

ISLAMIC HISTORY SERIES PART III
THE RIGHTLY GUIDED CALIPHS 3

'ALI

IBN ABI TÂLIB

علي بن أبي طالب

Volume One & Two

Dr. Ali M. Sallabi

الدار العالمية للكتاب الإسلامي

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC PUBLISHING HOUSE



IN THE NAME OF

ALLAH

THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE, ALL-MERCIFUL



'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib

Volume One

'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib

VOLUME ONE

علي بن أبي طالب

Dr. Ali M. Sallabi

Translated by

Nasiruddin al-Khattab

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
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Arabic honorific symbols used in this book

(): *Subhânahu wa ta'âla* — “The Exalted”

(): *Şalla-Allâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* — “Blessings and peace
be upon him”

(): *‘Alayhis-salâm* — “May peace be upon him”

(): *Raḍiya-Allâhu ‘anhu* — “May Allah be pleased with him”

(): *Raḍiya-Allâhu ‘anha* — “May Allah be pleased with her”

Pronunciation and Transliteration Chart

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Transliterated as:
أ	short 'a', as in <i>cat</i>	a
آ - إ	longer 'a', as in <i>cab</i> (not as in <i>cake</i>)	â
ب	/b/ as in <i>bell</i> , <i>rubber</i> and <i>tab</i>	b
ت	/t/ as in <i>tap</i> , <i>mustard</i> and <i>sit</i>	t
ة	takes the sound of the preceding diacritical mark sometimes ending in h (when in pausal form): ah, ih, or ooh; or atu(n), ati(n) or ata(n) when in uninterrupted speech	h or t (when followed by another Arabic word)
ث	/th/ as in <i>thing</i> , <i>maths</i> and <i>wealth</i>	th
ج	/j/ as in <i>jam</i> , <i>ajar</i> and <i>age</i>	j
ح	a 'harsher' sound than the English initial /h/, and may occur medially and in word-final position as well	h
خ	as in <i>Bach</i> (in German); may occur initially and medially as well	kh
د	/d/ as in <i>do</i> , <i>muddy</i> and <i>red</i>	d
ذ	as in <i>this</i> , <i>father</i> , and <i>with</i>	dh
ر	/r/ as in <i>raw</i> , <i>art</i> and <i>war</i> ; may also be a rolled r, as with Spanish words	r

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Transliterated as:
ز	/z/ as in <i>zoo</i> , <i>easy</i> and <i>gaze</i>	z
س	/s/ as in <i>so</i> , <i>messy</i> and <i>grass</i>	s
ش	as in <i>ship</i> , <i>ashes</i> and <i>rush</i>	sh
ص	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /sw/ or /s/ farther back in the mouth	ṣ
ض	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing /d/ farther back in the mouth	ḍ
ط	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing /t/ farther back in the mouth	ṭ
ظ	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing 'the' farther back in the mouth	<u>dh</u>
ع	no close equivalent in English: a guttural sound in the back of the throat	‘
غ	no close equivalent in English, but may be closely approximated by pronouncing it like the French /t/ in 'rouge'	gh
ف	/f/ as in <i>fill</i> , <i>effort</i> and <i>muff</i>	f

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Transliterated as:
ق	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing /k/ farther back in the mouth	q
ك	/k/ as in <i>king</i> , <i>buckle</i> and <i>tack</i>	k
ل	/l/ as in <i>lap</i> , <i>halo</i> ; in the word <i>Allah</i> , it becomes velarized as in <i>ball</i>	l
م	/m/ as in <i>men</i> , <i>simple</i> and <i>ram</i>	m
ن	/n/ as in <i>net</i> , <i>ant</i> and <i>can</i>	n
هـ - ه - هـ	/h/ as in <i>hat</i> ; unlike /h/ in English, in Arabic /h/ is pronounced in medial and word-final positions as well	h
و	as in <i>wet</i> and <i>away</i>	w
و (as a vowel)	long u, as in <i>boot</i> and <i>too</i>	oo
ي	as in <i>yet</i> and <i>yard</i>	y
ي (as a vowel)	long e, as in <i>eat</i> , <i>beef</i> and <i>see</i>	ee
ع	glottal stop: may be closely approximated by pronouncing it like 't' in the Cockney English pronunciation of <i>butter</i> : bu'er, or the stop sound in <i>uh</i> — <i>oh</i> !	' (Omitted in initial position)

Diphthongs:

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Transliterated as:
أَ ، و	Long o, as in <i>owe</i> , <i>boat</i> and <i>go</i>	au, aw, ow
أَ ، يَ	Long 'a', as in <i>able</i> , <i>rain</i> and <i>say</i>	ay, ai, ei

Diacritical marks (tashkeel):

Name of mark	Pronunciation	Transliterated as:
fatḥah	very short 'a' or schwa (unstressed vowel)	a
kasrah	shorter version of ee or schwa (unstressed vowel)	i
Dammah	shorter version of oo	u
shaddah	a doubled consonant is stressed in the word, and the length of the sound is also doubled	Double letter
sukoon	no vowel sound between consonants or at the end of a word	Absence of vowel

About the word 'Lord'

The word *lord* in English has several related meanings. The original meaning is 'master' or 'ruler', and in this sense it is often used to refer to human beings: 'the lord of the mansion' or 'Lord So-and-So' (in the United Kingdom, for example). The word *Lord* with a capital L is used in the lexicon of Islam to refer to the One and Only God-Allah. In Islam, there is no ambiguity about the meaning of this word. While it is true that one may occasionally use the word *lord* (whether capitalized or not) to refer to a human being, in Islamic discourse the reference of this term is always clear from the context. Whereas for Christians, Hindus and other polytheists, the word *Lord* with a capital L may refer to Allah, to Jesus or to some imagined deity, for Muslims, there can be no plurality of meaning. Allah alone is the Lord, and the Lord is Allah — not Jesus, not Rama, not any other being.

The Editor

Publisher's Note

All praise and thanks belong to Allah alone, the One, the Almighty, and All-Merciful. Blessings and peace be upon Prophet Muhammad, the last of His Messengers and Prophets, his family, his Companions and all those who follow in his footsteps until the end of time.

‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ؓ) was the cousin and close companion of the Prophet (ﷺ), the beloved husband of the Prophet’s daughter Faṭimah (ؓ), the father of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, and the fourth of the Rightly-guided Caliphs who led the Muslim nation after the Prophet’s death. Dr. Ali M. Sallabi has sifted through the numerous reports of this period to produce this authentic biography in which he skilfully describes ‘Ali’s character and recounts the significant incidents in his life, especially regarding the turmoil that enveloped the Muslim nation during his caliphate.

Inshallah this book will enable the readers to form an accurate picture of this noble figure in Islamic history so that they will not be misled by false allegations and distortions about this era, which are widespread and have repercussions in the Muslim world even today. We also hope that the book will allow the readers to develop a true understanding of what it means to love the family of the Prophet (ﷺ).

May Allah bless the efforts of all who contributed to the production of this book, and may it be acceptable to Him, *âmeen*.

Muhammad ibn ‘Abdul Mohsin Al-Tuwaijri
Managing Director
International Islamic Publishing House
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Translator's Foreword

In this book, Dr. Şallâbi presents the biography of the fourth caliph of Islam and examines in detail the momentous turmoil and conflicts that prevailed during that period in the history of the Ummah. These issues and events still have repercussions today.

Using authentic, sound hadîths and reports, the author depicts the life and times of 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (*radiya Allâhu 'anhû* — may Allah be pleased with him). Even though 'Ali's caliphate is regarded as an extension of the Rightly Guided caliphate, in the sense that the system of government and leadership followed the way of the Messenger of Allah (*Şalla Allâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* — blessings and peace be upon him) and the three preceding caliphs, it was marked by important differences because 'Ali (ﷺ) was faced with the unprecedented danger that engulfed the Ummah after the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ). Thus 'Ali (ﷺ) was compelled to focus all his efforts on seeking to keep the Ummah united and dealing with the extreme views and groups, such as the Kharijites and Râfiḍis, that began to emerge as a result of the turmoil.

The author highlights in detail the role of Abdullah ibn Saba' and his followers in stirring up unrest. He examines the parts they played in the conspiracy against 'Uthmân (ﷺ) that ended in his murder, in sparking the Battle of Camel after the two sides had reached a peace deal, and in introducing extreme views concerning *Ahl al-Bayt* [the family of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)] — views that the Râfiḍi Shia still believe in.

As a result of these internal pressures, the expansion of the Islamic state came to a standstill during the caliphate of 'Ali (ﷺ), as

he was preoccupied with confronting the raging unrest and conflicts. The positive outcome of this situation was that 'Ali (عليه السلام) set an example of the ideal way of dealing with Muslim opponents and with extreme Muslim elements in times of discord. He demonstrated that the way to deal with Muslim adversaries is not by labelling them disbelievers; throughout the conflict, he insisted that his opponents were Muslims, and that the rules of engagement with a Muslim adversary were different from those that apply when fighting the disbelievers. If they are Muslims, their wounded are not to be killed, their fighters who flee the battlefield are not to be pursued, their womenfolk and children are not to be taken captive, and their wealth and property are not to be seized.

In the course of researching this book, Dr. Şallâbi read through an enormous number of hadiths and reports referring to the time of turmoil, exposing the many false reports that were fabricated by the Râfiḍi Shia and their ilk in an attempt to distort the image of senior Companions such as 'Â'ishah, Ṭalhah, az-Zubayr, Mu'âwiyah and 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ (may Allah be pleased with them all). These false reports depicted those noble figures as petty-minded individuals whose main concern was the acquisition of power and wealth. On the basis of sound, authentic reports, the author proves that the dispute between these groups of Companions was due to genuine misunderstanding and the fact that they held different views, which each of them sincerely believed were right and proper.

A major portion of the book is devoted to a discussion of the views and beliefs of the Râfiḍi Shia, confirming that these positions are contrary to the views of 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (عليه السلام) himself. The members of Ahl al-Bayt rejected these views and regarded them as heresy and extremism.

This book comes at a time when the Râfiḍi Shia are striving to propagate their misguided beliefs and ideas throughout the world,

under the banner of love for Ahl al-Bayt. We are confident that this book will become a major reference for the English-speaking Muslim world and will help Muslims to preserve their sound beliefs and to stand up against corrupt, misguided notions, so that they will cling more strongly to the path of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmân, ‘Ali, the rest of the Companions and Ahl al-Bayt (may Allah be pleased with them all).

Nasiruddin al-Khattab

Toronto, 2010

*In the name of Allah,
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*

Introduction

Praise be to Allah (*Subhânahu wa Ta'âlâ* — Glorified and Exalted is He). We praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah (ﷻ) from the evil within ourselves and from our evil deeds. Whomsoever Allah (ﷻ) guides, none can lead astray, and whomsoever He sends astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah (ﷻ) alone, with no partner or associate, and I bear witness that Muhammad (ﷺ) is His slave and Messenger.

«O you who believe! Fear Allah [by doing all that He has ordered and by abstaining from all that He has forbidden] as He should be feared. [Obey Him, be thankful to Him, and remember Him always] and die not except in a state of Islam [as Muslims (with complete submission to Allah)].»
(*Qur'an* 3: 102)

«O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person [Adam], and from him [Adam] He created his wife [Hawwa (Eve)], and from them both He created many men and women; and fear Allah through Whom you demand [your mutual rights], and [do not cut the relations of] the wombs [kinship]. Surely, Allah is Ever an All-Watcher over you.»
(*Qur'an* 4: 1)

«O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allah and fear Him, and speak [always] the truth. He will direct you to do righteous good deeds and will forgive you your sins. And whosoever obeys Allah

and His Messenger, he has indeed achieved a great achievement [i.e. he will be saved from the hellfire and will be admitted to paradise].»

(*Qur'an* 33: 70-71)

O Lord, to You be praise as befits the majesty of Your countenance and the greatness of Your sovereignty. To You be praise until You are pleased, to You be praise when You are pleased and to You be praise after You are pleased.

This book is the fourth in a series on the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. The three books that were published previously are the biographies of Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq, 'Umar ibn al-Khattâb al-Farooq and 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân Dhun-Noorayn (may Allah be pleased with them all). This book encompasses the life of *Amir al-Mu'mineen* (Commander of the Faithful) 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) from his birth until his martyrdom. It begins with a discussion of his name, lineage, titles, birth, family and tribe.

It describes how he came to Islam and his most important actions in Makkah, his migration to Madinah and how he lived under the influence of the Holy Qur'an and the impact it had on his life. It explains his concept of Allah (الله), the universe, life, paradise, hell and the divine will and decree; the status of the Holy Qur'an in his view; what was revealed of Qur'an concerning him; the principles and fundamentals that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali followed in deriving rulings from the Holy Qur'an and how he interpreted its meanings; and his interpretation of some verses. It tells how he stayed close to the Messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) from his childhood; his deep knowledge of the status of prophethood and how he interacted with it, as explained through his words and deeds. He was keen to teach the people and to encourage them to follow the example of the Messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in his words and deeds and what he approved of. He stated that it is obligatory to obey the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and to adhere to and preserve his Sunnah. He explained the proof of

the prophethood of the Messenger (ﷺ), his virtues and some of the rights that he has over his Ummah. The reader will find examples of the ways in which Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) followed the Sunnah of the Prophet, as well as the names of some of those who narrated from Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) among the Companions, the *tâbi'oon*¹ and the members of his household.

The book then moves on to the life of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) in Madinah at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ). It discusses his marriage to as-Sayyidah Fâtimah (رضي الله عنها) and the lessons we can learn from this marriage about the bridal gift, trousseau, wedding celebration, life and asceticism, as well as Fâtimah's sincerity and leadership in this world and the hereafter. I have also included brief biographies of 'Ali's sons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (may Allah be pleased with them), mentioning their virtues and the hadiths that were narrated from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) concerning them. I discuss the concept of Ahl al-Bayt (the people of the Prophet's family) among Sunni Muslims, and the rulings that apply specifically to them, such as the prohibition on their accepting *zakâh*², the fact that they were not allowed to inherit from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), their entitlement to one-fifth of the war booty, sending blessings upon them as well as upon the Prophet (ﷺ), and the obligation to love and respect them.

I examine the exploits of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) in his campaigns and battles alongside the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), such as Badr, Uhud, al-Khandaq (the Trench), Banu Quraydhah, Ḥudaybiyah, Khaybar, the conquest of Makkah and Hunayn; how the Prophet (ﷺ) put 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) in charge of Madinah during the campaign to Tabook in 8 AH; his media role³ when Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) led the people on hajj; the delegation of the Christians of Najrân and the verse⁴ in which the Christians are challenged to come together with the Prophet (ﷺ), bringing their families, to pray to Allah and

invoke His curse on those who are lying; the Prophet's sending 'Ali (ﷺ) to Yemen as a preacher of Islam and a judge, and the rulings that he gave in Yemen; the actions of 'Ali (ﷺ) during the farewell pilgrimage; the letter that the Prophet (ﷺ) thought of writing during his final illness; 'Ali's relationship with the other Rightly Guided Caliphs and his position during their caliphates.

I describe his swearing allegiance to Abu Bakr (ﷺ) as caliph, his support for Abu Bakr during the Wars of Apostasy, his respect for and giving precedence to Abu Bakr, and his praying behind him and accepting gifts from him. I refer to the relationship between Abu Bakr (ﷺ) and Fâtimah (ﷺ), and the story of the estate of the Prophet (ﷺ). I refute the specious arguments of the Râfiḍis about this incident, exposing their weak and fabricated reports, and I provide definitive proof and clear evidence to rebut their contentions.

I prove the love that Fâtimah (ﷺ) had for the truth and her adherence to Sharia. I give examples that demonstrate her respect for the successor of the Prophet (ﷺ), the caliph Abu Bakr (ﷺ); her tolerant attitude towards him; the respect of Ahl al-Bayt for Abu Bakr (ﷺ); intermarriage between the family of Abu Bakr and Ahl al-Bayt; their love for him and their naming their children after him. I speak of the contribution that 'Ali (ﷺ) made during the caliphate of 'Umar (ﷺ) in judicial, organisational, financial and administrative matters; how 'Umar (ﷺ) appointed 'Ali (ﷺ) to be in charge of Madinah on several occasions, how he consulted with him regarding matters of jihad and affairs of the state; the strong and warm relationship between 'Umar and Ahl al-Bayt; the marriage of 'Umar to Umm Kulthoom, the daughter of 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ); and the background of this blessed marriage. I list clear evidence that refutes the false reports and demolishes them utterly. The historical facts show us a picture that highlights the real love that existed among the noble companions, as described in the Holy Qur'an.

I explain the allegiance that ‘Ali (ﷺ) swore to ‘Uthmân (ﷺ) when he assumed the caliphate, and I refute the lies that have surrounded the incident. I speak of ‘Ali’s efforts in support of ‘Uthmân’s state, how he defended ‘Uthmân (ﷺ) against the troublemakers, his attitude towards the unrest that led to the siege and murder of ‘Uthmân (ﷺ), and his stance after this martyrdom. I write of the intermarriage between the family of ‘Ali (ﷺ) and the family of ‘Uthmân (ﷺ).

I quote the comments of ‘Ali (ﷺ) concerning the Rightly Guided Caliphs who came before him, which are indicative of the love and respect he had for them, and his disavowal of those who slandered and reviled them. He carried out the *ḥadd*⁵ punishment for slander on those who reviled Abu Bakr and ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both). The Muslim reader cannot help but weep when he or she reflects upon the words of Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ) concerning the caliphs and his interactions with that unique Qur’anic generation and its noble leaders.

I recount the swearing of allegiance to ‘Ali (ﷺ) as caliph and how it was done; why he was most entitled to it; the consensus of the Companions concerning it; how Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr swore allegiance to him voluntarily, without any pressure or compulsion; how consensus was formed about his caliphate; the conditions stipulated by ‘Ali (ﷺ) in his oath of allegiance; the first sermons he gave; the decision-makers in his state; a little about his virtues and most important attributes and the foundations of his system of rule. I discuss at length his attributes, describing his vast knowledge, deep understanding, asceticism, humility, generosity, noble attitude, modesty, devotion and gratitude to Allah (ﷻ), patience, sincerity and humble supplication; the ultimate reference point for his state and how it adhered to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ) and followed the example of the Rightly Guided

Caliphs who preceded him; the right of the Ummah to keep watch over its rulers; consultation, justice, equality and freedom; his life in society and his concern to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil; his promotion of *tawhîd*⁶ and his fight against polytheism; his teaching the people about the names and attributes of Allah (ﷻ) and the blessings of Allah (ﷻ), for which He deserves to be thanked; his keenness to erase all traces of pre-Islamic ignorance; his keenness to prove the falsity of belief in the stars; his punishment of those who exaggerated about him and claimed that he was divine; his speech about how faith begins in the heart; his definition of *taqwa*⁷; his concept of the divine will and decree and how Allah (ﷻ) brings His slaves to account despite their large numbers.

I also cite some of his speeches and exhortations, as well as the poetry that is attributed to him or that he quoted on different occasions. I have chosen a number of his valuable, wise sayings that have become like proverbs among the people. I discuss what he said about the attributes of the best of people and about obeying the Prophet (ﷺ); how he described the noble Companions and how he warned against serious diseases that affect the heart (spiritual maladies), such as expecting to live a long life, following whims and desires, showing off and self-admiration. I also relate his concern for bringing discipline in the markets and for fighting against innovations and actions among people that are contrary to Sharia.

I discuss the institutions of his state, such as financial institutions, the judiciary and the governor system, and how the institutions of judiciary and legislation worked at the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs; the sources to which the Companions referred at that time; the distinguishing features of the judiciary system at the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs; the most famous judges appointed by 'Ali (ﷻ); his judicial style; his view of the rulings issued before him; those who were qualified to serve as

judges; passing judgement for free; his *ijtihâd*⁸ concerning acts of worship; financial interactions, ḥadd punishments, just retaliation and criminal cases. I refer to the importance of using as evidence the views of the Rightly Guided Caliphs and other Companions.

In my discussion, I explain the institution of governors and the provinces of the state at his time, and the important events that happened in each region. I discuss his method for appointing governors and keeping watch over his workers, some of his guidelines and the extent of authority granted to his governors, such as appointing advisers to each governor in each province, the formation of consultative committees, the establishment of armies in each province, the drawing up of foreign policy in war and peace, the maintenance of internal security, the setting up of a judicial system in each province, financial expenditure, the workers belonging to each province and checking on them, and the role of the chiefs and leaders in maintaining law and order. I explain some administrative concepts based on the sayings of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام), such as his emphasis on human dignity, the importance of experience and knowledge, the relationship between the leader and those under his authority, fighting stagnation, inspection and evaluation, control, joint decision-making, good choices on the part of the governor, offering financial and psychological security to state employees, keeping men of experience around the governor, a benevolent paternalistic approach to administration, and the criteria for employment, which should be based on qualifications and not on personal connections.

Then I move on to a discussion of the internal problems at the time of 'Ali (عليه السلام). I begin with the Battle of the Camel, starting with the events that preceded it and the effect of the Saba'i organisation on the outbreak of the battle; the role of Abdullah ibn Saba' in stirring up internal turmoil; the difference of opinion among the Companions

concerning the way to punish the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ); and the attitude of 'Ā'ishah, Mother of the Believers (ﷺ), Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr, Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân and those who were with them, who favoured hastening to punish the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ). I also describe the attitude of those who were neutral and did not get involved in the conflict, such as Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâs, Abdullah ibn 'Umar, Muḥammad ibn Maslamah, Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari, 'Imrân ibn Ḥusayn, Usâmah ibn Zayd and others who adopted their approach. I discuss the view of those who wanted to delay carrying out any punishment until things had settled down, such as Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ); the attempts at reconciliation before the Battle of the Camel broke out; the outbreak of fighting and the first and second rounds thereof; the martyrdom of Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr; how the people of Basra swore allegiance to 'Ali (ﷺ); the attitude of 'Ali (ﷺ) towards the Mother of the Believers 'Ā'ishah (ﷺ) and how he interacted with her, showed respect towards her and sent her back to Madinah honourably.

I refer to the virtues of 'Ā'ishah (ﷺ) and give a little of her biography. I also give biographies of az-Zubayr and Ṭalḥah, because they were among the most influential personalities of the era of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Rightly Guided Caliphs, including the time of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ). I defend them on the basis of truth, because they have been wronged; I describe their virtue and their status in Islam, and I refute the misleading arguments and lies that have become attached to them. I affirm the clear facts and indisputable evidence about their refined characteristics and noble attitudes, so that the Muslim reader will come away with real knowledge of these brilliant figures, without any trace of confusion or ambiguity, so that he or she will not be influenced by the weak reports or fabricated stories, made up by Râfiḍi Shia historians, which have distorted the image of these characters in the minds of some people. The approach I followed in discussing the biographies

of ‘Â’ishah, Talḥah, az-Zubayr, and other senior Companions who left their mark during the time of Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام), is in accordance with the method of *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ’ah* (Sunni Muslims), in general and in details.

I also discuss the Battle of Şiffeen; Mu’âwiyah’s motives in not swearing allegiance; the correspondence between him and ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with them both); attempts at reconciliation; the outbreak of fighting; the call for arbitration; the slaying of ‘Ammâr ibn Yâsir (عليه السلام) and its impact on the Muslims; the good conduct of both sides during the war and confrontation; the treatment of prisoners of war; the number of people slain; how ‘Ali (عليه السلام) prayed for mercy for the slain on both sides; and his ban on reviling Mu’âwiyah and cursing the people of Syria. I then discuss the arbitration, and I provide short biographies of Abu Moosa al-Ash’ari and ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âş (may Allah be pleased with them both). I demonstrate the falseness of the baseless lies and fabricated stories that have been attributed to them with regard to the arbitration, and I outline what we can learn from this story about resolving disputes between Muslim countries. I focus on the attitude of Ahl as-Sunnah with regard to these wars, and I warn against some books which distort the history of the Companions wrongfully, such as *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah*, a book which is falsely attributed to Ibn Qutaybah; *al-Aghâni* by al-Isfahâni; *Tareekh al-Ya’qoobi*; *Tareekh al-Mas’oodi* and other books which deviate from the methodology of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ’ah and the academic trust. I explain the role of the Orientalists in distorting Islamic history, and how they made use of the books of the Râfiḍi Shia to do so; how they established an opposing school of thought which contributed to the contamination of ideas, distortion of events, concealing of the facts, and exaggeration of the dark spots in our history under bright slogans such as unbiased academic research, realistic approach, objectivity and neutrality. These destructive ideas were adopted by a number of

Muslims who belong to Islam but who do not understand it, present it well, follow its teachings or defend it effectively; instead, they fell into the traps of the enemies of Islam, who are working to distort the history of this Ummah and the civilisation that was created by this great religion.

In the last chapter, I undertake an objective, academic study on the Kharijites and Râfiḍī Shia. I describe the origin of the Kharijites and who they are, and I quote prophetic hadiths which mention criticism of them. I also discuss their withdrawing to Ḥaroora', Ibn 'Abbâs's debate with them, 'Ali's policy in dealing with them, the reasons why he fought them, the outbreak of fighting with them, the story of Dhul-Thadyah or al-Mukhaddaj, and the effect of his slaying on the army of 'Ali (ﷺ).

I present the rulings of Islamic jurisprudence that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) came up with in the Battle of the Camel, the battle of Şiffeen and his battles with the Kharijites, and how the Muslim jurists subsequently relied on these rulings and compiled them in their books, under the heading of rulings of the interpretation of Islamic law of dealing with rebels. I also point out the most important characteristics of the Kharijites at the time of 'Ali (ﷺ), such as religious extremism, ignorance of religion, rebelling against authority, regarding the blood and wealth of the Muslims as permissible, slander, misguiding, thinking badly of others and being cruel and harsh towards the Muslims. I discuss some of the beliefs and opinions of the Kharijites, such as regarding as a disbeliever anyone who commits a major sin, their view of the position of caliph, their slander against some of the Companions and their regarding 'Uthmân and 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them) as disbelievers. I briefly discuss the causes of the Kharijite deviation from the truth and their ideas in modern times, such as: ignorance of Islamic sciences as a result of turning away from the scholars and reading books without

teachers, going to extremes in condemning those who imitate or follow scholars, the neglect of their duties on the part of many scholars, the spread of injustice and referring to man-made laws for judgement, the spread of corruption among people and their failure to purify their souls. I point to the most significant aspects of their exaggeration, such as going to extremes and making issues of religion hard on themselves and others, pretending to have great knowledge, self-admiration, clinging to their own opinions and regarding others as ignorant, criticising and maligning the dedicated scholars, having harsh and violent attitudes towards others and regarding some Muslims as disbelievers.

I speak of the Râfiḍī Shia sect and explain the meaning of the words ‘Shia’ and ‘*ar-raḍḍ*’ (the root of the word Râfiḍī) both in linguistic terms and in Sharia terminology, and the reason for their being called Râfiḍīs; how they originated and the role of the Jews in that; the stages through which the Shia passed; the most important beliefs of the Râfiḍī Shia; the attitude of ‘Ali (ﷺ) and the scholars of Ahl al-Bayt concerning those beliefs that are attributed to them, such as the belief in imamate and the ruling on the one who denies that. They claim that the Qur’an has stated the concept of imamate in the verse of purification (33: 33), the verse of *mubâhalah*⁹ (3: 61) and the verse of *wilâyah* (5: 55). Their so-called evidence from the Sunnah includes the sermons of Ghadeer Khum and the hadith, “You are to me like Haroon was to Moosa.” I also discuss the weak and fabricated hadiths that they quote as evidence for the concept of the imamate, such as the hadith of the bird, the hadith of the house, and the hadith “I am the city of knowledge, and ‘Ali is its door.” I discuss at length the evidence that they offer for the concept of infallibility, and I explain why it is false.

I include in the book an index of the weak and fabricated hadiths that the Râfiḍī Shia quote as evidence, so as to warn the

Muslims against falling into their traps. I explain the meaning of *tawhîd* according to the Râfiḍî Shia, how they distorted the texts of *tawhîd* to make them correspond to their belief in the Imams and made *imamate* the basis for acceptance of deeds; their belief that the Imams are intermediaries between Allah (ﷻ) and His creation; their idea that people cannot be guided except by the Imams and supplication cannot be accepted except in the name of the Imams; the fact that they consider pilgrimage to Shia shrines better than pilgrimage to the House of Allah; their idea that the Imam can forbid or permit whatever he wants, and that this world and the hereafter are for the Imam to dispose of however he wants; their attribution of natural events to the Imams; their saying that the Imams have the knowledge of what has happened and what will happen, and that nothing is hidden from them; their exaggeration about the concept of affirmation and how they deny the divine attributes; the issue of the creation of the Qur’an and the issue of seeing Allah (ﷻ) in the hereafter; their belief that the Imams are superior to the prophets and messengers; their attitude towards the noble Qur’an and the belief of some of their scholars that the Book of Allah has been distorted, with a refutation of that; the attitude of the Râfiḍî Shia towards the noble Companions and the Sunnah of the Prophet; their concept of *taqiyyah* (dissimulation or deception); their belief in the awaited Mahdi; their belief in bringing certain individuals back to life and their belief in changes in the divine will and decree. I explain the attitude of Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ), the imams of Ahl al-Bayt and the Sunni scholars towards these corrupt beliefs that deviate from the Book of Allah. In my discussion, I strive to adhere to proper etiquette and to avoid reviling and insults. I discuss Shia ideology on the basis of their sources and the books on which they rely. I am keen to show the truth to those who love Ahl al-Bayt among the Shia; I invite them to follow the example of Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ), and I warn them against those who hide beneath the cloak of Ahl al-Bayt with

the aim of corrupting people's beliefs and keeping them away from the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

Moreover, I have written this book with a sincere desire to educate the Sunni masses about the reality of the Râfiqî Shia, because Shia ideology is present and influential among the peoples of Africa, Asia, Europe, and North and South America. The proponents of the Râfiqî Shia point of view are active in spreading their deviant call and are spending a lot of wealth for that purpose. They have allied themselves with the enemies of true Islam so as to strike it, distort it and put an end to it. This is not a new phenomenon, but the Sunnis — with few exceptions — are completely oblivious to their tactics; they seem to be in a deep slumber, unaware of what is being planned against them. Some of them say that the Sunni/Shia conflict belongs in the past, but this is not true; it indicates ignorance and shows that the Muslim masses have been deceived in the name of bringing the two sides together and uniting the Muslims.

The correct way to grow close together is for the Sunni scholars to make a greater effort to spread the sound beliefs that are derived from the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), to explain the soundness of those beliefs and to demonstrate how they are distinct from the views of the followers of innovation. Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah are the ones who are following the way of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and his Companions, and their name is derived from their adherence to the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ), which is encouraged in his words, "I urge you to adhere to my Sunnah and the way of the Rightly Guided Caliphs who come after me; cling to it and adhere firmly to it."¹⁰ He warned us not to go against it when he said: "Beware of newly invented matters, because every newly invented matter is an innovation, and every innovation is a going astray,"¹¹ and, "Whoever turns away from my Sunnah has nothing to do with me."

This is different from the others, the people of whims and desires and innovation who followed ways other than that of the Messenger (ﷺ).

The beliefs of Ahl as-Sunnah originated with the emergence of the Prophet's mission, and they are preserved by Allah (ﷻ) in His Book and in the Sunnah of the Messenger (ﷺ). On the other hand, some of the beliefs of the followers of whims and desires emerged after the time of the Prophet (ﷺ); some emerged at the end of the era of the Companions, and others emerged later than that. The Messenger (ﷺ) foretold that whoever of his companions lived long enough would see division and dissent. He said: "Whoever among you lives (long enough) will see a lot of differences."¹² Then he told them to follow the straight path, which means following his Sunnah and the way of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, and he warned against newly invented matters, saying that they are misguided. It is not rational to suggest that some part of truth and guidance could be hidden from the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) and saved for people who would come after them. All of those newly invented innovations are evil; if there had been any good in them, the Companions would have initiated them. Many of those who came after them indulged in these innovations and deviated from the way of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). Imam Mâlik (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "The last of this Ummah will never be sound except on the basis of that which made the first of this Ummah sound." Hence Ahl as-Sunnah are named after the Sunnah, while others are named after false and deviant groups or after particular people.

The best way to bring people together is to explain the truth and expose the falsehood and to bring the Shia closer to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ), with the understanding of true Islam according to the Sunni scholars, primarily the jurists and scholars of Ahl al-Bayt, such as Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) and

his sons and grandsons. We should also pay attention to and encourage sincere Shia voices of reform. We should respect them, appreciate them and support them in their attempts to correct the course of their people, as as-Sayyid Ḥusayn al-Moosawi has said in his valuable book, *Lillâhi thumma lit-Tareekh: Kashf al-Asrâr wa Tabri'ah al-A'immah al-Aṭḥâr*¹³, and as represented in the academic effort undertaken by as-Sayyid Aḥmad al-Kâtib in his book *Tatawwur al-Fikr as-Siyâsi ash-Shi'i min ash-Shoora ila Wilâyat al-Faqeeh*. We have to show support to every sincere lover of Ahl al-Bayt who follows the sound reports related from them and their way of guiding people to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ). We should treat them with all due respect and hold their hands until they reach the safe shore. We should encourage them to use reason, liberate their minds from their bonds and remove the heavy accumulation of falsehood that has overwhelmed their common sense, so that they will have the opportunity to reach the truth, which shines brightly and cannot be hidden by the dark clouds.

The scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah must adhere to the methods of calm academic research when discussing innovation and innovators, and they should be kind and gentle with them. Part of that kindness may entail visiting them and helping them in matters in which there is no dispute, or supporting them at times of calamity and hardship, or when they are in a dispute with disbelievers or those who are wronging them, in accordance with a proper understanding of Islamic politics and on the basis of the pros and cons. But this principle of cooperation, good relationship and quiet academic debate is not always appropriate. In the case of those Râfiḍi Shia who engage in extreme actions, when keeping quiet may have an impact on the uneducated masses, we must denounce the extremists with regard to their odd opinions. What are the guidelines for differentiating between the two — the first group, with whom we should speak

gently, as opposed to the second group, with whom we should deal harshly? If the person's opinion is based on a Sharia text but the misinterpretation of it leads to his or her confusion, or the person's opinion is based on arguments that are erroneous but that may make sense to some people, then we should kindly explain to them. As for those who base their views on strange reports that were transmitted by unknown or later narrators, and those whose ideas are not a result of simple misinterpretation, being harsh in denouncing their innovations is a must.

The Sunni scholars and the decision-makers among them in sectarian societies have a major role to play in leading the Muslims towards goodness. They are also the ones who are able to evaluate the political situation and make alliances or deals with other groups and sects on the basis of a proper understanding of the pros and cons, in accordance with Sharia political principles. This does not mean that the scholars and callers should give up teaching the Muslims the basic principles of Ahl as-Sunnah and educating them in accordance with those principles, calling the people to them and warning them against the alien, corrupt beliefs that are being propagated among the Muslims. This is necessary so that the Muslims will not be influenced by these false beliefs whose proponents are striving to spread them night and day, in secret and in the open, without ever getting tired. We have a good example in the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ); when he migrated to Madinah, he signed treaties and covenants with the Jews that guaranteed them a life of dignity in the shade of the Islamic state. At the same time, the Holy Qur'an spoke of the beliefs, the history and the morals of the Jews so that the Muslims would come to know the reality of the Jewish character and would not be misled by it. When the Jews committed their act of treachery, the Muslims were not deceived because they already had knowledge of their character.

The one who studies Islamic history, such as the Crusades at the time of Noradin¹⁴ and Saladin¹⁵, the Ottoman era at the time of Sultan Muḥammad al-Fâtiḥ and others, and the Almoravids¹⁶ at the time of Yoosuf ibn Tashfeen, will notice that the factors leading to revival and victory are many, including: purity of belief and clarity of method; ruling the state in accordance with the laws of Allah; the presence of a dedicated leadership that follows the guidance of Allah, acts according to the natural laws of Allah with regard to educating and leading the nations and the rise and fall of states, and is also aware of social problems, how nations develop, the secrets of history, and the plots of the enemies, be they Crusaders, Jews, atheists, esoteric sects or innovators, and gives each factor its proper weight when dealing with them. Issues having to do with revival, short and long term, are complex and interwoven. They can only be understood by those who understand the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Messenger (ﷺ) and are well versed in the positions of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, which have been preserved from our great predecessors. They know the features and characteristics of revival, the means of bringing it about and the causes of its disappearance, and they learn from Islamic history and experiences of revival. Thus they realise that this Ummah never lost its leading position when it was sincere to its Lord and its Prophet, and they understand that military defeat is temporary, the effects of which soon diminish, but that intellectual defeat is a deadly wound. They know that sound education builds the Muslim individual, the Muslim family, the Muslim society and the Muslim state. This education must be built on solid foundations that are based on the Book of Allâh, the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ) and the guidance of the Rightly Guided Caliphs and those who followed in their footsteps. The genius of the early generation in building the Islamic civilisation is that which, after the help and protection of Allâh, preserved for Islam its structure until today.

We have to strive for this religion. Our happiness will come not from haste and quick results, but from sensing the help of Allah (ﷻ) and hoping to attain His pleasure.

In my study of the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, I have been careful in selecting words and phrases in order to fully clarify this period through sound reports, so that Muslims may learn from this era and acquire abundant knowledge and deep understanding, thus comprehending Islam in its totality. May Allah bless this effort and make it of benefit to those callers whose names we do not know, but whose impact will be seen over time, those who will help the Muslim world to overcome all obstacles and rise above its shortcomings, those devoted and sincere souls who know the truth and are happy to support it, who strive for it, defend it and stand by it, despite their weakness and lack of helpers. Allah (ﷻ) has guided them because of their sincerity and devotion and their following the Prophet (ﷺ). May He make this book beneficial to those scholars and seekers of knowledge, the ink of whose pens is equal to the blood of the martyrs; and to those businessmen who stand behind *da'wah*¹⁷ efforts, supporting them with their wealth and their selves, implicitly saying: ﴿We wish for no reward, nor thanks from you. Verily, We fear from our Lord a Day, hard and distressful, that will make the faces look horrible [from extreme dislike to it].﴾ (Qur'an 76: 9-10) They are the unknown soldiers of this world, who will nevertheless be prominent figures in paradise.

Powerful storms are raging, seeking to uproot our Islam, our religion and our beliefs; the efforts of the enemies of Islam, the Crusaders, Jews, secularists, esoteric sects and innovators are targeting our leaders and prominent figures in the fields of science, literature and politics, seeking to destroy our history, because if a nation is without history, it will never be a sound nation. What is the value of a nation that has no heroes? What is the value of a religion

that does not produce heroes despite its lengthy history (as they claim)? Can we learn lessons from our history that will humiliate the enemies of Allah and turn their plots against them? What can help us to resume our mission and support our civilisation?

Humanity is currently going through hard times in this dark era of history because it has strayed far from the path of Allah. The remedy lies with the Muslims alone. Will they be fair to themselves and save the others? Will there be a return to Islam in such a way that our hearts are purified, we establish good, we become connected with the Qur'an and we fully sense the honour of belonging to the nation and religion of Muḥammad (ﷺ)? Will we be motivated to conduct our lives in accordance with his call and the way of the Rightly Guided Caliphs Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân and 'Ali, and all the noble Companions (may Allah be pleased with them)? Will we be able to form another link in the chain of support for the message of the Beloved (ﷺ), which will continue until the end of time?

Before mentioning the sources and references that I used, it is essential to acknowledge that were it not for the help of Allah (ﷻ), and then the efforts of the scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah and the seekers of knowledge who followed in their footsteps, I could not have pursued this venture in such depth. Hence I acknowledge that I have benefited from academic theses which have been typed but not published, in terms of their content, methodology, judging of reports, referring to modern, historical and other sources, while also attempting to build on and benefit from the efforts of others.

In particular, I would like to mention Dr. Akram Diya' al-'Umari, who supervised and discussed many of the theses in this field. I have benefited from his books, such as his sound biography of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his study of the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. I have also benefited from the theses that he supervised, such as that by Dr. Yahya al-Yahya, titled *al-Khilâfah ar-Râshidah*

wal-Dawlah al-Umawiyah min Fath al-Bâri Jam'an wa Tawtheeqan (The Rightly Guided Caliphs and the Umayyad state, collected and authenticated from *Fath al-Bâri*); the thesis of Professor 'Abdul-'Azeez al-Muqbil, *Khilâfat Abi Bakr as-Şiddeeq (ﷺ) min khilâl Kutub as-Sunnah wat-Tareekh: Dirâsah Nadqiyyah lil-Riwâyât bistithna' Huroob ar-Riddah* [The Caliphate of Abu Bakr as-Şiddeeq (ﷺ) from the Books of Sunnah and History: a Critical Study of the Reports with the Exception of the Wars of Apostasy]; the thesis of Dr. 'Abdul-'Azeez ibn Muḥammad al-Furayḥ, *Tahqeeq Kitâb Mahd as-Şawâb fi Fadâ'il Ameer al-Mu'mineen 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb* (Commentary on the Book *Mahd as-Şawâb* on the Virtues of the Commander of the Faithful 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb) by Yoosuf ibn al-Ḥasan ibn 'Abdul-Hâdi ad-Dimashqi as-Şâliḥi al-Ḥanbali; the thesis of Dr. Muḥammad ibn Abdullah al-Ghabbân, *Fi Fitnat Maqtal 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân* (On the Turmoil of the Murder of 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân) and the thesis of 'Abdul-Ḥameed 'Ali Nâsir, *Khilâfat 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib* (The Caliphate of 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib).

I also consulted other university theses that were supervised by other professors, such as the thesis of Dr. Muḥammad Amḥazoon, *Tahqeeq Mawâqif as-Şahâbah fil-Fitnah min Riwâyât at-Ṭabari wal-Muḥadditheen* (Study of the Attitudes of the Companions towards Turmoil based on the Reports of at-Tabari and the Scholars of Hadith); the thesis of Salmân al-'Oadah, *'Abdullah ibn Saba' wa Atharuhu fi Ihḍâth al-Fitnah fi Şadr al-Islam* (Abdullah ibn Saba' and his Impact on the Creation of Turmoil at the Beginning of Islam); the thesis of Professor Asma' Muḥammad Aḥmad Ziyâdah, *Dawr al-Mar'ah as-Siyâsi fi 'Ahd an-Nabi (ﷺ) wal-Khulafa' ar-Râshideen* [Political Role of Women at the Time of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Rightly Guided Caliphs]; and others. Thanks be to Allah first of all, then to my professors and brothers and sisters who paved the way for me. I pray for them in absentia that Allah may accept their efforts and

their good deeds on the Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail, except for the one who brings to Allah (ﷻ) a clean heart [clean from shirk (polytheism) and (hypocrisy)].¹⁸

With regard to the sources used for this study that have to do with the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, they are as follows:

1) Books of Hadith

I started with the six books: *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhari*, *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*, *Sunan Abi Dâwood*, *Sunan at-Tirmidhi*, *Sunan an-Nasâ'i* and *Sunan Ibn Mâjah*; then the *Muwatta'* of Mâlik and the *Musnad* of Aḥmad, then I made some effort to extract the historical material that has to do with the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. I referred to the historical material in *Musannaf 'Abdur-Razzâq*, *Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah*, *Mustadrak al-Ḥâkim*, *as-Sunan al-Kubra* by al-Bayhaqi, the *Sunan* of Sa'eed ibn Maṣṣoor, the *Musnad al-Ḥumaydi*, *Musnad at-Ṭayâlisi*, *Majma' az-Zawâ'id*, *Kashf as-Sattâr 'an Zawâ'id al-Bazzâr* and *Mawârid adh-Dham'ân ila Zawâ'id Ibn Hibbân*. I did not overlook *al-Mu'jam al-Kabeer* by at-Ṭabarâni or the *Sunan* of ad-Dâraquṭni. I benefited from the efforts of the commentators on the books of hadith mentioned above when judging the reports.

2) Commentaries on Hadith

The most important of the commentaries on hadith are *Fath al-Bâri* by Ibn Ḥajar and *Sharḥ an-Nawawi 'ala Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*, in which there is historical material that cannot be overlooked. The comments of Ibn Ḥajar and an-Nawawi on some significant historical events are also important.

3) Books of Tafseer (Qur'anic commentary)

The most important of these are by at-Ṭabari, al-Qurṭubi and Ibn Katheer. I paid more attention to their comments than to the

reports that they transmitted, since most of the reports are mentioned in the books of hadith and history.

4) Books of 'Aqeedah¹⁹

The most important of these books are *Minhâj as-Sunnah an-Nabawiyah* by Ibn Taymiyah, from which I benefited a great deal, *Sharh at-Tahhâwiyyah*, *al-Ibânah fi Uşool ad-Diyânah*, *al-I'tiqâd* by al-Bayhaqi, *ash-Sharee'ah* by al-Âjurri and other books of 'aqeedah, from which I quoted the opinions of the early generation concerning the Rightly Guided Caliphs and the status of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all).

5) Books of Islamic jurisprudence

The most important books that I consulted are: *al-Mughni* by Ibn Qudâmah, *al-Majmoo'* by an-Nawawi, *Bidâyat al-Mujtahid* by Ibn Rushd and some others. I benefited from them with regard to interpretation of Islamic law and judicial issues in which the Rightly Guided Caliphs reached their conclusions on the basis of their ijtihâd.

6) Literary works

I have taken from these literary works some poetry that is attributed to the Rightly Guided Caliphs or that they quoted or listened to. Since literary works do not mention chains of narration, and they contain both good and bad material, I chose verses of poetry that are in harmony with the Book of Allah (ﷻ), the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ) and the morals and attitude of that unique generation. Among the most important of these books are: *'Uyoon al-Akhhâr* by Ibn Qutaybah and *al-Adab al-Islami fi 'Ahd an-Nubuwwah* by Nâyif Ma'roof.

7) Books of Asceticism and softening of hearts

From these I have quoted sayings of the Rightly Guided Caliphs in this field. Among the most important of these books are: *'Uddat as-Şâbireen wa Dhakheerat ash-Shâkireen* by Ibn al-Qayyim; *Madârij as-Sâlikeen* by Ibn al-Qayyim; *Mukhtaşar Minhâj al-Qâsideen* by Aḥmad ibn 'Abdur-Raḥmân al-Maqdisi, and others.

8) Books on Sects and madh-habs
(Schools of juristic thought)

The most important of these books are: *al-Faṣl fil-Milal wal-Ahwa' wan-Nihâl* by Abu Muḥammad ibn Ḥazm adh-Dhâhiri and *Usool Madh-hab ash-Shi'ah al-Imamiyyah al-Ithna 'Ashariyyah* by Dr. Nâsir al-Qafâri.

9) Books on Systems of ruling

The most important of these books are: *Nidhâm al-Ḥukoomah al-Islamiyyah* by al-Katâni, which is also known as *at-Tarâteeb al-Idâriyyah*, and *Nidhâm al-Ḥukm fîsh-Sharee'ah wat-Tareekh al-Islami* by Dhâfir al-Qâsimi.

10) Biographies

The most important of these books are: *Siyar A'lâm an-Nubala'* by adh-Dhahabi, *Shadharât adh-Dhahab fî Akhbâr man dhahaba* by 'Abdul-Ḥayy al-Ḥanbali, *Asad al-Ghâbah* by Ibn al-Atheer and *Siyar as-Salaf* by Abu al-Qâsim al-Işfahâni.

11) Books of Evaluation of narrators

The most important of these books are: *Tahdheeb al-Kamâl fî Asma' ar-Rijâl* by al-Ḥâfidh al-Mazzi, *al-Jarḥ wat-Ta'deel* by Ibn Abi Ḥatîm, *ath-Thiqât* by Ibn Hibbân and *al-Kâmil fî Du'afa' ar-Rijâl* by Ibn 'Adiyy.

12) Books of history

The most important of these is *Tareekh at-Ṭabari*. This book contains reports whose chains of narration are sound, weak and fabricated. The reports regarding 'aqeedah, Sharia rulings and events having to do with the Companions must be subjected to thorough evaluation, and the ones by Râfiḍi Shia, liars and unknown narrators should be highlighted. In this regard, I have benefited from the books *Istishhâd 'Uthmân wa Waq'at al-Jamal fi Marwiyât Sayf ibn 'Umar fi Tareekh at-Ṭabari* by Khâlid al-Ghayth, *Marwiyât Abi Makhnaf fi Tareekh at-Ṭabari* by Dr. Yahya Ibrâheem al-Yahya and *Athar at-Tashayyu' 'ala ar-Riwâyât at-Târeekhiiyyah* by Dr. 'Abdul-'Azeez Noor Wali. One of the most important of these books is *al-Bidâyah wan-Nihâyah* by Ibn Katheer.

These are the most important sources to which I referred, along with a large number of various modern references.

I was very strict in verifying reports or passing judgement on them when they had to do with matters of belief, rulings and the Companions (may Allāh be pleased with them). In this regard, I only transmitted the words of scholars who are specialised in this field, so thanks is due first to Allāh (ﷻ) and then to these scholars. I sought to depict historical events on the basis of sound reports, but I did not neglect the weak reports altogether; I made use of the latter to complete the picture when it could not be completed by the sound and reliable reports, in a manner that is in harmony with the spirit of that age, but only with regard to issues that have nothing to do with 'aqeedah or Sharia. I also engaged in a discussion of the erroneous arguments and lies of the Râfiḍis, the Orientalists and some contemporary writers. I was keen to demonstrate the methodology of Ahl as-Sunnah concerning the period of the Rightly Guided Caliphs and to refute the specious arguments, especially with regard to the time of 'Uthmân and 'Ali (may Allāh be pleased with them). Many

new ideas have been presented by some of our dear brothers in the study of the period of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, and I have the strong intention, if Allah (ﷻ) wills, to develop these ideas further in a manner that is in harmony with that brilliant age. We ask Allah (ﷻ) to guide and help us.

I have singled out the fifth of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷺ), for a special study because of the importance of his views, which reflect a deep understanding of how to run the state in accordance with Sharia and according to a deep understanding of pros and cons; his unique vision for reforming and uniting the Ummah by giving up the caliphate to Mu‘āwiyah (ﷺ); and the obstacles and calamities he faced while striving to implement his vision. He had a remarkable ability to lead his pioneering venture of reconciliation and a resolve to carry it out, which led to the unity of the Ummah and the fulfilment of the prophecy of the Prophet (ﷺ): “This son of mine is a leader, and perhaps Allah will reconcile two groups of the Muslims through him.”²⁰ With al-Ḥasan’s giving up the caliphate and swearing allegiance to Mu‘āwiyah (may Allah be pleased with them both), the period of caliphate in the footsteps of the Prophet came to an end after thirty years. The evidence for that is to be found in the words of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): “Caliphate in the footsteps of the prophets will be for thirty years, then Allah will give sovereignty to whomever He will,”²¹ and “Caliphate in my Ummah will be for thirty years, then it will be kingship after that.”²² Ibn Katheer commented on this hadith, saying: “The thirty years were completed with the caliphate of al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Ali, as he gave up the caliphate to Mu‘āwiyah in Rabee‘ al-Awwal 41 AH, thus completing exactly thirty years from the death of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), as he died in Rabee‘ al-Awwal 11 AH. This is one of the signs of his prophethood (ﷺ).”²³ Thus al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Ali (ﷺ) was the fifth Rightly Guided Caliph.

Inshallah my book *al-Hasan ibn ‘Ali* will provide an important conclusion to the study of the period of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. It will encompass the unique features and characteristics of that era, the reasons for its demise, its system of rules and the qualities of its people and leaders, its constitution and crisis management at that time, as well as a study of the laws and causes of advancement, the status of women at the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, the institutions of the state and the deep understanding of what it meant that they knew that they were going to meet Allah (ﷻ).

I was also very keen to analyse the character of Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ) from various angles, as his life is a great page in the history of the Ummah. He is one of the leaders whose guidance people can follow in their words and deeds in this life. His biography is one of the strongest sources of faith, sound Islamic inspiration and proper understanding of this religion. From him we learn the true understanding of the law of cause and effect, and how to behave and plan in accordance with it; how we may live with the Holy Qur’an, following its guidance and the example of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ); the importance of fearing Allah (ﷻ), being sincere to Him and seeking that which is with Him in order to attain success in this world and the hereafter; the impact of all of these on the life and revival of the Muslim Ummah and the resumption of its role in building a leading civilisation. Hence in my study of the life and times of ‘Ali bin Abi Tālib (ﷺ), I dedicated myself to the task and put all my effort into it, without claiming to be infallible and without denying any of my mistakes, seeking nothing but the countenance of Allah (ﷻ) and His reward, for He is the one whose help I seek, His are the best of names, and He hears all supplications.

I completed this book on Saturday at 12:45 p.m. on 17 Rabee‘ al-Awwal 1424 AH/ 7 June 2003 CE. All thanks be to Allah (ﷻ) first and last. I ask Him by His most beautiful names and sublime

attributes to make my work sincerely for His sake and beneficial to His slaves, to reward every letter that I have written and put it in the balance of my good deeds, and to reward my brothers who helped me with everything they could to complete this humble effort. We hope that every Muslim who reads this book will not forget its author, who is in need of the pardon, forgiveness, mercy and good pleasure of his Lord, in his or her supplications. ﴿My Lord! Grant me the power and ability that I may be grateful for Your favours which You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may do righteous good deeds that will please You, and admit me, by Your Mercy, among Your righteous slaves.﴾ (*Qur'an* 27: 19)

Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Whatever of mercy [i.e. of good], Allah may grant to mankind, none can withhold it; and whatever He may withhold, none can grant it thereafter. And He is the Almighty, the All-Wise.﴾ (*Qur'an* 35: 2)

May Allah send blessings and peace upon Sayyiduna Muḥammad (ﷺ) and his family and Companions. Glory and praise be to You, O Allah. I bear witness that there is no god except You, I seek Your forgiveness and I repent to You. And the end of our supplications is: all praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

The one who is in need of the pardon, forgiveness, mercy and good pleasure of his Lord,

Ali Muḥammad aṣ-Ṣallabi

CHAPTER ONE

‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷺ) in Makkah

1. Names, Lineage, Attributes and Family

1.1. Names and titles

1.1.1. Name and lineage

The full name and lineage of ‘Ali (ﷺ) was ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (‘Abd Manāf)¹ ibn ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib, who was called Shaybah al-Ḥamd² ibn Hāshim ibn ‘Abd Manāf ibn Quṣayy ibn Kilāb ibn Lu’ayy ibn Ghālib ibn Fihir ibn Mālik ibn an-Naḍr ibn Kinānah ibn Khuzaymah ibn Madrakah ibn Ilyās ibn Muḍar ibn Nizār ibn Ma’d ibn ‘Adnān.³ He was the paternal cousin of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and shared a grandfather with him in ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib ibn Hāshim. His father was Abu Ṭālib, the full brother of Abdullah, the father of the Prophet (ﷺ). ‘Ali’s name at birth was Asad; he was given this name by his mother (ﷺ), who named him after her father Asad ibn Hāshim. This is referred to in the lines of verse that ‘Ali composed on the day of Khaybar, when he said: “I am the one whose mother named him Ḥaydarah⁴, like a lion of the jungle, frightful to behold.”⁵

Abu Ṭālib was not present when ‘Ali was born. When he returned, he did not like this name, and he called the child ‘Ali.⁶

1.1.2. Kunyah⁷

The kunyah of 'Ali (عليه السلام) was Abu al-Ḥasan, after his oldest son al-Ḥasan, who was one of the children of his wife Fâtimah (عليها السلام), the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). He was also known by the kunyah Abu Turâb, which was given to him by the Prophet (ﷺ), and he was always happy to be addressed by it. The story behind that name was that once when the Messenger (ﷺ) came to the house of Fâtimah, and he did not find 'Ali in the house, he asked her: "Where is the son of your uncle?" She said: "There was a disagreement between him and me, and we got angry with one another, so he went out and did not take a nap here with me." The Prophet (ﷺ) said to someone: "Go and see where he is." The man came and said: "O Messenger of Allah, he is sleeping in the mosque." The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) went and saw him lying there. His upper garment had fallen from his shoulder, and dust (*turâb*) had gotten on to him, so the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) began wiping it from him and saying, "Get up, Abu Turâb (father of dust)."⁸ According to a report narrated by Bukhari: By Allah, no one called him that except the Prophet (ﷺ).⁹

Other kunyahs of his were: Abu al-Ḥasan wal-Ḥusayn, Abu al-Qâsim al-Hâshimi¹⁰ and Abu as-Sibṭayn.¹¹

1.1.3. Titles

Amir al-Mu'mineen (Commander of the Faithful), the fourth of the Rightly Guided Caliphs.¹²

1.2. The birth of 'Ali (عليه السلام)

There are many different reports about the year of his birth. Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrî stated that he was born fifteen or sixteen years before the Prophet's mission began.¹³ Ibn Ishâq stated that he was born ten years before the mission began,¹⁴ and Ibn Ḥajar regarded this view as

more likely to be correct.¹⁵ Al-Bâqir Muḥammad ibn 'Ali mentioned two views: the first is the same as that mentioned by Ibn Ishâq and regarded as more likely to be correct by Ibn Ḥajar, which is that he was born ten years before the mission began.¹⁶ The second view is that he was born five years before the mission began.¹⁷ I am inclined to favour the view of Ibn Ḥajar and Ibn Ishâq, so his birth was most likely to have occurred ten years before the mission began.¹⁸ Al-Fâkihi¹⁹ stated that 'Ali (ﷺ) was the first of Banu Hâshim to be born inside the Ka'bah. Al-Ḥâkim said: The reports that 'Ali was born inside the Ka'bah are *mutawâtir* (reported by so many people that it would not be possible for them to have agreed on an untruth).²⁰

1.3. Lineage and family, and their impact on the offspring

According to the science of anatomy (the study of the body's structure), psychology, behavioural science and sociology, blood ties and lineage affect a person's attitude, talent and potential to some extent, in most cases. That has to do with three things:

(a) Individuals try to maintain the values and ideals that their fathers and forefathers strongly believed in and adhered to, and they regard themselves as being of noble descent because of them. They consider themselves highly respectable and regard as odd those members of the family who go against these beliefs and drift away. Such an attitude is considered to be unacceptable and a sign of low esteem, lack of dignity, disobedience to the forefathers and tarnishing of the lineage that cannot be forgiven according to the inherited standards of that family.

(b) Each family has stories of forefathers and prominent members and their courage, chivalry, gallantry, sense of honour, generosity, munificence, and defence of the oppressed and weak. These are

transmitted from one generation to another and boasted about from an early age, through the age of youth to maturity. This affects the mental and emotional disposition of an individual and defines the standards of greatness and manhood. This respect for parents and forefathers offers justification for the good name of the family and the lineage.

(c) The science of genealogy proves that these attributes are inherited from generation to generation in a family that maintains its lineage.²¹ This is not absolute; neither is it a rule with no exceptions, unlike the divine laws of which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿So no change will you find in Allah's *Sunnah* (way of dealing), and no turning off will you find in Allah's *Sunnah* (way of dealing).﴾ (*Qur'an* 35: 43) The Prophet (ﷺ) also referred to this meaning when he said: "People are of different qualities like gold and silver; the best of them in the *jâhiliyyah*²² will be the best of them in Islam, if they understand,"²³ and "Whoever is slowed down by his deeds, his lineage will not help him to get ahead."²⁴

That is not to say that inherited blood is to be sanctified, or that spiritual or academic leadership is concentrated in a particular family, or that any family has a permanent monopoly on the leadership of the Ummah in religious, spiritual or academic terms. In the ancient world before Islam, this was a problem that caused overwhelming social and moral corruption, tyranny and abhorrent financial exploitation; this was evident through the downfall of the Roman and Sassanid empires, ancient Greek and Indian²⁵ societies and other cultures that were based on *jâhiliyyah*. The history books chronicle their collapse, and the historians bear witness to it. Hence it is appropriate for us to point out the position of the family and lineage into which 'Ali was born and in which he was raised, in racial and social terms. It is also imperative to bring forth the characteristics, customs, traditions and psychological and moral legacy that distinguished his family, and

how the Arabs viewed it and affirmed its virtue. We will start with Quraysh and move on to Banu Hâshim.²⁶

1.3.1. The tribe of Quraysh

All the Arabs acknowledged the sublime and noble lineage of Quraysh, their leadership, the purity of their language, their fluency and eloquence, their noble attitude, courage and chivalry. That became like a byword, indisputable and irrefutable.²⁷ They were united allies who still adhered to a great deal of the law of Ibrâheem al-Khaleel [the Prophet Abraham (*'alayhi as-salâm* — peace be upon him)]. They were not like the Bedouin, who had no respect for religion and no good manners. They loved their children, went on pilgrimage to the Ka'bah, performed the rituals (of hajj), shrouded their dead, washed in the case of impurity resulting from sexual activity, regarded as misguided the guardians of the fire temples²⁸, and kept away from incest with daughters, granddaughters, sisters and nieces out of decency and a wish to shun the way of the Magians. The Noble Qur'an was revealed approving of their behaviour and good choices in that regard. They married with a dowry and witnesses and gave three-stage divorces.²⁹ What increased them in honour was the fact that they married from any tribe they wanted without stipulating any conditions, but they would not give their daughters in marriage to anyone until they had stipulated that he should be a strict follower of their religion. They thought that because of their high status, it was not permissible for them to give their daughters in marriage until the other party submitted to them and followed their way.³⁰

1.3.2. Banu Hâshim

Banu Hâshim was the most prominent clan of Quraysh. If we read what historians and the biographies of the Prophet Muhammad

(ﷺ) have recorded about their exploits and sayings — which is very little indeed — we will see that they were distinguished by all noble human feelings, moderation in all things, sound reasoning, strong belief in the high status of the Ka‘bah before Allah (ﷻ), avoidance of wrongdoing or rejecting the truth, high ambition, kindness towards guests and the oppressed, generosity, courage and everything that chivalry implied to the Arabs of noble meanings, praiseworthy characteristics and good conduct that befits the forefathers of the noble Prophet (ﷺ). Banu Hāshim did not attain this status in their society except by means of sacrifice, generous living and service to the people. All that they practiced was in conformity with what the Prophet (ﷺ) propagated about noble morals and manners, with one exception: since they lived during the period between the coming of two prophets, they went along with their people with regard to ignorant beliefs and acts of worship.³¹

1.3.3. ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib

‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib ibn Hāshim was the grandfather of the Prophet (ﷺ) and of ‘Ali ibn Abi Tālib (ﷺ). ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib ibn Hāshim was in charge of providing water and food³² to all of the pilgrims after his uncle al-Muṭṭalib died. For his own people, he did what his forefathers before him had done with regard to managing their affairs, and he reached a high status among his people that none of his forefathers had reached. His people loved him, and he became very prominent among them.³³

‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib was not the richest man among Quraysh, nor was he the sole master of Makkah, as Quṣayy was, because in Makkah there were men who had more wealth and power than he had. He was the most prominent figure among his people because he was in charge of providing water and food for the pilgrims and he was in charge of the well of *Zamzam*³⁴, which was an important

position having to do with the Ka'bah.³⁵ 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib had a strong faith that this House was of high esteem before Allâh (ﷻ) and that He would protect it and take care of it. The sublime character and strong, proud attitude of this leader of Quraysh were manifested in the conversation that took place between him and Abrahah, the King of Abyssinia. Abrahah wanted to invade Makkah and humiliate the Ka'bah, thus putting an end to its high position, and he had captured two hundred camels belonging to 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib. When 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib went to see him, Abrahah showed great respect by making room for him on his throne and allowing 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib sit with him. Then he asked what he wanted, and 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib replied: "What I want is for the king to return the two hundred camels of mine that he has captured." When he said that, the king lost interest in him and turned his face away, and he said: "Are you speaking to me about two hundred camels of yours that I have captured, and ignoring the House that is the basis of your religion and the religion of your forefathers, which I have come to destroy, and you are not speaking to me about it?!" 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib said: "I am the lord (owner) of the camels, but the House has a Lord Who will protect it." Abrahah said: "No one can protect (the Ka'bah) from me." 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib said: "It's up to you."³⁶ What 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib said turned out to be true; the Lord of the House protected His house and made Abrahah's plot go astray:

﴿And He sent against them birds, in flocks, Striking them with stones of Sijjeel [baked clay]. And He made them like [an empty field of] stalks [of which the corn has been eaten up by cattle].﴾

(*Qur'an* 105: 3-5)

'Abdul-Muṭṭalib taught his children to avoid wrongdoing and oppression. He urged them to have a good attitude and forbade them from indulging in vile and base matters.³⁷ When 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib died, he was past the age of eighty, and the Messenger was eight

years old, which means that he died in approximately 578 CE.³⁸ It was said that no market was held in Makkah for many days after the death of 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib.³⁹

1.3.4. Abu Ṭālib

Abu Ṭālib was the father of 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷺ). Abu Ṭālib had no wealth. He loved his nephew very much, and when he went out he took him along. Abu Ṭālib looked after the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) after his grandfather's death, so the Prophet grew up with him under his care.⁴⁰ When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) proclaimed the call to Allah (ﷻ) openly, Abu Ṭālib stood beside him and was determined to support him and not let him down. That upset Quraysh a great deal and caused them to feel distress and envy, and they began plotting. One is astounded and impressed by the chivalrous attitude of Abu Ṭālib towards the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Abu Ṭālib connected his fate to that of his nephew Muḥammad (ﷺ); indeed he made use of the fact that he was the leader of Banu Hāshim to bring Banu Hāshim and Banu Muṭṭalib together in support of him, swearing to live or die together in defence of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), Muslims and polytheists alike.⁴¹ He offered complete protection to his nephew Muḥammad (ﷺ) without hesitating or declining. When Abu Ṭālib saw the good efforts that his people were making for his sake and their sympathy for him, he began praising them, referring to their noble history and the position and status of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) among them, so as to reinforce their attitude and bring them closer to him.⁴² He said:

*If one day Quraysh gathered together to boast,
'Abd Manāf would be their heart and soul;
And if the nobles of 'Abd Manāf were reckoned,
Among Hāshim would be their noblest and chief;
If they boast one day, then Muḥammad*

*Would be the chosen noble and honourable one.
Quraysh summoned everyone against us;
They were not successful and they were beside themselves.
Of old we have never tolerated injustice;
When people turned away their faces in pride we made them face us.*

When Abu Tâlib feared that the Arab masses would join forces with Quraysh against his people, he spoke words of poetry in which he sought refuge in the sanctity of Makkah and its status, offering the hand of friendship to the nobles of his people, yet at the same time telling them in his poetry that he would not hand over the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) nor would he leave him for anything, even if he died defending him. He said:

*When I saw the people had no love for us
And had severed every time and relationship,
And shown us enmity and ill-will,
Obeying the orders of persecuting enemies,
And had allied themselves with treacherous people against us,
Biting their fingers in rage at our backs,
I stood firm against them with my pliant spear,
And my shining sword, heirloom of princes.
Round the temple I gathered my clan and my brothers,
And laid hold of the striped red cloth that covered it,
Standing together, facing its gates,
Where everyone who takes an oath completes his vow.*

He sought refuge in the Ka'bah and the sacred things in it, and he swore by the Ka'bah that he would never hand over Muḥammad (ﷺ) even if blood flowed in rivers and battles with different clans of Quraysh intensified:

*You lie, by God's House, Muḥammad shall not be maltreated;
Before we shoot and thrust in his defence,*

*We will not give him up until we lie dead around him,
And be unmindful of our wives and children;
Until a people in arms rise and fight you,
As camels carrying water rise under empty water-skins.*

Abu Tâlib continued to support his nephew and managed to penetrate the society of Quraysh with his great poetry that moved the people deeply. When Islam became deeply entrenched in the hearts of the members of some tribes, Quraysh came together and agreed among themselves to carry out a boycott against Banu Hâshim and Banu Muṭṭalib, according to which they would not intermarry with them or trade with them, either buying or selling. They wrote a document, hung it up inside the Ka'bah and took pledges to that effect. Banu Hâshim and Banu Muṭṭalib went to Abu Tâlib and stayed with him in his mountain pass.⁴³ This occurred in the month of Muḥarram, seven years after the prophethood began, and Banu Hâshim remained in this situation for nearly three years, during which nothing reached them except in secret. Finally, the worms ate the document, and the Prophet (ﷺ) told Abu Tâlib about it, and about the tearing up of the document and the cancellation of its contents.⁴⁴ Abu Tâlib died in the middle of the month of Shawwâl, in the tenth year of prophethood, when he was over eighty years old, but he had not become Muslim.⁴⁵ This was the same year in which Khadeejah (رضي الله عنها), the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ), also died, and calamities befell the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) one after another. The year was known as the Year of Sorrow.⁴⁶

1.3.5. The mother of Amir al-Mu'mineen

'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه)

'Ali's mother was the noble female Companion Fâtimah bint Asad ibn Hâshim ibn 'Abd Manâf ibn Quṣayy al-Hâshimiyyah.⁴⁷ She was the first Hâshimi woman to give birth to a Hâshimi son.⁴⁸

She took care of the Prophet (ﷺ) when his paternal uncle Abu Tâlib sponsored him on the recommendation of his own father 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib. She was like a mother to him after his own mother died; she looked after him and took care of him as best she could. The Beloved (ﷺ) spent two decades of his life in her care, and she answered the call of Islam and became one of the first Muslim women, one of the elite women who occupied a high position in the realm of virtue. She (ﷺ) was kindness and compassion personified. This is exemplified in the way she interacted with Fâṭimah az-Zahra' (ﷺ) and helped her out of sheer kindness towards her and her father (ﷺ). It was narrated from Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) that he said: I said to my mother: Take care of bringing water and other errands for Fâṭimah, and she will take care of grinding flour and making dough for you.⁴⁹ Her high position in relation to the Prophet (ﷺ) is further enhanced by the fact that she memorised and narrated a number of hadiths from the Prophet (ﷺ). She was held in high esteem by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and he gave her gifts. Ibn Hajar narrated in *al-Iṣâbah* that 'Ali said: A suit of brocade was given to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and he said: "No, rather make them into veils and give them to the Fâṭimahs."⁵⁰ It was cut into four pieces: a headcovering for Fâṭimah the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), a headcovering for Fâṭimah bint Asad (ﷺ), a headcovering for Fâṭimah bint Hamzah (ﷺ), and he did not mention the fourth.⁵¹

Fâṭimah (the mother of 'Ali) was fortunate and blessed in her life and when she died. She was honoured to die within the lifetime of the Beloved (ﷺ).⁵² With regard to the report that was narrated from Anas about her burial, it is very weak and is not strengthened by the other reports, because they are all weak. It was narrated that Anas ibn Mâlik (ﷺ) said: When Fâṭimah bint Asad (ﷺ), the mother of 'Ali, died, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) entered upon her and sat at her head and said: "May Allah have mercy on you, O my mother, for you were a mother to me after my mother died; you went hungry so that

you might give me enough, you stayed without proper clothing so that you might clothe me, you refrained from eating good food so that you might feed me, seeking thereby the countenance of Allah (ﷻ) and the home of the hereafter.” He ordered that every part of her be washed three times, and when he reached the water in which there is camphor, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) poured it with his own hand, then the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) took off his garment, and she was clothed in it, and she was wrapped with his cloak over that. Then the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) called Usâmah ibn Zayd, Abu Ayyoob al-Ansâri, ‘Umar ibn al-Khattâb and a black slave to dig, and they dug her grave, and when they reached the niche, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) dug it with his own hand and removed its soil with his own hand. When it was finished, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) entered it and lay down in it and said: “O Allah, Who gives life and death, and Who is living and will never die, forgive my mother Fâtimah bint Asad, help her to answer the angels’ questions, make her grave spacious by virtue of Your Prophet and the prophets who came before me, because You are the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.” And he said *takbeer*⁵³ over her four times (that is, offered the funeral prayer for her), and he and al-‘Abbâs and Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with them) placed her in the niche.⁵⁴

This hadith was quoted as evidence by some⁵⁵ to show that it is permissible to seek to draw closer to Allah by mentioning the virtue of righteous people. Professor Abu ‘Abdur-Rahmân Jablân ibn Khadr al-‘Aroosi, in his Master’s thesis, researched the chains of narration of this hadith and demonstrated that it is either weak or false⁵⁶, and he explained that the hadith was narrated via five chains, three of which are *mawsool* and two are *mursal*, but none of them was free of many problems, so it is extremely weak. Nevertheless, seeking the help of Allah (ﷻ) by virtue of someone else is only mentioned with one chain, which is via Anas (رضي الله عنه). Other hadiths may weaken this hadith because all of them are weak, so they weaken

one another and only increase it in weakness. With regard to the text, it is to be rejected for several reasons:

- In this hadith, there is exaggeration and excessive praise, going beyond what was the norm at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ).
- This hadith is contrary to the teachings and Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) with regard to washing the body of a woman on several counts, including the following: His pouring the water himself, which is mentioned only in this story. With regard to the reports about the washing of his daughter Zaynab, he told others to wash her and he did not pour the water himself. Bukhari and Muslim narrated from Muḥammad ibn Sireen that Umm 'Aṭiyyah said: The Prophet (ﷺ) entered upon us when we were washing his daughter and said: "Wash her three times, or five, or more than that, if you see fit, with water and lotus leaves, and put camphor in the last time. And when you have finished, let me know." When we had finished, we let him know, and he gave us his waist wrapper and said: "Put it next to her body." And he did not do any more than that.⁵⁷
- Digging with his own hand and taking out the dirt with his own hand and lying down in the grave are only narrated in this weak hadith, which is contrary to his normal way, and it is a kind of exaggeration and excessive praise.

Moreover, the wording of the supplication, which begins in the third person and then moves to the second person, is very different from his usual style in the supplications which are narrated in hadith ("O Allah, You..."). We do not see in any supplication apart from this one the words "O Allah, Who..."

- Another indication of its weakness is that the narrator admits that the Prophet (ﷺ) did not do these actions except on this occasion, but he wants to highlight this fact as a justification.⁵⁸

1.3.6. The siblings of 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ)

Abu Ṭâlib had four sons: Ṭâlib, from whom he took his kunyah (Abu Ṭâlib), 'Aqeel, Ja'far and 'Ali. He also had two daughters, Umm Hâni' and Jumânah. All of them were children of Fâṭimah bint Asad. There were ten years between each of them; Ṭâlib was the oldest, then 'Aqeel was ten years younger, then Ja'far, who was ten years older than 'Ali.⁵⁹ The following is a brief look at the siblings of 'Ali:

(a) Ṭâlib ibn Abi Ṭâlib: Ṭâlib died a polytheist after the Battle of Badr. It was said that he left and did not return, and no one knew where he ended up or what happened to him; he was one of those who got lost in the earth. He loved the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and wrote poetry praising him. He joined the polytheists at Badr reluctantly. A dialogue took place between him and Quraysh when they went out to Badr. They said: By Allah, O Banu Hâshim, we know that even if you go out with us, your inclination is in favour of Muḥammad. Ṭâlib went back to Makkah with those who went back, and he composed poetry and an ode praising the Prophet (ﷺ) and eulogised the disbelievers who were thrown into the well at Badr.⁶⁰

(b) 'Aqeel ibn Abi Ṭâlib: he was known by the kunyah Abu Yazeed. He did not become Muslim until the year of the conquest of Makkah; it was said that it was after Ḥudaybiyah. He migrated to Madinah at the beginning of 8 AH. He was taken captive on the day of the battle of Badr and was ransomed by his paternal uncle al-'Abbâs. He is mentioned in several places in *aṣ-Ṣaḥeeḥ*. He was martyred during the campaign of Mu'tah, and no mention of him is made with regard to the conquest of Makkah and the Battle of Hunayn, because he was sick. That was mentioned by Ibn Sa'd, but az-Zubayr ibn Bakkâr stated, with his chain of narration going back to al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali, that 'Aqeel stood firm (in battle) on the day of Hunayn and died

during the caliphate of Mu'âwiyah. In *Tareekh al-Bukhari al-Ashghar* it is mentioned with a sound chain that he died at the beginning of Yazeed's caliphate, before the battle of al-Ḥarrah⁶¹, at the age of ninety-six.⁶²

(c) Ja'far ibn Abi Tâlib: Ja'far was one of the earliest Muslims. He loved the poor and sat in their company, served them and conversed with them. He migrated to Abyssinia, where the Negus and those who followed him became Muslim at his hands. I have discussed him in my book *as-Seerah an-Nabawiyyah: 'Arad Waqâ'i' wa Tahleel Aḥdâth (The Prophet's Biography: Events and Analysis)*. He was martyred fighting bravely at Mu'tah in greater Syria.⁶³

(d) Umm Hâni' bint Abi Tâlib: The female paternal cousin of the Prophet (ﷺ). It was said that her name was Fâkhithah or Fâṭimah or Hind, but the first is better known. She was the wife of Hubayrah ibn 'Amr ibn 'Â'idh al-Makhzoomi, and she bore him 'Amr, from whom he took his kunyah. At the conquest of Makkah, Umm Hâni' granted protection to two men from Banu Makhzoom, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Those to whom you grant protection, we grant protection, O Umm Hâni'." Umm Hâni' narrated hadiths from the Prophet (ﷺ) which are recorded in the six books and elsewhere as well.⁶⁴ At-Tirmidhi and others said that she lived longer than 'Ali (عليه السلام).⁶⁵

(e) Jumânah bint Abi Tâlib: She is also known as Umm Abdullah ibn Abi Sufyân ibn al-Ḥârith ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib. She was mentioned by Ibn Sa'd in his biography of her mother Fâṭimah bint Asad, in his chapter on the female paternal cousins of the Prophet (ﷺ). She bore Abu Sufyân ibn al-Ḥârith his son Ja'far ibn Abi Sufyân, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) gave her thirty *wasqs* of dates from Khaybar.⁶⁶

1.3.7. The wives and children of ‘Ali (ﷺ)

Fāṭimah,⁶⁷ the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), bore him al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, of whom we will speak in more detail later, as well as Zaynab al-Kubra and Umm Kalthoom al-Kubra. Khawlah bint Ja‘far ibn Qays ibn Maslamah bore him Muḥammad al-Akbar (Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah). Layla bint Mas‘ood ibn Khâlid from Banu Tameem bore him ‘Ubaydullah and Abu Bakr. Umm al-Baneen bint Ḥizâm⁶⁸ ibn Khâlid ibn Ja‘far ibn Rabee‘ah bore him al-‘Abbâs al-Akbar, ‘Uthmân, Ja‘far al-Akbar and Abdullah. Asma’ bint ‘Umayy al-Khath‘amiyyah bore him Yaḥya and ‘Awn.⁶⁹ Al-Ṣahba’⁷⁰ bore him ‘Umar al-Akbar and Ruqayyah. Umâmah⁷¹ bint al-‘Âṣ ibn ar-Rabee‘ bore him Muḥammad al-Awsat. Umm Sa‘eed bint ‘Urwah ibn Mas‘ood ath-Thaqafi bore him Umm al-Ḥasan and Ramlah al-Kubra. His slave women bore him Muḥammad al-Asghar, Umm Hâni’, Maymoonah, Zaynab al-Ṣughra, Ramlah al-Ṣughra, Umm Kalthoom al-Ṣughra, Fāṭimah, Umâmah, Khadeejah, Umm al-Kirâm, Umm Salamah, Umm Ja‘far, Jumânah and Nafeesah. Maḥyât bint Imrul-Qays bore him a daughter who died young. Ibn Sa‘d said: There is no sound proof that he had any other children apart from these.⁷² In total, the number of children that ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷺ) had was fourteen sons and nineteen daughters. (Some said seventeen daughters.) His descendants came from only five of his sons: al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah, al-‘Abbâs ibn al-Kilâbiyyah and ‘Umar ibn at-Taghlabiyyah.⁷³ We will speak of Fāṭimah (ﷺ) and her children al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and Umm Kalthoom throughout this book.

1.3.8. Physical characteristics of ‘Ali (ﷺ)

Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The best description that I have seen of ‘Ali (ﷺ) is that he was of average height, if not on the short side, with wide black eyes, a handsome face

like the moon when it is full, a large belly, broad shoulders, large hands and a neck like silver brocade. He was bald, with no hair on his head except at the back; his beard was large and thick. The bones of his shoulders were like the bones of a strong lion, and there was no difference between his forearm and upper arm, as if they were one. If he held a man's arm, the man would not be able to breathe. Even though he was somewhat fat, his arm and hand were very powerful. When he walked in battle he almost ran, and he looked steadfast, strong and brave.⁷⁴

2. His coming to Islam and his most important exploits in Makkah before the Hijrah

2.1. Accepting Islam

One of the blessings that Allah (ﷻ) bestowed upon ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (عليه السلام), and what Allah willed for him of good, was that a severe crisis befell Quraysh. Abu Ṭâlib had many children, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to his paternal uncle al-‘Abbâs — who was one of the most well off of Banu Quraysh — “O ‘Abbâs, your brother Abu Ṭâlib has many children, and you see what has happened to the people in this crisis. Let us go and reduce the number of his dependants; I will take one from his family and you will take one, and we will take care of them for him.” Al-‘Abbâs agreed, so they went to Abu Ṭâlib and said to him: “We want to reduce the number of your dependants until this crisis has passed.” He said to them: “If you leave me ‘Aqeel, then do whatever you want.” So the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) took ‘Ali home, and al-‘Abbâs took Ja‘far (عليه السلام). ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (عليه السلام) stayed with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) until his

prophethood, then ‘Ali (ؓ) followed him and believed in him. Ja‘far (ؓ) stayed with al-‘Abbās until he became Muslim and no longer needed his help.⁷⁵

We may note that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) wanted to pay back the kindness of his uncle Abu Ṭālib, who had sponsored him after the death of his grandfather ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib. This was one of the greatest blessings that Allah (ﷻ) bestowed upon ‘Ali (ؓ), as he was raised and educated by the one who was guided by Allah (ﷻ). The one whose attitude was the Qur’an looked after him and took care of him. This Qur’anic attitude was reflected in ‘Ali (ؓ), and it was enough that he was raised by the Prophet (ﷺ). He grew up in the house of Islam and learned its teachings at an early stage in his life, before the call of Islam went beyond the walls of the house to seek followers who would support it and propagate it among other people, bringing them forth from darkness to light. The scholars differed as to the next person who believed in Islam after Khadeejah bint Khuwaylid (ؓ), the Mother of the Believers, who was the first of all the people. Was the next person Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddeeq or ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with them both)? The scholarly view, which I am inclined to favour, is that the first one to become Muslim among free men was Abu Bakr, the first child to do so was ‘Ali, the first woman to do so was Khadeejah, and the first slave to believe was Zayd ibn Ḥārithah (may Allah be pleased with them all).⁷⁶ Thus Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (ؓ) was the first child to become Muslim.

2.2. How did ‘Ali become Muslim?

Ibn Ishâq narrated that ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ؓ) came to the Prophet (ﷺ) after Khadeejah (ؓ) became Muslim, and he found them praying. ‘Ali (ؓ) said: “What is this, O Muḥammad?” The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The religion of Allah, which He has chosen for Himself, with which He sent His Messengers; I call you to Allah

alone and to worship Him, and to disbelieve in al-Lat and al-'Uzza⁷⁷." 'Ali said to him: This is something that I have never heard of before today; I will not decide anything until I speak to Abu Ṭâlib. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not want to disclose his secret before he announced it openly, so he said to him: "O 'Ali, if you do not become Muslim, then keep quiet about it." He remained like that for a night, then Allah (ﷻ) caused his heart to incline towards Islam, so in the morning he went to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and said: What did you offer to me, O Muḥammad? The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "That you should bear witness that there is no god except Allah (ﷻ) alone, with no partner or associate, and disbelieve in al-Lat and 'Uzza, and disavow yourself of the rivals (to Allah)." 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) did that and became Muslim, and he kept coming to him (the Prophet) fearing that Abu Ṭâlib would find out. He concealed his Islam and did not show it openly.⁷⁸

2.3. Between 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) and Abu Ṭâlib

Ibn Ishâq said: Some scholars have stated that when the time for prayer came, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would go out to a mountain pass of Makkah, and 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib would accompany him, concealing the matter from his father Abu Ṭâlib, all his uncles and all the people. They would offer the prayers there and come back in the evening. This continued for as long as Allah (ﷻ) willed, until Abu Ṭâlib came upon them one day while they were praying, and he said to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "O son of my brother, what is this religion that you are following?" He replied: "O uncle, this is the religion of Allah, the religion of His angels, the religion of His Messengers and the religion of our father Ibrâheem. He has sent me as a Messenger to the people and you, O uncle, are the most deserving of my sincere advice and my call to guidance; you are the most deserving to respond and help me with that." Abu Ṭâlib said:

“O son of my brother, I cannot leave the religion of my forefathers and the way they followed, but no harm will reach you so long as I am alive.” They said that he said to ‘Ali: “O my son, what is this religion that you are following?” He said: “O my father, I believe in Allah and the Messenger of Allah, and I believe what he has brought. I prayed with him to Allah, and I followed him.” And they said that Abu Tâlib said to ‘Ali: “He is calling you to something good, so follow him.”⁷⁹

2.4. Did ‘Ali (ؓ) break the idols with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in Makkah?

It was narrated that ‘Ali (ؓ) said: The Prophet (ﷺ) and I set out and went to the Ka‘bah. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Sit down,” and he climbed on my shoulders and I wanted to stand up with him on my shoulders, but he realised that I was weak, so he got down. The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) sat down and said: “Climb on my shoulders.” I climbed on his shoulders, and he stood up with me on his shoulders, and I felt that I could reach the farthest horizon in the sky. I climbed up on top of the House, where there was a statue of gold or copper. I started shaking it right and left, forwards and backwards, until I was in full control of it. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to me: “Throw it down.” So I threw it down and it broke like a glass bottle, then I came down, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and I rushed away until we hid among the houses, lest anyone find us.⁸⁰ The chain of narration of this hadith is weak, and we cannot base any ruling on it as some people claim. The basic principle during the Makkan period remains that the Prophet (ﷺ) did not allow the Companions to use force with their opponents or commit any act of aggression against their idols and statues. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) purified Makkah of idols at the time of the conquest, and sent expeditions after that great conquest to destroy idols and purify the

Arabian Peninsula of the sites of polytheism and false gods, after he became able to remove them and destroy them.

2.5. Did 'Ali (عليه السلام) bury Abu Ṭâlib on the Prophet's instructions?

It was narrated from 'Ali (عليه السلام) that he came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: "Abu Ṭâlib has died." The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Go and bury him," and 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "He died a polytheist." The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Go and bury him." When he had buried him, he went back to the Prophet (ﷺ), and he said to him: "Do *ghusl*⁸¹." ⁸² According to another report, he said: "Go and do *ghusl*, then do not do anything until you come to me." 'Ali said: "So I did *ghusl*, then I came to him, and he offered supplication for me that made me happier than getting red and black camels." The narrator, 'Abdur-Raḥmân as-Sulami, said: When 'Ali had washed a deceased person, he would do *ghusl*.⁸³

2.6. Ali's attention to security matters and his role in bringing Abu Dharr (عليه السلام) to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)

Among the main features of Islam during the Makkan stage were concealment and secrecy, even from the closest of people. The Prophet's instructions on the necessity of secrecy were very clear and strict. 'Ali (عليه السلام) played an important role in bringing Abu Dharr (عليه السلام) to the house of the Messenger (ﷺ). Abu Dharr (عليه السلام) was unhappy with the situation of *jâhiliyyah*; he refused to worship idols and disapproved of those who associated others with Allah (ﷻ). He used to pray to Allah for three years before he became Muslim, without choosing any specific direction of prayer. It seems that he was following the path of the *Ḥaneefs*. When he heard of the Prophet (ﷺ), he came to Makkah, but he did not want to ask about him until

night came, then he lay down and 'Ali (ﷺ) saw him and realised that he was a stranger, so he invited him to stay with him. He did not ask him about anything. In the morning, he went to *al-Masjid al-Ḥarâm*⁸⁴, and he stayed there until evening came. 'Ali saw him and invited him to stay for a second night. The same thing happened on the third night, then 'Ali asked him why he had come. When Abu Dharr was certain about him, he told him that he wanted to meet the Messenger (ﷺ). 'Ali told him that he was indeed the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and said: "In the morning, follow me. If I see anything that I fear for you, I will step aside as if I want to pass water, but if I carry on then follow me." He followed 'Ali and met the Messenger (ﷺ), listened to what he had to say and became Muslim.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said to him: "Go back to your people and tell them to wait until my instructions come to you." He said: By the one in whose hand is my soul, I shall shout at the top of my voice among them. He went out to the mosque, and he shouted at the top of his voice: I bear witness that there is no god except Allah and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah. The people leapt up and attacked him, throwing him to the floor. Al-'Abbâs ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib came and warned them of the vengeance of his tribe Ghifâr, who might intercept the trade caravans of Quraysh, which passed through their land on the way to Syria. Thus he saved him from them.⁸⁵ Before coming to Makkah, Abu Dharr (ﷺ) had sent his brother to find out about the Prophet (ﷺ), to listen to what he had to say and then come to him. His brother did so, then he came back to Abu Dharr (ﷺ) and told him: I have seen him enjoining good attitudes and saying words that are not poetry. He said: You have not given me what I wanted, and he resolved to go himself to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). His brother said to him: Be on your guard against the people of Makkah, for they are his enemies and are hostile towards him.⁸⁶

The lessons we learn from this incident are the following:

2.6.1. Not rushing to seek information

Abu Dharr (ؓ) realised that Quraysh resented everyone who spoke to the Messenger (ﷺ). This caution was safer and was dictated by the sensitivity of the situation. If Abu Dharr had asked openly about the Prophet (ﷺ), Quraysh would have found out what he intended to do, and thus he would have been exposed to harm and expulsion and would not have been able to achieve the purpose for which he had left his people and undergone the hardships of travel.

2.6.2. Caution when giving information

When ‘Ali (ؓ) asked Abu Dharr (ؓ) why he had come to Makkah, he did not tell him as an extra precaution, even though Ali (ؓ) hosted him for three nights. Before telling him, he stipulated that he should conceal his secret at the same time as he showed him the way. This extreme caution brought him what he wanted.

2.6.3. Security cover for their movements

‘Ali and Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with them both) agreed upon a gesture or certain movement, giving the impression of fixing his shoe or passing water, if ‘Ali (ؓ) saw someone watching them. This security cover for their movements towards the headquarters (Dar al-Arqam) was in addition to the fact that Abu Dharr was walking some distance behind ‘Ali. This attitude was regarded as a precaution, taking into account all possibilities that could arise while they were moving.

2.6.4. The Companions’ advanced approach to security matters and the importance of security in their minds

This attitude was deeply entrenched in their hearts to such an extent that it was a distinguishing characteristic of all their actions, both private and public. Their movements were careful and well thought out. How great is our need to develop a similar sense of security to that of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). Security has become very important in our own time with regard to the demise and survival of states and civilisations, and it is very relevant to the weakness or strength of nations, peoples, groups, institutions and organisations. It has become a specialised field of knowledge with advanced techniques and highly developed methods and styles, its own independent organisations and high-level budgets. Information in general, and security information in particular, is sold for the highest price, and souls may be sacrificed in order to obtain it. As long as this is the case, then the Muslims must pay attention to the security aspect so that our secrets will not be discovered by our enemies or fall into their hands.⁸⁷

2.7. ‘Ali (عليه السلام) was with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) when he went around to the tribes and presented the call to Islam to them, and he attended the negotiations with Banu Shaybân

It was narrated from Abân ibn Taghlib from ‘Ikrimah from Ibn ‘Abbâs: ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib told me: When Allah (ﷻ) commanded His Messenger (ﷺ) to present himself to the Arab tribes, he went out, and Abu Bakr and I went with him, to Mina, where we joined one of the gatherings of the Arabs. Abu Bakr went forward and greeted them, and he was known for his prominence in doing good and his

knowledge of Arab lineages... Then we went to another gathering, which was a gathering of dignified and respectable people. Abu Bakr went forward and greeted them, and he said: "Who are you?" They said: "Banu Shaybân ibn Tha‘labah." Abu Bakr turned to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and said: "May my father and mother be sacrificed for you. These are the best of the people, and among them is Mafrooq, who is the most eloquent and handsome among them." He had two braids falling down his chest, and he was sitting closest to Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr said: "How many are you?" Mafrooq said: "We are more than one thousand and will never be defeated because of lack of numbers." Abu Bakr said: "How powerful are you?" Mafrooq said: "We are at our most angry when we meet (our enemies in battle), and we are most likely to engage them when we are angry. We love horses more than children and weapons more than women. Victory comes from Allah; He grants victory to us sometimes, and He grants victory against us sometimes. Perhaps you are the man from Quraysh [the Messenger of Allah]?" Abu Bakr said: "If you have heard that he is the Messenger of Allah, here he is." Mafrooq said: "O man of Quraysh, what are you calling us to?"

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "I am calling you to bear witness that there is no god except Allah alone with no partner or associate, and that I am the slave of Allah and His Messenger, and to give me refuge and support me, for Quraysh have rebelled against Allah and disbelieved in His Messenger. They have preferred falsehood to truth, but Allah is Independent of Means, Most Praiseworthy." Mafrooq said: "What else are you calling for, O man of Quraysh? For by Allah, I have never heard any words more beautiful than this." The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) recited:

﴿Say [O Muhammad]: Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited you from: Join not anything in worship with Him; be good and dutiful to your parents; kill not your children because of poverty

— We provide sustenance for you and for them; come not near to *Al-Fawâḥish* [shameful sins and illegal sexual intercourse] whether committed openly or secretly; and kill not anyone whom Allah has forbidden, except for a just cause [according to Islamic law]. This He has commanded you that you may understand. ﴿ *Qur'an* 6: 151)

Maḥrooq said: "By Allah, you are calling to the noblest of attitudes and the best of deeds, and the people who disbelieve in you and oppose you are wrongdoers." Then he referred the matter to Hâni' ibn Qubayṣah, saying: "This is Hâni' our chief, who is in charge of our religious affairs." Hâni' said: "I have heard what you said, O man of Quraysh, and I think that giving up our religion and following yours the first time we meet you is not a good idea and is a sign of not thinking through the consequences. Haste leads to mistakes, and we do not want to make a deal on behalf of those whom we left behind. But we will go back and you will go back, and we will think about it." Then it was as if he wanted al-Muthanna ibn Ḥârithah to contribute to the discussion, and he said: "Al-Muthanna here is our chief and is in charge of our military affairs." Al-Muthanna — who became Muslim later on — said: "I have heard what you have to say, O man of Quraysh, and my answer is the same as that of Hâni' ibn Qubayṣah with regard to our giving up our religion and following yours. We are located between two sources of water, one of which is al-Yamâmah and the other is al-Samâmah." The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "What are these two sources of water?" He said: "Rivers of Chosroes⁸⁸ and water of the Arabs. As for the rivers of Chosroes, if we offend him, then he will not forgive us or accept any excuse; we are allowed to camp there on the basis of a promise that we gave to Chosroes not to do any wrong and not to give refuge to any wrongdoer. I think that this matter to which you are calling us, O man of Quraysh, is something that kings dislike, but if you want us to give you refuge and to support you in the areas near the Arab waters, we

will do that.” The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Your answer is not bad, because you have spoken sincerely. No one can support the religion of Allah (ﷻ) except the one who will support it in all ways. Why don’t you wait a while, and soon you will see how Allah (ﷻ) will give you inheritance of their land and you will take their women as slaves? Why don’t you glorify and sanctify Allah (ﷻ)?” An-Nu‘mân ibn Shareek said: “Then we grant you that.”⁸⁹

This hadith contains lessons that ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) learned from this incident, including the following:

1. ‘Ali (عليه السلام) learned that the Prophet (ﷺ) refused to give any guarantee of power to any individual by way of reward for their support for the call of Islam. That is because the call of Islam is in fact a call to Allah (ﷻ), and the basic condition with regard to the one who believes in it and is prepared to support it is that it should be sincerely for Allah (ﷻ) alone, and seeking His pleasure should be the utmost aim that the person is trying to achieve by means of his support and sacrifice, not the hope for power or the desire for authority. That is because the motive for a person’s action is what will have an impact on the way he tries to go about it, so it is essential that the aim behind supporting the call should be free from any material interest, in order to guarantee continuous support for it, to protect it from any deviation and to guarantee the maximum support for it and sacrifices for its sake.⁹⁰ So everyone who wants to adhere to the main body of Muslims that calls people to Allah (ﷻ) should not stipulate any condition that he should be given a position or any kind of worldly gain, because this call is to Allah (ﷻ) alone. The matter is in the hands of Allah (ﷻ), and He decides things as He wills. The one who wants to join the effort should seek thereby the countenance of Allah (ﷻ) and strive to raise His banner. But if position and status are what is motivating him, this is a serious

sign which indicates that there was something wrong with his intention.⁹¹ Hence Yahya ibn Mu‘ādh ar-Rāzi said: He will never prosper from whom you sense any sign of aspiration to leadership positions.⁹²

2. ‘Ali (عليه السلام) learned from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that the type of support that he was seeking from the tribal leaders for his call should not be connected to any international treaties that conflicted with the call and from which they could not free themselves. In that situation, their support for the call might expose it to danger of destruction by the state with which they had the treaty, and this would pose a threat to the Islamic call and its interests.⁹³ Conditional or partial support does not achieve the desired aim. Banu Shaybān would never have fought against Chosroes if he had wanted to capture the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and his followers. Thus the negotiations failed.⁹⁴
3. The religion of Allah (ﷻ) will never be supported except by one who is prepared to support it in all ways. This was the response of the Prophet (ﷺ) to al-Muthanna ibn Ḥārithah when he suggested to the Prophet (ﷺ) that he could offer him protection at the Arab water but not at the Persian water. Whoever has lengthy experience of politics will recognise the unequalled farsightedness of the Prophet (ﷺ).⁹⁵
4. ‘Ali (عليه السلام) saw the impact of Islam on al-Muthanna and his people after they became Muslim, and how Banu Shaybān took upon themselves the burden of standing up to the Persians. Al-Muthanna ibn Ḥārithah — later on — was one of the leaders of the conquest of Iraq at the time of Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه). Their faith in this religion gave them the courage to fight the Persians.

These are some of the concepts and lessons that ‘Ali (عليه السلام) learned from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in his negotiations with the leaders of Banu Shaybān.

2.8. His offering himself as a sacrifice for the Prophet (ﷺ)

When the tribe of Quraysh met in Dar an-Nadwah, they agreed to kill the Prophet (ﷺ) and to be rid of him, but Allah (ﷻ) told His Prophet (ﷺ) about that. The Prophet (ﷺ) was the wisest of Allah's creation. He wanted those who sought to kill him to keep looking at his bed, waiting for him to come out to them, so he told 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه) to sleep in his bed that night. Who could dare to stay in the bed of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) when his enemies were surrounding the house, lying in wait in order to kill him? Who would be able to stay in that house, knowing that the enemies would not see the difference between him and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in his bed? No one except the most heroic of men, and the most courageous, by the grace of Allah.⁹⁶

The Prophet (ﷺ) told him to stay in Makkah for a few days in order to return the trusts, and items that had been deposited with him for safekeeping, to their owners among his enemies, without subtracting anything. This is the greatest justice and fulfilment of trusts.⁹⁷ According to one report, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to 'Ali (رضي الله عنه): "Sleep in my bed; wrap yourself in this green cloak of mine and sleep in it, and no harm will befall you from them."⁹⁸ Ibn Hajar said: Moosa ibn 'Uqbah narrated that Ibn Shihâb said: So 'Ali lay down on the bed of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in order to distract the enemies from him. All night, Quraysh were coming and going and discussing which of them would attack the occupant of the bed and tie him up. In the morning, when they saw 'Ali, they asked him where the Prophet was, and he said: I don't know. Then they realised that the Prophet (ﷺ) had fled.⁹⁹ It was narrated from Ibn 'Abbâs that 'Ali sold himself that night, when he put on the garment of the Prophet and then slept in his place.¹⁰⁰ Concerning 'Ali and his fellow Companions who strove to attain the pleasure of Allah (ﷻ)

and the home of the hereafter, Allah (ﷻ) revealed the words:

﴿And of mankind is he who would sell himself, seeking the pleasure of Allah. And Allah is full of kindness to [His] slaves.﴾

(Qur'an 2: 207)

From this event we learn a number of lessons:

1. The plan of migration, as drawn up by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), dictated that his place in the house should be taken by a man whose movements inside the house would trick the polytheists and distract them for a while from the departure of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), until he and his Companion Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) had gone beyond the danger zone.¹⁰¹
2. Ali's response to the command of the Prophet (ﷺ) was an example of a dedicated soldier who is sincere to the call of Islam, as he offered himself as a sacrifice for his leader. If the leader is safe, then the call is safe, but if he dies, then the call will be weakened and will slow down. What 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) did on the night of the *hijrah*¹⁰², spending that night in the bed of the Messenger (ﷺ), is to be regarded as a great sacrifice because it was highly possible that the swords of the young men of Quraysh might have fallen upon the head of 'Ali (رضي الله عنه). But 'Ali did not pay any attention to that. It was more important for him that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), the Prophet of the Ummah and the leader of Islam, should be safe.¹⁰³
3. The fact that the polytheists had deposited items for safekeeping with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), even though they were fighting him and were determined to kill him, is a clear indication of the strange contradiction into which they had fallen. At the same time that they disbelieved him and claimed that he was a sorcerer, madman or liar, they could not find anyone among the people around them who was better than him

in terms of honesty and trustworthiness. Therefore, they did not deposit their property or wealth that they feared for with anyone else but him for safekeeping. This indicates that their disbelief was not due to any doubt on their part concerning his sincerity; rather the reason was that they were too proud and arrogant to accept the truth that he brought, out of fear for their leadership and tyranny.¹⁰⁴ Allah the Almighty indeed spoke the truth: ﴿We know indeed the grief which their words cause you [O Muhammad]: it is not you that they deny, but it is the Verses [the Qur'an] of Allah that the *Dhâlimoon* [polytheists and wrongdoers] deny.﴾ (*Qur'an* 6: 33).

4. The Messenger (ﷺ) commanded 'Ali (عليه السلام) to return these trusts to their owners in Makkah. Normally, in such extreme circumstances, one might focus all thoughts on nothing but making the plan of migration succeed. Yet the Messenger (ﷺ) did not forget and was not distracted from returning the trusts to their owners, even in these most difficult of circumstances, in which any person might forget himself, let alone anyone else.¹⁰⁵ He refused to betray those who had trusted him, even if they were enemies who were inciting people against him and harming him, because betraying the trust is one of the attributes of the hypocrites, and the believers are above that.¹⁰⁶
5. This great hadith clearly points to the courage of 'Ali (عليه السلام). He knew, when he was doing as commanded, that he would be exposed to great danger. They might have invaded the house and killed him without verifying his identity. They might have ambushed him as he was leaving in the morning, without finding out who he was. The people were lying in wait all night waiting for their chance, but they became extremely exhausted, and in the morning, they were unable to verify the identity of the person who was leaving the house. Was he Muhammad (ﷺ) or

someone else? All of this must have gone through 'Ali's mind, but he hastened and was happy to obey the command. First of all, he loved Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ) with a love that dominated his heart, so he made the safety of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) his main goal even if it cost him his life. Secondly, this was an essential operation in order for the Messenger (ﷺ) to escape safely from the plots of his enemies so that he would be able to spread Islam in all places. So the matter had to do with the interests of Islam, first and last. 'Ali (ﷺ) slept in the bed of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in spite of all these perils. This points to the depth of his faith in the will and decree of Allah. Indeed, he firmly believed in the words of Allah: ﴿Say: 'Nothing shall ever happen to us except what Allah has ordained for us. He is our *Mawlâ* [Lord, Helper and Protector].' And in Allah let the believers put their trust.﴾ (*Qur'an* 9: 51)

In the fact that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) chose 'Ali (ﷺ) to play this important role, we can see complete and unparalleled trust and confidence in the special capabilities with which 'Ali (ﷺ) was distinguished, which may not be found in anyone else. He did not hesitate when the Messenger (ﷺ) called him to sleep in his bed, although he knew that there might be nothing else beyond that but death, since the polytheists were preparing the bravest young men of Quraysh to murder the Prophet (ﷺ). 'Ali (ﷺ) did not let himself think about the consequences because he knew that if he sacrificed his life for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), he would attain a high honour that could not be obtained in any other way.¹⁰⁷

2.9. His Hijrah (migration from Makkah to Madinah)

The next morning, 'Ali (ﷺ) got up. The people recognised him and realised that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had escaped. They said to 'Ali (ﷺ): "Where is your companion?" He said: "I do not

know; was I watching over him? You told him to leave, and he left.” The people were upset with this daring answer and were annoyed that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had departed from among them and that they had been blinded and did not see him. So they rebuked ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) and beat him; they took him to the mosque and detained him there for a while, then they let him go.¹⁰⁸ ‘Ali bore what befell him for the sake of Allah (ﷻ). His joy at the escape of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was more important to him than any harm that could befall him, so he did not weaken and he did not tell them where the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was. ‘Ali started going around the streets of Makkah, looking for the owners of the entrusted items that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had left him behind to deal with, and he kept on returning these entrusted items until he had given them all back to their owners. After spending three days in Makkah, he prepared to set out and catch up with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).¹⁰⁹

During his migration journey, ‘Ali hid by day and traveled by night, until he reached Madinah with his feet swollen and the skin broken.¹¹⁰ Thus ‘Ali endured hardships during his migration. He had no mount to ride, and he could not travel during the day because of the severe heat, but walking at night in the intense darkness was very lonely and frightening. If we add to that the fact that he (رضي الله عنه) covered the distance on foot, with no companion to cheer him up and keep him company, we will realise the extent of the hardship that he endured because of the roughness of the route and the hardships of travel, seeking the good pleasure of Allah (ﷻ). At the end of the journey, he would meet the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and enjoy his company, safe and secure in Madinah. When ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) reached Madinah, he stayed among Banu ‘Amr ibn ‘Awf, with Kulthoom ibn al-Hadam, where the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was staying.¹¹¹ This was the Hijrah of Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Tālib (رضي الله عنه), filled with sacrifice, patience and courage.

During his stay in Quba’, ‘Ali noticed a Muslim woman who had no husband. He saw that a man would come and knock on her door in the middle of the night; she would come out to him, and he would give her something that he was carrying. In the words of ‘Ali (ﷺ): “I became suspicious about this man, and I said to her: ‘O slave woman of Allah, who is this man who knocks at your door every night, and you come out to him, and he gives you something that I do not know what it is, and you are a Muslim woman and have no husband?’” She said: ‘This is Sahl ibn Ḥaneef ibn Wahb. He knows that I am a woman who has nobody. When evening comes, he attacks the idols of his people and breaks them and says: Use this for firewood.’” ‘Ali liked Sahl because of that. Later on, Sahl joined ‘Ali (ﷺ) in Iraq and died there.¹¹² We may note how alert the Muslim has to be, and he should not ignore what is going on around him.

3. How Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib lived with the Qur’an, and the impact it had on him

3.1. His concept of Allah, the universe, life, paradise, hell and the divine will and decree

The education that ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) received was the same as that which all the Rightly Guided Caliphs and noble Companions received. They were educated on the basis of the Noble Qur’an, and their teacher was the master of all mankind, Muḥammad (ﷺ). The Beloved (ﷺ) was keen that there should be one source and reference point, and that the Noble Qur’an was to be the only way to follow, along with the wisdom that the Lord, may He be glorified and exalted, revealed to him. So he educated the Muslims, individuals,

families and society, in the beliefs, acts of worship, ways of interacting and morals and manners that were brought in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ). The verses that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) heard directly from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had an impact on the formation of his Islamic character. They purified his heart and soul and illuminated his mind, and his soul interacted with them. This turned him into a new person with new values, feelings, aims, behaviour and ambitions.¹¹³

From the Noble Qur'an and the prophetic education he received, 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) learned who the God was that he should worship. The Prophet (ﷺ) implanted in his heart the meanings of those verses; he (رضي الله عنه) was keen to educate his Companions in the correct concept of their Lord and His rights over them, knowing that this concept would lead to belief and certainty when souls are pure and their *fiṭrah*¹¹⁴ is sound. So 'Ali's view of Allah, the universe, life, paradise, hell, the divine will and decree, the reality of man and his conflict with Satan were derived from the Noble Qur'an and the guidance of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Allah (ﷻ) is above having any shortcomings; His are the attributes of infinite perfection. He is One, with no partner or associate, and He has no wife or child. He is the Creator, Sovereign and Controller of all things:

«Indeed, your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in Six Days, and then He rose over [*Istawa*] the Throne [really in a manner that suits His Majesty]. He brings the night as a cover over the day, seeking it rapidly, and [He created] the sun, the moon, the stars subjected to His Command. Surely, His is the creation and commandment. Blessed is Allah, the Lord of the 'Âlameen [mankind, jinn and all that exists]!» (Qur'an 7: 54)

Allah (ﷻ) is the source of every blessing in this universe, great or small, manifest or hidden.

