (By Allah, I have succeeded). He had embraced martyrdom for the cause of Allah. He had lived the most successful life. He had been able to conquer his self and had denied himself all the pleasures and luxuries of this world. After the Prophet (PBUH&HD) he was the most perfect person.

He breathed his last on 21 Ramadan 40 Hijri.

Inna Lilla-hay-wa Inna Ellayeh Rajeyoon.

(Verily we are Allah's and verily unto Him shall we return.)

Qur'an 2;156

His prayer had been answered. He went to better companions and we are left at the mercy of tyrants. As Khalil Jabran said, "Hazrat Ali (AS) was like an apostle sent for a nation other than his own and during a period other than to which he belonged."

George Gordon is of the view, "No one can praise Ali to the extent that he (ALI) deserves.

I say, "Hazrat Ali (AS) was too immense a person and this world proved to be too small for him."

Hazrat Ali (AS) once said:

"Look to my time in future when my merits, so far not recognized, will become manifest, and you will recognize me when you miss me and find another in my place."

I miss you, O' my Maula, every moment of my life.

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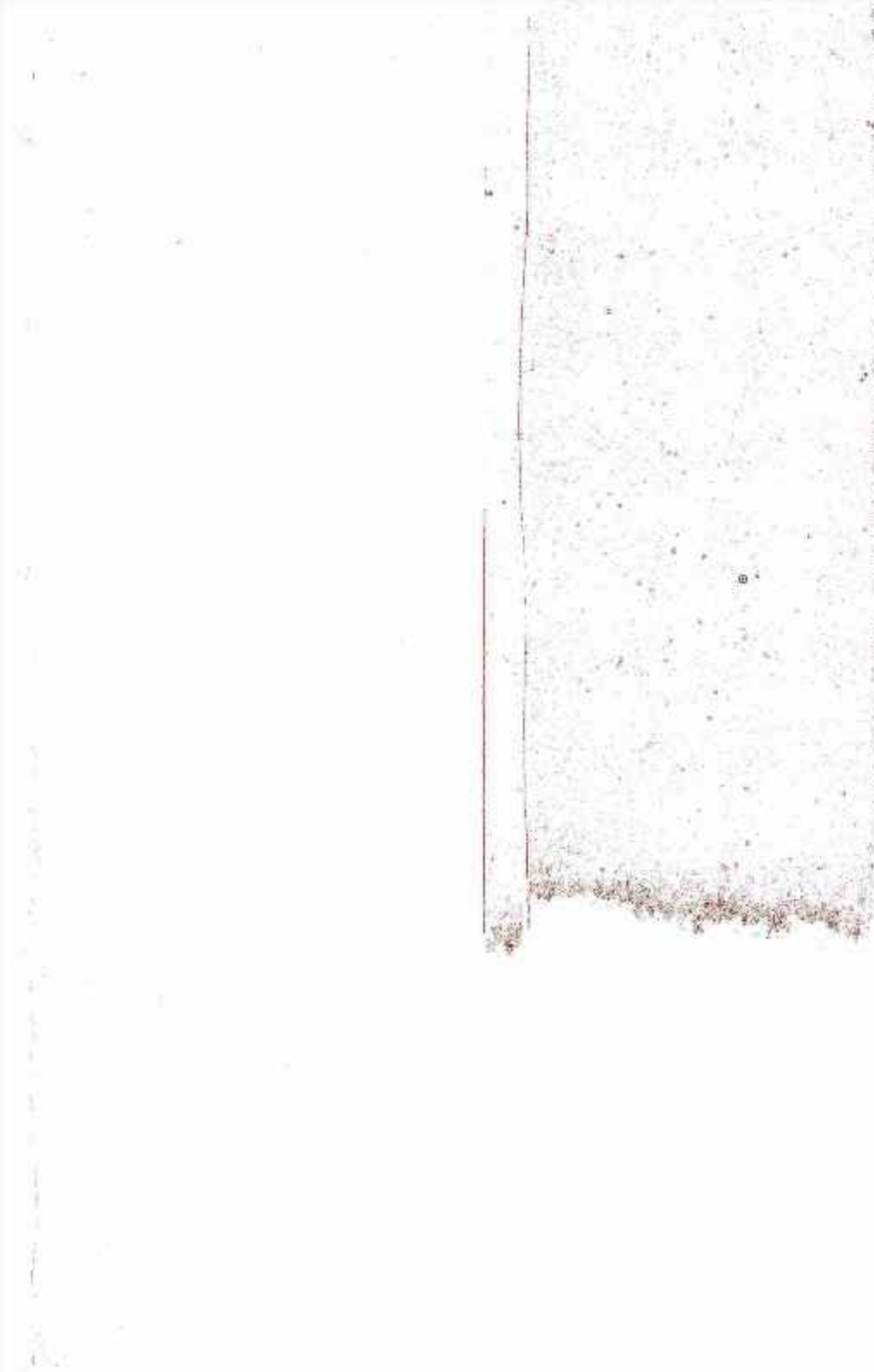
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THE I.N.O.P. has invited the following sayings of Lenin (V.I.) to be included in the Human Development Report

1. He who has oppressed himself is better over the people than he who has oppressed himself before reaching others. His reaching of others must be first by setting an example rather than with his words for he who begins by reaching and educating himself is more worthy of respect than he who reaches and educates others.
2. Your concern with developing the land should be greater than your concern for collecting taxes, for the latter can only be obtained by developing what can be made revenue without development of the land, the country and the people.
3. Seek the company of the learned and the wise in search of solving the problems of your country and the rights of men of your people.
4. No good can come in keeping them as a government of ignorant and ignorant.
5. The righteous are men of virtue whose logic is unshaken in word, whose heart is unshaken, whose will is unshaken, whose reaction necessary and who is unshaken by all difficulties.
6. There is but one among your people to whom you should listen. There is someone who does not easily give up, who is unshaken by enemies, someone who will not permit to wrong things, who will not hesitate to pursue right even to the death, someone whose heart knows no greed, who will not be satisfied with a minimum of explanation without seeking the maximum of understanding, who will be most resistant when attacked and, who will be the last impatient in correcting the opponent, the most patient in pursuing the truth, the most strict in carrying out judgment, someone who is unshaken by strategy and wily by the nation and those are our best.

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