«And whatever of blessings and good things you have, it is from Allah. Then, when harm touches you, unto Him you cry aloud for help.»
(*Qur'an* 16: 53)

Allah's knowledge encompasses all things, and nothing is hidden from Him on earth or in heaven, nothing that man conceals or displays openly.

Allah (ﷻ) records man's deeds through the actions of His angels, in a book in which nothing, great or small, is omitted, rather it is recorded precisely. That will be shown to man at the appropriate time:

«Not a word does he [or she] utter but there is a watcher by him ready [to record it].»
(*Qur'an* 50: 18)

Allah (ﷻ) tests His slaves with things that go against their desires and inclinations, in order to show their essence and to distinguish between two types of people. Those who accept the will and decree of Allah (ﷻ), submitting to it both outwardly and inwardly, are deserving of the positions of vicegerency and leadership. On the other hand, those who will be angry with His will and decree do not deserve anything and will not be given any rank.

«Who has created death and life that He may test you which of you is best in deed. And He is the All-Mighty, the Oft-Forgiving»
(*Qur'an* 67: 2)

Allah (ﷻ) grants help and support to the one who seeks His protection and follows His rulings in all that he does or abstains from:

«Verily, my Wali [Protector, Supporter, and Helper] is Allah Who has revealed the Book [the Qur'an], and He protects [supports and helps] the righteous.»
(*Qur'an* 7: 196)

His right over His slaves is that they should worship Him alone, and not join any other with Him:

«Nay! But worship Allah [Alone and none else], and be among the grateful.» (Qur’an 39: 66)

He alone is deserving of worship, and this is Allah’s right over His slaves:

«Verily, Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him [in worship], but He forgives except that [anything else] to whom He wills; and whoever sets up partners with Allah in worship, he has indeed invented a tremendous sin.» (Qur’an 4: 48)

Allah (ﷻ) has defined the essence of this ‘uboodiyyah (servitude to Him alone), which is the tawhīd that is described in the Noble Qur’an.¹¹⁵

‘Ali’s view of the universe was based on the words of Allah (ﷻ):

“Say [O Muḥammad]: Do you verily disbelieve in Him Who created the earth in two Days? And you set up rivals [in worship] with Him? That is the Lord of the ‘Ālameen [mankind, jinn and all that exists]. He placed therein [i.e. the earth] firm mountains from above it, and He blessed it, and measured therein its sustenance [for its dwellers] in four Days equal [i.e. all these four ‘days’ were equal in the length of time] for all those who ask [about its creation]. Then He rose over [Istawa] towards the heaven when it was smoke, and said to it and to the earth: Come both of you willingly or unwillingly. They both said: We come willingly. Then He completed and finished from their creation [as] seven heavens in two Days and He made in each heaven its affair. And We adorned the nearest [lowest] heaven with lamps [stars] to be an adornment as well as to guard [from the devils by using them as missiles against the devils]. Such is the Decree of Him, the All-Mighty, the All-Knower.» (Qur’an 41: 9-12)

As for this life, no matter how long it lasts, it will inevitably come to an end, and no matter how great its conveniences and luxuries, they are in fact insignificant. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And put forward to them the example of the life of this world: it is like the water [rain] which We send down from the sky, and the vegetation of the earth mingles with it, and becomes fresh and green. But [later] it becomes dry and broken pieces, which the winds scatter. And Allah is Able to do everything. Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world. But the good righteous deeds that last, are better with your Lord for rewards and better in respect of hope.﴾
(Qur'an 18: 45-46)

Allah (ﷻ) tells the Muslim about the reality of this life, and that it is not the place of honour, and that the hereafter is better and more lasting. This enables the one in whose heart love of Allah and His Messenger is entrenched to give precedence to pleasing Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger above anything else, even if the price of that is this world and everything in it. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) expressed this truth when he said: "O world, try to deceive someone else. Are you trying to tempt me or attract me? No way! I divorce you irrevocably. Your time is short and you are insignificant. Alas! The provision is little, the journey is long and the way is lonely."¹¹⁶

His view of paradise was derived from the verses which describe it, and he became one of those of whom Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Their sides forsake their beds, to invoke their Lord in fear and hope, and they spend [in charity in Allah's Cause] out of what We have bestowed on them. No person knows what is kept hidden for them of joy as a reward for what they used to do.﴾ *(Qur'an 32: 16-17)*

His concept of hell was derived from the Noble Qur'an, and this concept became a deterrent which prevented him from going astray from the laws of Allah (ﷻ). Anyone who studies the life of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) will see his deep understanding of how one should prepare to meet Allah (ﷻ) and the extent to which he should fear the wrath and punishment of Allah.

His concept of the Divine will and decree was derived from the Book of Allah and the teachings of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). This concept was firmly entrenched in his heart, and he understood its different categories as mentioned in the Book of Allah. He was certain that the knowledge of Allah (ﷻ) encompasses all things:

«Neither you [O Muḥammad] do any deed nor recite any portion of the Qur'an, nor you [O mankind] do any deed [good or evil], but We are Witness thereof, when you are doing it. And nothing is hidden from your Lord [so much as] the weight of an atom [or small ant] on the earth or in the heaven. Not what is less than that or what is greater than that but is [written] in a Clear Record.» (Qur'an 10: 61)

'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was certain that Allah has decreed everything that is to be:

«Verily, We give life to the dead, and We record that which they send before [them], and their traces and all things We have recorded with numbers [as a record] in a Clear Book.» (Qur'an 36: 12)

He understood that Allah's will is inevitable and that His power is complete:

«Allah is not such that anything in the heavens or in the earth escapes Him. Verily, He is All-Knowing, All-Omnipotent.» (Qur'an 35: 44)

He believed that Allah (ﷻ) is the Creator of all things.

«Such is Allah, your Lord! *Lâ ilâha illa Huwa* [none has the right to be worshipped but He], the Creator of all things. So worship Him [Alone], and He is the *Wakeel* [Trustee, Disposer of affairs or Guardian] over all things.» (Qur'an 6: 102)

This correct understanding and deep conviction of the reality of the Divine will and decree bore many fruits which were apparent in his life, as we shall see in this book. From the Noble Qur'an, he understood the reality of his own self and of all people. He knew that their essence went back to two origins: the ancient origin when man

was first created from clay, when he was formed and the soul was breathed into him, and the recent origin when they were created from a drop of sperm.¹¹⁷ Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Who made everything He has created good and He began the creation of man from clay. Then He made his offspring from semen of despised water [male and female sexual discharge]. Then He fashioned him in due proportion, and breathed into him the soul [created by Allah for that person]; and He gave you hearing [ears], sight [eyes] and hearts. Little is the thanks you give!» (*Qur'an* 32: 7-9)

He understood that Allah (ﷻ) has created humans with His own hand, and honoured them with a beautiful form and an upright posture. He has blessed them with wisdom, logic and discernment, and subjugated to them all that is in the heavens and on earth. Allah (ﷻ) favoured human beings over much of His creation, and honoured them by sending the Messengers to them. The most wondrous manifestation of this divine honour towards humankind was that He made them qualified to receive His love and good pleasure, which could be attained by following the Prophet (ﷺ), who called people to Islam so that they might live a good life in this world and attain eternal bliss in the hereafter. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Whoever works righteousness — whether male or female — while he [or she] is a true believer [of Islamic Monotheism] verily, to him We will give a good life [in this world with respect, contentment and lawful provision], and We shall pay them certainly a reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do [i.e. paradise in the hereafter].» (*Qur'an* 16: 97)

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) understood the true nature of the struggle between humans and Satan. He knew that this enemy comes to them from before and behind, from their right and from their left, and whispers to them, tempting them to commit sin and stirring up their desires. He used to seek the help of Allah (ﷻ)

against his enemy Iblees, and he prevailed over him throughout his life, as we shall see as we study his biography.

He learned from the story of Adam and Satan, as mentioned in the Qur'an, that Adam was the origin of humanity, that the essence of Islam is absolute obedience to Allah (ﷻ), and that man is vulnerable to falling into sin. From the story of Adam's sin, he learned the necessity of putting one's trust in Allah, the importance of repentance and praying for forgiveness in the life of the believer, the necessity of keeping away from envy and arrogance, and the importance of speaking in the best manner to one's companions, because Allah says:

﴿And say to My slaves [i.e. the true believers of Islamic Monotheism] that they should [only] say those words that are the best. [Because] Shayṭān [Satan] verily, sows a state of conflict and disagreements among them. Surely, Shayṭān [Satan] is to man a plain enemy.﴾

(Qur'an 17: 53)

He followed the path of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in such a way that he purified his companions' hearts and souls by means of all kinds of acts of worship, and he trained them to follow the guidelines for manners and attitude that were laid out in the Qur'an.

3.2. The status of the Noble Qur'an in his view

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) lived his life with the Qur'an, reading it, memorising it, understanding it and acting in accordance with it. He used to say: "Whoever reads the Qur'an and dies and enters hell, is among those who used to take the verses (or signs) of Allah in jest¹¹⁸." ¹¹⁹ He also used to say: "Glad tidings to those who were the dearest of people to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)." ¹²⁰ And he used to say: "I did not think that anyone with any wisdom would sleep before reciting the last three verses of Soorat al-Baqarah." ¹²¹ This was directed towards the people of the Qur'an. He said,

describing the Noble Qur’an and its great importance: “In the Book of Allah, there are stories of those who came before you, foretelling what will happen after you and rulings on issues between you. It is serious and is not in jest. Whoever among the tyrants neglects it, Allah will destroy him; whoever seeks guidance in anything else, Allah will send him astray. It is the strong rope, the wise reminder, the straight path. It is the Book that whims and desires cannot distort and tongues cannot mispronounce. Its wonders never end, and the scholars never tire of it. Whoever quotes it speaks the truth, whoever acts upon it will be rewarded, whoever judges according to it will be just, and whoever calls people to it will be guided to a straight path.”¹²²

Because of his great interest in the Qur’an, ‘Ali acquired a great deal of knowledge of it and its sciences. It was narrated that he said: “By Allah, no verse of it was revealed but I know why it was revealed, when it was revealed and to whom it was revealed. My Lord has blessed me with a deep understanding and an eloquent, truthful tongue.”¹²³ And he (ﷺ) said: “Ask me about the Book of Allah, for there is no verse in it but I know whether it was revealed by night or by day, on the plains or in the mountains.”¹²⁴ Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr narrated that ‘Ali (ﷺ) was one of those who collected the Noble Qur’an at the time of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) while the Messenger was still alive.¹²⁵ At the end of his life he said: “Ask me before you lose me.”¹²⁶ That was when most of the other scholars among the Companions had died, and he (ﷺ) was in Iraq. He was very keen to teach the Noble Qur’an and the teachings of the Prophet (ﷺ) to the people, among whom there was a great deal of ignorance. They did not know much about the rulings of Islam, and ‘Ali (ﷺ) was keen to teach them the truth. He was the most knowledgeable of people of his time. This is an example of the devoted scholar who is eager to teach people the truth and train them to follow it.

3.3. What was revealed concerning him of the Noble Qur'an

The Noble Qur'an was revealed to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) addressing real life events that happened in the society in which he lived. It praised some actions and some people, warned against others and pointed out some mistakes. Some verses were revealed that recorded forever some of the exploits of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) and other Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all).

1. Allah (ﷻ) said:

﴿These two opponents [believers and disbelievers] dispute with each other about their Lord; then as for those who disbelieved, garments of fire will be cut out for them, boiling water will be poured down over their heads. With it will melt [or vanish away] what is within their bellies, as well as [their] skins. And for them are hooked rods of iron [to punish them]. Every time they seek to get away therefrom, from anguish, they will be driven back therein, and [it will be] said to them: 'Taste the torment of burning! Truly, Allah will admit those who believe [in the Oneness of Allah — Islamic Monotheism] and do righteous good deeds, to Gardens underneath which rivers flow [in paradise], wherein they will be adorned with bracelets of gold and pearls and their garments therein will be of silk.﴾ (Qur'an 22: 19-23)

Bukhari narrated with a chain of narration from 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) that he said: "I will be the first one to kneel before the Most Merciful in a dispute on the Day of Resurrection." Qays ibn 'Ubâdah said: Concerning them the verse was revealed: "These two opponents (believers and disbelievers) dispute with each other about their Lord." He said: They are the ones who went forth for duels on the day of Badr: Hamzah, 'Ali, Abu 'Ubaydah ibn al-Ḥârith, Shaybah ibn Rabee'ah, 'Utbah ibn Rabee'ah and al-Waleed ibn 'Utbah.¹²⁷

2. He was one of those concerning whom Allah revealed the words:

﴿Then whoever disputes with you concerning him [‘Eesa (Jesus)] after [all this] knowledge that has come to you [i.e. ‘Eesa (Jesus) being a slave of Allah, and having no share in Divinity], say [O Muhammad]: ‘Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves — then we pray and invoke [sincerely] the Curse of Allah upon those who lie.’﴾

(*Qur’an* 3: 61)

That had to do with the delegation from Najrân, when the Prophet (ﷺ) debated with them about ‘Eesa ibn Maryam [Jesus, son of Mary (*‘alayhi as-salâm* — peace be upon him)], and said that he was the slave of Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger, and His Word that He bestowed upon his blessed mother. He told them that ‘Eesa was not God or the son of God or the third of three, and he called them to Islam, but they refused, so he invited them to pray and invoke sincerely the curse of Allah (ﷻ) upon those who are lying. It was narrated that ‘Âmir ibn Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqâs said: When the words, ﴿Say [O Muhammad]: ‘Come, let us call our sons and your sons...﴾ were revealed, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) called ‘Ali, Fâtimah, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn (may Allah be pleased with them all) and said: “O Allah, these are my family.”¹²⁸

3. The Qur’an confirmed his view that jihad is superior to maintenance of al-Masjid al-Ḥarâm. In *al-Ṣaḥeeh* it is narrated that a man said: I would not care if I do not do any deed after becoming Muslim except maintaining al-Masjid al-Ḥarâm. ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ؑ) said: “Jihad for the sake of Allah is better than all of that.” ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb said: “Do not raise your voices at the *minbar*”¹²⁹ of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). When the prayer is over, I will ask him about that.” He asked him, and Allah revealed this verse:

﴿Do you consider the providing of drinking water to the pilgrims and the maintenance of Al-Masjid al-Harâm [at Makkah] as equal to the

worth of those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and strive hard and fight in the Cause of Allah? They are not equal before Allah. And Allah guides not those people who are the Dhâlimoon [polytheists and wrongdoers]. Those who believed [in the Oneness of Allah — Islamic Monotheism] and emigrated and strove hard and fought in Allah's Cause with their wealth and their lives, are far higher in degree with Allah. They are the successful. Their Lord gives them glad tidings of mercy from Him, and His being pleased [with them], and of Gardens [paradise] for them wherein are everlasting delights. They will dwell therein forever. Verily, with Allah is a great reward.﴾

(*Qur'an* 9: 19-22)

So He (ﷺ) told them that faith and jihad are better than maintaining the Sacred Mosque in Makkah, hajj and *tawâf*¹³⁰, and better than looking after the pilgrims.¹³¹

4. 'Ali (ؓ) was compassionate towards the Ummah of Muhammad (ﷺ).

It was narrated that 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ؓ) said: When this verse was revealed — ﴿O you who believe! When you [want to] consult the Messenger [Muhammad] in private, spend something in charity before your private consultation﴾ (*Qur'an* 58: 12), the Prophet (ﷺ) said to 'Ali (ؓ): "Tell them to give in charity." He said: O Messenger of Allah, how much? He said: "A dinar." He said: They cannot afford it. He said: "Half a dinar." He said: They cannot afford it. He said: How much? He said: Gold equal to the weight of a grain of barley. The Prophet (ﷺ) said to 'Ali: "You are a man of little wealth (so you are speaking on the basis of what you have)." Then Allah (ﷻ) revealed the words:

﴿Are you afraid of spending in charity before your private consultation [with him]? If then you do it not, and Allah has forgiven you, then [at least] perform ṣalâh [Iqâmat-aṣ-Ṣalâh] and give zakâh.﴾

(*Qur'an* 58: 13)

'Ali used to say: "By means of me, Allah made it easy on this Ummah."¹³²

3.4. 'Ali conveyed the Prophet's commentary (tafseer) on some verses of the Noble Qur'an

'Ali benefitted from the commentary of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and he conveyed what he learned from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to the people. The following are some examples of that:

(a) Allah (ﷻ) says,

﴿And instead [of thanking Allah] for the provision He gives you, you deny [Him by disbelief]!﴾
(Qur'an 56: 82)

It was narrated from 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: ﴿And instead [of thanking Allah] for the provision He gives you, you deny [Him by disbelief]﴾: your way of giving thanks is by telling lies, when you say we got rain by such and such a star and so on."¹³³

(b) Everyone is guided to that for which he was created. It was narrated that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said: We were attending a funeral in Baqee' Cemetery¹³⁴. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came to us and sat down, and we sat down around him. He had a small stick with him, and he tilted his head and started scratching the ground with his stick. Then he said: "There is no one among you, no created soul, but Allah has decreed its place in paradise or hell, and it is decreed whether it is doomed or blessed." A man said: O Messenger of Allah, shouldn't we depend upon what is written and give up striving, then whoever is destined to be blessed will do the deeds of those who are destined to be blessed, and whoever is destined to be doomed will do the deeds of those who are doomed? He said: "Strive, for everyone is guided (to do deeds according to his destiny). Those who are destined to be blessed will be guided to do the deeds of those who are destined to be blessed, and those who are destined to be doomed will be guided to do the

deeds of those who are destined to be doomed. Then he recited:

﴿As for him who gives [in charity] and keeps his duty to Allah and fears Him, And believes in *Al-Ḥusnâ*.¹³⁵ We will make smooth for him the path of ease [goodness]. But he who is greedy miser and thinks himself self-sufficient. And belies *Al-Ḥusnâ*. We will make smooth for him the path for evil.﴾ (Qur’an 92: 5-10)¹³⁶

According to another report: Should we not rely on what is decreed for us and stop striving, then whoever among us is among those who are destined to be blessed will end up doing the deeds of the people who are destined to be blessed, and whoever is among the people who are destined to be doomed will end up doing the deeds of the people who are destined to be doomed?¹³⁷

According to a report in Bukhari and Muslim, ‘Ali (عليه السلام) said: One day, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was scratching the ground with a stick he had in his hand. Then he raised his head and said: “There is no soul but its place in paradise or hell is known.” They said: O Messenger of Allah, why should we strive? Shouldn’t we rely on that? He said: “No... you must strive, for everyone will be guided to that for which he was created.” Then he recited:

﴿As for him who gives [in charity] and keeps his duty to Allah and fears Him, And believes in *Al-Ḥusnâ*. We will make smooth for him the path of ease [goodness]. But he who is greedy miser and thinks himself self-sufficient And belies *Al-Ḥusnâ*. We will make smooth for him the path for evil.﴾ (Qur’an 92: 5-10)¹³⁸

In these hadiths and others, the Prophet (ﷺ) told us what the Noble Qur’an indicates, that Allah (ﷻ) has prior knowledge and has already written and decreed the ultimate destiny of His slaves and whether they will be blessed or doomed; He also has prior knowledge and has already written and decreed other things that will happen to His slaves and others.¹³⁹

The Prophet (ﷺ) stated that this does not contradict doing the deeds by means of which one attains a blessed or doomed state, and that if a person is one of those who are destined to be blessed, it will be made easy for him to do the deeds of those who are destined to be blessed, and if a person is one of those who are destined to be doomed, it will be made easy for him to do the deeds of those who are destined to be doomed. He forbade relying on the prior decree and not striving. Hence the one who relies on the prior decree and does not strive to do the actions that are enjoined upon him is one of the greatest losers in respect of (his or her) deeds, and one whose efforts have been wasted in this life.¹⁴⁰ Their abandoning of the deeds that are enjoined upon them is part of what is decreed for them, of making the path of doom easy for them. Those who are destined to be blessed are those who do what is enjoined and abstain from what is forbidden, so if a person abstains from doing obligatory actions that are enjoined upon him and does forbidden actions, relying on the prior decree, he is among those who are destined to be doomed, for whom it is made easy to do the actions of those who are destined to be doomed. This is the answer that the Prophet (ﷺ) gave, and ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (رضي الله عنه) and the Companions of the Prophet (may Allah be pleased with them) learned. It is the best and most appropriate answer to this question.¹⁴¹

3.5. The basic principles followed by Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) in deriving rulings from the Noble Qur’an and understanding its meanings

Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali possessed a great deal of knowledge of the Qur’an and its sciences. This knowledge made him believe that the Qur’an contained all rulings, either explicitly or implicitly. He said concerning that: ﴿And your Lord is never forgetful.﴾ (Qur’an 19: 64)¹⁴² Hence he often quoted the Qur’an as evidence and would

recite the verse in question in order to explain the Sharia rulings. His method in deriving rulings was as follows:

3.5.1. Adhering to the apparent meanings of the Noble Qur’an

Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) sometimes adhered to the apparent meaning of the Noble Qur’an when there was no other evidence to suggest that it should be interpreted in a way other than what it appears to mean. He made ablutions for every prayer and quoted the following verse: ﴿O you who believe! When you intend to offer *aş-Şalâh* [the prayer], wash your faces...﴾ (Qur’an 5: 6)¹⁴³ The apparent meaning indicates that one should make ablutions every time one wants to pray. And he enjoined fasting upon the traveller if Ramadan begins before he or she travels. He said: “If the fast (of Ramadan) begins when he is not travelling, and then he travels, then he has to fast, because Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿So whoever of you sights [the crescent on the first night of] the month [of Ramadan i.e. is present at his home], he must observe Sawm [fasts] that month.﴾ (Qur’an 2: 185)¹⁴⁴

Furthermore, he thought that breastfeeding an older child does not make him a *maḥram*¹⁴⁵, because that is not within the first two years of life, basing that on the apparent meaning of the verse which speaks of breastfeeding. It was narrated that he said concerning the verse, ﴿The mothers shall give suck to their children for two whole years, [that is] for those [parents] who desire to complete the term of suckling.﴾ (Qur’an 2: 233) Breastfeeding is for two years, so whatever breastfeeding occurs within the two years makes the child a *maḥram*, but whatever occurs after two years does not make him a *maḥram*.¹⁴⁶

He also interpreted the Qur’an in accordance with its apparent meaning in another place, where he ruled as innocent a woman who was accused of adultery because she gave birth six months after

getting married. He combined the verse ﴿The mothers shall give suck to their children for two whole years﴾ (*Qur'an* 2: 233) with another verse, ﴿and the bearing of him, and the weaning of him is thirty months﴾ (*Qur'an* 46: 15) and said: Pregnancy (bearing) is six months, and weaning is twenty-four months.¹⁴⁷ In other words, he subtracted the period of breastfeeding, which is two years, from the total period of breastfeeding and pregnancy, which is thirty months, which left six months. Thus he combined the apparent meaning of both verses and ruled accordingly.¹⁴⁸

3.5.2. Interpreting verses that are general in meaning on the basis of those that are clear and specific

Verses that are general in meaning are those in which the meaning is ambiguous and cannot be understood except by means of further explanation.¹⁴⁹ Clear verses are those in which the meaning is apparent, without any need for explanation.¹⁵⁰ 'Ali interpreted the general meaning of the Qur'an in the verse ﴿an offering, brought to the Ka'bah﴾ (*Qur'an* 5: 95) in the light of other verses that explained it. It was narrated that a man asked 'Ali (عليه السلام) about the offering — what kind of animal was it? He said: Eight head of cattle in pairs. It is as if the man was not sure, so 'Ali (عليه السلام) said to him: Do you read the Qur'an? He said: Yes. 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: Have you heard the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says, ﴿O you who believe! Fulfil [your] obligations. Lawful to you [for food] are all the beasts of cattle﴾ (*Qur'an* 5: 1)? He said: Yes. 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: Have you heard the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says, ﴿And of the cattle [are some] for burden [like camel] and [some are] small [unable to carry burden like sheep and goats for food, meat, milk and wool]. Eat of what Allah has provided for you﴾ (*Qur'an* 6: 142)? He said: Yes. 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: Have you heard the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says, ﴿of the sheep two [male and female], and of the goats two [male and female]. Say: "Has

He forbidden the two males or the two females, or [the young] which the wombs of the two females enclose? Inform me with knowledge if you are truthful.” And of the camels two [male and female], and of oxen two [male and female]] (Qur’an 6: 143-144)? He said: Yes. ‘Ali (عليه السلام) said: Have you heard the verse in which Allah (الله) says, ﴿O you who believe! Kill not the game while you are in a state of *ihrâm* [for hajj or ‘*umrah*¹⁵¹ (pilgrimage)], and whosoever of you kills it intentionally, the penalty is an offering, brought to the Ka‘bah﴾ (Qur’an 5: 95)? The man said: Yes. ‘Ali (عليه السلام) said: I killed an antelope; what do I have to do? He said: You have to give an offering, brought to the Ka‘bah.¹⁵²

3.5.3. Interpreting what is general in the light of what is clear and specific in the Noble Qur’an

That which is general is something which refers to a thing without being specific. That which is specific is what is referred to in specific words.¹⁵³ Amir al-Mu‘mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) interpreted that which is general in the Qur’an in the light of what is specific when deriving rulings, as he interpreted the general meaning of cutting off the hand, which is mentioned in the verse on stealing, in the light of a specific punishment which is mentioned in the verse on waging war against Allah and His Messenger and doing mischief in the land, which is that amputation is only to occur twice and not more than one hand and one foot is to be cut off if stealing is repeated. So if a person steals once, his right hand is to be cut off. If he steals again, his left foot is to be cut off, according to ‘Ali (عليه السلام). If he steals a third or fourth time, no further amputation is to take place but he is to be given an alternative punishment, because he [‘Ali] interpreted the verse, ﴿And [as for] the male thief and the female thief, cut off [from the wrist joint] their [right] hands﴾ (Qur’an 5: 38) in the light of the verse, ﴿The recompense of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and do mischief in the land is only that they shall be killed

or crucified or their hands and their feet be cut off from opposite sides.﴾ (*Qur'an* 5: 33) He said: Allah (ﷻ) did not specify cutting off more than one hand and one foot in the verse on waging war against Allah and His Messenger and doing mischief in the land, hence such cases are to be punished with imprisonment.¹⁵⁴ It was narrated that ash-Sha'bi said: 'Ali cut off no more than one hand and one foot, and if the person stole after that, he would be imprisoned and punished. He ['Ali] used to say: I cannot justify before Allah (ﷻ) leaving him without a hand with which to eat and clean himself.¹⁵⁵

3.5.4. Knowledge of Qur'anic verses which abrogate and verses which are abrogated

This refers to the lifting of a Sharia ruling by means of a subsequent divine statement.¹⁵⁶ Az-Zarkashi said: The imams said: It is not permissible for anyone to interpret the Book of Allah until after he has learned what abrogates and what is abrogated therein.¹⁵⁷ This meaning was confirmed by Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷺ), when he rebuked a preacher by saying: Do you know what abrogates and what is abrogated therein (in the Qur'an)? He said: No. He said: You are doomed, and you have led others to doom.¹⁵⁸

3.5.5. Interpreting the Qur'an in the light of the Arabic language

One of the methods of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali in understanding the Noble Qur'an was to look at it in the light of the Arabic language. He understood from the verse ﴿And divorced women shall wait [as regards their marriage] for three menstrual periods﴾ (*Qur'an* 2: 228) that what was meant by *al-aqra'* was menstrual periods, so the woman's *'iddah*¹⁵⁹ does not end until she has become pure following the third menstrual cycle.¹⁶⁰ Hence 'Ali (ﷺ) said concerning the divorced woman: It is not permissible for

her husband to take her back until she has done ghusl following the third menstrual cycle.¹⁶¹ *Al-Quroo'* in Arabic is the plural of *qar'*, which means menses, but it also means purification.¹⁶²

Another example is his understanding of the verse ﴿for you have been in contact with women﴾ (*Qur'an* 4: 43) as referring to intercourse. He said: *Al-Lamas* (lit. touching) means intercourse, but Allah (ﷻ) implied it here.¹⁶³ The people interpreted touching in the verse ﴿And if you divorce them before you have touched them, and you have appointed unto them the *mahr* [bridal-money given by the husband to his wife at the time of marriage]﴾ (*Qur'an* 2: 237) as referring to being alone with them. He said: What is meant by touching here is being alone with.¹⁶⁴ So he ruled that it is obligatory to pay the dowry in full if the husband has been alone with the wife.¹⁶⁵ He also said: If he drew the curtain on his wife and closed the door, then the bridal gift and the 'iddah become obligatory.¹⁶⁶

3.5.6. Understanding the text in the light of another text

An example of this is that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) understood the verse ﴿And never will Allah grant to the disbelievers a way [to triumph] over the believers﴾ (*Qur'an* 4: 141) as referring to the Day of Resurrection, because of the [preceding] words ﴿Allah will judge between you [all] on the Day of Resurrection.﴾ (*Qur'an* 4: 141). That was when a man came to him and asked him: How do we understand this verse, ﴿And never will Allah grant to the disbelievers a way (to triumph) over the believers?﴾ (*Qur'an* 4: 141) 'Ali (ﷺ) said: Come closer to me. Allah (ﷻ) will judge between you on the Day of Resurrection, and Allah (ﷻ) will never grant to the disbelievers a way (to triumph) over the believers.¹⁶⁷

He understood the verse, ﴿And by the roof raised high﴾ (*Qur'an* 52: 5) as referring to the heaven, because of what was

narrated by Ibn Jareer and mentioned by Ibn Katheer from 'Ali that ﴿And by the roof raised high﴾ (*Qur'an* 52: 5) means the heaven. Sufyân said: Then he recited: ﴿And We have made the heaven a roof, safe and well-guarded. Yet they turn away from its signs [i.e. sun, moon, winds, clouds].﴾ (*Qur'an* 21: 32)

He understood the verse, ﴿Guard strictly [five obligatory] *aṣ-Ṣalawât* [the prayers] especially the middle *Ṣalâh*. And stand before Allah with obedience﴾ (*Qur'an* 2: 238) as referring to 'Aṣr prayer, based on the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) on the day of al-Aḥzâb: "They distracted us from the middle prayer, 'Aṣr prayer, may Allah (ﷻ) fill their houses and graves with fire."¹⁶⁸

Another example is his understanding of the verse, ﴿If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden to do, We shall expiate from you your [small] sins, and admit you to a Noble Entrance [i.e. paradise].﴾ (*Qur'an* 4: 31) It was narrated from Sahl ibn Abi Khaythamah that his father said: I was in this mosque — the mosque of Kufa — when 'Ali (ﷺ) was addressing the people from the minbar and saying: "O people, the major sins are seven." The people listened carefully, and he repeated it three times, then he said: "Why don't you ask me about them?" They said: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, what are they?" He said: "Associating others with Allah, killing the soul that Allah (ﷻ) has made sacred, slandering chaste women, consuming the wealth of orphans, consuming usury, fleeing from the battlefield, and living like a Bedouin¹⁶⁹ after migrating."¹⁷⁰ This understanding is based on the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in which he said: "Avoid the seven that doom one to hell." They said: O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), what are they? He said: "Associating others with Allah, witchcraft, killing the soul that Allah has made sacred except in cases dictated by Sharia, consuming usury, consuming the wealth of the orphan, running away from the battlefield and slandering chaste women, indiscreet but

believing.”¹⁷¹ This is part of the method of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) in interpreting the noble Qur'an by means of the Sunnah.

3.5.7. Asking the Prophet about what he did not understand

Part of the method of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) in understanding the noble Qur'an was asking about whatever he did not understand. For example, he asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) about the greatest day [of hajj] in the verse, ﴿And a declaration from Allah and His Messenger to mankind on the greatest day [the 10th of Dhul-Hijjah — the 12th month of Islamic calendar]﴾ (*Qur'an* 9: 3). He said: I asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about the greatest day of hajj, and he said: the Day of Sacrifice.¹⁷² Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام) used this method when narrating from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). He said: I said: O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), if something befalls us and there is no clear command or prohibition, what should we do? He said: Consult the experts in Islamic law and the worshippers, and do not make a decision in isolation.¹⁷³

3.5.8. Knowledge of the occasions on which verses were revealed

This is useful for understanding the meanings of verses and deriving rulings from them, because the reason for revelation is an important way of understanding the meaning of the Qur'an.¹⁷⁴ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib reached a high level of knowledge of the reasons for revelation of verses. He used to say, when encouraging people to ask him about the Book of Allah: “Ask me, ask me, ask me about the Book of Allah, for by Allah, there is no verse but I know whether it was revealed by night or by day.”¹⁷⁵ According to another report: “By Allah, no verse was revealed but I know concerning what it was revealed and where it was revealed.”¹⁷⁶

3.5.9. Specifying what is general in meaning

What is general in meaning is wording that refers to everything that the word could mean, without any limitation.¹⁷⁷ The ruling concerning this is that every report that is general in meaning remains so until another report comes to make it more specific.¹⁷⁸ There may be some reports which limit what is general in meaning to some of what it means, and that is specifying what is general in meaning.¹⁷⁹

A report was narrated from 'Ali (عليه السلام) which specified the meaning of a verse that is general in meaning. He (عليه السلام) was asked about a man who had two slave women who were sisters; he had intercourse with one of them and then he wanted to have intercourse with the other. 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: No, not until they both go out of his possession.¹⁸⁰ It was narrated from Ibn al-Kawwa' that he asked 'Ali (عليه السلام) about marrying two sisters at the same time, and he answered: One verse forbade it, and another verse allowed it, but my family and I do not do that.¹⁸¹ What he meant by the verse which forbade it is the verse, ﴿And two sisters in wedlock at the same time﴾ (*Qur'an* 4: 23); and what he meant by the verse which allowed it is the verse, ﴿Except from their wives or [the slaves] that their right hands possess, for then they are free from blame﴾ (*Qur'an* 23: 6). Of these two verses, one is general in meaning and the other is specific, as it limits the general meaning of intimacy with slave women (those that their right hands possess) by specifying that it is not permitted to be intimate with two sisters at the same time.¹⁸²

Another example is when he gave a ruling concerning the 'iddah of a pregnant woman whose husband had died; he stated that she should take the longer of the two periods as her 'iddah. He said: Her 'iddah is the longer of the two periods.¹⁸³ In other words, he gave a specific meaning to the general meaning of the verses, ﴿And those of you who die and leave wives behind them, they [the wives] shall wait [as regards their marriage] for four months and ten days﴾ (*Qur'an*

2: 234) and ﴿And for those who are pregnant [whether they are divorced or their husbands are dead], their 'Iddah [prescribed period] is until they lay down their burden﴾ (*Qur'an* 65: 4). So if the pregnant woman whose husband has died gives birth before four months and ten days are over, then she should complete the period (of the 'iddah), and not follow the general meaning of the second verse, because the first verse is more specific. If she completes the period of four months and ten days, then her 'iddah does not end until she gives birth, because the first verse may be general in one way but it is made specific by the second. Both verses are general in one way and specific in another, and each of them makes the other specific according to 'Ali (عليه السلام).

Perhaps he was choosing to act on the safe side in order to reconcile between the two verses,¹⁸⁴ but the more correct view is that in either case, her 'iddah ends when she gives birth. It was narrated in a sound report from Abdullah ibn 'Utbah that Subay'ah bint al-Ḥārith told him that she was married to Sa'd ibn Khawlah, who was present at Badr, and he died during the farewell pilgrimage when she was pregnant. Soon after he died, she gave birth, and when her postchildbirth bleeding ended, she beautified herself to receive proposals of marriage. Abu as-Sanâbil entered upon her and said to her: Why do I see you adorned? Perhaps you hope to get married? By Allah (ﷻ), you will not get married until four months and ten days have passed. Subay'ah said: When he said that to me, I put on my outer garments in the evening and went to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and I asked him about that, and he answered me that my 'iddah had ended when I gave birth, and he told me to get married if I wanted to.¹⁸⁵

Perhaps 'Ali (عليه السلام) gave that decision because he had not heard the hadith of Subay'ah; otherwise he would not have gone against a proven sound report from the Prophet (ﷺ).¹⁸⁶

3.5.10. Knowledge of the customs of the Arabs and peoples who lived around them

Knowing the nature and customs of the Arabs and the peoples who lived around them, such as the Jews and Christians, at the time that the Qur’an was revealed plays a great role in understanding the noble Qur’an. ‘Ali (عليه السلام) lived at that time and knew a great deal about the customs that the Qur’an forbade or of which it approved. For example, Ibn Abi Hātim narrated: When Ibn Wā’il competed with Abu al-Farazdaq, and each of them slaughtered one hundred camels, ‘Ali went out riding the white mule of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), calling out: “O people, do not eat their meat, for they have been slaughtered for something other than Allah (ﷻ).” ‘Ali (عليه السلام) knew from the customs of the Arabs at his time that a competition like this was not for the sake of Allah (ﷻ), rather it was for the devil, and that was forbidden based on the evidence of the words of Allah (ﷻ): ﴿Forbidden to you [for food] are: *Al-Maitah* [the dead animals — cattle — beast not slaughtered], blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which Allah’s Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering [that which has been slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah]﴾ (Qur’an 5: 3).¹⁸⁷

3.5.11. Deep understanding

Deep understanding was one of the distinguishing characteristics for which ‘Ali (عليه السلام) was renowned. The examples indicating that are numerous, of which we may mention here one that was narrated by Ibn Jarer, who said: One of the Kharijites called out to ‘Ali when he was praying the dawn prayer, saying: ﴿And indeed it has been revealed to you [O Muhammad], as it was to those [Allah’s Messengers] before you: “If you join others in worship with Allah, [then] surely, [all] your deeds will be in vain, and you will certainly be among the losers﴾ (Qur’an 39: 65). ‘Ali (عليه السلام) responded as he was

praying [with the verse]: ﴿So be patient [O Muhammad]. Verily, the Promise of Allah is true; and let not those who have no certainty of Faith discourage you from conveying Allah's Message [which you are obliged to convey]﴾ (Qur'an 30: 60).¹⁸⁸

These are some of the basic principles followed by Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) in deriving rulings from the noble Qur'an and understanding its meanings. From his example, those who love him and the sincere Muslims can learn how to interact with the Book of Allah (الكتاب).

3.6. 'Ali's interpretation of some verses of the Qur'an

3.6.1. Adh-Dhâriyât [soorah 51]

It was narrated from ath-Thawri, from Ḥabeeb ibn Abi Thâbit, that Abu aṭ-Ṭufayl said: I heard Ibn al-Kawwa' ask 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib about *al-dhâriyâtu dharwan* [By (the winds) that scatter dust]. He said: The winds. He asked him about *al-ḥâmilâtu waqran* [And (the clouds) that bear heavy weight of water]. He said: The clouds. He asked him about *wal-jâriyâti yusran* [And (the ships) that float with ease and gentleness]. He said: The ships. He asked him about *al-mudabbirâti amran* [And those (angels) who distribute (provisions, rain, and other blessings) by (Allah's) Command]. He said: The angels.¹⁸⁹ Al-Hâkim classed this report as sound with a different chain of narration from Abu aṭ-Ṭufayl.

Aṭ-Ṭabari mentioned in detail the different chains of narration going back to 'Ali.¹⁹⁰ It was also narrated by 'Abdur-Razzâq with a different chain of narration from Abu aṭ-Ṭufayl, who said: I saw 'Ali when he was giving a sermon. He said: "Ask me, ask me about the Book of Allah, for by Allah, there is no verse but I know whether it

was revealed by night or by day, on the plains or in the mountains.” Ibn al-Kawwa’ said — when I was between him and ‘Ali, and he was behind me: What is *al-dhâriyâtu dharwan* [By (the winds) that scatter dust]? He also narrated a similar report, in which he said: Woe to you! Ask to learn and do not ask to cause annoyance.¹⁹¹

3.6.2. ﴿So verily, I swear by the planets that recede﴾ (Qur’an 81: 15)

Sa‘eed ibn Manşoor narrated with a reliable chain of narration from ‘Ali (عليه السلام) that he said: They are the planets that move swiftly by night and recede by day so they cannot be seen.¹⁹²

3.6.3. The earth’s weeping for the righteous slave

‘Ali (عليه السلام) said: When a righteous slave dies, the place where he used to pray on earth weeps, and the place where his deeds ascended from heaven and earth also weeps. Then he recited: ﴿And the heavens and the earth wept not for them, nor were they given a respite.﴾ (Qur’an 44: 29)

3.6.4. Humility in the heart and being gentle when dealing with a Muslim

Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) was asked about the verse ﴿Those who offer their Ṣalâh [prayers] with all solemnity and full submissiveness﴾ (Qur’an 23: 2). He said: Humility is in the heart, and being gentle when dealing with a Muslim, and not looking around while praying.¹⁹³

3.6.5. Two believing friends and two disbelieving friends

Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) was asked about the words of Allah (ﷻ), ﴿Friends on that Day will be foes one to another except

Al-Muttaqoon [the pious] ﴿ (Qur'an 43: 67). He said: Two believing friends and two disbelieving friends. One of the believers died and was given glad tidings of paradise, then he remembered his believing friend and said: O Lord, my friend So-and-so used to tell me to do good and forbid me from doing evil, and he told me to obey You and to obey Your Messenger, and he told me that I was going to meet You, so do not let him go astray after I am gone. Guide him as You guided me, and honour him as You honoured me. When the friend dies, they will be brought together in paradise, and it will be said to them: Let each one of you praise the other. So he will say: O Allah, he used to tell me to do good and forbid me from doing evil, and he told me to obey You and to obey Your Messenger, and he told me that I was going to meet You. What a good brother, friend and companion. Then one of the two disbelievers died and was given the tidings of hell. He remembered his friend and said: O Allah, my friend so-and-so used to tell me to do evil and forbid me from doing good; he told me to disobey You and to disobey Your Messenger, and he told me that I would not meet You. O Allah, send him astray as You sent me astray. When the friend dies, they will be joined together in hell, and it will be said: Let each of you praise the other. So he will say: O Allah, he used to tell me to do evil and forbid me to do good; he told me to disobey You and to disobey Your Messenger, and he told me that I would not meet You. What a bad brother, friend and companion.¹⁹⁴

3.6.6. Zuhr (asceticism) may be summed up in two phrases from the Qur'an

'Ali (عليه السلام) said: Asceticism may be summed up in two phrases from the noble Qur'an. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿In order that you may not be sad over matters that you fail to get, nor rejoice because of that which has been given to you﴾ (Qur'an 57: 23). The one who does not grieve

over the past or rejoice over what has been given to him has become an ascetic in the complete sense of the word.¹⁹⁵

3.6.7. 'Ali (عليه السلام) and his focus on prayer

'Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali explained that it is recommended for the worshipper to ask Allah (الله) for mercy if he recites a verse which mentions mercy and to ask Allah for refuge from His punishment if he recites a verse which speaks of punishment. It was narrated that 'Abd Khayr al-Hamdāni said: I heard 'Ali ibn Abi Tālib recite in his prayer, «Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High,» (*Qur'an* 87: 1) and he said: *Subhāna Rabbiy al-A'la* (Glory be to my Lord Most High).¹⁹⁶

It was narrated that Hġir ibn Qays al-Madri said: I stayed overnight with Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tālib (عليه السلام). When he was praying at night, I heard him reciting this verse: «Then tell Me [about] the [human] semen that you emit. Is it you who create it [i.e. make this semen into a perfect human being], or are We the Creator?» (*Qur'an* 56: 58-59) He said three times: No, rather it is You, O Lord. Then he recited: «Then tell Me about the seed that you sow in the ground. Is it you that make it grow, or are We the Grower?» (*Qur'an* 56: 63-64) He said three times: No, rather it is You, O Lord. Then he recited: «Then tell Me about the water that you drink. Is it you who cause it from the rain clouds to come down, or are We the Causer of it to come down?» (*Qur'an* 56: 68-69). He said three times: No, rather it is You, O Lord. Then he recited: «Then tell Me about the fire which you kindle. Is it you who made the tree thereof to grow, or are We the Grower?» (*Qur'an* 56: 71-72). He said three times: No, rather it is You, O Lord.¹⁹⁷

3.6.8. ﴿The Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail Except him who brings to Allah a clean heart.﴾ (Qur'an 26: 88-89)

'Ali (عليه السلام) said: Sons and wealth are the reward of this world, and righteous deeds are the reward of the hereafter, and Allah (ﷻ) may bestow both upon some people.¹⁹⁸

4. 'Ali's staying close to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)

'Ali was one of the Makkans who were able to read and write in an illiterate society, which is indicative of his love for knowledge from an early age. Allah (ﷻ) enabled him to live from childhood in the house of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), so he was raised by him, and the Prophet's care for him increased after he became Muslim. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was the main influence that impacted his character and enhanced his talents, purifying his heart, enlightening his mind and reviving his soul. He stayed close to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in Makkah and in Madinah. He was keen to study at the hands of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), who educated his Companions in knowledge of the noble Qur'an. He was the gushing spring from which 'Ali (عليه السلام) took his knowledge, education and erudition. Verses were revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ) in portions, according to situations and events. He recited them to his Companions, who learned their meanings and understood them in depth, and who were influenced by their teachings. Thus they had a profound impact on their minds, hearts and souls.

'Ali (عليه السلام) was one of those who were influenced by the Qur'anic education that they received from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), absorbing its teachings and the teachings of the Prophet (ﷺ).

From the time he became Muslim, ‘Ali (ﷺ) was very keen to memorise, understand and ponder the Noble Qur’an. He stayed close to the Messenger (ﷺ), learning from him what was revealed to him, until he had memorised all of its verses and chapters. Through the blessing of keeping company with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and being raised by him, ‘Ali (ﷺ) attained a great deal of good, and he became one of the Rightly Guided Caliphs later on. He was eager to immerse himself in the wise guidance of the Prophet, in times of war and peace. He acquired from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) knowledge, education and understanding of the aims of this great religion. There was great love between the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and ‘Ali (ﷺ), and love is an important factor in preparing an excellent academic atmosphere between teacher and student; it produces good academic results. ‘Ali (ﷺ) loved the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) very deeply. He was devoted to him and even offered himself as a sacrifice for him in order to spread his message.

4.1. Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ) and how he respected the status of prophethood

Allah (ﷻ) enjoined upon the two races who were alive at the time of the Prophet’s mission — mankind and the jinn — that they should believe in the Prophet (ﷺ) and the message he brought, as attested by the text of the Qur’an. Allah (ﷻ) also confirmed the obligation of believing in His Prophet by mentioning it alongside belief in Him (ﷻ) in many places in the noble Qur’an, such as:

﴿Say [O Muhammad]: “O mankind! Verily, I am sent to you all as the Messenger of Allah — to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. *Lâ ilâha illa Huwa* [none has the right to be worshipped but He]. It is He Who gives life and causes death. So believe in Allah and His Messenger [Muhammad], the Prophet who can neither read nor write [i.e. Muhammad], who believes in Allah

and His Words [(this Qur'an), the Tawrât (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel) and also Allah's Word: "Be!" — and he was, i.e. 'Eesa (Jesus) son of Maryam (Mary)], and follow him so that you may be guided.﴾
(*Qur'an* 7: 158)

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "By the One in Whose hand is the soul of Muḥammad, there is no one of this nation, Jew or Christian, who hears of me then dies without believing in that with which I have been sent, but he will be one of the dwellers of the fire."¹⁹⁹

The Ummah unanimously agrees that it is obligatory to believe in the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ). They also unanimously agree that everyone — whether human or jinn — who does not believe in him, after proof of his prophethood is established, is deserving of Allah's punishment like those among the disbelievers to whom the Messenger was sent. This is a basic principle on which the Companions, those who followed them in truth, the imams of the Muslims and all the Muslim sects, Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah and others, are all agreed.²⁰⁰

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ؓ) showed due respect for the position of prophethood and highlighted the importance of this position in his words and deeds. He was keen to teach the people and encourage them to follow the example of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in word and deed and in all that he approved of. Among the words of 'Ali in this regard is his saying: Follow the guidance of your Prophet (ﷺ), for it is the best of guidance; follow his Sunnah, for it is the best of ways.²⁰¹

4.1.1. Obligation of obeying the Prophet (ﷺ) and adhering to his Sunnah

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ؓ) was raised to obey the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). He was one of those who read, memorised

and understood the words of Allah: ﴿He who obeys the Messenger [Muhammad], has indeed obeyed Allah (ﷻ).﴾ (*Qur'an* 4: 80) This verse is one of a number of verses that make a connection between obeying Allah (ﷻ) and obeying the Messenger (ﷺ). Allah has made obedience to Him and obedience to His Messenger one and the same, and the command to obey His Messenger is included in the command to obey Him (ﷻ). This confirms to people that obedience to Him cannot be achieved except by obedience to the Messenger (ﷺ), and there are many verses that speak of this.²⁰² Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) was raised by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and he learned from him the importance of obeying him, heeding his commands, following that which he brought, adhering to his Sunnah and taking him as an example in all that he brought from his Lord. The advice of the Prophet (ﷺ) concerning this matter gave the Ummah very important guidelines. Whenever they followed it, adhered to it and used it to light the way, then they achieved happiness in this world and in the hereafter, and they prevailed and succeeded by Allah's leave. The hadiths which speak of this are many, and they use a variety of phrases and approaches; some of them contain likenesses that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) coined for his Ummah with regard to this matter. No doubt these variations and different approaches clarified the matter and highlighted its importance so that there was no room left for anyone to misinterpret it or to change or distort the meaning on the basis of whims and desires or corrupt opinions.

These hadiths, although they vary in style, all emphasise one and the same thing, which is confirming the obligation to obey him (ﷺ). They promise rewards for following that which he brought, in addition to warning against and forbidding disobedience to him and highlighting the severe punishment for that.²⁰³ One of these hadiths of the Prophet (ﷺ) is: "All of my Ummah will enter paradise except those who refuse." They said: O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), who

would refuse? He said: "The one who obeys me will enter paradise, and the one who disobeys me has refused."²⁰⁴ Obedience to the Messenger (ﷺ) means following his Sunnah and rejecting the words of anyone who says something about the religion of Allah (ﷻ) that goes against the Sunnah, without using trickery to justify overlooking the Sunnah by means of flawed arguments and baseless innovations.²⁰⁵

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) was one of the keenest of the Companions to obey the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). He (ﷺ) said: "I would not forsake the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) for the opinion of anyone."²⁰⁶ He also said: "I am not a prophet, and I do not receive revelation, but I act in accordance with the Book of Allah (ﷻ) and the Sunnah of Muḥammad (ﷺ) as much as I can." This is a unique example of adherence to the Sunnah and following and promoting it.²⁰⁷ It is on the basis of this understanding and clear vision of the importance of obeying the Messenger (ﷺ) and following his Sunnah that the actions of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) were based. He paid a great deal of attention to the Sunnah and tried to make sure that what he narrated and what he followed of the Sunnah was sound and correct. He (ﷺ) said: "If I narrate something to you from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), then to fall from heaven would be dearer to me than to tell lies about him."²⁰⁸ He also said: "If I heard a statement from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), Allah (ﷻ) benefited me by it as much as He willed. If someone else told me of it, I would ask him to swear (that he heard it from the Prophet), and if he swore, I would believe him."²⁰⁹

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) fought any idea that was contrary to the concept of following the Sunnah. He said: "If religious matters were based on personal opinions, then it would be more appropriate to wipe the bottom of the *khuff*²¹⁰ than the top."

4.1.2. The report of Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) about the signs of the prophethood of the Messenger (ﷺ)

Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) explained some of the signs of the prophethood of the Prophet (ﷺ), including the following:

4.1.2.a. The blessing of his supplication

Once ‘Ali (عليه السلام) fell sick, and the Prophet (ﷺ) came to visit him when he was saying: O Allah, if my time has come, then let me die and rest, and if it has not yet come, then heal me, and if You want to test me, then grant me patience. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “What did you say?” He repeated it, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “O Allah, heal him; O Allah, grant him wellbeing.” Then he said: “Get up.” [‘Ali] said: So I got up, and the pain never came back to me again after that.²¹¹ We will discuss below the supplication of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) for him at Khaybar.

4.1.2.b. ‘Ali’s narration from the Prophet about matters of the unseen that Allah revealed to him

‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) said: If I tell you something from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), to fall from heaven is dearer to me than to tell a lie about him. But if I tell you about matters concerning me and you, then war is deceit.²¹² I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: “At the end of time, there will come a people who are young in age and foolish of mind, quoting what the best of creation (the Prophet) said. They will pass out of Islam as the arrow passes through the prey. Their faith will go no further than their throats. Wherever you find them, kill them, for there is a reward on the Day of Resurrection for the one who kills them.”²¹³ We will discuss this hadith and others below when we discuss the Kharijites and Ali’s attitude towards them, inshallah.

4.1.2.c. Fear instilled in the hearts of the enemy

One of the signs of prophethood that were narrated by 'Ali (عليه السلام) is this, which he narrated from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "I have been given that which was not given to any of the other prophets." We said: O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), what is it? He said: "I have been supported by means of fear instilled in the hearts of the enemy, and I have been given the keys of the Earth, and I am called Aḥmad, and the soil has been made a means of purification for me, and my Ummah has been made the best of nations."²¹⁴

4.1.2.d. The Seal of Prophethood

'Ali (عليه السلام) explained that among the attributes of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) were physical signs, and he described one of the most prominent physical signs of his prophethood when he said: Between his shoulders was the seal of prophethood.²¹⁵ This sign was known to the People of the Book. It was an area of raised, red skin near his left shoulder. At its smallest, it was the size of a pigeon's egg, and at its largest, it was the size of a fist.²¹⁶

4.1.2.e. The mountains' greeting to the Prophet (ﷺ)

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام) told us of this sign when he said: I was with the Prophet (ﷺ) in Makkah, and we went out in some part of Makkah, and we did not come to any mountain or tree but it said, "Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)."²¹⁷

4.1.3. Encouraging people to adhere to the way of the Prophet (ﷺ)

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) used to encourage the Muslims to adhere to the guidance of the Prophet (ﷺ). He said in a sermon that he delivered in ar-Rabdhah²¹⁸: "Adhere to your religion, follow the guidance of your Prophet and follow his Sunnah. Whatever you do

not understand, try to find an answer in the Qur'an; whatever the Qur'an approves of, adhere to it, and whatever it disapproves of, reject it."²¹⁹ After Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) came back from fighting the Kharijites, he delivered an eloquent speech to his companions, encouraging goodness and prohibiting evil. In this speech, he referred to the importance of adhering to the guidance of the Prophet (ﷺ), and he encouraged them to do that. He said: "Follow the guidance of your Prophet (ﷺ), for it is the best of guidance. Follow his Sunnah, for it is the best of ways."²²⁰ The internal strife that arose during his caliphate did not distract Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) from calling his companions to all that is good, forbidding them to do any evil²²¹ and warning them against innovations. Among the things that he said concerning that was: "Serious matters are the best, and newly invented matters are the worst. Every newly invented matter is an innovation, and everyone who introduces something new is an innovator. The one who innovates is misled, and no innovator introduces an innovation but he has forsaken a Sunnah."²²²

4.1.4. Explaining the virtues of the Prophet and some of the rights that he has over his Ummah

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) explained the virtues of the Prophet (ﷺ) to the Muslims. Among the things that he said in this regard was: "One of the ways in which Allah honoured this Ummah and singled them out for blessing is that He sent to them Muḥammad (ﷺ), who taught them the Book, wisdom, obligations and the Sunnah so that they will be guided. He united them so that they would not be divided, he cleansed them so that they would be purified, and he made things easy for them so that they would not transgress. When he had done all of that, Allah (ﷻ) took his soul. Blessings, mercy and peace of Allah be upon him."²²³ The following are some of the rights of the Prophet (ﷺ):

4.1.4.a. Speaking the truth when narrating from him and avoiding lying about him

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) warned against telling lies about the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). It was narrated that Rib'i ibn Harrâsh said: I heard 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib say: The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Do not tell lies about me; the one who tells lies about me, let him enter hell." Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) warned against knowingly transmitting lies. Among the things that he narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ) are the words: "Whoever narrates a hadith from me, knowing that it is false, is one of the liars."²²⁴

4.1.4.b. Avoiding situations where people could reject the hadith of the Prophet

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) taught the people to keep away from any situation which could result in rejection of the hadith of Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), such as telling the people things that are beyond their understanding of the words of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). He said: "Tell the people what they know; do you want Allah and His Messenger to be disbelieved?"²²⁵ What is meant by what they know is that which they can understand. This is proof that ambiguous issues of hadith should not be mentioned to the common folk. Among those who disapproved of narrating some hadith but not others was Imam Aḥmad, with regard to hadiths which appear to encourage rebelling against those in authority; Mâlik with regard to hadiths about the divine attributes; and Abu Yoosuf with regard to hadiths which speak about strange matters. The guideline concerning that is when the apparent meaning of a hadith may lend support to innovation, but the apparent meaning is not what is meant. In this case, what is required is to refrain from narrating the hadith to one who, it is feared, will follow the apparent meaning.²²⁶

4.1.4.c. Thinking positively of the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said: "If you are told a hadith from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), then take it in the best, most guided and most appropriate manner."²²⁷

4.1.4.d. Sending blessings upon him

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Allah sends His *Ṣalâh* [Graces, Honours, Blessings, Mercy] on the Prophet [Muhammad], and also His angels [ask Allah to bless and forgive him]. O you who believe! end your *Ṣalâh* on [ask Allah to bless] him [Muhammad], and [you should] greet [salute] him with the Islamic way of greeting [salutation, i.e. *as-Salâmu 'Alaykum*].﴾
(*Qur'an* 33: 56)²²⁸

Here Allah is telling us of the status of His slave and Prophet among the assembly on high: He praises him before the angels who are close to Him, and the angels send blessings upon him. Then Allah (ﷻ) commands the inhabitants of the lower realm to send blessings and peace upon him, so that praise will come to him from the inhabitants of both realms, upper and lower.²²⁹ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه) confirmed this right of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) by describing the one who does not send blessings upon the Messenger of Allah when he hears him mentioned as being stingy. He narrated from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "The miser is the one in whose presence I am mentioned, and he does not send blessings upon me."²³⁰

4.1.4.e. 'Ali's love for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)

Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Say: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your kindred, the wealth that you have gained, the commerce in which you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which

you delight are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger, and striving hard and fighting in His Cause, then wait until Allah brings about His Decision [torment]. And Allah guides not the people who are *al-Fâsiqoon* [the rebellious, disobedient to Allah]] (Qur'an 9: 24). This verse states that it is obligatory to love Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger, and that this love must be given precedence over all other, and there is no difference of opinion concerning that among the Ummah.²³¹

Allah says: «Say [O Muhammad to mankind]: If you [really] love Allah, then follow me [i.e. accept Islamic Monotheism, follow the Qur'an and the Sunnah], Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful» (Qur'an 3: 31). In this verse, there is an implicit indication that it is obligatory to love the Prophet (ﷺ), because Allah (ﷻ) has stated that the proof of love for Him and sincerity thereof is following the Prophet (ﷺ). This following cannot be achieved except after believing in the Prophet (ﷺ), and believing in him must fulfil the necessary conditions, one of which is love for the Prophet (ﷺ).

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "By the One in Whose hand is my soul, no one of you truly believe this until I am dearer to him than his son and his father."²³² There can be no doubt that the level of the Companions' love for him was more complete than that of anyone else, because love is the fruit of knowledge and they were more aware of his position, status and virtue than anyone else. Hence their love for him (ﷺ) was stronger and greater.²³³ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه) was asked: "How was your love for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)?" He said: "He, by Allah, was dearer to us than our wealth, our children, our fathers, our mothers and cold water when one is thirsty."²³⁴ This type of absolute love is not for anyone but the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

4.1.5. Deep and precise knowledge of the characteristics of the Prophet’s personality

Family ties helped in this regard, as did living close to him for a long time and closely watching and observing the unique characteristics and noble attitude and inclinations that Allah (ﷻ) bestowed upon His Prophet. Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷺ) had precise and detailed knowledge of the Prophet’s character and was able to describe it and point out its subtle aspects. That may be seen below in what was narrated from him about the attitude, behaviour and characteristics of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).²³⁵

4.1.5.a. Description of his physical characteristics

Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ) said: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was not tall and not short; he had large hands and feet, and his face had a reddish colour; he had a long and narrow line of hair from his chest to his navel; he was of big build, and when he walked, he leaned forward slightly as if he was walking downhill.”²³⁶ I have never seen anyone like him before or since.”²³⁷

It was narrated from Muḥammad ibn ‘Ali that his father said: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had a large head, large eyes and long eyelashes.”²³⁸ Ḥasan said: “He had a thick beard, a reddish face and large hands and feet. When he walked, he leaned forwards as if climbing up, and when he turned, he turned with all his body (a sign of courage).”²³⁹

At-Tirmidhi narrated that Muḥammad, one of the sons of ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷺ) said: When ‘Ali described the Prophet (ﷺ), he said: “He was not very tall or very short; he was of average height. His hair was neither very curly nor straight, and he was not fat or fleshy in his face and cheeks, but there was some roundness in his face. He was white mixed with some reddishness, with large hands and feet. When he walked he moved energetically, as if walking downhill, and when he turned, he turned with all his body.”²⁴⁰

Moreover, 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) described one physical characteristic of the Prophet (ﷺ) after his death, something which no one else knew, except maybe those who washed him after he died.²⁴¹ He said: "I washed the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and I started looking to see what I would expect in one who was deceased, but I did not see anything. He looked good in life and in death, blessings and peace of Allah be upon him."²⁴² 'Ali (عليه السلام) said while he was washing him: "May my father and mother be sacrificed for you, how good you look in life and in death."²⁴³

4.1.5.b. Description of his attitude and character

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) spoke about the character of the Prophet (ﷺ), saying: "He was the most generous of people, the most openhearted, the most sincere in speech, the most gentle and easy-going,²⁴⁴ the kindest in dealing with others. Anyone who saw him for the first time would be in awe of him, and whoever came to know him would love him. One who described him said: I have never seen anyone like him before or since."²⁴⁵

He told us about the courage of the Messenger (ﷺ) and his toughness and strength. In spite of their great courage and strength (which is recorded in the descriptions of the military expeditions of the Prophet (ﷺ)), 'Ali and those who were with him would turn to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) when the battle intensified. 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "I remember the day of Badr and how we drew close to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). He was the nearest of us to the enemy, and he was one of the most courageous of the people that day."²⁴⁶ According to another report: "When the battle grew fierce and the two sides met (on the battlefield), we sought the protection of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and no one would be nearer to the enemy than him."²⁴⁷

Ali (عليه السلام) described the character of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as being merciful, generous, courageous and humble, as

mentioned in his description of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) when the Jews asked him about him: "He was the most merciful of people towards people; to the orphan he was like a compassionate father, and to widows he was generous and kind. He was the bravest of people and the most generous in giving, and he was the most handsome in appearance. His garment was a cloak, his food was barley bread, his condiment was milk, his pillow was leather stuffed with palm fibres, and his bed was made from a tree called *umm gheelan*, covered with woven material."²⁴⁸ He had two turbans; one was called *as-sahâb*,²⁴⁹ and the other was called *al-'iqâb*. His sword was *Dhul-Fiqâr*²⁵⁰; his banner was *al-Gharra*'; his she-camel was *al-'Adba*'²⁵¹; his mule was *Daldal*²⁵²; his donkey was *Ya'foor*; his horse was *Murtajaz*²⁵³; his ewe was *Barakah*; his banner was *al-Ĥamd*. He used to tie up the camel, feed the camel that was used for bringing water, patch his garment and repair his shoes.²⁵⁴

4.1.6. Examples of 'Ali's following the Sunnah

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) was always eager to follow the example of the Prophet (ﷺ), and his life is the best indication of that. The following are various examples showing that he did not differentiate between major and minor issues in following the Prophet.

— Supplication when mounting one's horse

It was narrated from 'Abdur-Razzâq: Someone who saw 'Ali (عليه السلام) when he rode told me: When he placed his foot in the stirrup, he said: In the name of Allah. When he mounted, he said: "All praise be to Allah, Who has placed this (transport) at our service; we ourselves would not have been capable of that, and to our Lord is our final destiny." Then he said *Al-ĥamdu Lillâh* (Praise be to Allah) three times and *Allâhu akbar* (Allah is most Great) three times, then he said: "O Allah, there is no god but You, Glory be to You. Verily I

have wronged myself, so forgive me, for surely no one can forgive sins except You.” Then he smiled, and he was asked: “Why are you smiling, O Amir al-Mu'mineen?” He said: “I saw the Prophet (ﷺ) do what I have done, and say what I have said, then he smiled. We said: ‘Why are you smiling, O Prophet of Allah?’ He said: ‘I am amazed at a slave of Allah when he says, “There is no god but You, I have wronged myself, so forgive me, for no one forgives sins except You,” knowing that no one forgives sins except Him.’”²⁵⁵

— Drinking while standing and while sitting

It was narrated from 'Aṭa' ibn al-Sâ'ib from Zadân that 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه) drank while standing, and the people were looking at him as if they disapproved of that. He said: What are you looking at? If I drink while standing, I saw the Prophet (ﷺ) drink while standing, and if I drink while sitting, I saw the Prophet (ﷺ) drink while sitting.²⁵⁶

— Teaching the wuḍoo'²⁵⁷ of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)

It was narrated from 'Abd Khayr: 'Ali taught us the wuḍoo' of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). The slave poured water on his hands until he cleansed them, then he put his hand in the vessel and rinsed his mouth and nose, and washed his face, three times for each; and he washed his forearms up to the elbows, three times for each; then he put his hand in the vessel and immersed it until his hand reached the bottom, then he withdrew it and wiped his other hand with it; then he wiped his head with his hands once; then he washed his feet up to the ankles, three times for each; then he scooped up a handful of water and drank it, then he said: “This is how the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did wuḍoo'.”²⁵⁸

— The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) forbade some things for 'Ali

It was narrated from Abdullah ibn Ḥaneen that his father said: I heard 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib say: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) forbade

me to wear a ring of gold, to wear *al-qass* (an Egyptian fabric with some silk in it) and clothes dyed with safflower, and to recite Qur'an while bowing. He gave me a suit made of a kind of silk, and I went out wearing it. He said: "O 'Ali, I did not give it to you for you to wear it." 'Ali said: So I took it back to Fāṭima, and gave her the edge to hold. She held it, thinking to fold it up with me, but I tore it in two. She said: May your hands be rubbed with dust, O son of Abi Ṭālib, what have you done? I said to her: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) forbade me to wear it; wear it and give it to your women to wear.²⁵⁹

— Sins and forgiveness

It was narrated that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "If a person commits sin in this world and is punished for it, Allah (ﷻ) is more just than to double the punishment for His slave, and if a person commits a sin in this world and Allah (ﷻ) conceals it and forgives him, Allah (ﷻ) is more kind than to look again at something that He has already forgiven."²⁶⁰

— Obedience is only with regard to what is right and proper

It was narrated from 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent out an army and appointed a man to command them. This man lit a fire and told them to enter it. Some of them wanted to enter it, but others said: "We have fled from this (by becoming Muslim)." The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was told about this, and he said to those who had wanted to enter the fire: "If you had entered it, you would have stayed in it until the Day of Resurrection." And he said kind words to the others, and he said: "There is no obedience if it involves disobedience to Allah (ﷻ); rather obedience is only in that which is right and proper."²⁶¹ This hadith shows us that obedience to rulers is limited to obedience to Allah and His Messenger; absolute obedience is not to be given to anyone except Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ).

— "Before one hundred years pass, the people who are alive today will be gone"

Abu Mas'ood 'Uqbah ibn 'Amr al-Ansâri entered upon 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib, and 'Ali (عليه السلام) said to him: You are the one who says "Before one hundred years have passed, the people who are alive today will have gone." By Allah, the prosperity of this will come after one hundred years.²⁶²

— The supplication of the Messenger (ﷺ) for blessing for the people of Madinah

It was narrated from 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) that he said: We went out with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and when we were in al-Harrah, at the water source belonging to Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâs, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Bring the water for wuḍoo'." When he had done wuḍoo', he stood up and turned to face the *qiblah*,²⁶³ then he said takbeer and said: "O Allah, Ibrâheem (عليه السلام) was Your slave and Your close friend, and he prayed for blessing for the people of Makkah. I am Muḥammad, Your slave and Your Messenger, and I pray to You for the people of Madinah, that you might bless them in their weights and measures as you blessed the people of Makkah, with a twofold blessing."²⁶⁴

— Supplication at the time of distress

It was narrated that 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) said: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) taught me to say when distress befalls me: "There is no God but Allah, the Forbearing, the Most Generous. Glory be to Allah and blessed be Allah, the Lord of the Mighty Throne, praise be to Allah the Lord of the Worlds."²⁶⁵ This hadith shows us the necessity of attaching one's heart to Allah (ﷻ) alone and depending on Him and turning to Him. No one can grant relief except Him (ﷻ), and no one answers the prayer of one who is in desperate need when he calls upon Him except the One Who created

him. There is no refuge except with Him. In this hadith, there is guidance and instruction for every Muslim to depend upon Allah (ﷻ) in all his affairs.

— “He did not say anything that was only for me, which was concealed from the public”

It was narrated that Abu aṭ-Ṭufayl said: We said to ‘Ali: Tell us something that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said only to you. He said: He did not say anything that was only for me, which was concealed from the public, but I heard him say: “May Allah curse the one who offers a sacrifice to anything other than Allah. May Allah curse the one who gives refuge to an innovator. May Allah curse the one who curses his parents. May Allah curse the one who changes the boundary markers.”²⁶⁶ He said “May Allah curse,” and the curse of Allah means being cast far away from the mercy of Allah. The words “the one who offers a sacrifice to anything other than Allah” includes everyone and everything other than Allah, if the sacrifice is offered to a Prophet, an angel, a jinn or anyone else. If these matters were not serious according to the religion of Allah (ﷻ), they would not have reached such a level that the one who does them deserves to be cursed by Allah (ﷻ).

— Allah is kind and loves kindness

It was narrated that ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (رضي الله عنه) said: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Allah is kind and loves kindness, and He gives in return for kindness that which He does not give in return for harshness.”²⁶⁷

— Giving zakāh before it is due

It was narrated from ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) that al-‘Abbās ibn ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about paying zakāh before it is due, and he granted him a concession allowing that.²⁶⁸

— The last ten days of Ramadan

It was narrated that 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) said: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to wake his family up (for night prayers) during the last ten days (of Ramadan), and he would tighten his waist wrapper (meaning that he strove hard).

4.2. People who narrated from 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام)

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) was the most knowledgeable of the Companions of his time about the Sunnah. It was narrated that 'Ali (عليه السلام) was mentioned in the presence of 'Â'ishah (عليها السلام), and she said: He is the most knowledgeable of the Sunnah among those who are left.²⁶⁹ Yet he narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ) 586 hadiths²⁷⁰, which is fewer than some of the other Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). That was for a number of reasons, including the following:

- (i) His being preoccupied with judiciary matters, rulership and war, which meant that he did not have time to issue fatwas or hold study circles, which were the main ways that the knowledge of some of the Companions, such as Abdullah ibn Mas'ood and Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs, becoming widespread.
- (ii) The emergence of people of whims and desires and followers of innovation, who exaggerated about him, and others who thought little of him, led to many lies being told about him. Hence the scholars did their utmost to check the soundness of the chains of narration that went back to him.
- (iii) The great extent of turmoil at this time, and the fact that some people were distracted by that, meant that he did not

trust anyone to pass on his knowledge. It was narrated that he said: I have knowledge, and would that I could find people to learn it from me and convey it to others.²⁷¹

With regard to ‘Ali’s methods of narrating and accepting hadiths, we may note the following:

4.2.1. Caution against telling lies about the Prophet (ﷺ)

‘Ali was one of those who narrated the words of the Prophet (ﷺ): “Whoever tells a lie about me deliberately, let him take his place in hell.”²⁷²

4.2.2. Double-checking the authenticity of the narration

As mentioned previously, ‘Ali (ﷺ) would ask the narrator to swear that it was true. It is narrated that he said: If I heard a hadith from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), I would benefit from it as much Allah (ﷻ) willed, and if someone else told me a hadith from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), I would ask him to swear to it, and if he swore to it I would believe him.²⁷³

4.2.3. Not narrating munkar (odd) hadith

It was narrated that he said: Tell the people what they can recognise and accept, and keep away from that which they find odd or objectionable. Do you want Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger to be disbelieved?²⁷⁴ ‘Ali narrated from Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, al-Miqdâd ibn al-Aswad and his wife Fâtimah (may Allah be pleased with them all).

Many of the Companions, Tâbi‘oon and members of his family narrated from ‘Ali (ﷺ). Among the most famous of the Companions who narrated from him were:

- (i) Abu Umâmah Iyâs ibn Tha'labah al-Anṣâri, from Banu Hârithah. He was the son of the sister of Abu Bardah. He narrated three hadiths from the Prophet (ﷺ), and he is the one whom the Messenger (ﷺ) told to stay with his mother on the day of the battle of Badr.²⁷⁵
- (ii) Abu Râfi' al-Qibṭi, the freed slave of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). It was said that his name was Ibrâheem, or Sinân, or Yasâr. Ibn 'Abdul-Barr said: The most well-known view is that his name was Aslam. He died at the time of 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib, in 40 AH.²⁷⁶
- (iii) Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri Sa'd ibn Mâlik ibn Sinân ibn Tha'labah al-Anṣâri. He went out to battle with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) when he was fifteen years old. He died in 74 AH.²⁷⁷
- (iv) Jâbir ibn Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn Ḥarâm ibn Ka'b ibn Ghanam ibn Ka'b al-Anṣâri al-Sulami. He was present at Şifteen with 'Ali and died in 78 AH. He was one of those who knew a great deal of the Sunnah.
- (v) Jâbir ibn Samurah ibn Junâdah ibn Jundub al-'Âmiri as-Sawâ'i, an ally of Banu Zahrah. His mother was Khâlidah bint Abi Waqqâş. His kunyah was Abu Abdullah. He said: I prayed with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) more than two thousand times. He settled in Kufah and died there in 74 AH.²⁷⁸
- (vi) Zayd ibn Arqam ibn Zayd ibn Qays ibn an-Nu'mân. It was said that his kunyah was Abu 'Umar or Abu 'Âmir. He died in Kufah in 66 or 68 AH.
- (vii) Abdullah ibn Ja'far ibn Abi Tâlib, the nephew of 'Ali. He was born in Abyssinia, and he was the first child born in Islam. He died in 80 AH at the age of ninety.²⁷⁹

- (viii) Abdullah ibn 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb al-Qurashi al-'Adawi. He became a Muslim with his father before he reached the age of puberty. He died in Makkah in 63 AH, at the age of eighty-four.²⁸⁰
- (ix) Abdullah ibn Mas'ood ibn Ghâfil ibn Wâ'il al-Hudhali, one of the earliest Muslims. He died in 32 AH.²⁸¹
- (x) 'Amr ibn Ḥurayth ibn 'Uthmân al-Qurashi al-Makhzoomi, whose kunyah was Abu Sa'eed. He saw the Prophet (ﷺ) and heard from him, and the Prophet wiped his head and prayed for blessing for him. He settled in Kufah and was a man of honour and dignity and noble position. He died in 85 AH.²⁸²

Among the members of his family who narrated from him were:

- (i) His son al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali, the grandson of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).
- (ii) His son al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali, the grandson of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). He was killed on the day of 'Ashoora' in 61 AH, when he was fifty-six years old.²⁸³
- (iii) His son Muḥammad ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib Abu al-Qâsim al-Madani, who was known as Ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah after his mother, Khawlah bint Ja'far ibn Qays, from Banu Ḥaneefah. Al-'Ajli said: He was a trustworthy Tâbi'i and a righteous man, who was known by the kunyah Abu al-Qâsim. He was born during the caliphate of 'Umar and died in 73 AH, or it was said 80, 81, 82, or 93 AH.²⁸⁴
- (iv) His grandson Muḥammad ibn 'Umar ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib, whom Ibn Ḥibbân mentioned in *ath-Thiqât*.²⁸⁵
- (v) His grandson 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib, who is known as Zayn al-Âbideen, one of the leaders of

the Tâbi'oon. His mother was Sulâfah bint Yazdagird, daughter of the last of the kings of Persia. He narrated *mursal*²⁸⁶ reports from his grandfather 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib. Al-'Ajli said: He was a trustworthy man of the Tâbi'oon of Madinah. He died in 94 AH, at the age of fifty-eight.²⁸⁷

(vi) His nephew (the son of his sister) Ja'dah ibn Hubayrah ibn Abi Wahb ibn 'Amr ibn 'Â'id ibn 'Imrân ibn Makhzoom, and his mother Umm Hâni' bint Abi Tâlib. He was born at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) and he was a Companion. He was governor of Khorasan and settled in Kufah. Al-'Ajli said: He was a trustworthy man of the Tâbi'oon of Madinah who narrated from 'Ali.²⁸⁸

(vii) His slave woman Umm Moosa. It is said that her name was Fâkhitah or Ḥabeebah. Al-Dâraqutni said: Her hadith is sound. Al-'Ajli said: She was a trustworthy woman of the Tâbi'oon of Kufah.²⁸⁹

The most famous of those who narrated from 'Ali (ﷺ) among the Tâbi'oon were:

(i) Abu al-Aswad ad-Du'ali al-Basri, the judge. His name was Dhâlim ibn 'Amr ibn Sufyân. It was also said that his name was 'Amr ibn 'Uthmân or 'Uthmân ibn 'Amr. He became Muslim at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), and he fought alongside 'Ali (ﷺ) in the Battle of the Camel. He was regarded as trustworthy by Ibn Ma'een, al-'Ajli and others. He died during the governorship of 'Ubaydullah ibn Ziyâd in 69 AH.²⁹⁰

(ii) Abu Bardah ibn Moosa al-Ash'ari the Islamic jurist. His name was al-Ḥârith, or it was said that it was 'Âmir. He was regarded as trustworthy by Ibn Sa'd, al-'Ajli and Ibn Ḥibbân. Al-'Ajli said: He was appointed judge of Kufah

after Shurayh. He narrated from his father, ‘Ali, Hudhayfah, Abdullah ibn Salâm, ‘Â’ishah and others. It was said that he died in 83 AH, or in 104 or 107 AH.²⁹¹

- (iii) Abu ‘Abdur-Raḥmân al-Sulami Abdullah ibn Ḥabeeb ibn Rabee‘ah, Abu ‘Abdur-Raḥmân as-Sulami al-Kufi al-Qâri’. His father was a Companion, and he was regarded as trustworthy by al-‘Ajli, an-Nasâ’i and Abu Dâwood. He narrated from ‘Umar, ‘Uthmân, ‘Ali, Sa’d, Khâlid ibn al-Waleed, Ibn Mas‘ood, Hudhayfah and others. It was said that he died in 72 AH or 85 AH when he was eighty-five years old. He was present with ‘Ali at Şiffeen.²⁹²
- (iv) Zurr ibn Ḥubaysh ibn Ḥubâbah ibn Aws al-Asadi Abu Maryam; it was said that he was also known as Abu Muṭarrif al-Kufi. Ibn Ma‘een stated that he was trustworthy. He died in 81, 82 or 83 AH, at the age of 120 years.²⁹³
- (v) Zayd ibn Wahb al-Juhani, from (the tribe of) Quḍâ’ah, who was known by the kunyah Abu Sulaymân. He was one of the most prominent and trustworthy of the Tâbi‘oon, and there is general consensus that his hadith may be used as evidence. He was regarded as trustworthy by Ibn Ma‘een and others. He died around 90 AH, during the governorship of al-Ḥajjâj.²⁹⁴
- (vi) Suwayd Ghafilah ibn ‘Awsajah ibn ‘Âmir, who was known by the kunyah Abu Umayyah. He travelled to meet the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), but the Prophet died before he could meet him. He accompanied Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmân and ‘Ali, and he died in 81 or 82 AH, at the age of 128.²⁹⁵
- (vii) Shurayh ibn Hâni’ ibn Yazeed ibn Nuhayk al-Ḥârithi al-

Madhhaji ibn al-Miqdâm al-Kufi. He lived at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), but he did not see him. He was one of the senior companions of 'Ali. He was killed with Abu Bakrah in Sijistan in 78 AH.²⁹⁶

(viii) 'Âmir ibn Sharaḥbeel ibn 'Abd, or it was said that his name was 'Âmir ibn Abdullah ibn Sharaḥbeel ash-Shi'bi al-Ḥimyari Abu 'Âmr al-Kufi, one of the people of Hamadân. It was narrated that he said: I met five hundred of the Companions. It was narrated that al-Ḥasan said: By Allah, he had great knowledge and was a man of dignity and prominent position in Islam. It was narrated that Makhool said: I have never seen anyone more knowledgeable than him. Ibn 'Uyaynah said: the people used to say that after the Companions, Ibn 'Abbâs was the most prominent in his time, ash-Shi'bi was the most prominent in his time, and ath-Thawri was the most prominent in his time. He was born six years after 'Umar became caliph, and he died in 109 AH.

(ix) 'Abd Khayr ibn Yazeed, and it was said ibn Bajeed ibn Jawa ibn 'Abd 'Amr ibn 'Abd Ya'rib ibn al-Şâ'id al-Hamadâni Abu 'Amârah al-Kufi. He was born during the time of jâhiliyyah. Al-'Ajli said: he was a trustworthy man of the Tâbi'oon of Kufah. Ibn Ḥibbân mentioned him among the trustworthy Tâbi'oon. It was said that he lived for one hundred and twenty years and was killed at Sifteen.²⁹⁷

(x) 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Abi Layla, whose name was Yasâr or Bilâl, or it was said that it was Dâwood ibn Bilâl ibn Baleel ibn Aşḥabah ibn al-Jallâḥ al-Ḥuraysh al-Anşâri al-Awsi. He was born six years before the end of 'Umar's caliphate. It was narrated that he said: I met one hundred and twenty

of the *Anṣâr*²⁹⁸. He was regarded as trustworthy by Ibn Ma'een and al-'Ajli. It was said that he was killed at al-Jamâjim in 71 or 82 AH.

- (xi) 'Ubaydah as-Salmâni, whose name was 'Ubaydah ibn 'Amr or Ibn Qays 'Amr as-Sulmâni al-Murâdi Abu 'Amr al-Kufi. He became Muslim two years before the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), but he did not meet him. Ash-Shi'bi said: Shurayh was the most knowledgeable on judiciary matters, and 'Ubaydah was equal to him. Al-'Ajli said: He was a trustworthy man of the Tâbi'oon of Kufah.²⁹⁹
- (xii) Abdullah ibn Salamah ibn Salamah al-Murâdi al-Kufi, the companion of 'Ali. His kunyah was Abu al-'Âliyah. Al-'Ajli said: He was a trustworthy man of the Tâbi'oon of Kufah. Ya'qool ibn Shaybah said: He is trustworthy.³⁰⁰
- (xiii) Abdullah ibn Shaqeeq al-'Aqeeli, whose kunyah was Abu 'Abdur-Rahmân or Abu Muḥammad al-Basri. He was one of the Tâbi'oon from Basra. He was mentioned by Ibn Sa'd in *al-Tabaqah al-Oola*, and it was narrated from Ibn Ma'een that he was trustworthy and one of the best of the Muslims; his hadith was not to be criticised. It was narrated that his supplication was accepted. He died after the year 100 AH, or it was said in 108 AH.³⁰¹
- (xiv) 'Alqamah ibn Qays an-Nakha'i. His full name was 'Alqamah ibn Qays ibn Abdullah ibn Mâlik ibn 'Alqamah an-Nakha'i al-Kufi. He was born during the lifetime of the Messenger (ﷺ). It was narrated from Ahmad that he was trustworthy and one of the good people. From Ibn Ma'een it was narrated that he read the entire Qur'an in one night. He died in 62 or 61 AH. Ibn Sa'd said: He was trustworthy and narrated many hadiths.

(xv) 'Umar ibn Sa'eed an-Nakha'i as-Şahbâni, Abu Yahya al-Kufi, from Ibn Ma'een, who was trustworthy and was mentioned by Ibn Hibbân among the trustworthy. He narrated a hadith from 'Ali about the punishment for the one who drinks alcohol. Ibn Sa'd said: He died in 115 AH, or it was said in 107 AH.³⁰²

(xvi) Hâni' ibn Hâni' al-Hamadhâni al-Kufi. An-Nasâ'i said: There is nothing wrong with him. He was mentioned by Ibn Hibbân among the trustworthy, and it was said that he was a Shia. Ibn Madeeni said: He is unknown. Ibn Sa'd said: His hadith was rejected. It was narrated from ash-Shâfa'i: The scholars of hadith do not accept his hadith because his condition is unknown. He was mentioned by Ibn Sa'd in *aṭ-Ṭabaqât al-Oola* in Kufah. Adh-Dhahabi said: There is nothing wrong with him.³⁰³

(xvii) Yazeed ibn Shurayk ibn Târiq at-Taymi al-Kufi. It was narrated from Yahya ibn Ma'een that he was trustworthy. He was mentioned by Ibn Hibbân among the trustworthy. Ibn Sa'd said: He was trustworthy and was the chief of his people. It was said that he was born during the time of jâhiliyyah. He narrated from 'Umar, 'Ali, Abu Dharr, Ibn Sa'd and Hudhayfah.³⁰⁴

This is a brief look at those who narrated from 'Ali (عليه السلام). Those who wish to learn more may refer to the thesis of Dr. Aḥmad Muḥammad Ta-Ha, *Fiqh al-Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib*, which was submitted to the University of Baghdad but has not yet been published.

5. The most important exploits of 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) between the migration to Madinah and the Battle of the Trench³⁰⁵

After he settled in Madinah, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) began to lay the foundations of the Islamic state. He created bonds of brotherhood between the *Muhâjireen*³⁰⁶ and the Anṣâr, then he built the mosque, drew up the covenant with the Jews, began to launch expeditions and focused on establishing the economic and educational aspects of the new society. 'Ali was close by his side in all his affairs, carrying out his orders and learning from his guidance.

5.1. Expeditions

As soon as the Muslims settled under the leadership of the Messenger (ﷺ) in Madinah, the expeditions began. They were aimed at establishing the authority of the state both inwardly and outwardly, winning over some of the tribes, containing the Bedouins and training the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) in making military preparations for larger campaigns. The conquest movement was a field for the practical training of leaders. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) took part in these expeditions, which occurred both before and after the battle of Badr. As for those in which he took part before Badr, they include:

5.1.1. Ghazwat³⁰⁷ al-'Asheerah³⁰⁸

In this campaign, the Prophet (ﷺ) aimed to attack Quraysh, and he appointed Abu Salamah ibn 'Abdul-Asad in charge of Madinah during his absence. This campaign was called Ghazwat al-'Asheerah, after the place in which the Prophet (ﷺ) stayed for the

month of Jumâda al-Oola and for a few days in the month of Jumâda al-Âkhirah. He made a peace deal with Banu Madlaj and their allies from Banu Dâmrâh, then he returned to Madinah. No fighting took place, because the loaded camels that he went to intercept had already passed by a few days before on their way to Syria³⁰⁹, following the coastal route. When news of that reached Quraysh, they set out to prevent it happening; they met the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and the Battle of Badr took place.³¹⁰ 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir told of his and 'Ali's participation in that campaign; it was narrated that he said: 'Ali and I were companions during the campaign of Dhul-'Asheerah. When we reached there, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) made camp, and we saw some people from Banu Madlaj working at a spring of theirs among some palm trees. 'Ali said to me: O Abu al-Yaqzân, shall we go to these people and see what they are doing? So we went to them and watched what they were doing for a while, then we felt sleepy, so 'Ali and I went and lay down under a group of palm trees, on the bare ground, and fell asleep. By Allah (ﷻ), we did not feel anything until the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) nudged us with his foot. We had gotten dusty on that bare ground, and it was on that day that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to 'Ali: Ya Abu Turâb (O Father of Dust), because of the dust that he saw on him. He said: "Shall I not tell you of the two most doomed of people?" We said: Yes, O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). He said: "The reddish man of Thamood who hamstrung the she-camel and the man who strikes you, O 'Ali, on this [meaning on the front of the head] until this [meaning his beard] becomes wet with blood."³¹¹ The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) called 'Ali by this name Abu Turâb again, as we shall see below.

5.1.2. The first campaign to Badr

The cause of this campaign was that Karaz ibn Jâbir al-Fihri had raided and captured some grazing camels and flocks of Madinah. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) went out after him until he reached a

valley called Şafwân, in the direction of Badr. Karaz ibn Jâbir got away, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) could not catch up with him, so he returned to Madinah.³¹² The Prophet (ﷺ) gave his white banner to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام).³¹³

These missions and campaigns that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) fought against the polytheists are regarded as the beginning of fighting jihad against the enemies of Islam. With the onset of these expeditions, it became clear that the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions, including Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام), were acting in accordance with the natural law of checking one set of people by means of another. This natural law is strongly connected to the support of this religion, and Allah refers to it in His noble Book:

﴿And if Allah did not check one set of people by means of another, the earth would indeed be full of mischief. But Allah is full of bounty to the 'Âlameen [mankind, jinn and all that exists].﴾ (*Qur'an* 2: 251)

﴿Those who have been expelled from their homes unjustly only because they said: 'Our Lord is Allah.' For had it not been that Allah checks one set of people by means of another, monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, wherein the Name of Allah is mentioned much would surely have been pulled down. Verily, Allah will help those who help His [Cause]. Truly, Allah is All-Strong, All-Mighty.﴾

(*Qur'an* 22: 40)

5.2. The Battle of Badr

5.2.1. Ali's presence at Badr

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "The historians are agreed that 'Ali was present at Badr and all the major events except Tabook. They said: The Prophet (ﷺ) gave him the banner on many occasions."³¹⁴

'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib was one of the *mujâhideen*³¹⁵ who took part in the battle of Badr, so let him tell us the story of this battle. It was narrated that Hârithah ibn Muḍarrib narrated that 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) said: "The Prophet was trying to find out what was happening around Badr. When we heard that the polytheists had come, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) marched to Badr, which was a well. The polytheists got there before us, and we found two of their men there, a man from Quraysh and a freed slave of 'Uqbah ibn Abi Ma'eet. The Qurayshi man fled, but we captured the freed slave of 'Uqbah, and we asked him: 'How many people are there?' He said: 'By Allah, they are many, and they are very strong.' When he said that, the Muslims beat him and took him to the Prophet (ﷺ), who said to him: 'How many people are there?' He said: 'By Allah, they are many, and they are very strong.' The Prophet (ﷺ) tried hard to make him tell him exactly how many they were, but he refused. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) asked him: 'How many camels do they slaughter every day?' He said: 'Ten a day.' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'They are one thousand, each camel for one hundred and some.'

"That night it rained, and we sheltered beneath trees and shields from the rain. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) spent the night calling upon his Lord, saying: 'If You cause this band to be destroyed, You will not be worshipped.' When he came out, he called out: 'Prayer, O slaves of Allah.' The people came from beneath the trees and shields, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) led us in prayer and urged us to fight. Then he said: 'Quraysh have gathered beneath this red side of the mountain.' When the people drew close to us, and we formed ranks and they formed ranks, we saw a man among them on a red camel of his, going among the people. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'O 'Ali, call Hamzah.' He was closest to the polytheists (and would be able to tell) who the man on the red camel was and what was he saying to them. Then the Messenger of Allah

(ﷺ) said: 'If there is anyone among the people who is enjoining good, it may be the man on the red camel.' Hamzah came and said: 'He is 'Utbah ibn Rabee'ah; he is telling them not to fight, and he is saying to them: O people, I see people who are prepared to die; you will never be able to harm them and stay safe. O people, go back and put the blame on me today, and say that 'Utbah is the coward, although you know that I am no coward.' Abu Jahl heard that and said: 'Are you saying this? By Allah, if anyone else were to say this, I would punish him. Your heart is filled with fear.' 'Utbah said: 'Are you accusing me of cowardice, O you who break wind out of fear? You will find out today which of us is the coward.' 'Utbah went forth scornfully with his brother Shaybah and his son al-Waleed, and they said: 'Who will come out for a duel?' Six young men of the Anşâr went forth, but 'Utbah said: 'We do not want these; send out to us our cousins from Banu 'Abdul-Muţţalib.' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Get up O 'Ali; get up O Hamzah; get up O 'Ubaydah ibn al-Hârith ibn al-Muţţalib.' Allah (ﷻ) caused 'Utbah and Shaybah, the sons of Rabee'ah, and al-Waleed ibn 'Utbah to be killed, and 'Ubaydah was wounded.

"We killed seventy of them and captured seventy. Then a short man from among the Anşâr brought al-'Abbâs ibn 'Abdul-Muţţalib as a prisoner. Al-'Abbâs said: 'O Messenger of Allah, by Allah this man did not capture me; rather I was captured by a bald man with the most handsome face, who was riding a piebald horse, but I do not see him among the people.' The Anşâri said: 'I did capture him, O Messenger of Allah.' He said: 'Be quiet; Allah supported you with a noble angel.' 'Ali said: From among Banu 'Abdul-Muţţalib we captured al-'Abbâs, 'Aqeel and Nawfal ibn al-Hârith."³¹⁶ From 'Ali's description of the battle of Badr, we may learn many lessons, which you may read in my book *al-Seerah an-Nabawiyyah: Waqâ'i' wa Tahleel wa Ahdâth* (The Prophet's Biography: Events and Analysis).

5.2.2. Poetry that was composed on the heroism of 'Ali at Badr

On the day of Badr, the banner of the polytheists was with Talḥah, who was killed by 'Ali. Al-Ḥajjāj ibn 'Allāt as-Sulami composed poetry to mark this event.

5.3. The marriage of 'Ali to Fâtimah (may Allah be pleased with them both)

She was Fâtimah the daughter of the leader of the pious and master of the sons of Adam, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and her mother was Khadeejah bint Khuwaylid (رضي الله عنها), and her kunyah was Umm Abeeha.³¹⁷ She was born before the Prophet's mission began, when the Prophet (ﷺ) was 35 years old.³¹⁸ The Prophet (ﷺ) gave her in marriage to 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه) in 2 AH, after the battle of Badr, and she bore him al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and Umm Kulthoom. She died six months after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ); may Allah be pleased with her and make her pleased.³¹⁹

5.3.1. Her dowry and trousseau

'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه) said: "Proposals were made to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) for Fâtimah. A freed slave woman of mine said: 'Do you know that offers are being made to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) for Fâtimah?' I said: 'No.' She said: 'Offers have been made. What is preventing you from going to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) so that he might give her to you in marriage?' I said: 'Do I have anything with which to get married?' She said: 'If you go to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), he will accept your proposal.' By Allah, she kept encouraging me until I entered upon the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). When I sat before him, I could not speak, out of awe and respect. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'What brings you here?'

Do you need something?' I remained silent, then he said: 'Perhaps you have come to propose to Fâtimah?' I said: 'Yes.' He said: 'Do you have anything to give as a mahr?' I said: 'No, by Allah, O Messenger of Allah.' He said: 'What did you do with the shield I gave you? By the One in Whose hand is my soul, it is worth four hundred dirhams.' I said: 'I have it.' He said: 'I give her to you in marriage; send it to her and that will be her dowry.' So it became the mahr of Fâtimah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).³²⁰

The reports of the Shia say: "She took my shield and went to the market with it and sold it for four hundred dirhams to 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân. When she took the money from him, and he took the shield from me, he said: 'O Abu al-Hasan, am I not more entitled to the shield than you, and aren't you more entitled to the money than me?' I said: 'Yes.' He said: 'This shield is a gift from me to you.' I took the shield and the money and went to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and placed the shield and the money before him, and told him what had happened with 'Uthmân, and the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed for him."³²¹

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) gave Fâtimah (ؓ) a trousseau of a velvet garment, a waterskin and a pillow of leather stuffed with grass.³²²

5.3.2. Her wedding

Asma' bint 'Umays said: "I was at the wedding of Fâtimah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). The next day, the Prophet (ﷺ) came to the door and said: 'O Umm Ayman, call my brother (meaning 'Ali) for me.' She said: 'He is your brother and you gave him your daughter in marriage?' He said: 'Yes, O Umm Ayman.' She said: 'Ali came and the Prophet (ﷺ) sprinkled water on him and prayed for him. Then he said: 'Call Fâtimah for me.' She said: She came stumbling because of shyness, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to her: 'Calm down; I have given you in marriage to the dearest

of my household to me.' The Prophet (ﷺ) also sprinkled water on her and prayed for her. Then the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) went back, and he saw a black shape ahead of him. He said: 'Who is this?' I said: 'Me.' He said: 'Asma'?' I said: 'Yes.' He said: 'Asma' bint 'Umayy?' I said: 'Yes.' He said: 'Did you come to the wedding of the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to honour him?' I said: 'Yes.' Then he prayed for me."³²³

5.3.3. The wedding feast

It was narrated that Buraydah said: When 'Ali proposed to Fâtîmah, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "There has to be a feast for the wedding." Sa'd said: I will provide a ram. Several of the Anṣâr collected a number of measures of barley for him. When the wedding night came, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: O 'Ali, do not do anything until you meet me. The Prophet (ﷺ) called for water and performed wuḍoo' with it, then he poured it on 'Ali and said: "O Allah, bless them and bestow blessings upon them and bless their offspring."³²⁴

5.3.4. The lifestyle of 'Ali and Fâtîmah (may Allah be pleased with them)

The lifestyle of 'Ali and Fâtîmah, who were the dearest of people to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), was an ascetic lifestyle in which they lived on very little; it was a life of patience and striving. Hanâd narrated from 'Aṭa': I was told that 'Ali said: "We stayed for several days during which we had nothing and the Prophet (ﷺ) had nothing. I went out, and I found a dinar lying on the road. I paused for a while, thinking whether to take it or leave it, then I took it because of the hardship we were facing. I bought some flour with it, then I brought it to Fâtîmah and said: Make dough and bread. She started to make dough, and she was so tired that she leaned forward and could

not keep her lock of hair from touching the dough. Then she baked bread, and I went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and told him. He said: ‘Eat, for it is provision that Allah (ﷻ) has granted to you.’”³²⁵

It was narrated that ash-Shi‘bi said: ‘Ali (ﷺ) said: “I married Fâtimah, the daughter of Muḥammad the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and she and I had no furnishings apart from the skin of a ram on which we slept at night, and on which we carried food to our camel during the day, and I had no servant apart from her.”³²⁶

It was narrated from Mujâhid that ‘Ali (ﷺ) said: “I got very hungry in Madinah, and I went out looking for work in the outskirts of the city. There was a woman who had gathered some dirt, and I thought she wanted to wet it, so I went to her and made an agreement with her (that she would give me) one date for each bucket. I brought sixteen buckets, until my hands swelled up, then I brought the water and drank some of it. I put my hands like this in front of her hands, and she counted out sixteen dates for me. Then I came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and told him, and he ate some of them with me.”³²⁷ This report shows us the hardship that Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ) went through in Madinah, and from it we may learn the proper conduct in dealing with hardship, as ‘Ali (ﷺ) went out and worked with his own hands to earn in the proper way, and he did not sit and wait for whatever people felt like giving. Another thing we learn is the strength of the patience with which he undertook that hard work when he was suffering severe hunger which had sapped his strength. We also learn about giving precedence to loved ones and showing loyalty to them, because despite his extreme hunger and the hard work he had done, he kept his wages of dates until he met the Prophet (ﷺ) and ate with him.³²⁸

5.3.5. Asceticism and patience of as-Sayyidah Fâtimah (عليها السلام)

Her life was very simple and uncomplicated; it was closer to a life of hardship than a life of luxury.³²⁹ The following story shows us Fâtimah's situation of hardship and exhaustion, and the attitude of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) when she asked him to give her a servant from among the prisoners of war. 'Ali said to Fâtimah one day: "By Allah, I have brought water until I felt a pain in my chest." He said: "Some captives have been brought to your father; go and ask him for a servant." She said: "And I, by Allah, have ground flour until my hands became sore." So she went to the Prophet (ﷺ), and he said: "What brings you here, O my daughter?" She said: "I have come to greet you"; she felt too shy to ask him, so she went back. 'Ali said: "What happened?" She said: "I felt too shy to ask him." So they went together, and 'Ali said: "O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), by Allah (ﷻ) I have brought water until I started to feel pain in my chest." And Fâtimah said: "I have ground flour until my hands hurt."³³⁰ Allah has brought you plenty of captives, so give us a servant." The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "By Allah, I will not give it to you and leave *ahl aş-şuffah*³³¹ starving when I have nothing to spend on them. Rather I will sell them (the captives) and spend the price on ahl aş-şuffah." So they went back. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) came, when they were under the cover which, if it covered their heads, it left their feet bare, and if it covered their feet, it left their heads bare. They wanted to get up, but he said: "Stay where you are." He said: "Shall I not tell you of something that is better than what you asked for?" They said: "Yes." He said: "(It is) words that Jibreel (peace be upon him) taught me." He said: "Following every prayer, glorify Allah ten times, praise Him ten times and magnify Him ten times. When you go to your bed, glorify Allah thirty-three times, praise Him thirty-three times and magnify Him thirty-four times."³³²

We learn several important values from this story:

This incident shows us how the Prophet (ﷺ) handled the economic crisis through which his state in Madinah passed, by putting his priorities in order. Spending on ahl aş-şuffah in order to alleviate their hunger was a necessity. As for ‘Ali and Fâṭimah’s need for a servant, it was not as important as the need of ahl aş-şuffah, so the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) gave priority to ahl aş-şuffah over them. The Prophet’s means of solving the economic crisis were many.

‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) was influenced by this Prophetic training, and with the passage of time, he became the caliph of the Muslims. As a result of the Prophet’s training, we see him putting himself above worldly gains and adornment although the treasures of the earth were in his hands, because remembrance of Allah (ﷻ) filled his heart and overshadowed his existence. He kept doing what the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had recommended, as he himself told us when he said: By Allah, I never omitted them since he taught me them. One of the Companions asked him: Not even on the night of Şiffeen? He said: Not even on the night of Şiffeen.³³³

5.3.6. “Our souls are in the hand of Allah, and when He wills, He could wake us from sleep”

It was narrated that ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه) said: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) entered upon me and Fâṭimah one night and woke us up to pray. He went back to his house and prayed for a while, but he did not hear any sound from us, so he came back to us and woke us up and said: ‘Get up and pray.’ I sat up, rubbing my eyes, and said: ‘By Allah, we will not pray anything but that which has been decreed for us. Our souls are in the hand of Allah, and when He wills, He could wake us from sleep.’ The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) turned away, striking his thigh with his hand and saying: ‘We will not pray anything but that which has been decreed for us, we will not

pray anything but that which has been decreed for us. ﴿But, man is ever more quarrelsome than anything.﴾ (Qur'an 18: 54)''' The fact that ‘Ali (عليه السلام) related this story shows how sincere he was towards the truth and how keen he was spread knowledge even though (the rebuke) had to do with him. This is an important value which the Muslims can learn from Amir al-Mu'mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام), because if he had wanted to, he could have concealed the hadith, knowing that the night prayers (*qiyâm al-layl*) are not obligatory.

5.4. Her two sons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (may Allah be pleased with them)

5.4.1. Al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib al-Ḥâshimi

He was the grandson of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and the apple of his eye in this world, one of the two masters of the youth of the people of paradise. His mother was Fâtimah az-Zahra'. He was born in the middle of Ramadan 3 AH, or it was said in the month of Sha'bân, or in 4 or 5 AH.³³⁴ He died in 50 AH. In my book *as-Seerah an-Nabawiyyah*, I favoured the view that he was born in the fourth year after the hijrah.³³⁵

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) named him Ḥasan. ‘Ali said: “When al-Ḥasan was born, I named him Ḥarb. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came and said: ‘Show me my son. What have you named him?’ I said: ‘Ḥarb.’ He (ﷺ) said: ‘No, rather he is Ḥasan.’”³³⁶ Thus he (ﷺ) changed that harsh name³³⁷ to a beautiful name³³⁸ that instils joy and happiness in the heart. So the newborn was given a beautiful name, and the Prophet (ﷺ) held him in his arms and kissed him.

Abu Râfi‘ tells us about the actions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): “I saw the Prophet (ﷺ) saying the words of the call to prayer in the ears of al-Ḥasan after Fâtimah gave birth to him.”³³⁹

Abu Râfi' also tells us of the *'aqeeqah* of al-Ḥasan. He said: "When Fâtimah gave birth to al-Ḥasan, she said: 'Shouldn't I offer two rams as *'aqeeqah* on behalf of my son?' The Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'No. Rather shave his head and give the weight of his hair in silver to the poor and al-awfâd.'" Al-awfâd were some of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) who were in need, in the mosque or at aṣ-ṣuffah. So she did that.³⁴⁰

There are many hadiths that speak of the virtues of al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali, including the following:

- (a) It was narrated that al-Bara' ibn 'Âzib (رضي الله عنه) said: "I saw al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali on the shoulder of the Prophet (ﷺ), who was saying: 'O Allah, I love him, so love him.'" ³⁴¹
- (b) It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said of al-Ḥasan: "O Allah, I love him, so love him and love those who love him." ³⁴²
- (c) It was narrated from Usâmah ibn Zayd (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet held him [Usâmah] and al-Ḥasan and said: "O Allah, I love them so love them." ³⁴³
- (d) It was narrated that Abu Bakrah (رضي الله عنه) said: I heard the Prophet (ﷺ) on the minbar, with al-Ḥasan beside him, looking from the people to him, saying: "This son of mine is a leader, and perhaps Allah (ﷻ) will bring about reconciliation by means of him between two groups of Muslims." ³⁴⁴ The fact that the Prophet (ﷺ) described al-Ḥasan as a leader was a great honour for him (may Allah be pleased with him and make him pleased), and the prophecy of his grandfather (ﷺ) was fulfilled. At his hand, the Muslims were reconciled, and bloodshed was prevented, when he gave up his right of caliphate to Mu'âwiyah (may Allah be pleased with them all). That occurred in 41 AH. His caliphate lasted six months, and that was called the year of unity. This is

what the Prophet (ﷺ) foretold when he said, "Perhaps Allah will bring about reconciliation by means of him between two great groups."³⁴⁵

Ibn Hajar said: "In this hadith, we see one of the signs of prophethood and a great virtue of al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali, because he gave up power, not because of a lack of support or weakness on his part or any fault of his; rather it was because of his desire to attain the reward that is with Allah, because of what he sought of preventing shedding of Muslim blood. So he paid attention to the interests of the faith and of the Ummah."³⁴⁶ We will discuss al-Ḥasan's yielding the caliphate to Mu'âwiyah when we discuss his era in a separate book inshallah.

- (e) It was narrated that Sa'eed al-Maqbiri³⁴⁷ said: "We were with Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), and al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib came to us and greeted us. We returned the greeting to him, but Abu Hurayrah did not hear him. We said: 'O Abu Hurayrah, this is al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali who has greeted us.' He ran after him and said: 'Upon you be peace, O my master.' Then he said: 'He is a master.'³⁴⁸
- (f) He resembled the Prophet (ﷺ) physically. Bukhari narrated with his chain of narration going back to Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) that he said: "No one resembled the Prophet (ﷺ) more than al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali."³⁴⁹
- (g) He also narrated with his chain of narration going back to 'Uqbah ibn al-Ḥârith that he said: "I saw Abu Bakr carrying al-Ḥasan and saying: 'May my father be sacrificed for the one who looks like the Prophet and not like 'Ali,' and 'Ali smiled."³⁵⁰ The fact that he resembled his grandfather (ﷺ) physically is a great virtue and obvious blessing for him.³⁵¹

5.4.2. al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali (ﷺ)

Abu Abdullah al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib, the grandson of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), the apple of his eye and his beloved. He was the son of the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), Fâtimah (ﷺ). He was born in 4 AH, although there are other opinions, and he (ﷺ) died as a martyr on the day of 'Ashoora' in the month of Muḥarram 61 AH, in Karbala' in Iraq. May Allah be pleased with him and make him pleased.³⁵² Many hadiths were narrated concerning his virtues, including the following:

- (a) Aḥmad narrated with his chain of narration going back to Ya'la al-Âmiri (ﷺ) that he went out with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to a meal to which they were invited. He said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came in front of the people, and al-Ḥusayn was playing with some boys. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) wanted to pick him up, but the boys started running here and there, and he and the Prophet (ﷺ) were both laughing until he caught hold of him. Then he put one of his hands on the back of his head and the other beneath his chin, and he kissed him and said: 'Ḥusayn is of me, and I am of Ḥusayn. O Allah, love whoever loves Ḥusayn; Ḥusayn is one of my grandsons.'"³⁵³ This shows the clear virtue of al-Ḥusayn (ﷺ), since the Prophet (ﷺ) urged that he should be loved, as if he had prior knowledge by means of revelation of what would happen between him and the people, so he mentioned him in particular and affirmed the obligation of loving him, and forbade harming him or fighting him. This is confirmed by his words, "May Allah love those who love Ḥusayn," because loving him leads to loving the Messenger, and loving the Messenger (ﷺ) is part of loving Allah (ﷻ).³⁵⁴
- (b) Bukhari narrated with his chain of narration going back to Anas ibn Mâlik (ﷺ) that he said: "The head of al-Ḥusayn (peace be

upon him) was brought to 'Ubaydullah ibn Ziyâd³⁵⁵ and placed on a platter. He started hitting the ground with a stick and saying how handsome he was." Anas said: "He was the one who most resembled the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and his hair was dyed with *wasimah*."³⁵⁶

- (c) According to another report from Anas: "When the head of al-Ḥusayn was brought to 'Ubaydullah ibn Ziyâd, he started touching the teeth with a stick. He (the narrator) said: 'I think he said that he was handsome.' I (Anas) said: 'I shall annoy you. I saw the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) kissing what you are touching with your stick.' So he stopped doing it."³⁵⁷ These two hadiths point to the virtue of al-Ḥusayn (عليه السلام) and show that he most resembled the Prophet among Ahl al-Bayt. But there may be some problem with that suggestion, especially in light of what we have quoted above concerning the virtues of al-Ḥasan, which say that no one resembled the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) more closely than al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali, which would imply a conflict between the reports. This confusion was dispelled by Ibn Ḥajar (may Allah have mercy on him); he reconciled the reports by saying: "These reports may be reconciled by noting that what Anas said, according to the report of az-Zuhri, was spoken when al-Ḥasan was still alive, because at that time he was the one who resembled the Prophet (ﷺ) more closely than his brother al-Ḥusayn. As for what is mentioned in the report of Ibn Sireen, that took place after that (after al-Ḥasan had died), as is clear from the context; or else what may be meant is that al-Ḥusayn resembled him more closely than anyone apart from al-Ḥasan. Or it may be that each of them resembled him more closely in some features. At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Ḥibbân narrated from Hâni' ibn Hâni from 'Ali that he said: 'al-Ḥasan resembled the Prophet (ﷺ) from head to navel, and al-Ḥusayn resembled the Prophet (ﷺ) from the navel downwards.'"³⁵⁸ These are some of the

hadiths narrated concerning al-Ḥusayn (may Allah be pleased with him and make him pleased).

5.4.3. Hadiths which mention virtues shared by al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (may Allah be pleased with them)

- (a) Bukhari narrated with his chain of narration going back to Ibn 'Umar that a man from Iraq asked him about the pilgrim in iḥrâm killing flies. He (ﷺ) said: "The people of Iraq are asking about flies when they killed the son of the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and the Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'They are my two sweet smelling flowers in this world!'"³⁵⁹ Ibn Ḥajar said: "What is meant is: they are among that with which Allah (ﷻ) has honoured me and blessed me, because children are to be smelled and kissed as if they are fragrant plants."³⁶⁰
- (b) It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Whoever loves them loves me, and whoever hates them hates me,'" meaning al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn.³⁶¹
- (c) It was narrated from al-Bara' ibn 'Âzib (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) saw Ḥasan and Ḥusayn and said: "O Allah, I love them, so love them."³⁶²
- (d) It was narrated from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn are the masters of the youth of paradise."³⁶³
- (e) It was narrated that Abdullah ibn Buraydah said: I heard Abu Hurayrah say: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was addressing us, and al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn came, wearing red shirts, walking and stumbling. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came down from the minbar, picked them up and put them in front of him; then he said: 'Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger speak the truth: Your

wealth and your children are only a trial.﴾ (Qur'an 64: 15) I saw these two children walking and stumbling, and I couldn't help but stop my talk and pick them up.”³⁶⁴

- (f) It was narrated from Sa'eed ibn Jubayr from Ibn 'Abbâs (may Allah be pleased with them) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to pray for refuge for al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, saying: “I seek refuge for you in the perfect words of Allah (ﷻ) from every devil and every vermin [*hâmmah*], and from every bad eye. This is how Ibrâheem used to pray for refuge for Isma'eel and Ishâq.”³⁶⁵ This hadith does not contradict that which was narrated by Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâs (رضي الله عنه), who said: “I heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say, ‘no *hâmmah*’³⁶⁶,³⁶⁷ and that which was narrated by Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, “*la hâm, la hâm*,”³⁶⁸ and his words, “There is no ‘adwâ (contagion, transmission of infectious disease without the permission of Allah), no Ṣafar (the month of Ṣafar was regarded as “unlucky” during the jâhiliyyah) and no *hâmmah*.”³⁶⁹ Abu Ja'far at-Taḥḥâwî responded by saying: These hadiths state that there is no *hâmmah* and that it does not exist, so how can it be possible to seek refuge for them from something that does not exist? Our response to him, with the help of Allah (ﷻ), is that the *hâmmah* from which the Prophet (ﷺ) sought refuge for them was *hawâm al-ard* or the vermin of the earth from which harm is feared; the *hâmmah* which he stated does not exist is something different; it was something that the Arabs believed in with regard to death.³⁷⁰ The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) denied that that was real, as seen in the hadith of Abu Hurayrah that we have quoted. As for the *hâmmah* from which he sought refuge for Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, that is something that does exist, and it is the frightening vermin of the earth. It is an entirely different word that has nothing to do with the *hâmmah* of ancient Arab superstition.³⁷¹

5.5. The hadith of the cloak and what is meant by Ahl al-Bayt

The hadith of the cloak was narrated by 'Â'ishah (ؓ).³⁷² She said: "The Prophet (ﷺ) went out one morning wearing a striped cloak of black camel hair. He enfolded 'Ali, Fâtimah, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (may Allah be pleased with them) in it, then he said: ﴿Allah wishes only to remove *ar-Rijs* [evil deeds and sins] from you, O members of the family [of the Prophet], and to purify you with a thorough purification﴾ (*Qur'an* 33: 33)."³⁷³

This proves false the idea that the Companions concealed the virtues of 'Ali (ؓ), because here is 'Â'ishah (ؓ), who they claim hated 'Ali (ؓ), narrating this virtue of 'Ali and Fâtimah (may Allah be pleased with them).³⁷⁴

This Qur'anic passage is addressed to all the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ), as it starts with them and ends with them. Allah says:

﴿O Prophet [Muhammad]! Say to your wives: 'If you desire the life of this world, and its glitter, then come! I will make a provision for you and set you free in a handsome manner [divorce]. But if you desire Allah and His Messenger, and the Home of the hereafter, then verily, Allah has prepared for Al-Muḥsinât [good-doers] amongst you an enormous reward. O wives of the Prophet! Whoever of you commits an open illegal sexual intercourse, the torment for her will be doubled, and that is ever easy for Allah. And whosoever of you is obedient to Allah and His Messenger, and does righteous good deeds, We shall give her, her reward twice over, and We have prepared for her Rizq Karim [a noble provision — paradise]. O wives of the Prophet! You are not like any other women. If you keep your duty [to Allah], then be not soft in speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease [of hypocrisy, or evil desire for adultery] should be moved with desire, but speak in an honourable manner. And stay in your

houses, and do not display yourselves like that of the times of ignorance, And perform aṣ-Ṣalâh [Iqâmat-aṣ-Ṣalâh], and give Zakâh and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah wishes only to remove ar-Rijs [evil deeds and sins] from you, O members of the family [of the Prophet], and to purify you with a thorough purification. And remember [O you the members of the Prophet's family, the Graces of your Lord], that which is recited in your houses of the Verses of Allah and Al-Ḥikmah [i.e. Prophet's Sunnah — legal ways, so give your thanks to Allah and glorify His Praises for this Qur'an and the Sunnah]. Verily, Allah is Ever Most Courteous, Well-Acquainted with all things. ﴿

(Qur'an 33: 28-34)

The commands, prohibitions, promises and warnings are all addressed to the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ), but because of the benefit that is mentioned in these verses, they may include both the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) and others of Ahl al-Bayt. Purification is mentioned in the masculine (in the original Arabic) because when masculine and feminine are mentioned together, the masculine predominates. So it includes all of Ahl al-Bayt, although 'Ali, Fâtimah, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (may Allah be pleased with them) are more entitled to this honour than others; hence the Prophet (ﷺ) singled them out to pray for them.

Moreover, the phrase 'Ahl al-Bayt' goes beyond 'Ali, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and Fâtimah to include others, as explained in the hadith of Zayd ibn Arqam. When he was asked: "Are his wives among the members of his household (*ahl baytihi*)?" He said: "His wives are among the members of his household, but the members of his household are those to whom receiving zakâh was forbidden, namely the family of 'Ali, the family of Ja'far, the family of 'Aqeel and the family of al-'Abbâs."³⁷⁵ If the concept of the family or household of the Prophet (*ahl bayt an-Nabi*) (ﷺ) is widened, then it includes his wives on the basis of the verse, and it also includes 'Ali,

Fâtimah, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, as in the hadith of the cloak. It also includes the families of 'Abbâs ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib, 'Aqeel ibn Abi Tâlib and Ja'far ibn Abi Tâlib, based on the hadith of Zayd ibn Arqam, and the family of al-Ḥârith ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib.³⁷⁶ We will discuss the verse in detail below, when we debate with the Shia.

5.6. Rulings that apply specifically to the family of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)

5.6.1. Prohibition of zakâh for them

This is proven by the hadith narrated by 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib ibn Rabe'e'ah, according to which the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Zakâh is not befitting for the family of Muḥammad, because it is impurity that comes from people."³⁷⁷

5.6.2. There is no inheritance from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)

It is proven from the hadith of Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه): The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "We are not to be inherited from; what we leave behind is charity."³⁷⁸ This hadith was narrated by Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân, 'Ali, Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr, Sa'd, 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf, al-'Abbâs ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib, the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) and Abu Hurayrah, as stated by Ibn Taymiyah, and it is proven from them in the books of *Ṣaḥeeḥ* and the *Musnads*.³⁷⁹

5.6.3. They are entitled to one-fifth of the war booty (*ghaneemah*³⁸⁰ and *fay'*³⁸¹)

Allah says:

﴿And know that whatever of war booty that you may gain, verily, one-fifth (1/5th) of it is assigned to Allah, and to the Messenger, and

to the near relatives [of the Messenger], [and also] the orphans, *al-Masâkeen* [the poor] and the wayfarer, if you have believed in Allah and in that which We sent down to Our slave [Muhammad] on the Day of Criterion [between right and wrong], the Day when the two forces met [the battle of Badr]; and Allah is Able to do all things. ﴿

(*Qur'an* 8: 41)

And Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿What Allah gave as booty [Fay'] to His Messenger [Muhammad] from the people of the townships — it is for Allah, His Messenger [Muhammad], the kindred [of Messenger, Muhammad], the orphans, *al-Masâkeen* [the poor], and the wayfarer, in order that it may not become a fortune used by the rich among you.﴾ (*Qur'an* 59: 7)

5.6.4. Sending blessings upon them as well as the Prophet (ﷺ)

It was narrated that Ka'b ibn al-'Ajjah said: We asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): O Messenger of Allah, how should we send blessings upon you, Ahl al-Bayt? For Allah has taught us how to send peace. He said: Say: O Allah, send blessings upon Muḥammad and upon the family of Muḥammad, as You sent prayers upon the family of Ibrâheem; You are indeed Worthy of Praise, Full of Glory. And send blessings upon Muḥammad and upon the family of Muḥammad, as You sent blessings upon the family of Ibrâheem; You are indeed Worthy of Praise, Full of Glory.³⁸²

5.6.5. There is special love for them

This is represented in the report narrated by Zayd ibn Arqam from the Prophet (ﷺ): "I remind you of Allah with regard to the people of my household, I remind you of Allah with regard to the people of my household, I remind you of Allah with regard to the people of my household."³⁸³

Al-Qurṭubī said: “This advice and urging in the strongest terms implies that it is obligatory to respect his family and love them. This highlights the obligation of the Muslims towards them and leaves no excuse for anyone not to do it.”³⁸⁴ Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq (رضي الله عنه) understood the Prophet’s instructions concerning Ahl al-Bayt properly, so he loved and honoured them, and he called for people to honour and love them. Bukhari narrated with his chain of narration going back to Abu Bakr that he said: “Prove your love for Muḥammad (ﷺ) in the way you treat his family.”³⁸⁵

This advice given by Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) is addressed to the people with regard to upholding the rights of the family of the Prophet (ﷺ) and showing love and respect to them. What Abu Bakr’s words mean is: Show your love and respect for him by honouring them and not harming or offending them.³⁸⁶ He confirmed those rights in what he said to ‘Ali: “By the One in Whose hand is my soul, the relatives of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) are dearer to me than upholding ties with my own relatives.”³⁸⁷ Love of Ahl al-Bayt is one of the fundamentals of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ‘ah. Ibn Taymiyah said: “One of the basic principles of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ‘ah is that they love the household of the Prophet (ﷺ); they support them and take care of them, following the instructions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).”³⁸⁸ Al-Qâḍi ‘Iyâḍ said: “One of the signs of a person’s loving him [the Prophet (ﷺ)] is his loving those whom the Prophet (ﷺ) loved and those who are connected to him, such as the members of his household and his Companions, both Muhâjireen and Anṣâr (may Allah be pleased with all). Part of loving a thing is loving those who love it.”³⁸⁹ Ibn Katheer said: “We do not deny the Prophet’s instructions concerning Ahl al-Bayt and the command to treat them kindly, respect them and honour them, for they are among the pure offspring of the noblest household ever found on the face of the earth, the best in lineage, especially if they follow the sound Sunnah and they are among the followers and supporters of truth, as were their

predecessors such as al-'Abbâs and his two sons and 'Ali and his family and offspring (may Allah be pleased with them all)."³⁹⁰

5.7. 'Ali (عليه السلام) at the Battle of Uḥud

At the Battle of Uḥud, the fighting began with a duel between 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) and Ṭalḥah ibn 'Uthmân, who was carrying the banner of the polytheists. He asked for a duel several times, and 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) went out and said to him: "By the One in Whose hand is my soul, I will not leave you until Allah hastens you to hell by means of my sword or He hastens me to paradise by means of your sword." 'Ali struck him and cut off his foot, and he fell to the ground, exposing his private parts. He said: "O son of my uncle, I adjure you by Allah and by our ties of kinship." He retreated from him and did not finish him off. The Messenger of Allah said: "*Allâhu akbar*" and some of his companions said to 'Ali: "Why didn't you finish him off?" He said: "He is my cousin and he adjured me by the ties of kinship when his private parts became uncovered, and I felt embarrassed before him."³⁹¹ After battle was joined, 'Ali (عليه السلام) took the banner following the slaying of Muṣ'ab ibn 'Umayr (عليه السلام).

During the battle, 'Ali (عليه السلام) killed many of the polytheists despite the hardships that befell the Muslims in this battle, in addition to his striving to defend the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).³⁹² 'Ali (عليه السلام) was the one who took the hand of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) when he fell into a hole on the day of Uḥud.³⁹³ During this battle, a large number of the best of the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr were martyred, and it left deep sorrow in the heart of the Messenger (ﷺ). The enemy managed to harm the noble Messenger, causing his face to bleed, and his daughter Fâtimah and her husband 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (may Allah be pleased with both) treated his wounds and stopped the flow of blood that was running down his face and beard (عليه السلام).³⁹⁴

The courage of 'Ali (عليه السلام) was manifested in that battle when it was rumoured that the Messenger (ﷺ) had been killed, and 'Ali could not find him. He thought that there would be nothing worth living for after the Prophet was gone, so he broke the scabbard of his sword and attacked people until they opened up a pathway before him. Then suddenly he saw the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)³⁹⁵, and he stood firm with him and defended him heroically, receiving sixteen blows on that day.³⁹⁶

Immediately after the polytheist army withdrew from the battlefield, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) to find out where the enemy was headed. He said to him: "Go and follow the people, see what they are doing and what they are up to. If they have dismounted from their horses and mounted their camels, then they are headed for Makkah; if they have mounted their horses and are driving the camels, then they are headed for Madinah. By the One in Whose hand is my soul, if they are headed for Madinah, I shall go back and meet them there, and I shall fight them." 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "So I set out after them to see what they were doing, and I found that they had dismounted from their horses and had mounted their camels and were headed for Makkah."³⁹⁷ So 'Ali (عليه السلام) went and told the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) the news about the people.³⁹⁸

From this we learn a number of lessons, which are as follows:

- The courage of the Prophet (ﷺ), who was in the midst of the polytheist lines such that 'Ali could not reach him except after exhausting efforts. He found the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in the midst of the enemy, fighting them until he received a number of wounds.
- The alertness of the Messenger (ﷺ), who was keeping a close watch on the movements of the enemy, and his ability to weigh up the situation, analyse enemy behaviour, and make decisions on that basis.

- His high morale, which is apparent from his readiness to fight the polytheists if they headed towards Madinah.
- The Prophet's confidence in 'Ali (عليه السلام) and his knowledge of the characters of men.
- 'Ali's chivalry when he withdrew from his opponent after the latter's private parts became uncovered, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) approved of that. This action teaches us the value of proper conduct and how one should act with high standards, even with the enemy and even on the battlefield.
- The necessity of making sacrifices for the sake of Allah (ﷻ). With this attitude and spirit, Islam will prevail in this life, and the martyr will attain paradise. This is what was proven to us by some of the Muhājireen and Anṣār in this battle and others.
- The necessity of implementing the means. This was demonstrated when the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) stationed some of the Companions on Mount Uḥud, but they disobeyed him and came down, and this was one of the causes of defeat.
- The courage of 'Ali (عليه السلام), because if this army had seen him when he was following them to find out what they were up to, they would not have hesitated to kill him.³⁹⁹

5.8. 'Ali (عليه السلام) in the Campaign of Banu an-Naḍeer

The historians who examined this matter narrated that the campaign of Banu an-Naḍeer took place in the month of Rabee' al-Awwal in the year 4 AH. Ibn al-Qayyim refuted those who said that the campaign of Banu an-Naḍeer took place six months after Badr, by saying: "Muḥammad ibn Shihâb az-Zuhri said that the Battle of Banu an-Naḍeer was six months after Badr, but this is a mistake or error on his part. There can be no doubt that it took place after Uḥud. What happened six months after Badr was the campaign of Banu

Qaynuqâ’; Quraydhah came after the battle of the trench, and Khaybar came after Ḥudaybiyah.”⁴⁰⁰ Ibn al-‘Arabi said: “The correct view is that it was after Uḥud.”⁴⁰¹ This was also the opinion of Ibn Katheer.⁴⁰² In this battle, the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) did not know where ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib was one night, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “He is on a mission on your behalf.” Soon after that, he brought the head of ‘Azwak. He had lain in wait for him until he came out with a group of Jews seeking to catch the Muslims unaware and attack them. He was brave and a good archer, but ‘Ali (عليه السلام) attacked him and killed him, and the Jews fled.”⁴⁰³

5.9. ‘Ali (عليه السلام) at the Battle of Ḥamra’ al-Asad

This battle is regarded as the completion of the Battle of Uḥud. The Muslims returned from Uḥud on Saturday evening, 15 Shawwâl 3 AH, and the next morning the people had just left the dawn prayer when the announcer of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) announced that they should get ready quickly to pursue the enemy, and that only those who had been at Uḥud should go out. The people responded to the call of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) despite their wounds and exhaustion, and foremost among them was the Messenger of Allah himself (ﷺ). He did not allow Abdullah ibn Ubayy to go out with him, nor did he allow anyone who had not been present at Uḥud, except Jâbir ibn Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn Ḥarâm; his father was martyred at Uḥud, and his father had prevented him from taking part at Badr and Uḥud so that he could stay with his young sisters. The army went out, led by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). The banner of Uḥud itself was carried by ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib.⁴⁰⁴ The Muslims, led by their noble Messenger (ﷺ), reached Ḥamra’ al-Asad, which was thirteen miles from Madinah, and camped there. This manoeuvre surprised the Jews and the hypocrites because of its courage and daring, and they became certain that the Muslim morale was high,

because if they were defeated they would not have pursued Quraysh.⁴⁰⁵ The Prophet's going out to Ḥamra' al-Asad was also an indication on his part of the importance of psychological warfare in affecting enemy morale. He set out with his troops and went to Ḥamra' al-Asad, and stayed there for three days. He ordered that fires be lit; these fires could be seen from afar, and they filled the horizon with their light, to the extent that Quraysh thought that the Muslim army had huge numbers of men that they had no power to tackle, so they left with their hearts filled with fear.⁴⁰⁶

Ibn Sa'eed said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) went with his Companions and camped in Ḥamra' al-Asad. During those nights, the Muslims lit five hundred fires that could be seen from afar, and the noise of their camp and the sight of their fires could be heard and seen in every direction, and Allah (ﷻ) suppressed their enemies by means of that."⁴⁰⁷ The noble Qur'an referred to this 'cold war', and Allah (ﷻ) recorded it in His book in the context of praising the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them):

﴿Those who answered [the Call of] Allah and the Messenger [Muḥammad] after being wounded; for those of them who did good deeds and feared Allah, there is a great reward. Those [i.e. believers] unto whom the people [hypocrites] said, 'Verily, the people [pagans] have gathered against you [a great army], therefore, fear them.' But it [only] increased them in Faith, and they said: Allah [Alone] is Sufficient for us, and He is the Best Disposer of affairs [for us]. So they returned with grace and bounty from Allah. No harm touched them; and they followed the good pleasure of Allah. And Allah is the Owner of great bounty. It is only Shayṭān [Satan] that suggests to you the fear of his Awliyā' [supporters and friends, polytheists, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah and in His Messenger, Muhammad]; so fear them not, but fear Me, if you are [true] believers﴾

(Qur'an 3: 172-175)

5.10. ‘Ali (عليه السلام) and his attitude towards the slander incident

The hadith of the slander describes the accusation that the hypocrites made against ‘Â’ishah (عليها السلام). The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) summoned ‘Ali and Usâmah (may Allah be pleased with them both) and consulted them about divorcing his wife, because there was a lot of talk, and the Prophet (ﷺ) was worried because there had been no revelation for a long time. Usâmah told him what he knew about her innocence and said: “O Messenger of Allah, she is your wife and we know nothing but good about her.” As for ‘Ali (عليه السلام), he said: “O Messenger of Allah, Allah has not made things restricted for you, and there are many women other than her. If you ask the slave woman, she will tell you the truth.”⁴⁰⁸ So the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) called Bareerah and said: “O Bareerah, have you seen anything to make you suspicious?” Bareerah said: “No, by the One Who sent you with the truth; if there is anything that I have seen that I could criticise her for, it is that she is a young girl, and she falls asleep and forgets about the dough of her family, and the lamb comes and eats it.” The Messenger of Allah stood up and complained on that day about Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salool. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said from the minbar: “By Allah, I do not know anything but good about my wife, and they have mentioned a man⁴⁰⁹ about whom I know nothing but good, and he never entered upon my family except with me.”⁴¹⁰

What ‘Ali said is to be understood as trying to help the Prophet (ﷺ) because of what he saw of his anxiety and distress as a result of what was being said, and he was a man of strong protective jealousy. ‘Ali (عليه السلام) initially thought that if the Prophet (ﷺ) divorced her, his anxiety because of her would be reduced until her innocence was established, in which case he could take her back.

What we learn from this is doing the lesser of two evils in order to avoid the greater.⁴¹¹ An-Nawawi said: “Ali (عليه السلام) thought

that it was in the Prophet's best interests, and he believed that because of what he saw of the extent of his anxiety and upset, so he did his best to advise him sincerely because he wanted to put his mind at rest."⁴¹² 'Ali (عليه السلام) did not say any word that could be understood as criticising 'Ā'ishah (عليها السلام) in the slightest or implying anything negative about her.⁴¹³ Rather his opinion of her was good; all he was saying was: if you want to put your mind at rest about this problem, then there are many others besides her, and if you want to reach the truth of the matter, then ask the slave woman, and she will tell you the truth, which is that 'Ā'ishah was innocent. Then after that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) addressed the people and explained that 'Ā'ishah was innocent and pointed out the seriousness of tarnishing his honour wrongfully on the basis of fabrication. The advice of both 'Ali and Usamah looked positive and was in the interests of 'Ā'ishah (عليها السلام), and it increased the Prophet's conviction of what he knew of his wife's goodness.⁴¹⁴

The reader should be wary of the worthless and false reports which suggest that 'Ali (عليه السلام) said negative things about 'Ā'ishah (عليها السلام) with regard to the slander, on which some researchers have built the notion that 'Ā'ishah (عليها السلام) hated 'Ali (عليه السلام), resented him, falsely accused him of killing 'Uthmān (عليه السلام) and rebelled against him, inciting huge numbers of Muslims to do likewise.⁴¹⁵ These researchers include 'Ali Ibrāheem Ḥasan in *at-Tareekh al-Islami al-Ām* and Taha Hussein in his book *'Ali wa Banuhu*⁴¹⁶, and others. We will discuss the strong relationship between the Mother of the Believers 'Ā'ishah (عليها السلام) and 'Ali (عليه السلام) below inshallah, when we discuss the Battle of the Camel.

The story of the slander is one of a series of trials and hardships that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) encountered at the hands of the enemies of the faith, but by Allah's kindness towards His Prophet and the believers, He exposed its faults, and the sound

reports of history recorded the attitudes of the believers towards this fabrication. These are attitudes from which the believers can learn a lesson when they are faced with such fabrications in their lives. The revelation has ceased, but the lessons remain for all generations until Allah (ﷻ) will inherit the earth and everything on it.⁴¹⁷ In my book *as-Seerah an-Nabawiyyah 'Arad Waqâ'i' wa Tahleel Ahdâth*, I have discussed the lessons and rulings that may be taken from the incident of the slander.⁴¹⁸

6. The most important exploits of 'Ali (ﷺ) between the Battle of the Trench and the death of the Prophet (ﷺ)

6.1. 'Ali (ﷺ) at the Battle of the Trench

The attitude of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) at the battle of the trench was heroic and brilliant. It was indicative of the strong faith in the hearts of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) and their willingness to call people to the faith and to die for it, and to renounce those who opposed it. Ibn Ishâq said: "Ali ibn Abi Tâlib went out with a group of Muslims after the polytheist cavalry crossed a weak point in the ditch and gained control of the spot from which they had crossed. The Muslim horsemen raced towards them to confront them. 'Amr ibn 'Abd Wudd had fought on the day of Badr until he was badly wounded, so he was not present on the day of Uhud, but when the day of the battle of the trench came, he marked himself to show his position. Then he and the other horsemen took up their positions and said: 'Who will come out to duel?' 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib came out and said to him: 'O 'Amr, you have promised Allah that if any man of Quraysh gives you one of two options, you will accept one of them.'

He said: 'Yes.' 'Ali said to him: 'I call you to Allah and to His Messenger and to Islam.' He said: 'I have no need of that.' 'Ali said: 'Then I call you to a duel with me.' He said to him: 'Why, O son of my brother? I do not want to kill you.' 'Ali said to him: 'But by Allah, I want to kill you.' 'Amr got angry at that, so he dismounted from his horse, hamstrung it and beat its face; then he turned to 'Ali, and they fought, circling around one another, until 'Ali (ﷺ) killed him and their cavalry fled, bursting headlong in flight across the trench."⁴¹⁹

Ibn Katheer quoted what al-Bayhaqî narrated in *Dalâ'il an-Nubuwwah* of poetry composed by 'Amr ibn 'Abd Wudd and 'Ali (ﷺ). 'Amr said, when he came forth for the duel:

*I've become hoarse from shouting.
Isn't there one among the lot of you who will answer my challenge?
I've stood here like a fighting champion
While the so-called brave are cowards.
I've always hastened to the front
Before the fight begins.
Bravery and generosity are in truth
The best qualities of a warrior.*

When 'Ali came out to meet him, he said:

*Don't be in a hurry. No weakling
Has come to answer your challenge.
A man of resolution and foresight.
Truth is the refuge of the successful.
I hope to make the keening women
Busy over your corpse
Through the blow of a spear
Whose memory will last while fights are talked of.*⁴²⁰

'Ikrimah threw down his spear that day when he was running from 'Amr, so Ḥassân ibn Thâbit said:

*As he fled, he threw his spear to us.
 Perhaps, 'Ikrimah, you have not done such a thing before?
 As you turned your back, you ran like an ostrich
 Turning neither to right nor left.
 You didn't turn your back as a human being would,
 The back of your neck was like a young hyena's.*

After the killing of 'Amr ibn 'Abd Wudd, the polytheists sent word to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) asking to buy his corpse for ten thousand. He said: "Give them their corpse, for it is an evil corpse, and the money collected for that is evil," and he did not accept anything from them.

This happened when the Muslims were going through hardship, but despite that, *ḥalâl* (permitted according to Islamic law) is *ḥalâl*, and *ḥarâm* (forbidden according to Islamic law) is *ḥarâm*, and this is the standard of Islam in what is lawful and prohibited. Compare this to some Muslims who try to come up with justifications for consuming usury and the like.⁴²¹

6.2. 'Ali (ﷺ) at the Battle of Banu Quraydhah

In this campaign, 'Ali carried the banner of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in the vanguard⁴²². The campaign ended with agreement to accept the arbitration of Sa'd ibn Mu'âdh, although at first they were preparing to fight, and there was no question of arbitration. Ibn Hishâm said: "Ali ibn Abi Tâlib called out, when they were besieging Banu Quraydhah: 'O battalion of faith!' He and az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm went forth, and he said: 'By Allah, I shall go through what Hamzah went through (meaning martyrdom), or I shall breach their fortresses.' They said: 'O Muḥammad, we will accept the arbitration of Sa'd ibn Mu'âdh.'" ⁴²³ Thus Allah (ﷻ) instilled fear and panic in the hearts of the enemies of the faith from the lips of that pious and

pure one ['Ali (ﷺ)], because of what Allah gave him of courage and willingness to die for the sake of the religion of Allah. He called to his battalion with the dearest of names with which Allah (ﷻ) calls His slaves; it is the call of faith that highlights the sincerity of his belief, the righteousness of his deeds and his love of jihad for the sake of Allah.⁴²⁴

When Sa'd ibn Mu'âdh (رضي الله عنه) determined that their fighters should be executed, their women and children enslaved and their wealth divided⁴²⁵, among those who carried out the executions were 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib and az-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with them both).⁴²⁶

6.3. 'Ali (ﷺ) at the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah and the pledge of Raḍwân

During the campaign of Hudaibiyyah and before the treaty, some of the (Muslim) slaves left Makkah and went to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Their masters wrote to him, asking him to return them, but the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) refused to return them and said: "O Quraysh, you should certainly stop, or Allah will certainly send upon you one who will strike your necks with the sword in support of the faith, one whose heart Allah (ﷻ) has tested for piety."⁴²⁷ The Companions asked him anxiously: Who is that, O Messenger of Allah? All of them were hoping to be the one who was meant by this great testimony from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). He said: "He is the one who is mending a shoe (referring to 'Ali, who was doing that)."⁴²⁸

When the treaty was drawn up between the Muslims and the polytheists of Quraysh, 'Ali (ﷺ) wrote the document recording the agreement between them. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Write: Muḥammad the Messenger of Allah." The polytheists said: Do not write

Muhammad the Messenger of Allah, for if you were the Messenger of Allah, we would not be fighting you. He said to ‘Ali: “Erase it.” ‘Ali said: I am not the one who will erase it. So the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) erased it with his own hand. Then he made a treaty with them on the basis that he and his Companions would enter (Makkah) for three days, with their swords sheathed in leather scabbards.⁴²⁹ ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) refused to erase the words ‘Messenger of Allah’ because of his love and veneration for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).⁴³⁰

The extreme Râfiḍīs criticised the attitude of the Companions and ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (may Allah be pleased with them all) at Ḥudaybiyah, and referred to ‘Umar’s questioning the Prophet (ﷺ) about the treaty, and also the Companions’ initial delay in offering their sacrifices and shaving their heads until they saw the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) offer his sacrifice and shave his head. But there is no reason for criticism of ‘Umar or anyone else among the Companions who were present at Ḥudaybiyah. The reason for their attitude was that the Messenger (ﷺ) had seen in a dream that he entered Makkah and circumambulated the Ka‘bah, and he told his Companions about that when he was in Madinah. When they went with him to Ḥudaybiyah, none of them doubted that this dream would be fulfilled that year. When the treaty came about, in which it was stipulated that they had to go back (without entering Makkah) and return the following year, it was very hard on the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).⁴³¹ ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) raised the issue, as he was known for his strong commitment to the truth, and he asked the Messenger (ﷺ) about the matter. However, the questions that he put to the Prophet (ﷺ) did not stem from any doubt on his part as to the truthfulness of what the Messenger (ﷺ) was saying or from any objection to it; rather he was asking for an explanation concerning what he believed, which was that they were going to enter Makkah and circumambulate the Ka‘bah. His aim thereby was to encourage the Messenger of

Allah (ﷻ) to enter Makkah and not go back to Madinah, because he thought that would offer support to the religion of Allah (ﷻ) and annoy the polytheists.⁴³²

An-Nawawi said: "Umar's question and the words mentioned do not represent doubt; rather it was a request to explain what he was not aware of and an eagerness to humiliate the disbelievers and to see Islam prevail, as is known of his attitude and his enthusiasm to support the faith and to see the misguided humiliated."⁴³³ 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) was acting on the basis of what he thought was right and on his understanding of the situation, motivated by his strict adherence to the truth, his strong support for the religion of Allah (ﷻ) and his deep love for it, in addition to what the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had trained them to do in terms of offering advice and expressing their views, which he (ﷺ) did in obedience to the command of Allah: ﴿so pass over [their faults], and ask [Allah's] forgiveness for them; and consult them in the affairs﴾ (Qur'an 3: 159). The Prophet (ﷺ) often consulted them and followed their suggestions. He consulted them on the day of Badr about going to intercept the caravan, and he followed their advice. He consulted them on the day of Uhud about whether to stay in Madinah or go out to fight the enemy; most of them advised going out to fight the enemy, so he did that. He consulted them on the day of the battle of the trench about making a peace deal with the confederates by offering them one-third of the crops of Madinah that year; the two Sa'ds (Sa'd ibn Mu'adh and Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah) refused, so he gave up that idea. He consulted them on the day of Hudaibiyah as to whether or not to attack the polytheists; Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) said: "We did not come to fight; rather we came to do 'umrah," and the Prophet (ﷺ) accepted what he said.⁴³⁴ There are many other similar occasions, which would take too long to list here. 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) was keen for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to follow his advice and confront Quraysh and fight them, so he kept raising the issue with him. He also raised the issue with Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه), but when he saw

that they were agreed, he stopped raising the issue and gave up his opinion. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) excused him because of what he knew of his good intentions and sincerity.⁴³⁵

With regard to the Companions not offering their sacrifices or shaving their heads until the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did that, this was not disobedience to the command of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). The scholars have given several explanations for it. Ibn Hajar said: “It was said that it was as if they hesitated because of the possibility that the command was by way of recommendation only, or in the hope that revelation would come annulling the treaty, or they understood it as being connected to their entering Makkah and completing their rituals (i.e., the command was general and there would be a further, specific command to say that this should be done after entering Makkah and doing ‘umrah). That could have been possible in their case because that was a time when abrogation was taking place occasionally. It could be that they were too absorbed with the issue and thinking too much about what had befallen them of humiliation — as they thought — in spite of the fact that they appeared powerful and capable of achieving their goal and completing their rituals by means of force and power. Or it may be that they delayed carrying out the command because they thought that a command of a general type does not necessarily have to be fulfilled immediately. And it may be that all of these reasons applied to different groups among them.”⁴³⁶

In some reports it says that when the Messenger (ﷺ) saw that they were not obeying, he entered upon his wife Umm Salamah and told her about that, and she said: “O Messenger of Allah, do not speak to them because they are very distressed due to the tough deal that you have agreed to and then going back without achieving victory.”⁴³⁷ She suggested to him, as it says in the report of Bukhari: “Go out and do not speak to anyone until you have offered your

sacrifice and called your barber to shave your head.” So he went out and did not speak to anyone until he had done that; he slaughtered his sacrifice and called his barber to shave his head. When they saw that, they got up and offered their sacrifices.⁴³⁸ Ibn Hajar said: “It may be that she understood that the Companions interpreted the Prophet’s command to exit *ihrâm* as a concession to them, and that he was going to continue in *ihrâm* without availing himself of any concession, so she suggested to him that he should exit *ihrâm* so as to rule out that possibility in their minds, and the Prophet (ﷺ) realised that she was right, so he did that. Something similar happened to them during the conquest of Makkah, when he told them to break the fast in Ramadan. When they continued to refuse, he took the vessel and drank, and when they saw him drink, they drank too.”⁴³⁹

This is a good explanation and is befitting to the status of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ). When the Prophet (ﷺ) commanded them to exit *ihrâm* and he did not do it, they thought that what made him tell them to do that was compassion for them, as was his usual attitude towards them. It is as if they (may Allah be pleased with them) preferred to follow his example rather than the concession which allowed them to exit *ihrâm*, but when they saw that he had exited *ihrâm*, they were certain that this was what was better for them, so they hastened to do it. This is like what happened to them during their hajj with the Prophet (ﷺ): when they reached Makkah and had done *ṭawâf* and *sâ’i*, he told them to exit *ihrâm* and be intimate with their wives, and make it an ‘umrah. That was very difficult for them, because of their veneration for their rituals, and they said: “Should we go to ‘Arafah with our private parts dripping with semen?” When the Messenger (ﷺ) heard about that, and he had not exited *ihrâm*, he said to them: “O people, exit *ihrâm*. Were it not for the offering I have brought with me, I would have done what you are doing.” Jâbir (رضي الله عنه), the narrator of the hadith, said: So we exited *ihrâm*; we heard and we obeyed.⁴⁴⁰

All of this reflects the eagerness of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to do good and their desire to follow the example of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) completely.⁴⁴¹

The Prophet's attitude in keeping quiet when 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) objected to the treaty sets a great example for the Muslim leaders — rulers, scholars and callers — and shows them that they should be patient and listen carefully to the opinions of others. They should give room for everyone to express his or her opinion of what is in the public interest, and they should not set up prisons to silence people. In the treaty of Ḥudaybiyah, the Prophet (ﷺ) demonstrated that the freedom of an individual to express his or her opinion is guaranteed in Islamic society, even if that opinion involves criticism of a ruler or caliph. It is the right of Muslims to explain their points of view in a safe atmosphere, with no terror or oppression stifling freedom of speech and thought. If this was the attitude of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) with 'Umar (رضي الله عنه), then objecting to or opposing the president of the state with regard to one of his opinions or decisions is not in itself a crime that deserves punishment and for which a person deserves to be thrown into the depths of prison.⁴⁴²

The Prophet's guidance also shows us how he trained his Companions by deriving lessons from events. 'Ali (رضي الله عنه), along with other Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) who were present at Ḥudaybiyah, attained the pleasure of Allah (ﷻ), and the following verse was revealed concerning them: ﴿Indeed, Allah was pleased with the believers when they gave the Bay'ah [pledge] to you [O Muhammad] under the tree﴾ (*Qur'an* 48: 18). The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "No one who swore allegiance under the tree will ever enter hell."⁴⁴³ 'Ali and his brethren such as Abu Bakr, 'Umar and others (may Allah be pleased with them all) had attained great honour before, at Badr. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said about the people of Badr: "And you do not know, perhaps Allah looked upon the people of Badr and said: Do as you wish, for I have forgiven you."⁴⁴⁴

6.4. 'Umrat al-Qaḍa' (the fulfilled pilgrimage) in 7 AH and 'Ali (عليه السلام), and the custody of the daughter of Ḥamzah (may Allah be pleased with them both)

Islam had a great impact and profoundly changed the mentality of the people. Daughters had been regarded as a source of shame for Arab nobles; in some tribes, the custom was to bury them alive to escape the shame and as a result of the lack of interest in daughters. In Islam, daughters became beloved, and the Muslims began to compete to raise them. The Muslims were equal, and no one was better than anyone else except by means of virtue or truth.⁴⁴⁵

When the Prophet (ﷺ) wanted to leave Makkah, the daughter of Ḥamzah followed him, calling out: "O uncle!" 'Ali turned to her, took her by the hand and said to Fāṭimah (عليها السلام): "Here is your cousin." 'Ali, Zayd and Ja'far disputed concerning her. 'Ali said: "I should take her because she is the daughter of my paternal uncle." Ja'far said: "She is the daughter of my paternal uncle, and her maternal aunt is my wife." Zayd said: "She is the daughter of my brother." The Prophet (ﷺ) ruled that she should go to her maternal aunt and said: "The maternal aunt is like the mother." He (ﷺ) said to 'Ali: "You are from me, and I am from you." He (ﷺ) said to Ja'far: "You resemble me physically and in attitude," and he said to Zayd: "You are our brother and our freed slave." 'Ali said to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "Why don't you marry the daughter of Ḥamzah?" He said: "She is the daughter of my brother through breastfeeding."⁴⁴⁶

From this story, we learn a number of lessons and rulings:

1. The maternal aunt is like the mother.
2. The maternal aunt takes precedence over anyone else with regard to custody, if there are no parents.
3. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) praised Ja'far ibn Abi Tâlib

(ﷺ) and described him as resembling him physically and in attitude.

4. The virtue of Zayd ibn Hârithah, as the Messenger (ﷺ) said to him: “You are our brother and our freed slave,” because he was a brother to Hamzah ibn ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib, since the Messenger (ﷺ) had established bonds of brotherhood between them. According to his way of thinking, he wanted to take on the duties of a brother towards his brother, and duty dictated that he should be the guardian of the daughter of Hamzah (ﷺ).
5. A woman’s marriage does not cancel out her right to custody, because the Prophet (ﷺ) ruled that custody be given to the wife of Ja‘far even though the girl’s paternal aunt, Ṣafiyyah bint ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib, was still alive.
6. It is essential that the husband give his permission before his wife takes custody of her sister’s daughter, because the wife’s duty is to focus on the interests and benefits of her husband, and custody may affect this interest in part. We may note here that Ja‘far ibn Abi Tâlib asked for custody of the daughter of his paternal uncle Hamzah to be given to her maternal aunt, who was his wife, which indicates that he approved of that.
7. If a child is breastfed along with his paternal uncle, he becomes his brother through breastfeeding, and all his daughters become daughters of his brother through breastfeeding, so it is forbidden for him to marry them.⁴⁴⁷

6.5. ‘Ali (ﷺ) and the campaign to Khaybar in 7 AH

Ibn Ishâq⁴⁴⁸ said that this campaign took place in the month of Muḥarram 7 AH. Al-Wâqidî⁴⁴⁹ said that it took place in Ṣafar or

Rabee‘ al-Awwal of 7 AH, after the return from Ḥudaybiyah. Ibn Sa‘d⁴⁵⁰ was of the view that it took place in Jumâda al-Oola 7 AH. Imam az-Zuhri and Imam Mâlik said that it was in Muḥarram 6 AH.⁴⁵¹ Ibn Ḥajar⁴⁵² thought that the view of Ibn Ishâq was more correct than that of al-Wâqidi.⁴⁵³

During this campaign, the heroism of Amir al-Mu‘mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (عليه السلام) was manifested, as was his position in relation to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ). What Allah decreed of the conquest of this Jewish colony was clearly of military and strategic importance.⁴⁵⁴ Khaybar, which was seventy miles northeast of Madinah,⁴⁵⁵ was a Jewish colony which included strongholds and was a military base for the Jews; it was their last foothold in the Arabian Peninsula, and they were watching for calamities for the Muslims⁴⁵⁶. They were conspiring with the Jews inside and outside Madinah to attack Madinah, so the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) wanted to be rid of them and to put his mind at rest as far as they were concerned. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) headed towards Khaybar with his army, who were fourteen hundred strong. He started besieging the fortresses of Khaybar and conquered them one by one, but the fortress of Ḥusn al-Qamoos held out against the Muslims. ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib was suffering from an eye infection⁴⁵⁷, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “I shall give this flag to a man at whose hands Allah will grant victory; he loves Allah and His Messenger, and Allah and His Messenger love him.” The people spent the night wondering which of them would be given the flag. When morning came, the people went to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), all of them hoping to be the flag-bearer. He said: “Where is ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib?” They said: “O Messenger of Allah, he has a problem in his eyes.” They sent for him, and he was brought, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) spat in his eyes and prayed for him, and he was healed, until it was as if there had been no pain in him. He gave him the flag, and

'Ali (ﷺ) said: "O Messenger of Allah, shall I fight them until they become like us?" He said: "Advance cautiously until you reach their open space, then invite them to Islam and tell them of their duties before Allah. By Allah, if Allah were to guide one man through you, that would be better for you than having red camels."⁴⁵⁸

He set out until Allah (ﷻ) granted him conquest of Khaybar. One of the examples of his heroism there was that their king Marḥab came out to him, saying:

*Khaybar knows that I am Marḥab
A fully armed warrior, a tried and tested hero
When war comes, spreading its flames.*

'Ali said:

*I am the one whose mother named him Ḥaydarah,
like a lion of the jungle, frightful to behold.
I return their attack with one more fierce.*

He struck the head of Marḥab and killed him, then victory came at his hands.⁴⁵⁹

We learn a number of things from 'Ali's attitude during the campaign of Khaybar, such as:

1. The great virtue of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ), as the Prophet (ﷺ) testified to his love when he said: "He loves Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), and Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) love him." Ibn Hajar said that what was meant was that 'Ali's love for Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) was perfect love; otherwise every Muslim shares the general meaning of this attribute with 'Ali (ﷺ). This hadith also refers to the words of Allah: *¶Say [O Muhammad] to mankind: If you [really] love Allah, then follow me [i.e. accept Islamic Monotheism, follow the Qur'an and the Sunnah], Allah will love you and forgive*

you your sins. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful» (*Qur'an* 3: 31), as if he were hinting that 'Ali (عليه السلام) had attained such perfect obedience to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that he deserved that Allah should love him.⁴⁶⁰

2. The blessing of the Prophet's supplication, as Allah answered the supplication of His Messenger (ﷺ). 'Ali said: "I never got sore eyes after the Prophet (ﷺ) spat in my eye."⁴⁶¹ 'Ali (عليه السلام) fell sick once, and the Prophet (ﷺ) came to him as 'Ali was saying: "O Allah, if my time has come, then let me die (quickly) and find relief; if my time has not yet come, then heal me; and if You are testing me, then give me patience." The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to him: "What did you say?" He repeated it, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "O Allah, heal him, O Allah, grant him well-being." Then he said, "Get up." So he got up, and he never felt that pain again after that.⁴⁶²
3. There is no connection between this hadith and the imamate of 'Ali (عليه السلام). The Shia say that 'Ali (عليه السلام) was supposed to be the caliph after the Prophet (ﷺ), and they quote a number of hadiths as evidence, including this one. In reality, these hadiths point to his virtue but do not point to his imamate [or caliphate]. They add false additions to this hadith that are not sound according to the scholars of hadith, and which, moreover, make no connection between his loving Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ) and his being loved by them, on the one hand, and his becoming the imam or caliph, on the other. Moreover, affirming this quality of 'Ali (عليه السلام) (his loving and being loved) does not mean denying that others have the same quality. How could that be the case when Allah (ﷻ) says concerning Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) and his companions: «...people whom He will love and they will love Him,» (*Qur'an* 5: 54) and

Allah says, concerning the people of Badr: ﴿Verily, Allah loves those who fight in His Cause in rows [ranks] as if they were a solid structure﴾ (*Qur'an* 61: 4)? Undoubtedly the one whom Allah loves, His Messenger (ﷺ) also loves, and the believer who loves Allah also loves His Messenger (ﷺ). Allah also says, concerning the people of the mosque of Qubâ': ﴿In it are men who love to clean and to purify themselves. And Allah loves those who make themselves clean and pure.﴾ (*Qur'an* 9: 108)

When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was asked: Who is the most beloved of people to you?, he said: 'Â'ishah. It was said: And among men? He said: Her father.⁴⁶³ He made his comments about love and being loved with regard to 'Ali (عليه السلام), even though this quality exists in others, for a subtle reason that we may conclude from his saying, "At whose hands Allah will grant victory."⁴⁶⁴ The reason is that if he had mentioned only victory, some may think that there is no reason for his superiority or virtue, because it is mentioned in the hadith: "Allah may cause this religion to prevail by means of an immoral man." This notion is dispelled by affirming that these two qualities (loving Allah and His Messenger and being loved by them) were present in him, so the point of mentioning this quality (Allah granting victory at his hands), and others is to dispel this notion.⁴⁶⁵

4. There are a number of things we learn from the hadith about the virtues of 'Ali (عليه السلام) at Khaybar, including the following:
 - The virtue of the Companions is highlighted by the fact that they were distracted that night from the glad tidings of victory because they were preoccupied with finding out who it was that loved Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), and Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) loved him.

- We learn to believe in the divine will and decree when we see that the one who did not strive to attain that position did attain it, while those who strove for it did not attain it, because the Companions went early the next morning to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), all of them hoping to be given the banner, but they were not given it. 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib was sick and did not even try for it, but despite that he was given the banner.
- We learn etiquette from his words 'be deliberate' or 'do not rush'. The point here is that he told them to be deliberate and not to be hasty, to call people to Islam before fighting, and to call with wisdom. This is based on his words, "...and tell them of their duties before Allah...", because it is wise to complete the call, by giving the option of Islam first, then telling them of their duties towards Allah (ﷻ). It is not sufficient just to tell him to embrace Islam, because he may or may not be able to implement Islam in the way that you told him to implement it. Therefore it is essential to continue to take care of him so that he will not return to disbelief. Telling him about the rights of Allah in Islam is based on the fact that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "...and tell them of their duties towards Allah..."
- We learn of the reward for the one at whose hands even a single person is guided, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "If Allah were to guide one man through you, that would be better for you than having red camels," meaning that is better for you than all that is regarded as desirable in this world. It does not mean, as some people think, that it is better for you than giving red camels in charity.
- We learn about swearing an oath to confirm an idea, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "By Allah, if Allah were to

guide..." So the Prophet (ﷺ) swore, although he was not asked to swear. The point here is that he was encouraging 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) so that Allah would guide people through him, and confirming this idea. Allah commanded His Messenger (ﷺ) to swear in three places in the Qur'an, where He said: ﴿And they ask you [O Muhammad] to inform them [saying]: 'Is it true [i.e. the torment and the establishment of the Hour — the Day of Resurrection]?' Say: 'Yes! By my Lord! It is the very truth!...'﴾ (Qur'an 10: 53); ﴿The disbelievers pretend that they will never be resurrected [for the Account]. Say [O Muhammad]: 'Yes! By my Lord, you will certainly be resurrected.﴾ (Qur'an 64: 7) and ﴿Those who disbelieve say: 'The Hour will not come to us.' Say: 'Yes, by my Lord, the All-Knower of the Unseen, it will come to you﴾ (Qur'an 34: 3). If there is any interest to be served by swearing an oath, or any question to be answered, then it is permissible and may even be required.⁴⁶⁶

6.6. 'Ali at the conquest of Makkah and the campaign of Hunayn, 8 AH

Quraysh broke their treaty with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) when they supplied Banu Bakr with horses, weapons and men, thus supporting them against Khuzâ'ah, who were allies of the Muslims. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "You will be supported, O 'Amr ibn Sâlim, and may Allah never help me if I do not help Banu Ka'b." Then as a cloud appeared in the sky, he said: "This cloud will provide help for Banu Ka'b."⁴⁶⁷ 'Amr ibn Sâlim came to Madinah and recited an ode before the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), in which he said:

*O Lord, I come to remind Muhammad
of the old alliance between our fathers.
You are sons for whom we provided the mother,*

*Then we made peace and have not changed our minds.
Help us, now God guide you,
And call God's servants to our aid.
Among them the Messenger of God prepared for war.
When he is wronged, his face becomes black with anger.*

...

*They claim that I can get no one to help us
And they but a miserable few.
They attacked us at night in al-Wateer
And killed us as we performed the ritual prayers.*

Quraysh sent Abu Sufyân to Madinah to confirm the treaty and extend its duration. When he arrived in Madinah, he entered upon the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to discuss the matter, but the Prophet (ﷺ) turned away from him and did not answer him. He sought help from the senior Companions, such as Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân and 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them), asking them to intervene between him and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), but they all refused, so Abu Sufyân went back to Makkah without managing to make any deal or covenant.⁴⁶⁸

During the conquest of Makkah, 'Ali (ﷺ) achieved a number of things, including the following:

6.6.1. Foiling attempts to spy for Quraysh

It was narrated from Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Ali ibn 'Ubaydullâh ibn Abi Râfi' that he heard 'Ali say: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent us, me, az-Zubayr and al-Miqdâd, and he said: 'Go to the garden of Khâkh, in which you will find a woman riding a camel with whom there is a letter, and take it from her.' We set out, with our horses galloping, until we reached the garden and we found the woman. We said: 'Give us the letter.' She said: 'I do not have a letter.' We said: 'Either you give us the letter or we will remove your

clothes.' So she brought it out from her braided hair, and we brought it to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). In it (was written): 'From Hâṭib ibn Abi Balta'ah to some of the polytheists of Makkah,' telling them something about the plans of Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'O Hâṭib, what is this?' He said: 'Do not be hasty in judging me, O Messenger of Allah. I am a man who was connected to Quraysh, but I was not one of them. The Muhâjireen with you have relatives who will protect their families in Makkah. I have no blood ties among them, so I wanted to do them a favour so that they would protect my family. I did not do it out of disbelief, or because I apostatized from my religion, or because I approved of disbelief after becoming Muslim.' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'He has spoken the truth.' 'Umar said: 'O Messenger of Allah, let me strike the neck of this hypocrite.' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'He was present at Badr, and you do not know, perhaps Allah (ﷻ) looked upon the people of Badr and said: Do what you wish, for I have forgiven you.'"⁴⁶⁹

6.6.2. We grant protection to the one to whom Umm Hâni' granted protection

Umm Hâni' bint Abi Tâlib, the sister of 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them both) said: "When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) camped in the upper part of Makkah, two men among my in-laws, from Banu Makhzoom, fled to me." She was married to Hubayrah ibn Abi Wahb al-Makhzoomi. She said: " 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib, my brother, entered upon me and said: 'By Allah, I will kill them.' I locked the door of my house on them, then I came to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) when he was in the upper part of Makkah. I found him washing himself (making ghusl) from a vessel in which there was a trace of dough, and his daughter Fâṭimah was screening him with his garment. When he had finished washing, he took his garment and put

it on, then he prayed eight *raka'ahs*⁴⁷⁰ of the optional morning prayer. Then he turned to me and said: 'Welcome, O Umm Hânî'. What brings you here?' I told him about the two men and about what 'Ali wanted to do. He said: 'We grant protection to the one to whom you granted protection, and we grant security to the one to whom you granted security, so he should not kill them.'⁴⁷¹

Based on the above, if a Muslim gives protection to a disbeliever whose people are in a state of war against Muslims, that guarantees his safety, and hence it is not permissible for the Muslims to harm him in any way. In order to protect the Muslims from any harm that may result from giving protection, the Islamic jurists stipulated that in order for it to be valid, the one who is offering protection should be above suspicion, and the guaranteed protection should not result in any bad consequences for the Muslims.⁴⁷² Otherwise, the matter should be referred to the ruler to see what his opinion is.

6.6.3. The killing of al-Ḥuwayrith ibn Naqeed ibn Wahb

This occurred during this great conquest. The Prophet (ﷺ) had issued instructions to his commanders that they should only fight those who fought them, but he also issued instructions to kill certain people whom he named, even if they were found beneath the coverings of the Ka'bah. One of these people was al-Ḥuwayrith ibn Naqeed ibn Wahb, who was one of those who had harmed the Prophet (ﷺ) in Makkah. When al-'Abbâs had provided a camel for Fâtimah and Umm Kalthoom, al-Ḥuwayrith spooked the camel which was carrying them, and they fell to the ground. When permission was given for him to be killed, 'Ali (ؓ) caught him and killed him.⁴⁷³

6.6.4. 'Ali (عليه السلام) on a reconciliation mission

The Messenger (ﷺ) sent 'Ali (عليه السلام) to Banu Judhaymah to make up for the mistake of Khâlid ibn al-Waleed, who had killed some of their people. The Messenger (ﷺ) had sent Khâlid in 8 AH, following the conquest of Makkah, to Banu Judhaymah to call them to Islam. Because of differences in dialects, they could not say *aslamna* ("We have become Muslim"); they said *saba'na* (literally: "We have become renegades"). Hearing that, Khâlid killed some of them and took some of them as prisoners. When the news reached the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), he raised his hands and said twice: "O Allah, I am innocent before You of what he has done."⁴⁷⁴ Then the Messenger (ﷺ) sent 'Ali (عليه السلام) to them to examine their situation, and he sent money with him. 'Ali (عليه السلام) performed his mission very well. He paid compensation for those who had been slain and compensated them for the loss of wealth, and even for the water bowl of a dog. When he had finished with all of that, he asked them: "Is there anything left of life or wealth for which you have not been compensated?" They said: "No." He said: "I will give you what is left of this money on behalf of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), in case claims should arise that neither he nor you know right now." When he went back to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and told him what he had done, he said: "You did right, and you did well."⁴⁷⁵ By means of this important mission, 'Ali (عليه السلام) removed a burden and worry that was troubling the Messenger (ﷺ).⁴⁷⁶ With this wise attitude, the Prophet (ﷺ) consoled Banu Judhaymah and removed the grief and sorrow that were in their hearts.⁴⁷⁷ Khâlid's slaying of Banu Judhaymah stemmed from a misunderstanding of the situation and misjudgement on his part. This conclusion is based on the fact that the Messenger (ﷺ) did not punish him for what he had done⁴⁷⁸ and did not dismiss him from his post.

6.6.5. 'Ali (عليه السلام) during the campaign to Ḥunayn

One of his exploits in jihad, which were characterised by courage and which point to 'Ali's (عليه السلام) expertise in fighting, was what happened during the campaign of Ḥunayn in 8 AH. He stood firm with the Messenger (ﷺ) and those of the Muhājireen and Anṣār who stood firm with him. In the army of Hawāzin, there was a man on a red camel, in whose hand was a black flag. When he could reach people, he stabbed them with his spear, and when he could not reach them, he would raise his spear for those who were behind him so they would follow him. 'Ali (عليه السلام), with his military brilliance and lengthy experience, realised that this man was an influential factor in motivating Hawāzin and making them put up a tough fight. So 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام) and a man of the Anṣār went towards him and managed to topple him from his camel and kill him. After that, it was not long before they were defeated and fled, and the Muslims were victorious.⁴⁷⁹

6.6.6. 'Ali's expedition to destroy the idol al-Falas in the land of Tayy'

After the Prophet (ﷺ) had purified the Ka'bah of the idols that were in it, it was necessary to destroy other houses which had been symbols of jāhiliyyah for a long time.⁴⁸⁰ Expeditions sent by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) went out one after another to purify Arabia. 'Ali's task was to destroy the idol of al-Falas in the land of Tayy', and his expedition set out in Rabee' al-Ākhir. There were 150 men of the Anṣār in the expedition, riding one hundred camels and fifty horses, with a black banner and a white flag. They launched their attack on the area belonging to Āl Ḥātim — Ḥātim at-Ṭā'i, whose generosity was proverbial — at dawn. They attacked al-Falas and destroyed it, and they gained plenty of prisoners, cattle and sheep. Among the captives was the sister of 'Adiyy ibn Ḥātim, and 'Adiyy fled to Syria.⁴⁸¹

6.7. The Prophet (ﷺ) appointed ‘Ali in charge of Madinah during the campaign of Tabook in 9 AH

The campaign to Tabook took place in the month of Rajab, 9 AH. This campaign was of immense importance in the life of the Prophet (ﷺ), and it achieved aims which had a far-reaching effect on the hearts of the Muslims and Arabs and on the course of Islamic history.⁴⁸² The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) appointed ‘Ali (عليه السلام) in charge of Madinah, and the hypocrites found an opportunity to express their inward feelings of resentment and hypocrisy. They began to talk about ‘Ali (عليه السلام) in negative terms. For example, they said that the Prophet had only left him behind because he could not put up with him. These bad actions and words of theirs were a clear sign of their hypocrisy. In the sound hadith, it says that ‘Ali (عليه السلام) said: By the One Who split the seed and created the soul, the unlettered Prophet (ﷺ) affirmed to me: “No one loves me except a believer, and no one hates me except a hypocrite.”⁴⁸³ At that point, Ali went and caught up with the army, and he wanted to go out on campaign with them. He asked: “O Messenger of Allah, have you left me behind among the women and children?” The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to him: “Do you not want to be to me as Haroon was to Moosa, except that there is no Prophet after me?”⁴⁸⁴

6.8. ‘Ali (عليه السلام) and his media role during the pilgrimage led by Abu Bakr, 9 AH

Efforts to educate society and build the state were ongoing at all levels during the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) in all fields, be they ideological, economic, social, political, military and devotional. The obligation of hajj had not been practised during previous years. In 8 AH, after the conquest of Makkah, ‘Itâb ibn Usayd was appointed in

charge of it, but the hajj of the Muslims had not yet been made distinct from the hajj of the polytheists.⁴⁸⁵ When hajj season came in 9 AH, the Prophet (ﷺ) wanted to perform hajj, but he said: "If the polytheists circumambulate the House naked⁴⁸⁶, I would not like to do hajj." So Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) set out with a large number of the Companions, and they took the sacrificial animals with them.⁴⁸⁷

When Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) set out with the pilgrim caravan, Soorah Barâ'ah⁴⁸⁸ was revealed. The Prophet (ﷺ) called 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) and ordered him to catch up with Abu Bakr as-Şiddeeq (رضي الله عنه). So he set out on al-'Aqba', the she-camel of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and caught up with Abu Bakr as-Şiddeeq (رضي الله عنه) at Dhul-Hulayfah. When Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) saw him, he said to him: "Are you coming to lead or be led?" He said: "To be led." So they went on together, and Abu Bakr led the people in hajj, following the same sequence of rituals as they had done during the jâhiliyyah. The hajj in that year was in the month of Dhul-Hijjah, as indicated by sound reports, and it did not take place in Dhul-Qa'dah as some people say.

Abu Bakr as-Şiddeeq (رضي الله عنه) gave speeches before at-Tarwiyah, on the day of 'Arafah, on the day of sacrifice, and on the first day of departure. He taught the people their rituals: standing in 'Arafah, departing from there, sacrifice, departure, the symbolic stoning of the devil and so on, with 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) following him each time, reciting the opening verses of Soorah Barâ'ah, then proclaiming to the people each time these four things: "No one but a believing soul will enter paradise; the House is not to be circumambulated naked; whoever has a covenant with the Prophet (ﷺ), it stands until it expires; and the polytheists and the Muslims are not to perform hajj together after this year."⁴⁸⁹ Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) ordered another group of the Companions to help 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه) carry out his mission.⁴⁹⁰

The revelation of the first verses of Soorah Barâ'ah marked the final break with idolatry and its followers, as their pilgrimage was banned, and war was declared against them.⁴⁹¹

Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Freedom from [all] obligations [is declared] from Allah and His Messenger to those of the Mushrikoon [polytheists, pagans, idolaters, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah], with whom you made a treaty. So travel freely [O Mushrikoon] for four months [as you will] throughout the land, but know that you cannot escape [from the punishment of] Allah; and Allah will disgrace the disbelievers. And a declaration from Allah and His Messenger to mankind on the greatest day [the 10th of Dhul-Hijjah — the 12th month of Islamic calendar] that Allah is free from [all] obligations to the Mushrikoon and so is His Messenger. So if you [Mushrikoon] repent, it is better for you, but if you turn away, then know that you cannot escape [from the punishment of] Allah. And give tidings [O Muhammad] of a painful torment to those who disbelieve.» (Qur'an 9: 1-3)

Those who had covenants were given respite until the end of their covenants. Allah (ﷻ) says: «Except those of the Mushrikoon with whom you have a treaty, and who have not subsequently failed you in aught, nor have supported anyone against you. So fulfil their treaty to them for the end of their term. Surely, Allah loves Al-Muttaqoon [the pious].» (Qur'an 9: 4)

Respite was also given to those of the polytheists who had no covenant until the end of the sacred months, at which point they would be in a state of war with the Muslims. Allah (ﷻ) says: «Then when the Sacred Months [the 1st, 7th, 11th and 12th months of the Islamic calendar] have passed, then kill the Mushrikoon wherever you find them, and capture them and besiege them, and lie in wait for them in each and every ambush. But if they repent [by rejecting Shirk (polytheism) and accept Islamic Monotheism] and perform aṣ-Ṣalâh [Iqâmat-aṣ-Ṣalâh], and give Zakâh, then leave their way free. Verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.» (Qur'an 9: 5)

The Prophet (ﷺ) appointed 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) to announce the breaking of covenants to the polytheists during the hajj season, because customarily when the Arabs wanted to make or cancel a covenant, no one could do that except the chief of the tribe or a man from his family, and this custom was not contrary to the teachings of Islam, hence the Prophet (ﷺ) sent 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) with these instructions before it was too late. This is the reason why 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was appointed to convey the opening verses of Soorah Barâ'ah, and it is not as the Râfiḍis claim, that this was to indicate that 'Ali was more entitled to the caliphate than Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه). Dr. Muḥammad Abu Shahbah commented on that and said: I do not know how they overlooked the words of Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه): "Are you coming to lead or be led?"⁴⁹² Or how the one who is to be led can be more deserving than the one who is to lead?⁴⁹³ This pilgrimage paved the way for the Farewell Pilgrimage. During the hajj of Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه), it was announced that the era of idols had come to an end and that a new stage had begun, and that all the people had to do was to respond to the laws of Allah (ﷻ). After this announcement, which spread among the Arab tribes throughout Arabia, these tribes became certain that the matter was serious and that the era of idolatry was indeed over, so they began sending delegations to declare their Islam and their belief in the Oneness of Allah (ﷻ) (tawḥeed).⁴⁹⁴

6.9. 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) and the delegation of Christians from Najrân, and the verse of mubâhalah in 9 AH

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent a letter to Najrân, in which he said: "I invite you to worship Allah instead of worshipping human beings, and I invite you to be dedicated to Allah (ﷻ) instead of being dedicated to human beings. If you refuse, then pay the *jizyah*⁴⁹⁵, and if you refuse that, then I declare war on you. Wassalâm."⁴⁹⁶ When

the letter reached the bishop, he gathered the people together and read it to them, then asked them what they thought about it. They decided to send a delegation composed of fourteen of their nobles, or it was said sixty riders, of whom three were in charge: al-‘Âqib, who was their leader and the one whose advice and opinion they followed; the chief who was in charge during travel; and Abu al-Ḥârith, their bishop and scholar who was in charge of their education.⁴⁹⁷ When the delegation of Christians from Najrân came to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in Madinah, they took off their travelling clothes and put on their *hibarah*⁴⁹⁸ garments, which they allowed to drag along the floor, and their gold rings, then they set out to meet the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). They greeted him, but he did not return their greeting. They tried for a long time to talk to him, but he refused to speak to them while they were wearing these garments and gold rings. So they went and looked for ‘Uthmân ibn ‘Affân and ‘Abdur-Raḥmân ibn ‘Awf (may Allah be pleased with them both) because they knew them. (They used to take their camels to Najrân during the *jâhiliyyah* so that their chief would buy wheat, crops and corn for them.) They found them among some of the Anṣâr in a gathering, and they said: “O ‘Uthmân, O ‘Abdur-Raḥmân, your Prophet wrote a letter to us and we came in response; we greeted him, but he did not return our greeting. We have been trying to speak to him all day; we tried hard to speak to him but to no avail. What do you think? Should we go back?”

They said to ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ), who was present in the gathering: “What do you think, O Abu al-Ḥasan, about these people?” He said: “I think that they should take off these garments of theirs and their rings, and put on their travelling clothes and go to him.” The delegation did that, then they went back to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). They greeted him, and he returned their greeting; then he asked them questions, and they asked him, and they kept

talking.⁴⁹⁹ They said to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "We were Muslims before you."⁵⁰⁰ The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Three things are keeping you from Islam: your worship of the cross, your eating pork and your claim that Allah has a son."⁵⁰¹ The argument and debate between him and them intensified, with the Prophet reciting Qur'an to them and refuting their falsehood with evidence. Among the things that they said to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was: "Why are you insulting our man (meaning 'Eesa) and saying that he is a slave of Allah?" He said: "Yes indeed, he is a slave of Allah and His Messenger and His word that he bestowed upon Maryam the virgin." They got angry and said: "Have you ever seen a man without a father? If you are telling the truth, show us someone like him." Then Allah revealed the response to them in the verse:

﴿Verily, the likeness of 'Eesa [Jesus] before Allah is the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust, then [He] said to him: 'Be!' — and he was. [This is] the truth from your Lord, so be not of those who doubt.﴾
(Qur'an 3: 59-60)

It was a decisive proof which likened that which was extraordinary to something that was even more extraordinary.⁵⁰² When debating with wisdom and beautiful preaching did not work with them, he invited them to *mubâhalah*⁵⁰³, in obedience to the command of Allah:

﴿Then whoever disputes with you concerning him ['Eesa (Jesus)] after [all this] knowledge that has come to you [i.e. 'Eesa (Jesus) being a slave of Allah, and having no share in Divinity], say [O Muḥammad]: 'Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves — then we pray and invoke [sincerely] the curse of Allah upon those who lie'﴾

(Qur'an 3: 61)

The Prophet (ﷺ) went out, accompanied by al-Hasan, al-Ḥusayn and Fāṭimah, and he said: "When I say supplications, say

Âmeen.”⁵⁰⁴ The Christians discussed the matter among themselves, and they were afraid they might be doomed because they knew that he was really a Prophet, and no people engaged in mubâhalah with a Prophet but they were doomed. So they refused to engage in mubâhalah with him and said: “Decide what you want concerning us.” He made a peace deal with them in exchange for two thousand suits, one thousand in the month of Rajab and one thousand in the month of Şafar.⁵⁰⁵

6.10. 'Ali (عليه السلام) engaging in da'wah and as a judge in Yemen, 10 AH

After the conquest of Makkah, the Arab tribes in Arabia responded to Islam, and the Messenger of Allah sent some of his Companions to the tribes who had not yet responded, to call them to Islam. He sent 'Ali (عليه السلام) to Hamadân in Yemen. Al-Bara' ibn 'Âzib (رضي الله عنه) tells us of what happened when he went with 'Ali (عليه السلام) to Yemen. He says: “...when we reached the borders of Yemen, the people heard about that, and they gathered to meet him. 'Ali (عليه السلام) led us in prayer, and when he had finished, he made us all sit in one row. He stood before us and praised and glorified Allah (ﷻ), then he read to them the letter from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). All of Hamadân became Muslim in one day, so he wrote to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to tell him the news. When the Prophet (ﷺ) read his letter, he fell down in prostration and said: ‘Peace be upon Hamadân, peace be upon Hamadân.’”⁵⁰⁶ The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was very concerned about the southern front of his state and anxious for the Yemeni tribes to enter Islam. This concern and attention led to the brilliant results achieved by the da'wah efforts, as indicated by the many delegations that came to Madinah from all parts of Yemen. This indicates that the efforts made by the envoys to Yemen were continuous and far-reaching. The expeditions of the Messenger of

Allah (ﷻ) supported these peaceful da'wah activities, as he sent Khâlid ibn al-Waleed (رضي الله عنه), then 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه). The Prophet (ﷺ) targeted prominent people and centres of influence in society, who could play an important role in building states. He followed this great principle throughout his life.⁵⁰⁷

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) commanded 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) to judge between the people in Yemen. 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) himself told us about that when he said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent me to Yemen. I said to him: 'O Messenger of Allah, are you sending me to people who are older than me, when I am young and do not know much about judicial matters?' He placed his hand on my chest and said: 'O Allah, make his tongue steadfast and guide his heart. O 'Ali, when two disputants sit before you, do not pass judgement between them until you listen to the second one the way you listen to the first one. If you do that, you will know what is the correct judgement.'" 'Ali said: "I never had any confusion concerning a judgement after that."⁵⁰⁸

After Islam spread in their country, the Yemenis needed people to teach them about their religion and to judge between them in accordance with the rulings of Allah (ﷻ). The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent a number of the Companions, including Mu'âdh and Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari, to various parts of Yemen, and one of the best of them was 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه). The books of history, hadith and Islamic jurisprudence have preserved for us a number of the judgements that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) passed when he was in Yemen, including the following:

6.10.1. His judgement concerning the four people who pushed one another beside a trap dug for a lion

It was narrated from Hanash that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent me to Yemen, and they came to some people who had built a trap for a lion.⁵⁰⁹ They began to push one

another, and one man fell, so he grabbed onto another one, who then grabbed onto another one⁵¹⁰, until all four of them ended up in the trap, and the lion wounded them. Then a man came and killed the lion with a spear, and they all died of their wounds. The next of kin of the first man went to the next of kin of the last man, and they took out weapons to fight, so 'Ali (عليه السلام) came to them right away⁵¹¹ and said: "Do you want to fight one another when the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is still alive? I will judge between you, and if you agree, then that is the verdict. Otherwise, keep away from one another until you go to the Prophet (ﷺ), and he will be the one who judges between you, then whoever transgresses after that will have no right. Collect from the tribes of those who dug the hole one-fourth of the amount of compensation for a life, one-third of the amount, one-half of the amount and a complete amount. For the first man (who fell in), there will be one-fourth because he caused the death of the one who came after him; for the second one, there is one third; for the third, there is half; and for the fourth, there is the complete amount." They refused to accept that, so they went to the Prophet (ﷺ) when he was at Maqâm Ibrâheem and told him the story, and he said: "I will judge between you." One of the people said: 'Ali (عليه السلام) has already passed judgement. They told him about it, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) approved it.⁵¹²

6.10.2. Three men who had intercourse with a woman in the same month

It was narrated from Zayd ibn al-Arqam that he said: "A case was brought to 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) when he was in Yemen, concerning three men who had had intercourse with a woman during one cycle of her being free from menses. He asked two of them, 'Do you affirm that this child belongs to (the third man)?' And they said, 'No.' He asked another two of them, 'Do you affirm that this child

belongs to (the third man)?' And they said, 'No.' Every time he asked two of them whether they affirmed that the child belonged to the third, they would say no. So he cast lots between them and attributed the child to the one whose name was chosen in this manner, and obliged him to pay two-thirds of the compensation.⁵¹³ The Prophet (ﷺ) was told of this, and he smiled so broadly that his back teeth became visible."⁵¹⁴ The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) smiled because he was happy that Allah (ﷻ) had guided 'Ali (ﷺ) to the right judgement, hence he approved of that.⁵¹⁵ It is possible that this happened before these people became Muslims, because what they did is forbidden in the religion of Allah (ﷻ).⁵¹⁶

6.11. 'Ali (ﷺ) during the Farewell Pilgrimage

'Ali (ﷺ) caught up with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) during the Farewell Pilgrimage. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) slaughtered sixty-three camels with his own hand, and the number of animals he sacrificed (sixty-three) was equal to the number of years of his life. Then he stopped and told 'Ali (ﷺ) to slaughter the rest of the hundred, so he did that and completed the number. 'Ali (ﷺ) described to us some of the rituals during his hajj with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). It was narrated from 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) that the Prophet (ﷺ) stood in 'Arafah, with Usâmah ibn Zayd riding behind him, and said: "This is the place of standing, and all of 'Arafah is a place of standing." Then he moved on, driving his camel carefully, and the people started rushing right and left, and he turned to them and said: "Calmly, O people; calmly, O people," until he came to Muzdalifah, where he joined two prayers together, then he stopped in Muzdalifah. He stopped in Quzah, and al-Faḍl ibn al-'Abbâs rode behind him, and he said: "This is the place of standing, and all of Muzdalifah is a place of standing." Then he moved on, driving his camel carefully, and the people were rushing right and left, and he

turned to them and said: “Calmly, calmly, O people.” When he came to Muḥassir, he made his mount speed up, until he came out of it, then he went back to his previous speed. After he had done the symbolic stoning of the devil, he came to the place of sacrifice and said: “This is the place of sacrifice, and all of Mina is a place of sacrifice.”

A young woman from Khath‘am came to him and said: My father is an old man, and he has become senile. Now the command of Allah (ﷻ) for hajj has come, and he cannot perform it; can I do it on his behalf? The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Yes,” and he started turning the face of Faḍl ibn al-‘Abbās away from her. Then another man came to him and said: I stoned the devil and did the ṭawâf of hajj and exited iḥrâm, but I did not shave my head. He said: “It doesn’t matter; shave your head.” Another man came to him and said: I stoned the devil and shaved my head and exited iḥrâm, but I did not offer a sacrifice. He said: “It does not matter; offer your sacrifice.”

Then the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did the ṭawâf of hajj. After that, he called for a bucket of Zamzam water, drank from it and made ablutions. Then he said: “Draw water from Zamzam to give to the pilgrims.”⁵¹⁷ O Banu ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib, were it not for my fear that it may be taken from you⁵¹⁸, I would have drawn water.” Al-‘Abbās said: “O Messenger of Allah, why did I see you turning the face of your nephew away?” He said: “I saw a young man and a young woman, and I feared for them with regard to the devil.”⁵¹⁹ ‘Ali (ﷺ) announced to the people whatever the Prophet (ﷺ) commanded him. It was narrated from ‘Amr ibn Saleem that his mother said: “While we were in Mina, we saw ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷺ) saying: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) says: ‘These are the days of eating and drinking, so no one should fast.’ And he followed the people on his camel, shouting that.”⁵²⁰

6.12 The honour of washing and burying the Prophet (ﷺ)

When the Prophet (ﷺ) died, 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was one of those who washed him, along with al-Faḍl ibn al-'Abbās and Usāmah ibn Zayd.⁵²¹ 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said: "I washed the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and I checked to see what is usually seen in one who is deceased, but I did not see anything; he looked good in life and in death."⁵²² He said: "May my father be sacrificed for the good (meaning the Prophet); how good you looked in life and in death."⁵²³ 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was among those who went down into the grave of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and buried him, along with al-Faḍl ibn 'Abbās, Qatham ibn 'Abbās and Shuqrān, the freed slave of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).⁵²⁴

The news of the death of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) struck the Companions like a thunderbolt, because of their intense love for him and because they were used to living under his care, like children living under their father's care, only more so. The share of that care that Ahl al-Bayt and the Hāshimi family — foremost among them Fāṭimah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib — enjoyed was greater than others for obvious reasons, based on natural human inclination and the fact that they were closely related; they were characterised by sensitive feelings, strong emotions and deep love. But they bore this calamity with strong faith, acceptance of the decree of Allah and submission to His command.⁵²⁵

6.13. The story of the letter that the Prophet (ﷺ) thought of writing during his final illness

It is proven in Bukhari and Muslim and elsewhere in the hadith of Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) that he said: "When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was dying and there were some men in the house, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'Come, let me write you a document after which you will never

go astray.' Some of them said: 'The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is overcome with pain, and you have the Qur'an; the Book of Allah is sufficient for us.' The people in the house disagreed and argued. Some of them said: 'Bring (pen and paper) and let him write a document, after which you will never go astray'; and some of them said something different. When their idle talk and argument became too much, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Get up and leave.'" Abdullah said: Ibn 'Abbâs used to say: "What a calamity it was when the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was prevented from writing that document because of their disagreement and noise."⁵²⁶

According to another report from Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه), he said: "Thursday and what a Thursday! The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) took a turn for the worse, and he said: 'Bring me (pen and paper) and I will write for you a document, so you will not go astray after I am gone.' But they argued (about that), and it is not appropriate to argue in the presence of a Prophet. They said: 'What is the matter with him? Is he delirious?'"⁵²⁷ Try to find out from him.' He said: 'Let me be, for the state in which I am now is better. I instruct you to do three things: expel the polytheists from the Arabian Peninsula and reward the delegations as I used to do.' Then he remained silent about the third, or it was said he forgot it."⁵²⁸ There is no reason to criticise the companions of the Messenger of Allah regarding what is proven in this hadith and other sound reports. As for what the Râfiqîs mention of criticism, it is false and known to be flawed. The scholars answered some of it a long time ago, and among their responses were the following points:

1. Difference of opinion among the Companions is proven to have happened, and the reason for it was the different ways in which they understood the words of the Messenger (ﷺ) and what he meant; they did not intend to disobey him. Al-Qurṭubî, the author of *al-Mufhim*, said: "The reason for all of that was difference in interpretation,

which is something acceptable in Islam, as they all had good intentions. Everyone who strives to reach the proper understanding is correct, or one of the two who hold different views is correct and the other is not sinning; rather he is rewarded, as is established according to the fundamentals of Islam.”⁵²⁹ Then he stated that the Prophet (ﷺ) did not rebuke them or criticise them; rather he said to them all: “Let me be, for the state in which I am now is better.”⁵³⁰ This is something similar to what happened to them on the day of al-Aḥzāb, when the Messenger (ﷺ) said to them: “Nobody should pray ‘Aṣr except in Banu Quraydhah.”⁵³¹ Some people were worried that they might miss the time for ‘Aṣr, so they prayed before they reached Banu Quraydhah, whereas others said: “We will only pray where the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) told us to.” And he did not rebuke either of the two groups.⁵³²

2. As for what the Râfiḍīs claim, that the difference of opinion between the Companions and what it led to, namely the fact that the Prophet (ﷺ) did not write that document for them, is what deprived the Ummah from protection against falling into error, it is false because it would mean that the Messenger (ﷺ) gave up conveying that which could protect the Ummah from going astray. This faulty claim by the Râfiḍīs also would mean that he (ﷺ) failed to convey the message of his Lord just because his Companions differed in his presence, until he died without passing on that message. This would mean that he went against the command of his Lord, Who said: ﴿O Messenger [Muhammad]! Proclaim [the message] which has been sent down to you from your Lord. And if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. Allah will protect you from mankind.﴾ (Qur'an 5: 67)

The Prophet (ﷺ) cannot have done that (failed to convey the message) because Allah (ﷻ) praised him when He said: ﴿Verily, there has come unto you a Messenger [Muhammad] from amongst

yourselves. It grieves him that you should receive any injury or difficulty. He [Muhammad] is anxious over you; for the believers [he is] full of pity, kind, and merciful.﴾ (*Qur'an* 9: 128)

Thus Allah (ﷻ) described him as anxious that his Ummah should be guided and that all benefits in this world and in the hereafter should reach them, as Ibn Katheer said in his commentary.⁵³³ If this was a well established fact in the religion of Islam, no one in whose heart there is an atom's weight of faith should have any doubt about that. He or she should believe that this noble Messenger (ﷺ) had conveyed the message as commanded, and that he was most worried about his Ummah, which is established in mutawâtir reports that describe his jihad and sacrifices, and all the reports about the Prophet (ﷺ) confirm that. Once this is established, then we know for certain, beyond any shadow of a doubt, that if the matter was as the Râfiḍis said — when they described this document as the one that could have protected the Ummah from misguidance in religious affairs and prevented divisions and disputes until the Hour begins — then it would not have been justifiable, on the basis of religious or rational evidence, for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to delay writing that document until that critical time. Even if he had delayed it until then, he would not have given up the idea just because his Companions differed concerning the matter.⁵³⁴ It cannot be imagined that the Prophet (ﷺ) would forsake the command of his Lord, even if we assume that he gave up that idea at that moment because of the dispute in his presence, for some reason that he saw fit.

What could have prevented him from writing it later on, since it is proven that he lived for several more days after that incident? According to what is stated in the report of Anas in Bukhari and Muslim,⁵³⁵ the Prophet (ﷺ) died on Monday, whereas this incident with the document took place on Thursday, according to consensus.⁵³⁶ It is proven by the consensus of both the Sunnis and

the Râfiḍīs that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not write that document before he died, so we know that it was not part of the religion that he was commanded to convey, because of the evidence in the Qur'an which indicates that Allah (ﷻ) had completed the religion for him and his Ummah. Before that, during the farewell pilgrimage, the words, «This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion,» (Qur'an 5: 3) had been revealed.

Ibn Taymiyah said: "Writing the document was not something that Allah (ﷻ) had enjoined upon him to write or convey at that time, because if that were the case, he (ﷺ) would not have ignored what Allah had commanded him to do. Rather that was something that he saw fit to do, so as to ward off dispute concerning the caliphate of Abu Bakr, as he thought that disputes would inevitably arise."⁵³⁷ Elsewhere, he said: "As for the story of the document that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) wanted to write, that was explained as is narrated in Bukhari and Muslim from 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها), who said: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said when he was sick: "Call your father and your brother for me, so that I may write a document, for I fear that someone might wish (for succession) and say 'I am more entitled to it,' when Allah and the believers will not accept anybody but Abu Bakr."⁵³⁸ Then after quoting the reports of the hadith, Ibn Taymiyah said: "The Prophet (ﷺ) had decided to write the document that he mentioned to 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها), but when he saw that confusion had arisen, he realised that writing the document would not dispel the confusion, so there was no benefit in writing it. He also realised that Allah (ﷻ) would unite them on what he intended, as he said: "Allah and the believers will not accept anybody but Abu Bakr."⁵³⁹

As for the words in the hadith, "you will never go astray after I am gone," ad-Dahlawi said in his interpretation of the hadith: "If it is said: if what he intended to write was not about religious affairs, why

did he say you will never go astray after me? We say: Misguidance has many aspects, and what is meant here is not making mistakes with regard to running the affairs of state, which is expelling the polytheists from the Arabian Peninsula, rewarding the delegations as he used to reward them and preparing and sending the army of Usâmah. It does not refer to misguidance and going astray from the religion.”⁵⁴⁰

3. Concerning the meaning of the words of Ibn ‘Abbâs, “The real calamity is that which prevented the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) from writing that document,”⁵⁴¹ as Ibn Taymiyah said with regard to what was meant: It means that the thing that prevented it was a calamity for those who doubted the caliphate of Abu Bakr and were confused about the matter. If there was a document, it would have dispelled their doubts. But as for those who knew that his caliphate was true, it was not a calamity for them, praise be to Allah.⁵⁴²

What explains that is the fact that Ibn ‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) only said that after the emergence of the people who followed whims and desires and innovations, such as the Kharijites and Râfîdis. This was stated by Ibn Taymiyah⁵⁴³ and Ibn Hajar.⁵⁴⁴

4. As for their claims that the Prophet (ﷺ) intended in this document to state that ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) should be the caliph, and the claim of some of the Râfîdis that there is no other rational interpretation, this claim is false.

Ibn Taymiyah said: “Whoever thinks that this document was to appoint ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) as the caliph is misguided according to all scholars, both Sunni and Shia. As for the Sunnis, they are agreed on the superiority of Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) and that he should be given precedence. As for those who said that ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) was deserving of the imamate, they say that his imamate had already been stated before that, as they claim, in clear and unambiguous terms, so there was no need for this document.”⁵⁴⁵

5. As for the Râfîdis' slander against 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) and their claim that he accused the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) of not knowing what he was saying, as he said "he is delirious," and he did not comply with what the Prophet (ﷺ) wanted, and he said "you have the Book of Allah" and "the Book of Allah is sufficient for us", the response to that is that the first claim, which is that 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) accused the Messenger of Allah of being delirious and not aware of what he was saying is false, because this phrase, "is he delirious?" is not proven to be the words of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) in the first place. Rather these are the words of one of the people who were present, but the reports narrated in Bukhari and Muslim do not specify who said it. What is proven is that they said, "What is the matter with him? Is he delirious?"⁵⁴⁶ It appears thus, in the plural, not the singular, hence some of the scholars said that these were not the words of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه). Ibn Hajar said: "It seems to me that the third possibility is most likely, which was mentioned by al-Qurṭubī, and that the one who said that was one of those who had recently become Muslim. It is common for one who is faced with severe pain to be distracted by the pain from carrying out what he wants to do."⁵⁴⁷ Al-Dahlawī said: "How can it be proven that the one who said these words was 'Umar, when in most reports it appears in the plural ('they said')?"⁵⁴⁸

What is proven with regard to this phrase is that it came in the form of a question ("is he delirious?"). This is unlike what is mentioned in some reports, where it says "he was delirious" and the like, which is less likely to be the case according to the conclusions of those scholars and hadith commentators who examined the matter, such as al-Qâḍī 'Iyâḍ⁵⁴⁹, al-Qurṭubī⁵⁵⁰, an-Nawawī⁵⁵¹ and Ibn Hajar.⁵⁵² They stated that the interrogative form here is indicative of objection to those who said: "Do not write (the document)."⁵⁵³ Al-Qurṭubī quoted the evidence that the Prophet (ﷺ) was infallible and was protected against making mistakes in conveying the message in

all situations, which was well-established among the Companions. Based on this, it was impossible that their words “is he delirious?” would indicate any doubt on their part about the soundness of what he was saying at the time of sickness. Rather that was said by some of them by way of objecting to those who hesitated to bring the shoulder blade and inkpot and delayed doing so. It is as if they were saying to those who were hesitant: ‘How could you hesitate? Do you think that he is rambling? Stop hesitating and bring the shoulder blade, for he speaks the truth and is not delirious.’ This is the best interpretation.⁵⁵⁴ This indicates that the Companions were unanimously agreed that it was impossible for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to be delirious, because those who said that mentioned it in the context of objecting to those who hesitated, who nevertheless knew that he was not delirious. Thus the Râfiḍi claims are proven false and baseless.⁵⁵⁵

6. Let us examine their claim that ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) objected to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) by saying: “You have the Book of Allah; the Book of Allah is sufficient for us,” and that he did not obey the command of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) with regard to what he wanted of writing the document. The response to the specious arguments is that it became clear to ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه), and those of the Companions who shared his opinion, that the Prophet’s command to write the document was not by way of obligation; instead, he was guiding them to that which was better. This was pointed out by al-Qâḍi ‘Ayâḍ⁵⁵⁶, al-Qurṭubî⁵⁵⁷, an-Nawawî⁵⁵⁸ and Ibn Ḥajar.⁵⁵⁹ Moreover, after this, it was proven that ‘Umar’s opinion was correct, because the Messenger (ﷺ) decided not to write the document.

If it had been obligatory, he would not have abandoned the idea because of their difference of opinion concerning it, because he did not fail to convey anything due to the objection of anyone. Hence this is regarded as one of the issues in which ‘Umar’s opinion

coincided with the truth.⁵⁶⁰ Similarly, the words of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه), "The Book of Allah is sufficient for us" are addressed to those who disagreed with him, and he did not say that by way of objecting to the command of the Prophet (ﷺ). This is clear from his words, "You have the Book of Allah." These words are addressed to those who disagreed with 'Umar's opinion, using the plural form of 'you'.

Moreover, 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) was farsighted and possessed deep insight and wisdom. He thought that it was more appropriate not to write the document after he became certain that the command here was not in the sense of being obligatory and that not writing the document would serve some clear Sharia interest. The scholars had many views as to what Sharia interest 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) may have had in mind, and there are a number of opinions. One view is that it was compassion on 'Umar's part for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) because of the hardship that writing the document might cause for him when he was so ill. This is borne out by his words: "The Messenger of Allâh was overcome by pain, so he did not want to burden the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) with something that was difficult and hard to do"⁵⁶¹, bearing in mind the verses in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿We have neglected nothing in the Book﴾ (*Qur'an* 6: 38) and ﴿And We have sent down to you the Book [the Qur'an] as an exposition of everything.﴾ (*Qur'an* 16: 89)

An-Nawawi said: As for the words of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه), the scholars who commented on the hadith are unanimously agreed that this is one of the signs of 'Umar's deep understanding, virtues and profound insight.⁵⁶²

Similarly, 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) based his view on what he thought was best with regard to writing the document, and the one who tries his best to understand an issue of Islam and come up with an answer is excused (regardless of whether he gets it right or wrong); rather he is rewarded, because of the words of the Prophet (ﷺ): "If the judge

passes judgement and strives hard and gets it right, he will have two rewards; if he strives hard and gets it wrong, he will have one reward.”⁵⁶³ So how about if ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) tried hard to work it out in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and he did not tell him he was wrong or criticise him; rather he agreed with what he wanted, which was not to write the document. Thus it is clear that this slander of the Râfiḍis against the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) on the basis of this incident is false and baseless, and this highlights the invalidity of what they said about them.⁵⁶⁴

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CHAPTER TWO

‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (عليه السلام) at the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs

1. ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (عليه السلام) at the time of Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣideeq (عليه السلام)

1.1. ‘Ali’s oath of allegiance to Abu Bakr as caliph (may Allah be pleased with them both)

There are many reports about the delay in ‘Ali’s swearing allegiance to Abu Bakr (عليه السلام), as well as az-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwâm’s delay in doing so, but most of these reports are not sound. There are sound reports stating that ‘Ali and az-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with them both) swore allegiance to Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣideeq (عليه السلام) in the beginning. It was narrated that Abu Sa‘eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه) said: When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died, the spokesmen of the Anṣâr stood up... and he went on to mention *bay‘at as-saqeefah*.¹ Then he said: Then they departed, and when Abu Bakr sat on the minbar, he looked at the faces of the people. He did not see ‘Ali (عليه السلام), so he asked about him, and some of the Anṣâr went and brought him. Abu Bakr (عليه السلام) said: “O cousin and son-in-law of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), do you want to cause division among the Muslims?” He said: “Let there be no reproach, O successor of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ),” and he swore allegiance to him. Then he did not see az-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwâm (عليه السلام), so he asked about him until they brought him,

and he said: "O cousin and disciple of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), do you want to cause division among the Muslims?" He said likewise: "Let there be no reproach, O successor of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)," and he swore allegiance to him.²

One indication of the importance of the sound hadith of Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri is that Imam Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, the author of *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*, which is the soundest of the hadith books after *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhari*, went to his Shaykh, al-Ḥâfidh Muḥammad ibn Ishâq ibn Khuzaymah, the author of *Ṣaḥeeḥ Ibn Khuzaymah*, and asked him about this hadith. Ibn Khuzaymah wrote the hadith down for him and read it to him. Then Muslim said to his Shaykh, Ibn Khuzaymah: "This hadith is as valuable as a camel (meaning very valuable)." Ibn Khuzaymah said: "This hadith is not only equal to a camel;³ rather it is equal to a sack⁴ of treasure." Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) commented on this hadith by saying: "This is a sound, *mahfoodh* chain of narration, and it is of great importance, namely the allegiance of 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) on either the first or second day after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ). This is true, because 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) did not stay away from Abu Bakr (ﷺ) at any time, and he did not miss any prayer that was offered behind him."⁵ According to the report of Ḥabeeb ibn Abi Thâbit: 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) was in his house, and a man came to him and told him: Abu Bakr (ﷺ) is sitting to receive the oath of allegiance. 'Ali (ﷺ) went out to the mosque, wearing a chemise of his, with no upper or lower garment, rushing for fear of any delay in swearing his oath of allegiance. He swore allegiance to Abu Bakr (ﷺ), then he sat down and sent for his upper garment (or cloak), which they brought to him and he put on over his chemise.⁶

'Amr ibn Ḥurayth asked Sa'eed ibn Zayd (ﷺ): "When was allegiance sworn to Abu Bakr (ﷺ)?" Sa'eed said: "The day the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died; the Muslims did not want to remain for

even part of a day without being united." He said: "Did anyone oppose Abu Bakr (ﷺ)?" Sa'eed said: "No, no one went against him except an apostate or one who was planning to become an apostate. Allah (ﷻ) saved the Anṣâr, so they rallied behind him and swore allegiance to him." He said: "Did anyone among the Mujâhireen refrain from swearing allegiance to him?" Sa'eed said: "No, the Muhâjireen came one after another to swear allegiance to him."⁷

Among the things that 'Ali (ﷺ) said to Ibn al-Kawwa' and Qays ibn 'Abbâd, when he came to Basra and they asked him about his journey, was: "If I had any covenant with the Prophet (ﷺ), I would not have left the man of Banu Taym ibn Murrah [i.e., Abu Bakr (ﷺ)] and 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ﷺ) standing on his (the Prophet's) minbar. I would have fought them, even if I had nothing with which to fight except this cloak of mine. But the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was not murdered and did not die suddenly; he remained sick for several days and nights, during which the muezzin would come to tell him about the prayer, and he would order Abu Bakr (ﷺ) to lead the people in prayer, when he could see where I was. One of his wives wanted to divert that from Abu Bakr (ﷺ), but he refused and got angry, saying: 'You are like the women around Yusuf! Tell Abu Bakr (ﷺ) to lead the people in prayer.' When Allah (ﷻ) took the soul of His Prophet, we discussed our situation, and we chose for our worldly affairs the one whom the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) wanted. Prayer is the basis of Islam, the most important of affairs and the pillar of the faith. So we swore allegiance to Abu Bakr (ﷺ), who was qualified for that, and no two people among us differed concerning him. I did my duty towards Abu Bakr (ﷺ) and obeyed him. I went out on campaign with him as one of his troops and accepted what he gave me. I went out on campaign if he asked me to, and I carried out ḥadd punishments in front of him with my whip."⁸

Among the things that 'Ali (ﷺ) said on the minbar of Kufah, praising Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them),

was: "The Muslims gave their allegiance willingly, and the first one to do that among the sons of 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib was me."⁹ There are reports indicating that 'Ali (عليه السلام) swore allegiance to Abu Bakr (عليه السلام) right away, even though they do not state that clearly. It was narrated from Ibrāheem ibn 'Abdur-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf that he said: "Abdur-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf (عليه السلام) was with 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (عليه السلام), then Abu Bakr (عليه السلام) stood up and addressed the people, explaining to them: 'By Allah, I was never eager for leadership at all. I never had any desire for it, and I never asked Allah (ﷻ) for it, in private or in public. But I was afraid of *fitnah*.¹⁰ I have no pleasure in the position of leadership, but I have been appointed to a very important position, for which I have no ability except by the help of Allah (ﷻ). I wish that the strongest of people who could bear it would be in my position today.' The Muhājīroon accepted his words and his explanation.

"'Ali and az-Zubayr said: 'The only thing that disappointed us was that we were not consulted, but we believe that Abu Bakr (عليه السلام) is the most qualified of the people for it after the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). He was his companion in the cave and the second of two, and we know of his honourable position and seniority. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) commanded him to lead the people in prayer when he was still alive.'¹¹ And it was narrated that Qays al-'Abdi said: "I witnessed the sermon of 'Ali (عليه السلام) on the day of Basra. He praised and glorified Allah (ﷻ). He mentioned the Prophet (ﷺ), how he guided the people and how Allah (ﷻ) took him to Himself. Then he mentioned that the Muslims decided to appoint as his successor Abu Bakr (عليه السلام), so they swore allegiance to him, gave their pledge to him and accepted his leadership. He said: I swore allegiance to him, gave my pledge to him and accepted his leadership. They were pleased, and I was pleased. He did well and strove hard until Allah (ﷻ) took his soul, may Allah (ﷻ) have mercy on him."¹²

'Ali did not stay away from Abu Bakr (عليه السلام) at any time, and he never stayed away from him in any gathering. He joined with him in

consultation and running the affairs of the Muslims. Ibn Katheer and a number of scholars narrated that ‘Ali (عليه السلام) renewed his oath of allegiance six months after the first oath, after the death of Fâṭimah (عليها السلام), and there are sound reports about this.¹³ When the second oath of allegiance took place, some narrators thought that ‘Ali (عليه السلام) had not sworn allegiance before that, so they denied the earlier pledge. However, what is proven takes precedence over what is denied.¹⁴

There is a book entitled *al-Imam ‘Ali Jad al-Haqeeqah wal-Muslimeen — al-Waṣiyyah wash-Shoora* (Imam ‘Ali, the Truth and the Muslims — Instructions Regarding the Succession and Consultation), by Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-‘Ali. Its author claimed to be researching and seeking the truth, but he could not rid himself of the Shia Râfiḍi approach when discussing this issue. He put poison in the honey, as it were, and we must point it out. He discussed ‘Ali’s oath of allegiance and said that ‘Ali’s right to the caliphate was based on the instructions of the Prophet (ﷺ).

1.2. ‘Ali (عليه السلام) and his support for Abu Bakr (عليه السلام) during the Wars of Apostasy

‘Ali (عليه السلام) was a sincere adviser to Abu Bakr (عليه السلام), preferring that which was in the best interests of Islam and the Muslims to anything else. There are many signs of his sincerity to Abu Bakr (عليه السلام), to Islam and to the Muslims, and of his keenness to protect the position of the caliphs and to uphold Muslim unity. One clear sign is his advice when he heard that Abu Bakr (عليه السلام) was determined to go to fight the apostates in Dhul-Qiṣṣah and to lead the military campaign against them himself. ‘Ali (عليه السلام) recognised the danger that this posed to the survival of Islam.¹⁵ It was narrated from Ibn ‘Umar (عليه السلام) that ‘Ali (عليه السلام) said [to Abu Bakr]: “I shall say to you what the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said on the day of Uhūd: ‘Keep your sword sheathed, and do not cause us grief by your loss.’ Go back to

Madinah, for by Allah, if we were to lose you, Islam would never prosper after that." Abu Bakr (ﷺ) went back.¹⁶

If 'Ali (ﷺ) had been discontented with Abu Bakr's caliphate and had given his oath of allegiance reluctantly — though he is far above any such suggestion — this would have been a golden opportunity for him to take advantage of. He could have let Abu Bakr (ﷺ) do what he wanted, in the hope that he would be harmed, and then he would have been rid of him and would have had no obstacles in his way. If his hatred had been even worse than that — Allah (ﷻ) forbid — and he was very keen to get rid of him, he could have enticed someone to assassinate him, as politicians do to their competitors and enemies.¹⁷ 'Ali's opinion was that the apostates should be fought, and when Abu Bakr (ﷺ) asked him what he thought, he said: "I think that if you leave anything that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to take from them, then you will not be following the Sunnah of the Messenger." Abu Bakr (ﷺ) said: "If you think that, then I shall certainly fight them, even if they withhold from me a rope (that was used for hobbling camels)."

1.3. 'Ali regarded Abu Bakr (ﷺ) as being of a higher position than anyone else

There are many reports from 'Ali (ﷺ) indicating that he preferred and gave precedence to Abu Bakr (ﷺ). For example:

1. It was narrated that Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah said: "I said to my father: 'Which of the people is best after the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)?' He said: 'Abu Bakr.' I said: 'Then who?' He said: 'Umar.' I was afraid that he would say 'Uthmân next, so I said: 'Then you?' He said: 'I am just one of the Muslims.'"¹⁸
2. It was narrated that 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "Shall I not tell you of the best of this Ummah after its Prophet (ﷺ)? Abu Bakr (ﷺ)."

Then he said: "Shall I not tell you of the best of this Ummah after Abu Bakr (ﷺ)? 'Umar (ﷺ)." ¹⁹

3. It was narrated that Abu Wâ'il Shaqeeq ibn Salamah said: It was said to 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷺ): "Why don't you appoint someone over us?" (meaning someone to rule after he was gone) He said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not appoint anyone to succeed him so that I should appoint anyone to succeed me, but if Allah (ﷻ) wills good for the people, then He will unite them behind the best of them after I am gone, as He united them behind the best of them after their Prophet (ﷺ) was gone." ²⁰
4. 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "I will not be brought anyone who gives me precedence over Abu Bakr and 'Umar, but that I will carry out the ḥadd punishment of the fabricator on him." ²¹
5. 'Ali said to Abu Sufyân (ﷺ): "We found that Abu Bakr (ﷺ) was most qualified for it."

There are reports which further highlight the good relationship between 'Ali and Abu Bakr, such as the following:

- (a) It was narrated that 'Uqbah ibn al-Ḥārith said: "I went out with Abu Bakr (ﷺ) after 'Asr prayer a few days after the Prophet (ﷺ) died, and 'Ali (ﷺ) was walking beside him. He passed by Ḥasan ibn 'Ali, who was playing with some boys, and he carried him on his shoulder, saying: 'May my father be sacrificed for the one who looks like the Prophet but he does not look like 'Ali.' And 'Ali laughed." ²²
- (b) It was narrated that 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "Whoever moves a hand span away from the main body of Muslims has gone beyond the pale of Islam." ²³ Could 'Ali (ﷺ) have moved away from the other Muslims? He (ﷺ) hated division and was very keen for unity. Al-Qurṭubī said: "Whoever

ponders what happened between Abu Bakr and ‘Ali when discussing differences and various points of view, which highlighted their total agreement, will realise that they acknowledged one another’s virtues and their hearts were filled with love and respect for one another. Even though human nature may sometimes influence one’s attitude, religious commitment cancels that out, and Allah is the source of strength.”²⁴

As for what was said about az-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwâm (رضي الله عنه) delaying swearing allegiance to Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه), it was never narrated by any sound chain of narration; rather there are reports that denied this and prove that he did swear allegiance to him straight away. This appears in the sound reports of Abu Sa‘eed and others.²⁵

- (c) Ibn Taymiyah said: There are so many reports that they reached the level of mutawâtir, and they state that Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه) said: “The best of this Ummah after its Prophet is Abu Bakr, then ‘Umar.” This was narrated from him through many chains of narration; it was said that there were eighty such chains. It was also narrated from him that he said: “I will not be brought anyone who gives me precedence over Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, but that I will carry out the ḥadd punishment of the fabricator on him.”²⁶ He also said: “No one ever said that he was more entitled to this (meaning the caliphate) than Abu Bakr, and no specific person said that anyone was more entitled to it than Abu Bakr; rather one who still had a trace of Arabian or Persian jâhiliyyah in him said that the household of the Messenger (ﷺ) was more deserving of leadership. This is because the Arabs used to give precedence to the households of the rulers during their jâhiliyyah; similarly, the Persians gave precedence to the

household of the king. Thus words to that effect were narrated from people of that ilk.”²⁷

- (d) Calling Abu Bakr ‘aṣ-Ṣideeq’ and testifying to his preeminence and courage. It was narrated that Yahya ibn Ḥakeem ibn Sa’d said: “I heard ‘Ali (ﷺ) swearing an oath by Allah (ﷻ) that the name of Abu Bakr (ﷺ) came down from heaven: aṣ-Ṣideeq.”²⁸ It was also narrated that Ṣilah ibn Zafar al-‘Absi said: “Abu Bakr (ﷺ) was mentioned in the presence of ‘Ali (ﷺ), and he said: ‘Are you mentioning the name of the one who has precedence? By the One in Whose hand is my soul, we never competed in doing good but Abu Bakr (ﷺ) surpassed us.’”²⁹ And it was narrated that Muḥammad ibn ‘Aqeel ibn Abi Ṭālib said: “‘Ali (ﷺ) addressed us and said: ‘O people, who is the bravest of the people?’ We said: ‘You, O Amīr al-Mu’mineen.’ ‘Ali said: ‘Rather it is Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣideeq, because on the day of Badr, we built the hut for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), then we said: “Who will stand with him so that none of the polytheists will get close to him?”’ No one stood with him except Abu Bakr (ﷺ), who stood with his sword unsheathed, guarding the Prophet (ﷺ); every time anyone got close to him, Abu Bakr (ﷺ) struck him with his sword. I saw the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) when Quraysh caught hold of him at the Ka’bah and started shaking him and saying: “You are the one who made the gods into one God.” By Allah, no one got close to him except Abu Bakr (ﷺ), and at that time Abu Bakr (ﷺ) had two braids. He started poking this one and pushing that one, saying: “Woe to you! Would you kill a man because he says my Lord is Allah (ﷻ), when he has brought you proof from your Lord?” One of Abu Bakr’s braids was cut off, and ‘Ali (ﷺ) said to his companions:

'I adjure you by Allah (ﷻ), which of the two men was better, the believer of the family of Pharaoh or Abu Bakr?' The people kept quiet, then 'Ali (ﷺ) said: 'By Allah, a day in the life of Abu Bakr (ﷺ) is better than the believer of the family of Pharaoh; that man concealed his faith, and Allah (ﷻ) praised him, but Abu Bakr (ﷺ) offered his life and his blood for the sake of Allah (ﷻ).''³⁰

1.4. 'Ali following Abu Bakr (ﷺ) in prayer and accepting gifts from him

'Ali (ﷺ) accepted the caliphate of Abu Bakr (ﷺ) and took part in his managing the affairs of the Ummah. He accepted gifts from him, referred cases to him for judgement, prayed behind him, loved him and hated those who hated him.³¹ That is confirmed even by the greatest opponent of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) and of those who followed their guidance and adhered to their way:³² the extremist Shia al-Ya'qoobi. In his *Tareekh*, he mentions the caliphate of Abu Bakr (ﷺ) and says: "Abu Bakr wanted to launch a campaign against the Byzantines, so he consulted a number of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), but they had different views. Then he consulted 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, who suggested that he should do it, saying: 'If you do it, you will prevail.' Abu Bakr (ﷺ) said: 'You have cheered me up.' So Abu Bakr stood up to address the people and commanded them to prepare themselves for a campaign against the Byzantines. According to another report, Abu Bakr asked 'Ali: 'On what basis did you give me these glad tidings?' He said: 'From the Prophet (ﷺ), when I heard him give these glad tidings.' Abu Bakr said: 'You have cheered me up by telling me what you heard from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), O Abu al-Ḥasan; may Allah cheer you up.'"³³

Al-Ya'qoobi also said: "Among those from whom Islamic jurisprudence was learned during the time of Abu Bakr were 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, Mu'ādh ibn Jabal, Ubayy ibn Ka'b, Zayd ibn Thābit and Abdullah ibn Mas'ood."³⁴ Abu Bakr (ﷺ) gave precedence to 'Ali (ﷺ) out of all his companions. This is a clear indication that they used to deal with one another and give precedence to 'Ali (ﷺ) with regard to seeking advice³⁵ and referring matters for judgement. At one time, a delegation of disbelievers came to Madinah. They noticed some weakness in the Muslims and saw that they were small in number because many of them had gone in different directions for jihad to uproot the apostates and evil wrongdoers. Abu Bakr (ﷺ) sensed that they posed a danger to the capital of Islam and to the Muslims, so he ordered that Madinah be placed under guard, and he appointed troops to protect its gates and watch out for approaching armies. He appointed 'Ali, az-Zubayr, Ṭalhah and Abdullah ibn Mas'ood (may Allah be pleased with them) in charge of these guards, and they remained like that until they felt they were safe from the threat.³⁶

There was constant interaction between Abu Bakr and 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them both), as well as friendship and complete harmony. Thus 'Ali (ﷺ), who was the head of Ahl al-Bayt and the father of the two grandsons of the Messenger (ﷺ), used to accept presents and gifts, as is the habit of brothers who treat one another on an equal footing and love one another. He accepted (as a gift) aṣ-Ṣuhba', the slave woman who was captured during the Battle of 'Ayn at-Tamr, and she bore him 'Umar and Ruqayyah.³⁷ Abu Bakr (ﷺ) also gave him Khawlah bint Ja'far ibn Qays, who was one of the captives taken during the Battle of al-Yamamah; she bore him the best of his children after al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, namely Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyah. Khawlah was one of the female captives from the war against the apostates, and her son Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyah was named after her and attributed to her.³⁸

Imam al-Juwayni says concerning the allegiance of the Companions to Abu Bakr (ﷺ): "They all accepted the authority of Abu Bakr (ﷺ), and 'Ali (ﷺ) used to hear his command and obey. He swore allegiance to Abu Bakr (ﷺ) in front of many people and joined his army in the campaign to Banu Haneefah."³⁹

There are numerous reports about him and his sons accepting financial gifts, the one-fifth share and wealth of the fay' (booty acquired without fighting) from Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with them all). 'Ali was in charge of distributing the booty at the time of Abu Bakr (ﷺ). This wealth was under 'Ali's control, then it was under the control of al-Ḥasan, then of al-Ḥusayn, then of al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan, then of Zayd ibn al-Ḥasan.⁴⁰ 'Ali (ﷺ) used to offer the five daily prayers in the mosque behind Abu Bakr (ﷺ), accepting him as an imam in prayer and demonstrating to the people the extent to which he was in agreement and harmony with him.⁴¹

'Ali (ﷺ) narrated some hadiths of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) from Abu Bakr. It was narrated that Asma' bint al-Ḥakam al-Fizâri said: "I heard 'Ali (ﷺ) say: 'If I heard something from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) by which Allah (ﷻ) benefited me, I would ask him (the narrator) to swear (that he heard it from the Prophet), and if he swore, I would believe him. Abu Bakr (ﷺ) told me — and Abu Bakr told the truth: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: 'There is no Muslim who commits a sin and then does wuḍoo' and does it well, then prays two raka'ahs and asks Allah to forgive him, but Allah will forgive him.'""⁴²

When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died, his Companions differed over where he should be buried. Some of them said to bury him in Baqee' Cemetery, others said to bury him in the place for funerals, and still others said to bury him where his Companions were buried. Abu Bakr (ﷺ) said: "Keep quiet, for voices should not be raised in the presence of the Prophet (ﷺ),

alive or dead.” ‘Ali (ﷺ) said: “Abu Bakr has something to say, which he was entrusted with.” Abu Bakr said: “The Messenger told me that there is no prophet who dies, but he is buried where he died.”⁴³

‘Ali (ﷺ) testified to the great reward of ‘Abu Bakr (ﷺ) with regard to collecting the Qur’an into one volume. It was narrated that ‘Abd Khayr said: “I heard ‘Ali (ﷺ) say: ‘The greatest of the people in reward with regard to the *muṣḥaf*’⁴⁴ is Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣideeq; he was the first one who collected it between two covers.”⁴⁵

1.5. Abu Bakr (ﷺ), Fâṭimah (ﷺ) and the estate of the Prophet (ﷺ)

‘Ā’ishah (ﷺ) said: “Fâṭimah and al-Abbâs (may Allah be pleased with them both) came to Abu Bakr (ﷺ) asking for their inheritance from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), mentioning his land in Fadak and his share of Khaybar. Abu Bakr (ﷺ) said to them: ‘I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: We prophets are not inherited from; what we leave behind is charity. Rather the provision of the family of Muḥammad (ﷺ) should come from this wealth.’”⁴⁶ According to another report, Abu Bakr (ﷺ) said: “I am not going to leave anything that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to do but I will do it too, because I am afraid that if I leave anything that he used to do, I will go astray.”⁴⁷

It was narrated that ‘Ā’ishah (ﷺ) said that when the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died, the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) wanted to send ‘Uthmân ibn ‘Affân (ﷺ) to Abu Bakr (ﷺ) to ask him for their inheritance from the Prophet (ﷺ). ‘Ā’ishah (ﷺ) said to them: “Didn’t the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: ‘We prophets are not inherited from; what we leave behind is charity’?”⁴⁸ It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) said: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

‘My heirs should not share out any dinar that I leave behind. Whatever I have left, after the maintenance of my wives and the remuneration of my agent, is charity.’”⁴⁹

Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣideeq (ؓ) followed these instructions with regard to Fâtimah (ؓ), in obedience to the words of the Prophet (ﷺ). Hence Abu Bakr (ؓ) said: “I am not going to leave anything that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to do, but I will do it too.”⁵⁰ And he said: “By Allah, I will not leave anything that I saw the Messenger of Allah do, but I will do it too.”⁵¹

Fâtimah (ؓ) stopped disputing with him after he quoted this hadith and explained the matter to her. This is evidence that she accepted the truth of what he said. Ibn Qutaybah⁵² said: “As for the dispute of Fâtimah (ؓ) with Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with them both) concerning the inheritance of the Prophet (ﷺ), this was not something strange, because she did not know what the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had said, and she thought that she would inherit from him as children inherit from their fathers. When Abu Bakr told her what the Prophet had said, she gave up her demand.”⁵³

The Râfiḍis went to extremes with regard to the story of the inheritance of the Prophet (ﷺ). They drifted away from the truth, turning away from and ignoring the sound reports stating that he (ﷺ) was not to be inherited from. They made it one of the foundations of the differences between the Companions and Ahl al-Bayt (may Allah be pleased with them all) and an extension of the issue of the caliphate. They accused the Companions (especially Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣideeq and ‘Umar al-Farooq) of mistreating and being unfair to Ahl al-Bayt. They alleged that these two seized the caliphate by force from Ahl al-Bayt and then confiscated their wealth and all of the financial rights that Allah (ﷻ) had enjoined for them. The Râfiḍis regard the issue of Fadak and denying Fâtimah (ؓ) her inheritance as one of the most serious issues in which the Companions conspired

after Abu Bakr (ﷺ) seized the caliphate from them by force, according to their claim. They argue that he kept the inheritance from them to prevent the people from becoming inclined towards Ahl al-Bayt because of this wealth, lest they unite against him and dismiss him from the caliphate.⁵⁴

The one who checks this matter in the Râfiḍi books will find that they focus on denying the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "We prophets are not inherited from; what we leave behind is charity."⁵⁵ They try to show that it is false by producing evidence such as the following:

1. They claimed that this hadith was fabricated by Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣideeq (رضي الله عنه). With regard to that, al-Hilli said: "Fâṭimah did not accept the hadith fabricated by Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) when he said: '...what we leave behind is charity.'" He also said: "He resorted to quoting a report that no one else narrated."⁵⁶ Al-Majlisi said, after stating that Abu Bakr and 'Umar seized Fadak: "For that purpose, they fabricated this evil and false report, 'We prophets are not inherited from; what we leave behind is charity.'"⁵⁷ Khomeini said concerning that: "We say that the hadith which is attributed to the Prophet is not valid, and that it was said in order to eliminate the progeny of the Prophet."⁵⁸

The response to that is that these statements are pure lies and obvious fabrications, because this report was not narrated by Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) only. Rather the words of the Prophet (ﷺ), "We prophets are not inherited from; what we leave behind is charity" were narrated from him by Abu Bakr, 'Uthmân, 'Ali, Ṭalhah, az-Zubayr, Sa'd, 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf, al-'Abbâs ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib, the wives of the Prophet, Abu Hurayrah and Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamân (may Allah be pleased with them all).⁵⁹ Concerning that, Ibn Taymiyah said: "The report from these people is proven in the books of *Ṣaḥeeḥ* and the *Musnads*,

and it is well known to the scholars of hadith. The one who says that Abu Bakr (ؓ) was the only one who narrated this report is proving that he is extremely ignorant or is deliberately lying.”⁶⁰

Ibn Katheer said, after mentioning those who narrated the hadith: “This claim of the Râfiḍis is false. If Abu Bakr (ؓ) was the only one who narrated the hadith, all the people of earth would still be obliged to accept his narration.”⁶¹ Dr. Sulaymân ibn Raja’ as-Suḥaymî, the author of the valuable book *al-‘Aqeedah fi Ahl al-Bayt bayna al-Ifrâṭ wa’t-Tafreeṭ* said: “This is supported by what is narrated in the books of the Râfiḍis from Imam Ja‘far aṣ-Ṣâdiq, the fifth infallible Imam according to them, as narrated from him by al-Kulayni, aṣ-Ṣaffâr and al-Mufeed, according to whom he said: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘Whoever follows a path seeking knowledge thereby, Allah will make easy for him a path to paradise. The scholars are trustees, the pious are fortresses and the twelve Imams are masters. The superiority of the scholar over the worshipper is like the superiority of the moon over all the other heavenly bodies on a night when it is full. The scholars are the heirs of the Prophets; they did not leave any dinars or dirhams to be inherited from them, rather they left behind knowledge, and whoever acquires any of it has got a good deal.’⁶² According to another report: ‘The scholars are the heirs of the Prophets, because the Prophets did not leave behind dinars or dirhams, rather they left behind their savings in their hadiths.’”⁶³

2. They claimed that this hadith was contrary to the words of Allah, ﴿Allah commands you as regards your children's [inheritance]: to the male, a portion equal to that of two females.﴾ (Qur'an 4: 11) They said: “Allah did not make this only for the Ummah in exclusion of him (ﷺ).”⁶⁴

In fact, this verse is addressed to those whom it is meant to

address, and there is nothing in the verse to suggest that the Prophet (ﷺ) is necessarily one of those who are addressed here.⁶⁵ The Prophet (ﷺ) is not to be compared to any other human being, because he is closer to the believers than their own selves and because Allah (ﷻ) has forbidden to him charity, both obligatory and voluntary. There are things that apply exclusively to him (ﷺ), for which Allah has singled him out. He and his fellow prophets (peace be upon them) are not to be inherited from, and this is protection from Allah so that there will be no reason for anyone to criticise them on the grounds that they only sought worldly gains for themselves and their heirs. As for the rest of mankind, they do not have that position of prophethood that could be undermined by the issue of inheritance. In a similar way, Allah (ﷻ) also protected our Prophet (ﷺ) from being literate or a poet, so as to eliminate any doubt about his prophethood, but others did not need this type of protection.⁶⁶

Ibn Katheer said, refuting the Râfiqis' use of this verse as evidence: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had special rulings that applied only to him, which the other Prophets did not share. If we assume that other prophets could be inherited from, which is not the case, then what was narrated by the Companions, especially Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه), demonstrates that this ruling applies only to him to the exclusion of the others."⁶⁷ Thus it is clear that their claim is false and contrary to the hadith.

3. They claim that the prohibition on inheritance and quoting of this hadith as evidence is contrary to the words of Allah, ﴿And Sulaymân [Solomon] inherited [the knowledge of] Dâwood [David],﴾ (*Qur'an* 27: 16) and that it is contrary to what Allah (ﷻ) said concerning His Prophet Zakariya (ﷺ): ﴿And verily, I fear my relatives after me, and my wife is barren. So give me from Yourself an heir, who shall inherit me, and inherit [also] the

posterity of Ya'qoob [Jacob] [inheritance of the religious knowledge and prophethood, not of wealth]. And make him, my Lord, one with whom You are Well-Pleased! (Qur'an 19: 5-6) They said: "Inheritance implies wealth and the like, and no one can say that what is meant in the verse is knowledge and not wealth."⁶⁸

The response is that the word 'inheritance' is a generic word that includes many meanings. It may be used with regard to inherited knowledge, prophethood, kingship or other things that can be transferred. The following verses refer to nothing more than the generic meaning of inheritance; they do not indicate inheritance of wealth:

«Then We gave the Book [the Qur'an] as inheritance to such of Our slaves whom We chose.» (Qur'an 35: 32)

«These are indeed the inheritors who shall inherit the Firdaws [paradise]. They shall dwell therein forever.» (Qur'an 23: 10-11)

«And Sulaymân [Solomon] inherited [the knowledge of] Dâwood [David]» (Qur'an 27: 16). Dâwood had many other children besides Sulaymân, and Sulaymân cannot have been singled out to inherit his wealth, which indicates that what is meant by inheritance here is inheritance of knowledge, prophethood and so on, and not inheritance of wealth. The context of this verse is praise for Sulaymân and the blessings for which Allah (ﷻ) singled him out. There is no particular virtue in singling him out for exclusive inheritance of wealth, because inheritance of wealth is something ordinary and common among people.

«Who shall inherit me and inherit [also] the posterity of Ya'qoob [Jacob].» (Qur'an 19: 5-6)

What is meant is not inheritance of wealth, because he (Zakariya) did not inherit any of the wealth of the family of

Ya'qoob; rather those who would inherit from the posterity of Ya'qoob are their children and other heirs, if they did inherit.⁶⁹

Similarly, the words of Allah: ﴿And verily, I fear my relatives after me, and my wife is barren. So give me from Yourself an heir,﴾ (*Qur'an* 19: 5) do not indicate that the inheritance in this case was inheritance of wealth, because Zakariya was not afraid that they would take his wealth after he died. That is not what he was worried about, because Zakariya (ﷺ) was not known to have any wealth; he was a carpenter who ate from what his own hands earned, as it says in *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*.⁷⁰ He did not have any more savings than what he needed to keep him going; therefore, his asking Allah (ﷻ) for a son to inherit from him indicates that what is meant in these two verses is inheritance of prophethood and taking over his position.⁷¹

Al-Qurṭubī said in his commentary on this verse: "Based on that, he did not ask for someone to inherit his wealth, because the Prophets are not inherited from. This is the more correct of the two opinions concerning the interpretation of this verse. What Zakariya (ﷺ) meant was inheritance of knowledge and prophethood, not inheritance of wealth, because it is proven that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'We prophets are not inherited from; what we leave behind is charity.'"⁷² In light of this ḥadīth, we can understand the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says, ﴿And Sulaymān [Solomon] inherited [the knowledge of] Dâwūd [David].﴾ (*Qur'an* 27: 16) This is similar to what Zakariya (ﷺ) said: ﴿Who shall inherit me, and inherit [also] the posterity of Ya'qoob [Jacob] [inheritance of the religious knowledge and prophethood, not of wealth]. And make him, my Lord, one with whom You are Well-Pleased!﴾ (*Qur'an* 19: 6)

The second verse explains what is meant in the first verse. Sulaymān did not inherit the wealth that Dâwūd left behind;

rather what he inherited from him was wisdom and knowledge. Similarly, Yahya inherited from the posterity of Ya'qoob (عليه السلام). This is what the scholars said about the interpretation of the Qur'an, except for the Râfîdis.⁷³

It is worth pointing out that the Râfîdis went against their own interpretation that inheritance is something obligatory when they limited the legacy of the Prophet (ﷺ) to Fâtimah (عليها السلام) only, and claimed that no one inherited from the Prophet (ﷺ) except her. Thus they excluded his wives and his relatives, contrary to the general meaning of the verses that they quoted as evidence. Aş-Şadooq narrated with his chain of narration from Abu Ja'far al-Bâqir that he said: "No, by Allah, neither al-'Abbâs, nor 'Ali, nor any of his heirs except Fâtimah (عليها السلام) inherited from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). The only reason why 'Ali (عليه السلام) took the Prophet's weapon and other things was to pay off his debts."⁷⁴ Al-Kulayni, aş-Şadooq and at-Toosi narrated, with their chains of narration going back to al-Bâqir, that he said: "Ali inherited his knowledge from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and Fâtimah (عليها السلام) inherited his estate."⁷⁵ In fact, they even excluded Fâtimah (عليها السلام) from that when they claimed that women do not inherit property. In his book *al-Kâfî*, Al-Kulayni included a chapter entitled: "Women do not inherit anything of property," in which he quoted a number of reports, including a report from Abu Ja'far aş-Şâdiq in which he said: "Women do not inherit anything of land or property."⁷⁶

Aş-Şadooq narrated, with his chain of narration going back to Maysar, who said: "I asked him (aş-Şâdiq) about women and what they are entitled to of inheritance. He said: 'As for land and property, they do not inherit them.'"⁷⁷ Thus it becomes clear that from their point of view, Fâtimah (عليها السلام) was not entitled to anything of the inheritance — without even having to quote as

evidence the hadith, "We prophets are not inherited from."⁷⁸ If women do not inherit property or land, on what grounds could Fâtimah (ﷺ) have asked for Fadak — according to what they say — which is undoubtedly property?⁷⁹ This indicates that they are lying and contradicting themselves, let alone the fact of their ignorance.⁸⁰

They also claim that Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) asked Fâtimah (ﷺ) to bring witnesses, and she brought 'Ali and Umm Ayman (may Allah be pleased with them), but that Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) refused to accept their testimony. This is an obvious and blatant lie. Hammâd ibn Ishâq said: "As for what some people narrated about Fâtimah (ﷺ) asking for Fadak and saying that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had allocated it to her, and 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) testifying to that but Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) not accepting his testimony because he was her husband, this is something that has no basis, and no report could ever be proven concerning that; rather it is fabricated and has no proof."⁸¹

4. The Sunnah and scholarly consensus indicate that the Prophet (ﷺ) was not to be inherited from. Ibn Taymiyah said: "The fact that the Prophet (ﷺ) was not to be inherited from is definitively proven in the sound Sunnah and by the consensus of the Companions, either of which is definitive proof which cannot be contradicted by another report which appears to be general in meaning. If it is general in meaning, then the other report is an exception, because if we accept it as proof, it would be no more than speculation or probability which cannot contradict that which is definitive, because that which is speculative cannot contradict that which is definitive. This report was narrated by more than one of the Companions at different times and in different gatherings, and none of the Companions ever objected to it or denied it. Rather they all accepted it and believed it.

Hence none of his wives insisted on demanding inheritance, and his paternal uncle did not insist on demanding inheritance. Rather when he asked for that and was told of what the Prophet (ﷺ) had said, he gave up his demand, and this is how matters remained at the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, including ‘Ali (عليه السلام). Nothing was changed, and none of the Prophet’s estate was divided.”⁸²

Ibn Taymiyah said: “Ali (عليه السلام) was appointed caliph after Dhun-Noorayn ‘Uthmân (عليه السلام), and Fadak and other property came under his control, and he did not give any part of them to any of the children of Fâtimah (عليها السلام) or to any of the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) or to any of the sons of al-‘Abbâs. If there was any injustice and he was able to remove it, that would have been easier for him than fighting Mu‘âwiyah and his armies. Do you think he would have fought Mu‘âwiyah, with all the bad consequences that resulted from that, and not given these people a little wealth, which was much easier for him to do?”⁸³

There was a consensus among the Rightly Guided Caliphs concerning this issue, and the Abbasid caliph Abu al-‘Abbâs as-Saffâh used this consensus as evidence against some of those who debated with him concerning this issue. Ibn al-Jawzi said in *Talbees Iblees*: “We narrated from as-Saffâh that he addressed the people one day, and a man who was one of the descendants of ‘Ali (عليه السلام) stood up and said: ‘O Amir al-Mu’mineen, help me against those who have wronged me.’ He said: ‘Who has wronged you?’ He said: ‘I am one of the descendants of ‘Ali (عليه السلام), and the one who wronged me was Abu Bakr (عليه السلام) when he took Fadak from Fâtimah.’ As-Saffâh said: ‘Did he persist in wronging you?’ The man said: ‘Yes.’ He said: ‘Who succeeded him?’ The man said: ‘‘Umar.’ He said: ‘Did he persist in wronging you?’ The man said: ‘Yes.’ He said: ‘Who succeeded

him?' The man said: 'Uthmân.' The man said: 'Did he persist in wronging you?' He said: 'Yes.' As-Saffâh said: 'Who succeeded him?' And the man began turning around as if he was looking for an escape route."⁸⁴

Some of the descendants of 'Ali (عليه السلام) from Fâtimah (عليها السلام) stated clearly that Abu Bakr (عليه السلام) was correct in his judgement on the issue of Fadak, according to what was narrated by al-Bayhaqi with his chain of narration from Fuḍayl ibn Marzooq, who said: "Zayd ibn 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib said: 'If I were in Abu Bakr's position, I would have given the same ruling as Abu Bakr did with regard to Fadak.'"⁸⁵ Abu al-'Abbâs al-Qurṭubi (may Allah have mercy on him) also narrated that there was consensus among Ahl al-Bayt, starting with 'Ali (عليه السلام) and his sons after him, then the sons of al-'Abbâs, in whose hands was left the charity of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). They did not think that they had the right to possess it; rather they spent it for the sake of Allah (ﷻ). Al-Qurṭubi said: "When 'Ali (عليه السلام) became caliph, he did not change its status from the way it had been at the time of Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them). He never tried to take possession of it or to take a share of it; rather he managed it in the way it had been managed before. Then it came under the control of Ḥasan ibn 'Ali, then Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali, then 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn, then al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḥasan, then Zayd ibn al-Ḥusayn, then Abdullah ibn al-Ḥusayn, then the Abbasids got control of it, according to what was stated by Abu Bakr al-Burqâni in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ*." They are senior figures of Ahl al-Bayt (may Allah be pleased with them) and are held in high esteem by the Shia and their scholars. It is not narrated from any of them that they took possession of it or inherited it or passed it on as an inheritance. If what the Shia say is true, then 'Ali (عليه السلام) or another member of Ahl al-Bayt would have kept it when they got control of it."⁸⁶

Ibn Katheer said: "The Râfiḍis spoke about this issue on the basis of ignorance and spoke of something of which they had no knowledge. They rejected something without having real knowledge of it, and they tried to get involved in something that did not concern them."⁸⁷ If they had understood the matter as it really was, they would have recognised the virtue of Abu Bakr (ﷺ) and accepted his explanation, which everyone should accept. But they are a doomed group, cheap and vile, who adhere to ambiguous matters and ignore issues that are well-established with the leaders of Islam, namely the Companions, Tâbi'oon and scholars who are respected in all places and in all eras, may Allah (ﷻ) be pleased with them all and make them pleased."⁸⁸

5. Fâṭimah's goodwill towards Abu Bakr (ﷺ). It is proven that Fâṭimah (ﷺ) was pleased with Abu Bakr (ﷺ) after that, and she died pleased with him, according to what was narrated by al-Bayhaqī with his chain of narration from ash-Shu'bi, who said: "When Fâṭimah fell sick, Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣideeq (ﷺ) came and asked for permission to see her. 'Ali (ﷺ) said: 'O Fâṭimah, here is Abu Bakr, asking permission to see you.' She said: 'Do you want me to give him permission?' He said: 'Yes.' So she gave him permission to enter upon her to try to reconcile with her. He said: 'By Allah, I never forsook my property, my wealth, my family and my tribe except to seek the pleasure of Allah and His Messenger and the pleasure of Ahl al-Bayt.' And he kept saying kind words to her until she was pleased with him."⁸⁹ Ibn Katheer said: "This is a good and strong chain of narration, and it seems that 'Âmir ash-Shu'bi heard it from 'Ali (ﷺ), or he was one of those who heard it from 'Ali (ﷺ)."⁹⁰

Thus the Râfiḍi criticism of Abu Bakr (ﷺ), which they base on Fâṭimah's being angry with him, is refuted. If she was upset with Abu Bakr (ﷺ) in the beginning, she was pleased with him after that,

and when she died, she was pleased with him. The one who sincerely loves her cannot afford but to be pleased with whomever she is pleased with.⁹¹ This cannot be contradicted by what is proven in the hadith of 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها): "The family of Muḥammad (ﷺ) could only live on this wealth, and by Allah I will not change anything of the charity of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) from the way it was at the time of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ); I shall manage it as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) managed it." According to 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها), Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) refused to give Fâṭimah (رضي الله عنها) something from it, and Fâṭimah (رضي الله عنها) got upset with Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) because of that, so she forsook him and never spoke to him until she died.⁹² This was as much as 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) knew, but in the hadith of ash-Shu'bi there is additional information that proves that Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) visited Fâṭimah (رضي الله عنها) and that she spoke to him and was pleased with him. 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) denied it and ash-Shu'bi affirmed it, and it is well known to the scholars that the words of one who affirms take precedence over the words of one who denies, because it is possible that something happened without the knowledge of the one who denied it, especially with regard to such issues. Abu Bakr's visit to Fâṭimah (رضي الله عنها) when she was sick was not a major issue that everyone would have known about; rather it was an ordinary matter that was not known to those who did not witness it, and no one would care to transmit it, because there was no need to mention it.

The scholars stated that Fâṭimah (رضي الله عنها) did not deliberately shun Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) in the first place; a woman like her is far above doing such a thing because the Prophet (ﷺ) forbade shunning for more than three days. Rather, she did not speak to him because there was no need to do so.⁹³ Al-Qurṭubi, the author of *al-Mufhim*, said in the context of commenting on the hadith of 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) referred to above: "Moreover, she [meaning Fâṭimah (رضي الله عنها)] did not meet Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) because of her grief at the loss of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and because she stayed in her house, and the narrator described

that as forsaking or shunning. But the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘It is not permissible for a Muslim to forsake his brother for more than three days.’”⁹⁴ She was the most knowledgeable of people about what was permissible and forbidden in that regard, and she was the least likely of people to go against the command of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). How could she be like that when she was a part of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and the leader of the women of paradise?⁹⁵

An-Nawawi said: “With regard to what is mentioned about Fâtimah (رضي الله عنها) shunning Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه), what it means is that she kept to herself and did not meet him, and this is not the shunning that is *ḥarâm*, which involves not greeting the person and turning away when meeting him. The words in this hadith, ‘she did not speak to him’, mean that she did not speak to him about this matter, or that she kept to herself and did not ask him for any need, and she had no need to meet him or talk to him. There is no narration at all to suggest that they met and she did not greet or speak to him.”⁹⁶ Fâtimah (رضي الله عنها) was distracted from everything by her grief at the loss of the noblest of creation, which was a calamity in comparison to which all other calamities look small. She was also preoccupied with her illness, which kept her bedridden and unable to participate in anything, let alone meeting the caliph of the Muslims, who was busy every minute of the day with the affairs of the Ummah, the wars of apostasy and other matters. She also knew that she would soon join her father, as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had told her that she would be the first one of his family to join him.⁹⁷ The one who has this type of knowledge does not worry about any worldly affairs. How good are the words of al-Muhallab which were narrated by al-‘Ayni: “No narrator said that they met and refused to greet one another; rather she stayed in her house, and the narrator described that as shunning.”⁹⁸

One of the things that indicate that the relationship between Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) and Fâtimah (رضي الله عنها) was very strong is that the wife of

Abu Bakr (ؓ), Asma' bint 'Umayy, is the one who tended to Fâtimah (ؓ), the daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ), during her final illness, and she was with her until she took her last breath. She was one of those who washed her and prepared her for burial. 'Ali (ؓ) tended her himself and was helped in that by Asma'. Fâtimah (ؓ) gave Asma' some instructions with regard to how she was to be shrouded and buried, and how her funeral was to be, and Asma' carried out those instructions.⁹⁹ Fâtimah (ؓ) said to Asma': "I do not like what is done to women: they cover the woman with a cloth that shows her shape." Asma' said: "O daughter of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), shall I tell you of something that I saw in Abyssinia?" She called for some fresh palm leaves, then she bent them and covered them with a cloth. Fâtimah (ؓ) said: "How good and beautiful this is! With this a woman can be told apart from a man."¹⁰⁰ It was narrated from Ibn 'Abdul-Barr that Fâtimah (ؓ) was the first one in Islam whose bier was covered in this manner, and Zaynab bint Jahsh was the next one.

Abu Bakr (ؓ) was in constant contact with 'Ali (ؓ) to ask about the condition of the daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ), contrary to what the people claim. Fâtimah (ؓ) was sick, and 'Ali (ؓ) was praying the five daily prayers in the mosque. After he had prayed, Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) would ask him: "How is the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)?" At the same time, he was in contact with her through his wife Asma', as she was the one who was actually in charge of taking care of her.

On the day Fâtimah (ؓ) died, Madinah was shaken with the weeping of men and women alike, and the people were distraught just as they had been on the day the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died. Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) went to offer condolences to 'Ali (ؓ) and said: "O Abu al-Ḥasan, do not offer the funeral prayer for the daughter of the Messenger of Allah before you

tell us.”¹⁰¹ She died the night before Tuesday, on the third of Ramadan 11 AH. Ibn Mâlik ibn Ja'far ibn Muḥammad narrated from his father that his grandfather 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn said: “Fâtimah died between sunset and nightfall, and Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân, az-Zubayr and 'Abdur-Rahmân ibn 'Awf (may Allah be pleased with them) were present. When she was placed for the funeral prayer to be offered over her, 'Ali (ﷺ) said: 'Go forward, O Abu Bakr (to lead the prayer).' Abu Bakr (ﷺ) said: 'What about you, O Abu al-Ḥasan?' 'Ali (ﷺ) said: 'By Allah, no one but you will lead the prayer over her.' So Abu Bakr (ﷺ) led the funeral prayer for her, and she was buried at night.” It says in another report that Abu Bakr (ﷺ) offered the funeral prayer for Fâtimah (ﷺ), the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and said takbeer over her four times.¹⁰² According to a report narrated by Muslim, 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) offered the funeral prayer for her, and this is more likely to be correct.¹⁰³

Muḥammad Iqbâl spoke eloquently in his ode to Fâtimah az-Zahra', in which he said:

*The lineage of the Messiah gives an honourable name to Maryam,
whose memory will live for ever,*

*But glory comes from three sources in the case of Fâtimah,
and how great they are.*

She is the daughter of whom? The wife of whom?

*The mother of whom? Who can come close to the
honourable status of her father?*

*She is a flash of light from the eye of al-Muṣṭafa, the one who guided
peoples who were lost.*

*He (the Prophet) is the one who awoke the sleeping
with his guidance, as if he brought them
back to life after they were dead.*

*He restored the course of history, just like a bride
in her adornment and beauty.*

*She is an example for mothers and an ideal;
the shining moon follows in her footsteps.
She resorted to beautiful patience as a means of
nourishment and steadfastness; she believed
that what pleased her husband pleased her...
Were it not for my adherence to the guidance of
al-Muṣṭafa and the limits set by Sharia,
may our souls be sacrificed for her,
I would have circumambulated her grave
and I would have kissed every spot of the
good dust that covers her resting place.*¹⁰⁴

1.6. Ties of marriage between Abu Bakr and Ahl al-Bayt, and Ahl al-Bayt giving the name Abu Bakr to some of their sons

The ties between Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣīdeeq (ؓ), the successor of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and the members of the Prophet's family (Ahl al-Bayt) were friendly and respectful, as befits him and them. This love and trust were mutual and were so strong that it cannot be imagined that there would be any problems or disputes, regardless of the myths and tales fabricated by the storytellers. Aṣ-Ṣīdeeqah 'Ā'ishah, daughter of aṣ-Ṣīdeeq Abu Bakr, was the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ) and one of the dearest of people to him, no matter how much the enviers resent this fact and no matter how many grudges those who hold different views may have in their hearts. This is a proven fact, and she is pure and innocent on the basis of the testimony of the Qur'an, even if the fabricators rejected and denied that.

Moreover, Asma' bint 'Umayy had been the wife of Ja'far ibn Abi Ṭālib, the brother of 'Ali (ؓ); after Ja'far died, she married Abu Bakr (ؓ) and bore him a son whom he called Muḥammad, who was

later appointed by 'Ali (ﷺ) as the governor of Egypt. When Abu Bakr (ﷺ) died, 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) married her, and she bore him a son whom he called Yahya.¹⁰⁵ The granddaughter of Abu Bakr (ﷺ) was married to Muḥammad al-Bâqir, a grandson of 'Ali (ﷺ) who is considered the fifth Imam by the Râfiḍis.

Professor Iḥsân Ilâhî Dhaheer quoted from the books of the Râfiḍis themselves proof of the strong connections and ties through marriage that existed between the family of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the family of Abu Bakr (ﷺ). It is proven that Qâsim ibn Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr, the grandson of Abu Bakr (ﷺ), and 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib, the grandson of 'Ali (ﷺ), were maternal cousins. Their mothers were among the female prisoners captured at the time of 'Umar (ﷺ); they were the daughters of Yazdagird ibn Shahriyâr and the granddaughters of Chosroes. Professor Dhaheer discussed the issue in detail in order to prove ties through marriage and a relationship of mutual love and compassion between Ahl al-Bayt and the family of Abu Bakr (ﷺ).¹⁰⁶

One of the signs of the love and friendship that existed between Ahl al-Bayt and Abu Bakr (ﷺ) was the fact that many of them gave Abu Bakr's name to their sons. The first was 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ), when he called one of his sons Abu Bakr. This is indicative of love, brotherhood and respect for Abu Bakr on the part of 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them both). It is worth mentioning that this child was born after Abu Bakr (ﷺ) had died, so it was obviously after he had become the caliph and leader. Is there anyone among the Shia today who claims to love 'Ali (ﷺ) and his sons and carries this name? Are they supporters of 'Ali (ﷺ) or his opponents? 'Ali (ﷺ) only gave his son this name because he hoped that the child would be like Abu Bakr (ﷺ). It was an expression of love and loyalty towards him, even after his death; there was no one among Banu Hâshim before 'Ali (ﷺ) who gave his son this name.

Moreover, ‘Ali (عليه السلام) was not the only one who sought blessings and showed love and sincerity towards Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه). His sons followed in his footsteps; both al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn had sons named Abu Bakr. This was mentioned by al-Ya‘qoobi and al-Mas‘oodi, who are both Râfiḍi historians.¹⁰⁷ Ahl al-Bayt continued to name their sons Abu Bakr; for example, the nephew of ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام), Abdullah ibn Ja‘far aṭ-Ṭayyâr ibn Abi Tâlib, called one of his sons Abu Bakr. This is one of the signs of love and friendship among people and is contrary to the claims of the Râfiḍis today that there was enmity, hatred and persistent arguments and differences among them.¹⁰⁸

1.7. ‘Ali (عليه السلام) and the death of Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣideeq

‘Ali (عليه السلام) was one of those whom Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) consulted as to who should become caliph after he was gone. Ali’s view was that ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) should become caliph after Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه).¹⁰⁹

When it was time to depart this world, and death came to Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه), the last words he spoke were the words of Allah (ﷻ): «Cause me to die as a Muslim [the one submitting to Your Will], and join me with the righteous» (*Qur’an* 12: 101). Madinah was shaken by the death of Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣideeq (رضي الله عنه) on that sorrowful evening; not since the death of the Prophet (ﷺ) had this city seen so many men and women crying. ‘Ali (عليه السلام) came rushing in, weeping and saying, “*Inna Lillâhi wa inna ilayhi râji’oon* (Verily to Allah we belong, and to Him is our return).” He stood at the door of the room in which Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) lay and said:

“May Allah have mercy on you, O Abu Bakr. You were a close friend of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), one with whom he felt at ease, in whom he confided and whom he consulted. You were the first of people to become Muslim and the most sincere in faith, the most

pious, the most fearing of Allah, the most effective in supporting the religion of Allah, the most protective towards the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), the most caring about Islam, the closest in companionship, the greatest in virtue, the best among those who strive to do righteous deeds, the highest in status, the one who has closest access to his Lord, the most closely resembling the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in adherence to Islam and attitude, the noblest in position, the one held in the highest esteem by the Prophet (ﷺ) and the dearest to him. May Allah (ﷻ) give you the best reward on behalf of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and on behalf of Islam. You believed the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) when the people disbelieved him. You were as dear to him as his hearing and sight. Allah (ﷻ) called you *as-Şideeq* in His revelation, as He said: ﴿And he [Muhammad], who has brought the truth [this Qur'an and Islamic Monotheism] and [those who] believed therein [*şaddaqa bihi*] [i.e. the true believers of Islamic Monotheism], those are *al-Muttaqoon* [the pious]﴾ (*Qur'an* 39: 33). You consoled him and supported him when others refrained; you stood with him at times of hardship when others held back; you gave him the best companionship at the time of difficulty. You were the second of two, his companion in the cave, the one to whom Allah (ﷻ) sent down His *sakeenah* (calmness, tranquillity, peace)¹¹⁰, his companion during the migration to Madinah, his successor in leading the religion and Ummah of Allah, the best successor in dealing with the apostates. You have done what no successor of any Prophet ever did; you took initiatives when other companions hesitated; you strove when they kept quiet; you showed strength when they showed weakness; you adhered to the way of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) when they faltered. You were, as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, weak in physical being, strong in supporting the religion of Allah, humble in yourself and great in the sight of Allah (ﷻ), held in high esteem in people's eyes and highly thought of. None of them ever had any criticism against you, and no one could ever find anything

bad to say against you, and you never looked down on any person. The weak, in your view, were strong and powerful until you restored their rights; close relatives and strangers were all equal before you; the one who is more obedient or more pious is the closest of people to you. You were the man of truth, sincerity and kindness; when you said something, you meant what you said. You were a man of patience and resolve; your opinion spoke of knowledge and clarity; the religion was supported by you; faith was strengthened by means of you, and Islam prevailed. You went far ahead of everyone, and you are going to make your successors work hard (to emulate you); you attained a clear victory. Verily to Allah we belong, and to Him is our return; we accept the will of Allah and submit to His decree. By Allah, besides the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), the Muslims will never be affected by the loss of a man as they will be by losing you. You brought support, protection and refuge to Islam. May Allah (ﷻ) cause you to join your Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) and not deprive us of reward for your loss or misguide us after you are gone.”

The people fell silent until he had finished speaking, then they wept, and their voices grew loud as they said: “You have spoken the truth.”¹¹¹

According to another report, when ‘Ali (ؓ) entered upon Abu Bakr (ؓ) after he had been laid out, he said: “There is no one with whose record of deeds I would love to meet Allah (ﷻ) more than this man who has been laid out.”¹¹²

2. ‘Ali (ؓ) at the time of ‘Umar al-Farooq

‘Ali (ؓ) was a prominent member of the consultative committee of ‘Umar’s state; indeed, he was the main consultant. ‘Umar (ؓ) acknowledged ‘Ali’s virtue, understanding of Islam and

wisdom, and he had a good opinion of him. It is proven that he said concerning him: “The best of us in judiciary matters is ‘Ali (ﷺ).”¹¹³ Ibn al-Jawzi said: “Abu Bakr and ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) used to consult him, and ‘Umar used to say: ‘I seek refuge with Allah from a problem that Abu al-Ḥasan (‘Ali) cannot handle.’”¹¹⁴

Masrooq said: “The people used to learn from six: ‘Umar, ‘Ali, Abdullah, Abu Moosa, Zayd ibn Thâbit and Ubayy ibn Ka‘b.” And he said: “I got to know the companions of Muḥammad (ﷺ), and I realised that the most prominent of them in knowledge were six: ‘Umar, ‘Ali, Abdullah, Abu ad-Dardâ’, Ubayy ibn Ka‘b and Zayd ibn Thâbit. Then I got to know the six, and I realised that the most prominent in knowledge among them were two: ‘Ali and Abdullah.”¹¹⁵ He also said: “The most prominent in knowledge are three: a scholar in Madinah, a scholar in Syria and a scholar in Iraq. The scholar in Madinah was ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib, the scholar in Kufa (in Iraq) was Abdullah ibn Mas‘ood, and the scholar in Syria was Abu ad-Dardâ’.” When they met, the scholar of Syria and the scholar of Iraq would ask the scholar of Madinah, and he would not ask them.”¹¹⁶

‘Ali (ﷺ) was one of those who were close to ‘Umar and supported him. He did not withhold any suggestion or advice from him, and he strove with him to come up with solutions to problems concerning which there was no text, and to organise the affairs of the emerging state. There is a great deal of evidence to that effect, of which we will mention the following:

2.1. With regard to judicial matters

2.1.1. A woman who experienced a fit of madness

It was narrated from Abu Dhabyân al-Janbi that a woman who had committed adultery was brought to ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ﷺ),

and he ordered that she be stoned. They took her to stone her, but they were met by 'Ali, who said: "What is this?" They said: "She committed adultery, and 'Umar ordered that she be stoned." 'Ali took her away from them and sent them back, so they went back to 'Umar, who said: "Why have you come back?" They said: "Ali sent us back." He said: "Ali has only done this because of something that he knows." So he sent for 'Ali (عليه السلام), who came, looking upset. 'Umar (عليه السلام) said: "Why did you send them back?" 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "Did you not hear the Prophet (ﷺ) say: 'The pen is lifted from three: from the sleeper until he wakes up, from the child until he grows up and from the insane until he recovers'?" He said: "Yes." 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "This is the afflicted woman of Banu so-and-so; perhaps he (the adulterer) came to her while she was going through one of her fits of madness." 'Umar (عليه السلام) said: "I did not know," and he did not stone her.¹¹⁷ 'Umar (عليه السلام) did not know that she was insane.

2.1.2. Doubling the ḥadd punishment for the one who drank alcohol

'Umar adopted the view of 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them both) with regard to doubling the ḥadd punishment for the one who drank alcohol. The drinking of alcohol had become widespread, especially in the recently conquered countries that were newly Muslim, so 'Ali suggested to 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) that eighty lashes should be given as the lightest punishment. He explained: "We see that when a person gets drunk, he speaks nonsense, and if he speaks nonsense, he fabricates, and the punishment for the fabricator is eighty lashes."¹¹⁸ It is proven that 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "I never carry out a ḥadd punishment on anyone and I get upset if he dies, except in the case of the one who drank alcohol. If he dies, I pay the compensation to his family, because the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not prescribe that."¹¹⁹ Al-Bayhaqi explained his words "the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not prescribe

that” as referring to anything more than forty lashes, or as meaning that he did not prescribe giving lashes with the whip; rather he prescribed using shoes and the hems of garments, striking forty times. And Allah (ﷻ) knows best.¹²⁰ The Islamic jurists derived from the actions of the Rightly Guided Caliphs the number of lashes for the ḥadd punishment. According to Mālik, ath-Thawri, Abu Ḥaneefah and those who followed them, it is eighty, because of the consensus of the Companions. Those who said that the ḥadd punishment is forty lashes were Abu Bakr and ash-Shâfa‘i, and it was one of the views of Aḥmad. The extra number added by ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) is to be interpreted as a disciplinary punishment that is permissible to carry out if the ruler sees fit. This is the correct view according to ash-Shâfa‘i.¹²¹ This opinion was also favoured by Ibn Taymiyah, who said: “But if drinking is not widespread and not excessive, then forty lashes is enough.”¹²²

2.1.3. “You have no authority over what is in her womb”

A pregnant woman was brought to ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه). When he questioned her, she admitted committing adultery, so ‘Umar ordered that she be stoned. She was met by ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه), who said: “What is going on with this woman?” They said: “Amir al-Mu’mineen (‘Umar) has ordered that she be stoned.” ‘Ali took her back and said: “Did you order that she be stoned?” ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) said: “Yes, she admitted to me that she had committed adultery.” ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) said: “You have authority over her, but what authority do you have over what is in her womb?” And ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) said: “Perhaps you rebuked her or scared her.” ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) said: “That is what happened.” ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) said: “Did you not hear the Prophet (ﷺ) say: ‘No ḥadd punishment is to be carried out on someone who admits wrongdoing if he is subjected to harshness. If you chain or detain or threaten someone, then his admission is not valid.’” So ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) let her

go, then he said: “Women are no longer able to bear sons like ‘Ali ibn Abi Tālib; were it not for ‘Ali, ‘Umar would be doomed.”¹²³

Ibn Taymiyah commented on this story: “If it is sound, it must be that ‘Umar (ﷺ) did not know that she was pregnant, so ‘Ali (ﷺ) told him. There is no doubt that the basic principle is that it was not known, and if the ruler does not know that the one who deserves to be executed or stoned is pregnant, then some of the people tell him about her situation, that comes under the heading of informing about people’s situation.” Then he said, concerning ‘Umar (ﷺ): “He used to restore people’s rights, carry out ḥadd punishments and judge among all people. During his caliphate, Islam spread and prevailed in an unprecedented manner, and he was always judging between people and giving fatwas; if he did not have a great deal of knowledge, he could not have done that. If he was uncertain about one case in a hundred thousand, then he came to know it, or had forgotten it then was reminded of it, what is wrong with that?”¹²⁴ He said this in refutation of the Râfiḍis.

2.1.4. “Misjudgements are to be reviewed in accordance with the Sunnah”

A woman who had gotten married during her ‘iddah was brought to ‘Umar (ﷺ), so he separated her from the man she married, took her mahr and put it in the public treasury and said: “I do not allow a mahr in a marriage that is invalidated.” He also said: “You two should never marry again.” News of that reached ‘Ali (ﷺ), and he said: “If they were unaware of the ruling, she may keep the mahr because he was intimate with her, but they should be separated, and when her ‘iddah ends, he will be like any other suitor.” ‘Umar (ﷺ) addressed the people and said: “Misjudgements are to be reviewed in accordance with the Sunnah, and ‘Umar (ﷺ) judged according to the view of ‘Ali (ﷺ).”¹²⁵

2.1.5. “This man had his way with me and brought shame on me among my people”

Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad said: “A woman was brought to ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ؓ) who had fallen in love with a young man of the Anṣâr. When he did not respond to her, she tried a trick against him. She took an egg, threw away the yolk and poured the white between her thighs and on her clothes, then she ran screaming to ‘Umar (ؓ) and said: ‘This man had his way with me and brought shame on me among my people, and here are the traces of what he did.’ ‘Umar (ؓ) asked the women, and they told him: ‘There are traces of semen on her body and clothing.’ ‘Umar (ؓ) thought of punishing the young man, but the man started asking for help and saying: ‘O Amir al-Mu‘mineen, verify the issue, for by Allah I never did anything wrong and never even thought of it. She tried to tempt me, but I refused.’ ‘Umar (ؓ) said: ‘O Abu al-Ḥasan (‘Ali), what do you think about her case?’ ‘Ali (ؓ) looked at what was on the garment. Then he called for boiling hot water, which he poured onto the garment, and the egg white solidified. Then he took it and smelled it and tasted it, and he recognised the taste of egg. He rebuked the woman and she admitted it.”¹²⁶

From this event, we learn:

- (a) That the means of proof in the Islamic judicial system include confession, testimony, oath and denial, and they also include circumstantial evidence and intuition.
- (b) That ‘Umar was keen to consult the senior Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) with regard to new issues, especially ‘Ali, whom he held in the highest esteem.¹²⁷

2.2. ‘Ali (ﷺ) and the financial and administrative systems in ‘Umar’s state

2.2.1. Financial matters

2.2.1.a. The caliph’s expenses

At first, after ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (ﷺ) was appointed leader of the Muslims after Abu Bakr (ﷺ), he did not consume anything from the public treasury. Then he started going through hardship because he was distracted from his business by taking care of the people’s affairs, so the small amount he earned from his trade was no longer sufficient. He sent for the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to consult with them, and he asked: “I am distracted by this matter; what do you think is sufficient for me to take?” ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān (ﷺ) said: “Just your food,” and this was also the view of Sa‘eed ibn Zayd ibn ‘Amr ibn Nufayl. ‘Umar said to ‘Ali: “What do you say about that?” He said: “The morning meal and the evening meal,” so ‘Umar followed that. ‘Umar described what he took from the public treasury (to sustain himself) in the following terms: “My position with regard to the wealth of Allah is like that of one who is in charge of an orphan. If I have no need of it, I leave it alone, but if I become poor and in need, then I take from it on a reasonable basis.”¹²⁸

2.2.1.b. ‘Ali’s opinion concerning the land of as-Sawād (Iraqi lowlands) in Iraq

When the land of as-Sawād (the lowlands) in Iraq was conquered by force, a number of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) suggested to ‘Umar (ﷺ) that it should be divided among the conquerors. Because the land was so vast and fertile, and because of ‘Umar’s farsightedness, bearing in mind the coming generations, he was not comfortable with the idea of dividing it. He consulted ‘Ali (ﷺ), and ‘Ali’s opinion was the same as his, that it

should not be divided. He followed his opinion and said: “Were it not for the sake of the coming generations of Muslims, I would not have conquered any city but I would have divided it among the conquerors as the Prophet (ﷺ) divided Khaybar.”¹²⁹

2.2.1.c. “You should certainly share it out”

Some wealth was brought to ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه), and he divided it among the Muslims. There was some left over, so he consulted the Companions about it, and they suggested that he keep it for any emergencies that might arise. ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) was among the people, but he kept quiet. ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) wanted to hear ‘Ali’s opinion, so ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) reminded him of the hadith about the wealth of Bahrain, when it was brought to the Prophet (ﷺ) and he divided it all. ‘Umar said to ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with them): You should certainly share it out. So ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) shared it out.¹³⁰ It seems that this took place before the setting up of the government ministries.¹³¹

2.2.2. ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) and administrative matters

When ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) needed to establish a fixed calendar in order to organise the affairs of state, he gathered the people together and asked them from which date the calendar should begin. ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) said: “From the day the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) migrated and left the land of polytheism,” so ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) did that.¹³² ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) thought of ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) as one of the best of those who could lead the people. It was narrated from him that he was talking with a man among the Anṣâr and he said: “Who do you think will succeed me?” The Anṣârî listed the names of some of the Muhâjireen, but he did not mention ‘Ali. ‘Umar said: “What do you think of ‘Ali? For by Allah, if you appointed him, he would lead you on the path of truth even if you were reluctant.”¹³³ After ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) was stabbed, he said to his son Abdullah ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه): “If they appoint the bald one (‘Ali), he will lead them on the straight path.”¹³⁴

2.2.3. 'Umar often appointed 'Ali in charge of Madinah in his absence

- (a) 'Umar (ﷺ) put 'Ali (ﷺ) in charge when he went out to the water of Sarra' and camped there. That was just before Qâdisiyyah, when the Persians had mobilised to fight the Muslims. 'Umar (ﷺ) gathered the people and consulted them, and they all said that he should go out to fight.¹³⁵
- (b) He left him in charge when he went out and camped at al-Jâbiyyah. That was when 'Amr ibn al-Âṣ (ﷺ) camped at Ajnadeen, and Artaboon of Byzantium wrote to him, saying: "By God, you will never be able to conquer any part of Palestine after Ajnadeen; go back and do not deceive yourself. The one who will conquer it is a man whose name has three letters." 'Amr realised that this was 'Umar (ﷺ) [whose name in Arabic has three letters], so he wrote to him to tell him that the conquest was being kept for him. 'Umar (ﷺ) called the people to go out and fight, and he selected 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷺ) to be in charge of Madinah while he was gone.¹³⁶
- (c) 'Umar (ﷺ) appointed 'Ali (ﷺ) to be in charge of Madinah when he took the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) for hajj. This was in 23 AH, and it was the last hajj he led. The Mothers of the Believers had their next of kin with them, in front of whom they did not have to veil themselves.¹³⁷

2.3. 'Umar (ﷺ) consulted 'Ali (ﷺ) with regard to jihad and matters of state

One of the most prominent things that may be noted by anyone who studies 'Umar's caliphate is the special relationship and sincere cooperation that existed between 'Umar and 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them both). 'Ali (ﷺ) was one of the main consultants

for 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ؓ); 'Umar used to seek advice from him concerning both major and minor matters. 'Ali (ؓ) gave him sincere advice concerning all his affairs,¹³⁸ and 'Ali never made a suggestion to 'Umar, but the latter implemented it out of conviction. He consulted with him when the Muslims conquered Jerusalem, when al-Madâ'in was conquered, when 'Umar wanted to head towards Nahawand to fight the Persians, when he wanted to go out to fight the Byzantines, when he wanted to establish the Islamic calendar and at many other times.¹³⁹ 'Ali (ؓ) was a sincere adviser throughout 'Umar's life; he loved him and feared for him, and 'Umar loved 'Ali. There was mutual trust and friendship between them. Despite all that, the enemies of Islam insist on falsifying history and narrating false reports that suit their ideas and inclinations, so that they may depict the era of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs as if everyone was lying in wait for another in order to destroy him, as if they were all plotting behind the scenes.¹⁴⁰

For example, when the Persians gathered in large numbers in Nahawand with the aim of attacking the Muslims, 'Umar (ؓ) gathered the people and consulted them as to whether he should march out to fight them himself. Most of the people suggested that he should do that, but then 'Ali (ؓ) stood up and said: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, if you send the troops of Syria away from their country, the Byzantines will attack their families; if you send the troops of Yemen away from their families, the Abyssinians will attack their families; if you leave this land (Madinah), the Arabs from all over will rebel against you, then what you leave behind you will become more urgent than what lies ahead on the borders. Leave these people in their lands and write to the people of Basra. Let them form three groups: one group to protect their women and children; another group to keep an eye on those who have a covenant with them, so that they will not break the treaty and rebel; and let another group go to Kufah as reinforcements for their brothers there. If the Persians see

you going out tomorrow, they will say, ‘This is the leader of the Arabs’, and that will make them more vicious in their fight against you. As for what you mentioned about the Persians mobilising, Allah (ﷻ) hates their mobilisation more than you do, and He is more able to change what He dislikes. As for their numbers, we never fought in the past on the basis of superior numbers; rather we fought with the help of Allah.” ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) said: “This is what I thought, and I wanted someone to support me in that.”¹⁴¹

‘Ali’s advice was that of one who loved ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) and was sincere towards him. He was very keen that he should not go out and leave Madinah and that he should direct the affairs of war by means of the other Arabs, while staying where he was. He warned him that if he left, there would emerge behind him vulnerabilities that would be more dangerous than the enemy he was going to confront. If the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had left instructions that ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) should succeed him after he was gone, would ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) have ignored those instructions and then supported — in such a co-operative, constructive and sincere manner — those who had usurped his right, nay his duty, to become caliph? Indeed, would all the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) have ignored the instructions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)? Can it be imagined that they would all unanimously agree to do that, with ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) first and foremost among them? Hence we may easily conclude that the Muslims, up until that point at the end of ‘Umar’s era, and even until the end of ‘Ali’s era, were of one group, and that there was no problem or confusion in the mind of any Muslim with regard to the caliphate or with regard to who was most deserving of it.¹⁴²

The frequency with which ‘Umar consulted ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with them both) and other Companions does not mean that he had less understanding and knowledge than them. The sound hadiths highlight the great extent of his knowledge and his perfect commitment to religion. He asked for advice because of his faith and

love of consultation, and his desire to encourage the rulers after him to consult advisers and not act like dictators, forcing their opinions on others. In many cases, ‘Ali (عليه السلام) retracted his opinion and followed that of ‘Umar (عليه السلام).¹⁴³ It was narrated from ‘Ā’ishah (عليها السلام) that she said about ‘Umar (عليه السلام): “‘Ali (عليه السلام) used to follow the opinion of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb with regard to what ‘Umar thought was right, even though ‘Umar frequently consulted ‘Ali, to such an extent that ‘Ali (عليه السلام) said: ‘‘Umar consulted me about such and such; my opinion was such and such, and his opinion was such and such, but ultimately I decided to follow ‘Umar’s view.’”¹⁴⁴

2.4. ‘Ali (عليه السلام) and his children, and their relationship with ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with them all)

‘Umar (عليه السلام) had such great respect for the family of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that he preferred them to his own sons and family. We will mention a few examples:

2.4.1. “You are more deserving of permission to enter than Abdullah ibn ‘Umar”

Among the things narrated by al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Ali (عليه السلام) was: “‘Umar said to me one day: ‘O my son, why don’t you visit us and spend time with us?’ So I came one day and found him on his own with Mu‘āwiyah; Ibn ‘Umar was at the door and had not been given permission to enter, so I went back. He met me after that and said: ‘O my son, why did I not see you coming to visit us?’ I said: ‘I came, but you were on your own with Mu‘āwiyah, and I saw that Ibn ‘Umar was not given permission to enter, so I went back.’ He said: ‘You are more deserving of permission to enter than Abdullah ibn ‘Umar. All the blessings that we are enjoying, as you see, are because of Allah (ﷻ), then you [the Prophet (ﷺ) and Ahl al-Bayt].’”¹⁴⁵

2.4.2. “I am very upset that I did not clothe you”

Ibn Sa‘d narrated from Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad al-Bâqir that his father ‘Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn said: “Some suits were brought to ‘Umar (ؓ) from Yemen, and he gave them to the people to wear, so they began walking about wearing the suits. He was sitting between the grave (of the Prophet) and the minbar, and the people were coming and greeting him and praying for him. Al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn came out of the house of their mother, Fâtimah (ؓ), walking through the rows of people, not wearing any of those suits. ‘Umar (ؓ) started to frown, then he said: ‘By Allah, I am very upset that I did not clothe you.’ They said: ‘O Amir al-Mu‘mineen, you clothed your people and you did well.’ He said: ‘I am upset because of these two young men who are going among the people, not wearing any of these new clothes.’ The suits were too big for them, and they were too small for the suits. Then he wrote to the governor of Yemen, asking him to send two suits for al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, and he quickly sent the suits, which ‘Umar (ؓ) gave to them to wear.”¹⁴⁶

2.4.3. Giving precedence to Banu Hâshim in allocating stipends

It was narrated from Abu Ja‘far that when ‘Umar (ؓ) wanted to give a regular stipend to the people, after Allah (ﷻ) granted him victory, he assembled some of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ). ‘Abdur-Raḥmân ibn ‘Awf (ؓ) said: “Start with yourself.” He said: “No, by Allah, rather I will start with those who are closest to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and those who are closest to Banu Hâshim, the tribe of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).” He allocated a stipend to al-‘Abbâs, then to ‘Ali, until he had listed five clans and reached Banu ‘Adiyy ibn Ka‘b. Then he wrote: “Those of Banu Hâshim who were present at Badr, then those of Banu Umayyah ibn ‘Abd Shams who were present at Badr, then the next closest and the next closest.”

He allocated stipends to them and also to al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (may Allah be pleased with them) because of their status with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).¹⁴⁷

2.4.4. "I was given this garment to wear by my brother and close friend"

'Ali (ﷺ) went out wearing a cloak from Aden, and he said: "I was given this garment to wear by my brother and close friend, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Umar."¹⁴⁸ A report from Abu as-Safar said: "'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) was seen wearing a cloak that he used to wear often. It was said: 'O Amir al-Mu'mineen, you wear this cloak a great deal.' He said: 'Yes, I was given this garment to wear by my brother and close friend 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ﷺ); he was sincere to Allah, and Allah rewarded him.' Then he wept."¹⁴⁹

2.4.5. The allocation of Yanbu'

'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ﷺ) allocated Yanbu' to 'Ali, who then bought other lands in addition to what 'Umar had given him. Then he dug, looking for water, and while they were digging, water started gushing like the necks of camels. The workers came to 'Ali (ﷺ) with the good news, and he gave it in charity to the poor and needy for the sake of Allah (ﷻ). He did that for the day when some faces will become white and some faces will become black¹⁵⁰, so that Allah (ﷻ) would keep his face away from the fire and keep the fire away from his face. He wrote in the document of endowment: "These are the instructions of 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) with regard to the disposal of his wealth: I give Yanbu', Wadi al-Qura, al-Adhniyah and Râ'ah in charity for the sake of Allah (ﷻ), seeking the pleasure of Allah, to spend from it in every useful way for the sake of Allah, at times of war and peace, on relatives close and distant. It is not to be sold or given away or inherited, whether I am alive or dead. I seek

thereby the countenance of Allah and the home of the hereafter. I seek nothing except that Allah (ﷻ) should accept it and inherit it, and He is the best of inheritors. That is my decision concerning it, a deal between me and Allah, may He be glorified and exalted.”¹⁵¹

2.4.6. “You should speak, O Abu al-Ḥasan”

A number of people from Quraysh, including ‘Ali (ﷻ), met with ‘Umar (ﷻ), and they started to discuss the honourable things that they had done. ‘Ali (ﷻ) remained silent, so ‘Umar (ﷻ) said: “You should speak, O Abu al-Ḥasan. Why are you silent?” ‘Ali did not want to speak, so ‘Umar (ﷻ) said again: “You should speak, O Abu al-Ḥasan.” Then ‘Ali (ﷻ) said:

*In every battle, our swords separate the enemy's heads
from their bodies.*

*Allah honoured us by causing us to support His Prophet,
and by means of us, Allah made the religion of Islam prevail.
Jibreel visits us in our houses to bring
the laws of Islam and its rulings.*¹⁵²

2.4.7. A discussion between Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Umar (ﷻ) and 'Ali (ﷻ) about dreams

‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ﷻ) said to ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷻ): “The most amazing thing about dreams is that a man may sleep and see something that never crossed his mind, and then the dream materializes. And a man may see something in a dream, and it does not mean anything.” ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷻ) said: “Shall I not tell you about that, O Amir al-Mu'mineen? Allah (ﷻ) says¹⁵³: ﴿It is Allah Who takes away the souls at the time of their death, and those that die not [He takes] during their sleep. He keeps those [souls] for which He has ordained death and sends the rest for a term appointed.﴾ (Qur'an 39: 42)”

2.5. Marriage of 'Umar to Umm Kulthoom bint 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (may Allah be pleased with them)

'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ؑ) gave his daughter — whose mother was Fâtimah, the daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ) — in marriage to 'Umar (ؓ) when 'Umar asked him to do so, because he had great confidence in him and held him in high esteem. This was an acknowledgement of his good character and a demonstration of the strong and good relationship that existed between them and the strong and blessed ties which burn the hearts of the envious enemies of the Ummah and rub their noses in the dust.¹⁵⁴ 'Umar felt a special love for Ahl al-Bayt that he did not have for anyone else, because of their closeness to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and because of the urging of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to honour the members of his family and take care of their rights. Based on this motive, 'Umar (ؓ) proposed marriage to Umm Kulthoom, the daughter of 'Ali and Fâtimah (ؑ). 'Umar (ؓ) spoke to 'Ali (ؑ) in a very gentle way, saying: "By Allah, there is no man on earth that would be so kind to her as I will be." 'Ali (ؑ) said: "I will do that." 'Umar (ؓ) turned to the Muhâjireen gladly and said: "Congratulate me." Then he said that the reason for his marrying her was what he heard from the Prophet (ﷺ): "All ties and connections will be severed on the Day of Resurrection except ties and connections to me." He said: "I wanted to have ties between me and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)."¹⁵⁵

This marriage was confirmed by all historians and genealogists, and by all the Shia narrators of hadith, jurists, stubborn persons and their so-called infallible Imams. Shaykh Ihsân Ilâhi Dhaheer quoted a number of reports about that in his book *Ash-Shi'ah was-Sunnah*.¹⁵⁶ This marriage was also mentioned by the Sunni historians, and all their sources are agreed upon it. Among the scholars who mentioned it were at-Ṭabari¹⁵⁷, Ibn Katheer¹⁵⁸, adh-

Dhahabi¹⁵⁹, Ibn al-Jawzi¹⁶⁰ and ad-Diyarbakri¹⁶¹. The marriage¹⁶² was also mentioned in books of biography, such as Ibn Hajar¹⁶³, Ibn Sa‘d¹⁶⁴ and *Asad al-Ghâbah*. Professor Abu Mu‘âdh al-Isma‘eeli, in his book *Zawâj ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb min Umm Kulthoom bint ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (raḍiya Allâhu ‘anhu) Ḥaqeeqah wa laysa Iftirâ’* (The Marriage of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb to Umm Kulthoom the daughter of ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib is a Fact and not a Fabrication), examined the reports in the sources of both the Shia and Ahl as-Sunnah, and he refuted the specious arguments that were raised concerning this blessed marriage. I have written about Umm Kulthoom, including some of her biography and her deeds at the time of ‘Umar (ﷺ), in my book *Faṣl al-Khiṭâb fi Seerat Ameer al-Mu’mineen ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb: Shakhṣiyatuhu wa ‘Asruhu*.

Umm Kulthoom bint ‘Ali bore ‘Umar a daughter named Ruqayyah and a son named Zayd. The companions of Zayd ibn ‘Umar narrated that he was present when a fight broke out one night among some people from Banu ‘Adiyy ibn Ka‘b. Zayd went out to them to try to reconcile between them; he received a blow that made his head bleed, and he died instantly. His mother was so aggrieved by his killing that she immediately fell unconscious and died. Umm Kulthoom and her son Zayd ibn ‘Umar were buried at the same time. Al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib made Abdullah ibn ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb go forward to lead the funeral prayer, and he prayed behind him.¹⁶⁵

2.6. “O daughter of the Messenger of Allah, no one in this world is dearer to us than your father, and no one after your father is dearer to us than you.”

It was narrated that Aslam al-‘Adawi said: “When allegiance was sworn to Abu Bakr (ﷺ) after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), ‘Ali and az-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwâm went to Fâtimah (ﷺ) to consult with

her. News of that reached 'Umar (ؓ), and he entered upon Fâtimah (ؓ) and said: 'O daughter of the Messenger of Allah, no one in this world is dearer to us than your father, and no one after your father is dearer to us than you,' and he spoke to her. 'Ali and az-Zubayr came to Fâtimah (ؓ), and she said: 'You may leave. May Allah guide you.' They did not come back to her until they had sworn allegiance (to Abu Bakr)."¹⁶⁶ This is what is proven and sound; in addition to the soundness of its chain of narration, it is in harmony with the spirit of that generation and the fact that Allah (ﷻ) praised them.

The Râfiḍis added to this report and fabricated lies and falsehoods. They said that 'Umar (ؓ) said: "If these people meet with you, I am going to burn this house down with them inside, because they want to divide the Muslims by delaying their oath of allegiance." Then he went out, and it was not long before they came back to her, and she said to them: "Do you know that 'Umar (ؓ) came to me and swore by Allah (ﷻ) that if you returned to this house, he would burn it down with you inside? By Allah, he will fulfil his oath, so leave and do not come back to me." So they did that, and they did not come back to her until after they had sworn allegiance.¹⁶⁷ This story is not proven from 'Umar, and the claims that 'Umar thought of burning down the house of Fâtimah (ؓ) is one of the lies of the Râfiḍis, the enemies of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah. It was narrated, along with other lies, by at-Ṭabari at-Ṭubrusi in his book *Dalâ'il al-Imâmah*,¹⁶⁸ from Jâbir al-Ja'fi, who is a lying Râfiḍi according to the imams of hadith, as it says in *al-Meezân*¹⁶⁹ by adh-Dhahabi and *Tahdheeb at-Tahdheeb*.¹⁷⁰

Some of the Râfiḍis claimed that 'Umar struck Fâtimah (ؓ) and caused her to miscarry her son Muḥsin, who was in her womb, but this is another Râfiḍi lie that has no basis in truth. They failed to realise that they were implicitly condemning 'Ali (ؓ) by accusing him of cowardice and keeping quiet about 'Umar (ؓ), when he was one of the bravest of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ).¹⁷¹ Indeed,

even some of the Râfiḍi books deny the soundness of this weird and false story,¹⁷² knowing that Muḥsin was actually born during the lifetime of the Prophet (ﷺ), as is proven in sound reports.

2.7. The dispute between al-'Abbâs and 'Ali, and 'Umar's judgement between them

Mâlik ibn Aws said: "While I was sitting with my family around the noon hour, the envoy of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb came to me and said: 'Amir al-Mu'mineen wants you to come.' So I went with him and entered upon 'Umar (رضي الله عنه), whom I found sitting on a bed of palm tree leaves, with no blanket between him and the mattress, reclining on a leather pillow. I greeted him, then I sat down, and he said: 'O Mâlik, there has come to us from your people a group from different families, and I have issued orders that they be given a little money. Take it and divide it among them.' I said: 'O Amir al-Mu'mineen, would that you had ordered someone other than me to do this.' He said: 'Take it, O Mâlik.' While I was sitting with him, his doorkeeper Yarfa' came to him and said: 'Will you let 'Uthmân, 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf, az-Zubayr and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâs come in, as they are asking permission to see you?' He said: 'Yes.' Permission was given to them, so they entered and greeted him and sat down. Yarfa' sat down for a while, then he said: 'Will you let 'Ali and 'Abbâs come in?' He said: 'Yes.' So permission was given to them, and they came in and greeted him and sat down.

"Abbâs said: 'O Amir al-Mu'mineen, judge between me and this man.' They were arguing over what Allah (ﷻ) had granted to His Messenger (ﷺ) of the property of Banu an-Naḍeer. The group — 'Uthmân and his companions — said: 'O Amir al-Mu'mineen, judge between them and give them relief from one another.' 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) said: 'Wait a moment. I adjure you by Allah, by Whose leave heaven and earth exist, do you know that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“We prophets are not inherited from; what we leave behind is charity,’ meaning himself?’ The group said: ‘He did say that.’ ‘Umar turned to ‘Ali and ‘Abbās and said: ‘I adjure you by Allah, do you know that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said that?’ They said: ‘He did say that.’ ‘Umar said: ‘Shall I tell you about this matter? Allah gave this fay’ exclusively to His Messenger, and He did not give it to anyone else.’ Then he recited: ﴿And what Allah gave as booty [fay] to His Messenger [Muhammad] from them — for this you made no expedition with either cavalry or camelry. But Allah gives power to His Messengers over whomsoever He wills. And Allah is Able to do all things,﴾ (Qur’an 59: 6)

“He said: ‘This was exclusively for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and by Allah, he did not keep it to himself in exclusion of you, and he did not prefer himself over you. Rather he gave it to you and divided it among you until there was nothing left of it except this property. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) spent on his family’s needs from this property every year, then he took what was left and regarded it as the property of Allah (charity). This is how the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) acted throughout his life. I adjure you by Allah, do you know this?’

“Umar said: ‘Then Allah took His Messenger (ﷺ) in death, and Abu Bakr said: “I am the successor of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ),” and Allah knows that he was sincere, righteous and wise, adhering to the right way in the way he dealt with it. Then Allah took Abu Bakr (in death) and I am the successor of Abu Bakr, so it was under my control for two years of my rulership, and I dealt with it as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and as Abu Bakr did, and Allah knows that I was sincere, righteous and wise, adhering to the right way in the way I dealt with it. Then you came to me and spoke to me, and I spoke to you both when you were in agreement. You came, O ‘Abbās, asking me for your share from your nephew, and this one

[meaning ‘Ali (ﷺ)] came to me asking for his wife’s share from her father, and I said to you both that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “We prophets are not inherited from; what we leave behind is charity.”

“ ‘Then when I decided to put it under your control, I said: ‘If you wish, I will give it to you, on the condition that you will administer it as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had administered it and as Abu Bakr administered it and as I administered it since I took charge of it.’ And you said: ‘Give it to us.’ And it was on that basis that I gave it to you. I adjure you by Allah, did I give it to you on that basis?’ The people said: ‘Yes.’ Then he turned to ‘Ali and ‘Abbâs and said: ‘I adjure you by Allah, did I give it to you on that basis?’ They said: ‘Yes.’ He said: ‘Do you want me to change the deal with you? For by Allah, by Whose leave heaven and earth exist, I cannot allow you to administer it in any other way. If you are unable to fulfil the condition, then give it back to me, and I will take care of it for you.’”¹⁷³

2.8. Umar’s nomination of ‘Ali for the caliphate alongside members of the consultative committee, and what ‘Ali said about ‘Umar after he was martyred

2.8.1. Nomination of ‘Ali (ﷺ) alongside the members of the consultative committee

When ‘Umar (ﷺ) thought that he was going to depart this world, after being stabbed, the Muslims began to enter upon him, saying: “Give us instructions, O Amir al-Mu’mineen, and appoint a successor.” He said: “I do not think there is anyone more deserving of that than this group with whom the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was pleased when he died.” He named six men: ‘Ali, ‘Uthmân, az-Zubayr,

Talhah, Sa‘d ibn Abi Waqqâs and ‘Abdur-Raḥmân ibn ‘Awf (may Allah be pleased with them).¹⁷⁴ Then he summoned the most prominent among them, namely ‘Abdur-Raḥmân, ‘Uthmân and ‘Ali, and exhorted them.¹⁷⁵ As the ruler, ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) had to appoint a successor who was the most suited to managing the affairs of the Muslims. He gave it a great deal of thought and decided that these six, with whom the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was pleased when he died, were more capable than others. He was correct, for no one said that anyone else was more deserving or qualified than them. He left the issue of appointing the caliph to these people, lest he appoint one of them and someone else be more qualified. It was clear to him that these six were more qualified, but he was not sure which one of them was the most qualified. He said: “The decision is up to these six to appoint one from their group.” This was the view of a just and sincere ruler who was not affected by whims and desires. This is a real life example of the application of the words of Allah: ﴿And who [conduct] their affairs by mutual consultation,﴾ (Qur’an 42: 38) and ﴿And consult them in the affairs﴾ (Qur’an 3: 159). The way he did this, by means of consultation, served the best interests of the Muslims.¹⁷⁶

‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) thought that these six were very similar in their qualifications, even though some of them possessed virtues that others did not; one who had a disadvantage in one way had another advantage that the others did not have. ‘Umar thought that if he appointed one of them, this could result in some shortcomings that could be attributed to him, so he refrained from appointing a successor out of fear of Allah (ﷻ). He realised that there was no one more qualified for this position other than these people, so he combined two interests: he nominated them because no one was more qualified than them, but he refrained from singling out one of them for fear of shortcoming. Allah (ﷻ) obliges His slaves to do what best serves the interests as much as they can, thus what ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) did was in the best possible interests.¹⁷⁷ It cannot be said that

when he left the matter in the hands of these six members of the consultative committee, he differed from his predecessors, as the Râfiḍī Shia claim, because differing is of two types: it may mean being contrary or it may refer to a variation. What ‘Umar (ﷺ) did was of the second type.¹⁷⁸ All the Companions approved of his decision, and we have not heard of anyone who disagreed with it. I have discussed in detail the new method invented by ‘Umar (ﷺ) for selecting the caliph who was to succeed him in my book *Faṣl al-Khiṭâb fi Seerat Ameer al-Mu’mineen ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb: Shakhṣiyatuhu wa ‘Aṣruhu*, which may be consulted by those who wish to know more about it.

2.8.2. What ‘Ali (ﷺ) said about ‘Umar (ﷺ) after he was martyred

Ibn ‘Abbâs said, according to what is narrated by Bukhari: “Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb was placed on his bier, and the people gathered around him praying for him and praising him before he was lifted up, and I was among them. Nothing surprised me except a man who seized my shoulder from behind. I turned to him and saw that it was ‘Ali (ﷺ). He prayed for mercy for ‘Umar (ﷺ) and said: ‘You have not left behind anyone with the like of whose deeds I would like to meet Allah more than you. By Allah, I think that Allah will unite you with your two Companions, because I often heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, “Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and I came; Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and I went in; Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and I went out.”’ ”¹⁷⁹

2.8.3. ‘Ali’s describing ‘Umar as wise and mature, and his keenness not to go against him after he died

It was narrated that ‘Abd Khayr said: “I was close to ‘Ali (ﷺ) when the people of Najrân came. I thought: If he is going to alter

anything that ‘Umar (ؓ) used to do, he will show it today. They greeted him and stood before him, then one of them put his hand in his sleeve and brought out a document, which he placed in ‘Ali’s hand. They said: ‘O Amir al-Mu’mineen, it was written by your hand and dictated by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to you.’ I saw ‘Ali (ؓ) with tears flowing down his cheeks. He looked up at them and said: ‘O people of Najrân, this is the last letter I wrote in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).’ They said: ‘Give us what is mentioned in it.’ He said: ‘Let me explain it to you. What ‘Umar (ؓ) took, he did not take for himself; rather he took it on behalf of the Muslim community, and what he took is better than what he gave you. By Allah, I will not alter anything that ‘Umar (ؓ) did, for ‘Umar (ؓ) was wise and mature.’”¹⁸⁰ Based on this incident, the jurists established the principle that no judge should overturn the verdict of the judges who came before him, according to ‘Ali (ؓ).¹⁸¹ It was narrated from him that he said: “Judge as you used to judge so that you will act as one, for I fear division.”¹⁸² This is the view of the majority of jurists.¹⁸³ ‘Ali said: I would not undo a knot that ‘Umar (ؓ) tied.¹⁸⁴

2.8.4. “Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ؓ) would not like to stay there, so I dislike it too”

When ‘Ali (ؓ) had finished with the Battle of the Camel, he entered Basra and then travelled for a short distance with Mother of the Believers ‘Â’ishah (ؓ), because she wanted to go back to Makkah. Then he marched from Basra to Kufah, which he entered on Monday, 12 Rajab 36 AH. It was said to him: “Stay in the white palace.” He said: “No, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ؓ) would not like to stay there, so I dislike it too.” Instead, he stayed in ar-Raḥbah and prayed two raka’ahs in the main mosque.¹⁸⁵

2.8.5. The love of Ahl al-Bayt for 'Umar (ﷺ)

One of the indications of the love that Ahl al-Bayt had for 'Umar (ﷺ) was that they gave his name to their sons out of love and admiration for his character, in appreciation for his good deeds and noble attitude, because of the great services that he had rendered to Islam and as an affirmation of the strong ties of blood, marriage and friendship that existed between him and Ahl al-Bayt. The first one to name his son after him was Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷺ); his son from Umm Ḥabīb bint Rabee'ah al-Bakriyyah was named 'Umar.¹⁸⁶ In the book *Ṣāḥib al-Fuḍool*, in a list of the children of 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷺ), it mentions his son 'Umar from at-Taghlibiyyah, whose full name was aṣ-Ṣahba' bint Rabee'ah; she was one of the female prisoners who were captured by Khālid ibn al-Waleed in 'Ayn at-Tamar. This 'Umar lived to the age of eighty-five and acquired half the estate of 'Ali (ﷺ), because all of his brothers — Abdullah, Ja'far and 'Uthmān — were killed before him, along with al-Ḥusayn (ﷺ). He was not killed with them at at-Ṭaff, so he inherited from them.¹⁸⁷

Al-Ḥasan followed in 'Ali's footsteps with regard to love for 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allah be pleased with them all), and he also named one of his sons 'Umar.¹⁸⁸ Al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali also named one of his sons 'Umar, and al-Ḥusayn's son 'Ali, who is known as Zayn al-Ābideen, also gave one of his sons the name 'Umar.¹⁸⁹ Moosa ibn Ja'far, who is known as al-Kādhim, gave one of his sons the name 'Umar.¹⁹⁰ These are the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt who followed the true path of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the way of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah with their beautiful attitude. They demonstrated the love they had in their hearts for 'Umar (ﷺ), and they remained loyal to him long after his death.

The names 'Umar, Abu Bakr and 'Uthmān are found among the offspring of Ahl al-Bayt who followed the truth, and this is still

the way of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ‘ah until the present day. We find the names of the Companions and those of the Mothers of the Believers among the Hâshimi families who adhered to the Qur‘an and Sunnah; they called their children Ṭalḥah, ‘Abdur-Raḥmân, ‘Â‘ishah and Umm Salamah. We invite the Shia today to follow the example of ‘Ali, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and all the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt, and name some of their sons and daughters after the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and the Mothers of the Believers.¹⁹¹ This is something that we hope for.

2.8.6. Allah (ﷻ) made ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (رضي الله عنه) a cause of the survival of the offspring of al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib

When ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (رضي الله عنه) received the booty from Persia, he gave the daughter of Yazdagird, the King of Persia, to al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه). She bore him Zayn al-‘Âbideen ‘Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn, who was the only one his sons to survive. All the descendants of al-Ḥusayn are descended from Zayn al-‘Âbideen.¹⁹² Let those beware who slander ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (رضي الله عنه) while claiming descent from al-Ḥusayn, because were it not for ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه), after Allah (ﷻ), they would not have existed.¹⁹³ Moreover, ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) gave her sister in marriage to Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr, so he was a brother-in-law of al-Ḥusayn, and she bore him al-Qâsim ibn Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr. This means that al-Qâsim ibn Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr and ‘Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn Zayn al-‘Âbideen were maternal cousins.¹⁹⁴

2.8.7. What Abdullah ibn al-Ḥasan said about ‘Umar¹⁹⁵

It was narrated that Ḥafṣ ibn Qays said: “I asked Abdullah ibn al-Ḥasan about wiping over the leather socks, and he said: ‘Wipe

over them, because 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (رضي الله عنه) wiped over them.' I said: 'I am asking you — do you wipe over them?' He said: 'May you be doomed! I tell you about 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) and you ask me about my opinion! 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) was an earthful better than me.' I said: 'O Abu Muḥammad, some people are claiming that this is taqiyyah on your part.' He said to me — when we were between the grave and the minbar [in Madinah] — 'By Allah, this is my opinion in private and in public. Do not listen to anyone who says anything about me that is different from what I am telling you.' Then he said: 'Who is this who claims that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was suppressed, and that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) told him to do something and he did not do it? What a great undermining and criticism of 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) it is to suggest that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) told him to do something and he did not carry it out.'"¹⁹⁶

3. 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) at the time of 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân

3.1. 'Ali's oath of allegiance to 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه)

The people had barely finished burying 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (رضي الله عنه) when the consultative committee and the members of the high council of state hastened to meet in the house of 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها), the Mother of the Believers (or it was said that they met in the house of Fâṭimah bint Qays al-Fibriyyah, the sister of aḍ-Ḍaḥḥâk ibn Qays) in order to decide the most important issue facing the Muslims after the death of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه). The people spoke and gave their opinions, and they were guided by the help of Allah (ﷻ) to reach an agreement that was accepted by prominent and ordinary Muslims alike.¹⁹⁷

The consultative process and the selection of the caliph were supervised by ‘Abdur-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf (ؓ), who demonstrated the consultative process in a systematic fashion for the first time in selecting the one who would bear the burdens of caliphate and manage the affairs of the Muslims. He resorted to a method of great deliberation, patience, resolve and proper management that guaranteed him success in fulfilling his great mission.¹⁹⁸ He led the consultative council in a skilful and unbiased manner that deserves the greatest respect.¹⁹⁹ Adh-Dhahabi said: “Among the best deeds of ‘Abdur-Raḥmān were his withdrawal from the race at the time of consultation and his choosing for the Ummah the one recommended by the people of prominence and evidence. He performed his mission in the best manner and united the Ummah behind ‘Uthmān (ؓ). If he had been biased, he would have taken the caliphate for himself or he would have appointed his cousin and the closest of the people to him, Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqâs.”²⁰⁰

There was unanimous agreement that allegiance would be sworn to ‘Uthmān (ؓ) following the dawn prayer on the chosen day, which was the last day of Dhul-Ḥijjah 23 AH/ 6 November 644 CE. Ṣuhayb ar-Roomi was leading the prayer when ‘Abdur-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf came, wearing the turban that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had put on his head. The men of the consultative committee had gathered by the minbar, and he sent for those of the Muhājireen, Anṣār and army commanders who were present, among whom were Mu‘āwiyah the governor of Syria, ‘Umayr ibn Sa’d the governor of Homs and ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ the governor of Egypt. They had gone for hajj with ‘Umar (ؓ) and had come with him to Madinah.²⁰¹ According to the report of Bukhari: “When the people had prayed the dawn prayer, and those men (the consultative committee) had gathered by the minbar, he sent for those of the Muhājireen and Anṣār who were present and the commanders of the army, who had

come to perform hajj with 'Umar (ؓ). When they had gathered, 'Abdur-Raḥmân recited the the testimony of faith [that there is none worthy of worship other than Allah, that He has no partners, and that Muhammad (ﷺ) is His Slave and Messenger], then he said: 'O 'Ali, I have spoken to the people and asked for their opinions, and I do not believe that they think anyone is as good as 'Uthmân (ؓ), but do not give anyone a reason to criticise you (by expressing disagreement with the majority).' 'Abdur-Raḥmân said (to 'Uthmân): 'I swear allegiance to you in accordance with the way of Allah and His Messenger and the two caliphs who came after him.' So the people swore allegiance to him; they included the Muhâjireen, the Anṣâr, the commanders of the army and the other Muslims."²⁰² According to the report of the author of *at-Tamheed wal-Bayân*, 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib was the first one to swear allegiance after 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf.²⁰³

3.2. Râfiḍi myths that have been inserted into the story of the consultative committee

There are many Râfiḍi myths that have been inserted into Islamic history concerning the story of the consultative committee and the selection of 'Uthmân (ؓ) for the caliphate. These reports were then picked up by the Orientalists, who circulated them further. Many modern historians and thinkers have been influenced by them, without examining the reports or checking their chains of transmission and texts, and thus they have become widespread among the Muslims.

The Râfiḍi Shia historians gave their attention to the story of the consultation and the appointment of 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân (ؓ) as caliph, and they inserted lies and false ideas. Some of them wrote entire books on this topic; Abu Makhnaf wrote a book entitled *Kitâb ash-Shoora*, and Ibn 'Uqdah and Ibn Bâbawayh also wrote similar

books.²⁰⁴ Ibn Sa’d narrated nine reports via al-Wâqidi about the consultative committee, the oath of allegiance to ‘Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) and the story of how he was appointed caliph.²⁰⁵ He narrated another report via ‘Ubaydullah ibn Moosa that included the murder of ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه), his limiting the committee to six men, his advice to both ‘Ali and ‘Uthmân if either of them were to be appointed caliph, and his advice to Şuhayb regarding this matter.²⁰⁶

Al-Balâdhuri narrated reports about the committee and the oath of allegiance to ‘Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) from Abu Makhnaf²⁰⁷, from Hishâm al-Kalbi (some of which was quoted from Abu Makhnaf and some of which was narrated only by him)²⁰⁸, from al-Wâqidi²⁰⁹ and from ‘Ubaydullah ibn Moosa.²¹⁰ At-Ṭabari based his version of this story on a number of reports, such as that of Abu Makhnaf.²¹¹ Ibn Abil-Ḥadeed narrated some of the events via Aḥmad ibn ‘Abdul-‘Azeez al-Jawhari,²¹² and he mentioned that he was quoting from the book *ash-Shoora* by al-Wâqidi.²¹³ The Shia reports include a number of interpolations for which there is no sound evidence, including:

3.2.1. Accusation against the Companions of favouritism in issues concerning the Muslims

The Râfiḍi Shia reports accuse the Companions of favouritism in issues concerning the Muslims and suggest that ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) was not happy about ‘Abdur-Raḥmân choosing the caliph. It was narrated by Abu Makhnaf and Hishâm al-Kalbi, from his father and Aḥmad al-Jawhari, that ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) gave the deciding vote, in the event of an equal split, to ‘Abdur-Raḥmân ibn ‘Awf, so ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) realized that the caliphate had slipped from his grasp because ‘Abdur-Raḥmân would choose ‘Uthmân (رضي الله عنه), to whom he was related by marriage.²¹⁴ However, Ibn Taymiyah denied that there was any close relationship by blood between ‘Uthmân and ‘Abdur-Raḥmân. He said: “Abdur-Raḥmân was not a brother or cousin of ‘Uthmân, and he

was not from the same clan at all. Rather, one was from Banu Zuhrah, and the other was from Banu Umayyah, and Banu Zuhrah were closer to Banu Hâshim than Banu Umayyah. Banu Zuhrah were maternal uncles of the Prophet (ﷺ), including 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâs, of whom the Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'This is my maternal uncle; who dares to compare his maternal uncle to mine?'²¹⁵ The Prophet (ﷺ) did not establish brotherhood between one Muhâjir and another, or between one Anṣârî and another, rather he established brotherhood between the Muhâjireen and the Anṣâr. He established brotherhood between 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf and Sa'd ibn ar-Rabee' al-Anṣârî.²¹⁶ This hadith is well known and established in the books of authentic hadiths and elsewhere, and all the scholars know that.²¹⁷ The Shia based their reports of 'Abdur-Raḥmân's favouring 'Uthmân on the fact that they were related by marriage, but they forgot that the ties of blood are stronger than ties through marriage. They also forgot the nature of the relationship among the believers in the first generation of Islam, and that it was based on neither ties of blood nor ties through marriage. The way in which 'Abdur-Raḥmân and 'Uthmân were related through marriage was that 'Abdur-Raḥmân was married to Umm Kalthoom bint 'Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'eet, the sister of al-Waleed.²¹⁸

3.2.2. The party of Banu Umayyah and the party of Banu Hâshim

The report of Abu Makhnaf suggests that there was a dispute between Banu Hâshim and Banu Umayyah during the swearing of allegiance, but this is not true. It is not mentioned in any report, sound or weak.²¹⁹ Some historians were influenced by the reports of the Râfiḍî Shia and based their incorrect analysis on these reports, so they portrayed the discussion among the Companions of the Messenger (ﷺ) about the appointment of the new caliph as a tribal

dispute, saying that the people divided into two groups, the party of Banu Umayyah and the party of Banu Hâshim. This is an imaginary idea and incorrect conclusion for which there is no evidence at all, because that is not the kind of atmosphere in which the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) were living where one of the Muhâjiroon would stand with an Anṣârî against his own father or brother or cousin or tribe. It ignores the fact that these Companions are the ones who sacrificed all worldly gains in order to protect their religion. It is not based on sound knowledge of these elite who had been given the glad tidings of paradise. There are many events in their lives which prove that these people were far above looking at things from such a narrow perspective when dealing with their affairs. It was not a matter of family or tribal representation; they were appointed to the consultative council because of their status in Islam.

3.2.3. Words that were falsely attributed to 'Ali (ﷺ)

Ibn Katheer said: "What is said by many historians, such as Ibn Jareer and others, who narrated from unknown men about 'Ali (ﷺ) saying to 'Abdur-Raḥmân: 'You deceived me; you only appointed him because he is related to you through marriage and so that he would seek your advice every day,' and that he did not swear allegiance to 'Uthmân (ﷺ) until 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf said, 'Verily, those who give *Bay'ah* [pledge] to you [O Muhammad] they are giving *Bay'ah* [pledge] to Allah. The Hand of Allah is over their hands. Then whosoever breaks his pledge, breaks it only to his own harm; and whosoever fulfils what he has covenanted with Allah, He will bestow on him a great reward' (Qur'an 48: 10) is false."

There are other reports that are contrary to what is proven in the books of authentic hadiths; they are to be rejected and thrown back at those who narrate them. And Allah (ﷻ) knows best. What is

to be expected from the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) is utterly different from the ideas of many of the Râfiḍis and narrators of strange stories, who cannot distinguish between sound and weak reports.²²⁰

3.3. Ruling on preferring 'Ali over 'Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them both)

The view of Ahl as-Sunnah is that the one who prefers 'Ali over Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) is a misguided innovator, and the one who prefers 'Ali over 'Uthmân is mistaken, but they did not regard him as misguided or an innovator.²²¹ One of the scholars spoke harshly about the one who prefers 'Ali over 'Uthmân, though, saying: "The one who prefers 'Ali over 'Uthmân is claiming that the Companions of the Messenger (ﷺ) betrayed the trust when they chose 'Uthmân over 'Ali."²²²

Ibn Taymiyah said: "Ahl as-Sunnah are agreed that 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) is of a higher status, although this issue — the issue of 'Uthmân and 'Ali — is not a basic issue such that the one who differs concerning it is regarded as misguided, according to the majority of Ahl as-Sunnah. The issue concerning which the one who differs is regarded as misguided is the issue of caliphate. That is because they believe that the caliph after the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was Abu Bakr, then 'Umar, then 'Uthmân, then 'Ali, and whoever criticizes the caliphate of any of these leaders is more misguided than his people's donkey."²²³

He mentioned the comments of the scholars about the issue of preferring 'Ali over 'Uthmân, concerning which there are two reports:

- ❖ The first is that this is not acceptable. The one who prefers 'Ali over 'Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them) has

transgressed beyond the Sunnah and introduced an innovation, because he disagreed with the consensus of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). Hence it was said that the one who prefers ‘Ali over ‘Uthmân has thought badly of the Muhâjireen and the Anṣâr. This was narrated from more than one scholar, including Ayyoob as-Sakhtiyâni, Aḥmad ibn Hanbal and ad-Dâraquṭni.

- ❖ The second view is that the one who prefers ‘Ali (ﷺ) is not to be regarded as an innovator, because ‘Uthmân and ‘Ali are so close in status.²²⁴

3.4. ‘Ali (ﷺ) carried out ḥadd punishments and was consulted with regard to matters of state during the rule of ‘Uthmân (ﷺ)

3.4.1. ‘Ali’s carrying out ḥadd punishments during the rule of ‘Uthmân (ﷺ)

It was narrated that Ḥusayn ibn al-Mundhir said: “I was with ‘Uthmân ibn ‘Affân (ﷺ) when al-Waleed was brought to him, and two men bore witness against him. One of them was Humrân, who said that he had drunk wine, and the other testified that he vomited. ‘Uthmân (ﷺ) said: ‘He would not have vomited unless he drank it.’ He said: ‘O ‘Ali, get up and whip him.’ ‘Ali (ﷺ) said: ‘O Ḥasan, get up and whip him.’ Al-Ḥasan said: ‘Let those who are enjoying the position of leadership carry out the punishment.’ It was as if he (‘Ali) got upset with him and he said: ‘O Abdullah ibn Ja‘far! Get up and whip him.’ So he whipped him, and ‘Ali (ﷺ) counted until he had reached forty, then he said: ‘Stop.’ Then he said: ‘The Prophet (ﷺ) gave forty lashes, and Abu Bakr gave forty, and ‘Umar (ﷺ) gave eighty. All are Sunnah, but this is dearer to me.’”²²⁵

It may be understood from this hadith that ‘Ali (ﷺ) was close to ‘Uthmân (ﷺ) and helped him to obey Allah (ﷻ). ‘Ali (ﷺ) used to say, when defending ‘Uthmân (ﷺ) and refuting the criticisms against him because of the actions attributed to al-Waleed²²⁶: “The way you criticize ‘Uthmân (ﷺ) is like one who stabs himself to kill his help. What is the mistake of ‘Uthmân (ﷺ) with regard to a man on whom he carried out the punishment because of his actions and dismissed him from his post? What error did ‘Uthmân (ﷺ) make when he acted on our advice?”²²⁷

3.4.2. ‘Uthmân’s consulting ‘Ali and the senior Companions with regard to the conquest of North Africa

In *Riyâḍ an-Nufoos*, it is narrated that word reached Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Uthmân ibn ‘Affân from his governor in Egypt, Abdullah ibn Sa’d, that the Muslims sometimes raided the borders of North Africa and inflicted damage on their enemies, and that their enemies were close to where the Muslims were located. As a result of that, ‘Uthmân ibn ‘Affân (ﷺ) expressed to al-Miswar ibn Makhramah his wish to send the armies to conquer North Africa. Al-Miswar ibn Makhramah narrated: “[‘Uthmân (ﷺ) said:] ‘What is your opinion, O Ibn Makhramah?’ I said: ‘Conquer them.’ He said: ‘Assemble the senior Companions of the Messenger of Allah today, so that I can seek their advice; whatever they agree on, I will do, or whatever most of them agree on, I will do.’ I saw ‘Ali, Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr and al-‘Abbâs [and he mentioned some of them]. ‘Uthmân conversed with each one on his own in the mosque, then he summoned Abu al-A‘war (Sa‘eed ibn Zayd) and said to him: ‘Why did you — O Abu al-A‘war — object to sending the troops to North Africa?’ He said: ‘I heard ‘Umar (ﷺ) say, “I will never send any Muslims to conquer it as long as I am alive,” and I do not think that you should go against ‘Umar’s decision.’ ‘Uthmân said to him: ‘By

Allah, we do not fear them, and they will be more than happy to be left alone in their land with no one bothering them.’ None of those from whom ‘Uthmân sought advice differed with him. Then he addressed the people and urged them to join the campaign to North Africa. Some of the Companions went out on this campaign, including Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr and Abu Dharr al-Ghifârî.”²²⁸

3.4.3. ‘Ali’s view on ‘Uthmân’s uniting the people on one Qur’anic recitation

‘Uthmân (ؓ) assembled the Muhâjireen and the Anşâr and consulted them with regard to this matter. Among this group were the most prominent Companions, foremost among whom was ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ؓ). ‘Uthmân (ؓ) presented this topic to the elite of the Ummah and its leaders who were guided and were beacons of guidance. He discussed the issue with them, and they discussed it with him, until he found out their view, and they came to know his view. What they agreed upon became known to people throughout the land, and it is not known that anyone opposed their decision or objected to this idea. The issue of the Qur’an is not something that could be hidden from any ordinary member of the Ummah, let alone the scholars and prominent figures.²²⁹

‘Uthmân (ؓ) did not introduce any innovations when collecting the Qur’an because Abu Bakr aş-Şiddeeq (ؓ) had done it before him. ‘Uthmân did not decide this matter by himself; he did it in consultation with the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), who approved of this action and said it was a good idea. They also said that he did well with regard to what he did with the muşhafs.²³⁰ Mus‘ab ibn Sa’d met the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) when ‘Uthmân burned the (other) muşhafs, and he saw that they were impressed by this action of his.²³¹ ‘Ali (ؓ) used to rebuke those who criticized ‘Uthmân (ؓ) for that, and he used to say: “O

people, do not go to extremes (in criticising) 'Uthmân, and do not say anything but good about him, for by Allah, he did not do what he did (to the Muṣḥafs) except on the basis of the agreement of us all — meaning the Companions. If I were in his position, I would have done the same as he did.”²³² According to another report from 'Ali (عليه السلام), he said: “When the people differed concerning the Qur'an, and news of that reached 'Uthmân, he assembled us, the Companions of the Messenger of Allah, and consulted us with regard to uniting the people on one recitation, and we agreed with him concerning that.” After that he said: “If I were in his position, I would have done the same as he did.”²³³

3.5. 'Ali's attitude concerning the turmoil faced by 'Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them both)

There were various, interconnected reasons that contributed to the murder of 'Uthmân (عليه السلام), such as prosperity and its effect on society, the nature of social changes, the fact that 'Uthmân came after 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both), the departure of the senior Companions from Madinah, ignorant tribalism, the conspiracy of those who bore grudges, the careful preparation of plots against 'Uthmân, the use of means and methods to provoke the people and the role of the Saba'is in bringing about turmoil. I have discussed these causes in detail in my book *Tayseer al-Kareem al-Mannân fi Seerat 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân — Shakhṣīyatuhu wa 'Aṣruhu* (available in English translation as *The Biography of 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân: Dhun-Noorayn*).

In stirring up the unrest that led to the murder of 'Uthmân (عليه السلام), the enemies of Islam used various means of provocation and incitement, such as spreading rumours which became numerous and widespread, inciting people, debating and arguing with the caliphs in

front of the people, criticising the governors, and using forged letters which were falsely attributed to the Companions, including 'Â'ishah, 'Ali, Tālḥah and az-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with them all). They also spread the rumour that 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) was more entitled to the caliphate, and that he had been appointed as the heir to succeed the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). They organised groups in Basra, Kufah and Egypt, four groups in each region, which is indicative of prior planning. They gave the impression to the people of Madinah that they had only come at the invitation of the Companions, and they fabricated the events that led to the murder.²³⁴ In addition to these methods, they also used a number of slogans such as the takbeer (*Allâhu akbar*, Allah is the most great). They claimed that their campaign was against injustice, that they were only enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, and that this was a demand to change and dismiss some governors. Then their demands escalated until they called for the dismissal of 'Uthmân (عليه السلام). They went so far in their audacity that they hastened to kill the caliph, especially when news reached them that the people of the regions were coming to support him. Their crazed enthusiasm led to their tightening the stranglehold on the caliph and their efforts to kill him by any means.²³⁵

The Saba'i organization, led by the Jew Abdullah ibn Saba', was behind these events and what came after them. We will discuss this more below, and we will discuss the murder of 'Uthmân, which shook the Muslim world and affected many events until the present day.

3.5.1. 'Ali's attitude at the beginning of the turmoil

'Ali (عليه السلام) continued with his usual attitude towards the caliphs, which was to hear and obey and to offer sincere advice. He himself expressed the extent of his obedience to the caliph 'Uthmân

(ﷺ), and how he followed his commands even when it was difficult to do so, when he said: "If 'Uthmân sent me to Şîrâr, I would hear and obey."²³⁶

When the rebels camped in Dhul-Marwah, approximately one and a half months before the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), 'Uthmân (ﷺ) sent 'Ali (ﷺ) and another man, whom the reports do not name, to meet with them. 'Ali (ﷺ) said to them: "Why not resolve all the issues on the basis of the Book of Allah, and all your objections will be dealt with?"²³⁷ and they agreed to that. According to another report, they argued with him two or three times, then they said to themselves: "He is the cousin of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and the envoy of the caliph, who is offering to resolve the issue on the basis of the Book of Allah," and they accepted that.²³⁸ They agreed on five things: the one who was banished would be allowed to return, the one who was deprived of his share would be given it, the fay' would be divided, there would be fairness in the way things were distributed, and people of honesty and capability would be appointed as governors. They wrote in the document that Ibn 'Âmir was to be restored as governor of Basra and that Abu Moosa would remain as governor of Kufah.²³⁹ Thus 'Uthmân (ﷺ) reached a deal with each delegation on its own, and each delegation returned to its homeland.²⁴⁰

After this treaty was drawn up and the people of the regions returned home content, it became apparent to those who sought to create dissent that their plan had failed and that their vile aims had not been achieved. Hence they drew up a new plan to revive the turmoil and make it stronger, and they hoped this would lead to destroying the deals between 'Uthmân (ﷺ) and the people of various regions. This plan was manifested in the following ways:

As the Egyptian delegation was travelling homeward, they saw someone riding a camel; he repeatedly approached them and then

moved away, as if he was fleeing from them and wanting them to capture him. They caught him and asked: "What is the matter with you?" He said: "I am the envoy of the caliph to his agent in Egypt." They examined him and found a letter addressed to the governor; it bore 'Uthmân's seal but was a forgery. When they opened it, they found that it contained orders to crucify them or kill them, or cut off their hands and feet. They went back to Madinah,²⁴¹ but 'Uthmân (ﷺ) denied ever writing this letter. He said to them: "There are two ways you can reach a verdict; either bring two Muslim men to testify, or accept my oath by Allah (ﷻ), besides Whom there is no other god, that I did not write it or dictate it or have any knowledge of it. A letter may be attributed to a man and a seal may be put on it." But they did not believe him.²⁴²

This letter, which the hateful rebels claimed was from 'Uthmân (ﷺ), bore his seal and was carried by his slave on one of the zakâh camels to his governor in Egypt, Ibn Abis-Sarḥ, ordering him to kill these rebels. It was a forged letter that was falsely attributed to 'Uthmân (ﷺ). This is clear for a number of reasons, including the following:²⁴³

The Iraqis were in the east, and the Egyptians were in the west, yet they all came back at the same time, as if they had an appointment. How did the Iraqis know about this matter when they had set out for their own country and were separated from the Egyptians — who intercepted this fabricated letter — by a huge distance? That could not have happened unless those who fabricated the letter and hired someone to carry it and play his role in al-Buwayb with the Egyptians had also hired another rider to go and tell the Iraqis that the Egyptians had discovered a letter sent by 'Uthmân (ﷺ) with instructions to kill the Egyptian rebels. This is what 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) was thinking when he said: "O people of Kufah and Basra, how did you know what had happened to the people of

Egypt, when you had travelled a long distance, then you came back?”²⁴⁴ In fact, ‘Ali (عليه السلام) was certain about that and said: “By Allah, this was a plan that was drawn up in Madinah.”²⁴⁵

This cursed letter was not the first letter fabricated by these criminals. They also fabricated letters that were attributed to the Mothers of the Believers, as well as ‘Ali, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr. ‘Ā’ishah (عليها السلام) was accused of having written to the people, telling them to rebel against ‘Uthmān (عليه السلام), but she denied it and said: “No, by the One in Whom the believers believe, and in Whom the disbelievers disbelieve, I never wrote anything to them until I sat here where I am.”²⁴⁶

Al-A‘mash commented: “They thought that it had been falsely attributed to her.”²⁴⁷ The delegates accused ‘Ali (عليه السلام) of having written to them, telling them to come to Madinah, but he denied that and swore: “By Allah, I did not write any letter to you.”²⁴⁸

Letters to people in other regions, telling them to come to Madinah because the religion of Muḥammad (ﷺ) had been corrupted and abandoned and stating that jīḥād in Madinah was better than staying in remote outposts, were also attributed to the Companions.²⁴⁹ Ibn Katheer commented on this report by saying: “This is a lie against the Companions, and the letters were fabrications against them. Fabricated letters that were attributed to ‘Ali, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr, which they denied, were sent to the rebels — the killers of ‘Uthmān (عليه السلام). This letter was also falsely attributed to ‘Uthmān (عليه السلام); he did not tell anyone to write it for him, and he was not aware of it.”²⁵⁰ The words of Ibn Katheer are confirmed by the report of aṭ-Ṭabari, as quoted by Khaleefah, which says that the senior Companions themselves — ‘Ali, ‘Ā’ishah and az-Zubayr — denied these letters, according to the most sound reports.²⁵¹

The criminals who fabricated these letters and attributed them falsely to the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) are the same ones who fanned the flames of turmoil from beginning to end and stirred up all the far-reaching corruption. They are the ones who invented and propagated all these lies against ‘Uthmân (ؓ) and tried to spread them among the people, until the hooligans began to accept them. Then they forged that letter which they attributed to ‘Uthmân (ؓ), so that ‘Uthmân (ؓ) would end up as a victim and thus become a blessed martyr.

But the martyr ‘Uthmân (ؓ) was not the only victim of this Saba’i conspiracy. Islam itself was a victim before that, and the many generations who learned that distorted history were also victims of this evil Jew and his helpers, who were motivated by greed, whims and desires, and grudges. Is it not time for the Muslims to learn the truth about their history and its great men? Rather, is it not time for contemporary Muslim writers to fear Allah (ﷻ) and not have the audacity to criticize the innocent before examining the reports and investigating thoroughly, so that they do not fall into the same trap as others?²⁵²

3.5.2. ‘Ali’s attitude during the siege

The siege against ‘Uthmân (ؓ) intensified until he was even prevented from attending prayers in the mosque, but he bore this calamity with patience, as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had commanded him to do. Guided by his strong belief in the divine will and decree, he tried to find a solution to this calamity. Sometimes he addressed the people and told them of the sanctity of Muslim blood, and that it was not permissible to shed it except as dictated by Sharia. At other times, he highlighted his virtues and great services to Islam, calling as witnesses those who remained of the ten who had been given the glad tidings of paradise (may Allah be pleased with

them).²⁵³ It was as if he was saying: If a person's actions and virtues are like this, is it possible that he could have worldly ambitions and give them precedence over the hereafter? Does it make sense that he would betray the trust and tamper with the wealth of the Ummah and the lives of its people, knowing what consequences that will have for him before Allah (ﷻ), when he is one who was taught and educated by the Prophet (ﷺ), when the Prophet (ﷺ) is the one who testified to his virtues and praised him, as did the senior Companions? Is this the proper way to treat such a man?

But the rebel siege of Madinah intensified until the insurgents were leading the people in prayer most of the time.²⁵⁴ The Companions realised that the situation was not as they thought, and they feared that something might happen that would lead to bad consequences. They had heard that the people wanted to kill 'Uthmân (ﷺ), so they offered to defend him and expel the thugs from Madinah, but he refused to allow blood to be shed on his account.²⁵⁵ The senior Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) sent their sons to defend 'Uthmân (ﷺ) without asking him; among them were al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali and Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr (ﷺ). Some of the reports state that al-Ḥasan was carried wounded from the house,²⁵⁶ and others were also wounded, namely Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr, Muḥammad ibn Ḥaṭīb and Marwân ibn al-Ḥakam. Al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali and Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) were also with them.²⁵⁷

'Ali (ﷺ) defended 'Uthmân (ﷺ) the most of all the people, as Marwân ibn al-Ḥakam testified.²⁵⁸ He was one of the closest of people to 'Uthmân (ﷺ), and he remained close to him throughout that painful and harsh turmoil. Ibn 'Asâkir narrated from Jâbir ibn Abdullah (ﷺ) that 'Ali (ﷺ) sent word to 'Uthmân (ﷺ), saying: "I have five hundred armed fighters with me; give me permission so that I can protect you against those people. You have not done

anything to make it permissible to shed your blood.” ‘Uthmân (ؓ) replied: “May you be rewarded with good; I would not like blood to be shed on my account.”²⁵⁹ Numerous reports have been narrated indicating that ‘Ali stood beside ‘Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with both) during the siege. For example, when the rebels withheld water from ‘Uthmân (ؓ) until his family almost died of thirst, ‘Ali (ؓ) sent him three skins filled with water. A number of the freed slaves of Banu Hâshim and Banu Umayyah were wounded trying to deliver the water skins, but they did not give up until the water reached him.²⁶⁰

Events followed one after another until the criminals pounced on ‘Uthmân and killed him (may Allah be pleased with him and make him pleased). News of that reached the Companions when most of them were in the mosque, and they lost their minds with grief. ‘Ali (ؓ) said to his sons and nephews, “How could ‘Uthmân (ؓ) be killed when you were at the door?” He slapped al-Ḥasan, who had been wounded,²⁶¹ struck the chest of al-Ḥusayn, and reviled the son of az-Zubayr and the son of Ṭalhah. Then he went out angrily to his house, saying: “May you perish and be doomed forever. O Allah, I declare myself innocent before You of his blood. I was not part of his murder and did not support his murder in any way.”²⁶² This was the attitude of ‘Ali (ؓ), sincere in offering advice and consultation, hearing and obeying, standing firmly by the side of ‘Uthmân (ؓ) during the turmoil and defending him the most among the people. He never said anything negative about him; he tried to bring about reconciliation and bridge the gap between the caliph and the rebels, but the matter was beyond his control. It was the will of Allah (ﷻ) that Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Uthmân ibn ‘Affân (ؓ) should attain martyrdom.²⁶³

3.5.3. Ties of marriage between the family of ‘Ali (ﷺ) and the family of ‘Uthmân (ﷺ)

There were no feelings of resentment, hatred, or enmity between Banu Hâshim and Banu Umayyah such as those fabricated and invented by the enemies of Islam and the Muslims, who made up myths and tales about that. It is clear to every fair-minded individual that the relationship between Banu Umayyah and Banu Hâshim was that of cousins, brothers and close friends. They were the closest of people to one another, between whom there was mutual love, appreciation and respect, and they shared grief, pain and sorrow. Banu Umayyah and Banu Hâshim were descendants of a common ancestor; they were the grandsons of a single grandfather and branches of a single tree both before and after Islam. They all sprang from the same origin and were nourished by the fruits of the religion of Allah (ﷻ) that was brought by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), the trustworthy one, the teacher, the seal of the prophets and messengers.

There was a legendary friendship between Abu Sufyân and al-‘Abbâs²⁶⁴, as well as ties through marriage, both before and after Islam. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) gave three of his four daughters in marriage to men of Banu Umayyah: one married Abu al-‘Âṣ ibn ar-Rabee‘, and two of his daughters married ‘Uthmân ibn ‘Affân ibn Abil-Âṣ ibn Umayyah, whose maternal grandmother was the paternal aunt of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), al-Bayḍa’ bint ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib. She was called Umm Ḥakeem, and she had given birth to twins at the same time as the Prophet’s father, Abdullah ibn ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib, was born. One of these twins was Arwa bint Kurayz ibn Ḥabeeb ibn ‘Abd Shams, the mother of ‘Uthmân (ﷺ). The son of ‘Uthmân ibn ‘Affân (ﷺ), Abân, also married a woman from Banu Hâshim; he married Umm Kulthoom, who was the daughter of Abdullah ibn Ja‘far (aṭ-Ṭayyâr) ibn Abi Ṭâlib, the brother of ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with them all).²⁶⁵ Sakeenah, the granddaughter of ‘Ali (ﷺ)

and daughter of al-Ḥusayn, was married to the grandson of ‘Uthmân (رضي الله عنه), Zayd ibn ‘Amr ibn ‘Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them all). The second granddaughter of ‘Ali, another daughter of al-Ḥusayn, Fâtimah, was married to another grandson of ‘Uthmân, Muḥammad ibn Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn ‘Uthmân ibn ‘Affân. Umm Ḥabeebah, the daughter of Abu Sufyân, the chief of Banu Umayyah, was married to the chief of Banu Hâshim and the leader of the sons of Adam, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), as is well known. Hind bint Abi Sufyân was married to al-Ḥârith ibn Nawfal ibn al-Ḥârith ibn ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib ibn Hâshim, and she bore him his son Muḥammad.²⁶⁶

Lubâbah bint ‘Ubaydullah ibn ‘Abbâs ibn ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib married al-‘Abbâs ibn ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib; after he passed away, she married al-Waleed ibn ‘Utbah (the nephew of Mu‘âwiyah) ibn Abi Sufyân.²⁶⁷ Ramlah bint Muḥammad ibn Ja‘far aṭ-Ṭayyâr ibn Abi Tâlib married Sulaymân ibn Hishâm ibn ‘Abdul-Malik al-Umawi. After he died, she married Abu al-Qâsim ibn Waleed ibn ‘Utbah ibn Abi Sufyân.²⁶⁸ Ramlah, the daughter of ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib, married Mu‘âwiyah, the son of Marwân ibn al-Ḥakam²⁶⁹ ibn Abi al-‘Âṣ ibn Umayyah, after her previous husband Abu al-Hayyâj died.²⁷⁰ Nafeesah bint Zayd ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib married al-Waleed ibn ‘Abdul-Malik ibn Marwân, and she died while she was married to him. Her mother was Lubâbah bint Abdullah ibn ‘Abbâs.²⁷¹

I have listed just some of the marriages between the two tribes, and this is sufficient for one who seeks the truth and proper understanding.²⁷²

3.6. Sayings of ‘Ali about the Rightly-Guided Caliphs

There is consensus on the legitimacy of the caliphates of Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmân and ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with them all).

The Companions were all agreed on that, and whoever criticises any one of them has gone against the words of Allah (ﷻ):

﴿And whoever contradicts and opposes the Messenger [Muhammad] after the right path has been shown clearly to him, and follows other than the believers' way, We shall keep him in the path he has chosen, and burn him in hell — what an evil destination!﴾ (Qur'an 4: 115)

Such a person also denies the words of the Prophet (ﷺ): "I urge you to adhere to my Sunnah and the way of the Rightly Guided Caliphs; hold on to it firmly." They are Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân and 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them) and those who followed them in truth.²⁷³ How good are the words of Ayyoob as-Sakhtiyâni in this context, when he said: "Whoever loves Abu Bakr has established true faith; whoever loves 'Umar, his path has become clear; whoever loves 'Uthmân has been guided by the light of Allah (ﷻ); whoever loves 'Ali has grasped the firm handhold; and whoever speaks well of the Companions of Muḥammad (ﷺ) is free of hypocrisy."²⁷⁴

The poet said:

*I am pleased with 'Ali as an example and guide,
as I am pleased with Abu Bakr,
the companion of (the Prophet) in the cave.
I am pleased with Abu Ḥafṣ ('Umar) and his party,
and I am not pleased with the slaying of 'Uthmân in the house.
All of the Companions for me are examples and guides.
Is there anything wrong with my saying this?
If You know that I only love them for Your sake,
then free me from the fire.²⁷⁵*

There is definitive evidence and clear proof of the distinct relationship between 'Ali and the Rightly Guided Caliphs (may Allah be pleased with them). This has been explained in the previous pages, and here we will add some further evidence to the definitive proof

that has been quoted above of the status of the Rightly Guided Caliphs in the opinion of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام).

3.6.1. The leader of the mature people and youth of paradise

It was narrated that 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "I was with the Prophet (ﷺ), and Abu Bakr and 'Umar came. He said: 'O 'Ali, these two are the leaders of the mature people and youth of paradise, after the prophets and messengers.'"²⁷⁶

3.6.2. I only think of them in the way I hope to be

It was narrated that Suwayd ibn Ghafilah said: "I passed by a group of the Shia who were reviling Abu Bakr and 'Umar, then I entered upon 'Ali (عليه السلام) and said: 'O Amir al-Mu'mineen, I passed by a group of your companions just now who were reviling Abu Bakr and 'Umar in a way that is not befitting to their status in the Ummah. Were it not for the fact that you think of them (Abu Bakr and 'Umar) privately as these men said publicly, they would not have dared to speak like that.' 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: 'I only think of them in the way I hope to be. May Allah curse those who think of them in any except the best of terms.'

"Then he got up with tears running down his cheeks, and he held my hand until he entered the mosque. He ascended the minbar and sat on it, holding onto his beard and looking at it — and it was white — until the people gathered. Then he stood up and delivered an eloquent and moving speech, and he said: 'What is the matter with people who mention the two leaders of Quraysh and the two leading figures of the Muslims? I disavow what they say, and I shall punish them for it. By the One Who causes the seed to split and sprout and the One Who created the soul, no one loves them (Abu Bakr and

‘Umar) but a pious believer, and no one hates them but an immoral evildoer. They accompanied the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) with sincerity and loyalty, enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, and they never did anything contrary to what the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) wanted to do. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) never regarded anyone else’s advice as equal to theirs, and he never loved anyone else as he loved them.

“When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died, he was pleased with them; and when they died, the believers were pleased with them. The Messenger of Allah ordered Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) to lead the believers in prayer, and he led them in prayer for nine days²⁷⁷ while the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was still alive. When Allah took His Prophet (ﷺ) in death and chose for him that which is with Him, the believers appointed him (Abu Bakr) in charge of their affairs, and they paid zakâh to him, because the two go together. Then they gave him their allegiance willingly and not under compulsion. I was the first one to do that from among Banu ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib, and he was reluctant to accept it, wishing that someone else could have taken care of that, but he was the best of those who remained. He was more merciful than anyone else, more kind, more pious and senior in terms of age and Islam. He led us as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had led us until he died like that, then ‘Umar was appointed in charge after him.

“Some of them were pleased, and some of them were not, but he (‘Umar) did not depart this world until those who had disapproved of him approved of him. He conducted affairs according to the way of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companion (Abu Bakr), following in their footsteps as the camel calf follows its mother. He was, by Allah, kind and compassionate, a merciful helper and supporter of the oppressed, not fearing the blame of anyone for the sake of Allah (ﷻ). Allah caused his tongue to speak the truth always and made sincerity second nature to him, until we thought an angel was speaking on his

lips. Allah (ﷻ) supported Islam by means of his becoming Muslim, and his migration was a support and help to the faith. Allah (ﷻ) instilled fear of him in the hearts of the hypocrites and instilled love for him in the hearts of the believers.

“Who do you know who is like them? May Allah have mercy on them, and may Allah help us to follow their path. No one can attain what they attained except by following in their footsteps and loving them. So whoever loves me, let him love them; whoever does not love them hates me, and I have nothing to do with him. Had I already explained my position regarding them to you, I would have given the harshest punishment for this, but I should not punish anyone before explaining and warning. After today, if anyone is brought to me who says this, I shall carry out on him the punishment of the fabricator. Verily the best of this Ummah after its Prophet are Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, and if I wished, I could name the third one. I ask Allah for forgiveness for me and for you.”²⁷⁸

3.6.3. “This is ‘Uthmân ibn ‘Ali; I named him after ‘Uthmân ibn ‘Affân”

It was narrated from Abu Sa‘eed al-Khudri: “I saw a young, prepubescent boy with braided hair down to his shoulders, and Allah (ﷻ) knows that I had my doubts about him; I did not know whether he was a boy or a girl. Then I passed by one who was even better than him, who was sitting beside ‘Ali (ﷺ). I said: ‘May Allah bless you, who is this young man beside you?’ He said: ‘This is ‘Uthmân ibn ‘Ali. I named him after ‘Uthmân ibn ‘Affân, and I named another of my sons after ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb, another after ‘Abbâs, the paternal uncle of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and another after the best of creation Muḥammad. As for al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and Muḥsin²⁷⁹, they were named by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), who offered a sacrifice for them, shaved the hair on their heads²⁸⁰ and

gave its weight in charity, and ordered that they be given their names and circumcised.²⁸¹ They were born at the time of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and he is the one who named them and offered the sacrifice on their behalf.’”

3.6.4. Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmân
(may Allah be pleased with them)
were held in particular esteem by the Prophet

It is known through mutawâtir reports, and it is not hidden from the common folk or the elite, that Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them) were held in high esteem by the Prophet (ﷺ), and they were among the most special of people to him. He was closest to them, and they were closest to him, and he had ties to all of them through marriage. He loved them and praised them. There can only be two cases: either they were righteous, both outwardly and inwardly, during his lifetime and after his death, or they were the opposite of that during his lifetime or after his death. If they were not righteous, despite this closeness to the Prophet (ﷺ), then one of two things must be true: either he did not know how they were, or he knew about it but was turning a blind eye to it. Whatever the case, this is one of the most serious criticisms against the Messenger (ﷺ), as the poet said: “If you did not know, that is a calamity; and if you did know, it is even worse.”

If they deviated after becoming righteous, then this would indicate that Allah (ﷻ) had let down His Messenger with regard to the elite of his Ummah and his senior Companions, and with regard to the promise that his religion would prevail over all others. How could the senior members of his inner circle become apostates? This and similar notions are among the most serious criticisms that the Râfiḍis make against the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). As Imam Mâlik and others said: These Râfiḍis only wanted to undermine the

Messenger (ﷺ), so that one might say that he was a man who had bad companions, for if he was a righteous man, then his companions would have been righteous. Hence the scholars say: "Râfiḍī ideas were introduced by heretics."²⁸²

3.6.5. Implications of the Râfiḍis' regarding the Companions as disbelievers

The view of the Râfiḍis, that the Companions were disbelievers, implies that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) was also a disbeliever, because he failed to carry out the command of Allah (ﷻ). This would imply that the Sharia texts did not reach us through a proper, mutawâtir chain of narration; rather that chain is invalid because the transmitters were apostates. This in turn leads to criticism of the noble Qur'an, because it reached us through Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân and their brethren. This was the aim of the one who came up with this idea. Hence Abu Zar'ah said: If you see a man reviling any of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), then you should know that he is a heretic, because the Messenger (ﷺ) is true and the Qur'an is true. Those who transmitted the Qur'an and Sunnah to us were the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). What these people want to do is to shed doubt on our witnesses, so as to undermine the Qur'an and Sunnah, but they are the ones who deserve to be criticised, and they are heretics.²⁸³ Hence the books of the Shia admit that the one who came up with this idea was Ibn Saba'. They say that he was the first one to openly criticise and disavow Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân and the Companions, and he claimed that 'Ali (عليه السلام) told him to do that.²⁸⁴

3.6.6. Real life evidence of the true nature of the relationship between 'Ali and the Rightly Guided Caliphs

Actual, practical evidence is established from the biography of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) concerning his relationship with his brethren Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmân; it is well known and widely transmitted. In the previous pages, we have quoted a great deal of that evidence, which proves the sincere love and strong bonds of brotherhood that existed among these chosen pioneers, the elite of the generation of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them).

First and foremost is the fact that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) gave his daughter Umm Kulthoom in marriage to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Umar (عليه السلام).²⁸⁵ If 'Umar (عليه السلام), who was held in high esteem by the Ummah as al-Farooq (the Criterion), is regarded by the Shia as a worse disbeliever than Iblees himself, shouldn't the Shia come back to their senses and think about the corrupt nature of their school of juristic thought and what that implies? Because if Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) were disbelievers, as they falsely claim, then the fact that 'Ali (عليه السلام) gave his daughter Umm Kulthoom al-Kubra in marriage to 'Umar (عليه السلام) means that 'Ali (عليه السلام) became a disbeliever or evildoer who subjected his daughter to a great sin, because marriage of a Muslim woman to a disbeliever is pure fornication.²⁸⁶ The wise and fair-minded person with no ulterior motive, who is sincere in his love for the Prophet (ﷺ) and the members of his household and their followers, cannot but submit to the reality of the love and friendship that existed among all four caliphs (may Allah be pleased with them all). Hence, when it was said to Mu'izz ad-Dawlah Aḥmad ibn Bawayh — a Râfiḍī who reviled the Companions of the Messenger of Allah — that 'Ali (عليه السلام) gave his daughter Umm Kulthoom in marriage to 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (عليه السلام), he was shocked and said: "I did not know that." He

repented, gave most of his wealth in charity, freed his slaves, set right a great deal of his earlier wrongdoing, and worked until he fell unconscious²⁸⁷ because he realised the enormity of his previous crimes, in which he had attacked the honour of these pure ones as a result of being deceived by the false arguments of the Râfiḍis.²⁸⁸

The leaders of the Râfiḍi Shia tried to undermine the significance of this proof by fabricating reports that were falsely attributed to the Imams, claiming that she "was a woman who belonged to us and was taken by force."²⁸⁹ Thus they made matters worse, to such an extent that they depicted Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) as one who could not defend his honour and who approved of immorality in his family. Is this something that could be imagined with regard to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام), the hero of Islam? Even the lowest of the Arabs would offer himself as a sacrifice to defend his honour and would expose himself to death in order to defend his womenfolk, so how about Banu Hâshim, who were the leaders of the Arabs and the noblest of them in lineage and the highest in terms of chivalry and gallantry? How could they attribute such abhorrent shortcomings to 'Ali (عليه السلام) and his daughter, the granddaughter of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), when 'Ali (عليه السلام) was so courageous and brave, the lion of Banu Ghâlib, Asadullah (the lion of Allah) in the east and west?²⁹⁰

It seems that some of them did not like the implications of this marriage, so they tried to find a way out of this problem by means of stranger and weirder logic. They claimed that Umm Kulthoom was not the daughter of 'Ali (عليه السلام); rather she was a jinn who took her shape!²⁹¹ Thus they came up with a notion that is an insult to the intelligence of men and women of sound reason. Anyone can claim that the one whom he hates is a male or female jinn; thus people live with myths and lose sight of the truth.

Another piece of evidence is the strong blood relationship and ties of kinship that existed among the Rightly Guided Caliphs, as well as the expressions of love among them. As we have seen, ‘Ali, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn named some of their children after Abu Bakr and ‘Umar. Could anyone name his children after the worst of his enemies among the disbelievers and those whom he hates the most? Could he bear to hear the names of his enemies reverberating around his house throughout the day, time and time again?²⁹²

The Companions, the Tâbi‘oon who followed them and the imams of the Muslims did not learn anything from Amir al-Mu‘mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ) except love for Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them) during their lifetimes, during their caliphates and after their deaths. During their caliphates, ‘Ali (ﷺ) listened to them and obeyed them; he loved them, and they loved him; he respected them, and they respected him. He was sincere in his love for and obedience to them. He strove in jihad against those whom they strove against, loved those that they loved and hated those that they hated. They used to consult him with regard to new issues that arose, and he would offer sincere advice on the basis of compassion and love; many of their decisions were based on his advice.²⁹³ These feelings were mutual, and it was said that love of Abu Bakr, ‘Uthmân, ‘Umar and ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with them all) could not be combined except in the hearts of the most pious of this Ummah.²⁹⁴ Sufyân ath-Thawri said: “Love for ‘Uthmân and ‘Ali cannot be combined except in the hearts of the noblest of men.”²⁹⁵ Anas ibn Mâlik said: “They said: ‘Love for ‘Uthmân and ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with them) cannot be combined in the heart of a believer,’ but they lied, for Allah combined love for them both in our hearts, praise be to Allah.”²⁹⁶

3.7. Description of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) in the Noble Qur’an

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah. And those who are with him are severe against disbelievers, and merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and falling down prostrate [in prayer], seeking bounty from Allah and [His] good pleasure. The mark of them [i.e. of their Faith] is on their faces [foreheads] from the traces of prostration [during prayers]. This is their description in the Tawrât [Torah]. But their description in the Injeel [Gospel] is like a [sown] seed which sends forth its shoot, then makes it strong, and becomes thick and it stands straight on its stem, delighting the sowers, that He may enrage the disbelievers with them. Allah has promised those among them who believe [i.e. all those who follow Islamic Monotheism, the religion of Prophet Muhammad till the Day of Resurrection] and do righteous good deeds, forgiveness and a mighty reward [i.e. paradise].﴾
(Qur’an 48: 29)

It is appropriate to end this section with this verse, which serves as evidence for what I have mentioned of love, compassion and cooperation among the Rightly Guided Caliphs and the noble Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all). This verse mentions the status of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) by praising him, then Allah (ﷻ) praises all the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all). Allah (ﷻ) mentions their attitude of harshness and sternness towards the disbelievers, and He also mentions the mutual compassion and kindness that existed among them. He describes them as doing many righteous deeds, accompanied by sincerity and great hope of mercy. Foremost among these righteous deeds is their offering frequent prayers, seeking the bounty and good pleasure of Allah (ﷻ). In this verse, Allah (ﷻ) also describes the effect of that,

which is clearly seen on their faces: "The mark of them (i.e. of their Faith) is on their faces (foreheads) from the traces of prostration (during prayers)." It was said that this mark is whiteness on their faces that will be seen on the Day of Resurrection. This is the view of al-Ḥasan and Sa'eed ibn Jubayr, and it is one narration from Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه). The other narration from him, which was also narrated from Mujāhid, is that the mark which can be seen in this world is dignity. It was also narrated from Mujāhid that it refers to humility and humbleness.²⁹⁷

There is no contradiction among these opinions because in this world, dignity may result from humility and modesty, while in the hereafter, it will be light on their brows.²⁹⁸ Ibn Katheer said: "The intentions of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) were pure, and their deeds were good, so everyone who looked at them would admire their dignity and their attitude and behaviour." Mālik (رضي الله عنه) said: "I heard that when the Christians saw the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) who conquered Syria, they said: 'By God, these people are better than the Disciples, according to what we have heard.'" And they spoke the truth in that, because this Ummah is spoken highly of in the earlier Books, and the greatest and most virtuous of them are the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Allah (ﷻ) referred to mention of them in the previous Books and reports which were in circulation (before Islam). He said: ﴿This is their description in the Tawrât [Torah]. But their description in the Injeel [Gospel] is like a [sown] seed which sends forth its shoot, then makes it strong, and becomes thick and it stands straight on its stem, delighting the sowers.﴾ (Qur'an 48: 29)

This is exactly how the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) were; they supported him "that He may enrage the disbelievers with them." According to one report, Imam Mālik (may Allah have mercy on him) concluded from this verse that the Rāfiḍis who hate

the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) are disbelievers. He said: "Because they (the Râfiḍis) are enraged by them (the Companions), and the one who is enraged by the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) is a disbeliever because of this verse." A number of the scholars agreed with him on that.

The verse continues: ﴿Allah has promised those among them who believe [i.e. all those who follow Islamic Monotheism, the religion of Prophet Muhammad till the Day of Resurrection] and do righteous good deeds,﴾ (*Qur'an* 48: 29). This means that He has promised great reward and good provision, and the promise of Allah (ﷻ) is true; He does not break it. Everyone who follows in the footsteps of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) is given the same promise, but they have an advantage because of their precedence and the perfection that they obtained. No one else of this Ummah can catch up with them, may Allah be pleased with them and make them pleased, and may He make Jannat al-Firdaws their abode, and that is indeed the case.²⁹⁹

The fact that Allah says about the noble Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), "that He may enrage the disbelievers with them" points to the most serious ruling, the sternest threat and the strongest warning with regard to those who are enraged by the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) or who harbour in their hearts any grudge against them.³⁰⁰ With regard to the words of Allah, the Exalted, the Almighty, at the end of the verse, ﴿Allah has promised those among them who believe [i.e. all those who follow Islamic Monotheism, the religion of Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ) till the Day of Resurrection] and do righteous good deeds,﴾ this is a promise of paradise from Allah (ﷻ) to all the Companions, and also to everyone who believes and does righteous deeds among the Ummah of Islam, because this promise is for all the believers until the Day of Resurrection.³⁰¹ The word '*min*' (translated here as 'among') in this

verse means those who are like them, and does not mean some of them.

Ibn Taymiyah said: "No doubt this is praise for them for the attributes mentioned, namely harshness towards the disbelievers, mercy amongst themselves, bowing and prostrating, seeking the bounty and pleasure of Allah (ﷻ), the mark of prostration on their faces and the fact that they started from a position of weakness and attained perfect strength, like the plants mentioned in the verse. The promise made to them of forgiveness and great reward is not only for these characteristics; rather it is for their faith and righteous deeds. Allah (ﷻ) mentions that for which they deserve this promise, even though all of them are like that, because if He did not mention that, it might be thought that they are deserving of forgiveness merely by virtue of what is mentioned, without explaining the reason why they deserve this reward."³⁰²

What I have mentioned in this section is in complete accordance with what the noble Qur'an says about mercy and compassion among the Companions and harshness against the disbelievers, especially among the Rightly Guided Caliphs. They are the noble leaders, the elite of the people and the leaders of the Ummah after the death of its Prophet. Beware of the weak reports and fabricated stories that were made up by the enemies of this Ummah in order to distort the history of the early generations of Islam. Should we believe false reports and worthless stories that depict enmity among the Rightly Guided Caliphs, or should we believe the Book of our Lord, what was said concerning them by our Prophet, and what is in accordance with reports narrated by trustworthy scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah?

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And He has united their [i.e. believers'] hearts. If you had spent all

that is in the earth, you could not have united their hearts, but Allah has united them. Certainly He is All-Mighty, All-Wise. ﴿

(Qur'an 8: 63)

This is the Qur'an's description of the real harmony among the Companions. This is a great blessing that Allah (ﷻ) bestowed upon that pure generation, and human beings have nothing to do with it. The noble Qur'an states that harmony among the Companions is a blessing that Allah (ﷻ) bestowed upon the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). This Qur'anic depiction of the reality of the Companions is in harmony with the sound reports which show love and friendship among them, thus exposing the deceit of those who fabricated false reports. The verse also includes everyone who follows the guidance of the noble Qur'an and the Sunnah of the leader of the Messengers. Ibn 'Abbâs said: "Ties between relatives may be severed, and a person's kindness may be rejected and unappreciated, but there is nothing like closeness between hearts."³⁰³

The poet said:

*I accompanied people and learned about their nature
and attitude, and I examined the ties connecting them,
and I have realised that blood ties cannot bring together
people who want to sever these ties,
and love and kindness are the strongest of ties.*³⁰⁴

* * *

CHAPTER THREE

The Oath of Allegiance to 'Ali (ﷺ), the most important of his characteristics and his way of life in society

1. The oath of allegiance to 'Ali (ﷺ)

1.1. How allegiance was sworn to 'Ali (ﷺ)

On Friday, 18 Dhul-Hijjah 35 AH,¹ the Rightly Guided Caliph 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân (ﷺ) was martyred at the hands of outlaw rebels, who killed him (ﷺ) unlawfully and wrongfully. They had come from various regions and various tribes that were not known for any service to Islam or any good achievement in this world. After this, all of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) who were left in Madinah swore allegiance to 'Ali (ﷺ) as caliph. There was no one better than him at that time, so no one else claimed leadership after 'Uthmân (ﷺ). 'Ali (ﷺ), the father of the two grandsons of the Prophet (ﷺ), was not eager for it, and he only accepted it after strong urging from those of the Companions who were left in Madinah, for fear that the tribulations might increase and spread further. Despite that, he was not spared the criticism of some ignorant people as the result of turmoil that took place later on, such as the battles of the Camel and Şiffeen, the flames of which were fanned by those who

hated Islam, such as Ibn Saba' and his followers, whom he led astray due to their evil nature and the deviation of their hearts from true guidance.

The manner in which they selected 'Ali (ﷺ) for the caliphate was narrated by some of the scholars.² Abu Bakr al-Khallâl narrated with his sound chain of narration going back to Muhammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah that the latter said: "I was with 'Ali (ﷺ) when 'Uthmân (ﷺ) was under siege. A man came to 'Ali and said: 'Amir al-Mu'mineen has just been killed.' 'Ali (ﷺ) got up, and I grabbed him by the waist, fearing for him. He said: 'Let me go, may you be bereft of your mother!' 'Ali (ﷺ) went to the house where 'Uthmân had been killed, may Allah have mercy on him. He went into his house and shut the door. The people came to him and knocked at the door, then they entered upon him and said: 'This man has been killed, and the people must have a caliph. We do not know of anyone more deserving of that than you.' 'Ali (ﷺ) said to them: 'You do not want me; I would rather be an adviser to you than a leader.' They said: 'No, by Allah, we do not know of anyone more deserving of it than you.' He said: 'If you insist on me, then allegiance to me should not be sworn in secret. Rather I will go out to the mosque and accept the people's allegiance.'"³

According to another report narrated from Sâlim ibn Abi Ja'd from Muhammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah: "The Companions of the Messenger of Allah came to him and said: 'This man has been killed, and the people must have a leader. We do not find anyone who is more deserving of that than you, or who is more senior in Islam, or closer to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).' 'Ali (ﷺ) said: 'Do not do it, for I would rather be an adviser to you than a leader.' They said: 'No, by Allah, we will not do anything until we swear allegiance to you.' He said: 'Then (do it) in the mosque, for allegiance to me should not be hidden, and it should only be with the approval of the Muslims.'"

Sâlim ibn Abi Ja'd said: "Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs said: 'I did not want him to go to the mosque for fear of troublemakers, but he insisted on going to the mosque.' When he entered the mosque, the Muhâjiroun and the Anşâr came and swore allegiance to him, and the people did likewise."⁴

From these sound reports we learn a number of lessons, including the following:

1.1.1. The support of 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) for 'Uthmân (عليه السلام) and his defence of him

This is narrated in mutawâtir reports from 'Ali (عليه السلام). Indeed, he defended 'Uthmân (عليه السلام) most out of all the people. That is narrated with many chains of narration, and Marwân ibn al-Ḥakam bore witness to that when he said: "There was no one among the people who defended our companion more than your companion," meaning that 'Ali defended 'Uthmân.⁵

1.1.2. 'Ali's lack of interest in caliphate

He did not seek or desire the caliphate, and he stayed at home until the Companions came to him, asking to swear allegiance to him.

1.1.3. The consensus of the Companions, both Muhâjiroun and Anşâr, and the people in general of Madinah, on swearing allegiance to him

Those who swore allegiance to 'Ali (عليه السلام) included the decision makers and the prominent people. They are the ones who went to 'Ali (عليه السلام) and asked him to accept the oath of allegiance, insisting until he agreed. It was not the thugs and killers of 'Uthmân (عليه السلام), as some weak and fabricated reports suggest.

1.1.4. 'Ali was the most deserving of the caliphate among the people at that time

This is indicated by the fact that the Companions went to him and insisted that he should accept the oath of allegiance, and they stated clearly that they did not know anyone who was more deserving of the caliphate at that time than him.

1.1.5. The importance of the caliphate

Hence we see that the Companions hastened to appoint 'Ali (ﷺ), who used to say: "Were it not for my fear for the religion of Allah, I would not have agreed."⁶

1.1.6. The dubious idea that they inserted concerning the oath of allegiance to 'Ali (ﷺ)

This idea suggests that the rebels who besieged 'Uthmân (ﷺ), some of whom took part in his murder, were in Madinah and were the first ones to swear allegiance to 'Ali (ﷺ), and that Talhah and az-Zubayr swore allegiance reluctantly, as was narrated by the historians. This idea has no basis, and the reports concerning it have no sound chains of narration. The correct view is that the people could find no one after Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them) who was like the fourth in status, knowledge, piety, religious commitment, seniority and track record of jihad. The Muhâjîroon and the Anşâr insisted on him, and he thought it was an obligation upon him, so he agreed to it. If they had not hastened to swear allegiance to 'Ali (ﷺ), that could have led to turmoil and division throughout the Muslim regions.

It was in the best interests of the Muslims for 'Ali (ﷺ) to accept the oath of allegiance regardless of the circumstances, and none of the Companions who were in Madinah held back from

swearing allegiance to him. Some people confused this with a later incident when some of the Companions stayed behind instead of marching to Basra with him. With regard to the oath, no one held back from that, but with regard to marching to Basra, some stayed behind because it was a matter of *ijtihâd*.⁷ 'Ali (عليه السلام) did not force them to come out with him, as we shall see in detail below when we discuss the Battle of the Camel.

1.1.7. Awareness of the exaggerations of storytellers

We must be aware of the exaggerations of some storytellers who claim that for five days following the murder of 'Uthmân (عليه السلام), Madinah remained under the control of al-Ghâfiqî ibn Ḥarb while they looked for someone to accept the position of caliphate and could not find anyone.⁸ Other reports claimed that the rebels of Egypt made an offer to 'Ali (عليه السلام) to become caliph, but he refused; that the rebels of Kufah offered the caliphate to az-Zubayr, but he did not accept; and that those who came from Basra offered allegiance to Ṭalḥah. This is not proven in any sound reports, and its chain of narration is not sound.⁹ Moreover, it is well known that the Companions were in full control of Madinah and would have been able to destroy these criminals were it not for the request of 'Uthmân (عليه السلام) to refrain from using force against them. This is explained in my book *Tayseer al-Kareem al-Mannân fi Seerat 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân*. The correct view is that allegiance to 'Ali (عليه السلام) was given voluntarily and freely by the Muslims, and the troublemakers played no part in that. All of the Companions in Madinah¹⁰ elected Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام).

1.1.8. Sound reports about the oath of allegiance to 'Ali

There are eleven sound reports about the oath of allegiance to 'Ali (عليه السلام).¹¹ We will discuss some of them in detail below.

1.2. 'Ali's entitlement to the caliphate

The most deserving of people to be caliph, after Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them), was 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام). This is the belief of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah, and this is what the Muslim is required to believe as part of his faith in regard to the sequence of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. There is an indication of 'Ali's being entitled to the caliphate in more than one Islamic text, including the following:

1. The verse in which Allah says: ﴿Allah has promised those among you who believe and do righteous good deeds, that He will certainly grant them succession to [the present rulers] in the land, as He granted it to those before them, and that He will grant them the authority to practise their religion which He has chosen for them [i.e. Islam]. And He will surely, give them in exchange a safe security after their fear...﴾ (Qur'an 24: 55). The point here regarding the legitimacy of 'Ali's caliphate is that he was one of those who were granted succession to (the present rulers) in the land and to whom was granted the authority to practice their religion.
2. The words of the Prophet (ﷺ): "I urge you to adhere to my Sunnah and the way of the Rightly Guided Caliphs who come after me; hold fast to it and cling to it strongly."¹² The relevant point in this hadith with regard to the validity of 'Ali's caliphate is that he was one of the Rightly Guided Caliphs who enjoined what is good and forbade what is evil, adhered to the limits set by Allah (ﷻ), established regular prayer, paid zakâh and followed the way of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in justice and establishing truth.
3. The words of the Prophet (ﷺ) as narrated in the hadith of Safeenah: "Caliphate in the footsteps of the Prophet will last for

thirty years, then Allah (ﷻ) will grant power to whomever He wills.”¹³ This hadith is indicative of the validity of ‘Ali’s caliphate, as his caliphate brought to a close the thirty year period of caliphate in the footsteps of the Prophet (ﷺ) that are mentioned in this hadith, and this was the basis of the scholars’ opinions.¹⁴ Aḥmad ibn Hanbal said: “The hadith of Safeenah about the caliphate is sound, and I based my opinion about the caliphate on it.”¹⁵ Abdullah ibn Aḥmad said: “I said to my father: ‘Some people are saying that he (‘Ali) was not a caliph.’ He said: ‘This is a bad and corrupt view.’ He said: ‘The Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to address him as Amir al-Mu’mineen; should we disbelieve them? He led people on hajj, cut off the hand of the thief and stoned the adulterer; could the one who did that be anything other than a caliph?’”¹⁶

Ibn Taymiyah said concerning the hadith of Safeenah: “It is a well-known hadith that was narrated by Ḥammâd ibn Salamah, ‘Abdul-Wârith ibn Sa‘eed and al-‘Awwâm ibn Hawshab from Sa‘eed ibn Jamhân from Safeenah, the freed slave of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). It was narrated by the authors of *as-Sunan* such as Abu Dâwood and others, and Imam Aḥmad and others based their views on it when affirming the caliphate of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs. Aḥmad regarded it as sound and quoted it as evidence against those who were not certain about the caliphate of ‘Ali (ﷺ) because the people were divided concerning him. Aḥmad said: ‘Whoever does not regard ‘Ali (ﷺ) as the fourth caliph is more misguided than his family’s donkey,’ and he forbade accepting such a person’s proposal of marriage.”¹⁷

The commentator of *aṭ-Ṭaḥḥâwiyyah* said: “And we affirm ‘Ali as caliph after ‘Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them both).

When 'Uthmân (ﷺ) was murdered, and the people swore allegiance to 'Ali (ﷺ), he became a true leader to whom obedience became obligatory. He was the caliph of his time, following in the footsteps of prophetic leadership, as indicated by the hadith of Safeenah....”¹⁸

4. It was narrated that 'Ikrimah said: "Ibn 'Abbâs said to me and his son 'Ali: 'Go to Abu Sa'eed, and listen to him.' So we went and found him working in a garden. He took his garment and wrapped it around himself, then he began talking to us until he mentioned the building of the mosque. He said: 'We were carrying bricks one at a time, and 'Ammâr was carrying bricks two at a time. The Prophet (ﷺ) started removing dust from him and saying: "Poor 'Ammâr! He will be killed by a group that is in the wrong. He will call them to paradise, and they will call him to hell." 'Ammâr said: "I seek refuge with Allah (ﷻ) from tribulation."””¹⁹

According to a report narrated by Muslim from Abu Sa'eed, he said to 'Ammâr, when he started digging the ditch and he started wiping his head: "Poor²⁰ son of Sumayyah, you will be killed by a group that is in the wrong."²¹ Ibn Taymiyah said, after quoting the Prophet's words that 'Ammâr would be killed by a group that is in the wrong: "This is indicative of the validity of 'Ali's leadership and the obligation of obeying him, and that the one who called people to obey him was calling people to paradise, and the one who called people to fight him was calling them to hellfire, regardless of whether his view was based on misinterpretation or he was a transgressor who had no such justification. This is the more correct of the two opinions held by our companions, and it is the view that those who fought 'Ali (ﷺ) were in the wrong. This is the view of the leading jurists, who derived many rulings from that with regard to fighting

rebels who have their own justification based on some misinterpretation.

“When Yahya ibn Ma‘een objected to ash-Shâfa‘i quoting as evidence events from the life of ‘Ali with regard to formulating rulings on fighting rebels who find justification in some misinterpretation, he said: ‘Is he regarding both Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr as wrongdoers?’ Imam Aḥmad responded by saying: ‘Woe to you! What else could he do with regard to this issue?’ – meaning that if he did not derive rulings on the basis of ‘Ali’s handling of events that occurred during his caliphate, he would not have any guidelines from the Rightly Guided Caliphs with regard to fighting rebels. Neither Aḥmad nor any of the Sunni imams ever hesitated with regard to that.”²²

If someone were to say that the killing of ‘Ammâr took place at Šiffeen when he was fighting alongside ‘Ali (ﷺ), and those who killed him were with Mu‘âwiyah, on whose side there was a group of the Companions, so how could that hadith refer to them as people who were calling to hellfire? The answer is that they thought that they were calling to paradise and they based their argument on what they thought was correct evidence, so there is no blame on them for following what they thought was correct. What is meant by calling to paradise is calling to that which leads to it, which is obeying the ruler. Thus ‘Ammâr was calling them to obey ‘Ali (ﷺ), who was the leader to whom obedience was obligatory at that time, whereas they were calling to something other than that, because of what appeared to them to be the right thing to do.²³

An-Nawawi said, after quoting the Prophet’s words, “Poor son of Sumayyah, you will be killed by a group that is in the wrong”:²⁴ “The scholars said: This hadith is clear evidence that ‘Ali (ﷺ) was in the right, and the other group was in the wrong,

but they thought they were doing the right thing, so there is no blame on them for that. This is clearly a miracle of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) for several reasons, including the fact that it foretold that 'Ammâr would be slain and that Muslims would kill him and they would be in the wrong, and that the Companions would fight one another and they would be two groups, one of which would be transgressing and the other group. All of that came to pass as clear as day. May Allah send blessings and peace upon His Messenger, who did not speak on the basis of whims and desires, rather it was a revelation that was revealed.”²⁵

5. It was narrated that Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'A group will secede from my Ummah at a time of division among the Muslims, and they will be killed by the group that is closer to the truth.'" It is also narrated that he said: "There will be among my Ummah two groups, from among whom (a third) group will secede, and they will be killed by those who are closer to the truth." According to another version, he said: "A group will secede at a time of division among the people, and they will be killed by the group that is closer to the truth."²⁶ His words "at a time of division" mean when the people are divided, when there is division among the Muslims. This is the division that occurred between 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah (may Allah be pleased with them both).²⁷ What is meant by the group that seceded is the people of Nahrawân; they were in 'Ali's camp at the battle of Şiffeen, then when 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah agreed to arbitration by the two arbitrators, they seceded. They said: "'Ali and Mu'âwiyah are racing towards disbelief like two horses on which bets are placed; Mu'âwiyah committed an act of disbelief by fighting 'Ali, then 'Ali committed an act of disbelief by accepting the arbitration of the two arbitrators." They also regarded Talḥah and az-Zubayr as

disbelievers. They were killed by the group that was with 'Ali (ﷺ). The Prophet (ﷺ) testified that the group who would fight them would be closer to the truth, and this is testimony from the Prophet (ﷺ) that 'Ali and his companions (may Allah be pleased with them) were in the right. This is one of the miracles of the Prophet (ﷺ) because he foretold what was to happen, and events unfolded as he said. It also offers clear evidence for the validity of 'Ali's caliphate and the error of those who opposed him.²⁸

1.3. The oath of allegiance sworn by Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with them)

It was narrated that Abu Basheer al-Ābidi said: "I was in Madinah when 'Uthmān (ﷺ) was killed. The Muhājireen and Anṣār, including Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr, gathered together and went to 'Ali (ﷺ). They said: 'O Abu al-Ḥasan, come and let us swear allegiance to you.' He said: 'I have no need of that position. I am with you, and whomever you choose, I will accept him, so choose someone.' They said: 'By Allah, we will not choose anyone but you...' "²⁹ This shows that there was universal allegiance to 'Ali (ﷺ). There are many reports concerning this, some of which were quoted by Ibn Jareer in his *Tareekh*.³⁰

This clearly indicates that the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) swore allegiance to 'Ali (ﷺ), and that they, including Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr, were agreed on doing so. As for what is mentioned in some reports, that Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr swore allegiance reluctantly, this is not proven in any sound transmission, and the sound reports state something different.³¹

Aṭ-Ṭabari narrated that 'Awf ibn Abi Jameelah said: "As for me, I bear witness that I heard Muhammad ibn Sireen say: "'Ali came and said to Ṭalḥah: "Give me your hand, O Ṭalḥah, so that I might

give you my allegiance.” Ṭalḥah said: “You are more deserving, you are Amir al-Mu'mineen; give me your hand.” So 'Ali gave him his hand, and Ṭalḥah swore allegiance to him.”³²

It was narrated from 'Abd Khayr al-Khaywâni that he went to Abu Moosa and said: “O Abu Moosa, were these two men — meaning Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr — among those who swore allegiance to 'Ali (ﷺ)?” He said: “Yes.”³³

Imam al-Muḥaqqiq ibn al-'Arabi also stated that the claim that they swore allegiance reluctantly is false; he said that this was not something befitting them or 'Ali. He said: “If it is said that they (Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr) swore allegiance reluctantly, we say: Allah forbid that they could ever have been reluctant. If they were reluctant, that could not have affected them because a ruler may become fully legitimate with the allegiance of one or two people. But this view is not acceptable, and whoever swore allegiance after that, it was something that he had to do and was compelled to do so by Sharia. But if they (Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr) did not swear allegiance, that would not have affected them, and it would not have affected the validity of the leader to whom allegiance had already been sworn. As for the suggestion that he had a paralysed hand, so his oath of allegiance was not valid,³⁴ the one who said that thought that Ṭalḥah was the first one to swear allegiance, but that was not the case. If it was said that Ṭalḥah said: ‘I swore allegiance with the sword over my head,’ we would say that this is a fabricated report, for linguistic reasons.”³⁵ So it is a lie.

As for the idea that someone objected on the grounds that his hand was paralysed, even if that were so, it is irrelevant, because a hand that was paralysed as a result of defending the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is a blessed hand.³⁶ The reports which say that Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr were forced to swear allegiance are false.³⁷ As we have mentioned, there are sound reports indicating that they gave their

allegiance to ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with them all), and there is a sound report narrated by Ibn Ḥajar,³⁸ via al-Aḥnaf ibn Qays, which says that ‘Ā’ishah, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with them) all told Aḥnaf that he should give his allegiance to ‘Ali (ﷺ) when he asked them to whom allegiance should be given after ‘Uthmān (ﷺ).³⁹

‘Ali’s seniority in Islam, virtue, strict adherence to the rulings of the Qur’an and Sunnah, and promise in his speech to implement the commands and prohibitions of Sharia left no room for anyone to object to his right to be the leader of the Muslims. It might be said that ‘Ali (ﷺ) was the strongest candidate to lead the Ummah after the murder of ‘Umar (ﷺ), and ‘Umar did in fact appoint him among the six whom he recommended. However, four members of the consultative committee — namely ‘Abdur-Raḥmān, Sa’d, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr — withdrew their names, leaving the choice between ‘Ali (ﷺ) and ‘Uthmān; thus there were only two candidates. This amounts to consensus on the part of the members of the consultative committee that if the caliphate had not gone to ‘Uthmān, it would have gone to ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with them). After the death of ‘Uthmān (ﷺ), when the people of Madinah recommended him and gave him precedence as the best candidate, he thus became entitled to the position of caliphate on the basis that none of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) who were present at that time was more qualified than him (ﷺ). He was one of the earliest Muslims and one of the earliest migrants, the cousin and son-in-law of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). In addition to that, he was undeniably able and qualified. He possessed courage, intelligence and rare wisdom in judging; he knew how to tackle new situations and crises; he was firm in adhering to the truth and farsighted in his handling of affairs. All of these factors made him indisputably the only candidate to lead the Muslims during that crucial period of their history.⁴⁰

Despite all that, his caliphate only became valid after there was consensus among the Muhâjireen and Anşâr and they swore allegiance to him.

1.4. Consensus on the appointment of 'Ali (عليه السلام) as Caliph

There is consensus among Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah that 'Ali (عليه السلام) was entitled to the position of caliphate after 'Uthmân (عليه السلام), as the Muhâjireen and Anşâr swore allegiance to him, because of his superiority over the remaining Companions. He was the first of them to become Muslim, the most knowledgeable, the closest to the Prophet (ﷺ) in lineage, the most courageous, the dearest to Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ), the best in calibre, the most superior, the highest in status and the one who most resembled the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in attitude and character. He was better suited for the caliphate than anyone else. The Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) who were left in Madinah swore allegiance to him as caliph unanimously. At that point, he became a legitimate ruler whom all the people were obliged to obey, and it was forbidden to rebel against him or oppose him. Many scholars have narrated that there was consensus on his caliphate, including the following:

1. Muhammad ibn Sa'd narrated that there was consensus on swearing allegiance to 'Ali (عليه السلام) among those Companions in Madinah who were known for their piety and seniority in Islam. He said: "Allegiance was sworn to 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) in Madinah on the day after the killing of 'Uthmân (عليه السلام). Allegiance was sworn to him by Talhah, az-Zubayr, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâs, Sa'eed ibn Zayd ibn 'Amr ibn Nufayl, 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir, Usâmah ibn Zayd, Sahl ibn Haneef, Abu Ayyoob al-Anşârî, Muḥammad ibn Maslamah, Zayd ibn Thâbit, Khuzymah

ibn Thâbit, all those Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) who were left in Madinah and others.”⁴¹

2. Ibn Qudâmah (may Allah have mercy on him) stated that Imam Aḥmad (may Allah have mercy on him) narrated with his chain of narration from ‘Abdur-Razzâq from Muhammad ibn Râshid that ‘Awf said: “I was with al-Ḥasan and it was as if a man criticised Abu Moosa for following ‘Ali (ﷺ). Al-Ḥasan got angry, then he said: ‘Glory be to Allah! Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Uthmân was killed, and the people rallied behind the best of them and swore allegiance to him. Why should Abu Moosa be blamed for following him?’”⁴²
3. Abu al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘ari said: “We affirmed the validity of ‘Ali’s leadership after ‘Uthmân (ﷺ) on the basis of the allegiance sworn by those of the Companions who were people of prominent position and decision-makers, because none of the members of the consultative committee was nominated other than him at that time, and there was consensus on his virtues and justice. The fact that he refrained from nominating himself for the caliphate at the time of the caliphs was the right thing to do, because he knew that his time had not yet come. Then when he was appointed to the position, he gave it his all and did not fall short, thus he followed the straight path, as did the caliphs and leaders of justice before him, following the Book of their Lord and the Sunnah of their Prophet. These four are the ones on whom there is consensus with regard to their justice and virtue, may Allah be pleased with them.”⁴³
4. Abu Na‘eem al-Asbahâni said: “When there were differences of opinion among the Companions as to who were the first to migrate and who were the first to enter Islam and who were the early supporters who defended the faith, the Ummah is agreed on their seniority because of their virtue and prominence in

religious and worldly affairs, and they never disputed concerning them (the four caliphs) with regard to who was most entitled to the position of caliphate among the group whom the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) testified were people of paradise among the ten with whom he was pleased when he died. Those who were left of those ten accepted 'Ali's pre-eminence, and no one denied that he was one of the most prominent and highest in status among the Ummah, because of his seniority and his virtues and knowledge, and because he had been present at major events. Allah and His Messenger loved him, and he loved Allah and His Messenger. The believers loved him, and the hypocrites hated him. His position is not undermined by the fact that some other Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) were more senior than him; rather that increased his standing because he recognised the virtue of those to whom he gave precedence over himself, because that even existed among the Prophets and Messengers (blessings and peace of Allah be upon them). Allah says: ﴿Those Messengers! We preferred some of them to others; ...but Allah does what He likes.﴾ (Qur'an 2: 253) The fact that some are superior to others did not undermine the position of those who are of lesser status. All of the Messengers are chosen by Allah and are the best of His creation. 'Ali (ﷺ) became the leader of the Muslims and ran their state on the basis of justice and lack of interest in worldly gains, following in his conduct the way of the Messenger (ﷺ) and of his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) until Allah took him as a martyr, guided and guiding others, leading them on the path of truth.”⁴⁴

5. Abu Manşoor al-Baghdâdi said: “All people of truth and justice are agreed on the validity of the caliphate of 'Ali (ﷺ) when he was appointed to it after the killing of 'Uthmân (ﷺ).”⁴⁵

6. Az-Zuhri said: “He was loyal and sincere to ‘Uthmân (ﷺ) until he was killed, and he was the best of those Companions who remained. No one was more deserving of the caliphate than him, but he did not accept it, even though he was the most entitled of the people to it, until allegiance was sworn to him and the remaining members of the consultative committee (shoora) swore allegiance to him along with the rest of the people.”⁴⁶
7. Abdullah al-Juwayni said: “With regard to ‘Umar, ‘Uthmân and ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with them), the way to prove that their caliphates were valid, and that they met the conditions of being qualified for this post, is the same as that of proving the validity of the caliphate of Abu Bakr (ﷺ). The evidence of anyone who discusses the position of leadership is to be based on mutawâtir reports and consensus. No attention should be paid to the one who says that there was no consensus on the caliphate of ‘Ali (ﷺ), because his caliphate was not denied; rather there was division and turmoil because of other issues.”⁴⁷
8. Abu Abdullah ibn Battâh said: “The oath of allegiance to ‘Ali (ﷺ) was based on consensus and was a mercy. He did not want this position, and he did not force them to swear allegiance to him by the sword; nor did he gain power by means of his clan. The position of caliphate itself was honoured when ‘Ali (ﷺ) became caliph; he adorned it with his high status, gave it a sense of dignity by means of his justice, and elevated it by his noble attitude. He refused that position, but they forced him; he was reluctant, but they put pressure on him.”⁴⁸
9. Al-Ghazâlî said: “They all agreed on the superiority of Abu Bakr, then Abu Bakr nominated ‘Umar, then they all agreed on ‘Uthmân, then on ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with them all). These people are not to be thought of with suspicion — as treacherous with regard to the religion of Allah or as betraying

the faith for personal gain. Their consensus on that is the best evidence that highlights the level of their superiority. Hence the belief of Ahl as-Sunnah is that their superiority is to be ranked in this order. Then they looked for reports and found in them the basis for the views of the Companions and the people of consensus with regard to this ranking of superiority.”⁴⁹

10. Abu Bakr ibn al-‘Arabi said: “When Allah decreed what He decreed (the murder of ‘Uthmân), it was well known that the people could not be left without an authority and that the people after him needed a caliph, so they had to look and see who was best for that position. There was no one after the first three caliphs who was like the fourth in status, knowledge, piety and religious commitment. So allegiance was sworn to him, and were it not for their haste in swearing allegiance to ‘Ali (ﷺ), these thugs could have caused further damage that could never have been repaired. But the Muhâjiroun and the Anşâr insisted on him, and he thought it was an obligation upon him, so he yielded to their pressure and accepted.”⁵⁰
11. Ibn Taymiyah said: “The Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) agreed to swear allegiance to ‘Uthmân after ‘Umar, and it is proven from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: ‘I urge you to adhere to my Sunnah and the way of the Rightly Guided Caliphs after me; adhere to it and cling firmly to it. And beware of newly introduced matters, because every innovation is a going astray.’⁵¹ Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) was the last of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, and all of Ahl as-Sunnah, scholars, worshippers, commanders and troops were unanimously agreed that they should say: Abu Bakr, then ‘Umar, then ‘Uthmân, then ‘Ali.”⁵²
12. Ibn Hajar said: “The swearing of allegiance to ‘Ali (ﷺ) as caliph came immediately after the slaying of ‘Uthmân (ﷺ), at

the beginning of the month of Dhul-Ḥijjah in 35 AH. All of the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr, and everyone who was present, swore allegiance to him. He wrote letters to other provinces telling them that they should also swear allegiance to him; they all agreed except Mu‘âwiyah and the people of Syria, and there happened between them what happened.”⁵³

What we learn from the above quotations, which describe consensus, is that the caliphate of ‘Ali was the subject of consensus with regard to its validity at the time it took place. That was after the slaying of ‘Uthmân (ﷺ), and there was no one left on earth who was more entitled to it than ‘Ali (ﷺ). So the position of caliph finally came to him at the right time.⁵⁴

Some people have objected to the view that there was consensus concerning the caliphate of ‘Ali (ﷺ) for several reasons:

1. The abstention of the Companions Sa‘d ibn Abi Waqqâs, Muhammad ibn Maslamah, Ibn ‘Umar, Usâmah ibn Zayd and others like them.⁵⁵
2. People only swore allegiance to him on condition that he execute the killers of ‘Uthmân (ﷺ).⁵⁶
3. The people of Syria, Mu‘âwiyah and those who were with him, did not swear allegiance to him; rather they fought him.⁵⁷

These objections do not have any effect on the consensus referred to above, and they do not contradict or undermine it, because they are to be refuted on several counts:

1. The claim that a number of the Companions abstained from swearing allegiance to ‘Ali (ﷺ) is incorrect because no one refrained from swearing allegiance to him. Some people, including those mentioned above, did not join him; that was an

issue that is subject to individual opinion, so each individual worked it out for himself and acted accordingly.⁵⁸ With regard to Ibn Khaldoon's comment that the people were scattered throughout the regions at the time of 'Uthmân's murder and were not present when the oath of allegiance was sworn to 'Ali (عليه السلام), and that of those who were present, some swore allegiance and some (Sa'd, Sa'eed, Ibn 'Umar and others)⁵⁹ refrained until the people gathered and agreed on a leader, what is mentioned is an exaggeration on the part of Ibn Khaldoon (may Allah have mercy on him). With regard to Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâs, his swearing allegiance to 'Ali (عليه السلام) was narrated by Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Hibbân, adh-Dhahabi and others.⁶⁰ The same is true for the rest; they swore allegiance, as we have mentioned, and there was consensus on that among the Companions who were present in Madinah. Ibn Khaldoon himself has narrated that there was consensus among the second generation after the Companions in Madinah that the caliphate of 'Ali (عليه السلام) became valid and was binding on all Muslims. I have quoted what Ibn Khaldoon said because many writers and researchers relied on it later on.

2. Appointing a caliph and leader is obligatory and essential, but basing that on the condition that the entire Ummah be present and agree to it is something impossible. It is not permissible to stipulate this condition, because that will lead to this duty not being fulfilled, and many evils may arise as a result.⁶¹
3. Consensus regarding the caliphate of Abu Bakr (عليه السلام) was achieved by means of the oaths of allegiance of 'Umar and Abu 'Ubaydah and those of the Anşâr who were present with them, even though 'Ali, 'Uthmân and other Companions were not present. Similarly, consensus regarding the caliphate of 'Ali (عليه السلام) was achieved when Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâs, Ibn 'Umar, Usâmah ibn Zayd, 'Ammâr and others of those who had been

present at Badr and other Companions swore allegiance to him, and that consensus was not undermined by the fact that some were absent or that some did not swear allegiance (may Allah be pleased with them all). Al-Ḥasan al-Basri said: “By Allah, the oath of allegiance to ‘Ali was like the oath of allegiance to Abu Bakr and ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with them).”⁶²

4. The claim that allegiance was only sworn to him on the condition that he would execute the killers of ‘Uthmān (ﷺ) could not be a valid condition. Rather they swore allegiance on the condition that he rule on the basis of justice and truth, which is by summoning the one who is asking for retaliation and the one who is accused, then allowing everyone to present his case and allowing questioning and examination of evidence; only after that can the verdict be given.⁶³ As for the reports claiming that Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr and some of the other Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) stipulated when swearing allegiance that ‘Ali (ﷺ) should carry out the ḥadd punishments, these reports are weak in their chains of narration, and the texts are also subject to further discussion.⁶⁴ Concerning that, Ibn al-‘Arabi said: “If it is said that they swore allegiance to him on the basis that he would execute the killers of ‘Uthmān (ﷺ), we say: That is not valid as a condition of swearing allegiance.”⁶⁵
5. Mu‘āwiyah (ﷺ) did not fight ‘Ali (ﷺ) for the position of caliph, and he never denied the validity of his leadership; rather he fought him so that the ḥadd punishments might be carried out on those who had taken part in the slaying of ‘Uthmān (ﷺ), because in his estimation, that this was the right thing to do. He was mistaken in that, though, so he would have the reward of *ijtihād* only.⁶⁶ The sound reports prove that his disagreement with ‘Ali (ﷺ) had to do with the execution of the killers of ‘Uthmān (ﷺ), and he did not dispute with him with regard to

the caliphate; rather he affirmed his right to that position. It was narrated from Abu Muslim al-Khawlânî that he and some other people came to Mu'âwiyah (ؓ) and said: "You are disputing with 'Ali (ؓ); are you like him?" He said: "No, by Allah. I know that he is better than me and has more right to the position of caliph than me. But don't you know that 'Uthmân (ؓ) was killed unlawfully, and I am his cousin and am seeking retribution for his blood? So go and tell him that he should hand over to me the murderers of 'Uthmân (ؓ), and I will stop disputing with him." So they went to 'Ali (ؓ) and spoke to him, but he did not hand the murderers over to him.⁶⁷

Ibn Katheer narrated via Ibn Deezeel, with his chain of narration going back to Abu ad-Dardâ' and Abu Umâmah (may Allah be pleased with them both), that they entered upon Mu'âwiyah and said to him: "O Mu'âwiyah, why are you fighting this man? For by Allah, he has more seniority in Islam than you and your father, he was closer to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) than you and he is more deserving of this position than you." He said: "I am fighting him because of the issue of seeking retribution for the blood of 'Uthmân (ؓ), and he has given refuge to his killers. So go to him and tell him: Let him exact retribution on the murderers of 'Uthmân (ؓ), then I will be the first of the people of Syria to swear allegiance to him."⁶⁸

The reports concerning this matter are many, and they are well known to the scholars.⁶⁹ They indicate that Mu'âwiyah (ؓ) was not disputing with 'Ali (ؓ) for the caliphate, and this was stated by the scholars who examined this issue and established this fact.⁷⁰ Imam al-Haramayn al-Juwayni said: "Even though Mu'âwiyah fought 'Ali, he did not deny the validity of his caliphate, and he never wanted it for himself; rather he was pursuing the killers of 'Uthmân (ؓ) because he thought that he was correct, but he was wrong."⁷¹ Ibn

Hajar al-Haythami said: "Among the beliefs of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah is that what happened between 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah (may Allah be pleased with them both) of fighting was not because Mu'âwiyah was competing with 'Ali (ﷺ) for the caliphate, because there was consensus that 'Ali (ﷺ) was more qualified for it, as we have seen. So the turmoil was not because of that; rather it is because Mu'âwiyah (رضي الله عنه), and those who were with him, asked 'Ali (ﷺ) to hand over the killers of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) to them because Mu'âwiyah was 'Uthmân's cousin, but 'Ali (ﷺ) refused."⁷² We will explain 'Ali's stance and why he did not hand over the killers of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) later on, but the point here is to prove that Mu'âwiyah's not swearing allegiance did not mean that he objected to 'Ali becoming the caliph.

Ibn Taymiyah said: "Mu'âwiyah did not seek the caliphate, and no one swore allegiance to him as caliph when he fought 'Ali (ﷺ). He was not fighting on the basis that he should be caliph or that he was entitled to the caliphate. All the scholars affirm that, and Mu'âwiyah confirmed that to those who asked him about it. In addition to that, the supporters of both groups⁷³ affirmed that Mu'âwiyah was not equal to 'Ali (ﷺ) with regard to the position of caliph, and he could not be caliph while it was possible to appoint 'Ali (ﷺ) to that position. 'Ali's superiority, seniority, knowledge, religious commitment, courage and all of his virtues were obvious and well known to them."⁷⁴ Thus it is proven that no one was competing with 'Ali (ﷺ) for the caliphate, either among those who differed with him or any others.⁷⁵ These scholarly opinions all have to do with the belief of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah with regard to the order of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, so it is essential to defend this belief, tell people about it, raise the new generation with it and be proud of it.

1.5. Conditions stipulated by Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) in the oath of allegiance, and the first speech that he delivered

Some reports state that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) stipulated a number of conditions with regard to the oath of allegiance to him, including: that allegiance should be sworn in public and not in secret, that it should be done in the mosque, that it should be done with the approval of the Muslims, and that he would run their affairs as he saw fit and on the basis of what he knew. They agreed and arranged to meet in the mosque the following morning to swear the oath of allegiance.⁷⁶ That was an eventful and important day. Amir al-Mu'mineen came out wearing complete formal clothing. After praising and glorifying Allah (ﷻ), he explained to the people the attempts that had been made to convince him to accept the caliphate, and he said: "I was reluctant to be appointed in charge of your affairs, but you insisted that I should be in charge of you. I have no authority without your support, and indeed the keys of your wealth are with me. Verily I have no right to keep even a single dirham to myself in exclusion of you."⁷⁷ Then he said: "O people, this issue of leadership is your affair, and no one has any right to it except the one whom you appoint. Yesterday we parted after agreeing on a matter, so if you want, I will sit to receive your oath of allegiance; otherwise, I do not have any hard feelings towards anyone (if you change your minds)." Then he raised his voice and said: "Do you agree?" They said: "Yes." He said: "O Allah, bear witness over them," and the people started to give their oath of allegiance to him.⁷⁸ After the oath of allegiance had been sworn, Amir al-Mu'mineen said: "O people, you have sworn allegiance to me on the same basis as you swore allegiance to my companions. As you have sworn allegiance to me, you have no other option than to follow me, and the ruler is obliged to follow the right path and to be upright and just. This is a general oath of allegiance..."⁷⁹

Among the lessons we learn from this are the following:

1.5.1. The principle of consultation

The swearing of allegiance to the fourth caliph ‘Ali (عليه السلام) was no different, with regard to the principle of consultation, from those that came before it, despite the crisis that the Ummah was going through and the turmoil and problems that were coming one after another. Allegiance was not sworn on the basis of clan, family or tribe, or on the basis of instructions or a covenant from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). If there was anything of that nature, there could not have been that lengthy a discussion, and Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) would not have refused; he would have been the first one to demand his rights. On the contrary, the people were pushing and urging him to accept the oath of allegiance, and he was trying to avoid them and keep out of it, hoping that something would happen to prevent him from getting involved, until he accepted it reluctantly. If there were any instructions from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to that effect, they would not have hesitated to carry them out, but they did not ask him to do that on the basis of instructions. Nor did they ask him on the grounds that he was from the tribe of ‘Abd Manâf or because he was one of Quraysh; rather it was because he was one of the earliest to become Muslim, he was one of the ten who were given the glad tidings of paradise, and he was the people’s second choice after ‘Uthmân (عليه السلام) when the consultation process was carried out after the murder of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaţţâb (عليه السلام). Whenever ‘Abdur-Rahmân ibn ‘Awf consulted someone and they recommended appointing ‘Uthmân as the caliph after ‘Umar, he asked the person whom he would choose if ‘Uthmân were not there, and the answer every time was ‘Ali (عليه السلام).⁸⁰

1.5.2. The decision-makers and prominent people at the time of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ)

When Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them) were appointed as caliphs, the decision-makers and prominent people comprised the remainder of the ten who had been given the glad tidings of paradise, as well as the clan chiefs of al-Aws and al-Khazraj. They were all residents of Madinah, among the first to become Muslim, and well-versed in knowledge and faith.⁸¹

'Ali (ﷺ) thought that the selection of the caliph was a matter for those who were still in Madinah of the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr, the decision-makers among those who had been present at Badr and the consultative committee, but al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali (ﷺ) thought that attention should be paid to the new elements in Muslim society. That is clarified in the discussion that took place between al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali and his father 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (may Allah be pleased with them both). Al-Ḥasan said: "I told you, but you did not listen to me, and next you will be killed when you are alone with no one to support you." 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "You are still nagging like a little girl. What is it that you told me to do and I did not listen to you?" He said: "I told you on the day that 'Uthmân (ﷺ) was besieged to leave Madinah, so that if he was killed you would not be there. Then I told you on the day that he was killed not to accept the oath of allegiance until the delegations from different regions and Arab tribes had each sworn their allegiance."⁸² 'Ali's response was: "As for your telling me not to accept the oath of allegiance until the allegiance of the regions came, this matter is something to be decided by the people of Madinah, and we did not want this decision to be made by others."⁸³

'Ali (ﷺ) thought that swearing allegiance to appoint the caliph could be done by people other than the people of Madinah and the Muhâjiroon and Anṣâr, but he did not want this position to be moved away from them to others or that others should participate in it

at that time. He was concerned that a person from elsewhere might introduce new things that drifted away from the ways of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and the earlier caliphs, or that it was still too early to allow anyone other than the Muhâjiroun and Anşâr to participate in the selection of the Muslim ruler. Therefore he did not want this issue to be taken away from the Muhâjiroun and Anşâr.⁸⁴ The evidence for that is that when the people of Kufah suggested to him that allegiance should be given to al-Ḥasan, he said: "I neither forbid you nor enjoin you." This indicates that it is permissible for people other than the people of Madinah to choose the ruler.

From this discussion that took place between al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Ali and his father (may Allah be pleased with them both), we learn a number of things:

- (a) Respect for the other side's opinion in discussions.
- (b) Kind and gentle treatment of Amir al-Mu'mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) towards his son.
- (c) Frankness of the son towards his father in expressing everything he thought was right in this discussion.
- (d) Listening properly to the other side, as Amir al-Mu'mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) listened to all the arguments presented by his son al-Ḥasan.
- (e) Discussing the points one after another in a systematic manner.⁸⁵

1.5.3. Keenness that the position of caliph should not remain vacant

The Muhâjiroun and Anşâr in Madinah insisted that ‘Ali (ﷺ) should accept the position of caliph, even though he was reluctant, so as to ward off the danger of the Ummah falling into chaos and

division. So he accepted and was keen to push the rebels a step backwards by stipulating that allegiance should be sworn to him openly in the mosque. The people of prominent position and the decision-makers are the ones who should appoint the caliph; as for the common folk, their place is in swearing the general oath of allegiance, which is to be done openly.⁸⁶ He was keen to confirm this principle from the minbar when he said: "O people, this matter of yours (appointing someone to the caliphate) is your affair, and no one has the right to take that position except the one whom you appoint."⁸⁷

1.5.4. Response to some contemporary writers who talk about the oath of allegiance to 'Ali (ﷺ)

Al-'Aqqâd says, speaking about the election of the caliph after the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ): "This report, even though it is brief, listed for us the names of all the possible candidates for the caliphate in Madinah after the killing of 'Uthmân (ﷺ). Perhaps those who sought it most were Talḥah and az-Zubayr, who declared war on 'Ali (ﷺ) later on. They were paving the way for that during 'Uthmân's lifetime; they thought that Quraysh had already decided that no Hâshimi should take that position, and that 'Ali (ﷺ) would soon be pushed away from the post of caliph after 'Uthmân (ﷺ), as he had been before. 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) preferred for the caliphate to end up with one of these two or with Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr, because Talḥah was from the tribe of Taym, and az-Zubayr was the husband of her sister Asma'. The support of 'Â'ishah for one of them would give great hope of success."⁸⁸

Elsewhere, he said: "The matter concerning which there is no doubt is that Imam ['Ali (ﷺ)] was annoyed at the injustice done to him when allegiance was sworn to someone else after the death of his cousin (ﷺ), and he thought that his kinship with the Prophet was an

advantage that would make him more qualified to become caliph after him, because it was a branch of prophethood as he thought. They were the family of prophethood, and the message descended among them, as he said.”⁸⁹

He also said: “It is well known that ‘Ali (عليه السلام) thought that he was more entitled to the caliphate than his predecessors, but he had been pushed away from his right since the departure of the Prophet (ﷺ) to the higher companion.”⁹⁰ There are other serious mistakes, lies and obvious fabrications in which al-‘Aqqâd indulged because of the fabricated reports.

Similar errors were made by Khâlid Muhammad Khâlid in his book *Khulafa’ ar-Rasool*, in which he quoted from ‘Ali (عليه السلام) fabricated words, according to which he said that Abu Bakr and ‘Umar had usurped the caliphate from him.⁹¹ Khâlid al-Beetâr was also mistaken in his book *‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib* when he commented on the stance of Fâtimah (عليها السلام) with regard to the inheritance of her father⁹² and the attitude of ‘Ali (عليه السلام) concerning the caliphate of Abu Bakr (عليه السلام).

These are just a few examples from a long list of people who discussed these issues and said things that were not based on proper research and knowledge, claiming that ‘Ali was pushed away from the caliphate after the death of ‘Uthmân (عليه السلام) as he had been pushed away before that; that the Companions were conspiring to seize the caliphate on the basis of tribal affiliation and resentment against Banu Hâshim, or for the purpose of worldly gains; that ‘Ali was upset because of the unfairness that befell him when allegiance was given to someone other than him after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ); that he felt that he was more entitled to the caliphate than his predecessors, and that the Prophet (ﷺ) had paved the way for his caliphate and tried to make him loved by the people when he appointed him as a commander on some occasions and left him in charge of Madinah in

his absence on others; that there were no close relationships between 'Ali (ﷺ) and the other Companions; that he forgave Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) for their transgression against him and seizure of the caliphate; and that he swore allegiance to Abu Bakr only after the death of Fâṭimah (ﷺ).

All of these are lies and fabrications that are contrary to truth, justice and fairness; they are also contrary to the sound historical record and to clear statements made by 'Ali (ﷺ) himself, as quoted above. He acknowledged the superiority of the previous caliphs when he was caliph; he would even announce that from the minbar and issue threats of punishment to anyone who gave him precedence over them. This is proven with sound chains of narration. He was a support and help to them, and his relationships with them were strong. The strength of these bonds was not affected by the turmoil and troubles that were stirred up by those whose confusion was based on weak and fabricated reports from the authors whom we have mentioned, whose statements we have quoted by way of example; this is not a complete list. The reason why they fell into this pit was their ignorance of the methodology of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah in writing history, as well as the fact that they were not able to distinguish between sound sources and worthless sources, or between sound reports and weak or fabricated reports, so they relied on fabricated reports when reaching their conclusions.

1.5.5. The first speech delivered by 'Ali (ﷺ)

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) said, in the first speech that he delivered when he was appointed as caliph: "Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, sent down a Book of guidance in which He explained good and evil, so do what is good and stay away from what is evil. Carry out obligatory duties for the sake of Allah, and Allah will lead you to paradise. Allah has established sacred limits that are

not unknown; He has made the sanctity of the Muslim more sacred than all other sacred limits; and He has brought the Muslims together on the basis of devotion and tawh  d. The Muslim is the one from whose hand and tongue the Muslims are safe, except when there is a legitimate reason. It is not permissible to harm a Muslim except when there is a legitimate reason. Pay attention to the interests of the people... for the people are in front of you (meaning that you could do something for them), and the Hour is behind you and will catch up with you. Show little interest in this world, and you will join the righteous people, because what lies ahead of the people is their destination in the hereafter. Fear Allah with regard to His slaves and His land, for you are responsible even for the land and the animals. Obey Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, and do not disobey Him. If you see something good, then go ahead and do it; if you see something evil, then leave it. *  And remember when you were few and were reckoned weak in the land   (Qur'an 8: 26).*"⁹³

Since the oath of allegiance to 'Ali (  ) came after overwhelming turmoil, the victim of which was the previous caliph of the Muslims, he called the Muslims to do good and to stay away from evil, and he explained to them that the sanctity of the Muslim surpassed all others, and that it is not permissible to harm a Muslim under any circumstances. Then he reminded them of death and the hereafter, and he urged them to adhere to piety, obedience and righteous deeds.⁹⁴

The main points of this speech had to do with aspects of belief, worship and attitude. He also referred to some of the aims of Sharia. We may sum up the plan that he wanted to draw up for the people as follows: Go back to the way you were at the time of the Messenger of Allah (  )⁹⁵ and the Rightly Guided Caliphs who came before 'Ali (  ). With wisdom and eloquence, Amir al-Mu'mineen explained the foundation for the new era of the caliphate by saying: "If you see

something good, then go ahead and do it; if you see something evil, then leave it.”

He concluded with the Qur'anic verse that they needed to be reminded of, so as to compare how they were before Islam and after. They had been few in number, weak, lonely and in a state of obscurity, to the extent that they were like a piece of meat pecked by birds, but now [after Islam came] they had gained in strength, abundance, security, peace, prosperity and riches. Allah (ﷻ) had granted them blessings, so they had become famous; their banners were planted throughout the world, and people and countries had submitted to them.⁹⁶

1.5.6. The equivalence of the words 'imam', 'caliph' and 'Amir al-Mu'mineen'

An-Nawawi said: “It is permissible to call the ruler caliph, imam and Amir al-Mu'mineen.”⁹⁷ Ibn Khaldoon said: “We have explained the definition of this position: it is someone who acts on behalf of the one who brought Sharia with regard to protecting the religion and taking care of the worldly affairs of the Muslims. That post may be called the caliphate or imamate, and the one who fills that post may be called the caliph or imam.”⁹⁸ Ibn Mandhooor defines the caliphate as rulership.⁹⁹ Abu Zahrah explained the similarity between these two words caliphate and greater imamate: “It is called caliphate (*khilâfah*) because the one who takes that post and becomes the ultimate ruler of the Muslims is taking the position of succeeding the Prophet (ﷺ) with regard to running their affairs; and it is called the imamate because the caliph was called imam, because obedience to him is obligatory, and the people rally behind him as they would rally behind the one who led them in prayer.”¹⁰⁰ Professor Muhammad al-Mubâarak explained the reason for the choice of these words — imam, caliph and Amir al-Mu'mineen — as aimed at

making the Islamic concept of the state distinct from the ancient system of monarchy as understood by other nations such as the Persians and the Byzantines, since those systems were fundamentally different from the new Islamic concept.¹⁰¹ The early caliphs were called both caliphs and imams, and from the time of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (رضي الله عنه), the Muslims began to use the title Amir al-Mu'mineen.

The word imam is mentioned in the noble Qur'an in more than one place in the sense of leader, guide or head. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿He [Allah] said [to him], 'Verily, I am going to make you an *Imam* [a leader] for mankind [to follow you].' [Ibrâheem (Abraham)] said, 'And of my offspring [to make leaders].' [Allah] said, 'My Covenant [prophethood] includes not *Zâlimoon* [polytheists and wrongdoers]﴾ (*Qur'an* 2: 124). This means that He was going to make him an example to be followed.¹⁰² He (ﷻ) also says: ﴿and make us leaders [*imaman*] of the Muttaqoon [the pious]﴾ (*Qur'an* 25: 74), so that they will follow us in matters of religion. He says: ﴿[And remember] the Day when We shall call together all human beings with their [respective] Imam [their Prophets, or their records of good and bad deeds, or their holy Books like the Qur'an, the Tawrât (Torah), the Injeel (Gospel), or the leaders whom the people followed in this world]﴾ (*Qur'an* 17: 71), that is, with whomever they followed as a leader, be it a Prophet or a religious leader, or as it was said: the book of their deeds which they sent ahead.¹⁰³ The word imam also appears in many places in the Sunnah, such as the words of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "Whoever swears allegiance to a ruler [imam], giving him his hand with sincerity, let him obey him if he can. If another comes and disputes with him, then strike the neck of the other one;"¹⁰⁴ "Adhere to the main body of the Muslims and their leader [imam]"¹⁰⁵ and "There are seven whom Allah will shade with His shade on the Day when there will be no shade but His: a just ruler [imam]..."¹⁰⁶

It may be noted that the word *imamate* is most often used by Ahl as-Sunnah in their books of 'aqedah (belief) and fiqh, while the word *caliphate* is more usually used in their historical books. The reason for that may be that these books, especially those on 'aqedah, were written to refute those who introduced innovations into these matters, such as the Râfiḍī Shia and the Kharijites.¹⁰⁷ The Râfiḍī Shia use the word *imam* but not the word *caliph*, and they regard it as one of their pillars of faith and they differentiate between *imamate* and *caliphate*. They regard the *imamate* as religious leadership and the *caliphate* as head of state,¹⁰⁸ intending thereby to affirm that 'Ali was the *imam* during the time of the three *caliphs* who preceded him.¹⁰⁹ Ibn Khaldoon said: "The Shia gave the title of *imam* exclusively to 'Ali so as to affirm his position of *imamate* which was akin to the position of *caliphate*, and to affirm what they believe: that he had more right to lead the people in prayer than Abu Bakr (ﷺ)." ¹¹⁰

These titles — *caliph*, *imam* and *Amir al-Mu'mineen* — are not an issue that has to do with religious beliefs and actions, rather they are terminologies that existed after the death of the Messenger (ﷺ) that were used by the people. The Muslims also used other titles later on, such as *amir* (*emir*), as was the case in Andalusia, and *sultan*, and rulers may be called by any of these titles in the Islamic state. What matters in this regard is that the Muslims and their leaders should submit to Islamic teachings in beliefs and in laws and legislation, regardless of the titles that may be given to the head of state — whether his title is *caliph*, *Amir al-Mu'mineen*, head of state or president of the republic. Any of these titles or others may be used, depending on the people's customs. It is preferable to use the titles mentioned above, though, because they have political connotations that are distinct from the connotations used by other nations, and because they have meanings that resonate throughout our history as a symbol of Islamic civilisation.¹¹¹

1.5.7. Which is more correct when mentioning Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) — to say 'May Allah be pleased with him', 'May Allah honour his face', or 'Peace be upon him'?

The basic principle when mentioning the Companions is to say 'may Allah be pleased with them all', as Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And the foremost to embrace Islam of the Muhâjiroon and the Anṣâr and also those who followed them exactly [in Faith]. Allah is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him﴾ (*Qur'an* 9: 100) and ﴿Indeed, Allah was pleased with the believers when they gave the Bay'ah [pledge] to you [O Muhammad] under the tree.﴾ (*Qur'an* 48: 18). Hence Ahl as-Sunnah are accustomed to saying 'may Allah be pleased with him' for any Companion who is mentioned or from whom any hadîth is narrated. For example, it may be said: "This hadîth was narrated from Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him)."

As far as I know, they do not use the phrase 'peace be upon him' when mentioning any of the Companions, even though peace or salâm is the greeting of the Muslims amongst themselves, as Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿But when you enter the houses, greet one another with a greeting from Allah [i.e. say: *as-Salâmu 'Alaykum* — peace be on you], blessed and good﴾ (*Qur'an* 24: 61). Based on this, saying 'may Allah be pleased with him' is better than saying 'peace be upon him'. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿But the greatest bliss is the Good Pleasure of Allah﴾ (*Qur'an* 9: 72), and the Prophet (ﷺ) told us that Allah (ﷻ) says to the people of paradise: "I grant you My pleasure, and I will never be angry with you again."¹¹² But the scholars are accustomed to saying 'peace be upon him' only with regard to the prophets, because Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And peace be on the Messengers﴾ (*Qur'an* 37: 181) and ﴿And Salâm [peace] be on him the day he was born﴾ (*Qur'an* 19: 15).

Due to the report that was narrated concerning 'Ali (عليه السلام), in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said to him: "You are to me as Haroon was to Moosa,"¹¹³ those who exaggerate, such as the Râfiḍis, started to use the phrases 'peace be upon him' or 'may Allah honour his face' with regard to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام). Undoubtedly he is deserving of that, but the other Companions are just as worthy.¹¹⁴ This phrase was used by many copyists and scribes, and by some of the scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah, specifically with regard to 'Ali (عليه السلام); they would say 'peace be upon him' or 'may Allah honour his face' when referring to him but not to the rest of the Companions. Even though the meaning may be correct, we should treat all the Companions equally in that regard.¹¹⁵

2. Some of the virtues and most important characteristics of 'Ali (عليه السلام) and the basis for his system of rule

Imam Aḥmad, Ismâ'eel al-Qâḍi, an-Nasâ'i and Abu 'Ali an-Neesaboori said: "There are no reports (with good chains of narration) concerning any of the Companions more numerous than those which were narrated concerning 'Ali (عليه السلام)."¹¹⁶ Al-Hâfiḍh ibn Ḥajar said: "The reason for that is that he came at a later stage, i.e., he was the last of the Rightly Guided Caliphs; differences arose during his time, and there were some groups who rebelled against him. That was why the Companions explained his virtues so often to people, in order to refute those who opposed him. Therefore Ahl as-Sunnah needed to propagate his virtues, and there were many narrators thereof. However, each of the four caliphs had a great deal of good virtues, and if you compare the virtues of the four on the basis of fairness and justice, the conclusion you reach will never differ from the view of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah at all."¹¹⁷ Ibn Katheer said:

“Among the virtues of ‘Ali (عليه السلام) is that he was the closest in lineage to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) of the ten whom our Prophet testified would be in paradise.”¹¹⁸ I have mentioned a great deal about his virtues above, as appropriate. In order to complete the picture of the virtues of ‘Ali (عليه السلام), we may add the following:

- ❖ It was narrated that Zurr (عليه السلام) said that ‘Ali (عليه السلام) said: “By the One Who caused the seed to split and sprout and created the soul, the unlettered Prophet (ﷺ) told me that no one loves me but a believer, and no one hates me but a hypocrite.”¹¹⁹
- ❖ It was narrated from Abu Ishâq: “A man asked al-Bara’ when I was listening: ‘Was ‘Ali present at Badr?’ He said: ‘He engaged in a duel and wore two coats of chain mail.’”¹²⁰
- ❖ It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (عليه السلام) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was on Mount Uḥud with Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmân, ‘Ali, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with them), and the rock moved. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Be still, for there is no one on you but a Prophet, a Ṣiddeeq and a martyr.”¹²¹
- ❖ Sa‘eed ibn Zayd said: “I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: ‘The Prophet will be in paradise, Abu Bakr will be in paradise, ‘Umar will be in paradise, ‘Uthmân will be in paradise, ‘Ali will be in paradise, Ṭalḥah will be in paradise, az-Zubayr will be in paradise, ‘Abdur-Raḥmân ibn ‘Awf will be in paradise, Sa’d will be in paradise, and if you wish I will mention the tenth one.’”¹²²
- ❖ Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: “I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: ‘Whoever reviles ‘Ali has reviled me.’”¹²³

- ❖ A man came to Ibn 'Umar and asked him about 'Uthmân (ؓ). He mentioned his good deeds and said: "Perhaps that bothers you?" He said: "Yes." He said: "May Allah cause your nose to be rubbed in the dust!" Then he asked him about 'Ali (ؓ), and he mentioned his good deeds and said: "It is all true, and that is his house in the midst of the houses of the Prophet (ﷺ)." Then he said: "Perhaps that annoys you?" He said: "Indeed it does." He said: "May Allah cause your nose to be rubbed in the dust! Go away and do whatever you can against me."¹²⁴

As for the attributes of 'Ali (ؓ), he had the attributes of a devoted leader who is willing to sacrifice everything for the sake of Allah and His Book and the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ). We will sum them up in a few lines here, then we will focus on some of them in more detail. Some of the most important of these attributes were: soundness of belief, knowledge of Sharia, trust in Allah, leading by example, sincerity, calibre, courage, chivalry, asceticism, love of sacrifice, choosing helpers well, humility, forbearance, patience, ambition, determination, strong willpower, justice and the ability to teach and train leaders. There are other qualities that may show themselves to the researcher who studies the Makkan period, during which he was with the Prophet (ﷺ); the Madinan period, when he accompanied the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) on his military campaigns; and his role in the society. There were still other attributes that were manifested when he was appointed leader of the state and became Amir al-Mu'mineen (ؓ). Among the most important of these qualities were the following:

2.1. Knowledge and understanding of Islam

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ؓ) was one of the senior scholars among the Companions. He was distinguished by his abundant

knowledge and eagerness to acquire further knowledge. He used all means and methods available at that time to acquire and preserve knowledge, such as writing, studying and staying close to the Prophet (ﷺ). With regard to his collecting the noble Qur'an, he said: "I swore an oath that I would not wear my cloak except in prayer until I had collected the Qur'an."¹²⁵ He also said: "I did not sleep at the time of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) until I found out what Jibreel (as) had brought down that day of ḥalâl and ḥarâm, or Sunnah, or Qur'an, or instructions or prohibitions, and concerning whom it had come down."¹²⁶ 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) would hear the text directly from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), but if he heard a hadith from someone else, he would be very cautious about accepting it, lest he attribute to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) something that he did not say. Among the indications that he used this method are his words: "If I heard a hadith from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), I would benefit from it as much Allah (ﷻ) willed, and if someone else told me a hadith from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), I would ask him to swear to it, and if he swore to it I would believe him."

He said: "Abu Bakr told me — and Abu Bakr spoke the truth (ﷺ) — I heard the Messenger of Allah say: 'There is no slave who commits a sin then purifies himself properly, then stands up and prays two raka'ahs and asks Allah for forgiveness, but Allah will forgive him.'" Then he recited this verse: ﴿And those who, when they have committed *Fâḥishah* [illegal sexual intercourse] or wronged themselves with evil, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their sins; and none can forgive sins but Allah — and do not persist in what [wrong] they have done, while they know﴾ (*Qur'an* 3: 135).¹²⁷ Yes, 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه) asked the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to swear, even though they were trustworthy and of good character. This is indicative of his extreme caution in accepting hadiths that he received from anyone other than the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).¹²⁸

'Ali (عليه السلام) was a man who used to ask a lot of questions and had the ability to understand quickly. He said: "My Lord gave me a smart mind and a questioning tongue."¹²⁹ He attributed his great knowledge to his seeking it from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) by asking questions. He said: "If I asked, I would be given an answer, and if I remained quiet, I would still be taught."¹³⁰ When shyness came between him and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and prevented him from asking questions, he would ask one of the Companions to ask for him. It was narrated that Muhammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah reported that 'Ali said: "I was a man who had a great deal of pre-seminal fluid, and I felt too shy to ask Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) about that, so I asked al-Miqdād ibn al-Aswad to ask him for me, and he said: 'Wuḍoo' is required for that.'"¹³¹ 'Ali (عليه السلام) warned the people against failing to acquire knowledge because of shyness, saying: "None of you should feel too shy to learn if he does not know,"¹³² and an ignorant person should not feel too shy to ask about what he does not know."

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) was among the few Muslims who knew how to read and write in the early days of Islam. Over and above that, he was one of the scribes who wrote down the revelation for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). This skill in reading and writing also helped him to develop a deep knowledge of Islam. He thought that texts should be written in a clear script, with distinct gaps between the lines and the letters close together. It was narrated from Abu 'Uthmān 'Amr ibn Bahr ibn al-Jāhiz that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام) said: "Handwriting has a message, so the clearer it is, the better."¹³³ He instructed his scribe 'Ubaydullah ibn Abi Rāfi': "Fill your inkpot, and sharpen your pen so that it will last longer. Leave gaps between the lines, and bring the letters close together."¹³⁴ It was narrated that Abu Ḥakeemah al-'Abdi said: "We used to write out the muṣḥafs in Kufah. 'Ali would pass by us while

we were writing, and he would say: 'Make your writing big and clear.' I cut my pen, then I wrote, and he said: "This is the way; give light to that to which Allah has granted light." ¹³⁵

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) also put into practice what he learned. He was one of the most eager of people to apply what he heard from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) even in the most difficult circumstances, as we saw when the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) taught the remembrances to Fâtimah and him (may Allah be pleased with them both). He said: "I never stopped doing that since the time I heard it from the Prophet (ﷺ)." He was asked: "Not even on the night of Şiffeen?" He said: "Not even on the night of Şiffeen." ¹³⁶

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) used to preserve the text by putting it into action, as he said: "Acquire knowledge, and you will become known for it; act upon it, and you will become people of knowledge." ¹³⁷ He thought that a scholar could not be called a scholar unless he acted upon his knowledge; hence he said to the bearers of knowledge: "O bearers of knowledge, act upon it, for the true bearer of knowledge is the one who acts upon what he learns and whose actions are in accordance with his knowledge." ¹³⁸ He also said: "Knowledge calls out to action to join it. If action responds (all well and good); otherwise, knowledge will depart." ¹³⁹

'Ali (عليه السلام) issued many fatwas compared to other Companions of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah be pleased with them). Ibn al-Qayyim said: "Those among the Companions of the Messenger of Allah from whom fatwas were taken were 130-odd, both men and women. Those who issued a large number of fatwas were seven: 'Umar ibn al-Khaţţâb, 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib, Abdullah ibn Mas'ood, 'Â'ishah Mother of the Believers, Zayd ibn Thâbit, Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs and Abdullah ibn 'Umar." ¹⁴⁰ Ibn Hâzm regarded 'Ali (عليه السلام) as the third among the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) with regard to the number of fatwas he issued. In our discussion

of the judiciary institutions, we will examine in greater detail his interpretations of Islamic law and other judiciary matters.

'Ali (عليه السلام) used to urge people to visit one another and discuss issues of knowledge, saying: "Visit one another and discuss hadiths; do not neglect it lest they disappear."¹⁴¹ According to another report: "Visit one another and discuss hadiths, for if you do not do that, they will disappear."¹⁴² Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) encouraged staying close to a religious scholar and being keen to learn from him. He said: "Do not feel that you have had enough of staying with him for a long time, for he is like a palm tree; you never know when something will fall from it on you."¹⁴³

'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) had the opportunity to stay with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as a small child, as he was raised under his care, and as an adult, when he became his son-in-law and the father of his two grandsons; thus he was close to the Messenger of Allah and learned from him. 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) testified to 'Ali's close companionship with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). It was narrated from al-Miqdâm ibn Shurayh that his father said: "I asked 'Â'ishah: 'Tell me about a man among the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) who asked him about wiping over the khuffs (leather socks).' She said: 'Go to 'Ali and ask him, for he stayed close to the Prophet (ﷺ).' I went to 'Ali and asked him, and he said: 'The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) instructed us to wipe over the khuffs when we travelled.'"¹⁴⁴

'Ali (عليه السلام) thought that one should be selective in choosing what to learn. He said: "Knowledge is more than can be learned, so take from each branch of knowledge what is best."¹⁴⁵ He reached such a high level of knowledge that he used to tell the people in Iraq: "Ask me." It was narrated that Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyab (رضي الله عنه) said: "None of the people said 'Ask me' except 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام)."¹⁴⁶ The people, both Companions and Tâbi'oon, had great confidence in his knowledge. It was narrated that Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه)

said: "If a sound report came to us from 'Ali, we would not regard anything else as equal to that report."¹⁴⁷ It was also narrated that Ibn 'Abbâs said: "If a trustworthy person narrated a fatwa to us from 'Ali (ﷺ), we would be content with it (and would not ask anyone else)."¹⁴⁸ It was narrated from Suwayd ibn Ghafilah that a man came to him asking about the inheritance of a man who had died, leaving behind his daughter and his wife. Suwayd said: "I will tell you of the verdict of 'Ali (ﷺ)." The man said: "The verdict of 'Ali (ﷺ) is sufficient for me." He said: "He allocated one-eighth to his wife and one-half to his daughter, then he gave the rest to his daughter."¹⁴⁹

The people praised 'Ali (ﷺ) for his knowledge. It was narrated that 'Ā'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: "He is the most knowledgeable of the Sunnah among the people."¹⁵⁰ Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ) used to write to someone to ask 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) on his behalf about new issues that he faced. When news of 'Ali's murder reached him, Mu'âwiyah said: "Islamic jurisprudence and knowledge have been lost with the death of 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ)."¹⁵¹ It was narrated from al-Hasan ibn 'Ali that he addressed the people after the death of 'Ali (ﷺ) and said: "A man left you yesterday who was never surpassed in knowledge by those who came before him and will never be surpassed by those who come after him."¹⁵² It was also narrated that Abdullah ibn 'Ayyâsh ibn Abi Rabee'ah said, when asked about 'Ali (ﷺ): "He was a prominent person who stood for the sake of Allah (ﷻ), he was related to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) through ties of blood and marriage, and he was one of the earliest to come to Islam. He had unsurpassed knowledge of the Qur'an and Sunnah. He was a great warrior and the most generous at the time of need."¹⁵³ It was narrated that Masrooq said: "The most prominent in knowledge of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah were 'Umar, 'Ali, Ibn Mas'ood and Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with them all)."¹⁵⁴

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) left behind advice and guidance to seekers of knowledge, scholars and jurists. This advice, which deserves to be memorised and acted upon, includes the following.

2.1.1. People are of three types: the devoted scholar, the one who seeks knowledge in order to save himself and the riffraff who follow every caller

Al-Hâfidh Abu Na'eem narrated that Kameel ibn Ziyâd said: “ ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) took me by the hand and led me out to the desert. When we got there, he sat down, breathing deeply, then he said: ‘O Kameel ibn Ziyâd, hearts are like vessels; the best of them are those that contain the most knowledge. Remember what I say to you. People are of three types: the devoted scholar, the one who seeks knowledge in order to save himself and the riffraff who follow every caller, bending with every wind; they do not seek guidance with knowledge and they never hold on to any strong pillar.’ ”¹⁵⁵ This eloquent advice included the most beautiful exhortation and wisdom. Amir al-Mu'mineen divided people into three categories:

- (a) The devoted scholars. What is meant here is religious scholars, learned people of religion who practice what they know and also preach to others, combining understanding of religion with wisdom, as Ibn 'Abbâs (عليه السلام) said in his commentary on the verse ﴿Be you *Rabbâniyyoon* [learned men of religion who practise what they know and also preach to others]﴾ (*Qur'an* 3: 79). He said: “People of wisdom and deep understanding.” This report was narrated by Imam Bukhari. This is also how Abdullah ibn Mas'ood (عليه السلام) interpreted it.¹⁵⁶ Those who combine wisdom and understanding of religion are the ones who are qualified to teach and guide the Ummah, because wisdom means putting things in the right place, which

includes properly implementing the rulings of Sharia on people's reality. That requires precise and subtle understanding of the realities of Muslim society. Another aspect of wisdom is teaching this Ummah about its religion, which requires a combination of teaching the religion and training the Muslims to be conscious of Allah and to observe good manners. As for deep understanding, that means understanding religious rulings from their Sharia sources. Hence the devoted scholars are the best of the Ummah, because they combine two virtues, namely the acquisition of knowledge and teaching and training others. Hence they are the ones who are qualified to teach and lead the Ummah.¹⁵⁷ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) defined the devoted scholars as being the ones who teach the people wisdom and train them on that basis.¹⁵⁸

- (b) Seekers of knowledge, whose intention is sincere, so that it might be a means of their being absolved of responsibility before Allah (الله). 'Ali (عليه السلام) referred to this type of person when he said: "The one who seeks knowledge in order to save himself." This applies not only to seekers of knowledge who devote their lives to the pursuit thereof, but also to everyone who shoulders the responsibility of applying this religion to life. These are the people who are concerned with their salvation in the hereafter, so they ask the devoted scholars questions about religious matters in order to worship Allah (الله) with proper understanding and to interact with people according to the guidelines set by Allah (الله). Such people are regarded as those who seek knowledge in order to save themselves, even if they do not sit in study circles.¹⁵⁹ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) showed us the importance of sincerity of intention towards

Allah when seeking knowledge. He called on the people to give precedence to that which is with Allah (ﷻ) and the hereafter over insignificant worldly gains and whims and desires, to give precedence to calling people to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger and the religion of truth, and to be patient in doing so.

- (c) Those who neglect to seek religious knowledge and who have no connection with the devoted scholars when it comes to learning about their religion. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) described them as "the riffraff who follow every caller, bending with every wind and not seeking guidance with knowledge." He warned against this class of people, who have no character. He advised the people to focus on the truth and adhere to it, to spend their time in this world and in the hereafter in obedience to Allah (ﷻ), to seek to be guided by the light of Allah (ﷻ) and to make this world a step towards the hereafter.

2.1.2. Contrast between knowledge and wealth

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) also advised Kameel ibn Ziyâd that knowledge is better than wealth. This is because knowledge will protect you, whereas you have to protect wealth; knowledge increases with action, whereas wealth decreases with spending; knowledge is a judge or criterion, whereas wealth is subject to rules; the benefit of wealth disappears when wealth is lost, whereas loving the scholars is a sign of religious commitment. Knowledge brings authority to a scholar, and he will have a good name even after he dies, whereas those who accumulate wealth are dead even while they are alive. The names of the scholars will be remembered until the end of time, and although their physical being may be gone, their teachings remain in people's hearts.¹⁶⁰ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali

(ﷺ) drew a contrast between knowledge and wealth on the basis that Islamic knowledge is the most important thing for those who focus on the hereafter; for them, it is the ultimate ambition and honour in this world and in the hereafter. What is meant by wealth here is that which a person accumulates because of his love for it, which he does not use in ways that are pleasing to Allah and in accordance with the laws of his Lord. ‘Ali (ﷺ) justified his view on the following bases:

- (a) Knowledge protects a person, whereas the one who owns wealth is the one who has to protect it. The way in which knowledge protects a person is that religious knowledge protects him from the things that lead to doom in this world and in the hereafter. With regard to the hereafter, the meaning is obvious and well known, as this knowledge leads a person to the pleasure of Allah (ﷻ) and to paradise, and it helps him to avoid the path that leads to hell. What a great achievement for a person to seek, and what great gains there may be. As for protection from that which leads to doom in this world, it is true spiritual happiness that cannot be achieved except by means of certain faith, before which the entire world and its troubles become insignificant. All of the grief and calamities become coolness and peace for those who have certain faith, because they ignore it and pay no heed, while these misfortunes and disasters turn life into hell for those who regard this life as their capital and profit. With regard to the meaning of the owner of wealth protecting his wealth, that is quite obvious. How much are the wealthy controlled by worries and fears for their wealth, to the extent that they become sick and they continue to guard their wealth with worry, anxiety and exhausting grief?¹⁶¹ Knowledge gives insight and enables one to choose what is best, to draw lessons from the nations of the past and to live in accordance with these lessons. Knowledge broadens the horizons and enables one to understand differences of opinions and determine which are acceptable; it helps one to

understand the pros and cons and goals, and it teaches one how to prioritise and know what one is doing.

- (b) Knowledge grows and becomes more deeply rooted when one acts upon it, because the application of knowledge makes it more deeply entrenched in the mind. This is unlike wealth, which decreases as it is spent. What is referred to here is the wealth of people whose aim is this world, who spend that wealth only for the sake of worldly pleasure. As for the wealth of people whose aim is the hereafter, it is subjected to Sharia rulings, so spending from it increases it. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "A person's wealth does not decrease because of charity."¹⁶²
- (c) Sharia knowledge is that which leads and judges. It is the true ruler because a person organises his affairs by means of it, and all systems that rule people's lives should be based on it. As for wealth, it is subject to rule, because earning and spending it is subject to rules and regulations, whether they are the rules and regulations of Sharia or otherwise.¹⁶³
- (d) Social relationships that are based on common financial interest fade away as soon as the wealth disappears. It is wealth that forms the basis of those relationships, and they are founded on mutual interests that last only as long as the wealth is present. So when the wealth disappears, those mutual interests go away, too. As for the brotherly relationships that are based on the exchange of religious knowledge between the scholars and those that love knowledge, they will abide forever in this world and in the hereafter. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Friends on that Day will be foes one to another except *al-Muttaqoon* [the pious]﴾ (*Qur'an* 43: 67).
- (e) Islamic knowledge brings to those who have it the love and obedience of the Muslims, which they give willingly without it being imposed on them. This respect continues throughout their lives; their memory is cherished after their death and will

continue to be so until Allah (ﷻ) inherits the earth and everyone on it, because the people have not lost anything but their images and figures.

If we examine history until the present day, we will find that the names of the scholars from the time of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) reverberate throughout history. History has recorded their lives in books, speeches and lessons, whereas the names of those who were great in worldly terms are often forgotten when their lives come to an end, and sometimes their names are already forgotten even while they are still alive.¹⁶⁴

2.1.3. The one who has proper understanding (of Islam) is the one who does not cause people to despair of the mercy of Allah (ﷻ)

“The one who has proper understanding (of Islam) is the one who does not cause people to despair of the mercy of Allah and does not cause them to feel safe from the punishment of Allah (ﷻ); he does not give them concessions to disobey Allah (ﷻ) and does not give precedence to any book over the Qur'an. There is nothing good in worship that is not based on knowledge, there is nothing good in knowledge that is not based on proper understanding, and there is nothing good in reading in which there is no pause for thought.”

In these words, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) explains that part of proper understanding of religion is adhering to a balanced and moderate approach when discussing worldly affairs and trying to reform the people's situation. This means that the one who calls people to Islam should tread a middle path between fear and hope. He or she should not cause people to be so afraid that they despair of the mercy of Allah (ﷻ), but he or she should not raise their hopes to the extent that they feel safe from the punishment of Allah (ﷻ). Here we find 'Ali (ﷺ) stating that it is a sign of proper understanding of the

religion that the scholar does not give the impression that sin is not very serious, as this might lead people to become audacious. He should preserve the level of faith and piety that people already have, while at the same time trying to raise them towards perfection.

Another aspect of proper understanding of Islam is trying to strengthen the connection between the Muslims and the Book of Allah. Thus 'Ali explains the importance of the noble Qur'ân, giving it absolute precedence and ultimate priority above all other things. This is an explanation of the way in which we should deal with the Qur'an; we should not give precedence to any other book out of lack of interest in it, because it is the primary source of guidance. It is well known that the Sunnah of the Prophet is a detailed explanation of the noble Qur'an, so telling people to consult the Qur'an is like telling them to consult the Sunnah. Then he explains that one of the most important conditions of Islamically acceptable worship is that it should stem from knowledge of the Qur'an and Sunnah, and that knowledge cannot be beneficial unless it is accompanied by sound understanding.

He concludes his beneficial advice by explaining the importance of pondering the meanings of the Book of Allah while reading it, because all goodness is in understanding the aims of the Qur'an in order to act upon its rulings and to focus completely on Allah (ﷻ) with one's heart, mind, soul and physical faculties when reading His Book. We should do all that we can in order to understand what Allah (ﷻ) meant and to follow His commands, heed His prohibitions and rid ourselves of all obstacles that come between us and the Book of Allah. We should be completely devoted and sincere to Allah (ﷻ). We should try to seek the message of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) and the religion of truth, even if that leads to losing our family, wealth, children and worldly possessions, because that which is with Allah (ﷻ) is better and more lasting. We should

heed this exhortation and strengthen our faith by pondering over this great Book.¹⁶⁵

2.1.4. How soothing it is to the heart

It was narrated from ash-Sha'bi that 'Ali (عليه السلام) went out to them saying: "How soothing it is to the heart." It was said to him: "What is that?" He said: "To say, when you do not know something: Allah (ﷻ) knows best."¹⁶⁶

2.1.5. People of knowledge and their duty to teach the people

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "Allah did not take covenants from ignorant people that they should learn until He took covenants from people of knowledge that they should teach."¹⁶⁷

2.1.6. Goodness is in abundant knowledge, not in wealth or children

'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "Goodness does not mean increasing your wealth and number of children, rather goodness means increasing your knowledge, having great patience and deliberation, and competing with people in worship of your Lord. If you do well, then praise Allah (ﷻ), and if you do badly, then seek forgiveness from Allah (ﷻ). There is nothing good in this world except one of two men: a man who commits a sin and then hastens to erase it by repenting, and a man who strives to do good. No deed is insignificant if it is accompanied by piety; how can it be insignificant if it is accepted?"¹⁶⁸

2.1.7. Knowledge and ignorance

'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "It is sufficient honour for knowledge that the one who is not good at it claims it and is happy if it is attributed to

him. And it is sufficient humiliation for ignorance that the one who is ignorant disavows it and becomes angry if it is attributed to him.”¹⁶⁹

2.1.8. The reason why people have little interest in seeking knowledge

‘Ali (عليه السلام) said: “The reason why people have little interest in seeking knowledge is that they see that the one who has knowledge benefits little from the knowledge that he has.”¹⁷⁰ This is a warning to bad scholars who put people off from following the path of Allah (ﷻ). It is a call to the scholars to act upon their knowledge, to call people to it and to be patient in putting up with their annoyance for the sake of Allah (ﷻ).

2.1.9. Rights of the scholars over the Ummah

Amir al-Mu'mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) said: “Among the rights of the scholar is that you should not ask too many questions of him, you should be content with his answer, you should not annoy him when he gets tired, you should not grab his garment if he wants to leave, you should not disclose his secret, you should not backbite anyone in his presence, you should not seek out his faults, and if he makes a mistake you should accept his explanation. You should respect him for the sake of Allah (ﷻ) as long as he is obeying the commands of Allah. You should not sit in front of him, and if he needs something, you should be the first to serve him.”¹⁷¹

2.1.10. The status of the active scholars before Allah

Amir al-Mu'mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) said: “Whoever learns and acts upon his knowledge will be called a great man in the kingdom of heaven.”¹⁷² This is a call to learn, and it is encouragement to strive for the high position with which Allah (ﷻ) honours the one who learns and acts upon what he learns, seeking His pleasure.

2.1.11. Focusing on knowledge is better than focusing on voluntary worship

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "The scholar is superior to the one who fasts and prays at night and strives in jihad. When the scholar dies, a gap appears in the fortress of Islam unless another scholar takes his place."¹⁷³ This advice is indicative of 'Ali's deep understanding of priorities, because he thought that effort that goes beyond oneself to benefit other people, which is knowledge, should take precedence over efforts in worship, which only benefit the individual himself.

This is some of the good advice given by Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) to the seekers of knowledge.

2.2. The asceticism and piety of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام)

From living the noble Qur'an, staying close to the Prophet (ﷺ) and keeping company with the noble Companions, and from the way he viewed this life, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام) understood that this world is the realm of trials and tests. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) was raised with the Book of Allah, and he understood the verses that speak of this world and tell us that it is insignificant and temporary in nature and that it will quickly come to an end, as well as the verses that encourage people to focus on the hereafter and that tell of its honour and eternal reward, such as the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And put forward to them the example of the life of this world: it is like the water [rain] which We send down from the sky, and the vegetation of the earth mingles with it, and becomes fresh and green. But [later] it becomes dry and broken pieces, which the winds scatter. And Allah is Able to do everything. Wealth and children are the

adornment of the life of this world. But the good righteous deeds that last, are better with your Lord for rewards and better in respect of hope. ﴿﴾ (Qur'an 18: 46)

He was raised by the Prophet (ﷺ), who was the most knowledgeable of all mankind about this world and its value; he is the one who said: "If this world were worth a gnat's wing before Allah (ﷻ), He would not give the disbeliever a drink of water."¹⁷⁴ He also said: "This world in comparison to the hereafter is like one of you dipping one finger into the sea; let him see how much it can hold"¹⁷⁵ and "This world is like a prison for the believer and a paradise for the disbeliever."¹⁷⁶ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ؑ) was influenced by this Qur'anic and prophetic upbringing. He became one of the best examples of how the Prophet (ﷺ) taught, purified and disciplined his followers, of which Allah (ﷻ) said:

﴿Similarly [to complete My Blessings on you], We have sent among you a Messenger [Muhammad] of your own, reciting to you Our Verses [the Qur'an] and purifying you...﴾ (Qur'an 2: 151)

'Ali gave us brilliant parables of asceticism, of which a few examples follow:

2.2.1. "O yellow, O white, tempt someone other than me"

It was narrated from 'Ali ibn Rabee'ah al-Wâbili that Ibn an-Nabbâh came to 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ؑ) and said: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, the public treasury of the Muslims is filled with yellow and white (referring to gold and silver)." He said: "*Allâhu akbar!*" Then he stood up, leaning on Ibn an-Nabbâh, and went to the public treasury of the Muslims, where he said:

"O Ibn an-Nabbâh, bring me the people of Kufah." So the call went out to the people, and 'Ali (ؑ) gave away everything that was in the

treasury of the Muslims, saying all the while: "O yellow, O white, tempt someone other than me. Take, take!" until there was neither dinar nor dirham left in it. Then he issued instructions that it should be sprinkled with water, and he prayed two raka'ahs therein. According to another report narrated by Abu Na'eem, Majma' at-Taymi said: "Ali used to sweep the public treasury and pray in it. He took it as a place of prayer in the hope that it would testify for him on the Day of Resurrection."

This is an eloquent example of putting oneself above the fleeting luxuries of this world. The Muslims' treasury was filled with gold and silver, but Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) did not look at it with admiration and pride; rather his response, when the official told him about that, was to say, "*Allâhu akbar!*" Although some people venerate worldly accumulation and think of wealth as being great, Allah (ﷻ) is greater than that and greater than all things. As long as the Muslim truly feels that Allah is greater, why should he make his heart submit to anything less? This shows deep understanding on the part of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام), as he remembered the insignificance of this world and magnified Allah (by saying "*Allâhu akbar*"). This is an implicit rebuke to the one who is deceived by temporary worldly accumulation and forgets that Allah is greater than all things. This is indeed a very accurate evaluation that is felt by the believer who is enlightened by Allah. The more he recognizes in his heart that Allah (ﷻ) is greater than all things, the more these worldly matters and everything that has to do with them will become insignificant, and he will begin to use *halâl* wealth to obey Allah (ﷻ). On the other hand, if worldly gain becomes more significant in his heart, it will be at the expense of his regarding Allah (ﷻ) as great.

We see Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) soaring to heights of greatness when addressing worldly gains by saying: "O yellow, O white, tempt someone other than me." This is indicative of a lively

conscience and sensitive feelings that regard this world as an enemy that is trying to cheat and deceive its opponent. Thus he announced his victory over all the inclinations of self-interest and emotions. He showed that he was using reason to make a proper evaluation of worldly accumulation, because all times of pleasure or of hardship are transient, and to make a proper evaluation of the hereafter, because it is eternal and has both great blessings and the terror of its punishment in hellfire. He (ﷺ) reached the pinnacle when he prayed two raka'ahs in the public treasury so that they would be witnesses for him on the Day of Resurrection, testifying that he was just in his ruling and that he adhered to the straight path. Perhaps his taking the treasury as a place of prayer symbolised the superiority of the hereafter over this world and the perfect, sublime conduct he followed when disposing of this wealth in legitimate ways.¹⁷⁷

2.2.2. "By Allah, I do not take anything from your wealth"

Another example of 'Ali's asceticism was narrated by Haroon ibn 'Antarah from his father, who said: "I entered upon 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib in Khoornaq (a place in Kufah) and found him shivering beneath an old, worn out cloak. I said: 'O Amir al-Mu'mineen, Allah has allocated to you and your family a share of this wealth, and you are doing this to yourself!' He said: 'By Allah, I do not take anything from your wealth; rather this is my old cloak that I came out with from my house' — or he said: 'from Madinah.'"¹⁷⁸

We may wonder: what made Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) live the life of the poor and put up with the bitter cold when he was able to buy the best and warmest of clothes on earth? This is an example of true asceticism, as he shunned worldly conveniences even though he was able to afford them. He was a student of the prophetic school in which he was raised, with no interest in the

fleeting conveniences of this world; instead, he had a spirit of competing for the eternal blessings of the hereafter. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) lived the life of the poor, even though he could have been like the best of the rich.¹⁷⁹

2.2.3. "I am happy with what he sold me, and he was happy with what he took"

It was narrated that Abu Maṭar ibn Abdullah al-Juhani said: "I saw 'Ali wearing a lower garment and upper garment and carrying a stick, as if he were a Bedouin of the desert." Then he mentioned him entering the marketplace and bargaining with one of the merchants over a garment for three dirhams. The merchant recognised him, whereupon 'Ali (ﷺ) decided not to buy anything from him. He went to another merchant, and when that one recognised him too, he did not buy anything from him either. Then he went to a young lad and brought a shirt from him for three dirhams. The boy's father came, and the boy told him what had happened. His father took one dirham, went to 'Ali (ﷺ) and said: "This dirham, O Amir al-Mu'mineen!" 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "What about this dirham?" He said: "The price of the shirt was two dirhams." He said: "I am happy with what he sold me, and he was happy with what he took."¹⁸⁰ This is an example of the asceticism of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷺ). His outward appearance gave the impression that he was a Bedouin man because his clothing was scruffy; when he bought clothes for himself, he chose the humble kind that were cheap in price, even though at that time he was the highest official in the world, as he was the caliph of the Muslims. This is indicative of his humility and lack of interest in worldly goods, even though he had his share of the fay', the treasury and other sources of state income that were available to those like him who worked full-time taking care of the Muslims' interests.

Another example of his piety and cautious approach, which was aimed at being above suspicion lest he fall into sin, is reflected in his refusal to buy from those who recognised him. They might have given him a lower price because of his status, and he did not want to take advantage of this high position for personal gain. This shows a precise understanding of the concepts of piety and awareness of Allah (ﷻ), because the position of caliphate for him and others like him was a righteous deed. The caliph, if he is just, is the first of the seven whom Allah (ﷻ) will shade with His shade on the Day of Resurrection. He did not want to sully this righteous deed with worldly interests, thus changing the good deeds into a cause of punishment instead of reward. This sublime conduct set a good example for those who came after him.¹⁸¹

2.2.4. "It is more humbling to the heart, and an example for the believer to follow"

'Umar ibn Qays said: It was said to 'Ali (ﷻ): "Why do you patch your shirt?" He said: "It is more humbling to the heart, and an example for the believer to follow."¹⁸² This is an example of his asceticism and his eagerness to train the Muslims to live a life of self-denial and simplicity. He noted two things about wearing patched clothes. First, it is a means of making the heart and soul humble and keeping away from the causes of self admiration and pride. Secondly, he regarded that as an example to the Muslims. If the people saw him wearing patched clothes when he was occupying the highest position, their hearts would become humble, and they would avoid competing with each other to buy expensive clothes. This would also lend support to and raise the morale of the ascetics whom people always criticise for their simple way of life.¹⁸³

2.2.5. "Nothing of the wealth of Allah (ﷻ) is permissible for the caliph except two plates"

It was narrated that Abdullah ibn Zurayr al-Ghâfiqi said: "I entered upon 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ), and he offered us some pieces of meat cooked in water and sprinkled with flour. I said: 'May Allah (ﷻ) guide you; why didn't you offer us some of this duck, for Allah (ﷻ) has blessed us a great deal?' He said: 'O son of Zurayr, I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: "Nothing of the wealth of Allah (ﷻ) is permissible for the caliph except two plates, a plate from which he and his family eat and a plate which he offers to people."'"¹⁸⁴ Here we see Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) setting a sublime example of piety and asceticism with regard to worldly luxuries of food and drink. He could have taken whatever he wanted from the treasury, without anyone noticing, in order to live at the same level as the richest of the Muslims. But he was content with a hard life, preferring the hereafter to this world, preferring to be on the safe side with regard to his religious commitment. He sought to set a good example, because if the highest man in the state lived like this, then that would be a consolation to the poor, encouraging them to be patient and accept the decree of Allah (ﷻ). Conversely, it would be an exhortation to the rich to be grateful to Allah (ﷻ) and to reduce their indulgence in extravagance and luxury.¹⁸⁵

2.2.6. "I do not like anything to enter my stomach except that which I know"

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) used to put a seal on the sack of barley flour that he ate from, and he would say: "I do not like anything to enter my stomach except that which I know."¹⁸⁶ Sufyân said: "Ali did not build one brick over a brick or one stone over a stone (meaning that he did not build a lofty house for himself). His grain was brought to him from Madinah in a sack."¹⁸⁷

2.2.7. "You have a nice smell, a nice colour, and a nice taste"

'Adiyy ibn Thâbit and Ḥabbah ibn Juwayn narrated that a large platter of sweets called *faloodhaj*¹⁸⁸ was brought to 'Ali (ﷺ), but he did not eat. 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "You have a nice smell, a nice colour and a nice taste, but I do not want to get accustomed to something that I am not accustomed to."¹⁸⁹

2.2.8. The least interested of all people in worldly adornment was 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ)

Al-Ḥasan ibn Sâlih ibn Ḥayy said: "They were discussing ascetics in the presence of 'Umar ibn 'Abdul-'Azeez, and he said: 'The least interested of all people in worldly adornment was 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib.'"¹⁹⁰ Al-Dhahabi stated that 'Ali (ﷺ) rode a donkey with his feet dangling to one side, and he said: "I am the one who looked down on the temptation of this world." This action was by way of setting a practical example of asceticism and piety and looking down on worldly adornment, not by way of showing off.¹⁹¹

Concerning wealth, Abu 'Ubayd narrated from 'Ali (ﷺ) that he gave out money to people three times in one year, then some wealth came to him from Isfahan, and he said: "O people, come to a fourth distribution, for I am not your storekeeper." Some people took it, and some people refused it.¹⁹² 'Ali (ﷺ) addressed the people and said: "O people, by Allah, besides Whom there is no other god, I have never touched your wealth, a little or a lot, except this," and he took out from the sleeve of his garment a bottle in which there was perfume. He said: "Some chieftain gave this to me as a gift." Then he went to the treasury and said: "Take!" And he composed the following line of verse: "He will prosper who has a small reed container from which he eats a date every day."¹⁹³

Asceticism was one of the most prominent characteristics in the personality of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام). He lived simply, despite the availability of luxuries and wealth, and despite the people's trust in him and their respect for him, which prevented any criticism, checking or blame.¹⁹⁴ Despite his asceticism, piety and strict adherence to his religion, he was not harsh, sombre, stern-faced, gloomy or miserable. In fact, he was friendly and cheerful, with a noticeable sense of humour. It was narrated that he had a handsome and cheerful face and stepped lightly upon the earth.¹⁹⁵ 'Ali (عليه السلام) described asceticism by saying: "O people, asceticism means not expecting to live a long life, being grateful for blessings and refraining from *ḥarâm* things."¹⁹⁶ Expecting to live a long life makes one forget the hereafter. Not expecting to live a long life enables one to combine the interests of both this world and the hereafter, seeking the pleasure of Allah (سبحانه).

Being grateful for blessings is an attribute of the devoted Muslims who are aware of the blessings that Allah (سبحانه) has bestowed upon them, whether tangible or intangible, apparent or hidden. They respond with gratitude to the Almighty, the Giver. 'Ali's definition of the real nature of asceticism undoubtedly shows that the asceticism of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) had an impact on those around him, and that he was an effective teacher in the history of the Ummah. Abu al-Ḥasan an-Nadwi made a connection between asceticism and revival in Muslim society, saying: "We have seen that asceticism and revival go hand-in-hand in Islamic history. We do not know of anyone who turned things around and altered the course of history, breathing new life into Muslim society or opening a new era into Islamic history, leaving behind any eternal legacy of knowledge, thought and religious commitment that remained influential for centuries after, dominating the fields of knowledge and literature, except that he had an inclination towards asceticism, had complete mastery over his physical desires and had control over materialistic

gains and materialistic people. The reason for this is that asceticism gives a man power to resist and gives him self-confidence on the basis of belief, and it makes him look down on materialistic men, those who are victims of physical desires and prisoners of their stomachs.”¹⁹⁷

2.3. The humility of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام)

One of the Qur'anic attitudes that were embodied in the character of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) was that of humility. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And walk not on the earth with conceit and arrogance. Verily, you can neither rend nor penetrate the earth, nor can you attain a stature like the mountains in height.﴾
(*Qur'an* 17: 37)

﴿And turn not your face away from men with pride, nor walk in insolence through the earth. Verily, Allah likes not any arrogant boaster. 'And be moderate [or show no insolence] in your walking, and lower your voice. Verily, the harshest of all voices is the braying of the asses.﴾
(*Qur'an* 31: 18-19)

In the verse from Soorat al-Isra', there is a clear call to adopt the best of characteristics, such as humility and gentleness, and to know one's limitations. There is a clear prohibition of evil inclinations such as pride, arrogance, exultation in riches and looking down on people. The command to adopt the opposite attributes of humility and moderation is understood implicitly from the prohibition mentioned above. Allah concluded this prohibition and command by stating His displeasure and anger with the one who has these negative qualities. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Verily, Allah likes not any arrogant boaster﴾ (*Qur'an* 31: 18). The fact that He does not love the one who is like that means that He is angry and displeased with him,

as is indicated by the verse quoted above, and that is enough encouragement to make the believer love humility.¹⁹⁸ In order to promote humility, the noble Qur'an does not stop there; it encourages it in the most eloquent fashion when Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And the [faithful] slaves of the Most Gracious [Allah] are those who walk on the earth in humility and sedateness, and when the foolish address them [with bad words] they reply back with mild words of gentleness.»
(*Qur'an* 25: 63)

This is great praise for the humble, for Allah (ﷻ) describes them as being freed slaves to Him. This is the greatest honour for them, because true servitude to Him (ﷻ) is the noblest description and the highest status for those who love Him, and they may feel proud of that.

Our Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is the epitome of this great attribute in all shapes and forms. There is nothing strange about that, for he is the one who was taught by his Lord in the best way. Among the good attitudes that Allah (ﷻ) taught him was, as the Qur'an says:

«Look not with your eyes ambitiously at what We have bestowed on certain classes of them [the disbelievers], nor grieve over them. And lower your wings for the believers [be courteous to the fellow-believers].»
(*Qur'an* 15: 88)

«And be kind and humble to the believers who follow you.»
(*Qur'an* 26: 215)

Lowering the wing is a metaphor for being humble and kind towards them.¹⁹⁹ The Prophet (ﷺ) manifested that in the truest sense, and the effect of humility was manifested in all these interactions, in society and with his family, at all times and in all places. There is no instance in which he was not humble towards Allah (ﷻ) and the believers.²⁰⁰ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ؑ) was influenced by the teachings of the Qur'an and by his upbringing in the house of the

Prophet (ﷺ), so this attribute was firmly rooted in his brilliant character. There follow some examples:

2.3.1. "I am the one who scorned worldly adornment"

Sâlih ibn Abil-Aswad narrated that someone told him that he saw 'Ali (ﷺ) riding a donkey with his feet dangling down on one side, and he said: "I am the one who scorned worldly adornment."²⁰¹ Thus Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) felt joy at his victory over his worldly desires when he appeared before the people in a humble manner, even though he was the caliph of the Muslims. High worldly status is very deceptive, and the trial of status is greater than that of wealth. How often has it happened that people in positions of authority were seen as humble before they were appointed to those high positions, but afterwards, the attitude of superiority slowly crept into their hearts until in the end it became difficult to talk to them or meet with them? However, in the case of the pious close friends of Allah (ﷺ), the higher they rise in worldly status, the more humble they become towards the people. They feel great joy when they act in a humble way, which shows that they do not have the attitude of arrogance and pride.²⁰²

2.3.2. "The father of the children should carry (food for his children)"

It was narrated from 'Ali (ﷺ) that he bought some dates for a dirham and carried them in a cloth. Some people said: "We will carry it for you, O Amir al-Mu'mineen." He said: "No, the father of the children should carry (food for his children)."²⁰³ This is an example of his humility, as he carried his goods himself even though he was the caliph and was older. He did not think that his position justified accepting the people's serving him. By doing this, he set a good

example of humility for the Muslims. If any person of prominent position feels that it is embarrassing for him to carry his own goods, he should remember the attitude of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام), and his embarrassment will disappear. If anyone objects to any of the humble people or their attitude, he should follow the example of this man, who held the highest position on earth, and that should refute this objection.²⁰⁴

2.3.3. 'Ali's dealing with his uncle al-'Abbâs (may Allah be pleased with them both)

It was narrated that Şuhayb, the freed slave of al-'Abbâs, said: "I saw 'Ali kissing the hands and feet of al-'Abbâs and saying: O uncle, be pleased with me."²⁰⁵ Let us think about how Dirâr at-Ṭâ'i described 'Ali (عليه السلام) when he said: "He liked shorter clothes (those that came above the ankle) and coarse food. He was just like one of us. He would answer us if we asked him and tell us if we enquired of him, but by Allah, although he was so close to us, we could hardly speak to him out of respect for him."²⁰⁶

One of the sayings of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) concerning humility was: "Humility honours a man."²⁰⁷ The more knowledge of the Qur'an and Sunnah a person gains, and the more he acts upon them, the more he understands the reality of himself, and the more humble he becomes towards Allah (ﷻ) and His creation. The problem with those callers to Islam today who develop self-admiration is lack of knowledge and understanding. In addition, the caller focuses on the number of followers around him instead of thinking of that which is with Allah (ﷻ) or looking at the devoted scholars who are superior to him. This is one of the subtle tricks of the devil by which he deceives seekers of knowledge and those who are counted as working in the field of da'wah. It was said in *Manshoor al-Hukm*: "If you acquire knowledge, then do not think of

the number of ignorant people who are inferior to you; rather look at the scholars who are superior to you.”²⁰⁸

We will end this description in the words of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام): “How beautiful is the humility of the rich person towards the poor person, hoping for the reward of Allah (ﷻ). But better than that is the pride shown by the poor man towards the rich man out of trust in Allah (ﷻ).”²⁰⁹ What is meant by pride here is not arrogance; it is that the poor man feels of independent means through the help of Allah, so he does not need what the rich have.

2.4. His generosity

Another of the Qur'anic attitudes that were embodied in the character of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) was that of generosity. The noble Qur'an heaps praises on those who are generous. This phrase appears near the beginning of the Qur'an when Allah (ﷻ) says at the beginning of the second soorah, after the Basmalah:

Alif-Lâm-Meem. [These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur'an and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings.] This is the Book [the Qur'an], whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are al-Muttaqoon [the pious believers of Islamic Monotheism who fear Allah much (abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which He has forbidden) and love Allah much (perform all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained)]. Who believe in the Ghayb [the unseen] and perform aṣ-Ṣalâh [Iqâmat-aṣ-Ṣalâh], and spend out of what we have provided for them [i.e. give Zakâh, spend on themselves, their parents, their children, their wives, and also give charity to the poor and also in Allah's cause — jihad]. And who believe in [the Qur'an and the Sunnah] which has been sent down [revealed] to you [Muhammad] and in that which were sent down before you [the

Tawrât (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel)] and they believe with certainty in the hereafter [Resurrection, recompense of their good and bad deeds, paradise and hell). They are on [true] guidance from their Lord, and they are the successful.﴾ (Qur'an 2: 1-5)

And Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And those who remain patient, seeking their Lord's countenance, perform aṣ-Ṣalât [Iqâmat-aṣ-Ṣalât], and spend out of that which We have bestowed on them, secretly and openly, and defend evil with good, for such there is a good end. 'Adn [Eden] paradise [everlasting Gardens], which they shall enter and [also] those who acted righteously from among their fathers, and their wives, and their offspring. And angels shall enter unto them from every gate [saying]: 'Salâmun 'Alaikum [peace be upon you] for you persevered in patience! Excellent indeed is the final home!﴾ (Qur'an 13: 22-24)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) attained perfection and greatness in all aspects of manners and attitude, especially the attitude of generosity. Khadeejah (رضي الله عنها) described him as follows: "You uphold ties of kinship, spend on the weak and orphans, give to the destitute, honour your guest and help others when they are struck by calamity."²¹⁰ She described him as having these great and sublime attitudes even before his mission began, when he had not yet taken on the burden of his nation. Prophethood brought him extra perfection and greatness, so one can imagine how he would have been after all of that. No doubt his generosity reached the ultimate pinnacle, surpassing the generosity of the previous prophets and all of mankind, and there is a great deal of evidence for this.²¹¹ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه) was influenced by his Qur'anic and prophetic training, and he left us clear examples indicating that the characteristic of generosity was deeply rooted in his sublime character.

Al-Hâfidh Ibn Katheer narrated from the report of al-Asbagh ibn Nabâtah that: "A man came to 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) and said: 'O Amir al-Mu'mineen, I have a need that I ask of Allah before I ask it of you. If you fulfil it, I will praise Allah and thank you; if you do not fulfil it, I will praise Allah, and I will not blame you.' 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: 'Write what you need on the ground, for I would not like to see on your face the embarrassment of asking.' He wrote: 'I am in need.' 'Ali (عليه السلام) said to me (the narrator): 'Bring me a suit.' I brought it, and the man took it and put it on, then he spoke lines of poetry in praise of 'Ali (عليه السلام). 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: 'Bring me some dinars.' So one hundred dinars were brought, and he gave it to him. Al-Asbagh said: 'O Amir al-Mu'mineen, a suit and one hundred dinars?' He said: 'Yes. I heard the Messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) say: "Treat the people according to their status," and this is the status of this man in my view."²¹² This was the noble attitude of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) in meeting the needs of the poor; he paid attention to their affairs and respected their feelings. The most brilliant aspect of this report is his saying, "Write what you need on the ground, for I would not like to see on your face the embarrassment of asking." How much humiliation and embarrassment the poor suffer before those whom they ask for help; sometimes they may stammer or be unable to speak. The needy man was deeply moved when Amir al-Mu'mineen responded to him in this excellent manner, and he composed poetry praising him.²¹³

'Ali (عليه السلام) would feel happy when guests came; he honoured his brothers for the sake of Allah (ﷻ) and checked on them. It was narrated that he once said: "I have not had a guest for seven days, and I am afraid that Allah is humiliating me."²¹⁴ He also said: "Twenty dirhams that I give to my brother for the sake of Allah (ﷻ) is dearer to me than giving one hundred dirhams to the poor and needy."²¹⁵ When he was asked about generosity, he said: "What is initiated by

the person is true generosity; as for that which is given in response to being asked, it is given out of embarrassment and as a favour.”²¹⁶

During his lifetime, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) established a number of endowments for the sake of Allah (الله). He gave his land in Yanbu' as an endowment, and he wrote in a document concerning it: "These are instructions issued by 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib and his decision concerning his wealth: I give in charity Yanbu', Wadi al-Qura, al-Udhaynah and Râ'ah for the sake of Allah (الله) and for relatives near and far. It is not to be given away or inherited, whether I am alive or dead.”²¹⁷ He said of his charity: "I remember when I tied a rock to my stomach because of hunger, and now my charity has reached four thousand dinars.”²¹⁸ He did not mean that this four thousand was what he had paid in zakâh on his wealth; he was referring to the endowments that he had established, the income from which was charity of this amount. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) did not save any money. The evidence²¹⁹ for that is what his son al-Ḥasan said about him after he was killed: "There has left you a man who did not leave behind any yellow or white (meaning gold or silver) except seven hundred dirhams that remain of his stipend, with which he intended to buy a slave.”²²⁰

He used to urge people to honour their relatives and clans. He would say: "Honour your clan, for they are your wings by which you fly. With their help, you can achieve what you want to achieve, and they are your support at times of hardship. Honour their prominent ones, visit their sick, seek their advice in your affairs and help the one who is going through hardship.”²²¹

2.5. Shyness, or modesty, before Allah (الله)

Shyness, or modesty, is one of the noblest of characteristics because it is indicative of a pure heart, a sensitive conscience,

strength of religious deterrent and the sense that Allah (ﷻ) is always watching. The one who does not have any modesty does not honour guests, fulfil promises, render back trusts, meet the needs of others, try to seek the best deeds and give precedence to them, try to avoid bad deeds, cover the private parts of the body that should be covered, or refrain from immorality. There are many people who, were it not for this shyness, would not do any of the things that are enjoined on them; they would not pay any attention to the rights of any created being, uphold ties of kinship or honour their parents. The motive for all of these deeds is either religious, in hope of a reward, or a sublime worldly motive, which is the fear of shame before people. Thus it is clear that were it not for shyness — either before the Creator or before people — people would not do them.²²²

The degree of shyness depends on how alive the conscience is. The more vibrant the conscience, the more complete this sense of modesty will be. The lack of modesty stems from a deadening of the heart and soul.²²³ Shyness is one of the branches of faith, because it motivates one to do good deeds and prevents one from committing sin.²²⁴ Hence it is a characteristic to which the noble Qur'an pays great attention.²²⁵ The Qur'an speaks of shyness with regard to the Prophet (ﷺ) in this verse: ﴿O you who believe! Enter not the Prophet's houses, unless permission is given to you for a meal, [and then] not [so early as] to wait for its preparation. But when you are invited, enter, and when you have taken your meal, disperse without sitting for a talk. Verily, such [behaviour] annoys the Prophet, and he is shy of [asking] you [to go]; but Allah is not shy of [telling you] the truth﴾ (*Qur'an* 33: 53). We can see how shyness prevented him from confronting his Companions to ask them to leave. He could not tell them directly what he wanted them to do²²⁶ because he was more shy than the virgin in her seclusion.²²⁷ The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Shyness does not bring anything but goodness."²²⁸

This quality was manifested in the character of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام). He told us of this quality when he said: "I feel shy before Allah that there could be any wrong done to me that is greater than my ability to forgive, that anyone should treat me in an ignorant manner that is greater than my patience, that there should be any fault (that I find in a person) that could not be covered by my concealment, or that there should be any need that cannot be met by my generosity."²²⁹ These four kinds of shortcomings found in people were met by Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib with four counterparts of perfection. Shyness before Allah requires one to have the quality of forgiveness when one has the power to settle the score. This applies if the wrong done does not transgress the sacred limits of Allah. One should have knowledge that could forgive the ignorance of ignorant people, the ability to conceal people's faults, and sufficient generosity to encompass people's needs. What gives this ruling weight is the fact that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali connected it to shyness before Allah (عليه السلام). These four qualities are regarded as qualities of perfection by those who are wise. Many sensible individuals strove to acquire them in order to gain a good reputation in this world and to be able to run the affairs of people by gaining their support and approval. 'Ali connected them to shyness before Allah, because his higher aim was to seek the pleasure of Allah. The person who has this aim will undoubtedly embody these qualities more fully than one whose aim is merely worldly.²³⁰

2.6. True submission, patience and sincerity towards Allah (عليه السلام)

'Ali (عليه السلام) had a comprehensive concept of worship which encompassed his entire life. He was distinguished by his regular offering of voluntary prayers during the middle of the night, and he became one of those whom Allah (عليه السلام) mentions:

﴿Their sides forsake their beds, to invoke their Lord in fear and hope.﴾
(Qur'an 32: 16)

﴿Taking joy in the things which their Lord has given them. Verily, they were before this Muḥsinoon [good-doers]. They used to sleep but little by night [invoking their Lord (Allah) and praying, with fear and hope]. And in the hours before dawn, they were [found] asking [Allah] for forgiveness.﴾
(Qur'an 51: 16-18)

﴿And the [faithful] slaves of the Most Gracious [Allah] are those who walk on the earth in humility and sedateness, and when the foolish address them [with bad words] they reply back with mild words of gentleness. And those who spend the night in worship of their Lord, prostrate and standing.﴾
(Qur'an 25: 63-64)

Ḍirār ibn Ḍumayrah al-Kināni described 'Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib to Mu'āwiyah ibn Abi Sufyān (may Allah be pleased with them all) as follows: "He did not feel content with this world and its adornment, but he felt content with the night and its darkness. I bear witness by Allah (ﷻ) that I once saw him, when the night had dropped its curtain and the stars had appeared deep in the sky, weeping in his place of prayer and holding onto his beard like one who is stung with pain, weeping and mourning. It is as if I can hear him now, saying: 'O our Lord, O our Lord,' beseeching Him. Then he said to this world: 'Are you trying to deceive me, or are you trying to attract me? No way, no way. Go and deceive someone else, for I have thrice divorced you. Your life is short, you are of no significance or importance. Ah, how little provision we have, how long is the journey and how lonely the road!'" At that, Mu'āwiyah's tears fell down onto his beard; he could not stop them. He started to dry them with his sleeve, and the people began to sob. He said: "This is how Abu al-Ḥasan was, may Allah (ﷻ) have mercy on him. How sad do you feel for losing him, O Ḍirār?" He said: "As sad as the mother

whose only son was slaughtered in her lap. Her tears never cease, and her grief never ends." Then he got up and left.²³¹

Al-Ashtar an-Nakha'i entered upon Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) when he was standing and praying at night, and he said to him: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, fasting by day, staying up at night and striving hard in between." When 'Ali (عليه السلام) had finished his prayer, he said to him: "The journey to the hereafter is long and needs to be crossed by travelling at night."²³² Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) used to encourage the people to be conscious of Allah (الله), to remember that He is always watching, and to fear Him. He said: "O people, fear the One Who hears if you speak and Who knows if you conceal something. Prepare for death, which will catch up with you if you try to flee, and will take you if you stay."²³³ He also used to say: "O people, learn from me these words, which you will never find the like of, even if you ride camels and wear them out trying: No person should hope in anyone but his Lord, and he should not fear anything but his sin. If he does not know something, he should not feel embarrassed to try to learn; if he is asked about something that he does not know, he should not feel embarrassed to say 'I do not know.' You should realise that patience is to faith as the head is to the body, and there is nothing good in a body which has no head."²³⁴

This advice is a combination of principles of tawhîd and guidelines on the etiquette of acquiring knowledge, as he advised people to have the correct type of fear and hope. The true believer does not place his hope in anyone but Allah (الله), because He is the only One Who gives all these blessings. As for the people at whose hands the blessings come, they are no more than the means; the Initiator and Creator of the blessings is Allah (الله). The true believer does not fear anything but Allah (الله), because He is the One Who can cause harm or bring benefit. As for the created things that people

imagine are sources of fear, they and all creation are under the control of Allah. He is the only Provider, the only Creator, the only Sovereign and the One Who is able to do all things, so why should the believer fear or put his trust in anything else? Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) expressed fear of Allah (الله) as fear of sin, because what is meant is the fear of the consequences of sin, which is the punishment of Allah; thus, this is the main means of achieving true fear of Allah.

'Ali (عليه السلام) then explained some of the etiquette of learning, because religious knowledge can only be acquired by learning. He explained that one aspect of the etiquette to be followed by the learner is that shyness should not prevent him from learning, even if he is old or of a high status; similarly, shyness should not prevent him from saying, 'I do not know', for these words offer more protection for his religious commitment and that of the one who asks him.

Then he concluded his beneficial advice by stating one of the fundamental principles of faith, which is patience; he described it as being to faith like the head is to the body. That is because success is based on patience in all matters, whether they relate to this world or to the hereafter.²³⁵ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) demonstrated the quality of patience throughout his life: when he became a Muslim in secret with the Messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) at a very early age, through all the times when he fought in battles and campaigns, at the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs with all the serious events that accompanied that era, and then throughout the difficult turmoils that he faced during his own caliphate, which ended in his murder. In all the stages of his life, there are beautiful lessons for those who seek to call people to Islam today. These lessons highlight what is required of patience, perseverance and a willingness to pay the price when calling people to Allah²³⁶, seeking thereby the pleasure of Allah.

'Ali (عليه السلام) used to encourage his companions to be patient. He said to al-Ash'ath ibn Qays: "If you are patient, the decree of Allah

(ﷺ) will be carried out on you, and you will be rewarded. But if you panic and show impatience, the decree of Allah (ﷻ) will be carried out on you while you are burdened with sin (and thus you will be doomed).”²³⁷ He (ﷺ) also said: “Patience is to faith as the head is to the body; if the head is cut off, the body is ruined.” Then he raised his voice and said: “The one who has no patience has no faith.”²³⁸ He also said: “Patience is a mount that never tires.”

Patience occupies a well-known position in the religion of Allah. Allah (ﷻ) mentions patience in many verses of the Qur'an, such as the verse in which He says: ﴿Only those who are patient shall receive their reward in full, without reckoning﴾ (*Qur'an* 39: 10). The virtues of patience are also mentioned in many hadiths. Patience is of three types: Patience in obeying Allah (ﷻ), patience in refraining from disobeying Allah and patience in bearing calamity.

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib was keen that his actions should be sincerely for the sake of Allah (ﷻ), in accordance with the words of Allah (ﷻ):

﴿Say [O Muhammad]: My Lord has commanded justice and [said] that you should face Him only [i.e. worship none but Allah and face the *Qiblah*, i.e. the Ka'bah at Makkah during prayers] in each and every place of worship, in prayers [and not to face other false deities and idols], and invoke Him only making your religion sincere to Him [by not joining in worship any partner with Him and with the intention that you are doing your deeds for Allah's sake only]. As He brought you [into being] in the beginning, so shall you be brought into being [on the Day of Resurrection in two groups, one as a blessed one (believers), and the other as a wretched one (disbelievers)].﴾
(*Qur'an* 7: 29)

﴿Say [O Muhammad], 'I am only a man like you. It has been revealed to me that your *Ilâh* [God] is One *Ilâh* [God — i.e. Allah]. So

whoever hopes for the Meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord.' ﴿﴾
(Qur'an 18: 110)

﴿So, call you [O Muhammad and the believers] upon [or invoke] Allah making [your] worship pure for Him [Alone] [by worshipping none but Him and by doing religious deeds sincerely for Allah's sake only and not to show off and not to set up rivals with Him in worship], however much the disbelievers [in the Oneness of Allah] may hate [it].﴾
(Qur'an 40: 14)

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tālib (ؑ) learned from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that good deeds are not accepted unless they are done with a sincere intention. Sincerity is a basic pillar of worship, and worship in which there is no sincerity will be rejected, as it says in this hadith, whose meaning was revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ) from Allah: "I am the least in need of a partner. Whoever does any deed in which he associates someone else with Me, I will reject him and his deed."²³⁹ 'Ali (ؑ) fought polytheism in all forms and types, whether it related to not believing in the Lordship of Allah or to performing acts of worship to other than Allah. He was keen to ensure that all of his actions were done sincerely for the sake of Allah (ﷻ) alone, and he would encourage people, especially seekers of knowledge, to avoid showing off. He said: "O bearers of knowledge, act upon it, for the knowledgeable one is the one who acts on what he knows and whose actions and knowledge are in harmony. There will be people who acquire knowledge, but it does not go any deeper than their collarbones; how they are inwardly will be contrary to how they appear to be, and their actions will differ from their knowledge. They will lead study circles and compete with one another to the extent that one will get angry with a person in his circle if he leaves him to go and sit with someone else. Those people's actions do not ascend from their gatherings to Allah (ﷻ)."²⁴⁰

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) pointed out some serious diseases in those who sit to teach people for the purpose of boasting and gaining a reputation. They become angry with their students if they leave and go to someone else, even if doing so is in their best interests, because the student's best interests do not matter to such people; what matters to them is their status and reputation. Even if they do not actually say that, it is obvious from their attitude.²⁴¹ For one who calls people to Allah (الله) sincerely, the main concern should be that the people follow the truth, even if they follow a view that is different from his. This was the way of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام), who said: "Judge as you used to judge, for I hate differences, (and I shall do my best) to keep the people united or die as my predecessors died."²⁴² That was with regard to his opinion that it is not permissible to sell a slave woman who has borne a child to her master. 'Umar held the same view, but 'Ali changed his mind and decided that these slave women could be sold.²⁴³ This is a lesson for those who call people to Islam and for seekers of knowledge. Legitimate differences of opinion are something natural; one should not object to them, and they should not affect the unity of Muslims. Those who call people to Islam today are in the greatest need of checking themselves with regard to this attitude and their stance on it; they need to beseech Allah (الله) to grant them this good quality so that they may attain the reward of Allah (الله) after they die and so that their da'wah efforts may bear fruit during their lifetime.

Ali's worship was based on complete sincerity towards Allah (الله) and adherence to the guidance of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), for Allah (الله) is the only One Who is deserving of worship. 'Ali's entire life consisted of worship, moving from one type to another in obedience to the words of Allah (الله):

«Say [O Muhammad]: 'Verily, my Ṣalâh [prayer], my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of the 'Âlameen

[mankind, jinn and all that exists]. He has no partner. And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims.’ ﴿

(*Qur'an* 6: 162-163)

Worship was an important factor in purifying and enhancing his good attitude and in his observance of the laws of Allah (ﷻ). Hence Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام), in his commentary on the verse ﴿Verily, those who say: 'Our Lord is [only] Allah,' and thereafter stand firm [on the Islamic Faith of Monotheism], on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve﴾ (*Qur'an* 46: 13), explained 'standing firm' as referring to the performance of the obligatory duties of Islam.²⁴⁴

2.7. His gratitude to Allah (ﷻ)

Gratitude means using all the blessings that one has received for the purpose for which one was created.²⁴⁵ In other words, all the blessings, both apparent and hidden, in oneself and in one's wealth, should be dedicated to worshipping one's Lord in a befitting manner, using every faculty that Allah (ﷻ) has given in the most perfect way. A person who does that will have acknowledged and shown the blessings that Allah (ﷻ) has bestowed upon him and will have fulfilled the duty of giving thanks to Him (ﷻ).²⁴⁶ Gratefulness is one of the most important attitudes that the believer should have in all situations, because in doing so he is attributing blessings to the One Who granted them. The high-ranking position of gratitude is indicated by the fact that other good Islamic attitudes, such as love, contentment and trust, stem from it. Gratitude is not complete unless it is accompanied by these other attitudes, and it cannot be achieved unless one feels these other qualities, too.²⁴⁷

The noble Qur'an paid a great deal of attention to gratitude, as befits its noble position. It is mentioned in more than seventy verses, which is indicative of how serious and important this attitude is.²⁴⁸

There are verses that enjoin and encourage it, praise those who have this quality, promise a good reward and warn against its opposite. Allah (ﷻ) mentions remembrance of Him and gratitude together: ﴿Therefore remember Me [by praying, glorifying]. I will remember you, and be grateful to Me [for My countless Favours on you] and never be ungrateful to Me﴾ (Qur'an 2: 152). He also mentions worship together with gratitude: ﴿So seek your provision from Allah [alone], and worship Him [alone], and be grateful to Him. To Him [alone] you will be brought back﴾ (Qur'an 29: 17). This indicates that there is a strong connection between worship dedicated to Allah (ﷻ) alone and gratitude.²⁴⁹

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) occupied the highest position in all praiseworthy attitudes, including this one, which he taught to his Companions, including 'Ali ibn Abi Tālib (ؓ). He did not become aware of any blessing without giving thanks to Allah (ﷻ) for it. When he came out of the washroom, he would wipe his stomach with his hand and say: "What a great blessing; would that people gave thanks for it."²⁵⁰ It was narrated from Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ؓ) that he said to a man from Hamadān: "Blessing is connected to gratitude, and gratitude leads to more blessings; they are attached to one another, so more blessings from Allah (ﷻ) will not cease unless gratitude from the person ceases."²⁵¹ 'Ali (ؓ) thought that part of gratitude was forgiving one's opponents, and he said: "If you gain power over your enemy, then make your forgiveness a sign of your gratitude for gaining power over him."²⁵²

2.8. Supplication to Allah (ﷻ)

Supplication is a very important matter. If a person begins to offer a great deal of supplication, he will be showered with goodness and blessings. Hence Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ؓ) was very keen to have a good relationship with Allah (ﷻ) and to offer a great deal of

supplication. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And your Lord said: 'Invoke Me [i.e. believe in My Oneness (Islamic Monotheism) and ask Me for anything] I will respond to your [invocation]. Verily, those who scorn My worship [i.e. do not invoke Me, and do not believe in My Oneness, (Islamic Monotheism)] they will surely enter hell in humiliation.﴾ (Qur'an 40: 60)

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tālib (ﷺ) kept close to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and saw how he used to seek the help and support of Allah (ﷻ). He (ﷺ) was eager to learn this worship from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and to ensure that his supplication was offered in the manner that was enjoined by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and with which he was pleased. The Muslim should not give precedence to any versions of supplications, glorification of Allah (ﷻ) or prayers that were not narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ), no matter how beautiful the wording or the meaning may appear. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is the best teacher and guide to the straight path, and he knew best what is better and more perfect.

Some people falsely attribute fabricated, innovated supplications and phrases of remembrance to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tālib (ﷺ), but the one who loves him should follow his way and his method. He taught us to follow the Prophet (ﷺ) in word and deed. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tālib (ﷺ) was a person whose supplications were answered. It was narrated from Zadhān Abu 'Umar that a man told 'Ali (ﷺ) something, and he remarked: "I think you are lying to me." The man said: "No, I am not." 'Ali (ﷺ) asked: "Shall I pray against you if you are lying?" The man said: "Go ahead." So 'Ali (ﷺ) prayed (offered supplication), and shortly after that, the man became blind.²⁵³ 'Ali (ﷺ) used to say when he was praised: "O Allah, forgive me for what they do not know about me, do not hold me accountable for what they say, and make me better than what they think."²⁵⁴

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "If any one of you sneezes, let him say '*Al-ḥamdu Lillah* (praise be to Allah).' Those around him should respond by saying '*Yarhamuk-Allah* (May Allah have mercy on you).' And he should respond to them by saying '*Yahdeekum Allah wa yuṣṣilaḥa bâlakum* (May Allah guide you and rectify your condition).'"²⁵⁵ This action reflects a good attitude and good manners towards Allah (ﷻ) by praising Him in a situation where one is enjoined to give thanks. Al-Ḥaleemi said: Sneezing wards off harm from the brain, where one's power of thought resides and from which the nervous system starts, through which a person has his senses. With soundness of the brain, all other faculties will remain sound. Thus it becomes clear that it is a great blessing, so it is appropriate to respond with praise of Allah because that is acknowledging that Allah (ﷻ) is the Creator Who has all power; it is attributing creation to Him and not to natural processes.²⁵⁶

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) demonstrated some of the etiquette of the traveller in the report that he narrated from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "When the Prophet (ﷺ) wanted to travel, he would say: 'By Your help, O Allah, I prevail. By Your help I travel around, and by Your help I walk.'" ²⁵⁷

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) demonstrated another point of the traveller's etiquette. When he set out to travel and placed his foot in the stirrup, he said: "*Bismillah* (in the name of Allah)." When he had mounted the animal, he said: "*Al-ḥamdu Lillah* (praise be to Allah)." Then he said: ﴿Glory to Him Who has subjected this to us, and we could never have it (by our efforts). And verily, to Our Lord we indeed are to return﴾ (*Qur'an* 43: 13-14). Then he said "*Al-ḥamdu Lillâh* (praise be to Allah)" three times and "*Allâhu akbar* (Allah is most Great)" three times, then: "O Allah, there is no god but You. Verily I have wronged myself, so forgive

me, for surely no one can forgive sins except You.” Then he smiled. It was said to him: “Why are you smiling, O Amir al-Mu'mineen?” He said: “I saw the Prophet (ﷺ) doing what I have done and saying what I have said, then he smiled. We said: ‘Why are you smiling, O Prophet of Allah?’ He said: ‘I am amazed by a person who says, ‘there is no god but You, verily I have wronged myself, so forgive me, for surely no one can forgive sins except You’, knowing that no one forgives sin except Him.’”²⁵⁸

It was narrated that Ibn A'bad said: “Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه) said to me: ‘O Ibn A'bad, do you know what the right of food is?’ I said: ‘What is its right, O 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib?’ He said: ‘You should say: In the name of Allah, O Allah, bless us in that which You have provided for us.’ He said: ‘Do you know how to give thanks for it when you have finished?’ I said: ‘How should I give thanks for it?’ He said: ‘By saying: Praise be to Allah, Who has fed us and given us to drink.’”²⁵⁹

When 'Ali saw the new moon, he would say: “O Allah, I ask you for the good of this month and its support, help, blessings, provision, light, purity and guidance. I seek refuge in You from its evil, and the evil of what is in it, and the evil of what comes after it.”²⁶⁰

He used to say when prostrating: “O Lord, I have wronged myself, so forgive me.”²⁶¹ Between the two prostrations, he would say: “O Allah, forgive me, have mercy on me, support me and grant me provision.”²⁶² He taught the people to recite this supplication when entering the marketplace: “In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. I put my trust in Allah, and there is no power and no strength except in Allah. O Allah, I seek refuge in You from a false oath and a losing deal, and from the evil of what is in this market.”²⁶³ He used to say: “There are no words dearer to Allah (ﷻ) than a person's saying: ‘O Allah, there is no god but You. O Allah, I

do not worship anyone but You. O Allah, I do not associate anything with You. O Allah, I have wronged myself, so forgive me my sins, for no one forgives sins but You.”²⁶⁴ He also used to say: “O Allah, make us steadfast in adhering to justice and fairness and what is right; make us adhere to the Book, guided and guiding others, content and making others content, not going astray or leading others astray.”²⁶⁵

Another of ‘Ali’s supplications was: “O Allah, I ask you by Your mercy that encompasses all things, by Your might that overwhelms all things, by Your glory that prevails over all things, by Your sovereignty that encompasses all things, by Your power that nothing can resist, by Your light that illuminates all things, by Your knowledge that encompasses all things, by Your name that prevails over all things, and by Your eternal countenance that remains after all things have perished. O Allah, O Most Gracious, O Most Merciful, forgive me my sins that incur Your wrath and the sins that generate regret. Forgive me the sins that keep away blessings, and forgive me the sins that change blessings into their opposite. Forgive me the sins that bring down calamity and cause enemies to prevail. Forgive me the sins that cause rain to be withheld and supplications to be rejected. Forgive me the sins that would doom me to hell.”²⁶⁶ This supplication demonstrates Ali’s sense of needing his Lord and also his fear of his sin; it shows us how we should deal with the beautiful names of Allah (ﷻ) and call upon Him by them. This supplication also sheds light on the true sense of servitude to Allah (ﷻ) that was felt by Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ).

It is also narrated that ‘Ali (ﷺ) said: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) taught me these words and told me that if any calamity or hardship befell me, I should say them: ‘There is no god but Allah, the Forbearing, the Most Generous. Glory be to Him. Blessed be Allah, the Lord of the Mighty Throne. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.’”²⁶⁷ Abdullah ibn Ja‘far used to prompt the dying person to

say these words, recite them over one who was sick with a fever, and teach them to his daughter, who was living away from home.²⁶⁸

These are some of the characteristics that were the fruit of his tawḥeed, his faith in Allah and his preparations to meet Allah (ﷺ). As we cover the events of his life, the reader will notice many of his attributes, including courage, forbearance and eloquence.

2.9. The ultimate reference points for the government of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه)

The ultimate reference points for the government of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه) were the Book of Allah (ﷻ) and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ), following the example of the two shaykhs Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them).

2.9.1. The Book of Allah (ﷻ)

Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Surely, We have sent down to you [O Muhammad] the Book [this Qur'an] in truth that you might judge between men by that which Allah has shown you [i.e. has taught you through Divine Revelation], so be not a pleader for the treacherous﴾ (Qur'an 4: 105). The Book of Allah contains all Sharia rulings that have to do with worldly affairs. The noble Qur'an also tells the Muslims everything they need to know of the foundations on which their state is to be established. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (رضي الله عنه) said: "Adhere to your religion, follow the guidance of your Prophet, follow his Sunnah and try to find an answer in the Qur'an about whatever you are uncertain of. Whatever the Qur'an approves, adhere to it, and whatever it disapproves of, turn away from it."²⁶⁹

2.9.2. The Sunnah

The Islamic constitution is derived from the Sunnah, from which it is possible to find out the proper way of implementing and executing the rulings of the noble Qur'an.²⁷⁰ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) said: "Follow the guidance of your Prophet (ﷺ), for it is the best of guidance, and follow his way, for it is the best of ways."²⁷¹

2.9.3. Following the example of the Rightly Guided Caliphs

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Follow the example of those who come after me, Abu Bakr and 'Umar."²⁷² Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) said concerning Abu Bakr and 'Umar (عليه السلام): "By the One Who causes the seed to split and sprout and the One Who created the soul, no one loves them but a pious believer, and no one hates them but an immoral evildoer. They accompanied the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) with sincerity and loyalty, enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, and they never did anything contrary to what the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) wanted to do. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) never regarded anyone else's advice as equal to theirs, and he never loved anyone else as he loved them. When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died, he was pleased with them; and when they died, the believers were pleased with them." He continued speaking until he said concerning Abu Bakr (عليه السلام): "He was the best of those who remained; he was more merciful than anyone else, more kind, more pious and senior in terms of age and Islam. He led us as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had led us until he died like that, then 'Umar was appointed in charge after him... He conducted affairs according to the way of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companion (Abu Bakr), following in their footsteps as the camel calf follows its mother... Who do you know who is like them? May Allah

(ﷺ) have mercy on them, and may Allah (ﷻ) help us to follow their path. No one can attain what they attained except by following in their footsteps and loving them. So whoever loves me, let him love them. Whoever does not love them hates me, and I have nothing to do with him.”²⁷³

‘Ali defended the actions of ‘Uthmân ibn ‘Affân, saying: “O people, do not go to extremes (in criticising) ‘Uthmân, and do not say anything but good about him. For by Allah (ﷻ), he did not do what he did (to the muṣḥafs) except on the basis of the agreement of us all — meaning the Companions. If I were in his position, I would have done the same as he did.”²⁷⁴ He also used to say: “I would not undo a knot that ‘Umar tied.”²⁷⁵

2.10. The right of the Ummah to keep watch on its rulers

The Ummah has the right to keep watch on its rulers and set them straight. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good [Islam], enjoining *al-Ma‘roof* [i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do] and forbidding *al-Munkar* [polytheism and disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden]. And it is they who are the successful.﴾

(*Qur'an* 3: 104)

The first thing that Amir al-Mu'mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ) said after he was appointed was: “No one has any right to this matter (the position of leader) except the one you appoint, and I cannot decide any matter without your approval.”²⁷⁶ This is similar to what Abu Bakr (ﷺ) said when he was appointed: “If I do well, then help me, and if I do wrong, then set me straight.”²⁷⁷ ‘Umar said something like it: “The dearest of people to me is the one who points out my mistakes to me.”²⁷⁸ ‘Umar also said: “I am afraid that I may do wrong and no one

will stop me for fear of me.”²⁷⁹ ‘Uthmân said something with the same meaning: “If you find in the Book of Allah (ﷻ) that you should put my leg in chains, then put my leg in chains.”²⁸⁰ This is how the caliphs acted in the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. They submitted to the right of the Ummah to watch over the rulers, and no one objected, which indicates that there was agreement on this.²⁸¹

The consensus of the Companions — as rulers and subjects — at the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs can only mean one thing, which is a sound understanding of the Qur’an and the proper way of acting upon the Sunnah. They were there at the time when the Book was being revealed, and they witnessed the way that the Prophet (ﷺ) told the people to live in accordance with the Qur’an. They are the ones who best understood the spirit of this religion, were most knowledgeable about the aims of Sharia and were most able to distinguish between truth and falsehood. It is most unlikely — rather it is impossible — that they would agree on falsehood, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “My Ummah will never unite on misguidance.”²⁸² Hence their consensus is regarded as evidence to which attention must be paid and that should be included in the sources of the Islamic constitution. The consensus of the Ummah may be on the understanding of a text, or they may agree on an analogy, and that becomes evidence.²⁸³

During his caliphate, Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali encouraged the people to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil. One day he gave a speech in which he praised and glorified Allah, then he said: “O people, what destroyed those before you was that they committed sins, and the devoted scholars and rabbis did not stop them, thus they were seized by punishment. So enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil before there befalls you the like of what befell them, and remember that enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil does not stop provision and does not bring one closer to death.”²⁸⁴

2.11. Consultation

One of the principles of the Islamic state is the obligation of the leaders and rulers to consult with the Muslims, listening to their views and ruling on the basis of consultation. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And by the Mercy of Allah, you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you; so pass over [their faults], and ask [Allah's] forgiveness for them; and consult them in the affairs. Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah, certainly, Allah loves those who put their trust [in Him].﴾ (Qur'an 3: 159)

﴿And those who answer the Call of their Lord [i.e. to believe that He is the only One Lord (Allah), and to worship none but Him Alone], and perform *as-Salâh* [*Iqâmat-as-Salâh*], and who [conduct] their affairs by mutual consultation, and who spend of what We have bestowed on them.﴾ (Qur'an 42: 38)

The verse mentions together two things: rule by consultation among the Muslims and the establishment of prayer. This indicates that the ruling on consultation is as important as the ruling on prayer; thus consultation is a religious obligation.²⁸⁵ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) was keen to adhere to the method of consultation in his dealings, actions and decisions. For example, when he received a letter from his commander Ma'qil ibn Qays ar-Riyâhi, who was in charge of fighting the Kharijite al-Khirreet ibn Râshid, he gathered his companions and read the letter to them. He consulted them and asked for their opinions until most of them agreed on one opinion, namely: "We think that you should write to Ma'qil ibn Qays and tell him to seek out the evildoer and keep after him until he kills him or banishes him, lest he turn the people against you."²⁸⁶

Another report narrated from Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) tells us that he said: “Consultation is the essence of guidance. The one who bases his actions on his own opinions without consulting others is in grave danger.”²⁸⁷ He also said: “What a great support when you seek consultation, and what a bad preparation when you do not consult anyone.”²⁸⁸ He said: “The view of an old man is better than what the young man sees with his own eye.”²⁸⁹

When Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) sent Mâlik ibn al-Ḥârith al-Ashtar to Egypt, he gave him this advice concerning consultation: “Do not include among your advisers any miser, because he will advise you not to be generous and will make you fear poverty. Do not include any coward, because he will weaken your resolve. Do not include anyone who is covetous, because he will try to make you accumulate things by unjust means. Miserliness, cowardice and covetousness are different types of inclinations that are based on thinking badly of Allah (ﷻ).”²⁹⁰

‘Ali (عليه السلام) held the view that if the ruler did not have any advisers, he would not be aware of what was good and bad in the way the state was run, and he would be unaware of many issues of state and ruling. He knew that consultation would enable him to find out what he did not already know, and it would remove uncertainty in all matters on which he had to make decisions. He said to al-Ashtar an-Nakha‘i, when he appointed him as governor of Egypt: “Examine the profiles of the workers whom you appoint, and let your appointment of them be on the basis of qualification and not on the basis of favouritism or preference. Appointing people to official positions on the basis of favouritism is injustice and betrayal of Allah (ﷻ), and it causes great harm to the people. People’s affairs cannot be run soundly, and neither can the affairs of governors, unless the governors choose those who are most qualified to manage the people’s affairs and choose their workers to take care of matters that

they cannot handle themselves. For positions of authority, choose people who are pious, dignified, knowledgeable and kind. Make sure that they are experienced, intelligent and modest people from righteous families, who are religiously committed and pious, because they are the noblest in attitude and more careful in protecting themselves from falling into error; they are the least greedy and are more aware of the consequences of things than others. These should be your workers and helpers.”²⁹¹

2.12. Justice and equality

One of the aims of Islamic rule is to establish the foundations of the Islamic system, which plays a role in the establishment of Muslim society. Among the most important of these foundations are justice and equality. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) established justice among the people. His good qualities and his deep knowledge and understanding joined together to make him qualified to play this role in the most perfect manner, to the extent that the Messenger (ﷺ), because of his confidence in him and in his abilities, sent him to Yemen as a judge.²⁹² The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) offered this excellent supplication for him: “O Allah, make his tongue steadfast (in speaking the truth) and guide his heart.”²⁹³

It was natural that he should establish his rule on the basis of comprehensive justice and make that his main objective, because by means of justice the affairs of state become sound, and love and harmony prevail among the people.²⁹⁴ Undoubtedly, justice in the mind of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) was the justice of Islam, which is the main foundation on which Islamic society and Islamic rule are based. Islam cannot exist in a society where injustice prevails and justice is not known.

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) was exemplary in his justice; he captured hearts and dazzled minds. The view that he tried to implement was that justice was one of the most important pillars of the Rightly Guided Caliphate, a practical means of calling people to Islam and opening their hearts to faith. This was the method followed by the Messenger (ﷺ), as his rule was based on total justice among people.

It was narrated that Shurayh said: "When 'Ali (عليه السلام) set out to fight Mu'âwiyah (عليه السلام), he lost a shield. When the battle was over and he returned to Kufah, he found a shield in the possession of a Jewish man who was selling it in the marketplace. He said to him: 'O Jew, this shield is my shield; I did not sell it or give it away.' The Jew said: 'It is my shield and is in my possession.' 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: 'Let us go to the judge.' So they went to Shurayh, and 'Ali (عليه السلام) sat beside Shurayh, while the Jew sat in front of him. Shurayh said: 'Speak, O Amir al-Mu'mineen.' He said: 'Yes. I say that this shield that is in the Jew's hands is my shield; I did not sell it or give it away.' Shurayh said: 'O Amir al-Mu'mineen, give me proof.' He said: 'Yes. Qunbur,²⁹⁵ al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn will bear witness that this shield is my shield.' Shurayh said: 'The testimony of the son for the father does not count.' 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: 'The testimony of a man who is one of the people of paradise does not count? I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: "Al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn will be the leaders of the youth among the people of paradise."'²⁹⁶ The Jew said: 'The Amir al-Mu'mineen brought me to his judge, and his judge is ruling against him? I bear witness that this is the truth; I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and that the shield is your shield. You were riding on your dusky camel, heading towards Ṣiffeen; you dropped this (shield) at night, and I picked it up.' 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: 'Since you admit it, it is yours,' and he gave him a horse too. I saw him when he went out to fight the Kharijites with 'Ali at Naharwân."²⁹⁷

Another example of his justice in ruling was narrated by al-Qurashi from his father, who said: "We were standing at the gate of the palace when 'Ali (ﷺ) came out to us. When he saw us, we stepped back out of respect; when he had passed, we walked behind him. While he was like that, a man called out: 'Help for the sake of Allah (ﷻ)!' There were two men fighting. He punched one on the chest and then the other, and told them to move away from one another. One of them said: 'O Amir al-Mu'mineen, this man bought a sheep from me, and I stipulated to him that he should not give me any faulty dirhams. He gave me a faulty dirham, so I returned it to him, and he slapped me.' 'Ali (ﷺ) said to the other one: 'What do you say?' He said: 'He is telling the truth, O Amir al-Mu'mineen.' He said: 'So give him what he stipulated.' Then he said to the one who had slapped him: 'Sit down,' and he said to the one who had been slapped: 'Settle the score.' He said: 'Or pardon, O Amir al-Mu'mineen?' 'Ali (ﷺ) said: 'It is up to you.' When the man left, 'Ali (ﷺ) said: 'O Muslims, grab him (the other one).' They caught him, and he was carried on a man's back as you would carry a schoolboy, and he was given fifteen lashes. 'Ali (ﷺ) said: 'This is a punishment because you transgressed against him.' According to another report he said: 'This is the right of the ruler.'"²⁹⁸

This report is regarded as a wonderful example of humility because Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) came out of his house to go to the marketplace and check on the people's situation, and he himself solved their problems. This is the kind of sublime behaviour that makes the presence of the rulers felt in the real life of the people, whether that is done by the caliph or someone of lower rank. It is not essential to do it every day, but it is sufficient to make people feel that the rulers are with them to deal with their problems and to reassure people that no one is going to transgress against them or their due rights, and that they can regain their rights if they are violated. It also discourages anyone who thinks of transgressing against the people's

rights. Over and above that, it deters anyone who thinks of transgressing against the rights of Allah (ﷻ).

This strong bond between the rulers and the people may be manifested in different ways, as suited to the ways of life in different eras. No one should say that what Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) did is something that was possible in his era but is far-fetched in the time we are living in, because it does not matter how it is done. What matters are the aims and goals by means of which a happy life is guaranteed for the Muslims, and that is achieved by paying attention to the rights of Allah (ﷻ) first of all, and then the rights of the people, both general and specific. The fact that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) ordered that the punishment be carried out on the transgressor, even though the one who was transgressed against pardoned him, is indicative of his understanding of the goal of Islam, which is to preserve security and spread peace among the believers. Thus Islam seeks to deter those who are inclined to violate the rights of others, because they know that the punishment will be carried out on them even if their victims let them off.²⁹⁹

Another example of 'Ali's justice was narrated by 'Aṣim ibn Kulayb from his father, who said: "Some wealth from Isfahan³⁰⁰ was brought to 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷺ), and he divided it into seven parts. Within that was a loaf of bread. He divided it into seven parts, and on each share of the treasure he put a piece of bread. Then he drew lots to determine which of them would be given first."³⁰¹

With regard to the principle of equality followed by Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷺ) in his state, it is regarded as one of the general principles that are confirmed by Islam. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is that [believer] who has *At-Taḳwa* [i.e. he is one of the *Muttaqoon* (the pious)]. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.﴾ (*Qur'an* 49: 13)

'Ali's implementation of this principle is the best model. We have seen his keenness to divide wealth on an equal basis among the people as soon as it reached him, after deducting from it what was needed for the expenses of state. He never allowed himself to take anything from this wealth except as much as he gave to other people. He gave stipends to his opponents among the Kharijites, just as he gave to others. (That was before they shed blood and transgressed against the people.)³⁰² He (ﷺ) gave to the people equally, following the example of Abu Bakr (ﷺ). He did not give precedence to a nobleman over a commoner, or to an Arab over a non-Arab.

On one occasion, he gave equal shares of food and money to two women, one of whom was Arab while the other was not. The former objected, saying: "By Allah, I am an Arab woman, and this woman is a non-Arab." 'Ali (ﷺ) replied: "By Allah, I do not see any reason to give precedence to the offspring of Ismâ'eel over the offspring of Ishâq with regard to this wealth." Similarly, when he was asked to give precedence to the noble Arabs and Quraysh over the freed slaves and non-Arabs, he said: "No, by Allah. If it were my own wealth, I would divide it equally among the people, so how about when it is the people's own wealth?"³⁰³

It was narrated that Yahya ibn Salamah said: "Ali appointed 'Amr ibn Salamah as governor of Isfahan, and he came bringing its wealth and some skins containing honey and ghee. Umm Kulthoom bint 'Ali sent word to 'Amr, asking him for ghee and honey, and he sent to her a container of honey and a container of ghee. The next day, 'Ali (ﷺ) went out and brought the wealth, honey and ghee to be divided. He counted the vessels and found two missing. He asked 'Amr about them, and he did not tell him anything, but he said: 'I shall bring them for you.' 'Ali (ﷺ) insisted that he should tell him what he had done with them, so he told him. 'Ali (ﷺ) sent word to Umm Kulthoom. He took the two vessels from her and saw that some was

missing from them. He told the traders to estimate how much was missing from them, and it was three dirhams’ worth. So he sent word to her and took it from her, then he shared out the total amount.”³⁰⁴

It was narrated from Abu Râfi‘, the storekeeper for ‘Ali (عليه السلام) who was in charge of the public treasury, that he said: “He came in one day, and his daughter had adorned herself. He saw her wearing pearls that he recognised from the public treasury. He said: ‘Where did she get this from? By Allah, I shall cut off her hand.’ When I saw that he was serious, I said: ‘By Allah, O Amir al-Mu’mineen, I adorned my niece with them. How could she obtain them if I did not give them to her?’ And he fell silent.”³⁰⁵

2.13. Freedom

Freedom was one of the basic principles of government at the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. This principle dictates that all freedoms should be guaranteed and protected, within the limits of Sharia and in a way that does not contradict it. Islam calls for the freedom of all people, in a comprehensive call the like of which is rarely found in history.

The first call, found in a number of Qur’anic verses, is for the people to affirm the unity of Allah (الله) and to direct worship to Him alone, to the exclusion of all other beings and creatures. This call to tawhîd brings freedom and independence for all people. Moreover, Islam recognises freedom in all senses and all aspects. Sometimes the call is positive, such as enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, and sometimes it is negative, such as refraining from forcing anyone to enter Islam. In many cases, the concept of freedom is merged with concepts of mercy, justice, consultation and equality, because each of these principles that Islam promotes cannot be sound and cannot be achieved except in the presence of freedom. During the rule of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, the principle of freedom

contributed effectively to the spread of the religion of Islam. It facilitated the Muslim conquests and the expansion of the state's territory, because Islam honours human beings and guarantees their freedom in the most comprehensive manner. The political systems that were prevalent at that time, in the Byzantine and Persian empires, were tyrannical and dictatorial systems in which power was concentrated in the hands of a few. They caused suffering and the worst degree of suppression, persecution and injustice to people, especially political opponents and religious minorities. However, in Islam at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Rightly Guided Caliphs, the general freedom that is known nowadays was known and protected.³⁰⁶

On a number of occasions, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) defended freedom, and he took a number of actions that supported this principle in Muslim society. One of his sayings was: "What a bad provision for the hereafter to transgress against the people."³⁰⁷ This brief statement indicates that transgressing against the people in any way is not permissible in Islam, and it reminds transgressors of the punishment of Allah on the Day of Resurrection. It is known that he also said: "It is not justice to judge against the man of sound character on the basis of speculation."³⁰⁸ These words clearly indicate that it is not permissible to judge people on the basis of mere speculation and doubts; rather it should be on the basis of certainty that is founded on irrefutable evidence, and the best of this evidence is that which the Sharia stipulates. Thus the principle that was established by modern criminal laws, that the accused is considered innocent until proven otherwise, was known to Islam a long time ago.³⁰⁹

The principle of freedom was manifested in the most brilliant way during the time of 'Ali (عليه السلام). Despite exceptional circumstances (tribulation, conspiracies and wars) that could have justified restrictions on people's freedom of movement and residence, or what

is known nowadays as martial law, ‘Ali (ﷺ) did not limit the freedom of anyone, whether they were his followers or his opponents. He did not force anyone to stay in the area under his authority or to leave that area. He did not force anyone to go out with him to fight his enemies, and he did not even prevent anyone from joining Mu‘āwiyah.³¹⁰ He did not limit the freedom of the companions of Abdullah ibn Mas‘ood, ‘Ubaydah as-Salmāni and ar-Rabee‘ ibn Khaytham, and he did not force them to go out with him to fight the people of Syria when they refused to do so; rather he allowed them to go and guard one of the border regions as they wished.³¹¹ When the Kharijites rebelled against him after the battle of Şiffeen because of the issue of arbitration, he did not force any of them to stay under his authority or to leave. On the contrary, he instructed his officials not to intercept them as long as they did not cause any mischief or violate the rights of the people.³¹² He said to them: “We grant you three things; we will not prevent you from praying in this mosque, we will not withhold your share of this fay’ (booty) as long as you are with us, and we will not fight you unless you fight us.”³¹³

3. ‘Ali’s life in society and his attention to enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil

3.1. His call to tawḥeed and combating shirk

The life of Amir al-Mu‘mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Tālib (ﷺ) was filled with the call to affirm the Oneness of Allah; teaching the people the meaning of faith and of relying on, trusting in and fearing Allah; teaching the people about Him (ﷻ) through His beautiful names and sublime attributes; and combating polytheism of all kinds. He was

always teaching and educating people about the call of tawh  ed and fighting polytheism, as manifested in the following ways:

3.1.1. No one should place his hopes in anyone except his Lord, and he should never fear anything except his sin

These are among the best, most eloquent and most perfect of words, for hope is connected to something good, and fear is connected to something bad. Evil only befalls a person because of his sins, as Allah (  ) says: ﴿And whatever of misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned. And He pardons much﴾ (*Qur'an* 42: 30). The one who has hope seeks to attain good and ward off evil. No one brings blessings except Allah (  ), and no one wards off calamity except Allah (  ).

﴿And if Allah touches you with harm, there is none who can remove it but He; and if He intends any good for you, there is none who can repel His Favour.﴾ (*Qur'an* 10: 107)

﴿Whatever of mercy [i.e. of good], Allah may grant to mankind, none can withhold it; and whatever He may withhold, none can grant it thereafter.﴾ (*Qur'an* 35: 2)

Hope is based on trust in Allah (  ), and the one who puts his trust in Allah (  ) is seeking what he hopes for in terms of obtaining benefits and warding off harm. Trust can only be put in Allah (  ), as He says: ﴿If Allah helps you, none can overcome you; and if He forsakes you, who is there after Him that can help you? And in Allah [Alone] let believers put their trust.﴾ (*Qur'an* 3: 160)

﴿Would that they were contented with what Allah and His Messenger gave them and had said: 'Allah is Sufficient for us. Allah will give us of His Bounty, and so will His Messenger [from alms]. We implore Allah [to enrich us].'﴾ (*Qur'an* 9: 59)

«Those [i.e. believers] unto whom the people [hypocrites] said, 'Verily, the people [pagans] have gathered against you [a great army], therefore, fear them.' But it [only] increased them in Faith, and they said: 'Allah [Alone] is Sufficient for us, and He is the Best Disposer of affairs [for us].'» (Qur'an 3: 173)

So they say: Allah (ﷻ) is sufficient for us, meaning that He is sufficient to ward off calamity. They are commanded to say: Allah (ﷻ) is sufficient to bring us blessings, and He is sufficient for His slave, to protect against evil and help him to attain good. «Is Allah not sufficient for His slave?» (Qur'an 39: 36) Whoever put his trust and hope in anyone other than Allah (ﷻ) will be let down and deprived of help.

«The likeness of those who take [false deities as] *Awliya'* [protectors, helpers] other than Allah is the likeness of a spider who builds [for itself] a house; but verily, the frailest [weakest] of houses is the spider's house.» (Qur'an 29: 41)

«And they have taken [for worship] *âlihah* [gods] besides Allah, that they might give them honour, power and glory [and also protect them from Allah's punishment]. Nay, but they [the so-called gods] will deny their worship of them, and become opponents to them [on the Day of Resurrection].» (Qur'an 19: 81-82)

«And whoever assigns partners to Allah, it is as if he had fallen from the sky, and the birds had snatched him, or the wind had thrown him to a far off place.» (Qur'an 22: 31)

«Set not up with Allah any other *ilâh* [god], [O man]! [This verse is addressed to Prophet Muhammad, but its implication is general to all mankind], or you will sit down reprovèd, forsaken [in the hellfire].» (Qur'an 17: 22)

«You worship besides Allah only idols, and you only invent falsehood. Verily, those whom you worship besides Allah have no

power to give you provision, so seek your provision from Allah [Alone], and worship Him [Alone], and be grateful to Him. To Him [Alone] you will be brought back.﴾ (Qur'an 29: 17)

Whoever strives for the sake of anything other than Allah (ﷻ), hoping to benefit from that for which he is striving, is a loser. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿As for those who disbelieved, their deeds are like a mirage in a desert. The thirsty one thinks it to be water, until he comes up to it, he finds it to be nothing; but he finds Allah with him, Who will pay him his due [hell]. And Allah is Swift in taking account.﴾ (Qur'an 24: 39)

﴿The parable of those who disbelieved in their Lord is that their works are as ashes, on which the wind blows furiously on a stormy day; they shall not be able to get aught of what they have earned.﴾ (Qur'an 14: 18)

﴿And We shall turn to whatever deeds they [disbelievers, polytheists, sinners] did, and We shall make such deeds as scattered floating particles of dust.﴾ (Qur'an 25: 23)

﴿Everything will perish save His Face.﴾ (Qur'an 28: 88)

As it was said in the commentary on these verses: All action is in vain except that by means of which His countenance is sought. When anyone strives for anything but Allah (ﷻ) and puts his hope in that, this effort is in vain. The one who is hoping sometimes seeks by means of his actions the pleasure of the one in whom he has placed his hope, and sometimes he relies on him in his heart and turns to him and asks him for help to achieve it; that is a kind of worship of him and a kind of seeking his help, and Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿You [Alone] we worship, and You [Alone] we ask for help [for each and everything].﴾ (Qur'an 1: 5)

﴿So worship Him [O Muhammad] and put your trust in Him.﴾ (Qur'an 11: 123)

﴿Say: 'He is my Lord! *Lâ ilâha illâ Huwa* [none has the right to be worshipped but He]! In Him is my trust, and to Him will be my return with repentance.'﴾ (Qur'an 13: 30)

To explain further: Whatever good a person attains is from Allah, and whatever misfortunes are warded off from him or he is granted relief from, it is Allah Who prevented it, and it is Allah Who granted him relief. Whatever actions or means led to that were created by Him. Allah is the Creator of all means, whether the means are the action of a living being done by choice and intentionally, as Allah may create the cause by the action of the angels, jinn, humans or animals, or by the actions of inanimate objects because of what Allah (ﷻ) has created in them of nature or inclinations, or by means of forces that are under His control, such as wind, water and so on. Allah (ﷻ) is the Creator of all that, and there is no power and no strength except in Him.³¹⁴ Whatever He wills happens, and whatever He does not will does not happen. All hope and trust must be placed in the Lord, and all supplication must be directed to Him. If He wills something and makes it easy, it will happen and will be easy, even if people do not want it. But if He does not will it and does not make it easy, it will not happen, even if people want it.³¹⁵ These are some of the meanings of the words of Amir al-Mu'mineen: "No one should place his hopes in anyone except his Lord."³¹⁶

As for his words, "And he should never fear anything except his sin"³¹⁷, Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿But whenever good came to them, they said: 'Ours is this.' And if evil afflicted them, they ascribed it to evil omens connected with Moosa [Moses] and those with him﴾ (Qur'an 7: 131). So Allah (ﷻ) tells us that good fortune comes from Him, and He blesses people with it, but misfortune only befalls them because of their sin. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And Allah would not punish them while you [Muhammad] are amongst them, nor will He punish them while they seek [Allah's] forgiveness.﴾ (Qur'an 8: 33)

He is telling us that He does not punish the one who asks for forgiveness, because asking for forgiveness erases the sin that is the cause of punishment. Thus punishment is warded off, as the Prophet (ﷺ) told us: "Whoever persists in asking for forgiveness, Allah (ﷻ) will grant him relief from every worry and a way out from every hardship, and He (ﷻ) will grant him provision from (sources) he could never imagine."³¹⁸ Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿[Saying] worship none but Allah. Verily, I [Muhammad] am unto you from Him a warner and a bringer of glad tidings. And [commanding you]: 'Seek the forgiveness of your Lord, and turn to Him in repentance, that He may grant you good enjoyment, for a term appointed, and bestow His abounding grace to every owner of grace [i.e. the one who helps and serves the needy and deserving, physically and with his wealth, and even with good words].﴾

(*Qur'an* 11: 2-3)

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that the one who affirms His Oneness and seeks His forgiveness will be granted good enjoyment for a term appointed, and whoever does good after that will receive His abounding grace. According to the hadith, Satan said: "I cause doom to people by means of sins, and they cause my doom by means of *Lâ ilâha illa Allâh* (saying that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah) and asking for forgiveness."³¹⁹ When I saw that, I tried to misguide them on the basis of whims and desires, so that they would sin and not repent, because they think that they are doing well."³²⁰ 'Umar ibn 'Abdul-'Azeez said: "There is no calamity that occurred except because of sin, and there is no calamity that was relieved except because of repentance." Hence Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Those [i.e. believers] unto whom the people [hypocrites] said, 'Verily, the people [pagans] have gathered against you [a great army], therefore, fear them.' But it [only] increased them in Faith, and they said: 'Allah [Alone] is Sufficient for us, and He is the Best

Disposer of affairs [for us].’ So they returned with grace and bounty from Allah. No harm touched them; and they followed the good Pleasure of Allah. And Allah is the Owner of great bounty. It is only Satan that suggests to you the fear of his Awliyâ’ [supporters and friends (polytheists, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah and in His Messenger, Muhammad)]; so fear them not, but fear Me, if you are [true] believers. ﴿﴾ (Qur’an 3: 173-175)

So Allah (ﷻ) told the believers not to fear the friends of Satan, and He commanded them to fear Him. Fear of Him dictates doing that which He enjoins, refraining from doing that which He forbids, and asking Him for forgiveness for sins. Then calamity will be ward off, and victory against enemies will be granted. Hence Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (ؑ) said: “No one should fear anything but his sin.”³²¹ If someone gains power over him, it is only because of his sins, so let him fear Allah (ﷻ) and repent from the sins that caused whatever befell him.³²² As it says in the report: “Allah (ﷻ) says: ‘I am Allah, the King of Kings; the hearts and forelocks of the kings are in My hand. Whoever obeys Me, I will make them (kings) merciful to him, and whoever disobeys Me, I will make them a source of vengeance against him. So do not be distracted by reviling kings. Obey Me, and I will soften their hearts towards you.’”³²³

3.1.2. Amir al-Mu’mineen taught the people the names and attributes of Allah (ﷻ)

Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿So know [O Muhammad] that *Lâ ilâha illa Allah* [none has the right to be worshipped but Allah], and ask forgiveness for your sin﴾ (Qur’an 47: 19). The one who has more knowledge of Allah (ﷻ) will fear Him more, as Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allah﴾ (Qur’an 35: 28). So the noble Qur’an states that knowledge of the beautiful names and sublime attributes of Allah is one of the greatest

means of increasing and strengthening faith and making it steadfast. Knowledge of Allah (ﷻ) includes the three types of tawḥeed: the tawḥeed of His Lordship, the tawḥeed of directing acts of worship to Him alone, and the tawḥeed of His names and attributes. These three types are the essence, foundation and aim of faith. The more one knows the names and attributes of Allah (ﷻ), the more one's faith grows and increases in certainty.³²⁴ Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And [all] the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call on Him by them, and leave the company of those who belie or deny [or utter impious speech against] His Names. They will be requited for what they used to do﴾ (*Qur'an* 7: 180). ﴿Say [O Muhammad]: 'Invoke Allah [or invoke the Most Gracious (Allah)], by whatever name you invoke Him [it is the same], for to Him belong the Best Names'﴾ (*Qur'an* 17: 110). And it is proven in Bukhari and Muslim that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Allah has ninety-nine names, one hundred less one. Whoever learns them by heart will enter paradise."³²⁵ In other words, whoever memorises them, understands their meanings, believes in them and worships Allah (ﷻ) with them will enter paradise, and no one will enter paradise except the believers.³²⁶

Because of the importance of this knowledge, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ؑ) said: "O seeker of knowledge, there are three signs of the knowledgeable person: knowledge of Allah, knowledge of what Allah loves, and knowledge of what Allah hates."³²⁷ He also said, describing Allah (ﷻ): "He has knowledge of every place, of every moment in time. He did not create things from raw material; neither did He create things from something that already existed. Rather He created what He created in a perfect manner and gave it shape and shaped it perfectly. He is One in His supremacy, and nothing is beyond His control. He does not benefit from acts of obedience on the part of His creation. He responds quickly to those who call upon Him. The angels in heaven and on earth obey Him. His knowledge of those who are long dead is like His knowledge of those

who are still living. His knowledge of what is in the highest heaven is like his knowledge of what is in the deepest earth. His knowledge encompasses all things, and He does not become confused by the multitude of voices and languages. He is the All-Seeing Controller, the Knower of all things, the Ever Living, Self Sustaining. Glory be to Him, and exalted be He far above his attributes being likened to human attributes.”³²⁸

A Jew came to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) and asked him: “When did our Lord come into existence?” 'Ali's face changed, and he said: “Are you saying that He did not exist, then He existed? He existed before anything existed, and His existence has no comparison. He exists with no beginning and no end. All things will end, but He is eternal, and He is the ultimate goal.” The Jewish man became Muslim.³²⁹ Among the reports that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) narrated from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) concerning the attributes of Allah (ﷻ) was the report that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Allah is kind and loves kindness, and He gives for kindness that which He does not give for harshness.”³³⁰

Knowing the names and attributes of Allah (ﷻ), pondering their meanings and believing in them generates love of Allah (ﷻ) and veneration of Him. This, in turn, motivates one to heed His commands and prohibitions, to turn to Him in times of calamity, to ask of Him in times of need, to seek His help in times of hardship, and to perform other kinds of worship that are rooted in the heart.³³¹

3.1.3. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) taught the people about the blessings of Allah (ﷻ) for which they should give thanks

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) said, reminding the people of Allah and His blessings to His slaves: “I exhort you, O slaves of Allah, to fear Allah (ﷻ) Who set out parables for you, set a

time for you on earth, gave you hearing to understand what you need to understand, gave you sight to see the things around you, and gave you hearts and minds to understand things, in a body to which He gave shape and function. For Allah (ﷻ) did not create you in vain, and He did not forsake you; rather He honoured you with a great deal of blessings and granted you a great deal from His generosity. He has encompassed you with His knowledge and has promised you reward for times of ease and hardship. So fear Allah, O slaves of Allah (ﷻ), and strive hard in seeking Him. Hasten to do good deeds before death, the destroyer of pleasures, approaches.”³³²

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) used to urge the people to draw close to Allah (ﷻ) by giving thanks for the blessings that they had, and he used to warn them against being content with that and feeling secure with it. He encouraged them to seek what is with Allah (ﷻ) of more blessings by giving thanks for blessings, as he said: “If you are blessed with a time of ease, then give thanks to Allah and combine that with fear of Him. If hardship befalls you, remember Allah and combine that with hope in Him, for Allah grants to the Muslims a goodly reward, but He gives more to those who give thanks.”³³³ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) called the people to evaluate themselves, and he said: “The one who knows himself knows his Lord.”³³⁴ Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And also in your own selves. Will you not then see?﴾ (*Qur'an* 51: 21)

3.1.4. Keenness of Amir al-Mu'mineen

'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib to erase the traces of jāhiliyyah

'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) said: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was at a funeral, and he said: ‘Which of you will go to Madinah³³⁵ and not leave any idol without breaking it, or any grave without levelling it, or any image without erasing it?’ ‘Ali (ﷺ) said: ‘I will, O Messenger of Allah.’ Then the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘Go.’

So he set out, then he came back and said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, I did not leave any idol but I broke it, and I did not leave any grave but I levelled it, and I did not leave any image but I erased it.’ The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘Whoever goes back to any of these things has disbelieved in that which was revealed to Muhammad (ﷺ).’”³³⁶

When he became caliph, ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) sent Abu al-Hayâj al-Asadi and said to him: “I am sending you on the same mission as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent me. Do not leave any image without destroying it, or any raised grave without levelling it.”³³⁷ He told him that images should be erased and that the graves should be level with the ground, with no raised features.

Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) would often go to the graveyard to visit it and to seek a lesson therefrom. He looked out over the graveyard and said: “O people of the graves, tell us your news. As for our news, the women have gotten married, the wealth has been divided, and the houses are inhabited by people other than you.” Then he said: “If they could speak, they would say: ‘We do not think there is anything better than piety.’”³³⁸ Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) used to strive hard to purify his tawḥeed, and he blocked by all means any practices that might lead to idolatry. Hence he warned against taking graves as places of worship, because of the trouble that might cause to the occupants of the graves and because it is a means that leads to worship of the dead. He said: “The most evil of people are those who take graves as places of worship.”³³⁹ By his words and actions, he was following the words of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): “The wrath of Allah is very great against people who took the graves of their Prophets as places of worship.”³⁴⁰ There are other sound hadiths about this topic, too.

It is essential to note that the purpose of visiting the graves is to achieve two things, as is clear from the Prophet’s teachings: one is to

seek a lesson from death, and the other is to pray for the deceased and to ask for mercy for them. There is nothing in any of these reports to indicate that the visitor should go to the grave for the purpose of seeking to have his needs met. Going to the grave in order to benefit from it is contrary to the teaching of the Prophet (ﷺ), and it is contrary to the etiquette of visiting the graves, as stated by the scholars.³⁴¹

Ibn al-‘Arabi made a list of the aims of travel, and this included travelling to see one’s brothers to check on their situation. After mentioning the virtue of the one who visits a brother for the sake of Allah (ﷻ), he said: “This applies if he is alive. If he is dead, it is permissible to visit his grave too, and to pray for mercy for him, so that the deceased may benefit from the living. But he should not seek to benefit from the deceased, because this is an innovation.”³⁴²

In fact, going to graves in the hopes of having one’s needs met is exactly like what the Prophet (ﷺ) warned his Companions against when they asked him to make them a tree that would bring blessings. According to the hadith of Abu Wâqid al-Laythi, when the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) set out for Hunayn, he passed by a tree of the idol-worshippers that was called *Dhât Anwât*, on which they would hang their weapons (for blessing). They said: “O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), make for us a Dhât Anwât like they have.” The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Glory to Allah! This is just like what was said to Moosa, ‘Make us a god like they have.’ By the One in Whose hand is my soul, you will follow the way of those who came before you.”³⁴³

In *‘Iddat al-Mureed*, Shaykh az-Zarooq quotes the hadith mentioned above and says: “According to the scholars, it is not permissible to venerate a place, tree, building or anything else that has a basis in the beliefs of pre-Islamic ignorance, in hope of being healed or having one’s needs met.”³⁴⁴ Then he said: “In the hadith, there is evidence that everything that perpetuates or has an origin in

pre-Islamic idol worship, such as wood, iron, stone, structures and so on, is forbidden if it cannot be put to any mundane use.”³⁴⁵

Undoubtedly, veneration of graves has its origin in the worship from the time of spiritual darkness before Islam; in fact it is the root thereof. Nothing is more indicative of that than the fact that the most famous of the idols that they worshipped instead of Allah (ﷻ) were al-Lât and Manât. These were the names of righteous men, but after they died, the people exaggerated in their veneration of them until they began to worship them instead of Allah (ﷻ).³⁴⁶ Here the hadith of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the actions of 'Ali (ؑ) played a critical role in protecting the concept of tawḥeed. It becomes clear to us that what some ignorant Muslims do, such as venerating graves, circumambulating them, and becoming attached to their occupants, is something ḥarâm that is contrary to the commands of Allah (ﷻ) and the attitude and actions of Amir al-Mu'mineen. The devoted scholars who put their hope in Allah (ﷻ) and the Last Day must follow the example of the Prophet (ﷺ), as Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ؑ) did. They must strive to teach the people to worship the Lord alone and make their hearts attached to Allah (ﷻ), the One, the Subduer. They must conquer, with wisdom and beautiful preaching, the obstacles that bar the way to Allah.

3.1.4.a. The prescribed manner of visiting graves

There is a prescribed manner of visiting graves, but many people are unaware of it. This is due to the prevalence of innovations and myths in the Muslim world and the lack of guidance from scholars and callers to Islam concerning the prescribed manner of visiting graves and what should be said when visiting them. The aims are to be reminded of death, the true status of man and what his end will be, and to remember that there will come a day when this place, which he is visiting today, will be his resting place. This will help to make the people steadfast in obeying Allah (ﷻ), and it will

encourage them to push themselves to worship Allah (ﷻ), especially if they are lazy and unwilling to worship. Greeting the dead, and praying for mercy and forgiveness for them, is also prescribed. Among the evidence concerning that is the hadith of 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها), who said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to go out at the end of the night to Baqee' Cemetery and say: 'Peace be upon you, O abode of believing people, and we — if Allah wills — will join you. O Allah (ﷻ), forgive the people of Baqee' Cemetery.'" According to another report from her (رضي الله عنها), Jibreel came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and told him that Allah was commanding him to pray for forgiveness for the people of Baqee' Cemetery. 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said: "What should I say to them, O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)?" He said: "Say: 'Peace be upon the people of these abodes, believers and Muslims. May Allah have mercy on those of us who have gone on before and those who come later, and we will — if Allah wills — join you.'" ³⁴⁷

3.1.4.b. The beginning of celebrations of visits to tombs

It is said that the first ones to introduce the celebration of annual visits to tombs were the Fatimids in the fourth century AH. Al-Maqreezi Aḥmad ibn 'Ali said: "They had six birthdays: the birthday of the Prophet (ﷺ); the birthdays of 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and Fâtimah (may Allah be pleased with them), and the birthday of the caliph. They used to offer sacrifices of camels, cattle and sheep at the tomb of al-Ḥusayn." ³⁴⁸

Before this time, during the first three centuries, the Muslims did not build tombs or hold celebrations around them. In fact, most of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) were buried outside Baqee' Cemetery, in Egypt, Syria and Iraq, and the locations of their graves are not even known. In cases where the grave is said to be known, the historians and writers of biographies differed concerning it. How could their burial places be unknown to the writers of their biographies when they were righteous scholars and

beacons of guidance, individuals who carried the banner of Islam, knowledge, jihad and worship? If it had been the custom to build up tombs at the time of the Companions and the Tâbi'oon, then their locations could not have been hidden. They would have been known at that time and in later times, and the historians would not have differed as to whether a specific grave was that of a certain Companion or not. The fact that people after the earliest generations performed these actions does not give them any legitimacy at all. How could it, when the Prophet (ﷺ) had forbidden taking his grave as a place of gathering? Those who do that are in fact doing exactly what the Prophet (ﷺ) forbade, quoting their own actions and the actions of their shaykhs as evidence and giving that precedence over the teaching of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and his Companions. But Allah (ﷻ) says: «O you who believe! Do not put [yourselves] forward before Allah and His Messenger.» (*Qur'an* 49: 1)

«And let those who oppose the Messenger's [Muhammad] commandment [i.e., his Sunnah — legal ways, orders, acts of worship, statement, etc.] [among the sects] beware lest some Fitnah [disbelief, trials, afflictions, earthquakes, killing, overpowered by a tyrant, etc.] befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them.» (*Qur'an* 24: 63)

3.1.4.c. Connection between shrines and backwardness and ignorance

Placing importance on building domes and tombs is contrary to the command of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to level them, as Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) explained to us. The people used their talents to decorate them with bright colours; they were adorned with silk covers like the covers of the Ka'bah and were guarded with splendid gates. There were heavy iron boxes to collect money from visitors, who paid for vows made to the occupants of the tombs so that their needs might be met and their hopes fulfilled.

Some people prospered from serving and guarding tombs, and these people narrated stories of miracles, as well as warnings of bad consequences for anyone who shed doubts on the soundness of what was taking place.

It is well known that venerating tombs in this manner is something that did not flourish until the Muslims became backward and grew weak, in the eras of intellectual decline and stagnation. By then, the light of Muhammad's (ﷺ) message, which in its first forty years had managed to spread from Persia to Morocco and had called for the building of a noble civilisation, had turned into apathy, idleness, laziness and pinning hopes on illusions. The Muslims limited their efforts to practices that our righteous predecessors, who filled this world with knowledge and righteous deeds, would not even discuss or pay any attention to. Does it not behoove us to ask ourselves: at the time of the Companions, did they do anything of that nature to the grave of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), which is the best grave on the face of the earth, or to any of their graves, when they are the best of the Ummah? Did anything like that happen even at the time of the imams whose example is to be followed, such as Mâlik, ash-Shâfa'i, Abu Ḥaneefah and Aḥmad, may Allah have mercy on them?

None of these things happened at their time. Isn't that an indication that what is going on has no basis in Islam or in worship or in the concept of the *wali* (close friend of Allah)? Rather this is a manifestation of backwardness and ignorance, which was exploited by those who have an interest to achieve in the name of religion, regardless of what that interest may be. Their goals are to numb the public, to gain control of their minds and pockets, to consume their wealth and to pull them backwards. For many centuries, the Islamic nation led the world in power, knowledge, civilisation, legislation, morality, compassion for humanity, invention and other sublime

matters. That was how the Muslims were when they were following true Islam. Then they turned away from that and adopted misconceptions based on fatalism, idleness, apathy and attachment to metaphysical matters that have no basis in Sharia and that Allah (ﷻ) did not enjoin. What they had of knowledge and guidance was replaced by these fallacies, which were called blessings, although they were actually the exact opposite. The ones who turned away from guidance and means of guidance became the misguided and the furthest away from blessing.³⁴⁹

3.1.4.d. Colonialism and the establishment of tombs

The Western colonialist campaigns played a role in encouraging the Muslims to follow this path so that they would be far away from the essence of Islam. The English newspaper *The Times* quoted the words of one of the British colonialists who encouraged innovation and myths among the Muslims: "This guarantees to keep them away from Islam. Shaykh Aḥmad al-Baqoori said that one of the senior Orientalists told him about some of the methods of colonialism in Asia, and that it was essential to change the routes of the caravans coming from India to Baghdad through that vast area to new routes that served the interests of the colonialists. They could not find any method to make the caravans choose that new route until finally they were guided to establish tombs and shrines at short intervals along that route. Soon the people started to transmit rumours about the 'saints' to be found on that route and what they had seen of their miracles, whereupon this route became very popular."³⁵⁰

The British government paid attention to the religious situation in Egypt and was watching the communist movement in the area. One of the things that confirmed the religious commitment of the Egyptians was that three million Muslims visited the tomb of Aḥmad al-Badawi in Tanta in one year. One of the scholars who was sent

from the Awqâf Ministry to exhort them said: "I have seen, of their actions, things that require lashes with the whip, not just verbal rebukes. If they were called to a valid religious duty, they would be reluctant to do it and would run away. It is sufficient to know about their situation that they come to the tomb mentioned to fulfil vows and offer supplication."³⁵¹

3.1.4.e. Are shrines an innovation in religion?

When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died, he was the dearest of creation to Allah (ﷻ) and the one who feared Allah (ﷻ) the most. The respect that the Companions had for him is no secret, and their love for him is beyond estimation. He (ﷺ) was buried in his house, and the site of his grave was known to his Companions. Although it is the best grave in this world, they did not build a shrine or structure or dome over it. Neither the Rightly Guided Caliphs nor any of his other Companions gathered at his grave to commemorate him on any particular day of the year for the purpose of remembrance and worship. Rather if they passed by his grave, they would send blessings and peace upon him, as their Lord had enjoined them to do. They obeyed the Prophet's commands, followed his Sunnah and guidance, and heeded his commands and prohibitions both during his life and after his death, in obedience to the words of their Lord: ﴿And whatsoever the Messenger [Muhammad] gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain [from it].﴾ (*Qur'an* 59: 7) and ﴿Indeed in the Messenger of Allah [Muhammad] you have a good example to follow.﴾ (*Qur'an* 33: 21)

The way of his successors is the best example of the way the Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ) commanded us to follow and cling firmly to. It is not narrated from any of the Muslims that these Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) gathered on a specific night of the year at his grave for remembrance and worship, hoping for his blessings, even though they were the closest of people to Allah. They

were the guided group, the supporters of the truth and the troops of faith; they had more knowledge than us of what the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) loved, and they were more keen to obey him. The high esteem in which they held the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and the great respect that they had for him in their hearts is no secret, and no one disputes that. This is confirmed by the Qur'an, and all the scholars of Islam are agreed that they honoured, loved and respected him.

If this annual gathering at his grave was something that could bring people closer to Allah (ﷻ), and there was no fear that it might lead to misguidance in religion, they would have been the first to do it, but the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not command them during his lifetime to do anything like that. There is nothing in his Sunnah, no action and no approval, that could indicate that such acts are permissible at the grave of the Prophet (ﷺ) or at the grave of any of the Companions. Years of his life went by, and neither he nor his Companions performed any acts of worship of that nature. He is the best of Allah's creation in servitude and worship of Allah (ﷻ), the most perfect in knowledge of what pleases Him, the most sincere towards his Ummah and the most keen to guide them to that which benefits them. This is something that is confirmed in the Qur'an: ﴿Verily, there has come unto you a Messenger [Muhammad] from amongst yourselves. It grieves him that you should receive any injury or difficulty. He [Muhammad] is anxious over you; for the believers [he is] full of pity, kind, and merciful.﴾ (Qur'an 9: 128)

The Prophet (ﷺ) forbade us to take his grave as a place of gathering. He said: "Do not make your houses like graves, and do not make my grave a place of regular gathering; but send blessings upon me, for your blessings will reach me wherever I am."³⁵² In other words: Do not allocate special days for visiting my grave, or special times every month or every year and so on, for public gatherings that are repeated in a regular manner such as Eid; do not create rituals for

it, for which you travel like hajj; and do not imitate the Jews and Christians, for they do that, and it has led them to exaggeration and going to extremes in praising the deceased, to the extent that they made the Messiah (peace be upon him) a god. The Prophet (ﷺ) warned his Companions against that, saying: "Do not praise me as the Christians praised the son of Maryam, for I am only His slave. Say: The slave of Allah and His Messenger."³⁵³

If this is prohibited for the grave of the Prophet (ﷺ) — the noblest of creation before Allah (ﷻ), the leader of the first and the last, the best of all creation, the one whose intercession is most hoped for before Allah (ﷻ) on the Day of Judgement — then what about the graves of those who are of lesser status, such as the 'saints' and the righteous? Taking their graves as places of regular gathering is a violation of this prohibition. It is like going against the Prophet's command, which Allah (ﷻ) warned about in this verse: ﴿And let those who oppose the Messenger's [Muhammad] commandment [i.e., his Sunnah — legal ways, orders, acts of worship, statement, etc.] [among the sects] beware lest some Fitnah [disbelief, trials, afflictions, earthquakes, killing, overpowered by a tyrant, etc.] befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them.﴾ (Qur'an 24: 63)

This is the way of the best of generations. The one who goes against them, thinking that he is doing acts of worship and drawing close to Allah (ﷻ), is doing one of two things: either he is introducing innovation wrongfully, or he is claiming that he has surpassed them in virtue and knowledge. Imam Mâlik (may Allah have mercy on him) used to say: "Whoever introduces anything to this Ummah that its early generations did not do is claiming that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) betrayed the religion, because Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿This day, I have perfected your religion for you.﴾ (Qur'an 5: 3) So whatever was not part of the religion of Islam then cannot be part of the religion of Islam today,"³⁵⁴ He also used to say: "And the

Sunnah is like Nooh's ark: whoever embarks on it will be saved, and whoever stays behind will drown."³⁵⁵

Establishing shrines as an act of worship is something that was not done by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) or his Companions. He forbade that, and going against him is introducing innovations to the religion that will lead to misguidance. In every Friday sermon, the Prophet (ﷺ) gave the warning: "The best of speech is the Book of Allah (ﷻ), and the best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad; the worst of matters are those which are newly invented, and every innovation is going astray."³⁵⁶ He also (ﷺ) said: "Whoever introduces something into this matter of ours that is not part of it will have it rejected."³⁵⁷

Gathering the people for the purpose of worship on a specific day and on a regular basis, in a place to which they travel from all over, is only permissible in cases prescribed by Allah (ﷻ). These include the established rituals of pilgrimages in Makkah, 'Arafah, Mina and Muzdalifah; the prayers on Eid and Friday; and prayers in congregation. These are the symbols which Allah (ﷻ) enjoined to be venerated and established, and He praised those who do that, saying: ﴿Thus it is an obligation that mankind owes to Allah. And whosoever honours the symbols of Allah, then it is truly from the piety of the heart.﴾ (*Qur'an* 22: 32)

Introducing events and locations other than those that have been mentioned, on any day of the year, is an innovation in religion, because it is introducing acts of worship and rituals that are not prescribed by Allah (ﷻ). Among the common folk, these shrines have become like hajj; they gather at these places on a certain day of the year to offer sacrifices and perform acts of worship, and they travel for that purpose. This in and of itself is a blameworthy action, because these are general acts of worship that are good to do at all times and in all places. If a certain night or day or place is specified

for it, which has no basis in Islam, and it is believed that doing it at that time or in that place has a special effect in attaining blessings or raising one's status or causing deeds to be accepted or maximising the reward, then these actions, which are originally prescribed kinds of worship, turn into innovations according to scholarly consensus, because the amount of reward that is connected to actions is something that can only be known from the texts of Sharia.

This has led to a great deal of corruption in the beliefs of the common folk about the occupants of the graves over which domes have been built, contrary to the prohibition of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Some believe that they have the power to cause harm, bring benefit and meet needs, so they seek to draw close to them by visiting the shrine on a certain day of the year and offering a sacrifice there. The idea was propagated that whoever brings an animal to the shrine to be slaughtered there at that time has the hope that his Lord will grant him what he needs, and that he will not go back without having that need met. These shrines became a focal point for people with needs, such as a childless person asking for a child or a sick person asking to be healed. They began to ask of them what a person should ask of his Lord. They sought help from them and thought that their needs would be met by their Lord because of their intercession and through them. They began to offer sacrifices at these shrines to bring rain if it was delayed, turning away from the Book of Allah (ﷻ) and the guidance of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), who enjoined repentance, seeking forgiveness, supplication and a special prayer asking for rain. Rain may fall after they offer their sacrifice, as a further test and to let them get carried away in their misguidance, but nevertheless their action remains the work of the devils and beliefs of pre-Islamic ignorance.³⁵⁸ It is only to Allah (ﷻ) that we complain.

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷺ) promoted tawḥīd, and he fought polytheism and its causes. Those who love

him and follow him should follow his words and actions, which instruct us to adhere to the Holy Qur'an and the guidance of the Prophet (ﷺ). How good are his words: "No person should hope in anyone but his Lord, and he should not fear anything but his sin."³⁵⁹ He said to Abu al-Hayâj al-Asadi: "Shall I not send you on the same mission as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent me? Do not leave any image without erasing it, or any raised grave without levelling it."³⁶⁰

3.1.6.f. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) was keen to demonstrate that belief in the stars is false

When Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) wanted to travel to fight the Kharijites, an astrologer came up to him and said: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, do not travel, for the moon is in Scorpio, and if you travel when the moon is in Scorpio, you will be defeated," or words to that effect. 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "Rather I will travel, putting my faith and trust in Allah, to prove that you are lying." He travelled and was blessed in that journey, and he defeated the Kharijites.³⁶¹

According to another report, when he had finished fighting in Nahrawân, he praised and glorified Allah (ﷻ), then he said: "Had we marched at the time suggested by the astrologer, the ignorant who do not know would have said: 'He marched at the time that the astrologer told him, and that is why he prevailed.'"³⁶²

Look at how keen Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) was to ensure that his companions' belief was free from the corrupt claims of the astrologer. 'Ali (ﷺ), even though he was engaged in the important issue of fighting the Kharijites and was preoccupied with the outcome of the battle, did not forget what that astrologer had said to him at the beginning of his journey. He highlighted the corrupt nature of that belief at the appropriate time, after his battle with the Kharijites had ended and he had prevailed over them.³⁶³

3.1.4.g. How faith begins in the heart, according to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (عليه السلام), and his definition of piety

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (عليه السلام) said: "Faith begins as a small white spot in the heart, and the more a person increases in faith, the whiter his heart becomes. But the more a person increases in hypocrisy, the blacker his heart becomes until, when the person becomes a complete hypocrite, his heart becomes black. By Allah, if you were to open the heart of the believer, you would find it to be white, and if you were to open the heart of the hypocrite and the disbeliever, you would find it to be black."³⁶⁴

The Sunni scholars have explained the real nature of faith. They said that faith is belief in the heart, uttering the twin declaration of faith, doing righteous deeds and carrying out obligations. In other words, it is belief, words and actions. These three all come under the heading of faith and represent parts of its essence. There are many comments of the scholars and those who came after them about this fact, and they quoted as evidence a great deal from the Qur'an and hadith to demonstrate the soundness of this view on the reality of faith.³⁶⁵ Allah (ﷻ) says:

«The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a fear in their hearts and when His Verses [this Qur'an] are recited unto them, they [i.e. the Verses] increase their Faith; and they put their trust in their Lord [Alone]; Who perform aṣ-Ṣalâh [*Iqâmat-aṣ-Ṣalâh*] and spend out of that We have provided them. It is they who are the believers in truth. For them are grades of dignity with their Lord, and forgiveness and a generous provision [paradise].» (*Qur'an* 8: 2-4)

These verses, which discuss the attributes of the believers, combine actions of the heart and actions of physical faculties. All of that is regarded as faith, and faith is limited to that, which is why it says 'only' (*innama*). It defines the believers as having these

attributes combined, when it says at the end, “It is they who are the believers in truth.” The physical actions referred to here are establishing prayer and spending for the sake of Allah (ﷻ).³⁶⁶

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Faith has seventy-odd branches; the best of them is saying *Lâ ilâha illa-Allâh* (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah), and the least of them is removing a harmful thing from the road. And modesty is one of the branches of faith.”³⁶⁷ Saying *Lâ ilâha illa-Allâh* refers to words, removing a harmful thing from the road is an action, and modesty is an attitude and behaviour. Making each of these three a part of faith is indicative of the essence of faith, and most of the branches of faith are physical deeds.³⁶⁸ Imam Bukhari said in his *Ṣaḥeḥ*: “It is words and deeds, and it increases and decreases. Loving and hating for the sake of Allah are part of faith.” ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdul-‘Azeez said: “Faith contains obligations, prescriptions, limits and sunnahs. Whoever acquires all of them has acquired perfect faith, and whoever does not acquire all of them has not acquired perfect faith. If I live, I shall explain it to you so that you might act upon it, but if I die, then I am not eager to stay with you.”³⁶⁹

When Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) was asked about faith, he said: “Faith is based on four pillars: patience, certainty, justice and striving. Patience is based on four things: longing, fear, asceticism and expecting death. The one who longs for paradise will be able to turn away from physical desires, the one who fears hellfire will avoid *ḥarâm* things, the one who has no interest in worldly gains will not be distressed by calamities, and the one who expects death will hasten to do good things. Certainty is based on four things: deep insight, wisdom, learning lessons from others and the ways of those who came before. Whoever has deep insight will have wisdom, and whoever has wisdom will learn the lesson; the one who learns the lesson will be as if he was among those who came before. Justice is

based on four things: deep understanding, deep knowledge, proper judgement and patient forbearance. Whoever understands will gain deep knowledge, whoever gains deep knowledge will have proper judgement, and whoever has forbearance will not go to extremes and will be well liked by people. Striving is based on four things: enjoining what is good, forbidding what is evil, taking a sincere stance in different situations and resenting evildoers. The one who enjoins what is good will support the believers; the one who forbids what is evil will annoy the hypocrites; the one who takes a sincere stance in all situations has done what is required of him; and the one who resents the evildoers and gets angry for the sake of Allah, Allah will get angry for his sake and will make him content on the Day of Resurrection.”³⁷⁰

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) said, defining piety: “(It is) refraining from persisting in sin and refraining from relying too much on obedience.”³⁷¹ He also said: “Piety is fear of the Most Majestic, acting in accordance with the revelation, being content with little and preparing for the day of departure (death).”³⁷² 'Ali's concern for urging people to be pious bore fruit on both the individual and social levels. For example:

Allah will love a person: ﴿Surely, Allah loves *al-Muttaqoon* [the pious].﴾ (*Qur'an* 9: 4)

Allah will be with him: ﴿Truly, Allah is with those who fear Him [keep their duty unto Him], and those who are *Muḥsinûn* [good-doers].﴾ (*Qur'an* 16: 128)

He will benefit from the Qur'an: ﴿This is the Book [the Qur'an], whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are *al-Muttaqoon* [the pious believers of Islamic Monotheism who fear Allah much (abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which He has forbidden) and love Allah much (perform all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained)].﴾ (*Qur'an* 2: 2)

He will be protected from Satan and his whispers: ﴿Verily, those who are al-Muttaqoon [the pious], when an evil thought comes to them from Satan, they remember [Allah], and [indeed] they then see [aright].﴾ (*Qur'an* 7: 201)

There will be an end to fear and grief: ﴿Whosoever becomes pious and righteous, on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve.﴾ (*Qur'an* 7: 35)

There will be an acceptance of righteous deeds: ﴿Verily, Allah accepts only from those who are al-Muttaqoon [the pious].﴾ (*Qur'an* 5: 27)

There will be ease after hardship and relief after difficulty: ﴿And whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out [from every difficulty]﴾ (*Qur'an* 65: 2); ﴿and whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make his matter easy for him.﴾ (*Qur'an* 65: 4)

He will have intuition, wisdom and light: ﴿O you who believe! If you obey and fear Allah, He will grant you *Furqân* [a criterion to judge between right and wrong], or *Makhrāj* [i.e. a way for you to get out from every difficulty].﴾ (*Qur'an* 8: 29)

He will enter paradise: ﴿Paradise as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for al-Muttaqoon [the pious].﴾ (*Qur'an* 3: 133)

He will have salvation from the fire: ﴿Then We shall save those who used to fear Allah and were dutiful to Him. And We shall leave the *Dhâlimûn* [polytheists and wrongdoers] therein [humbled] to their knees [in hell].﴾ (*Qur'an* 19: 72)

He will have a high status on the Day of Resurrection: ﴿But those who obey Allah's orders and keep away from what He has forbidden, will be above them on the Day of Resurrection.﴾ (*Qur'an* 2: 212)³⁷³

3.1.4.h. The divine will and decree, as understood by Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام)

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) said: "Nothing happens on earth until it is decreed in heaven. There is no one who does not have two angels appointed to defend him and take care of him until the time comes for what Allah has decreed, whereupon they no longer stand between him and what is decreed for him. I have complete protection from Allah, but when it is time for me to die, this protection will be taken away. No one knows true faith until he realises that what befalls him could never have missed him, and what misses him could never have befallen him."³⁷⁴

He (عليه السلام) also said: "The divine decree comes down from heaven like drops of rain, and every soul will have what Allah decreed for it of increase or decrease with regard to himself or his family or his wealth. If a person sees that he has some decrease with regard to himself or his family or his wealth, and he sees that others have a great deal, that should not be a source of resentment for him. The sincere Muslim will have one of two rewards when he prays to Allah: either Allah will grant him wealth, and thus he will have family and wealth, and he will still have his respected status and religious commitment, or Allah will give him blessings in the hereafter, and the hereafter is better and more lasting. The blessings will be twofold: blessings in this world: wealth and piety, as well as blessings in the hereafter: the righteous good deeds that remain. And Allah may grant both to some people."³⁷⁵

3.1.4.i. How Allah (الله) brings His slaves to account despite their huge numbers

It was said to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام): "How will Allah bring His slaves to account despite their huge numbers?" He said: "Just as He provides for them despite their huge numbers."³⁷⁶

3.2. The amazing sermons of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام)

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) made sure to educate, guide and teach the people through his daily interactions with them, especially on Fridays when the sermon from the minbar offered an opportunity for guiding and teaching the Ummah. History has recorded many of the sermons of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام). The following is a brief look at his sermons, such as this brilliant example, in which he said:

"This world is coming to an end and will soon bid farewell, and the hereafter is coming and will soon begin. Today the horses are being kept in preparation, and tomorrow will be the race. Indeed you are living in the days of hope that will be interrupted by death. Whoever falls short during the days of hope before his death comes will be doomed. Strive hard for the sake of Allah (ﷻ) in the hope of reward as you strive hard for His sake for fear of His punishment. I have never seen anything like paradise whose seekers could sleep, and I have never seen anything like hell, those who fear which can sleep. The one who does not benefit from the truth will be harmed by falsehood, and whoever does not benefit from guidance will be led astray by misguidance. You have been instructed to travel, and you have been told about your provision. O people, this world is a temporary convenience; the righteous and the immoral alike may enjoy its luxuries. But the hereafter is true, and it will be ruled by a powerful King. Satan threatens you with poverty and bids you to do evil, but Allah (ﷻ) promises you forgiveness and bounty from Him, and Allah (ﷻ) cares for all and knows all things. O people, do righteous deeds during your lifetime, and your offspring will be taken care of. Allah (ﷻ) has promised His paradise to those who obey Him, and He has warned of His hell for those who disobey Him. Its fire will never be extinguished, its prisoners will never be ransomed,

and the one who suffers therein will never be helped. Its heat is intense, its bottom is deep and its water is a boiling fetid liquid.”³⁷⁷

If we ponder the quotation above, we will find that several methods of impacting or moving people are represented here:

1. A sincere tone that is based on his strong conviction of what he is calling for, which makes it seem as if his words are taken from his burning soul and warm emotions. As soon as he utters a sentence, their ears will receive it and their hearts will understand it.
2. Words that are powerful yet easy and sweet; the way they are put together is clear, and the sentences are short. This may help the listener to understand the intended meaning.
3. Mentioning opposite meanings, which makes the meaning clearer and will have a great impact on the listener. For example, “This world is coming to an end and will soon bid farewell, and the hereafter is coming and will soon begin,” and “I have never seen anything like paradise whose seekers could sleep and I have never seen anything like hell, those who fear which can sleep.”
4. Referring to the Holy Qur'an, as in the words, “Satan threatens you with poverty and bids you to do evil, but Allah promises you forgiveness and bounty from Him, and Allah cares for all and knows all things.”³⁷⁸ This is based on the verse: ﴿Satan threatens you with poverty and orders you to commit *Fahsha* [evil deeds, illegal sexual intercourse, sins]; whereas Allah promises you forgiveness from Himself and bounty, and Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knower.﴾ (*Qur'an* 2: 268)
5. The ideas in this sermon are strongly influenced by the Holy Qur'an and the words of the Messenger (ﷺ), and they are strongly connected to human life, with deep, sublime and comprehensive meanings. He excelled in choosing words and

putting sentences together, speaking briefly and using images to express meaning. In conclusion, this speech has a special importance because of what it contains of religious, literary and personal references. It represents a powerful indication of the character of its author, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام). It tells of his sound understanding of Islamic concepts that deal with the nature of this world, the goal of human existence and the ultimate destination of humanity. This speech explains the conclusions that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) reached concerning that, and it tells us of the deep insight that he had. This is supported by his clarity of mind and purity of heart, in addition to other sublime spiritual and intellectual qualities that were granted to him as a result of his piety, his adherence to the teachings of Islam, his relying on his Lord and his feeling content with His decree. All of that helped him to attain this high literary level in this piece of prose. Thus in the field of literature, he was indeed a knight of the word and a leader of literary expression, as he was a just and ascetic leader, a wise and experienced ruler, and a knight whom no one could resist.³⁷⁹

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) paid attention to making use of different occasions to exhort and remind the people; he did not limit it to Friday sermons only. When he walked with the funeral procession and heard the voices of the bereaved family raised in weeping as the body was placed in the niche in the grave, he would say: "Why are you weeping? By Allah, if they could see what your deceased one is seeing, they would be distracted from their deceased one by what they see. Death will come back again and again, until none of them is left. So fear Allah, O slaves of Allah, and strive hard in righteous deeds. Hasten to do good deeds before death, the destroyer of pleasures, comes. The pleasures of this world will not last, and you cannot feel secure against the calamities of this world, for it is

fleeting and deceitful and cannot be relied on. Learn the lessons, O slaves of Allah, and heed the exhortation, for soon you will die and will be buried. Soon the Trumpet will be blown, and the occupants of the graves will be raised and driven to the arena of gathering for the Reckoning. Everything is under the control of the Almighty. Every person will have an angel to drive him and an angel to bear witness to his deeds. ﴿And the earth will shine with the light of its Lord [Allah], when He will come to judge among men, and the Book will be placed [open], and the Prophets and the witnesses will be brought forward, and it will be judged between them with truth, and they will not be wronged.﴾ (Qur'an 39: 69) ”

From this exhortation, we notice the following ways of how to make a speech have an impact:

1. Giving the exhortation at an appropriate time. This was given on the occasion of a funeral, when people are prepared to receive admonitions about death and the hereafter.
2. Eloquent delivery. The words of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tālib (عليه السلام) were distinguished by their moving style that had an impact on the hearts of the listeners.
3. Following the way of the Qur'an. This message was based on the Qur'an. His words: “And every person will have an angel to drive him and an angel to bear witness to his deeds,” are based on the words of Allah (ﷻ), ﴿And every person will come forth along with an [angel] to drive [him] and an [angel] to bear witness.﴾ (Qur'an 50: 21)
4. Warning the people by mentioning the terrors of the Day of Resurrection. He said: “For soon you will die and will be buried. Soon the Trumpet will be blown, and the occupants of the graves will be raised and driven to the arena of gathering for the Reckoning. Everything is under the control of the Almighty.”

5. Presenting a vivid image by using the past tense (in Arabic) to describe something that is going to happen in the future, so that the listener can imagine what is awaiting him. For example, he said: "for soon you will die and will be buried [this appears in the past tense in the Arabic original]."
6. Using a gentle approach so as to attract listeners and not put them off.³⁸⁰

These are a few examples of the speeches and exhortations of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) that became widely known among the people and played a role in educating them, teaching them good manners and purifying their hearts. Their impact was felt in his generation and the generations that came after him, until the present day.

3.3. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) and poetry

From the reports that have reached us, it seems that the poetry movement was active at the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. The sources for information on poetry and poets at the time of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) are the books of literary works, which are rich in this regard. Although it is well known that literary works did not rely on trustworthy narration with regard to the way they were transmitted, they are the main sources for information on literature and literary criticism having to do with the Rightly Guided Caliphs and the Companions in general, and those who followed them in truth. The only exceptions are some lines of verse that were recited at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) and mentioned in the books of hadith.³⁸¹

'Ali's attitude towards poetry was no different from that of the Rightly Guided Caliphs who came before him. Their attitude was based on the Book of Allah (ﷻ) and the Sunnah of His Messenger

(عليه السلام). 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (عليه السلام) would listen to poets and to what he was asked to listen to of sincere words and sublime meanings. He would give rewards for poetry if he liked it and was impressed with it, as we have seen above when the Bedouin said (in verse):

*You gave me a suit to wear, the beauty of which will wear out,
but I shall clothe you with many suits of praise.*³⁸²

'Ali's evaluation of poetry was fine and astute. His standards of criticism remain valid and are still referred to by critics today. He said: "Poetry is the standard of speech."³⁸³ This means that poetry has characteristics by means of which good wording can be distinguished from bad according to the standards of this verbal art, even though the values mentioned may differ from those of other people.³⁸⁴

With regard to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) as a poet, there is a difference of opinion concerning most of the poetry that is attributed to him. However, this dispute does not undermine his position as a poet with regard to what is most likely to be his poetry, nor does it affect his linguistic and literary pre-eminence. But it seems to the researcher that poetry was not his main focus. Moreover, his political career and the major events that accompanied it did not give him the opportunity to focus on the composition and narration of poetry, or to seek beautiful meanings and choose moving rhythms. Nevertheless, there is a great deal of poetry that is attributed to him, including a collection of poetry that includes a number of odes and short poems, as well as some statements that were made spontaneously and some sublime and wise opinions.

The first one who shed doubt on the attribution of some odes to him was Ibn Hishâm, who narrated that 'Ali used to say some lines of verse during the construction of the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah:

*There's one that labours night and day,
to build us mosque of brick and clay,
and one who turns from dust away!*³⁸⁵

Ibn Hishâm commented: "I asked more than one of those who have knowledge of poetry about these lines, and they said: 'We heard that 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) recited them.'" Then he said: "It is not known whether he was the composer or someone else."³⁸⁶ Elsewhere, Ibn Hishâm says: "Ibn Ishâq narrated three odes that are attributed to 'Ali (عليه السلام), but this attribution is not sound; he thinks it most likely that they were composed during the Islamic battles by one of the Muslims. They examined the religious meanings, and the narrator thought that it was befitting to attribute it to 'Ali, so they did so." As for the collection of poems that is attributed to him, Dr. Nâyif Ma'roof thinks that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) is known for his eloquence, and his eloquence is of a higher standard than that which is found in this collection. It seems most likely that what is mentioned in the collection comes from different poets of varying standards of poetry, and that it was compiled by some of those who loved 'Ali (عليه السلام) and found it hard to accept that he was not a poet, thinking that this would raise him in status with people. However, it may be noted that 'Ali (عليه السلام) was not one of the poets of the Messenger, whose role was to respond to the propaganda attacks launched by the polytheist poets against Islam and the Muslims.³⁸⁷ There is no poetry that can be soundly attributed to 'Ali except two lines.³⁸⁸ There are many reports that are contrary to this suggestion, and the narrators confirmed many uses of verse which may soundly be attributed to him in their view.³⁸⁹

3.4. Wise sayings of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) which became widely circulated among the people

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) had many qualities such as cleverness, eloquence, wisdom, purity of heart and soul, deep faith, profound understanding and closeness to the

Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). He learned the Revelation from him, which enabled him to speak eloquently and explain clearly. Still, his words were like pearls, and his statements became sayings that impressed people of wisdom. Thus they set standards for people of a literary bent and seekers of guidance. In his words there was motivation for them to do righteous deeds and acquire sublime characteristics. His beautiful words became a valuable means of calling people, teaching them, instilling good manners in them, enlightening their minds and reviving their hearts, because of what they contained of eloquent expressions, clarity of meaning and deep thought. Moreover, they stemmed from a pure heart.³⁹⁰ By way of example, we will list some of these sayings:

1. "Prayer at night brings radiance to the face during the day."³⁹¹ Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And those who spend the night in worship of their Lord, prostrate and standing﴾ (*Qur'an* 25: 64). He also said: "The light of the believer results from the optional prayer during the night."³⁹²
2. "The soundness of religious commitment comes from restraint, and corruption thereof results from greed."³⁹³
3. "Glad tidings to the one who acts upon what he knows."³⁹⁴
4. "Opportunity passes as quickly as a cloud."³⁹⁵
5. "Hardheartedness comes from a full stomach."³⁹⁶
6. "Prominence stems from virtue and good manners, not from origin or lineage."³⁹⁷
7. "A good attitude is more splendid than good looks."³⁹⁸
8. "A good attitude brings ample provision."³⁹⁹
9. "Kindness is one of the best of treasures."⁴⁰⁰

A group of people gathered in the presence of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib and discussed kindness. Amir al-Mu'mineen took this opportunity to encourage them and urge them to be kind, and he said: "Kindness is one of the best of treasures and one of the best of crops. You should not be discouraged from doing acts of kindness by the ingratitude of those who reject it and deny it. Kindness cannot be complete except with three things: thinking little of it, concealing it and hastening it. If you think little of it, you will make it great; if you conceal it, you will perfect it; and if you hasten it, you will give people the chance to enjoy and appreciate it."⁴⁰¹

10. "There is no nobility with bad manners."⁴⁰²
11. "There is no rest for the envious."⁴⁰³
12. "The envier is angry with someone who has done nothing wrong."⁴⁰⁴
13. "Woe to the wrongdoers from the most just of judges."⁴⁰⁵
14. "Whoever unsheathes the sword of transgression will be killed by it."⁴⁰⁶
15. "The wrongdoer who started the trouble will look at his hand tomorrow and learn a lesson from it."⁴⁰⁷ This warning is based on the verse, ﴿And [remember] the Day when the *Dhâlim* [wrongdoer, oppressor, polytheist] will bite at his hands.﴾ (*Qur'an* 25: 27)
16. "Concealing hardship is a sign of chivalry."⁴⁰⁸
17. "Be kind to the one who wrongs you, and you will be safe from his wrongdoing."⁴⁰⁹
18. "Kindness puts an end to backbiting."⁴¹⁰

19. "Whoever has a sweet tongue will have a lot of friends."⁴¹¹
20. "Whoever is lacking in sincerity will have few friends."⁴¹²
21. "Your tongue will speak what you accustom it to say."⁴¹³
22. "Whoever asks about that which does not concern him will miss out on that which does concern him."⁴¹⁴
23. "Keep company with righteous people, and you will be safe from the evildoers."⁴¹⁵
24. "Having a good companion is a treasure."⁴¹⁶
25. "Accompanying a foolish man is a loss in this world and a regret in the hereafter."⁴¹⁷
26. "If you think about what people dislike, it means you will have manners."⁴¹⁸
27. "Do not examine the one who said it; rather think of what he said."⁴¹⁹
28. "The best of people is someone who benefits people."⁴²⁰
29. "A person is hidden under his tongue."⁴²¹
30. "The tongue is an indication of either ignorance or wisdom."⁴²²
31. "Your brother is the one who supports you in times of hardship."⁴²³
32. "The value of every person is connected to what he is good at."
33. "Beware of the anger of the noble man if he gets hungry, and beware of the anger of the ignoble man when he is full."
34. "The ego is inclined to follow whims and desires and to take the easy option. It is inclined to idle pursuits, prone to

evil, and attracted to immorality. It prefers to avoid challenges and is reluctant to strive hard. If you force it, you will lead it in the right way, but if you neglect it, you will cause its doom.”⁴²⁴

35. “Feeling helpless is a sickness, patience is bravery, asceticism is wealth and piety is protection.”
36. “Do not be a slave to anyone when Allah (ﷻ) has made you free.”
37. “Beware of relying on wishful thinking, because this is the way of the foolish people.”
38. “The people are sleeping, and when they die, they will wake up.”
39. “People are enemies of things they do not know.”
40. “No man will be ruined who knows what he is.”
41. “One word could cause the loss of a blessing.”
42. “Good manners are like a garment renewed, and pondering is like looking into a clear mirror.”
43. “Poverty makes the smart man unable to establish his proof, and the one who has little money is a stranger in his own land.”
44. “When one acquires worldly blessings, people attribute to him qualities that are not his, but when all of that departs from him, then people cannot see his good qualities.”⁴²⁵
45. “Exhort people, and be wise when doing so, for people’s hearts and minds get tired just as their bodies do.”⁴²⁶
46. “A cheerful countenance is another gift.”⁴²⁷

47. "Forgiving when one has power is a kind of gratitude for having that power."⁴²⁸
48. "Repeating the apology is a reminder of the mistake."⁴²⁹
49. "The best exhortation is to look at the dead."⁴³⁰
50. "Remembering death gives clarity to the mind."⁴³¹

These are some of the wise sayings of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام) that became widely known among people and which sum up a great deal of his experience of life in brief phrases that carry deep meanings and reflect noble goals and aims. They had an impact on the life of the society in which he lived and on the following generations until today. These sayings, speeches, poetry and exhortations are among the means that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام) used in guiding, directing and teaching the Muslim society.

3.5. Comments of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام) on the attributes of the best of people, the supererogatory worship of the Prophet (ﷺ), and his description of the noble Companions

3.5.1. The attributes of the best of people

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام) was asked about the best of people, and he said: "Those who, if they do righteous deeds, they become cheerful and hopeful, and if they do wrong deeds, they ask for forgiveness; if they are faced with trials, they are patient, and if they get angry, they forgive."⁴³² He also said: "Allah (ﷻ) has slaves, and it is as if they already saw the people of paradise who will be in paradise forever and the people of hell who are being

punished there. People are safe from their evil, their hearts are filled with sorrow, their souls are pure and their wants are few. They were patient for a few days for the sake of a long rest. When you see them at night, you see them standing on their feet (in prayer) with tears flowing down their cheeks, praying to Allah (ﷻ) to ransom their necks. As for their days, they are virtuous, forbearing, righteous and pious. One might look at them and think that they are sick, but there is nothing wrong with them. They mix with people, but they are preoccupied with a very serious matter.”⁴³³

Another of his sayings is: “When the believer looks at something, it should be to learn a lesson; when he is silent, it should be because he is thinking about something; and when he speaks, he should speak words of wisdom.”⁴³⁴

He also said: “Glad tidings to every person who is not known or prominent; he knows people, but people do not know him; he knows Allah (ﷻ) and strives to please Him. Such people are beacons of guidance, and Allah (ﷻ) will save them from every dark trial and will admit them into mercy and grace from Himself.”⁴³⁵ They do not disclose secrets or broadcast gossip, and they are not harsh natured or showoffs.”⁴³⁶ The words of Amir al-Mu'mineen (ﷺ) are clearly influenced by the words of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): “Allah loves the slave who is pious, independent of means and unknown to the people.”⁴³⁷

3.5.2. 'Ali's (ﷺ) answer to the one who asked him about the supererogatory worship of the Prophet (ﷺ)

It was narrated that 'Āṣim ibn Ḍamurah said: “We asked 'Ali (ﷺ) about the supererogatory worship of the Prophet (ﷺ) during the day. He said: ‘You cannot do it.’ We said: ‘Tell us what you think we can do.’ He said: ‘When the Prophet (ﷺ) finished praying the dawn prayer, he would wait until the sun was here (meaning in the east) as

high as it is here (meaning in the west) at the time of the afternoon prayer, then he would get up and pray two raka'ahs. Then he would wait until the sun was here (meaning in the east) as high as it is here (meaning in the west) at the time of the noon prayer, then he would get up and pray four raka'ahs. (And he would pray) four raka'ahs before the noon prayer when the sun passed the meridian and two afterwards, and four raka'ahs before the afternoon prayer, separating each two raka'ahs with salâm upon the angels who are close to Allah (ﷺ) and the Prophets and those who followed them of the believers and Muslims.' 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said: 'That is sixteen raka'ahs of optional prayer that the Prophet (ﷺ) did during the day, and very few people can persist in doing that.'"⁴³⁸

Elsewhere, Amir al-Mu'mineen (رضي الله عنه) explained the teachings of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) concerning *witr*.⁴³⁹ He said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) prayed *witr* at the beginning of the night and at the end of it and in the middle, and as late as just before dawn."⁴⁴⁰ Explaining what the Prophet (ﷺ) did after his prayer, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه) said: "When the Prophet (ﷺ) said salâm at the end of his prayer, he would say: 'O Allah! Forgive me what I have done in the past, what I will do in the future, what I have concealed, what I have done openly, and what I have exceeded in, whatever You know about me more than I. You are the One Who brings forward, and You are the One Who puts back. There is no god except You.'"⁴⁴¹

3.5.3. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali's description of the noble Companions

When Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه) noticed some negligence and laziness among his companions with regard to worship, he reminded them of the lives of their predecessors, the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Among the reports

narrated by Abu Arâkah are these words: "I prayed the dawn prayer with 'Ali. When he finished praying and turned to the right to face us, he stayed still, as if he were depressed, until the sun had risen the height of a spear above the wall of the mosque. He prayed two raka'ahs, then he gestured with his hand and said: 'By Allah, I have seen the Companions of Muhammad (ﷺ), and I did not see anything like them today. In the morning, they would look yellow, unkempt and dusty, with a mark between their eyes that looked like a goat's knee. They spent the night prostrating to Allah (ﷻ), standing and reciting the Book of Allah, alternating between prostration and standing. Then in the morning when they mentioned the name of Allah (ﷻ), they would sway like trees on a windy day, and their eyes shed tears until their clothing got wet. By Allah (ﷻ), it is as if the people now are becoming negligent.' Then he got up, and he was never seen smiling after that until he was killed by Ibn Majmâ, the evil enemy of Allah."⁴⁴²

3.5.4. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) pointed out to his companions the best deeds

Among the speeches that are narrated from him are his words: "I urge you to fear Allah, for the best means by which a person may draw close to Allah are faith, jihad for the sake of Allah and a word of sincerity (the Islamic testimony of faith), for that is the natural inclination (of humans) instilled by Allah; and establishing prayer, for it is the foundation of religion; paying zakâh because it is obligatory; fasting the month of Ramadan because it is protection against His punishment; going on pilgrimage to His house because it is purification of sin; upholding ties of kinship because that extends one's life and increases love of family; hidden charity because it expiates sins and extinguishes the wrath of the Lord; doing kind deeds because they protect against a bad death; and remembering Allah (ﷻ) a great deal because that is the best of remembrance."⁴⁴³

3.5.5. Visiting the sick

It was narrated from Thuwayr ibn Abi Fâkhitah that his father said: "Ali (ﷺ) took me by the hand and said: 'Let us go and visit al-Ḥasan because he is sick.' We found Abu Moosa with him, and 'Ali (ﷺ) said: 'Have you come to visit him because he is sick, O Abu Moosa, or is it just a (social) visit?' He said: 'No, I am visiting him because he is sick.' 'Ali (ﷺ) said: 'I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: "There is no Muslim who visits a Muslim (because he is sick) in the morning but seventy thousand angels will send blessings on him until evening comes, and if he visits him (because he is sick) in the evening, seventy thousand angels will send blessings upon him until morning comes." ' "444

3.5.6. Encouraging his son al-Ḥasan to give speeches

Amir al-Mu'mineen said to his son al-Ḥasan one day: "O my son, why don't you give speeches so that I can hear you?" He said: "When I see you, I feel shy to give speeches." So 'Ali went where al-Ḥasan could not see him, then al-Ḥasan stood up and addressed the people while 'Ali was listening, and he gave an eloquent speech. When he finished, 'Ali said: "Offspring one of the other, and Allah (ﷻ) hears and knows all things."445

3.5.7. "I am not as you think"

'Amr ibn Murrah narrated that Abu al-Bukhtari said: "A man came to 'Ali and praised him, but 'Ali had heard that the man had said something bad about him, so he said: 'I am not as you think, and I am better than you think.' "446

3.5.8. Warning against giving in to whims and desires

Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) said: “Beware of giving in to whims and desires because the immediate consequences are bad, and the long-term consequences are worse. If you cannot get control of your whims and desires by means of warning and punishment, then try to use the method of encouragement and thinking of reward, because if the deterrent and incentive come together, you will subject yourself to both, and you will be able to control your desires.”⁴⁴⁷

3.5.9. Making a Muslim happy

‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) said: “One of the means of attaining forgiveness from Allah is making your Muslim brother happy.”⁴⁴⁸

3.5.10. The most difficult of actions are three

Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib said: “Among the most difficult of actions are three: allowing others to settle scores with you, remembering Allah (ﷻ) in all situations and helping your brothers financially.”⁴⁴⁹

3.6. Warning against serious diseases

3.6.1. The consequences of sin

Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) said: “The consequences of sin are having no energy for worship, a reduced livelihood and reduced physical pleasure.” It was said: “What is reduced physical pleasure?” He said: “He will not indulge in any permissible pleasure but something will come to spoil it.”⁴⁵⁰ This was encouragement and a deterrent from sin. Amir al-Mu’mineen

'Ali (ﷺ) did not neglect to point out the positive consequences of refraining from sin, as he said: "Whoever wants glory without the support of a large family, offspring without having a lot of children and independent means without wealth, let him move from the humiliation of sin to the glory of obedience."⁴⁵¹ He also said: "If you want to attain a position of prominence, avoid what is ḥarâm."⁴⁵²

3.6.2. Hoping for a long life and following whims and desires

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) delivered a sermon on the minbar of Kufah. He praised and glorified Allah (ﷻ), then he said: "O people, what I fear most for you is hoping for a long life and following whims and desires. As for hoping to live a long life, it makes one forget the hereafter. As for following whims and desires, it makes one abandon the truth. Indeed this world is coming to an end, and the hereafter is starting soon. Each one of them has children, so be among the children of the hereafter and do not be among the children of this world, because today is good deeds with no reckoning, and tomorrow is for reckoning with no deeds."⁴⁵³

In this speech, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) pointed out two serious matters that have a great impact on people's lives. The first is hoping to live a long life, because that deceives man so he is distracted by worldly aims and ambitions, which make him postpone righteous deeds and forget the hereafter; thus his effort for this world becomes great, and his effort for the hereafter becomes small. If every person bore in mind the fact that he is vulnerable to death at any moment, his efforts in this world would become very little, only as much as is necessary, and his efforts for the hereafter would become great, because that is what will remain after death. The second matter is following whims and desires. This diverts a person and makes the highest gains in his life the attainment of his own

whims and desires and the whims and desires of those under whom he works, so he forgets the supreme Islamic goal, which is seeking the pleasure of Allah (ﷻ) and His bounty in paradise. When the aims and goals are changed, the plan of action changes and becomes focused on worldly matters, the aims of which do not go beyond this life. It also changes relationships and ties, which become based on worldly interests instead of faith and piety, and there are other consequences of changing goals.⁴⁵⁴

3.6.3. Showing off

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷻ) said: "Do not do any good deed to show off, and do not refrain from doing it out of shyness."⁴⁵⁵ He also said: "There are three signs of the show-off: he is lazy when he is alone and active when he is with other people; he does more if he is praised because of it; and he does less if he is criticised because of it."⁴⁵⁶ The texts of Sharia described showing off as a lesser form of polytheism. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "The thing I fear most for you is lesser polytheism." They said: "What is lesser polytheism, O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)?" He said: "Showing off. Allah will say on the Day of Resurrection, when He will reward the people for their deeds: 'Go to those to whom you used to show off in the world, and see whether you find any reward with them.'"⁴⁵⁷ It was also narrated that Shaddâd ibn Aws said: "At the time of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), we used to regard showing off as lesser polytheism."⁴⁵⁸

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷻ) warned against serious diseases of the heart that have to do with the desire to please another person and show off to people. He encouraged people to focus their intention on Allah (ﷻ) alone, to devote their acts of obedience to Him alone and to adhere to the way of the Prophet's Sunnah. It is proven from him that he said: "No words are good unless accompanied by action, and no action is good unless accompanied by intention, and no

intention is good unless it is in accordance with the Sunnah.”⁴⁵⁹ It was narrated from al-Fuḍayl ibn 'Iyād that he recited the verse: ﴿...that He may test you which of you is best in deed...﴾ (*Qur'an* 67: 2) He said: “The most sincere and most correct.” They said: “O Abu 'Ali, what is the most sincere and most correct?” He said: “If the deed is sincere but not correct, it is not accepted, and if it is correct but not sincere, it is not accepted, unless it is both sincere and correct. It is sincere when it is done solely for the sake of Allah (ﷻ), and it is correct when it is in accordance with the Sunnah.”⁴⁶⁰

The forms of showing off are many, including those which involve actions, such as when a person prays and makes the standing, bowing and prostrating lengthy and makes a show of humility when people are looking at him. It may involve words, such as showing off by exhorting, reminding, memorising stories and reports for the purpose of debating and making a show of abundant knowledge, or moving one's lips in *dhikr* when in the presence of people but neglecting it at home. Showing off may involve clothing and appearance, such as leaving the mark of prostration on the forehead; wearing rough and coarse clothing and making it very short (above the ankles, for men) so that it might be said that one is an ascetic and worshipper; or wearing a certain type of clothing that is usually worn by those who are regarded by people as scholars, so that it might be said that one is a scholar. Showing off may also involve one's friends and visitors, like the one who tries to ask a scholar or worshipper to visit him, so that it might be said that so-and-so visited him; or inviting people to visit him so that it might be said that good people often come to his house. It may involve keeping company with shaykhs, so that it might be said that so-and-so met many shaykhs and learned from them, so that he can boast about it. Showing off may be in worldly terms, such as the one who walks and struts in a proud manner, or turns his cheek from others or wraps himself in a

cloak or drives his car in a certain manner. It may be in physical terms, such as looking thin and wan so that people will think that he is serious in worship, fears Allah (ﷻ) a great deal and is filled with sorrow. There are many other forms that showing off may take, by means of which the show-offs seek to attain high status in people's hearts and minds.⁴⁶¹

In general, adhering to righteous deeds, remembering and worshipping Allah a great deal, fearing Him alone and not fearing people when devoting oneself to Allah, loving the righteous people and so on — all of these are good and righteous deeds that are necessary. But it is essential that they should all be for the sake of Allah (ﷻ), because showing off means doing the righteous deeds for someone other than Allah (ﷻ). It is imperative for the believer to correct his intention and make it for the sake of Allah (ﷻ) alone. He should not give up doing righteous deeds for fear of showing off. Let those people beware of the seriousness of the disease of showing off and remember the words of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "Whoever seeks to acquire knowledge in order to debate with the jurists and to try to compete by means of it with the scholars or to divert people's attention to him, Allah (ﷻ) will admit him to the fire."⁴⁶²

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) warned against showing off and explained that deeds cannot be accepted unless they are sincerely for the sake of Allah (ﷻ) and in accordance with the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). On many occasions, he urged people to adhere to the Sunnah. He said: "Follow the guidance of your Prophet (ﷺ), for it is the best of guidance, and follow his Sunnah, for it is the best of ways."⁴⁶³

3.6.4. Self-admiration

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷺ) said: "Self-admiration is the most serious of problems."⁴⁶⁴ Self-admiration is

one of the problems that spoil deeds and lead people to doom. Self-admiration is one of the obstacles faced by those who strive in their march towards Allah (ﷻ). It is a disease that is contrary to sincerity, and it keeps one away from humility and the sense of needing Allah (ﷻ). It represents a bad attitude towards Allah (ﷻ). Moreover, self-admiration keeps a person from evaluating himself and turns him away from finding out about his problems and faults. Yet we rarely hear discussion of this problem, even though it is very serious, harmful and widespread.

Abdullah ibn al-Mubârak said: "Self-admiration means thinking that you have something that others do not have."⁴⁶⁵ Ibn Taymiyah differentiated between showing off and self-admiration, and said: "Self-admiration is akin to showing off, but showing off is a kind of including people as a motive for one's efforts, whereas self-admiration is including oneself with Allah (ﷻ) (in the sense that one remembers one's talents but forgets that they all come from Allah and by His help). So the show-off is not fulfilling the words 'You (Alone) we worship', and the one who admires himself is not fulfilling the words 'and You [Alone] we ask for help,' (Qur'an 1: 5) because the one who fulfils the words 'You (Alone) we worship' will avoid showing off, and the one who fulfils the words 'and You (Alone) we ask for help' will avoid self-admiration."⁴⁶⁶

Al-Ghazâli said: "It should be noted that the problems resulting from self-admiration are many. Self-admiration leads to arrogance. So what is generated by self-admiration is arrogance, and arrogance leads to many problems that are not hidden. Self-admiration leads to forgetting and overlooking one's sins. As for acts of worship, (the one who admires himself) thinks that his acts of worship are great, and he uses them as evidence of his righteousness; he thinks that he is doing Allah (ﷻ) a favour by doing them, and he forgets the blessings that Allah has bestowed upon him by enabling

and helping him to do them. The one who admires himself is too confident in himself and his opinion, so he feels safe from the plan and punishment of Allah, and he thinks that he has some status before Allah. His self-admiration makes him praise himself a great deal.”⁴⁶⁷

Al-Qurâfi said: “The reason why self-admiration is *ḥarâm* is that it is a bad attitude towards Allah, may He be exalted, because a slave should never think of as great the acts of worship by means of which he seeks to draw close to his Master; rather he should think of them as little in comparison to the greatness of his Master, especially the greatness of Allah (ﷻ). Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿They made not a just estimate of Allah such as is due to Him﴾ (*Qur'an* 39: 67). This means that they did not venerate Him as He deserves to be venerated. Whoever develops self-admiration and admires his worship is doomed before his Lord, Who is aware of him. He has exposed himself to the wrath and anger of Allah (ﷻ).”⁴⁶⁸ It may be said that self-admiration results from two things:

- (a) Ignorance of the rights of Allah (ﷻ), not making a just estimate of Allah (ﷻ) such as is due to Him, lack of knowledge of the names and attributes of Allah and not worshipping Allah on the basis of proper understanding of His name and attributes.
- (b) Not understanding the nature of the ego (lower self), ignorance of its faults and problems, and negligence in checking and watching oneself.⁴⁶⁹

Hence the remedy is to learn about Allah (ﷻ), realise His greatness, make a just estimate of Allah such as is due to Him, base servitude to Him on knowledge of His beautiful names and sublime attributes, and worship Him on that basis, for all goodness is in His hands, and His mercy encompasses all things. ﴿And whatever of blessings and good things you have, it is from Allah.﴾ (*Qur'an* 16: 53)

Imam ash-Shâfa'î said: "If you fear that self-admiration will affect your deeds, remember the One Whom you are trying to please, what blessings you are trying to seek and what kind of punishment you are seeking to escape. The one who thinks of that will see his deeds as insignificant."⁴⁷⁰

An-Nawawi said: "The way to rid oneself of self-admiration is to know that knowledge is a blessing from Allah (ﷻ) and a complete favour. That belongs to Allah (ﷻ) which He takes away, and that belongs to Him which He gives, and everything has an appointed time with Him, so a person should not develop self-admiration for something that he had nothing to do with and has no control over, and it is not certain that it will last."⁴⁷¹

Ibn al-Qayyim said: "It should be noted that when a person says or does something, seeking the pleasure of Allah (ﷻ), realising the blessings that Allah (ﷻ) has bestowed by enabling him to do or say it and knowing that Allah (ﷻ) helped him with regard to that, and he is doing it by the help of Allah (ﷻ) and not by his own power, knowledge, thought and strength — rather it is Allah (ﷻ) Who created for him his tongue, heart, eyes and ears — therefore He is the one who blessed him with what he said or did. When that becomes well entrenched in his mind, then self-admiration will not develop in him, because self-admiration results from focusing on one's own self and not realising the blessing and help of one's Lord."⁴⁷²

As for the other remedy for self-admiration, it is to know oneself and to keep taking stock of oneself. Ibn al-Jawzi said: "Whoever thinks of the inclinations of his own self and the sins that his self is committing will realise his sins and shortcomings for certain and will be uncertain with regard to other people. What he must beware of is self-admiration and exaggerating about the righteous deeds that he is doing for the hereafter. The believer in that regard is always thinking little of himself. It was said to 'Umar ibn

'Abdul-'Azeez (عليه السلام): 'If you die, we will bury you in the chamber of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).' He said: 'If I meet Allah with all kinds of sin except for polytheism, that is dearer to me than thinking of myself as qualified for that.'"⁴⁷³

Ibn Ḥazm said: "Whoever is tested with self-admiration, let him think of his faults; if he admires his virtues, let him think of his bad manners and attitude. If he cannot find any, to the point that he thinks that he has no faults, then he should realise that his problem is chronic and that he is the most imperfect of men, and has the most faults and least discernment. That is because he is feeble-minded and ignorant, and there is no fault worse than these two, because the wise man is the one who can see faults in himself and tries to overcome them, whereas the foolish man is the one who is ignorant of his own faults. If you admire your opinions, then think of the number of times when you got it wrong; remember them and do not forget them. Think of every time you expressed your opinion and it turned out to be wrong, and someone else got it right and you were mistaken. If you admire your knowledge, then remember that it is not from yourself; rather it is a pure gift from Allah (ﷻ) that was given to you by your Lord, so do not respond to it in a way that angers Him, for He may cause you to forget it by means of a problem with which He may test you, which may result in you forgetting what you have learned and memorised. If you are impressed by your brothers' praise for you, then think of the criticism of your enemies; then your self-admiration will disperse. If you have no enemies, there is nothing good in you; there is no one whose status is lower than the one who has no enemy. It is no more than the status of the one who has no blessing from Allah (ﷻ) for which to be envied, may Allah keep us safe and sound. If you think little of your faults, then think of them if people found out about them. Imagine people finding out about them, then you will be embarrassed and will recognise your shortcomings.""⁴⁷⁴

Ibn al-Qayyim said, speaking about the wisdom behind the divine decree allowing evil deeds and sins, that one of the reasons for this is that: "When Allah (ﷻ) wills good for His slave, He causes him to forget his acts of obedience and erases them from his mind and from his lips (so that he does not speak about them). But if he commits a sin, He makes him think about his sin all the time and forget his good deeds, so that he focuses constantly on his sin, when he stands up and sits down, when he comes and goes. This is the essence of mercy concerning him, as one of the early generation said: 'A person may commit a sin and enter paradise because of it, and he may do a good deed and enter hell because of it.' They said: 'How is that?' He said: 'He does one wrong thing and keeps thinking of it, and whenever he remembers it he weeps, feels regret and repents and asks for forgiveness. He turns to Allah (ﷻ) and beseeches Him, and he humiliates himself before Him and does righteous deeds, so this becomes a cause of mercy for him. Another person may do a good deed and keep thinking about it, so he feels proud of it before his Lord and before people, and he becomes arrogant because of it and wonders why people do not show respect to him and honour him because of it, and this continues until it takes its toll on him and causes him to enter hell.'"⁴⁷⁵

This is a brief explanation of the words of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ): "Self-admiration is a disease of the mind and heart."⁴⁷⁶

3.7. Ali's concern about setting guidelines for the marketplace, and various incidents in which he took a stand in order to correct people

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tālib (ﷺ) was keen to check on people's dealings in the marketplace and to force them to do business in accordance with the laws of Islam. It is proven that 'Ali

(ﷺ) gave a great deal of attention to checking on and inspecting the marketplace. It was narrated from al-Ḥurr ibn Jarmooz al-Murâdî that his father said: "I saw 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) come out of the palace wearing two striped garments; his lower garment came to mid-calf and his upper garment was wrapped tightly around him. He was carrying his stick and walking about in the marketplace, enjoining them to fear Allah (ﷻ) and be honest in dealing. He said: 'Give just measure, and do not take out the marrow from bones when selling meat.'"⁴⁷⁷

It was narrated that Abu Maṭar said: "I came out of the mosque and heard a man calling out from behind me: 'Lift up your lower garment, for that is cleaner for your garment and more pleasing to your Lord, and cut your hair if you are a Muslim.' I walked behind him; he was wearing the waist wrapper and an upper garment on his shoulders, and he was carrying a stick, as if he were a Bedouin of the desert. I said: 'Who is this?' A man said to me: 'You must be a stranger in this city.' I said: 'Yes, I am from Basra.' He said: 'This is 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib, Amir al-Mu'mineen.' When he reached the place of Ibn Abi Ma'eet, he saw him driving his camels and said: 'Sell, and do not swear an oath, for an oath may cause an item to be sold, but it erases the blessing.' Then he went to the date sellers and saw a female servant weeping. He said: 'Why are you weeping?' She said: 'This man sold me some dates for a dirham, but my master refused to accept them.' 'Ali (ﷺ) said to him: 'Take your dates and give her a dirham, for she has nothing to do with it.' And he gave her the dirham. I said: 'Do you know who this is?' He said: 'No.' I said: 'This is 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib, Amir al-Mu'mineen.' So she gave back the dates, and he gave her a dirham. Then the man said: 'I would like you to be pleased with me, O Amir al-Mu'mineen.' He said: 'Why should I be pleased with you if you give people their dues (because there should be nothing special about that)?' Then he passed by the date sellers and said: 'O date sellers, feed the poor, and your earnings

will increase.' Then he went — with the Muslims with him — until he came to the fish sellers and said: 'No fish that was found floating dead should be sold in our marketplace.' Then he went to Dar Furât, which is the market of the cotton cloth."⁴⁷⁸

It was narrated that Zadân said: " 'Ali used to walk in the marketplace on his own, guiding those who had gone astray and helping the weak. He would pass by the sellers and grocers and would start with them, reciting Qur'an, and he would recite: ﴿That home of the hereafter [i.e. paradise], We shall assign to those who rebel not against the truth with pride and oppression in the land nor do mischief by committing crimes.﴾ (Qur'an 28: 83) Then he said: 'This verse was revealed concerning just and humble people among the governors and people in power, to the exclusion of other people.'"⁴⁷⁹ Al-Khallâl narrated with his chain of narration that Abu Sa'eed said: " 'Ali used to go to the marketplace and say: 'O people of the marketplace, fear Allah (ﷻ) and beware of swearing oaths, for an oath may help to sell the item, but it erases the blessing. Traders are evil, except the one who takes his dues and pays his dues. Peace be upon you.' Then he left, then he came back to them and said something similar to them."⁴⁸⁰

It was narrated that Abu as-Sahba' said: "I saw 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) in Shaṭṭ al-Kalâ"⁴⁸¹, asking about prices."⁴⁸²

This direct supervision on the part of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) may indicate a number of things, including the following:

- (a) That his tour of the market was not limited to supervising and giving guidelines only; rather it went further than that and involved serving the people in their affairs, such as guiding one who had gone astray and helping the weak. If a person is like that, his words and exhortations will be more effective and will have a greater impact on people's hearts.

- (b) Sincere advice to fear Allah (ﷻ) and be honest in dealing. Sometimes he quoted Qur'an to remind them, because the one who fears Allah will treat people with kindness and be sincere towards them and will keep away from deceiving and cheating them.
- (c) Forbidding wrongdoing in transactions and restoring people's rights, because the master of the slave woman who bought the dates did not approve of this purchase, and she herself had no say in the matter.
- (d) Forbidding all kinds of deceit that happens in marketplaces, such as removing the marrow from the bone that is covered with meat.
- (e) Explaining some rulings and etiquette that have to do with transactions among people, including the following:
 - Prohibition on swearing oaths when selling. The reason given for this is that an oath may help to sell the item, but it wipes out the blessing, as was narrated from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "An oath may help to sell the item, but it erases the blessing."⁴⁸³
 - Encouraging and urging people to feed the poor, because this increases earnings.
 - Prohibition on selling fish that was found floating dead in the water. Perhaps this was so that it would not be mixed with the fresh catch.

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷻ) used to check on traders' affairs himself, and he instructed his governors in the provinces to do likewise. He would praise those who did well; as for those who committed transgressions after being told not to, he would punish them, without going to extremes.⁴⁸⁴ He had some beneficial instructions and prohibitions which encouraged people to adopt the

best of characteristics and adhere to the Islamic rulings. The following are some examples:

3.7.1. Denunciation of mixing between men and women in the marketplaces

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) would denounce people who did not prevent their womenfolk from going out to the marketplaces and mixing with the disbelievers. He said to them: "Do you not feel any shame or protective jealousy? For I have heard that your womenfolk go out in the marketplaces and mix with the disbelievers."⁴⁸⁵

3.7.2. Do not refuse a little profit lest you be deprived of a lot

'Ali (عليه السلام) used to enter the market with his stick in his hand and wearing a cloak, and he would say: "O merchants, take what is due and give what is due, and you will be safe and sound. Do not refuse a little profit, lest you be deprived of a lot." He looked at a man who was cutting fabric and said to him, "Are you cutting when we are still close to the time of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)? I shall ask you a question and if you respond, all well and good; otherwise I shall beat you to the ground with this stick. What reinforces religious commitment and what undermines it?" He said: "As for what reinforces it, it is piety, and what undermines it is greed." He said: "You have done well. Carry on cutting, because a man like you is one who should cut."⁴⁸⁶

3.7.3. The danger of getting involved in trading before properly understanding its Sharia rulings

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) said: "The one who gets involved in trading before fully understanding the religion

will get involved in usury, then he will get involved in usury, then he will get involved in usury. 'Umar (ؓ) used to hit with his stick anyone who sat in the marketplace and did not know the rulings, and he would say: 'No one should sit in our marketplace who does not know about usury.'"⁴⁸⁷ 'Ali (ؓ) also used to say: "No one should sell in our marketplace except one who has acquired deep understanding of the religion; otherwise he will consume usury, whether he wants to or not."⁴⁸⁸

The Rightly Guided Caliphs (may Allah be pleased with them) paid attention to all matters of ruling, and no one matter took up their attention at the expense of another. Thus the situation did not go beyond the control of the ruler. They established guidelines for trade, which kept the market in good shape, regulated business transactions and guaranteed stability and steadiness. There were no unfair deals, cheating, hoarding, black market or ignorance of what was and was not permitted in the world of trade.

It is possible today to teach traders by means of study circles in the mosques, especially those that are located in marketplaces. It is essential to address them by means of pamphlets and brief audiotapes that explain the rulings on business and simplify issues that have to do with it, highlighting the following issues:

- Presenting selected examples of Muslim business owners who are sincere to their religion and who support the cause of Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger with their wealth.
- Explaining the importance of the hereafter for them so that they may combine the good things of this world and the hereafter.

The scholars and seekers of knowledge have an important duty to educate this large sector of society. The Islamic movements should not forget their duty to teach their members who are involved in business and others about this important issue.

3.7.4. "The one who gets to a place first has more right to it"

There was an issue concerning trading spots in the market, and 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) gave a verdict in the marketplace of Kufah stating that the one who gets to a place first has more right to it, as long as he is still there during that same day. If he moves from that spot, then it is permissible for someone else to take it. Al-Asbagh ibn Nabâtah said: "I went out with 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib to the marketplace, and he saw that the people of the marketplace had reserved spots for themselves. 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: 'What is this?' They said: 'The people of the marketplace have reserved their spots.' He said: 'They do not have the right to do that. The marketplace of the Muslims is like the prayer place of the Muslims; whoever gets there first, it is his for the rest of the day unless he leaves it.'" This principle was followed until the governorship of al-Mugheerah ibn Shu'bah. When Ziyâd ibn Abeehi became governor in 49 AH, he ruled that the one who sat in the place was more entitled to it as long as he remained there.⁴⁸⁹

3.7.5. "The hoarder is an accursed sinner"

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) said concerning the hoarding of food: "The one who brings food to the market is granted provision, and the hoarder is an accursed sinner."⁴⁹⁰ Amir al-Mu'mineen ordered that hoarded food be burned. Al-Hâfidh ibn Abi Shaybah narrated that al-Hakam said: "Ali was told about a man who hoarded food, one hundred thousand, and he ordered that it be burned."⁴⁹¹

Ibn Qudâmah was of the view that the hoarding that is prohibited is that which meets the following conditions:

- (a) That it is bought from the marketplace. If he brings something from elsewhere or keeps something that he

already had, he is not a hoarder. This is clear from the words of 'Ali (عليه السلام).

(b) That what is bought is a staple food.⁴⁹²

(c) That hardship is caused to the people by someone's buying it in order to hoard it.

'Ali's warning against hoarding was based on the words of the Messenger (ﷺ): "No one hoards except a wrongdoer."⁴⁹³

3.7.6. "Loss is to be taken from the capital, and profit is to be shared out as agreed"

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) explained some of the rulings on *muḍârabah*, which is a kind of business dealing among people. It involves giving a known amount of wealth to someone to trade with it, in return for some of the profit. 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "Loss is to be taken from the capital and profit is to be shared out as agreed."⁴⁹⁴ Loss is to be borne by the partnership and is to be taken from the wealth. In other words, it is to be borne by each partner according to how much he has put in. If each partner put in an equal part,⁴⁹⁵ then the loss is shared equally between them. If it is thirds, then the loss is divided on this basis.

3.7.7. Burning of a village in which alcohol was sold

'Ali (عليه السلام) strongly denounced those who sold alcohol, and he ordered the burning of a village in which alcohol was sold. Imam Abu 'Ubaydah al-Qâsim ibn Salâm narrated that 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) looked at Zurârah⁴⁹⁶ and said: "What is this village?" They said: "It is a village called Zurârah. Meat is slaughtered there, and alcohol is sold there." He got up and went there and said: "Bring the fire and set fire to it, and let evil consume itself." The narrator said:

"It was burned from the west as far as the Garden of Khawâsta ibn Jubroona."⁴⁹⁷

3.7.8. Checking on matters to do with clothing and appearance

It was narrated that Abu Maţar said: "I went out of the mosque and there was a man calling out behind me: 'Lift up your lower garment, for that is cleaner for your garment and more pleasing to your Lord, and cut your hair if you are a Muslim.'"⁴⁹⁸

3.7.9. Detaining evildoers and mischief makers

'Ali (ﷺ) would pursue evildoers and mischief makers, and if he caught one of them he would detain him. Al-Qâdi Abu Yoosuf narrated that 'Abdul-Mâlik ibn 'Umayr said: "If there was among the tribe or people a promiscuous or immoral man, 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) would detain him. If he had wealth, he would spend on his maintenance from his wealth; if he did not have any wealth, he would spend on him from the public treasury of the Muslims." He also said: "Protect the people from his evil, and spend on him from their treasury."⁴⁹⁹

3.7.10. Warning against not spending

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) said: "The miser is the one who seeks to hasten poverty and lives in this world like the poor; he will be brought to account in the hereafter on the basis that he was rich."⁵⁰⁰

3.7.11. 'Ali's call to prayer

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) paid a great deal of attention to the matter of prayer. He would walk through the

streets, calling “Prayer, prayer,” and he would wake the people for the dawn prayer in this way. Al-Ḥasan (عليه السلام) told us that on the day he was stabbed, he went out from his house. When he came out of the door, he called out: “O people! Prayer, prayer.” He did that every day, carrying a stick. Two men intercepted him, and Ibn Maljam struck him on the head.⁵⁰¹

3.7.12. Paying attention to public works

Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali ordered the building of waterways in the wadis and sewers, lest the road of the Muslims be blocked.⁵⁰²

3.7.13. The innovation of the storytellers, and ‘Ali’s efforts to fight it

The innovation of the storytellers appeared during the time of ‘Ali (عليه السلام), and it was denounced by the Companions and the Tâbi‘oon. Muhammad ibn Waddâh narrated that Moosa ibn Mu‘âwiyah said: “Ibn Mahdi narrated to us from Sufyân from ‘Ubaydullah ibn Nâfi‘ that he said: ‘Stories were not told at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) or the time of Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmân. The first time stories were told was during the turmoil (the murder of ‘Uthmân).’”⁵⁰³

The storytellers were preachers who held gatherings for preaching in competition with the gatherings of knowledge. They exhorted the people by telling stories, tales narrated from Jewish sources, and so on which had no basis or were fabricated, or were beyond the comprehension of the masses. Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) banned them because they started telling the people about weird things and ambiguous matters, and things that were beyond their comprehension and of which they had no knowledge.⁵⁰⁴ Amir al-Mu’mineen permitted those who had strong Sharia knowledge to tell stories in order to exhort the people.

'Ali's life in society was a call to tawh  d and striving against polytheism. He was keen to teach people the names and attributes of Allah (ﷻ), connect their hearts to Him alone, remind them of the blessings of Allah (ﷻ) and urge them to be grateful for them. He (ﷺ) was also persistent in his efforts to eliminate any traces of pre-Islamic ignorance, using all kinds of means such as speeches, exhortations, poetry and proverbs. He did not live a life that was remote and removed from the people; rather he lived among them on the basis of his good attitude, manners and knowledge (ﷺ).

3.8. The Police force at the time of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi T  lib

When 'Ali (ﷺ) was appointed as the new caliph, the police force was one of the important departments in the state. There are many stories and reports that speak of the role of the police at the time of 'Ali (ﷺ). For example, Asbagh ibn Nab  tah narrated that a young man complained to 'Ali ibn Abi T  lib (ﷺ) about a group of people. He said: "These people went out with my father on a journey; they returned, but my father did not return. I asked them about him, and they said that he died. I asked them about his wealth, and they said that he did not leave anything, although he had a great deal of wealth with him. We referred the matter to Shurayh, and he asked them to swear an oath and let them go." 'Ali (ﷺ) called the police. He appointed two policemen for each one of them and instructed them not to let any of them get close to another and not to let anyone speak to them. He called his scribe, then he called one of the men and said: "Tell me about the father of this young man. On what day did he go out? Where did you halt? How was your journey? How did he die? How did he lose his wealth?" He also asked him about those who washed him and buried him, who led the funeral prayer for him, where he was buried and so on, and the scribe wrote it all down. Then

'Ali (ﷺ) said takbeer, and everyone present said takbeer. The other accused person had no knowledge about what was going on, but he thought that their companion had confessed about them. After the first one had been taken away, 'Ali (ﷺ) summoned another and asked him the same questions. He carried on like that until he had heard what they all had to say, and he found that each one of them said something different than his companions. Then he ordered that the first one be brought back, and he said: "O enemy of Allah, I am aware of your stubbornness and lies because of what I heard from your companions. Nothing can save you from punishment except telling the truth." Then he ordered that he be imprisoned, and he said takbeer, and everyone present said takbeer. When the other people realised what was happening, they did not doubt that their companion had testified against them. Then he called another one of them and threatened him, and he said: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, by Allah, I was not happy with what they did." Then he called all of them, and they admitted what had happened. He summoned the one who was in prison, and it was said to him: "Your companions have confessed, and nothing will save you except telling the truth." So he admitted everything that the others had admitted. He forced them to give back the money, and he took blood money from them for the one who had been slain.⁵⁰⁵

This story contains many implications which are useful for those involved in investigations. At the same time, it proves that there were prisons and policemen.⁵⁰⁶ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) built a prison in Kufah which he called Nâfi', but it was not well prepared for prisoners, and they were able to get out of it. He demolished it and built a replacement, which he called Mukhees.⁵⁰⁷ He provided the inmates with what they needed of food, condiments and clothing in the winter and summer.⁵⁰⁸ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib had a police force whose members included Abu al-Hayâj al-Asadi,

Qays ibn Sa'd ibn 'Ubâdah, Ma'qil ibn Qays ar-Rayyâhi, Mâlik ibn Khubayb al-Yarboo'i, al-Aşbagh ibn Nabâtah al-Mushâja'i and Sa'eed ibn Sâriyah ibn Murrah al-Khuzâ'i. One of the roles played by the police in society was helping the needy and those in trouble by guiding the lost, feeding the poor, offering help, showing kindness and other humane acts of help by means of which the countenance of Allah (ﷻ) may be sought.

Hence we can see clearly that the security forces during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs played a civic role in offering general services to the public. Their role was not limited only to security matters, even though that was their main focus.

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CHAPTER FOUR

Financial and judiciary Institutions at the time of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib, and some of his views on Islamic jurisprudence

1. Financial institutions

At the time of 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ؑ), there were not many changes worth mentioning in the financial policies of the Islamic state. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ؑ) returned to the way of Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq (ؑ) in giving equal stipends to the people,¹ and he did not show preference to anyone; he gave to slaves as he gave to their masters.² In some regions, the treasury was entrusted to the governors themselves. Qays ibn Sa'd ibn 'Ubâdah, the general governor of Egypt, was in charge of the treasury there. Similarly, when 'Ali (ؑ) sent al-Ashtar an-Nakha'i to be governor of Egypt, he indicated that in addition to his general duties, he was responsible for the treasury and for supervising it in a way that served the people's interests. He explained: "Because if the people are in good shape, than the treasury will continue to be in good shape. The affairs of the community cannot be sound unless they are in good shape, because all the people are dependent on the treasury and on those who are in charge of it. So your focus should be on developing the land to bring about prosperity, more than on collecting money from the people, because collection of taxes is dependent upon prosperity.

Whoever seeks to collect taxes without paying attention to prosperity will harm the country and destroy the people, and he cannot last as governor except for a little while. If they complain about burdens, problems, shortages of water or damage to the land because of flooding or drought, then you should reduce their burden as much as you think may help them out, because the more you focus on prosperity, the better results you will get. The ruin of society results from the poverty of its people, and the poverty of the people results from the greed of governors and their focus on collecting taxes. Because of their misguided thinking, they will stay there for a long time, hoping to live for a long time, and not learning from the lessons of others.”³

The way Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) viewed the treasury is something that went beyond collecting money; it encompassed the economy of the country as a whole, as the land tax formed the main source of income at that time. 'Ali (عليه السلام) was known for being very strict in keeping an eye on his agents in all that they did. The treasury and financial affairs were important matters that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) kept a close eye on. He used to send spies and intelligence gatherers to find out about these matters.⁴ The governors had general authority to spend from the wealth and public treasury of their provinces. The governors who were in direct control of the treasury and tax collectors at the time of the caliphs used to spend in legitimate ways from the wealth that they had when it was needed. They used this wealth for matters of jihad, such as preparing weapons and mounts, paying soldiers' salaries and other expenses. They also gave salaries to official workers and employees in the province.⁵ In addition to that, they used to carry out construction projects, such as building bridges and digging channels, springs and rivers, all of which required spending from the money that they collected from their provinces.⁶

In some situations, control of the treasury was separate from the job of the governor. In that case, as part of their general supervision of the province, governors required the officials in charge of the treasury to spend on the activities mentioned above. Alternatively, the governor would hire workers to supervise a particular project, and the costs of the work would be paid from the income of the province through the treasury department. So even if the role of the treasury was separate from that of the governor, as has been suggested by some researchers,⁷ spending was still supervised by the governors in many cases, whether it was for jihad or for development.

Some Islamic jurists have pointed out that the governors had to spend in the interests of the Muslims and not freeze this wealth, because holding this wealth that was taken lawfully, and not spending it on the interests of the Muslims, would be equivalent to taking it in an unlawful manner. They regarded freezing public wealth as something unjust and as a shortcoming on the part of governors.⁸ The regions and provinces were more entitled to their wealth and tax revenues than others, so the governors would not transfer the treasury's funds from the provinces to the capital in Madinah, or in Kufah later on, until they had covered the needs of their provinces first.⁹

Undoubtedly what the Rightly Guided Caliphs did, especially at the time of ‘Umar (ؓ), in terms of organising a precise system of financial affairs in the provinces, collecting sources of income or a general income in addition to general expenditure, is regarded as a new system. Nonetheless, this did not prevent them from benefiting from the experience of those who had come before them as they introduced the government ministries and controlled their financial affairs in all aspects. I have discussed the financial institutions during the era of ‘Umar (ؓ) in some detail. Any reader wishing to know

more about that may refer to my book *Fasl al-Khiṭâb fī Seerat Ameer al-Mu'mineen 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb* (available in English under the title *'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb — His Life and Times*).

Some Orientalists, including Philip Hitti in his *History of the Arabs*, have tried to undermine the importance of the efforts of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (may Allah be pleased with them) in organising the wealth of the state in general. Hitti writes:

"Later developments, the result of many years of practice, were attributed by this tradition to the initiative of 'Umar. The fact is that the original part which the first caliphs and the early Moslem [sic] governors played in the imposition of taxes and the administration of finances could not have been great. The framework of the Byzantine provincial government in Syria and Egypt was continued in Allah's name, and no radical changes were introduced into the machinery of local administration in the former Persian domains. From the very beginning taxation varied according to the nature of the soil and the system that had prevailed in that locality under the old rule, whether Byzantine or Persian; it did not necessarily depend upon the acquisition of land by capitulation (ṣulḥan) or by force ('anwatan) nor upon any legislative act on the part of 'Umar."¹⁰

The writer ignored reports that were narrated about the way in which 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) worked out the tax on lands conquered by force, and how this new system was opposed by some of the Companions before the matter was settled and they all agreed to adopt it.¹¹ Muhammad Diya' ad-Deen ar-Rayyis took on the task of refuting these Orientalists and their views, on the basis of authentic historical texts. He concluded that this claim has no sound basis and that the Muslims and their jurists differentiated between that which was introduced by 'Umar and that which was introduced by others. Indeed, they discussed in great detail the issue of tax collection at the time of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه).¹²

It is the habit of the Orientalists and their lackeys to criticise and undermine the great figures of Islam. The problem is that they find people in the Ummah who view their writings with respect and admiration.

Due to the wars and internal conflict, the Muslim state at the time of ‘Ali (عليه السلام) was negatively affected with regard to its various institutions, such as the financial and military ones. The position of caliphate itself was also affected, and this played a role in the demise of the Rightly Guided Caliphate. We will discuss this in more detail below.

2. Judicial institutions

Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) was appointed as caliph, and his appointment resulted from the murder of ‘Uthmân (عليه السلام) and subsequent events that split the Muslims and created division in their ranks. His main preoccupation and focus was confronting these issues in order to bring the Ummah together, but the bloody conflict at the time of ‘Ali (عليه السلام) did not prevent him from giving some attention to organising the judiciary. This is indicated by a letter¹³ that he sent to al-Ashtar an-Nakha‘i, his governor in Egypt, in which he said:

“Then select to judge between people one whom you think is the best of your people, one who is unflappable, who does not get offended by opponents, who does not get carried away if he makes a mistake, who will not refrain from turning towards the truth when he recognises it, who does not have greed and ambitions, who is not content with one explanation only before listening to all others, who takes his time and does not rush into passing judgement on ambiguous issues, who relies most on evidence, who does not get

annoyed with people referring to him and coming back to him, who is most patient in studying and examining the case until it becomes clear, who is the most decisive once the verdict becomes clear in his mind, who does not become too proud if he is praised and is not tempted easily. Such men are few. Then check regularly on the way he handles cases, and be generous towards him so that he will not be in a state of poverty or need, and thus he will not need people. Show great respect to him, so that no one could hope to get his way with him of people who are close to you, and so that he can feel safe and secure with you from the aggression of people close to you.”¹⁴

This letter also says: “Give precedence to Allah (ﷻ) and to people over yourself and those who are close to you of your family and those of your subjects whom you love and are close to. Unless you do that, you will be unjust, and if anyone is unjust to the slaves of Allah, He will be his opponent on behalf of His slaves. The one who is opposed by Allah (ﷻ) will not have a leg to stand on; Allah (ﷻ) will declare war on him until he gives it up or repents. There is nothing that leads to changing the blessing of Allah and hastening His vengeance more than persisting in injustice, for Allah (ﷻ) answers the prayers of the oppressed, and He is watching the oppressors like a guardian on a watchtower.”¹⁵

We may note that this advice includes a discussion of the qualities of the judge and his rights and duties. The one who ponders what Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) wrote to his governor in Egypt will be amazed by this advice that was written in the year 40 AH or thereabouts, at a time when the Arabs had had no contact yet with other civilisations, and how the sound mind which is guided by the light of Allah (ﷻ) was able to come up with such ideas and lay out guidelines that would ensure the smooth running of the affairs of state, in a way that is better than what we see today of constitutions and manmade laws.¹⁶ Later, 'Ali's ideas of fairness towards people

and avoiding injustice towards them formed the basis for setting up a department to look into injustice.¹⁷

2.1. Judiciary and legislative plan at the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, and the sources to which the Companions referred at that time

What is meant by this plan is the method followed by the Rightly Guided Caliphs and the noble Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) when trying to work out Sharia rulings on new situations and cases that occurred in their daily lives. They were guided to this method by the close company they kept with the noble Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and the education and training they received from him. Hence following this method became obligatory upon those who came after them.

We have noted in our study of the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs in our books on Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān, and in the current study on the era of 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them all), that every time they came across a new issue or needed a verdict, they would turn to the Book of Allah (ﷻ) first of all. If they found the Sharia ruling for the new issue there, then the matter would be settled, otherwise they would refer to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). If they did not find the solution there, they would move on to working it out on the basis of their personal view in the broad meaning of the term. We have noted that this way of working things out was initially done collectively in most cases, especially if the issue had to do with matters of state, which is something general in nature. What helped in that regard was the fact that the senior Companions were still living in Madinah, which made it easy to bring them together and listen to their views. The collective agreements that stemmed from these consultations were later known

as *ijmâ'* or consensus. They made use of analogy and *maṣlaḥah* (that which serves the interests of the Muslims), which is the aim of Sharia.

The best evidence for this plan is the words of Maymoon ibn Mahrân who said: "If two disputants came to Abu Bakr, he would look in the Book of Allah (ﷻ). If he found there anything that would decide the matter between them, he would judge in accordance with it. If there was nothing in the Book, and he knew of any precedent from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) concerning that matter, he would judge in accordance with it. If he could not find anything in the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), he would call together the prominent and best of the people and consult them. If they agreed on something, he would judge in accordance with it. 'Umar did likewise; if he could not find an answer in the Qur'an and Sunnah, he would look to see it if there was a similar case that Abu Bakr had ruled on, otherwise he would call the prominent Muslims; if they agreed on something, he would judge in accordance with it."¹⁸

It was narrated that Ibn Mas'ood said: "Whoever is presented with a case after today, let him rule in accordance with the Book of Allah. If there comes to him a case which is not mentioned in the Book of Allah, and concerning which there is no verdict from His Prophet (ﷺ), let him refer to the verdict of the righteous people. If there comes to him a case which is not mentioned in the Book of Allah, and concerning which there is no verdict from His Prophet (ﷺ) or from righteous people, let him try to work it out on the basis of his knowledge. Let him not say: 'I think, but I am not sure,' because what is ḥalâl is clear and what is ḥarâm is clear, and in between there are ambiguous matters, so leave that which makes you doubt for that which does not make you doubt."¹⁹

In our discussion on the ultimate reference points in the state of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ), we have discussed

his eagerness to follow the same method. From these reports, it is clear that in their legislative and judicial plans, the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) used to rely on the Qur'an and Sunnah before moving on to opinions in the general sense.²⁰

Now let us and draw some conclusions from these reports:

1. The Companions were agreed on this method, and the steps they followed in trying to find answers to problems were in the following order: First, they started with the Book of Allah, then they moved on to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), before resorting to working it out collectively and then analogy.
2. Legal precedent played an important role in this procedure; its role was second only to the texts.
3. It is worth noting with regard to this method that Abu Bakr and 'Umar, in particular, did not consult anyone except those of the Companions who were already present in Madinah. There is no report to indicate that they would summon those of the Companions who were absent for the purpose of consulting them on any issue that required some working out. This indicates that consensus was reached on the basis of agreement among the Companions who were present, regardless of the opinion of those who were absent. It is clear to us from the plan of the Rightly Guided Caliphs and the Companions in legislation and judicial matters, that every time they had a problem to solve or came across a case they needed a ruling on, they hastened to consult the Qur'an first of all. If they did not find a solution there, they would refer to the Sunnah. If they did not find a solution there, they would work it out on the basis of their own views in the general sense thereof, whether they reached this conclusion collectively or individually. The decision that resulted from their collective opinions is called consensus, which is a reference that was introduced by them and was not

known at the time of the Prophet; this came to be regarded as the third source or reference point after the Qur'an and Sunnah. As it was not always possible to gather the Companions for the purpose of consultation and reaching consensus on a certain issue, for various reasons, the Companions began to issue fatwas and verdicts based on individual opinions. They relied on the Qur'an and Sunnah in their individual and collective opinions, and they relied on deep understanding of the aims of Sharia, which seek to ward off evil and achieve interests. For matters on which there were no clear texts, they derived rulings on the basis of the spirit of the texts, not on their apparent or literal meaning. They used analogy from the time of the Messenger (ﷺ); this is the fourth reference point of the legislation and comes after consensus in status, even though it was known before it.²¹

These are the sources on which the Rightly Guided Caliphs and the noble Companions relied:

1. The noble Qur'an, which is the main foundation, the fount of wisdom, the miracle of the message, the guide for eyes and insight. There is no way to Allah (ﷻ) except through it.
2. The Sunnah, which is what was transmitted from the Prophet (ﷺ) via sound chains of narration.
3. Consensus, which must be based on a text of the Qur'an or Sunnah, or analogy.
4. Analogy.

The Rightly Guided Caliphs and the noble Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) developed rulings on new issues on the basis of interests to which attention must be paid or harms that must be protected against. Their conclusions on issues for which there is no text were broad in scope and paid attention to the people's needs and interests.²²

2.2. Distinguishing features of the judiciary at the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs

The judiciary at the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (may Allah be pleased with them) represented the second stage, after that of the prophetic era, which formed the roots and foundations. On the one hand, it represented the complete structure and comprehensive system; on the other hand, it gave an excellent image of the Islamic judiciary. It is regarded as an example and a model, a focal point for all subsequent eras. We may sum up the most important distinguishing features of the judiciary at the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (may Allah be pleased with them) as follows:

1. The judiciary at that time was a continuation of the way it was at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ); it adhered to and followed its method. Religious education was widespread, and the people were strongly connected to faith and correct beliefs. There was a strong religious awareness and simplicity in the way claims and cases were dealt with, and judicial procedures were straightforward. There were few claims and disputes in relation to the size of the state and the number of people and countries it encompassed. Judges were chosen carefully and had all the qualities required to fill this position.
2. The judges then are regarded as giving a true and sound image of the Islamic judiciary; hence that era became a reference point for researchers and Muslim jurists. Their judicial rulings and systems became a source of Sharia rulings, judicial opinions and interpretations of Islamic law throughout the ages on the basis of consensus, at least theoretically, among all scholars and schools of thought, even though there are some differences in some subtle details. An example of that is the differences among the imams as to whether the view of a Companion may be used as evidence or not, as is discussed in the fields of principles of

Islamic jurisprudence, classification of hadiths and the history of legislation. We will discuss that below.

3. The Rightly Guided Caliphs and some of the regional governors examined some disputes and were in charge of the judiciary, in addition to other gubernatorial duties. They paid careful attention to dealing with disputes between people and inspecting the marketplaces.²³
4. In most cities of the Muslim regions, the Rightly Guided Caliphs appointed judges, whose main job was to judge between people, in exclusion of other duties. For the first time, in a primitive form, there appeared the separation of judiciary authority from other forms of authority. In the major cities where judges were appointed alongside the governors, the governors had no authority in judicial matters. In the other cities and regions, the governors were in charge of both the judiciary and the other matters involved in governing, and they were under the supervision of the Rightly Guided Caliph.
5. Judges at the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs had to work out their verdicts, so they would look at the texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah directly and reach their conclusions on the basis of what they understood. If they did not find any ruling applying to an incident, they would examine precedents and consult their contemporary scholars to try to reach a conclusion on the basis of what they understood, and then they would issue the ruling that they had reached by those efforts.
6. New sources for the judiciary appeared at the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, as a result of the method to which they adhered, which is outlined above. Now the sources of judicial rulings were: the Qur'an, the Sunnah, consensus, analogy, legal precedents, and individual opinion combined with consultation.

7. A precise administrative system for the judiciary was developed during this time. Both ‘Umar and ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with them) sent well-known letters to the judges and governors, highlighting the judiciary system and explaining its constitution and methods. In addition to these letters, the caliphs followed up with the judges and monitored them. They discussed issues with them, asked how they were doing and found out how they were handling their cases. They also asked them to refer difficult and serious cases to them. This involvement reached a peak at the time of ‘Umar (ﷺ) but decreased a little during the time of ‘Uthmân (ﷺ). It weakened at the time of ‘Ali (ﷺ), as a result of the turmoil and civil war, as well as the emergence of the autonomous trend in Syria and the consequences to which it led, in addition to the development of a number of power bases.
8. The qualifications of the judges were general in most cases and covered all incidents. The authority of the judge was comprehensive, and he had complete freedom in decision-making. Later during that era, there emerged the beginning of specialisation among judges. Certain judges would be appointed to deal with simple and straightforward cases, and others would be appointed to deal with serious cases and major issues. Most of the caliphs continued to examine cases of criminal acts and ḥadd punishments, even though some of the governors did that, too. This era also saw the appointment of multiple judges at one time in the larger cities and provinces such as Madinah, Kufa, Basra and Yemen. Military judges also were appointed for the first time.
9. During this era, they continued to follow the way of the prophetic era in supervising and checking judicial verdicts and approving those that were in accordance with the Qur’an and Sunnah and those which were based on personal effort and

opinion. A personal view and interpretation cannot be cancelled out by means of another personal view and interpretation, but it may be cancelled out if it is contrary to the Qur'an and Sunnah.²⁴

10. Regular salaries for judges were introduced to make their lives comfortable, and courthouses and prisons were set up. For the first time, we see the reluctance of the senior Companions to be appointed as judges. Ibn 'Umar was asked by 'Uthmân to serve as a judge, but he refused. Ka'b ibn Yasâr ibn Dannah was asked by 'Umar to serve as a judge in Egypt, but he also refused; it was also said that he accepted for a few days, then he withdrew.²⁵
11. Judicial procedures at this time were simple and straightforward. They involved only a few steps, starting with listening to the case, then establishing proof and evidence, issuing the verdict, and finally, carrying out the verdict. Attention was paid to the etiquette of judging so as to protect the weak, support those who had been wronged, ensure equal treatment of disputants, establish the truth and implement Sharia laws for all people, even if the ruling went against the caliph, amir or governor. In most cases, the judge would carry out the rulings himself, if other parties involved would not do so willingly. The ruling would be carried out immediately after issuing the verdict. However, it seems that at the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, many new procedures and organisational details were introduced. Scribes for judges were introduced at the time of 'Umar (ؓ); the police and helpers for the judge and governor appeared at the time of 'Uthmân (ؓ); and this system of criminal investigation developed at the time of 'Ali (ؓ), when he separated the witnesses in order to find out the truth. This method became an example to be followed.²⁶

2.3. The most famous judges of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام)

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) retained some of the judges who had demonstrated their high calibre and had been appointed to that post before his caliphate, and he appointed some other judges and governors,²⁷ including the following:

1. Shurayh ibn al-Hârith who was in charge of the judiciary in Kufah. 'Ali (عليه السلام) approved of his post and paid him five hundred dirhams every month.²⁸
2. Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari, whom 'Uthmân (عليه السلام) had appointed to the judiciary in Kufah. 'Ali (عليه السلام) confirmed him in this post but later dismissed him.²⁹
3. 'Ubaydullah ibn Mas'ood, the governor and judge of Yemen.
4. 'Uthmân ibn Haneef in Basra.
5. Qays ibn Sa'd in Egypt. He had been present at the conquest of Egypt and had a house there. He governed it for 'Ali (عليه السلام), then he was dismissed and replaced by Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr.³⁰
6. 'Amârah ibn Shihâb in Kufah.
7. Qatham ibn al-'Abbâs in Madinah in 37 AH, Makkah and at-Tâ'if.³¹
8. Ja'dah ibn Hubayrah al-Makhzoomi, then Khulayd ibn Qurrah al-Yarboo'i in Khorasan.³²
9. Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs, who was 'Ali's governor in Basra. Abu al-Aswad ad-Duwali was in charge of its judiciary, and some interesting verdicts were narrated from him. According to another opinion, Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs appointed 'Abdur-Rahmân ibn Yazeed al-Hudâni to be in charge of the judiciary in

Basra. He was the brother of al-Muhallab ibn Abi Şufrah, through his mother. He remained as the judge during the caliphate of 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib and the time when Mu'âwiyah was in charge, until Ziyâd came and dismissed him.³³ Abu 'Ubaydah said: "Ibn 'Abbâs used to issue fatwas to the people and judge between them."³⁴ Whenever Ibn 'Abbâs left Basra, he would appoint Abu al-Aswad to be in charge, and he was the mufti, as the judge was known at that time. It remained like that until 'Ali (ﷺ) was killed in 40 AH. When Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) left Madinah and went to Basra, he appointed Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs to be in charge of the city.³⁵

10. Sa'eed ibn Nimrân al-Hamadâni, whom 'Ali (ﷺ) appointed when he came to Kufah; then he dismissed him. He was appointed as judge of Kufah by Muş'ab ibn az-Zubayr, and he held this post for three years until Ibn az-Zubayr appointed Abdullah ibn 'Utbah ibn Mas'ood.³⁶
11. 'Ubaydah as-Salmâni, Muhammad ibn Ḥamzah, whom 'Ali appointed to the judiciary of Kufah after dismissing Sa'eed al-Hamadhâni. He said to him: "Judge as you used to judge." Then he dismissed him and appointed Shurayḥ. Al-Sha'bi said: "Shurayḥ was the most knowledgeable of people about judicial matters, and 'Ubaydah was equal to Shurayḥ in that. He passed some interesting verdicts, and he was one of the well-known scholars of Kufah. Shurayḥ used to consult him and refer to him."³⁷
12. Muhammad ibn Yazeed ibn Khulaydah ash-Shaybâni. 'Ali appointed him as a judge in Kufah, and he issued some verdicts there.³⁸

'Ali's judges in Egypt were also his governors in various cities, because their governorship was general and included ruling,

administration, carrying out ḥadd punishments, leading the prayers, judging, collecting zakâh and other duties.³⁹ ‘Ali (ﷺ) required his governors to be careful in appointing judges, which indicates that he gave them the authority to appoint judges in the land under their rule. Moreover, in most cases, the governors were themselves the judges of the cities in which they lived, but there are reports which mention the names of a number of judges in different cities at the time of ‘Ali (ﷺ), as we have seen above. It seems that the governors of cities had the right to examine appeals made by people against some judicial rulings, primarily those passed by the judges appointed by them and not by the caliph. They also had the right to examine appeals from other cities concerning verdicts given by judges who had been appointed by the caliph, because they had general authority in their provinces;⁴⁰ however, they used to discuss these cases with the caliphs. It is well known that the caliphs would open their doors to anyone who brought a complaint, whether the complaint was against the governors, judges, tax collectors or anyone else.⁴¹

2.4. Judicial style of Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ), his view of verdicts issued before his time, those who were qualified to act as judges and free access to the judiciary system

2.4.1. His preservation of judiciary style

It seems that ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) intended to introduce some changes in the way the judicial system was run and how cases were heard, thinking that this was appropriate due to new developments in the society, but he deferred that until things settled down. It is narrated from him (ﷺ) that he said: “Judge as you used to judge until you are united, for I fear differences.”⁴²

2.4.2. Not nullifying verdicts issued before his time

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) was keen to achieve stability, and he thought that a judge had no right to nullify a verdict issued by another judge. 'Ali had written down the treaty between the people of Najrân and the Prophet (ﷺ), but at the time of 'Umar (عليه السلام), their numbers increased until he feared for the people concerning them. A disagreement arose among them, and they came to 'Umar (عليه السلام) asking for compensation, so he compensated them. Then they regretted it, and something happened among them, so they came to him and asked him to let them off, but he refused to do so. When 'Ali (عليه السلام) became caliph, they came to him and said: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, you interceded for us and wrote a treaty with your right hand." 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "Woe to you! 'Umar was right in what he did."⁴³ I will never undo the verdict of 'Umar."

2.4.3. Qualifications for the position of judge

The judiciary is a public post, so the same conditions are required for a judge as for anyone else who is appointed to a public post over the Muslims, namely being of sound mind, being an adult and being a Muslim. In the case of the judge, it is stipulated that he should have no interest in what people possess, he should be forbearing and not provoked by words, he should not be angered by misbehaviour, and he should be knowledgeable of the rulings of Sharia and of what abrogates and what is abrogated. 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib said to a judge: "Do you know what abrogates and what is abrogated?" He said: "No." He said: "You are doomed and cause others to be doomed."⁴⁴ 'Ali asked him about that because knowledge thereof was not an easy matter at that time.

It is also stipulated that the judge should have knowledge of the verdicts of previous judges, so that he will not drift away from their way and so as to avoid chaos in rulings or things getting out of hand. He should also be humble and should not have any reservations about consulting men of knowledge, reason and wisdom, because this consultation will help him to avoid mistakes in his verdicts. He should be courageous in adhering to the truth, so that he will not delay giving his verdict, even if he angers the people in authority. All of that is summed up in the words of 'Ali (عليه السلام): "The judge cannot be a judge unless he has five qualities: lack of interest in material gain, a forbearing nature, knowledge of what came before him, willingness to consult people of knowledge and wisdom, and not fearing the blame of anyone for the sake of Allah (الله)." ⁴⁵

2.4.4. Location for judgement

The judge should choose a place to hear cases that is located in the middle of the city, so that it will not be difficult for anyone to get there. 'Ali (عليه السلام) told Shurayh, the judge, to sit in the main mosque, ⁴⁶ so that it would be easy for the people to reach him. ⁴⁷

2.4.5. Free access to the judiciary system

Since establishing justice among people is one of the aims of the Islamic state, Islamic law dictates that there should be no barrier between one who has been wronged and restoration of his rights. The two disputants should not have to pay the judge or the state any money in order to obtain the verdict that settles the dispute between them. Rather it is the Islamic state that covers the expenses of the judge and the court. 'Ali (عليه السلام) gave Shurayh a salary in return for serving as a judge; when he appointed him as judge of Kufah, he paid him five hundred dirhams every month. ⁴⁸

2.4.6. Emergence of the idea of lawyers

The idea of lawyers began to emerge at the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. 'Ali (ﷺ) appointed his brother 'Aqeel to represent him in cases, and when 'Aqeel grew too old, he appointed Abdullah ibn Ja'far ibn Abi Ṭālib to appear on his behalf in front of the judges. He used to say: "If the outcome is in favour of my agent, then it is in my favour, and if it is against my agent, then it is against me."⁴⁹

2.5. What is required of the judge

In order to attain justice in rulings, attention must be paid to the following:

2.5.1. Careful study of the case presented

It is not right for the judge to hasten to issue a verdict before examining the case completely and feeling satisfied with the conclusion reached. Hence 'Ali (ﷺ) said to Shurayḥ: "Your tongue is under your control as long as you do not speak, but once you speak you are bound by what you say. So think about what your verdict is, and the basis for your verdict, and how to work out your verdict."⁵⁰

2.5.2. Equal treatment of disputants

'Ali (ﷺ) had a guest who stayed with him for a few days, then he brought a dispute to him. 'Ali (ﷺ) asked him: "Are you a disputant?" He said: "Yes." 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "Then leave us, for we are not allowed to have a disputant staying with us unless his opposite number is with him." (He meant that he was required to treat both of them equally.)⁵¹

2.5.3. Not shouting at the disputants

‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) appointed Abu al-Aswad ad-Du‘ali as a judge. Later, ‘Ali (عليه السلام) dismissed him, so he asked: “Why did you dismiss me when I have never done anything wrong?” He said: “I saw that you raise your voice against two disputants.”⁵²

2.5.4. Keeping away from things that may influence the judge’s verdict

The judge should strive to keep his own inclinations in check, whether these are based on relationships with others, financial factors, hatred or anything else. Ja‘dah ibn Hubayrah came to ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) and said: “O Amir al-Mu‘mineen, two men come to you, and you are dearer to one of them than his own self, but the other would slaughter you if he could — and you pass judgement in favour of the latter?” ‘Ali (عليه السلام) poked him and said: “If it were a personal matter, I would have done (what you think), but my judgement is for the sake of Allah (ﷻ).”⁵³

2.5.5. Consultation

The judge must consult people of knowledge, lest he gave a wrong verdict. ‘Ali (عليه السلام) was one of the members of the consultative committee whom the caliphs were keen to consult when faced with difficult issues. Al-Khaṣṣâf said in *Adab al-Qâḍi* that if the two disputants came to him, ‘Uthmân ibn ‘Affân would tell one of them to call ‘Ali (عليه السلام), and he would tell the other to call Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr or some of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). When they came to him, he would say to them: “Speak.” After they had spoken, he would turn to the Companions and ask: “What do you think?” If they said something that he agreed with, he would give the verdict on that basis and would not discuss the matter further.⁵⁴

3. The Islamic jurisprudence of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام)

3.1. With regard to acts of worship

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام) never spared any effort to explain the rulings on acts of worship to the people, because of what he enjoyed of great abundance of knowledge and understanding of Islam. What he taught the people about the rulings on acts of worship would require many huge volumes;⁵⁵ therefore, we will refer to just a few of his rulings by way of example:

Rulings on purification

1. The urine of a baby girl needs to be washed, and the urine of a baby boy needs only to be sprinkled if he does not yet eat solid food

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "The urine of a baby girl needs to be washed, and the urine of a baby boy needs only to be sprinkled if he does not yet eat solid food."⁵⁶ The evidence for that is that when al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali urinated in the lap of the Prophet (ﷺ), Lubābah bint al-Ḥārith said: "O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), give me your garment and put another on." He (ﷺ) said: "The urine of the male only needs to be sprinkled, whereas the urine of the female needs to be washed."⁵⁷

2. The sleep of one who is sitting up, and the ruling if he breaks wind

'Abdur-Razzâq narrated in his *Muṣannaḥ* that 'Ali, Ibn Mas'ood and aṣḥ-Sha'bi said concerning a man who sleeps while sitting: "He does not have to perform ablution (wuḍū')."⁵⁸ This may be understood as referring to very light sleep or dozing, because

of the hadith by Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه), who said: "The Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to wait for 'ishâ' prayer until they began to nod off; then they would get up and pray, without renewing their ablution." (recorded by Muslim, Ibn Abi Shaybah, Abu Dâwood, ad-Dâraqutni and al-Bayhaqi)

With regard to deep sleep, where one becomes completely unaware of what is happening around one, in that case ablution is essential because the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Whoever sleeps should perform ablution..." This point of fiqh is also indicated by the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "That which seals the back passage (anus) is the eyes; whoever sleeps should perform ablution."⁵⁹

3. Washing off pre-seminal fluid and doing wuḍoo' because of it

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said: "I was a man who had a lot of pre-seminal fluid, so I told a man⁶⁰ to ask the Prophet (ﷺ) — because I was married to his daughter — so he asked him, and he (ﷺ) said: 'Do wuḍoo' and wash your sexual organ.'"⁶¹

4. Reciting Qur'an without the muṣḥaf in whatever state one is in, as long as it is not a state of ritual impurity due to sexual activity or emission

'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه) said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to teach us the Qur'an in whatever state he was in, as long as he was not a state of ritual impurity due to sexual activity or emission."⁶² It was narrated that 'Âmir ash-Sha'bi said: "Recite Qur'an as long as one of you is not in a state of ritual impurity due to sexual activity or emission. If he is in that state, then he should not even read one letter."⁶³

5. Intercourse with a menstruating woman

'Umar (رضي الله عنه) asked 'Ali: "What do you think about a man who has intercourse with his wife when she is menstruating?" He said:

"He does not have to offer expiation, but he has to repent."⁶⁴ The Ummah is unanimously agreed that it is *ḥarām* to have intercourse with a menstruating woman, and there is no difference of opinion,⁶⁵ because Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿They ask you concerning menstruation. Say that is an *Adha* [a harmful thing for a husband to have a sexual intercourse with his wife while she is having her menses], therefore, keep away from women during menses and go not unto them till they are purified [from menses and have taken a bath]. And when they have purified themselves, then go in unto them as Allah has ordained for you.﴾

(*Qur'an* 2: 222)

6. Intimacy with a menstruating woman

'Ali (ﷻ) was asked: "What can you do with your wife if she is menstruating?" He said: "(Be intimate with her) above the waist wrapper."⁶⁶ The evidence for that is that it was narrated that 'Ā'ishah (ﷺ) said: "If one of us was menstruating, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would tell her to wear a waist wrapper, then he would be intimate with her."⁶⁷

Rulings on prayer

1. Qur'an is not to be recited when bowing or prostrating

'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷻ) said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) told me not to recite Qur'an when I was bowing or prostrating."⁶⁸

2. The one who does not pray is a disbeliever

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷻ) was asked: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, what do you think about a woman who does not pray?" He said: "The one who does not pray is a disbeliever."⁶⁹ Abdullah ibn Shaqeeq said: "The Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not think that refraining from any action constituted disbelief except prayer, because it is an act of worship by means of

which one enters Islam, like the testimony of faith, so by not doing it one exits Islam.”⁷⁰ This ruling is supported by the words of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): “Between a man and polytheism and disbelief there stands his giving up prayer.”⁷¹ Imam an-Nawawi said: “The one who does not pray, if he denies that it is obligatory, then he is a disbeliever according to the consensus of the Muslims, and he is beyond the pale of Islam, unless he is new in Islam and has not mixed with Muslims for long enough to have learned that prayer is obligatory for him.”

If he does not pray because he is lazy, although he believes that it is obligatory — as is the case with many people — then the scholars differed concerning him. Mâlik and ash-Shâfa‘i (may Allah have mercy on them) and the majority of the earlier and later scholars were of the view that he is not a disbeliever; rather he is an evildoer who should be asked to repent. If he repents, all well and good; otherwise, he is to be executed as a ḥadd punishment, like the married adulterer, except that he should be killed by the sword. On the other hand, a number of the earlier generations were of the view that he is a disbeliever. This was narrated from ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) and is mentioned in one of the two reports from Aḥmad ibn Hanbal (may Allah have mercy on him). It was also the view of Abdullah ibn al-Mubâarak, Ishâq ibn Râhawayh and some of the followers of ash-Shâfa‘i. Abu Haneefah and a number of the people of Kufah, as well as al-Muzani, the companion of ash-Shâfa‘i, were of the view that he is not a disbeliever and is not to be executed; rather he should be given a disciplinary punishment and imprisoned until he does pray.⁷²

3. Repeating a prayer within its time

If a worshipper prays alone and then repeats the prayer within its time in order to attain the virtue of praying in congregation,⁷³ then the first prayer is regarded as obligatory and the second is regarded as supererogatory, according to ‘Ali (عليه السلام). That was narrated from Ibn

Qudâmah and from al-Hârith from 'Ali (عليه السلام). He said: "His first prayer (was the obligatory one)," ⁷⁴ meaning that the second one was optional in this case. The evidence for that is the report narrated by Abu Dharr, who said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to me: 'How will you be if there are appointed over you rulers who neglect prayer and delay it from its proper time? If you are with them when they pray, pray with them, and that will be a supererogatory prayer for you.'"⁷⁵ The point here is that he called the prayer that is offered with a congregation (in this case) a supererogatory prayer.⁷⁶ But if he repeats the sunset prayer,⁷⁷ he should make it an even number by adding a raka'ah, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام). It was narrated from al-Hârith that if he repeated the sunset prayer, he would make it even by adding a raka'ah.⁷⁸

4. Making up missed prayers

Whoever misses a prayer has to make it up. It is recommended to make it up immediately according to 'Ali (عليه السلام), who said: "If a man sleeps and misses a prayer or forgets a prayer, let him pray when he wakes up or remembers."⁷⁹ The Muslims are unanimously agreed on this, with no difference of opinion.⁸⁰ The evidence for that is the words of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "If one of you sleeps and misses a prayer, or forgets it, let him offer the prayer when he remembers, for Allah (ﷻ) says, ﴿and perform *as-Salâh* [*Iqâmat-as-Salâh*] for My remembrance﴾ (*Qur'an* 20: 14)."⁸¹

5. Taraweeh⁸² prayer

It was narrated from Abu 'Abdur-Rahmân as-Sulami that 'Ali (عليه السلام) led them in praying *qiyâm al-layl*⁸³ in Ramadan.⁸⁴ It was also narrated that Isma'eel ibn Ziyâd said: "'Ali passed by the mosques during the month of Ramadan, and there were lamps in them." He said: "May Allah fill 'Umar's grave with light as he filled our mosques with light."⁸⁵ On this the madh-habs of Ahl as-Sunnah are agreed⁸⁶, and the evidence for that is the report narrated by Abu

Hurayrah, according to which the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whoever prays qiyâm in Ramadan out of faith and in the hope of reward, his previous sins will be forgiven.”⁸⁷ The point here is that taraweeḥ is a kind of qiyâm, so it is Sunnah.⁸⁸ Praying taraweeḥ in congregation is better, according to ‘Ali (عليه السلام), and he used to offer this prayer in congregation.⁸⁹ It was narrated that ‘Arfajah ath-Thaqafi said: “‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib would instruct the people to pray qiyâm in Ramadan and appoint an imam for the men and an imam for the women.” ‘Arfajah said: “I was the imam for the women.”⁹⁰

There is a precedent for taraweeḥ prayer in the actions of the Prophet (ﷺ). It was narrated from ‘Urwah ibn az-Zubayr that ‘Ā’ishah (عليها السلام) told him that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came out in the middle of the night and prayed in the mosque, and some men followed his prayer. The next day, the people were talking about that, then more of them gathered; the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came out on the second night, and they followed his prayer. The next day, the people were talking about that, and the number of people in the mosque increased on the third night. He came out, and they followed his prayer. Then on the fourth night, the mosque could hardly contain the people, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not come out to them until he came out for the dawn prayer. When he had finished the dawn prayer, he turned to the people, recited the testimony of faith, and said: “I was not unaware of your situation last night, but I feared that this prayer might be made obligatory for you, and you would be unable to do it.” When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died, that was how it was.⁹¹

6. Eid prayer in the mosque for the old and weak

When Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib was appointed as caliph and went to Kufah, there were many people in the city, and they said: “O Amir al-Mu’mineen, there are people in this city who are old and weak, and it is hard for them to go out to the desert (for the Eid prayer).” So ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib appointed a man to lead the

people in offering the Eid prayer in the mosque, and he led the people in prayer in the desert outside the city. This was not done previously, but 'Ali (ﷺ) was one of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Adhere to my Sunnah and the way of the Rightly Guided Caliphs after me."⁹² The one who adheres to the way of the Rightly Guided Caliphs has obeyed Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger.⁹³

7. A man washing his wife (after she has died)

It is permissible for a man to wash his wife to prepare her for burial, according to 'Ali (ﷺ), and he washed his wife Fâtimah (may Allah be pleased with them both).⁹⁴ It was narrated that Asma' bint 'Umayy said: "Fâtimah left instructions that when she died, no one was to wash her except 'Ali (ﷺ) and me, so 'Ali and I washed her."⁹⁵ It is also narrated that there was consensus among the Companions on that, because that was well known among them, and no one objected to it.⁹⁶ This was also the view of the majority of scholars, and the evidence for that is the words of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها): "It will not matter if you die before me, for I will take care of you, wash you, shroud you, offer the funeral prayer for you and bury you."⁹⁷

8. The shroud is to be paid for from the wealth of the deceased

The costs of shrouding the deceased are to be taken from his capital if he had any capital, according to 'Ali (ﷺ).⁹⁸ It was narrated from Abdullah ibn aḍ-Ḍumayrah from his father from his grandfather that 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "The shroud is to be paid for from the capital (of the deceased)."⁹⁹ The proof is that when Muṣ'ab ibn 'Umayr was killed on the day of Uhud, "We (the Companions) could not find anything with which to shroud him except a woollen cloak which, if we put it on his head, his feet showed, and if we put it over his feet, his head showed. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Put it over his head, and put some (of a certain kind of) grass on his feet.'"¹⁰⁰ The

point here is that if it was obligatory for the Muslims, he would have taken from the Muslims who were present whatever was needed to shroud him completely.¹⁰¹

9. The shroud of a man and a woman, and not going to extremes in that

It is Sunnah to shroud a man in three pieces of cloth and to shroud a woman in five, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام). That was narrated from him by al-Kasâni and others.¹⁰² Going to extremes in shrouding is detested; according to 'Ali (عليه السلام), this means using more than three pieces of cloth for a man and more than five for a woman.¹⁰³ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "The shroud of a woman is five pieces of cloth, and the shroud of a man is three, and transgress not. Verily, Allah does not like the transgressors"¹⁰⁴.¹⁰⁵

10. Washing and shrouding of the martyr

The martyr is not to be washed or shrouded, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام). That was narrated from him by al-Kasâni and others.¹⁰⁶ It was narrated that he did not wash those who were killed fighting alongside him against those who opposed him, and he did not instruct that they should be shrouded. He buried 'Ammâr (عليه السلام) without washing him.¹⁰⁷ This is the view of the majority of scholars, apart from al-Ḥasan al-Basri and Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyab, whose view is that the deceased is in a state of impurity and needs to be purified by water.¹⁰⁸

Rulings on Zakâh

1. There is no zakâh due on wealth until one full year has passed, according to the Islamic calendar

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) stated that the passing of one full year is a condition of zakâh being obligatory, because it was narrated from him (عليه السلام) that he said: "No zakâh is due on wealth until

one full year has passed.”¹⁰⁹ The passing of a year is one of the conditions of zakâh being due for cash, livestock and trade goods; it is not a condition in the case of crops. There is consensus on this point, and no one differed from that.¹¹⁰

2. The minimum threshold for gold and silver and the rate of zakâh on them

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) stated that the minimum threshold at which zakâh becomes due is twenty *mithqâls*¹¹¹ for gold, and no zakâh is due on anything less than that. If there is more than that, then it should be calculated. He said: “Nothing (no zakâh) is due on anything less than twenty dinars. For twenty dinars (the zakâh is) half a dinar, and for forty dinars it is one dinar, and so on.”¹¹²

He said with regard to the minimum threshold for silver: “There is no zakâh on less than two hundred dirhams.”¹¹³ He also said: “If it reaches two hundred dirhams, then (the zakâh is) five dirhams, and if it is less than two hundred, then nothing is due on it. If it is more than two hundred, it is to be calculated (at that rate).”¹¹⁴

3. Minimum threshold for camels and the rate of zakâh on them

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) said: “For between five and nine camels, the zakâh is one sheep. If it is one more, then two sheep are due, up to fourteen camels. If it is one more, then three sheep are due, up to nineteen camels. If it is one more, then four sheep are due, up to twenty-four camels. If it is one more, then it is five sheep.¹¹⁵ If it is one more, then a female camel in its second year or a male camel in its third year is due, up to thirty-five camels. If it is one more, then a female camel in its third year is due, up to forty-five camels. If it is one more, then a female camel in its fourth year is due, up to sixty. If it is one more, then two female camels in their third year are due, up to ninety. If there are many camels, then

for each fifty, a female camel in its fourth year must be given, and there should be no joining of separate herds and no separating of joined herds (as a trick to pay less zakâh)."¹¹⁶

4. Types of crops on which zakâh is due

According to 'Ali (ؑ), the types of crops on which zakâh is due are wheat, barley, dates and raisins. That was narrated from him by Ibn Hâzim and others.¹¹⁷ 'Ali (ؑ) said: "Zakâh is due on four things: wheat; if there is no wheat then dates; if there are no dates then raisins; and if there are no raisins then barley."¹¹⁸

5. There is no zakâh on vegetables, fruits and honey

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ؑ) said: "There is no zakâh on vegetables."¹¹⁹ According to another report he said: "There is no zakâh on vegetables and herbs."¹²⁰ This is the opinion of the majority of scholars.¹²¹ There is no zakâh on fruit, according to 'Ali (ؑ). It was narrated from Abu Ishâq that 'Ali (ؑ) said: "There is no zakâh on apples and the like."¹²² It was narrated from 'Âṣim ibn Ḍamurah that 'Ali (ؑ) said: "There is no zakâh on vegetables: herbs, apples and cucumbers."¹²³ This is the view of all those who said that the obligation of zakâh is limited to the four types of grains. The evidence for including them under the ruling on vegetables is that they have in common the fact that they do not last and cannot be stored.¹²⁴ With regard to the zakâh on honey, it is not obligatory according to 'Ali (ؑ), as he said: "There is no zakâh on honey."¹²⁵

6. Giving zakâh to one category of recipients only

It is permissible to give zakâh to only one of the eight categories of eligible recipients or to only one person, according to 'Ali (ؑ). He said: "There is nothing wrong with a man sending zakâh to one category of recipients."¹²⁶ It was narrated from him that zakâh was brought to him, and he sent it to the members of one household.¹²⁷

7. Giving zakâh to one's parents or children

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "Neither the son nor the father has any right to obligatory charity. Whoever has a son or father and does not take care of him is a sinner."¹²⁸ It was narrated that there was scholarly consensus on this point; those who disagreed with it interpreted it as referring to voluntary charity. Their argument was that the benefit of that comes back to the giver of the zakâh, because he no longer needs to spend on them or give anything to them, and that may be a trick to avoid giving zakâh. Moreover, zakâh and maintenance are two separate duties, and one cannot take the place of the other, as with prayer and fasting. Zakâh is a duty towards Allah (ﷻ), so it is an act of worship. As for spending on maintenance, it is a duty towards people and upholding the ties of kinship.¹²⁹

Rulings on fasting

1. The beginning of the Ramadan fast may be confirmed with moon sighting by one witness of good character

The beginning of the month of Ramadan may, according to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام), be confirmed with the report of one witness of good character, whereupon the people are obliged to fast. It was narrated from Fâtimah bint al-Ḥusayn that a man bore witness before 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) that he had seen the new moon of Ramadan, so he fasted, and "I (the narrator) think he said: and he ordered the people to fast."¹³⁰ This ruling is based on what is proven from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "Fast when you see it, and break the fast when you see it. If it is cloudy, then reckon the month of Sha'bân¹³¹ as thirty days."¹³²

An-Nawawi said: "What is meant is sighting (of the moon) by some of the Muslims. It is not essential for it to be sighted by everyone; rather it is sufficient for all people if it is seen by two men of good character, or by one man of good character according to the

more correct opinion. With regard to the breaking of the fast, the testimony of one man of good character of having seen the new moon of Shawwâl¹³³ is not sufficient, according to all scholars except Thawr, who said that the testimony of one man of good character is acceptable in this case.”¹³⁴

2. Fasting of one who is in a state of ritual impurity due to sexual activity or emission

Fasting is permissible for one who is in a state of ritual impurity due to sexual activity or emission. According to ‘Ali (عليه السلام), he may delay doing ghusl until morning, then he should do it and complete his fast. That was narrated from him by Ibn Qudâmah. It was also narrated from al-Hârith that ‘Ali (عليه السلام) said: “If morning comes, and a man is in a state of ritual impurity due to sexual activity or emission, but he wants to fast, let him fast if he wishes.”¹³⁵ The evidence for this is the report narrated from the Mothers of the Believers ‘Â’ishah and Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with them both), saying that dawn would come when the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was in this state following relations with his wife, and he would do ghusl and fast.¹³⁶

3. Not fasting for one who is elderly

Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) said, commenting on the verse ﴿And as for those who can fast with difficulty, [e.g. an old man], they have [a choice either to fast or] to feed a *Miskeen* [poor person] [for every day]﴾ (Qur’an 2: 184). The old man who cannot fast may not fast, and he should feed one poor person for each day.¹³⁷

4. The status of *i’tikâf*¹³⁸

It was narrated from Abu ‘Abdur-Rahmân as-Sulami that ‘Ali (عليه السلام) said: “There is no *i’tikâf* except in the mosque in which prayers are held in congregation.”¹³⁹ According to another version: “There is no *i’tikâf* except in the main mosque of the city.”¹⁴⁰ Perhaps what he

meant by that was that i'tikâf should not be done except in the main mosque of the city, in which the Friday congregational prayer is held.¹⁴¹

5. What is permissible for the one who is observing i'tikâf

'Ali (ؓ) said: "When a man is observing i'tikâf, let him attend the Friday congregational prayer, visit the sick, attend funerals and go to his family and tell them what he needs while he is standing."¹⁴²

Rulings on Hajj

1. Pilgrim in ihrâm kissing his wife

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ؓ) said: "Whoever kisses his wife while he is in ihrâm, let him offer a sacrifice."¹⁴³

2. Pilgrim in ihrâm killing a threatening animal

It was narrated from Mujâhid from 'Ali (ؓ) with regard to a hyena that attacks a pilgrim in ihrâm, that he may kill it. If he kills it before it attacks him, though, he must sacrifice a sheep.¹⁴⁴ The evidence for that is the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿But if one is forced by necessity without willful disobedience nor transgressing due limits, then there is no sin on him﴾ (Qur'an 2: 173). This applies to a situation where he is forced by necessity because if he did not kill it, it would kill him. Moreover, when it attacked him, it became a dangerous animal, thus it is included in the category of harmful animals that may be killed.¹⁴⁵

3. Killing crows

'Ali (ؓ) said: "The pilgrim in ihrâm may kill crows."¹⁴⁶ The evidence for that is that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Five kinds of vermin may be killed in the sanctuary: mice, scorpions, crows, kites and vicious dogs."¹⁴⁷

4. Uncertainty in ṭawâf

'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "If you circumambulate the House and do not know whether you have completed it or not, add what you are unsure of, for Allah (ﷻ) will not punish you for doing extra."¹⁴⁸

5. Forgetfulness in ṭawâf

If a man forgets and does a circuit more than what is prescribed, he should add more so as to make it two complete ṭawâfs, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام). 'Ali (عليه السلام) said, concerning a man who forgot and did eight circuits: "Let him add six more, so that it will be fourteen, then let him pray four raka'ahs."¹⁴⁹

6. Delegating Hajj

If a person can afford to do hajj but is unable to do it physically because he is old or sick, he must delegate someone to go on his behalf, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام). That was narrated from him by Ibn Hazm and others.¹⁵⁰ Concerning the old man, he said that he should give another man enough to cover the expenses of hajj and let him do hajj on his behalf.¹⁵¹ The evidence for that is the report narrated by Ibn 'Abbâs, according to which a woman from Khath'am said: "O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), my father is an old man, and he still has to perform the obligation of hajj, but he cannot sit up straight on the back of his camel." The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Perform hajj on his behalf."¹⁵² This indicates that being financially able to afford it is sufficient to make it obligatory to do hajj for one who is accountable, according to 'Ali and those who were with him. As for being physically able, it is sufficient if he is able by means of another person, whether on the basis of paying his expenses or hiring him or by other means.¹⁵³

7. Uncertainty as to the number of stones thrown

If the pilgrim is uncertain as to the number of stones thrown during the symbolic stoning of the devil, he should repeat what he is

unsure of, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام). It was narrated from Abu Majlaz that a man asked Ibn 'Umar: "I stoned the devil, and I do not know whether I threw six or seven." Ibn 'Umar told him: "Go to that man," meaning 'Ali (عليه السلام). The man went and asked him, and 'Ali said: "As for me, if I do that in my prayer, I repeat my prayer." The man came and told him that, and he said: "He is right." The Shaykh said: "It is as if he meant, and Allah knows best, that he should repeat what he is not sure of; so similarly in stoning the devil, he should repeat what he is not sure of."¹⁵⁴

Other rulings

1. Catching up with the dying animal before it dies

If one catches up with an animal that is about to die, shortly before it does die, and slaughters it, it is permissible to eat it. The minimum sign that it was alive before being slaughtered is if one limb was seen to move, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام).¹⁵⁵ He said: "If you find an animal that has been killed by strangling, a violent blow, a headlong fall, or by the goring of horns, or that which has been (partly) eaten by a wild animal, but you see it moving a foreleg or hind leg, then slaughter it and eat."¹⁵⁶ The evidence for that is the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Forbidden to you [for food] are: *al-Maitah* [the dead animals, cattle or beast not slaughtered], blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which Allah's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering [that which has been slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah, or has been slaughtered for idols] and that which has been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by the goring of horns and that which has been [partly] eaten by a wild animal unless you are able to slaughter it [before its death]﴾ (*Qur'an* 5: 3). The point here is that the phrase ﴿unless you are able to slaughter it [before its death]﴾ is an exception to what comes before

it, meaning except that which you are able to catch up with and slaughter (before it dies), in which case it is permissible to eat it.¹⁵⁷

2. Meat slaughtered by Arab Christians

It is not permissible to eat meat slaughtered by Arab Christians, unlike other Christians, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام). That was narrated from him by at-Ṭabari and others.¹⁵⁸ It was narrated that 'Ubaydah as-Salmâni said: "Meat slaughtered by Arab Christians should not be eaten, because they know nothing of Christianity except drinking alcohol."¹⁵⁹ According to another report: "Do not eat meat slaughtered by the Christians of Banu Taghlib, because they do not adhere to anything of Christianity except drinking alcohol."¹⁶⁰ He quoted as evidence for that the fact that they did not adhere to the teachings of Christianity with regard to commands and prohibitions, so they were not to be regarded as being Christians.

However, when Allah (ﷻ) permitted eating meat slaughtered by them, it was a time when the Christians had deviated from the original teachings of Christianity, whether that was with regard to doctrines or rulings, and that did not prevent it being made permissible to eat their meat. This was the view of the majority of the Companions and jurists.¹⁶¹

3. Meat slaughtered for glory

It is *ḥarâm* to eat meat which was slaughtered for glory, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام). It was narrated that al-Jarood ibn Abi Sabrah said: "There was a man from Banu Riyâḥ who was called Ibn Washeel — and his name was Saḥeem — who was a prominent poet. Abu Farazdaq bet him that he could slaughter one hundred of his camels when they came to the watering place outside Kufah. When the camels came, they both took their swords and started to slaughter them. The people came out¹⁶² wanting the meat. 'Ali (عليه السلام) was in Kufah, and he came out riding the mule of the Messenger of Allah

(عليه السلام), calling: 'O people, do not eat this meat, for they were slaughtered as a sacrifice for something other than Allah.'" Ibn Ḥazm said: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "May Allah curse the one who offers a sacrifice to anything other than Allah."¹⁶³ The point here is that the slaughter was for the sake of pride and glory, which meant that it was sacrificed for something other than Allah (ﷻ), so it was included in what was referred to in this hadith.¹⁶⁴

4. Impurity of the egg inside the dead hen

An egg which is inside a dead hen is impure, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام); it is not permissible to eat it whether the shell has hardened or not. That was narrated from him by Ibn Qudâmah.¹⁶⁵

5. Food of the polytheists and Magians other than meat

There is nothing wrong with eating the food of the Magians and polytheists if it does not contain any meat slaughtered by them, because the prohibition applies only to meat. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "There is nothing wrong with eating the food of the Magians. It is only meat slaughtered by them that is forbidden."¹⁶⁶ According to another report: "There is nothing wrong with eating the bread of the Magians. It is only their meat that is forbidden."¹⁶⁷ This is the view of the majority of jurists.¹⁶⁸

6. Leaving white hair

It is permissible to leave one's hair white and not change it by dyeing it with henna and the like, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام). That was narrated from him by Ibn Ḥajar and others.¹⁶⁹ It was narrated that ash-Sha'bi said: "I saw 'Ali with a head of white hair and a white beard that filled the area between his two shoulders."¹⁷⁰ It was narrated from Abu Ishâq: "I saw 'Ali bald and with a white head and beard."¹⁷¹ It was narrated from Ibn al-Ḥaneefah that 'Ali (عليه السلام) dyed his hair with henna once, then stopped.¹⁷²

7. Playing with dice and playing chess

Playing with dice is *ḥarâm*, according to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام), who said: "Playing with two burning coals is dearer to me than playing with two dice."¹⁷³ He would not greet people who were playing with dice.¹⁷⁴ The evidence for this prohibition is the words of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "Whoever plays with dice, it is as if he were dipping his hand in the flesh and blood of a pig."¹⁷⁵

Chess is also *ḥarâm* according to 'Ali (عليه السلام), as was narrated from him by Ibn Qudâmah.¹⁷⁶ He used to say concerning chess: "It is the gambling of the non-Arabs."¹⁷⁷ According to another report: "It is a kind of gambling."¹⁷⁸ It was narrated that Maysarah ibn Ḥabeeb said: "'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) passed by some people who were playing chess and said: 'What are these images to which you are (so assiduously) devoted?'"¹⁷⁹ Holding a coal until it goes out is better for him than touching these."¹⁸⁰ It was narrated that 'Ammâr ibn Abi 'Ammâr said: "'Ali (عليه السلام) passed by a group of (the tribe) Taym-Allah who were playing chess. He stood over them and said: 'Allah created you for something other than this. By Allah, were it not that it would set a precedent, I would hit your faces with it.'"¹⁸¹ The evidence for this prohibition is that it is gambling, which is *ḥarâm* according to the Qur'an and by analogy.¹⁸²

8. Temporary (or fixed-term) marriage

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: Ramadan abrogated all other fasts, and temporary marriage was abrogated by divorce, *'iddah* and inheritance.¹⁸³ 'Ali's evidence for that was the report that he narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ), that he forbade temporary marriage and the flesh of domestic donkeys at the time of Khaybar.¹⁸⁴

9. Marriage without a guardian

It was narrated from Abu Qays al-Awdi that 'Ali (عليه السلام) used to say: "If she gets married without the permission of a guardian, then

he consummates the marriage with her, they are not to be separated, but if he did not consummate the marriage with her, they should be separated.”¹⁸⁵

10. Physical defects in the woman

If the man finds out that there is a defect in the woman he married which makes it difficult for him to stay with her, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: “If he consummated the marriage with her, he must pay the mahr, and he is to be given the choice of either divorcing her or staying with her. If he has not consummated the marriage with her, they may be separated without any mahr.”¹⁸⁶

11. Marriage of a eunuch

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: “It is not permissible for a eunuch to get married.” If he gets married, and the woman did not know, they should be separated according to 'Ali (عليه السلام), who said: “It is not permissible for the eunuch to marry a chaste Muslim woman.”¹⁸⁷ The evidence for that is that being a eunuch is an off-putting defect which makes it difficult or impossible to have intercourse, so an analogy was drawn with other physical faults which make it permissible to separate the couple.¹⁸⁸

12. One who gets married to two sisters without knowing that they are sisters

If a man marries a woman then marries another, and later he finds out that they are sisters, he should be separated from the one he married last, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام). It was narrated that Ibn Jurayj said: “I was told about 'Ali, with regard to a man who married a woman and consummated the marriage with her, then went to another city and married a woman and consummated the marriage with her, then found out that this was the sister of his first wife. He ruled that he should leave the second one and go back to the first one, but he should not go back to the first one until the 'iddah of the

second one was over.”¹⁸⁹ This is the view of the majority of jurists of different madh-habs.¹⁹⁰ Their evidence is that the marriage to the first woman was valid, whereas the marriage to the second woman was not valid and did not count.¹⁹¹

13. Prohibition on anal intercourse with one's wife

Anal intercourse with one's wife is ḥarām, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام). This was narrated from him by Ibn Qudāmah.¹⁹² It was narrated that Abu al-Mu'tamir said: “'Ali called out from the minbar, saying: 'Ask me.' A man said: 'Can one have anal intercourse with women?' He said: 'You have sunk very low, may Allah (ﷻ) bring you low. Have you not seen that Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿You commit *al-Fāhishah* [sodomy — the worst sin] which none has preceded you in [committing] it in the *Ālameen* [mankind and jinn]﴾ (Qur'an 29: 28)?” That was also narrated from Abdullah ibn 'Abbās, Abdullah ibn 'Amr and Abu Hurayrah; and it was the view of Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyab, Abu Bakr ibn 'Abdur-Raḥmān, Mujāhid and 'Ikrimah. It was also the view of Abu Haneefah, ash-Shāfa'ī, Aḥmad, the Mālikis and the Dhāhiris (the literalists).¹⁹³ The evidence for this prohibition is the words of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): “Cursed be the one who has anal intercourse with his wife.”¹⁹⁴ The point here is that disallowing a thing, and stating that the one who does it is cursed, indicates that it is ḥarām.¹⁹⁵

14. 'Iddah of a pregnant woman whose husband has died

If a woman is pregnant when her husband dies, and she gives birth before the end of her 'iddah, then according to 'Ali (عليه السلام) she should observe 'iddah for the longer period, meaning the 'iddah of pregnancy, if she does not give birth before the end of the 'iddah of the widow. However, if she gives birth before that, she should observe 'iddah for four months and ten days (the 'iddah of the widow). That was narrated from Ibn Rushd and others.¹⁹⁶ It was narrated that 'Abdur-Raḥmān ibn Ma'qil said: “I was present when a

man asked 'Ali about a woman whose husband died when she was pregnant. He said: 'She should observe 'iddah for the longer period.'"¹⁹⁷ It was narrated that ash-Sha'bi used to say: "The 'iddah of the pregnant woman is the longer of the two periods."¹⁹⁸ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) reconciled the two verses: ﴿And for those who are pregnant [whether they are divorced or their husbands are dead], their 'Iddah [prescribed period] is until they lay down their burden﴾ (*Qur'an* 65: 4) and ﴿And those of you who die and leave wives behind them, they [the wives] shall wait [as regards their marriage] for four months and ten days﴾ (*Qur'an* 2: 234), because one verse is general in meaning and the other is more specific, so there is no reason to apply one to the exclusion of the other. Both should be applied together, so as to be certain and to reconcile them and avoid contradiction.¹⁹⁹

The more correct view is that her 'iddah ends when her pregnancy ends, in either case. It is narrated in a sound report from Abdullah ibn 'Utbah that Subay'ah bint al-Hârith told him that she was married to Sa'd ibn Khawlah, one of Banu 'Âmir ibn Lu'ayy, who was one of those who had been present at Badr. He died during the farewell pilgrimage when she was pregnant, and she gave birth shortly after he died. When her period of post-childbirth bleeding ended, she adorned herself to receive offers of marriage. Abu as-Sanâbil ibn Ba'kak, a man from Banu 'Abdud-Dâr, entered upon her and said to her: "Why do I see you beautified? Perhaps you are hoping to get married? By Allah, you will not get married until four months and ten days have passed!" Subay'ah said: "When he said that to me, I put on my outer garments in the evening and went to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and I asked him about that, and he answered me that my 'iddah had ended when I gave birth, and he told me to get married if I wanted to."²⁰⁰

This is the view of the majority of Muslim scholars. It was said that there was consensus on this point after this hadith was heard.²⁰¹ Al-Sha'bi said: "I do not believe that 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) said

that the 'iddah of a woman whose husband dies is the longer of the two periods."²⁰² Perhaps 'Ali (عليه السلام) said that because he had not heard the hadith of Subay'ah, otherwise he would not have gone against a proven, sound hadith from the Prophet (ﷺ).²⁰³

Some rulings having to do with financial dealings

1. Gifts from the ruler

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "There is nothing wrong with gifts from the ruler, because what he gives you from ḥalâl sources is more than what he gives you from ḥarâm sources."²⁰⁴ He also said: "Do not ask the ruler for anything. If he gives you something, then take it, for what is in the public treasury of ḥalâl wealth is more than what is in it of ḥarâm wealth."²⁰⁵

2. Gifts to undo injustice and attain rights

If a person helps someone to attain his rights or to ward off injustice, it is not permissible for him to accept a gift from the person he helped or from whom he warded off injustice, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام). That was narrated from him by Ibn Ḥazm.²⁰⁶

3. Not holding the borrower responsible for damage done to a borrowed item

The borrower is not to be held responsible for damage done to the borrowed item if it was damaged without any abuse or transgression (on the borrower's part) according to 'Ali (عليه السلام).²⁰⁷ 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "The borrower is not to be held responsible for the borrowed item; rather it was a favour, unless the borrower overstepped the mark, in which case he is to be held responsible."²⁰⁸

4. Not holding a person responsible for an item deposited with him

An item deposited with a person is a trust entrusted to him. If it is damaged when it is with him, without any betrayal or misconduct

on his part, then he is not to be held responsible for it according to 'Ali (ﷺ). He (ﷺ) said: "The borrower or person to whom something is entrusted is not to be held responsible."²⁰⁹

5. Selling booty to the disbelievers

If the Muslims capture the wealth of the disbelievers as war booty, it is not permissible to sell it back to the same disbelievers, according to 'Ali (ﷺ). It was narrated that Umm Moosa said: "A vessel adorned with gold was brought to 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib; it was one of the vessels of the Persians. He wanted to break it down and divide it among the Muslims, but some of the chieftains said: 'If you break it, it will lose its value. We will pay you a good price for it.' 'Ali (ﷺ) said: 'I will not return to you wealth that Allah has taken away from you.' Then he broke it down and divided it among the people."²¹⁰ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) did that so that it would not remind them of their past glory or bring any benefit back to them.

6. Holding workers responsible

Holding the workers accountable is necessary to protect people's wealth from being wasted. Al-Shâṭibi said: "The Rightly Guided Caliphs ruled that workers should be held accountable. 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) said: 'This is the only way to protect people's interests.'"²¹¹ One of the aims of Sharia is to protect wealth from being wasted.²¹² In *Muṣannaf 'Abdur-Razzâq* it says that 'Ali (ﷺ) held tailors, dyers and workers in similar trades responsible, so as to protect the people.²¹³

7. The covenant with dhimmis,²¹⁴ and not being harsh when collecting the jizyah from them

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "Nothing will be accepted from the polytheists of the Arabs except Islam or the sword. As for the polytheists of the non-Arabs, jizyah may be taken from them. As for the People of the Book, both Arabs and non-Arabs, if they refuse

to become Muslim and ask to be dhimmis, we will accept jizyah from them.”²¹⁵ It was also narrated from 'Ali (عليه السلام) that he said: “They only accepted the covenant of dhimmis so that their wealth would be like our wealth and their blood would be like our blood.”²¹⁶ 'Ali used kindness in the way he took the jizyah, and he was lenient in the way he calculated it. It was narrated that 'Abdul-Malik ibn 'Umayr said: “A man from Thaqeef told me: “'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib employed me and said: “Do not strike any man with a whip when you are collecting tax money, do not force them to sell provision or winter garments or summer garments, do not take blood money that they are collecting to pay, do not appoint a man for the purpose of pressuring people to pay money.” I said: “O Amir al-Mu'mineen, then I will come back as I left.” He said: “Even if you come back as you left; we are only instructed to take from them what is surplus to their needs.””²¹⁷

3.2. Hadd punishments

3.2.1. Punishment of the apostate

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: “The apostate is to be asked to repent three times. If he repents (all is well and good), otherwise he is to be executed.”²¹⁸ The evidence for executing him is the report narrated by Ibn 'Abbâs that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whoever changes his religion, execute him.”²¹⁹ The evidence for asking him to repent is the report narrated from Jâbir ibn Abdullah, according to which the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) asked a man who had apostatised from Islam to repent four times.²²⁰

Two opinions were narrated from 'Ali (عليه السلام) concerning the hypocritical heretic who made an outward display of being Muslim while inwardly concealing disbelief:

- (a) When asking an apostate to repent, no differentiation is to be made between the one who manifests his apostasy openly and a

hypocritical heretic, who makes an outward display of being Muslim when inwardly he is a disbeliever, if proof of that had been established against him.²²¹ 'Abdur-Razzâq narrated that Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr wrote to 'Ali (عليه السلام) about two Muslims who became hypocritical heretics, and he wrote back saying: "If they repent (all well and good); otherwise strike their necks (execute them)."²²²

- (b) The one who manifests his apostasy openly should be asked to repent, whereas the hypocritical heretic should not be asked to repent. Al-Athram narrated, with his chain of narration going back to 'Ali (عليه السلام), that an Arab man who had become Christian was brought to him. He asked him to repent, but he refused, so he executed him. Then a group of people who prayed but were hypocritical heretics were brought to him, and proof was established against them by witnesses of sound character. They denied it and said: "We have no religion other than Islam." He executed them and did not ask them to repent. He said: "Do you know why I asked the Christian to repent? I asked him to repent because he showed his religion openly. As for the hypocritical heretics against whom proof was established, I executed them because they denied it when proof had been established against them."²²³

With regard to a woman who becomes an apostate, two views were narrated from 'Ali (عليه السلام) concerning her case:

- (a) There is no difference between her and a man with regard to the ruling that they should be executed. This opinion was also narrated from Abu Bakr (عليه السلام), and it was the view of al-Hasan, az-Zuhri, an-Nakha'i, Makḥool, Hammâd, Mâlik, al-Layth, al-Awzâ'i, ash-Shâfa'i and Ishâq.²²⁴
- (b) A woman is to be enslaved and not executed. This was the view of al-Hasan²²⁵ and Qatâdah, because Abu Bakr (عليه السلام) enslaved

the women and children of Banu Haneefah and gave one of these women to 'Ali (ﷺ), who bore him Muhammad ibn al-Hanafīyyah. That was done in the presence of the Companions, and there was no objection, which means that there was consensus on that.²²⁶ The story about 'Ali sending word to Bani Nājiyah, which we will discuss below, also provides evidence to support this view. In that case, 'Ali (ﷺ) executed the men of fighting age and took the women and children captive.²²⁷

Amir al-Mu'mineen executed apostates in different ways according to the circumstances in each case. One way was to strike the neck with the sword (beheading), as in the response of 'Ali ibn Abi Tālib (ﷺ) to Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr when he asked him about two Muslims who had become hypocritical heretics. He said: "As for the two who have become hypocritical heretics, if they repent (all is well and good); otherwise strike their necks."²²⁸

One of the aims of Sharia is to protect the religion, and executing the apostate offers protection to people of religious commitment. We have noted the keenness of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (may Allah be pleased with them) to implement the rulings of Allah (ﷻ) with regard to those who follow whims and desires and those who oppose or rebel against religion, and to carry out appropriate punishments on them. One of the most important of these rulings is fighting against and executing the apostates. The Rightly Guided Caliphs did this, implementing the words of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "...it is not permissible to shed the blood of a Muslim who bears witness that there is no god except Allah, except in three cases: the married adulterer, a life for a life and the one who gives up his religion and forsakes the main body of the Muslims."²²⁹

Ibn Taymiyah said: "If the apostate is not executed, then you will find those who entered religion exiting from it. So executing him offers protection to people of religious commitment, and that protects

against the undermining of Islam and prevents them from leaving it.”²³⁰

3.2.2. Hadd punishment for zina

3.2.2.a. The story of stoning

Aṣḥ-Sha‘bi said: “Shurāḥah had a husband who was absent in Syria, and she got pregnant. Her master brought her to Amir al-Mu‘mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام) and said: ‘This woman committed adultery and admitted it.’ So he gave her one hundred lashes on Thursday and stoned her on Friday. A hole was dug for her up to her navel, and I was present, then he said: ‘Stoning is a ruling established by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). If there is a witness who accused her, he would be the first one to throw a stone. Since she admitted it, I will be the first one to stone her.’ Then the people stoned her, and I was among them, and by Allah, I was among those who killed her.” According to the version narrated by Aḥmad and Bukhari, ‘Ali (عليه السلام) said: “I flogged her in accordance with the Book of Allah (ﷻ), and I stoned her in accordance with the ruling of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).”²³¹ This judicial ruling was the personal view (ijtihād) of ‘Ali (عليه السلام), and there is a difference of opinion concerning it among the jurists. The majority are of the view that lashes and stoning should not be combined.²³²

According to another report, a hole was dug for her to her navel, and the people formed a circle around her, but (‘Ali) struck them with his stick and said: “This is not how stoning is done, for if you do it this way, you will shed one another’s blood. Rather you should form rows as for prayer.” Then he said: “O people, the first of the people to stone the adulterer should be the ruler, if there was a confession. If four witnesses testified to adultery, then the first of the people to stone him or her should be the witnesses who testified to that, then the ruler, then the people.” He threw a stone at her and said takbeer, then he ordered those in the first row to throw their stones

and then depart, and it carried on like that, row by row, until they killed her.²³³

3.2.2.b. Delaying stoning for one who is pregnant

If it is proven that a pregnant woman committed adultery, the ḥadd punishment is not to be carried out on her until after she gives birth, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام).²³⁴ It was narrated from him (عليه السلام) that he said: "A servant woman of the Prophet (ﷺ) committed an immoral action, and he ordered me to carry out the ḥadd punishment on her. But I found that her postchildbirth bleeding had not yet ended, so I came and told him, and he said: 'When her postpartum bleeding stops, then carry out the ḥadd punishment. Carry out the ḥadd punishment on those whom your right hands possess (meaning slave women).'"²³⁵ 'Ali implemented this ruling during his caliphate.

3.2.2.c. A woman who is forced to commit zina through being raped

There is no ḥadd punishment for the woman who was forced to commit zina by being raped, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام). A woman who was raped is entitled to a mahr equivalent to that of her peers,²³⁶ whether she is a virgin or has been married before.²³⁷

3.2.2.d. Zina in a case where a woman is forced into it by circumstances

If a woman is forced into committing zina in order to save her life, and she cannot ward off death except by means of that, the ḥadd punishment is waived, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام).²³⁸ According to a report, a woman came to 'Umar (عليه السلام) and said: "I committed zina, so stone me." He sent her away until she had testified four times, then he ordered that she be stoned. 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, bring her back and ask her why she committed zina. Perhaps she had a reason." So he brought her back and said: "Why did you commit zina?" She said: "My family had some camels, and I

took my family's camels out. We had a partner, and he came out with his camels. I had water with me, but there was no milk in my camels; our partner brought water, and there was milk in his camels. My water ran out, and I asked him for water, but he refused to give me any unless I let him have his way with me. I refused until I almost died, then I gave him what he wanted." 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "Allâhu akbar, if one is forced by necessity without wilful disobedience nor transgressing due limits, then there is no sin on him."²³⁹ I think she has an excuse."²⁴⁰ So 'Umar (عليه السلام) gave her something and let her go.²⁴¹

The jurists mentioned this incident as an example of one who is forced into zina, and they did not differ concerning the view that the ḥadd punishment is to be waived in cases where a woman is forced.²⁴² Physical force, or rape, is different from compulsion; in the case of compulsion, a person goes ahead with the action by choice. In the case of rape, the person is forced to do the action by violent means. This is based on the fact that Allah (ﷻ) mentions physical force separately from compulsion, as in the verses, ﴿And force not your maids to prostitution﴾ (*Qur'an* 24: 33) and ﴿But if one is forced [compelled] by necessity without wilful disobedience nor transgressing due limits, then there is no sin on him.﴾ (*Qur'an* 2: 173)

'Ali (عليه السلام) quoted the second of these verses as evidence. The point here is that being compelled in order to save one's life means that the punishment in the hereafter is waived, so waiving the worldly punishment is more appropriate with regard to sin against Allah (ﷻ). Thus it may be understood that with regard to this case, 'Ali (عليه السلام) followed the principle which says that necessity makes what is forbidden permissible.²⁴³

3.2.2.e. Not implementing ḥadd punishments when there is doubt

Hudood punishments should not be carried out when there is doubt, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام). It was narrated from aḍ-Ḍaḥḥâk ibn

Muzâhim that 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "If, with regard to carrying out a ḥadd punishment, the story involves 'perhaps' and 'maybe', then the ḥadd punishment is to be cancelled."²⁴⁴ It was narrated from 'Ali (عليه السلام) that a woman came to him and said: "I have committed adultery." He said: "Perhaps someone came to you when you were sleeping in your bed, or maybe you were forced to do it?" She said: "I did it willingly and was not forced." He said: "Perhaps you were raped." She said: "I was not raped." So he detained her, and after she was released and her son grew up, he had her flogged.²⁴⁵ Her punishment was flogging because she was not married.

3.2.2.f. Adultery of the Christian woman

If a Christian woman commits adultery, she should not be subjected to the ḥadd punishment. According to 'Ali (عليه السلام), she should be handed over to her coreligionists so that they may punish her in accordance with their religion.²⁴⁶ It was narrated from Qaboos ibn Mukhâriq that Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr wrote to 'Ali (عليه السلام), asking him about a Muslim man who committed zina with a Christian woman. 'Ali (عليه السلام) wrote back to him: "As for the Muslim, carry out the ḥadd punishment on him, and hand over the Christian woman to her coreligionists."²⁴⁷ Carrying out the ḥadd punishment for zina is an act of worship and includes purification from sin, and that is not appropriate for one who is not a Muslim.

3.2.2.g. The ḥadd punishment is expiation of sin for the one on whom it is carried out, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام)

It was narrated from Abu Layla that a man from Hudhayl, which is regarded as being from Quraysh, said: "I heard 'Ali (عليه السلام) say: 'If a person does an evil action and the ḥadd punishment is carried out on him, that is expiation.'"²⁴⁸ According to another report from him: "I was with 'Ali (عليه السلام) when Shurâḥah was stoned. I said: 'She has died in the worst situation.' He struck me with a stick or a whip that was in his hand and hurt me. I said: 'You hurt me.' He said:

‘I meant to hurt you. She will never be asked about this sin of hers again; it is like a debt that has been paid off.’”²⁴⁹ The evidence for the view of Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) is the hadith of ‘Ubâdah ibn as-Ŝâmit: “We were with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in a gathering, and he said: ‘Whoever does any of that and is punished for it, it is an expiation for him; whoever does any of that and Allah (ﷻ) conceals it for him, then it is up to Allah. If He wills, He will pardon him and if He wills, He will punish him.’”²⁵⁰

One of the aims of Sharia is to protect honour and lineage. Not protecting them results in evils that occur because of neglect and transgression. The wars, fighting, mischief, mixing of lineage and stopping of bloodlines that happen as a result of that are well-known, because the one who commits zina is not seeking progeny; rather he is seeking immediate pleasure. If there was no chastity or protection, people would no longer be interested in marriage, immorality would become widespread, and the crime of zina would become common, along with what results from it of corruption, ill health, calamities, disasters and trials. Even if nothing else were narrated concerning this except the following verse of the Qur’an, that would be sufficient: ﴿And come not near to unlawful sex. Verily, it is a *Fâhishah* [i.e. anything that transgresses its limits: a great sin], and an evil way that leads one to hell unless Allah forgives him.﴾ (Qur’an 17: 32)²⁵¹ Hence Islam brought binding laws to protect honour and lineage, and the Rightly Guided Caliphs (may Allah be pleased with them) applied these laws.

3.2.3. The ḥadd punishment for drinking alcohol

3.2.3.a. Drinking alcohol in Ramadan

It was narrated from ‘Ata’ from his father that ‘Ali (عليه السلام) flogged the poet an-Najâshi al-Ĥârithi, who drank alcohol in Ramadan. He gave him eighty lashes then detained him. The next

day, he brought him out and gave him twenty lashes, then he said to him: "I only gave you these twenty lashes because of your lack of shame before Allah (ﷻ) in breaking the fast in Ramadan."²⁵²

3.2.3.b. If death occurs when carrying out the ḥadd punishment for drinking alcohol

It was narrated that 'Ali (ﷻ) said: "There is no man on whom I carry out a ḥadd punishment and he dies that I feel bad about, except in the case of alcohol. If he dies, I will pay compensation (blood money), because the Prophet (ﷺ) did not prescribe it."²⁵³

The rulings of Islam came to protect the reason and intellect with which Allah (ﷻ) honoured man, and Islam forbade alcohol, which takes away man's reason, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! Intoxicants [all kinds of alcoholic drinks], and gambling, and Al-Ansâb [stone altars for sacrifices to idols, etc], and al-Azlâm [arrows for seeking luck or decision] are an abomination of Satan's handiwork. So avoid [strictly all] that [abomination] in order that you may be successful. Satan wants only to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants [alcoholic drinks] and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah and from aṣ-Ṣalâh [the prayer]. So, will you not then abstain?﴾ (Qur'an 5: 90-91)

In this regard, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Every intoxicant is *khamr*,²⁵⁴ and all *khamr* is ḥarâm."²⁵⁵ Hence it is prescribed to carry out the ḥadd punishment on the drunkard, and drugs and relaxants which affect the soundness of the mind are forbidden.²⁵⁶

Protection of the mind and reason is one of the aims of Sharia. Protecting them leads to protecting the other necessities of Sharia, and failing to protect them leads to innumerable evils.²⁵⁷

3.2.4. The ḥadd punishment for stealing

3.2.4.a. Stipulation that the item should be in a place where it is usually put away

For the hand of the thief to be cut off, it is stipulated that the stolen property should have been taken from a place where such items are usually put away, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام). It was narrated from Dumayrah that 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "The hand of the thief is not to be cut off unless he takes the goods from the house."²⁵⁸

3.2.4.b. Theft of items whose ownership is in doubt

If a thief stole property whose ownership was in doubt, such as if he has a share in it, his hand is not cut off, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام).²⁵⁹ It was narrated that Zayd ibn Dithâr said: "A man who had stolen from the one-fifth share of the war booty was brought to 'Ali. The man said that he had a share in it, so 'Ali did not cut off his hand." It was also narrated from ash-Sha'bi that 'Ali (عليه السلام) used to say: "The hand of one who steals from the public treasury is not to be cut off."²⁶⁰

3.2.4.c. Stealing a free person

The person who steals a child who is free should have his hand cut off, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام). It was narrated from Ibn Jurayj that 'Ali (عليه السلام) cut off the hand of someone who sold a free person, and he said: "The free person can never be a slave."²⁶¹ A person is more precious and valuable than property, so it is more appropriate to cut off the hand with regard to stealing a person."²⁶²

3.2.4.d. A slave stealing from his master

The hand of the slave who steals from his master is not to be cut off, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام). It was narrated from al-Ḥakam that 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "If a slave stole from my property, I would not cut off his hand."²⁶³

3.2.4.e. Proof of theft

It was narrated by Ibn Qudâmah²⁶⁴ that according to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام), theft is proven by the testimony of two witnesses or if the thief confesses twice. It was narrated that 'Ikrimah ibn Khâlid said: " 'Ali did not cut off the hand of a thief unless witnesses were brought and gave testimony. In the meantime, he would detain the accused; if they testified against him, he would cut off his hand, but if they did not give testimony, he would let him go. On one occasion, a thief was brought to him, and he imprisoned him until the next day, when he summoned him and the two witnesses. It was said that one of the witnesses did not show up, so he let the thief go and did not cut off his hand."²⁶⁵ It was narrated from al-Qâsim ibn 'Abdur-Rahmân from his father that a man came to 'Ali and said: "I have stolen." He rebuked him and reviled him, then he said: "I have stolen." 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "Cut off his hand, for he has testified against himself twice." And I saw his hand hung from his neck.²⁶⁶

3.2.4.f. Finding out about the thief before he steals

The hand of the thief is not to be cut off if he is caught before he takes the goods out of the place where they are stored, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام). It was narrated from al-Ḥârith that a man was brought to 'Ali (عليه السلام) who had broken into a house but he had been caught at that point, so his hand was not cut off.²⁶⁷ There is another version of this report which adds that he was flogged as a disciplinary punishment.²⁶⁸

3.2.4.g. Repeated theft

The first time a person steals, his right hand is to be cut off. If he steals again, his left foot is to be cut off. Then if he steals a third or fourth time, he is to be given a disciplinary punishment, but his other hand and foot are not to be cut off, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام). That was

narrated from him by Ibn al-Mundhir and others.²⁶⁹ It was narrated from Abdullah ibn Salamah that a thief was brought to 'Ali (عليه السلام), and he cut off his hand. Then he was brought to him again, and he cut off his foot. Then he was brought to him again, and he said: "Shall I cut off his hand? How will he wipe himself (after relieving himself) and how will he eat?" Then he said: "Shall I cut off his foot? How will he walk? I feel shy before Allah." Then he had him beaten and flogged and imprisoned.²⁷⁰ It was narrated that al-Mugheerah and ash-Sha'bi said: "'Ali used to say: If a thief steals several times, I will cut off his hand and foot; then if he does it again, I will put him in prison."²⁷¹ And it was narrated that ash-Sha'bi said: "'Ali only cut off one hand and one foot. If the thief stole again after that, he would be imprisoned and subjected to corporal punishment. And 'Ali used to say: 'I feel too shy before Allah not to leave him a hand with which to eat and clean himself (after relieving himself).'"²⁷²

3.2.4.h. Cutting off the hand and hanging it

It is recommended to cauterise the arm and to hang the severed hand from the neck of the person who has been punished, according to 'Ali.²⁷³ It was narrated from Hajjiyyah ibn 'Adiy that 'Ali would cut off the hand, cauterise the arm and detain the thief. When the thieves had recovered, he would send for them and bring them out, then he would say: "Raise your hands to Allah," and they would raise them. Then he would say: "Who cut off your hands?" They would say: "'Ali." He said: "Why?" They said: "Because we stole." And he would say: "O Allah, bear witness; O Allah, bear witness."²⁷⁴ The arm was cauterised so as to stop bleeding and so that it would heal quickly, and for fear of infection that might affect the body and cause death.²⁷⁵

One of the aims of Islamic Sharia is to protect people's wealth, which is essential to their lives. Islam forbids every means of taking people's wealth unlawfully; it forbids stealing and imposes the ḥadd

punishment on anyone who is proven to have committed this crime. Allah (ﷻ) says: «And [as for] the male thief and the female thief, cut off [from the wrist joint] their [right] hands as a recompense for that which they committed, a punishment by way of example from Allah» (Qur'an 5: 38). The Rightly Guided Caliphs (may Allah be pleased with them) carried out these rulings.

3.3. Just retaliation and bodily harm

Islamic Sharia brought rulings on just retaliation, in order to protect life and ward off evils that result from widespread ḥarâm killing and bloodshed. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«O you who believe! *Al-Qiṣâṣ* [the Law of Equality in punishment] is prescribed for you in case of murder.» (Qur'an 2: 178)

«And there is [a saving of] life for you in *al-Qiṣâṣ* [the Law of Equality in punishment], O men of understanding.» (Qur'an 2: 179)

«And whoever is killed wrongfully [*Mazlûman* intentionally with hostility and oppression and not by mistake], We have given his heir the authority [to demand *Qiṣâṣ*, — Law of Equality in punishment — or to forgive, or to take *Diyah* (blood money)]. But let him not exceed limits in the matter of taking life [i.e. he should not kill except the killer]. Verily, he is helped [by the Islamic law].» (Qur'an 17: 33)

The following are some issues having to do with the rulings on murder, retaliation and bodily harm:

3.3.1. When a number of people take part in the murder

If a group of people take part in murdering a person, then they are all to be executed for it, according to 'Ali (ﷺ).²⁷⁶ It was narrated

that he executed three people who killed one man.²⁷⁷

3.3.2. One who orders his slave to kill someone

If a master orders his slave to kill a man and the slave does so, then the master is to be executed and the slave is to be imprisoned, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام). That was narrated by Ibn al-Mundhir and others.²⁷⁸ It was narrated from Khallâs that a man ordered his slave to kill a man, and 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "He (the slave) is like his whip or his sword."²⁷⁹ According to another report: "If a man orders his slave to kill a man, he is like his sword or his whip; the master is to be executed, and the slave is to be imprisoned."²⁸⁰

3.3.3. One who was killed because of crowding

If a person is killed because of crowding, and it is not known who killed him, his compensation is to be paid from the public treasury of the Muslims, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام).²⁸¹ It was narrated from Yazeed ibn Madhkoor al-Hamadâni that a man was killed in the mosque on Friday when it was crowded, and 'Ali (عليه السلام) paid his indemnity from the public treasury.²⁸²

3.3.4. Damage caused by one who is driving, leading or riding an animal

There are two reports from 'Ali (عليه السلام) with regard to this issue. The first report says that the one who is driving, leading or riding an animal is liable if the animal steps on or kicks someone or something; he blamed the person for negligence, not being careful and not paying attention.²⁸³ It was narrated from Khallâs that 'Ali (عليه السلام) held accountable the one who was leading, driving or riding the animal.²⁸⁴ The evidence he gave is that the one who is riding is directly responsible for the damage because the animal is like a tool in his hand. As for the ones who were driving or leading an animal, they are

the cause and are liable because they did not take care to avoid causing bodily harm when driving or leading.²⁸⁵

The second report says that they are not held accountable if it is proven that they were not negligent, as it was narrated that 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "If he shouted out to people to give way, and made people hear him, then he is not liable."²⁸⁶ It was also narrated that he said: "If the road was wide, then he is not liable."²⁸⁷ The evidence is that if the road was wide, and he shouted to alert passers-by, then he was taking precautions and being careful. If the passers-by did not pay attention to that, then it is their fault; if they were harmed, then they brought it upon themselves, so there is no protection for them. There is no contradiction between the two reports, because the first report refers to a case in which it is proven that there was negligence, and the second report refers to a case where there was no negligence.²⁸⁸ The burden of proof of negligence is on the passers-by.

3.3.5. Whatever is established unlawfully and causes damage

If a person digs a well or lays something down or builds something in a place where he has no right to do that, and it causes damage to someone, such as if that person falls into a well or stumbles over what he lay down and dies, then he is liable, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام)²⁸⁹ who said: "If a person digs a well or lays down a beam and someone gets hurt, then he is liable."²⁹⁰

3.3.6. Errors in testimony

If there is an error in testimony, then the witness is liable, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام). He said that if a person mistakenly gives wrong testimony in a case involving a ḥadd punishment or retaliation, and it leads to loss of life or limb, then he is liable and must pay compensation.²⁹¹ It was narrated from 'Ali (عليه السلام), via a number of chains of narration, that two men testified that a man had

stolen something, so 'Ali (ﷺ) cut off his hand. The next day, another man was brought, and they said: "We made a mistake with the first man. This is the one who did it." He regarded their testimony against the second man as invalid, and he penalised them by making them pay the compensation for the first man.²⁹² The reason for that is that they caused loss of limb, and the fact that they caused it dictated that they were liable, like one who digs a well in the road.²⁹³ According to another report, he said: "If you had done that deliberately, I would have cut off your hands."

3.3.7. When a number of people kill one another by mistake

If a number of people kill one another by mistake, responsibility for the harm caused is shared among all of them, each one according to his actions, taking out what the deceased brought upon himself.²⁹⁴ It was narrated that Khallâs said: "A man hired four men to dig a ditch for him; they dug it, then it collapsed on them, and one of them died. The case was referred to 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ), and he imposed three-quarters of the indemnity on them, taking out one-quarter of it."²⁹⁵

3.3.8. One who employs a minor or a slave without permission

If a person employs a minor without the permission of his guardian, or a slave without the permission of his master, to do some task, or he makes him ride a mount, and he dies as a result of that, then he is liable, according to 'Ali (ﷺ). It was narrated that al-Hakam said: "Ali (ﷺ) said: 'The one who employs the slave of some people, whether he is old or young, is liable.'"²⁹⁶ He (ﷺ) also said: "Whoever seeks the help of a child who is free is liable, but whoever seeks the help of an adult is not liable."²⁹⁷

3.3.9. Non-physical actions

Non-physical actions, such as scaring or terrifying a person and the like, incur criminal responsibility if they result in death or harm to a person, according to 'Ali.²⁹⁸ It was narrated that Ibn Jurayj said: "I said to 'Ata': 'A man called out to a boy who was standing on a wall, saying that he should move back, and the boy fell and died.' He said: 'They narrated that 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "He is to be held liable. He scared him."'"²⁹⁹ Holding a person accountable for non-physical actions in general is the opinion of the majority of scholars.³⁰⁰

3.3.10. Harm caused by doctors

If a doctor or veterinarian does something that is contrary to treatment methods and causes harm to a person or animal, he is liable.³⁰¹ It was narrated that aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Muzāḥim said: "'Ali (ﷺ) addressed the people and said: 'O veterinarians and doctors, whoever among you treats a sick person or an animal, let him take steps to prove his innocence. If he treats something without covering himself and causes damage, then he is liable.'"³⁰² It was narrated from Mujāhid that 'Ali (ﷺ) said concerning doctors: "If he (the doctor) does not bring witnesses to what he is treating, then he has no one to blame but himself." Then he said: "He is liable."³⁰³

3.3.11. One who dies as a result of just retaliation or ḥadd punishment

If a ḥadd punishment or retaliation is carried out on one who deserves it, and he dies, there is no liability on the one who carried it out, according to 'Ali (ﷺ).³⁰⁴ He (ﷺ) said: "If a person dies as a result of retaliation that was in accordance with the Book of Allah (ﷻ), there is no compensation for him."³⁰⁵ He said: "The one who dies as a result of a ḥadd punishment was only killed by the ḥadd

punishment.”³⁰⁶ He also said: “If a ḥadd punishment is carried out on a man for zina, theft or slander, and he dies, there is no compensation for him.”³⁰⁷ The evidence is that retaliation is obligatory, and that which is obligatory has no guarantee of safety, so there is no liability in carrying it out as long as there is no shortcoming or negligence.³⁰⁸

3.3.12. The bandit who is caught

If he did not take any wealth or kill anyone, he is to be detained until he repents. If he took wealth but did not kill anyone, his hand and foot on opposite sides are to be cut off. If he took wealth and killed someone, his hand and foot on opposite sides are to be cut off, then he should be crucified until he dies. If he repents before he is caught, he is liable for the wealth and is subject to retaliation, but he is not subjected to the ḥadd punishment.³⁰⁹

Al-Ḥārith ibn Badr, who was a bandit, repented before he was caught. Because of that, ‘Ali (ﷺ) accepted his repentance and waived the ḥadd punishment for banditry.³¹⁰

3.3.13. If a killer confesses so as to prevent an innocent person being accused

A man was brought to Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ) from a ruined place. He had been found holding a knife that was dripping with blood, standing before a slain person who was lying in a pool of blood. ‘Ali (ﷺ) asked him, and he said: “I killed him.” ‘Ali (ﷺ) said: “Take him and execute him.” When he was taken away, a man came rushing in and said: “O people, do not be hasty; take him back to ‘Ali (ﷺ).” So they took him back, and the second man said: “O Amir al-Mu’mineen, this is not the one who did it. I killed him.” ‘Ali (ﷺ) said to the first man: “What made you say that you killed him when you did not kill him?” He said: “O Amir al-Mu’mineen, what else could I do when the policeman found the man lying in a pool of

blood, and I was standing before him with a knife in my hand, on which there was blood, and I was captured in those ruins? I was afraid that it would not be accepted from me and that you would make me swear, so I admitted to something that I did not do and I sought reward with Allah (ﷺ).”

'Ali (ﷺ) said: “What a bad thing you have done. What really happened?” He said: “I am a butcher, and I came out of my shop in the dark and slaughtered a cow and skinned it. While I was skinning it, with the knife in my hand, I needed to urinate, so I went to the nearby ruins and entered them to relieve myself. Then I went back towards my shop and came across this slain man lying in a pool of blood. I was shocked and stood staring at him, with the knife in my hand, not realising anything until your policemen came and caught me. The people said: ‘This man killed him, and no one else killed him.’ I was certain that you would not reject what they said and believe what I said, so I confessed to something that I did not do.”

'Ali (ﷺ) said to the second man: “What is your story?” He said: “Iblees tempted me, and I killed the man in order to take his wealth. Then I heard the sound of the policemen approaching, so I left the ruins and found this butcher in the state that he described. I hid from him in the ruins until the policemen came and caught him and brought him to you. When you ordered that he be executed, I realised that I would have his blood on my hands too, so I admitted the truth.”

'Ali (ﷺ) said to al-Ḥasan: “What is the ruling on this?” He said: “O Amir al-Mu'mineen, he took one life but he saved another, and Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind﴾ (Qur'an 5: 32).” So 'Ali (ﷺ) let them both go, and he paid the indemnity of the slain man from the public treasury.³¹¹ It may be that he did that after the next of kin of the slain man waived their right to retaliation.³¹²

3.3.14. A woman who killed her husband on her wedding day in the presence of her male friend

At the time of 'Ali (ﷺ), a woman killed her husband on her wedding day in the presence of her male friend, and the punishment was execution in retaliation for the crime.³¹³

3.3.15. Substituting something else for camels when paying the compensation for death, and how it is to be paid

The basic principle is that the compensation for death is to be paid in the form of camels, but it is permissible to give something else if camels are not available, according to 'Ali (ﷺ). It was narrated from 'Âmir that 'Ali, Abdullah and Zayd said: "The compensation is one hundred camels."³¹⁴ It was narrated from al-Ḥasan that 'Ali ruled that the compensation should be twelve thousand,³¹⁵ referring to dirhams of silver.

In the case of accidental or quasi intentional killing, it is to be paid by the male relatives of the killer in instalments over three years, according to Amīr al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷺ).³¹⁶ The evidence for that is the report narrated from al-Mugheerah ibn Shu'bah, who said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) ruled that the compensation is to be paid by the male relatives."³¹⁷ As for paying it in instalments, that is because it is a large amount and it is difficult to pay it all at once. It is divided into instalments paid over three years, based on the principle of making things easy, which is enjoined in Islam.³¹⁸

3.3.16. Compensation for one of the People of the Book

The compensation for killing one of the People of the Book, whether a Jew or a Christian, is the same as that for a Muslim.³¹⁹ It was narrated from al-Hakam ibn 'Utaybah that 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "The compensation for a Jew or a Christian, or any dhimmi, is the same as that for a Muslim."³²⁰

3.3.17. Compensation for injury to the spine

If the spinal column is broken, causing impotence, the compensation is the complete amount for a life, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام). He said: "If the back is broken and impotence is caused, then compensation for a life is due."³²¹

3.3.18. The eye of one who is one-eyed

If a person puts out the eye of a man who is one-eyed, a complete compensation for a life is due, or the one-eyed man may retaliate by putting out one of the aggressor's eyes and taking half of the compensation, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام). That was narrated by Ibn Qudâmah.³²² That is because the eye of the one-eyed man is equivalent to two eyes of a sighted person in terms of vision. Hence the compensation is to be paid in full for it.³²³

3.3.19. Compensation for fingers and toes

The compensation for each digit is one-tenth of the amount for a whole person, according to 'Ali (عليه السلام); in other words, ten camels. It was narrated from 'Âsim ibn Damurah that 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "For digits, one-tenth of the compensation for a life."³²⁴ According to another report: "For digits, one-tenth of one-tenth."³²⁵

3.4. Disciplinary punishments

If the crime did not merit a ḥadd punishment, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام) used to discipline wrongdoers and deter people from committing sin by means of disciplinary punishments. Since disciplinary punishments are not specified, he tried to make the punishment fit the crime; the worse the crime, the greater the punishment. The means of punishment used by Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib were many, and they varied according to the nature of the crime and the situation of the criminal.³²⁶ For example:

3.4.1. Striking with hands

Once when 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (عليه السلام) was circumambulating the Ka'bah, and 'Ali (عليه السلام) was circumambulating with him, a man came to 'Umar (عليه السلام) and said: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, settle the score for me with 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib." He said: "What is the issue?" He said: "He slapped me on the eye." 'Umar (عليه السلام) stopped and waited until 'Ali (عليه السلام) caught up with him, then he said: "Did you slap this man on the eye, O Abu al-Ḥasan?" He said: "Yes, O Amir al-Mu'mineen." He said: "Why?" He said: "Because I saw him staring at Muslim women during ṭawāf." 'Umar (عليه السلام) said: "Well done, O Abu al-Ḥasan!"³²⁷

3.4.2. Lashes fewer than the ḥadd punishment

This was the most common disciplinary punishment used by 'Ali (عليه السلام). For example, he flogged an-Najāshi, the poet who drank alcohol and broke the fast in Ramadan. Then he said to him: "I only gave you these twenty lashes because of your lack of shame before Allah in breaking the fast in Ramadan."³²⁸

3.4.3. Naming and shaming

Sometimes 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (عليه السلام) resorted to naming and shaming criminals and making the people aware of them, as he did in the case of one who gave false testimony. This was in the interests of society, lest he give testimony and cause people's rights to be lost. It was narrated that 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn said: "If 'Ali caught a person who gave false testimony, he would send him to his tribe and say: 'This man gave false testimony; know him and tell others about him.' Then he would let him go."³²⁹ It was narrated from Zayd ibn 'Ali, from his father, from his grandfather that when 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (عليه السلام) caught a man who gave false testimony, he punished him and paraded him through his neighbourhood to make him known, and he told people not to ask him for testimony.³³⁰

3.4.4. Detention

On occasion, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) punished people by detaining them. For example, he detained an-Najâshi, the poet who drank alcohol and broke the fast in Ramadan.³³¹

3.4.5. Chaining people up in detention

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (عليه السلام) used to chain up evildoers in detention, using chains that had locks. He would appoint someone to release them from their chains on one side at the time of prayer.³³²

3.4.6. Dipping in filth

A man was found underneath a woman's bed. He was brought to 'Ali (عليه السلام), who said: "Take him and turn him upside down in a rotten place, because he was in a situation that was worse than that."³³³

3.4.7. Execution

According to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام), the disciplinary punishment could reach the level of execution if the crime was very serious and had a far-reaching impact. One such crime was fabricating hadiths and attributing them to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), because this action leads to introducing things into Islam that are not part of it; this causes people to deviate from the religion that Allah (ﷻ) chose for them.³³⁴ Hence he used to say: "Whoever tells a lie about the Prophet (ﷺ), strike his neck."³³⁵

3.4.8. Destroying the tools of crime and whatever is connected to it

It was narrated that Rabee'ah ibn Zakkâr said: "Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) looked at a village and said: 'What is this village?' They said: 'It is a village called Zurârah.'³³⁶ Meat is slaughtered there, and alcohol is sold there.' He got up and went there, bringing fire and said: 'Set fire to it, and let evil consume itself.' So it was burnt."³³⁷ In this village, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) burned the alcohol and everything that had to do with it of raw materials and the tools that were used to make it.³³⁸

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) had an impact on judicial institutions through his ijtihâd in the fields of retaliation, ḥadd punishments, liability and disciplinary punishments. He also played a role in developing the schools of Islamic jurisprudence through his ijtihâd, which is indicative of his vast and abundant knowledge and his deep understanding of the noble aims of Sharia.

4. Regarding the opinions of the Companions and Rightly Guided caliphs as Sharia evidence

The scholars in the field of principles of Islamic jurisprudence discussed the views of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) and said that there are different views as to whether the opinion of a Companion is binding and may be used as evidence. Ibn al-Qayyim stated that there was consensus among the four imams that it may be used as evidence.³³⁹

The Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), especially the most prominent among them, were distinguished by their deep understanding and knowledge, as Ibn Mas'ood (رضي الله عنه) said. They were the most sincere at heart, the deepest in knowledge, the most straightforward, the best in guidance and the most dignified of this Ummah. They are the people whom Allah chose to accompany His Prophet (ﷺ) and establish His religion, so we should acknowledge their virtue and follow in their footsteps, for they were on the right path.³⁴⁰ The relevant point here is his saying that they were the deepest in knowledge of this Ummah and had the most understanding. Comparing the knowledge of those who came after them to their knowledge is like comparing the virtue of the two groups.³⁴¹ Since that is so clear that there is no need to prove it, we will point out the main means by which Allah (ﷻ) enabled them to attain this position:

4.0.1. Learning directly from the Prophet (ﷺ)

This had an effect on their understanding in a number of ways:

4.0.1.a. Purity of the source from which they learned

Because they learned directly from the Prophet (ﷺ), they were learning the revelation fresh, as it was revealed, and they heard the words of the Prophet (ﷺ) directly from him. Their knowledge was not contaminated with anything; rather it was pure Qur'an and Sunnah that was not mixed with people's opinions or the other elements of knowledge that appeared after the Muslims opened the doors to them later on, such as philosophy and the like.

4.0.1.b. Precise understanding

Their understanding was precise because their teacher was the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), the most eloquent and clear in speech and the most able to explain and teach. Imagine when that was combined with listening ears, comprehending minds and good nature, as well as a desire to seek the truth and eagerness to hear it. Undoubtedly that made them understand what was said to them precisely and in accordance with what Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger wanted. This matter is very clear, because the people during their lifetimes, and seekers of knowledge when they are pursuing that knowledge, look for the best of scholars and those who are most able to explain different issues. How many students have become prominent in their fields of knowledge by the grace of Allah (ﷻ) and by virtue of the effective teaching of their instructors? We know that no one can ever reach the level of the Prophet (ﷺ) in his superior way of teaching, or even reach one-tenth of that. This was the testimony of Mu'âwiyah ibn al-Ḥakam (رضي الله عنه) when he spoke of how great a teacher the Prophet (ﷺ) was: "May my father and mother be sacrificed for him. I never saw a teacher before him or after him who was better in teaching than him."³⁴²

4.0.1.c. The certainty of faith that they attained with regard to what they heard and understood

Their knowledge was based on certainty, whereas the knowledge of those who came after them was often subject to speculation.

4.0.1.d. They were able to know the reasons for Revelation and background to any hadith

They had knowledge of what abrogates and what is abrogated, which helped them to understand the meanings.

4.0.1.e. They had the opportunity to witness the actions of the Prophet (ﷺ)

The Sunnah explained his words and clarified the verses of the Qur'an, and by means of his actions, he demonstrated what was meant.

4.0.1.f. Possibility of asking about anything that was not clear to them

When they did so, they were able to get an answer.

4.0.2. Their natural understanding of the Arabic language

They understood the verses of the Qur'an and the hadiths of the Prophet (ﷺ) by virtue of their natural understanding of the language. They knew the particular meaning of what was said; they did not need to study grammar and principles of Islamic law, as later generations did.

4.0.3. Sincerity towards Allah (ﷻ) and piety

Through the blessing of their sincerity, they attained a great deal of beneficial knowledge within a short period of time. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿So fear Allah, and Allah teaches you﴾ (Qur'an 2: 282).

All the factors outlined above formed a strong basis that resulted in deep and solid understanding on the part of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ). After mentioning their unique understanding, which resulted from their hearing from the Prophet (ﷺ), their listening to the narrations of one another and their knowledge of Arabic in the most perfect manner, Ibn al-Qayyim said:

“If we compare our understanding to theirs, there is no doubt that they were more sincere at heart, had deeper knowledge, were more straightforward and were more likely to understand the text more correctly than we can do, because Allah (ﷻ) blessed them with smarter minds, more eloquence, deeper knowledge, a more straightforward approach to the text, proper and quick understanding, little or no impact from other influences, good intentions and fear of the Lord. The Arabic language came naturally to them, and the correct meanings and concepts were instilled in their hearts and minds. They had no need to examine the chains of narration and background of the narrators to see if there were any faults in the hadith or to assess the quality of the narrators or to examine the fundamentals of the branches of knowledge and the different views of the experts on the principles of Islamic law. They had no need of all of that. For them there were only two steps to follow:

- (i) Allah (ﷻ) said such and such, and His Messenger said such and such.
- (ii) What it means is such and such.

They were the most capable of people to go through these two steps easily, and they were the most qualified because all of their energy, knowledge and quality was focused on these two things only. In comparison, the energies and focus of the later scholars were scattered. Studying the Arabic language and matters connected to it took up a great deal of their intellectual efforts. Understanding the fundamentals of different branches of knowledge took up further

efforts, and knowledge of the chains of narration and the backgrounds of the narrators took up even more, as did their focus on examining the books of the shaykhs from whom they were learning, of whom there were many, and what they meant (in their books and in what they said), and so on. When they reached the point, after all this effort, of seeking to understand the texts with hearts and minds that were exhausted from examining everything that came before they were in a position to examine the text, and after they had expended their energy in studying things other than the text, then they would understand the text and what it meant with whatever was left of their energy.”³⁴³

Thus it becomes clear that the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) had deeper knowledge and understanding on the basis of what Allah (ﷻ) granted them of the means to understand and learn. Therefore they had more knowledge of the aims and goals of Sharia than anyone else, because one of the most important means of achieving the aims of Sharia is knowledge of the Qur'an and Sunnah and the ways of deriving rulings from them. Undoubtedly this was available to the Companions in the most perfect manner.³⁴⁴

Ash-Shâṭibi said: “The early generation (as-Salaf) was the most knowledgeable about the meanings of the Qur'an.”³⁴⁵ Concerning the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), he said: “They are the example to follow with regard to the way in which Sharia and its aims and goals are to be understood.”³⁴⁶ However, the scholars differed as to whether the view of the Companion may be regarded as evidence, and there are five well-known views. Before we mention these views, we will highlight the following points:

1. All are agreed that the view of a Companion with regard to issues that are subject to *ijtihād* is not binding on other Companions, whether the Companion was a ruler or a judge or one who gave fatwas.

2. If the Companion voiced an opinion, and the others agreed with him, it is not subject to debate because there is consensus in that case.
3. If he voiced an opinion and it became widespread, and no one opposed it, then this is regarded as silent consensus.
4. They agreed that the opinion of a Companion is not binding if another Companion disagreed with him.
5. They agreed that if the opinion of a Companion is based on the Qur'an or Sunnah or consensus, then it is binding in that case because of what he referred to.
6. They agreed that if the Companion recanted his view, it is no longer binding.

The point of dispute is where the Companion voiced an opinion concerning an issue that is subject to *ijtihād*, and we do not know of anyone who disagreed or agreed, or whether it became widespread or not, or whether he differed with someone else concerning this matter or not.³⁴⁷

The scholars differed concerning that, and there are a number of opinions:

1. The first opinion is that it is binding. This is the view of Mâlik and of ash-Shâfa'i in his old *madh-hab*; it is also the view of Aḥmad according to one report narrated from him. It is the view of most of the scholars and jurists among the Ḥanafis; Ibn 'Aqeel among the Ḥanbalis; al-'Alâ'i³⁴⁸ and al-Khaṭeeb al-Baghdadi among the Shâfa'is. It was the view favoured by Ibn al-Qayyim in *I'lâm al-Muwaqqi'een*, ash-Shâṭibi in *al-Muwâfaqât*, and Ibn Taymiyah.³⁴⁹
2. The second opinion is that it is not binding. This is the view of ash-Shâfa'i, according to one of his two opinions,

and it is favoured by al-Âmidî, ar-Râzî, al-Ghazâlî and Aḥmad, according to one report.³⁵⁰

3. The third opinion is that it is binding if it is a matter in which there is no room for personal opinion only, and this is the view of a number of Ḥanafis.³⁵¹
4. The fourth opinion is that only the views of Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) are binding, but no others.³⁵²
5. The fifth opinion is that only the views of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs — Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân and 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them) — are binding, but no others.³⁵³

The correct opinion — and Allah (ﷻ) knows best — is the first one. The evidence to support that is as follows:

4.1. From the Book of Allah (ﷻ)

Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And the foremost to embrace Islam of the Muhâjirûn and the Anṣâr and also those who followed them exactly [in Faith]. Allah is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him. He has prepared for them gardens under which rivers flow [paradise], to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success.﴾ (*Qur'an* 9: 100)

Al-Ĥâfîdh Ibn Ḥajar narrated in his commentary on this verse, with his chain of narration from Muhammad ibn Ka'b al-Qurazî, that the latter said: " 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb passed by a man who was reciting the verse, 'And the foremost to embrace Islam of the Muhâjirûn and the Anṣâr...' When he reached the words 'as they are well-pleased with Him', 'Umar took hold of his hand and said: 'Who taught you this?' He said: ' 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b.' He said: 'Do not leave

me until I take you to him.' When he came to him, he said: 'Did you teach this verse like this to this man?' He said: 'Yes.' He said: 'Did you hear it from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)?' He said: 'Yes.' He said: 'I used to think that we (the Muhâjiroon) had been raised to such a level that no one after us would ever reach.' Ubayy said: 'The confirmation of this verse appears at the beginning of Soorat al-Jumu'ah: ﴿And [He has sent him (Prophet Muhammad) also to] others among them [Muslims] who have not yet joined them [but they will come]. And He [Allah] is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise﴾ (Qur'an 62: 3).

In Soorat al-Hashr, ﴿And those who came after them say: Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in Faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed full of kindness, Most Merciful﴾ (Qur'an 59: 10); and in al-Anfâl ﴿And those who believed afterwards, and emigrated and strove hard along with you [in the Cause of Allah], they are of you. But kindred by blood are nearer to one another [regarding inheritance] in the decree ordained by Allah. Verily, Allah is the All-Knower of everything﴾ (Qur'an 8: 75)."

The reason why 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) asked this question is that he used to recite this verse [at-Tawbah 9: 100] with the word *Anṣâru* [as opposed to *Anṣâri*, which is how Ibn Ka'b recited it], which would indicate that the word *as-Sâbiqoon* [foremost] was not connected only to the word *Muhâjireen*. When it became clear to him that Ubayy ibn Ka'b recited it as *Anṣâri*, which would indicate that it was also included with the word *Muhâjireen*, he said: "I used to think that we [the Muhâjireen] had been raised to such a level that no one after us would ever reach" — referring to the Muhâjireen. These words of 'Umar's support the view of those who held the first opinion, who said that the views of all the Companions are binding, without singling out some of them, because all of them are praised in the

verse and are described as pioneers ('the foremost') in knowledge, virtue, jihad and actions. This verse was quoted as evidence by Ibn al-Qayyim, who counted it as part of the evidence indicating that it is obligatory to follow the Companions.³⁵⁴ He narrated that Imam Mâlik used it as evidence to prove the same point,³⁵⁵ and said that this verse praises the Companions and shows that they are entitled to be leaders who are taken as an example and whose views are to be followed. It also praises those who follow all of them or who follow each one of them, so long as that does not go against any Sharia text.³⁵⁶

Among the evidence for that is the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿You [true believers in Islamic Monotheism, and real followers of Prophet Muhammad and his *Sunnah*] are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind; you enjoin *al-Ma'roof* [i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam has ordained] and forbid *al-Munkar* [polytheism, disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden], and you believe in Allah﴾ (*Qur'an* 3: 110). In his commentary on this verse, Ibn Jareer narrated, with his chain of narration from ad-Daḥḥâk, that the latter said: "They are the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in particular."³⁵⁷ Ibn Jareer said, after quoting this report: "This means that they were the conveyors of the message whom Allah (ﷻ) enjoined the Muslims to obey."³⁵⁸ This verse was also quoted as evidence by ash-Shâṭibi, when he stated that the way of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) is the way to be followed and referred to.³⁵⁹ He said concerning this verse: "This affirms the superiority of the Companions over all other nations. That implies that they were righteous in all situations, and all the affairs of their lives were based on following the teachings of Islam and not going against it in any way."³⁶⁰ Imam Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah discussed in detail the issue of proving that the opinion of the Companions is binding by quoting these verses, and he highlighted

the way in which the text refers to that. He did a good job and mentioned many useful points.³⁶¹

4.2. Evidence from the Sunnah

There is a great deal of evidence from the Sunnah, for example the words of the Prophet (ﷺ): "The best of people is the generation of whom I am one, then the second generation (after that), then the third."³⁶² His telling us that implies that they are the foremost in all aspects of good deeds, especially with regard to doing and saying the right things.³⁶³ They are superior to others in all virtues, such as knowledge, action, faith, reason, religious commitment, eloquence and worship, and they are more qualified to understand every difficult issue. No one could dispute that except one who rejects what is well established and well known in the religion of Islam.³⁶⁴ According to Abdullah ibn Mas'ood, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "There is no Prophet whom Allah (ﷻ) sent to any nation before me, but he had disciples and companions from among his nation who followed his path and obeyed his commands."³⁶⁵ Al-Bayhaqi quoted this hadith as evidence of their superiority and high status³⁶⁶ in knowledge, action and sincerity.³⁶⁷

4.3. Evidence from other reports

It was narrated from Hudhayfah ibn al-Yamân (رضي الله عنه) that he said: "O people, follow the path of those who came before you, for by Allah (ﷻ), if you follow their path, then indeed you will succeed tremendously, but if you drift away from it, right or left, you will be greatly misguided."³⁶⁸ Al-Khateeb narrated with his chain of narration from 'Âmir ash-Sha'bi that the latter said: "What they narrate to you from the Companions of Muhammad (ﷺ), accept it."³⁶⁹

4.4. Sayings of the imams and scholars concerning the binding nature of the Companions’ opinions

1. Ash-Shâfa‘i said: “So long as there is evidence in the Qur’an and Sunnah, then the excuse for not following them is invalid. If we find no evidence there, then we turn to the opinions of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) or of one of them.”³⁷⁰ He also said: “You have no right to give an opinion unless you base it on a reference point or a valid analogy, and the reference point is the Qur’an or Sunnah, the words of one of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), or the consensus of the people.”³⁷¹
2. Aḥmad said: “Do not trust any of these people with regard to religious matters. Whatever comes from the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions, follow it; then with regard to those who came after them (the Tâbi‘oon), the matter is broad in scope.”³⁷²
3. The opinion of Imam Mâlik with regard to the actions of the people of Madinah is well known, but he went further than that and regarded the opinions of the Companions, especially the caliphs who came after the Prophet (Blessings and peace be upon him), as binding.³⁷³
4. Ibn Taymiyah said: “Those among these scholars who said that the opinion of a Companion is binding meant that this applies as long as there is no other Companion who gave a different view, and no text to the contrary is known. Moreover, if it became widely known, and no one objected to it, that may be regarded as approval for this opinion. So if it is known that they approved it and no one objected to it, it may be said that this is consensus by approval, because they do not approve of falsehood.”³⁷⁴ But if the opinion did not become widely known, or if it is known that

someone disagreed with it, then it is not binding and does not count as evidence, according to consensus.”³⁷⁵

5. Ash-Shâṭibi said, in his commentary on the words of the Prophet (ﷺ), ‘the path upon which I and my Companions are’:³⁷⁶ “This refers to what they said and did and the views they worked out. All of that is binding in general, and this is based on the testimony of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) for them in particular... So everything they said and did is something to be followed, without anyone else sharing this virtue, unlike others.”³⁷⁷ He also said in *al-Muwâfaqât*: “The way of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) is a way to be followed and referred to.”³⁷⁸

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CHAPTER FIVE

Governors at the time of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ)

1. Regions of the state

1.1. Makkah al-Mukarramah

When 'Uthmân (ﷺ) died, the governor of Makkah was Khâlid ibn Sa'eed ibn al-'Âṣ. 'Ali (ﷺ) issued a decree dismissing him, and he appointed Abu Qatâdah al-Anṣârî as governor of Makkah.¹ It seems that his governorship only lasted a short time, because when 'Ali (ﷺ) wanted to leave Madinah and go to Iraq, he dismissed Abu Qatâdah and sent Qatham ibn al-'Abbâs² to be the governor of Makkah.³ Thus the governorship of Abu Qatâdah lasted approximately two months, and not much is narrated concerning that period. Most of the sources that speak about the governorship of Qatham ibn al-'Abbâs over Makkah mention that 'Ali (ﷺ) appointed him as governor of Makkah, at-Tâ'if and the surrounding regions at the same time.⁴

The reports that were narrated about Makkah during 'Ali's caliphate have to do with hajj and who was in charge of the pilgrimage. There is no report that 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) attended hajj during his caliphate, because he was preoccupied with the turmoil that had broken out throughout the Islamic State, and this situation had not settled down. During the hajj season, he would send

someone to lead the pilgrims. It seems that Qatham ibn al-'Abbâs led the people in hajj in the year 37 AH only. 'Ali (ﷺ) sent Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs to lead the pilgrims in 36 AH and 'Ubaydullâh ibn al-'Abbâs in 38 AH, although the sources differ concerning the year in which each of them made the pilgrimage.

In 39 AH, he sent Mu'âwiyah, one of his commanders in Syria, with the pilgrims from Syria and told him to lead the people in hajj. When he reached Makkah, he had a dispute with Qatham ibn 'Abbâs. Fighting would have broken out, were it not for the efforts of some of the Companions to bring about reconciliation between them on the basis that hajj would be led by one of Banu Shaybah. Thus the pilgrimage ended peacefully and no fighting occurred.⁵

Qatham ibn al-'Abbâs remained the governor of Makkah until the arrival of Mu'âwiyah's army, led by Bishr ibn Artâh, whereupon he fled, fearing for his life. Thus Qatham's governorship ended and Makkah was no longer under the authority of 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ). 'Ali (ﷺ) sent some troops to recapture Makkah, but he (ﷺ) was martyred before the mission could be accomplished.⁶

1.2. Madinah

During the time of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and the three caliphs who succeeded him, Madinah was the capital of the Islamic state. The leader of the Muslims lived there and ran its affairs himself; when he travelled, he would appoint someone to run its affairs.

However, this situation changed after allegiance was sworn to 'Ali (ﷺ) as caliph. The general state of confusion after the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) meant that 'Ali (ﷺ) had to leave Madinah, especially after Ṭalhah, az-Zubayr and 'Â'ishah left and headed towards Iraq before the Battle of the Camel.⁷ 'Ali (ﷺ) appointed Sahl ibn Haneef

al-Anşâri in charge of Madinah, according to some reports,⁸ but we do not know how long Ibn Ḥaneef remained in that position. It seems that his governorship lasted for more than one year, since it was narrated that he was in charge of Madinah in 37 AH.⁹ After dismissing Sahl ibn Ḥaneef, 'Ali (ﷺ) appointed Tamâm ibn al-'Abbâs. Later, he appointed Abu Ayyoob al-Anşâri, and he remained the governor of Madinah until 40 AH, when an army sent from Syria by Mu'âwiyah and led by Bishr ibn Artâh arrived in Madinah.¹⁰ Abu Ayyoob fled from Madinah and went to join 'Ali (ﷺ) in Kufah.¹¹ Thus Madinah slipped from the control of 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) and came under the control of Mu'âwiyah. So at the time of 'Ali (ﷺ), Madinah changed from being the seat of the caliphate to being one of the provinces, and political events began to take place far away from it. Hence we find that the historical sources ignored it during that period, until Mu'âwiyah's army managed to capture it.¹²

1.3. Bahrain and Oman

When 'Uthmân (ﷺ) was martyred, Bahrain belonged to the emirate of Basra, and Ibn 'Âmir used to appoint some of his workers to govern it. While 'Ali (ﷺ) was the caliph, he appointed a number of governors in charge of Bahrain, one of the most important of whom was 'Umar ibn Abi Salamah.¹³ He set out from Madinah with 'Ali (ﷺ) during his journey to Iraq, then 'Ali (ﷺ) sent him to govern Bahrain¹⁴ for a period of time. Later, he was summoned to accompany 'Ali in Iraq. Other employees of 'Ali in Bahrain were Qudâmah ibn al-'Ajlân al-Anşâri¹⁵ and an-Nu'mân ibn al-'Ajlân al-Anşâri.¹⁶ 'Ali also appointed 'Ubaydullâh ibn 'Abbâs to govern Bahrain;¹⁷ he was the governor of Yemen, so perhaps Bahrain and Najd also came under his governorship at that time. This may be understood from what at-Ṭabarâni said, and what Khaleefah ibn Khayyât said may be understood on the basis that he did not know

about the correct order of these governors.¹⁸ The sources mention the names of some men whom 'Ali (ﷺ) sent to Oman, one as a governor and the other as the commander of troops to suppress one of the rebellions that were launched against 'Ali (ﷺ) in Oman.¹⁹ There was also a man in charge of al-Yamâmah,²⁰ and it may be that he was working under the governor of Bahrain.²¹

1.4. Yemen

When 'Uthmân (ﷺ) was martyred and allegiance was sworn to 'Ali (ﷺ) as caliph, he appointed 'Ubaydullâh ibn al-'Abbâs (ﷺ) as governor of Yemen.²² 'Uthmân's governors left Yemen before 'Ubaydullâh ibn 'Abbâs got there; some of them joined Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr in the army of the Battle of the Camel, and they played a role in equipping their army.²³ 'Ubaydullâh ibn 'Abbâs was the governor of Ṣan'â' and its surrounding areas, and his fellow governor was Sa'eed ibn Sa'd ibn 'Ubâdah al-Anṣârî²⁴, who was in charge of the troops.²⁵

The murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) had a far-reaching effect on the Muslims in Yemen, who felt disappointed and upset by this crime. Some of the Yemenis did not swear allegiance to 'Ali (ﷺ) and wanted to kill the killers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ). When that was delayed, they corresponded with Mu'âwiyah after the arbitration, and he sent Bisr ibn Arṭa'ah, who managed to gain control over Yemen with their help. This only lasted for a short time, though,²⁶ before 'Ali (ﷺ) managed to take it back from the army of Mu'âwiyah and restore 'Ubaydullâh ibn 'Abbâs as its governor once again. He remained in that position until Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) was martyred.²⁷

It was narrated that Bisr killed two sons of 'Ubaydullâh ibn 'Abbâs and some of the supporters of 'Ali (ﷺ) in Yemen, then he went back to Syria. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) had sent Jâriyah

ibn Qudāmah as-Sa’di; it was said that he did the same as Bisr had done, and he killed some of the supporters of ‘Uthmān (ﷺ) in Yemen.²⁸ Ibn Katheer said: “This report is well known to the biographers, but there is some doubt as to its soundness.”²⁹ Undoubtedly, the killing of innocent people was not the norm at that time, even in the battles of the Camel and Şifteen, when fighting broke out between the two sides. How could children and innocent people be killed at the time of truce? Hence we cannot accept these stories that are contrary to Muslim customs, values and religion.³⁰

1.5. Syria

Mu‘āwiyah (ﷺ) was governor of Syria during the caliphates of ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān (may Allah be pleased with them both). When ‘Ali (ﷺ) was appointed as caliph, he wanted to dismiss him and appoint Abdullah ibn ‘Umar instead, but Abdullah ibn ‘Umar refused to accept the governorship of Syria. He gave his apologies, mentioning the close ties of kinship and marriage that existed between them.³¹ Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ) respected his wishes and did not force him to go to Syria. As for the reports claiming that ‘Alī (ﷺ) reviled or insulted Abdullah ibn ‘Umar (ﷺ) for adopting a neutral stance instead of taking his side, they represent a distortion of the facts and seem to be blatant lies.³²

The most that can be said concerning the issue of Abdullah ibn ‘Umar and the governorship of Syria is that which was narrated by adh-Dhahabi via Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah from ‘Umar ibn Nāfi‘ from his father that Ibn ‘Umar said: “Ali sent for me and said: ‘O Abu ‘Abdur-Rahmān, you are a man whom the people of Syria would obey, so go there, for I have appointed you over them.’ I said: ‘I urge you by Allah, and by my ties of companionship to the Messenger of Allah, to let me off.’ ‘Ali (ﷺ) refused, so I sought the help of Ḥaṣṣah, but still he refused. So I departed at night for Makkah.”³³

This offers definitive evidence that Ibn 'Umar had sworn allegiance to 'Ali (ﷺ) and come under his authority; otherwise how could 'Ali (ﷺ) seek to appoint him if he had not sworn allegiance to him?

In Ibn 'Abdul-Barr's *al-Isti'âb* it is narrated via Abu Bakr ibn Abil-Jahm from Ibn 'Umar that he said, when he was dying: "I do not regret anything except not fighting the transgressors alongside 'Ali (ﷺ)." ³⁴ This also indicates that he swore allegiance to 'Ali (ﷺ), because he only regretted not going out with 'Ali (ﷺ) to fight. He was one of those who kept away from turmoil and did not fight with anyone. If he had refrained from swearing allegiance, his regret for that would have been greater, and he would have said that clearly. The act of swearing allegiance is obligatory, and refraining from it is threatened with punishment, according to the report of Ibn 'Umar himself, who said that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever dies without having sworn allegiance has died a death of pre-Islamic ignorance." ³⁵ This is unlike going out to fight alongside 'Ali (ﷺ); the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) differed on this matter, and some of them kept out of it. So how can it be imagined that Ibn 'Umar would regret not taking part in this fighting but not regret not swearing allegiance, if he did in fact refrain from that despite the stern warning concerning it? Thus it is clear that the claim of some historians, that Ibn 'Umar did not swear allegiance to 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them both), is false. It is proven that he was one of those who swore allegiance to him. Indeed, he was close to him, to the point that 'Ali (ﷺ) was keen to appoint him as his governor and seek his help, because of the sincerity and loyalty he saw in him. ³⁶

After Ibn 'Umar apologised for not accepting the governorship of Syria, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) sent Sahl ibn Haneef instead. He had hardly reached the borders of Syria when he was seized by members of Mu'âwiyah's cavalry, who said to him: "If 'Uthmân

(ﷺ) has sent you, then you are welcome, but if anyone else has sent you, then go back.”³⁷ Syria was seething with anger at the unjust and wrongful murder of ‘Uthmân (رضي الله عنه). The chemise that was stained with his blood had reached them, along with the fingers of his wife Nâ’ilah, which had been cut off as she was defending him. This story of his martyrdom was terrifying and painful; it shook them emotionally and moved them to tears. They had also heard the news that the thugs had taken over Madinah and that Banu Umayyah had fled to Makkah.

All of this, as well as other events and factors, had a strong effect on the people of Syria and their leader Mu‘âwiyah (رضي الله عنه). He said that he had the responsibility of standing up for ‘Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) and wreaking vengeance on his killers, since he was his kinsman, and Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And whoever is killed wrongfully [Mazlûman intentionally with hostility and oppression and not by mistake], We have given his heir the authority [to demand *Qisâs*, — Law of Equality in punishment — or to forgive, or to take *Diyah* (blood money)]. But let him not exceed limits in the matter of taking life [i.e. he should not kill except the killer]. Verily, he is helped [by the Islamic law]﴾ (*Qur’an* 17: 33). Mu‘âwiyah gathered the people together and addressed them, telling them that ‘Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) had been killed unlawfully at the hands of foolish hypocrites who did not respect blood that is protected in Sharia; they had shed his blood during the sacred month in the sacred land.

The people got angry and denounced what had happened, and their voices became loud. Among them were a number of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). One of them named Murrah ibn Ka‘b stood up and said: “Were it not for a hadith I heard from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), I would not have spoken. The Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned the turmoil and gave some details concerning it. Then a man passed by whose face was covered with a

cloth, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'This man will be following true guidance at that time.' I went up to him and found that he was 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân. I turned to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked: 'This man?' He (ﷺ) said: 'Yes.'"³⁸

There is another hadith which played a role in Mu'âwiyah's quest for vengeance for 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) and gave him a strong motive and resolve to achieve this goal. It was narrated from an-Nu'mân ibn Basheer that 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent for 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân. He came, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) turned to him. The last words he said, when tapping his shoulder, were: 'O 'Uthmân, Allah may clothe you with a chemise which, if the hypocrites want you to take it off, do not take it off until you meet me.' He said it three times." I [an-Nu'mân] said to her: "O Mother of the Believers, why did you not tell us this before?" She said: "I forgot it, and by Allah I did not remember it." He said: "I told Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân about it, and he did not like what I told him. He wrote to the Mother of the Believers, asking her to write to him about it, and she wrote a letter to him about it."³⁹

Eagerness to implement the ruling of Allah (ﷻ) against the killers was the main reason for the refusal of the people of Syria, led by Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân, to swear allegiance to 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه) as caliph. It was not because of Mu'âwiyah's ambition to remain as governor of Syria or to ask for that which he was not entitled to, because he understood perfectly that this matter (the caliphate) was only for those who remained of the six members of the consultative committee, and that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was better than him and more entitled to that position.⁴⁰ The evidence for that is the report narrated by Yahya ibn Sulaymân al-Ja'fi with a good chain of narration from Abu Muslim al-Khawâlânî, who said to Mu'âwiyah: "Are you disputing with 'Ali and thinking that you are like him?" He said: "No, by Allah, I know that he is better than me and more

entitled to this matter than me, but do you not know that 'Uthmân was killed unlawfully and I am his cousin and the one who is seeking vengeance for his blood? So go to him and tell him: Let him hand over to me the killers of 'Uthmân, and I will follow him." They went to 'Ali and spoke to him, but he did not agree to hand them over.⁴¹ According to another report, they went and spoke to him, and he said: "Let him swear allegiance first and leave these people for me to deal with them," but Mu'âwiyah refused.⁴²

There are reports depicting Mu'âwiyah's refusal to obey as being because of his ambitions and worldly aspirations, and because of enmity and competition between Banu Hâshim and Banu Umayyah dating back to pre-Islamic times. In addition, there are other slanders, fabrications and attempts to undermine the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah be pleased with them all). Some contemporary writers — such as al-'Aqqâd in *'Abqariyyat 'Ali* and 'Abdul-'Azeez al-Doori in *Muqaddimah fi Tareekh Sadr al-Islam* — relied on these reports and based their false notions on them. The truth is that all of these reports are worthless, and their narrators were criticised, either because they were not of good character or they were confused.⁴³

The province of Syria remained under the control of Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân (رضي الله عنه) throughout the caliphate of 'Ali (رضي الله عنه); he was not able to gain control of it or to appoint governors or commanders over it. There were some clashes in the eastern part of Syria between the troops of 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) and the troops of Mu'âwiyah (رضي الله عنه). The most significant of these was the battle of Şiffeen in 37 AH, at which both 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah (may Allah be pleased with them both) were present. None of these battles put a stop to Mu'âwiyah's continued domination of Syria.⁴⁴

1.6. Mesopotamia (al-Jazeerah)

Mesopotamia was one of the provinces that belonged to Syria at the time of 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân (رضي الله عنه). After he was martyred, Syria was under the control of Mu'âwiyah (رضي الله عنه), while Iraq was under the control of 'Ali (رضي الله عنه). This made Mesopotamia an area of dispute between the two sides, because of its geographical location with its connection to Syria, on the one hand, and Iraq on the other.⁴⁵ Hence, it was possible to gain control of it from either side. A number of battles took place between the troops of 'Ali and the troops of Mu'âwiyah, as both sides attempted to conquer the region. 'Ali managed to gain control of it for a while.⁴⁶ He appointed al-Ashtar, the most famous of 'Ali's governors in Mesopotamia⁴⁷, whom he appointed to that post more than once. Al-Ashtar managed to put its affairs in order, but in 38 AH, 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was forced to transfer him to Egypt as the governor there.⁴⁸ Chaos returned to Mesopotamia once again, and a number of battles took place there as Mu'âwiyah tried to gain control of it after that.⁴⁹

It seems that at the end of 39 AH, Mu'âwiyah managed to gain control over Mesopotamia to some extent.⁵⁰ It had been a refuge for some of those who had stayed out of the conflict between 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah; they did not swear allegiance to 'Ali while the dispute was ongoing between him and Mu'âwiyah.⁵¹ Its location in the middle, between the two sides, is what prompted them to choose Mesopotamia. According to some narrations, two of those who were appointed as governors of Mesopotamia by 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) were Shubayb ibn 'Âmir⁵² and Kameel ibn Ziyâd. They played a role in resisting the armies of Syria which attacked Mesopotamia; in fact, they managed to attack Syria from the direction of Mesopotamia.⁵³

1.7. Egypt

When ‘Uthmân (ؓ) was martyred, the governor of Egypt was Muḥammad ibn Abi Ḥudhayfah, who had taken the position by force and was not approved by ‘Uthmân (ؓ). After the martyrdom of ‘Uthmân, ‘Ali confirmed him as Egypt’s governor. Not long after that, Mu‘âwiyah sent an army to Egypt and defeated and captured Muḥammad ibn Abi Ḥudhayfah. He was then imprisoned and executed.⁵⁴

It was said that ‘Ali (ؓ) did not appoint Muḥammad ibn Abi Ḥudhayfah as governor of Egypt; rather he left him in his post until he was killed, whereupon ‘Ali (ؓ) appointed Qays ibn Sa’d to take his place.⁵⁵ He said to him: “Go to Egypt, for I have appointed you as its governor. Go there, and take people whom you trust and love to accompany you. Take troops with you until you get there, because that will be more frightening to your enemies and more encouraging to your followers. When you get there inshallah, be kind to those who do good, and be harsh towards those who do evil. Be kind to the common folk and prominent people alike, for kindness is a blessing.”⁵⁶

Qays’s intelligence and good conduct prevailed in a number of situations. When he set out for Egypt, there was a group there who was angry about the killing of ‘Uthmân (ؓ) and another group who had taken part in the murder. Qays was met by cavalry from Egypt before he entered the land. They said: “Who are you?” He said: “I am one of the supporters of ‘Uthmân. I am seeking refuge with some people so that we can support one another for the sake of Allah.” They said: “Who are you?” He said: “Qays ibn Sa’d.” They said: “Go ahead.” So he went ahead and entered Egypt.⁵⁷

The way Qays handled this situation is what enabled him to enter Egypt. After that he announced that he was an amir (governor).

Perhaps if he had announced to the soldiers that he was an amir, they would have prevented him from entering Egypt in the first place, like the one whom 'Ali (ﷺ) sent to Syria, who was prevented from entering the country when the Syrian troops realised that he had been sent by 'Ali (ﷺ) as governor of Syria.

When Qays ibn Sa'd reached al-Fuṣṭāṭ, he ascended the minbar and addressed the people of Egypt. He read to them a letter from 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) and asked them to swear allegiance to 'Ali.⁵⁸ At that point, the people of Egypt divided into two groups; one group swore allegiance to 'Ali (ﷺ) and to Qays, and the other group stayed away from the issue. Qays ibn Sa'd was wise in dealing with those who swore allegiance and those who refused. He did not force them to swear allegiance, and he left them as they were;⁵⁹ he even sent their stipends to them in the place where they chose to stay away from the turmoil. Some of them came to him, and he honoured them and treated them kindly.⁶⁰ This good treatment helped to avoid confrontation with them, and it helped him to calm things down in Egypt. He appointed senior officials, organised the collection of the land tax, and appointed men to the police force.⁶¹ Thus he managed to put the affairs of Egypt in order and to please all parties in the country.⁶²

Qays ibn Sa'd became a political and military danger to Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân in Syria, because Egypt was close to Syria and because Qays succeeded in putting Egypt's affairs in order and was well-known for his resolve. Mu'âwiyah was worried about the military manoeuvres against him that could come out of Egypt. He began to correspond with Qays ibn Sa'd in Egypt, threatening him while at the same time trying to tempt him to join him. However, Qays' response to that was so intelligent that Mu'âwiyah was not able to determine where Qays stood and what he intended to do, even though a number of letters were exchanged between them.⁶³ The

Râfiḍi reports about the letters between Mu'âwiyah and Qays ibn Sa'd, which were mentioned by Abu Makhnaf, became widely quoted in the history books, but they are false and are not sound. The only one who narrated them was this worthless Râfiḍi, who was regarded as weak by the scholars who determine who was praiseworthy and who was unreliable. The texts of these reports also contain odd things, among the most prominent of which are the following:

1. 'Ali's address to the people of Egypt who were with Qays ibn Sa'd, in which he (allegedly) said: "Then came after them (Abu Bakr and 'Umar) a ruler whose conduct was not appropriate, so the men of the Ummah started showing resentment, then they got angry with him and changed him." In other words, those who rebelled against 'Uthmân (ﷺ) were the men of the Ummah, and the Ummah had changed this evil by killing 'Uthmân. The truth is that 'Ali (ﷺ) is innocent of these words. He knew that those who killed 'Uthmân (ﷺ) were thugs and that his slaying was unjust and wrong, and his words reflect that. Ibn 'Asâkir narrated that Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah said: "I never heard 'Ali saying anything bad about 'Uthmân."⁶⁴ Al-Ḥâkim and Ibn 'Asâkir narrated that 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "O Allah, I declare myself innocent before You of the blood of 'Uthmân. I felt very distressed the day 'Uthmân was killed, and I was deeply grieved. They came to me to swear allegiance to me, and I said: 'By Allah, I feel shy before Allah to accept allegiance from people who killed a man of whom the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Should I not feel shy of one before whom the angels feel shy?" I feel shy before Allah to accept allegiance when 'Uthmân is lying slain on the ground and has not been buried yet.' So they went away, and when he had been buried, the people came back and asked me to accept their oath of allegiance. I said: 'O Allah, I am very uncertain of what I am letting myself in for.' Then I decided to go ahead, and I accepted their oath of allegiance.

When they said 'Amir al-Mu'mineen', it was as if my heart was broken, and my eyes filled with tears."⁶⁵ There are many similar reports from 'Ali (عليه السلام).⁶⁶ I have compiled them in my book: *Tayseer al-Kareem al-Mannân fi Seerat Ameer al-Mu'mineen 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân* (The Biography of 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân).⁶⁷

2. The words attributed to Qays ibn Sa'd, "We have sworn allegiance to the best one we know after our Prophet (ﷺ)" are to be rejected, because what is proven is to give precedence to Abu Bakr and 'Umar (عليه السلام) over 'Ali (عليه السلام), as stated in sound reports. This is something that no one doubted at that time among the Companions and others. Based on that, this cannot be soundly attributed to Qays ibn Sa'd (عليه السلام) or to anyone else among the Companions and Tâbi'oon. This idea was unknown except among the later Râfiḍi Shia.⁶⁸ Ibn Taymiyah said: "The earlier Shia were all agreed on the superiority of Abu Bakr and 'Umar."⁶⁹ There is a great deal of evidence for the superiority of Abu Bakr and 'Umar, including the report narrated by Ibn 'Umar (عليه السلام): "We used to compare the people at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), and we would say that the best were Abu Bakr, then 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb, then 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân."⁷⁰

The hadiths that speak of this are many and well-known.⁷¹ In fact, as we have seen from the sound reports quoted above, Mu'âwiyah asked Amir al-Mu'mineen to hand over the killers of 'Uthmân to him, and he never accused 'Ali of being involved in the murder.

3. The alleged letter from Mu'âwiyah to Qays ibn Sa'd and his suggestion that 'Ali had played a part in the murder of 'Uthmân. This could not have come from Mu'âwiyah because it is quite clear that 'Ali (عليه السلام) was innocent, as we have seen previously. This is something of which Mu'âwiyah (عليه السلام) was not unaware, and he would not have accepted it from Qays ibn Sa'd (عليه السلام).

Muḥammad ibn Sireen, one of the senior Tābi'oon who lived at that time, said: "Uthmān was killed, and I do not know of anyone who accused 'Ali of killing him."⁷² He also said: "When 'Uthmān was killed, his house was filled with people (who wanted to protect him), among whom were Abdullah ibn 'Umar and al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali with his sword around his neck. But 'Uthmān insisted that they should not fight."⁷³ Ibn Abi Shaybah narrated, with a chain of narration whose men are sound, from Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah that 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "May Allah curse the killers of 'Uthmān on the plains and in the mountains, on land and on sea."⁷⁴ There are many texts that speak of this matter,⁷⁵ which confirms that 'Ali's hatred of the killers of 'Uthmān was well known.⁷⁶

4. With regard to what was narrated about Mu'āwiyah accusing the Anṣār of shedding 'Uthmān's blood, this cannot be a valid report from Mu'āwiyah because he knew that those who defended 'Uthmān were all Anṣār. Ibn Sa'd narrated, with a sound chain of narration, that Zayd ibn Thābit (رضي الله عنه) came to 'Uthmān (رضي الله عنه) when he was under siege and said: "The Anṣār are at the door and are saying that if you wish, we will be supporters of Allah (Anṣār Allah) for a second time." 'Uthmān said: "As for fighting, no."⁷⁷
5. What was mentioned about Mu'āwiyah fabricating a letter in the name of Qays ibn Sa'd. This is a lie. It could not possibly have come from Mu'āwiyah because the Arabs used to regard lying as one of the worst of attributes, something that noble men would refrain from. We see this in the story of Abu Sufyān when he was still a polytheist; Bukhari narrated that when Heraclius asked him about the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), Abu Sufyān said: "By Allah, were it not that I would feel too embarrassed that they should narrate that I told a lie, I would have lied."⁷⁸ This is how

lying was regarded by the Arabs; among the Muslims, it was seen as even worse. Though one can argue that this was deceit and war is deceit, deceit does not mean lying, as is well known. Mu'āwiyah (رضي الله عنه) was too smart to do that.⁷⁹

6. The narration of these many letters among Qays, Mu'āwiyah and 'Ali, in this particular sequence and with such precision, makes the reader doubt because it is not known who knew about the contents of these letters and who transmitted them.⁸⁰

Dr. Yahya al-Yahya said: "The fact that Qays ibn Sa'd ibn 'Ubādah (رضي الله عنه) was appointed as governor of Egypt by Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tālib (رضي الله عنه) is something upon which there is consensus."⁸¹ No biography of Qays failed to mention these details.⁸² In other words, what Abu Makhnaf mentioned in this report was not even mentioned by the respectable historians of Egypt,⁸³ although the report of Abu Makhnaf was narrated from at-Ṭabari in summarised form by Ibn al-Atheer, Ibn Katheer, Ibn Khaldoon and Ibn Tagharribardi.⁸⁴ Al-Kindi also narrated that 'Abdul-Kareem ibn al-Hārith said: "When Mu'āwiyah got worried about Qays being in Egypt, he wrote to some of Banu Umayyah in Madinah saying: 'May Allah reward Qays ibn Sa'd with good, but conceal it, for I am afraid that 'Ali may dismiss him if he hears of the relationship between him and us.' When 'Ali heard about that letter, the leaders of Iraq and Madinah who were with him said: 'Qays has changed.' 'Ali said: 'Woe to you, he has not changed. Leave me alone.' They said: 'You should dismiss him because he has changed,' and they kept on at him until he wrote to Qays, saying: 'I want you to be near me, so appoint someone to be in charge in your absence and come.'"⁸⁵ This report was regarded as more correct by Dr. Yahya in his valuable book *Marwiyât Abi Makhnaf fi Tareekh at-Ṭabari*, in which he said:

1. It is a report from a trustworthy Egyptian who knew his country better than anyone else.

2. It was narrated by an Egyptian historian.
3. It is free of any weird content.
4. Its text is in harmony with the conduct and behaviour of these men.
5. It explained ‘Ali’s hesitation to dismiss Qays until the people put pressure on him, so he kept him with him. Thus leaders do not waste brilliant leadership at times of turmoil.⁸⁶

Appointment of Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr as governor of Egypt

As we have seen, some people interfered to cause trouble between ‘Ali (عليه السلام) and Qays ibn Sa’d, hoping that he would remove him. In the end, some of ‘Ali’s consultants insisted that he dismiss Qays because they believed the rumours about him. ‘Ali (عليه السلام) wrote to him and said: “I want you to be near me, so appoint someone to be in charge in your absence and come.”⁸⁷ This letter effectively dismissed Qays from his post as governor of Egypt, and ‘Ali appointed al-Ashtar an-Nakha’i to replace him,⁸⁸ according to most reports. ‘Ali (عليه السلام) met with al-Ashtar before he travelled to Egypt and told him about Egypt and its people. He said: “Egypt has no one but you; go, may Allah have mercy on you, and if I do not give you instructions, it is because I trust your judgement. Seek the help of Allah for whatever worries you, and mix strictness with gentleness; be gentle when that is more effective, and be strict when strictness is the only way.”⁸⁹ Al-Ashtar went to Egypt, accompanied by a group of his companions. When he reached the coast of the Red Sea, he died before he could enter Egypt, and it was said that he had been given a drink of poisoned honey that killed him. Some of the people who paid the land tax were accused of poisoning him at the instigation of Mu‘āwiyah,⁹⁰ but the accusations made against Mu‘āwiyah of killing al-Ashtar an-Nakha’i cannot be proven by any

sound report. Ibn Katheer⁹¹ and Ibn Khaldoon⁹² both thought it very unlikely, and Dr. Yahya al-Yahya agreed with them.⁹³ I am also inclined to favour this view.

Al-Ashtar died before he could start his work in Egypt; nevertheless the sources speak of him as one of 'Ali's governors in Egypt. After he died, Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr was appointed as governor of Egypt.⁹⁴ He had previously lived in Egypt at the time of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه), and the reports indicate that Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr reached Egypt before the previous governor, Qays ibn Sa'd, left. A discussion took place between Qays ibn Sa'd and Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr, in which Qays offered some advice to Muḥammad, especially with regard to the people who were angry about the murder of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) and who had not sworn allegiance to 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) after he died. Qays said: "O Abu al-Qâsim, you have come from Amir al-Mu'mineen, and his dismissal of me should not prevent me from giving sincere advice to you and to him, as I have good experience about this matter (Egypt and its people). Leave these people and those who joined them alone — meaning those who had not sworn allegiance to 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) or to anyone else. Leave them as they are, then if they come to you, accept them, and if they stay away from you, do not pursue them. Treat people according to their status, and if you can visit the sick and attend funerals, then do so, for that will not undermine your position."⁹⁵

Muḥammad brought with him a message from 'Ali (رضي الله عنه). He read it to the people of Egypt and addressed them.⁹⁶ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali wrote a letter to Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr, which came to him when he was appointed governor of Egypt. It was not limited to matters of governorship; it also called Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq to Allah (ﷻ). Among other things, this letter said:

"Remember, O Muḥammad, that even if you are in need of your share of this world, you are in greater need of your share of the

hereafter. If you have two matters to deal with, one which has to do with the hereafter and the other which has to do with this world, then start with that which has to do with the hereafter. Your desire to do good should be great, and you should always base it on the right intention, for Allah gives to a person according to his intention. If he loves good deeds and the people who do them, but he does not do them, he will inshallah be like one who has done them, because when the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came back from Tabook, he said: 'In Madinah, there are men and you have not covered any distance or crossed any valley but they were with you, but they were held back by sickness.' They had the intention.⁹⁷ Moreover, remember O Muḥammad [ibn Abi Bakr] that I have appointed you in charge of my greatest troops, the people of Egypt, and I have put you in charge of the people's affairs. You are right to fear for yourself concerning this responsibility and to worry about your religious commitment, every minute of the day. If you can, strive hard not to anger your Lord in order to please His creation. Be harsh with the wrongdoer, and be gentle with the righteous; bring the righteous close to you and make them your inner circle and brothers. Was-salâm."⁹⁸

After Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr started his governorship, the first month passed peacefully, but things began to change after that. Muḥammad did not follow the advice of Qays ibn Sa'd, and he began to bother those people who had not sworn allegiance to 'Ali (عليه السلام). He wrote to them and called them to swear allegiance, but they did not respond. He sent men who destroyed their houses, confiscated their wealth and imprisoned some of their children, so the people started to fight him.⁹⁹ Then Mu'âwiyah prepared an army led by 'Amr ibn al-Âṣ, and he attacked Egypt and formed an alliance with those whom Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr was fighting. The number of fighters reached ten thousand, among whom were Maslamah ibn Mukhallad and Mu'âwiyah ibn Hudayj.¹⁰⁰ Fierce battles took place between them and Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr. In the end, he was killed, and

Mu'āwiyah's troops took over in Egypt. Thus Egypt was lost by 'Ali ibn Abi Tālib (عليه السلام) in 38 AH.¹⁰¹ Abu Makhnaf, the Rāfiḍī Shia, is the only one who narrated a detailed report about this. It distorted a lot of the historical facts, but it was quoted by aṭ-Ṭabari¹⁰² and a number of historians, as follows:

Al-Ya'qoobi mentioned that 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ fought Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr, and that Mu'āwiyah ibn Hudayj caught him and killed him, then he put him inside the carcass of a donkey and burned him.¹⁰³ Al-Mas'oodi¹⁰⁴ and Ibn Ḥibbān¹⁰⁵ referred to the slaying of Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr, but they did not mention any details.¹⁰⁶ Ibn al-Atheer¹⁰⁷ narrated the report of Abu Makhnaf that was quoted by aṭ-Ṭabari, after omitting from it the letter of Mu'āwiyah to Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr and the text of the correspondence between 'Ali (عليه السلام) and Ibn Abi Bakr. He also omitted the response of Ibn Abi Bakr to Mu'āwiyah and 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ, which was mentioned in the report of Abu Makhnaf that was quoted by aṭ-Ṭabari.

An-Nuwayri mentioned something similar to that which was mentioned by Ibn al-Atheer,¹⁰⁸ and ibn Katheer included something like what was mentioned by these two. Ibn Khaldoon referred to the reports of Abu Makhnaf,¹⁰⁹ and ibn Tagharribardi summarised them.¹¹⁰ All of these reports came via Abu Makhnaf and played a role in distorting the Islamic history of that era. They were then quoted by contemporary writers, who failed to examine them and contributed to circulating them. Thus many of these lies became entrenched in the minds of some educated people and became an essential part of a series of misconceptions that spread among the people.

Nevertheless, the fact that Mu'āwiyah ibn Hudayj killed Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr is proven through a sound report which was narrated by Abu 'Awwānah from 'Abdur-Raḥmān ibn

Shamâsah, who said: "I entered upon 'Â'ishah, the Mother of the Believers, and she said to me: 'Where are you from?' I said: 'I am from Egypt.' She said: 'How did you find Ibn Hudayj in this campaign of yours?' I said: 'We found him to be the best commander. No slave of any of us died but he gave him another slave, and no camel died except he gave him another camel, and no horse died except he gave him another horse.' She said: 'The fact that he killed my brother should not prevent me from narrating what I heard from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "O Allah, whoever attains any position of authority among my Ummah and is harsh towards them, be harsh towards him; whoever attains any position of authority among my Ummah and shows kindness towards them, show kindness towards him; and whoever shows harshness towards them, show harshness towards him." ' '111

The reports of Abu Makhnaf in *Tareekh at-Ṭabari* about Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr's governorship of Egypt and his slaying include a number of strange things, the most prominent of which are the following:

1. What he mentioned about the people of Syria swearing allegiance to Mu'âwiyah as caliph after the arbitration is not correct. Ibn 'Asâkir narrated, with a chain of narration whose men are trustworthy, that Sa'eed ibn 'Abdul-'Azeez at-Tanookhi, the most knowledgeable of the people regarding Syria,¹¹² said: "Ali was in Iraq and was called Amir al-Mu'mineen, while Mu'âwiyah was in Syria and was called the amir. When 'Ali died, Mu'âwiyah in Syria was called Amir al-Mu'mineen."¹¹³ This text explains that allegiance was not sworn to Mu'âwiyah as caliph until after the death of 'Ali. This is also the view of at-Ṭabari, who said concerning the last events of 40 AH: In this year, allegiance was sworn to Mu'âwiyah as caliph in Aelia.¹¹⁴ Ibn Katheer commented on this by saying:

“Meaning that when ‘Ali died, the people of Syria swore allegiance to Mu‘âwiyah as caliph, because there was no longer anyone who could dispute with him.”¹¹⁵ The people of Syria knew that Mu‘âwiyah was not as qualified for the caliphate as ‘Ali (عليه السلام) and that it was not permissible for him to become a caliph when it was still possible for ‘Ali (عليه السلام) to be caliph. ‘Ali’s superiority, seniority, knowledge, religious commitment, courage and all his virtues were obvious and well known, like the virtues of his brethren Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmân and others (may Allah be pleased with them all).¹¹⁶ In addition to that, there are texts which forbid giving allegiance to another caliph when the first one is still in place. Muslim narrated in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* that Abu Sa‘eed al-Khudri said: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘If allegiance has been sworn to two caliphs, then kill the second one.’”¹¹⁷ There are many other similar texts, so it is impossible that the Companions would have done anything contrary to that.¹¹⁸

2. He said: ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ made an agreement with Mu‘âwiyah to the effect that Egypt would be his so long as he lived. This story was narrated by Ibn ‘Asâkir with a chain of narration that contains an unknown narrator.¹¹⁹ It was also mentioned by adh-Dhahabi in such a way that implied that it was weak, hence it is worthless and should be ignored.
3. The accusation that Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr killed ‘Uthmân (عليه السلام) with his arrow is false. There are weak reports concerning that. Moreover, the text is odd because it is contrary to the sound report which states that the killer was an Egyptian man.¹²⁰ Dr. Yahya al-Yahya stated a number of reasons to support the innocence of Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr in the murder of ‘Uthmân (عليه السلام), including the following:
 - a. ‘Â’ishah (عليها السلام) went out to Basra to pursue the killers of

- 'Uthmān (ﷺ). If her brother had been one of them, she would not have mourned for him when he was killed.
- b. 'Ali (ﷺ) cursed the killers of 'Uthmān (ﷺ) and disavowed them, which implies that he would not bring them close to him or appoint them to positions of authority. He would not have appointed Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr as governor of Egypt if he had been one of the murderers.
 - c. Ibn 'Asākir narrated with his chain of narration that Muḥammad ibn Ṭalḥah ibn Muṣarraf said: "I heard Kinānah, the freed slave of Safiyyah bint Ḥuyayy, say: 'I was present when 'Uthmān was killed, and I was fourteen years old.' He said: 'Was Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr directly involved in his killing?' He said: 'Allah forbid. He entered upon him, and 'Uthmān (ﷺ) said: "O son of my brother, you are not the one who would kill me." So he went out, and he did not play any role in the actual killing.'"¹²¹ This is also borne out by the report narrated by Khaleefah ibn Khayyāṭ and aṭ-Ṭabari, with a chain of narration whose men are trustworthy, from al-Ḥasan al-Basri, who was one of those present on the day 'Uthmān (ﷺ) was killed,¹²² according to which Ibn Abi Bakr took hold of 'Uthmān's beard and 'Uthmān (ﷺ) said to him: "You are holding me in a way that your father would never have done." So he went out and left him.¹²³ Thus it is clear that Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq is innocent of shedding 'Uthmān's blood just as the wolf was innocent of shedding the blood of the prophet Yoosuf. It is also clear that the reason why he was accused was that he entered the house before the killing took place.¹²⁴ Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said that when 'Uthmān (ﷺ)

spoke to him, he felt ashamed and he turned back and felt regret. He covered his face and tried to defend him, but his efforts did not succeed.¹²⁵

- d. The reports about Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân (رضي الله عنه) threatening Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr with mutilation, and what was mentioned about putting the body of Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr in the carcass of a donkey and burning it, are all contrary to Islamic rulings concerning the handling of the dead. It is narrated that it is forbidden to mutilate the bodies of disbelievers, so how about the bodies of Muslims? Muslim narrated in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* that when the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) appointed commanders for an army or expedition, he would advise them personally to fear Allah (ﷻ) and to be good to those Muslims who were under their command. Then he would say: "Fight in the name of Allah (ﷻ) for the sake of Allah. Fight those who disbelieve in Allah (ﷻ). Fight, but do not steal from the war booty, do not break your promises, do not mutilate (the enemy dead) and do not kill children."¹²⁶

Ash-Shâfa'i said: "When the Muslims captured some polytheists and wanted to kill them, they killed them by beheading, but they did not go beyond that. They did not mutilate them by cutting off hands or feet or any part of the body, or stabbing them in the stomach or burning or drowning or anything beyond what was described, because the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) forbade mutilation."¹²⁷

Can it be thought that the noble Companions would go against this ruling when they were, as Ibn Mas'ood described them, "the best of this Ummah, the most righteous in heart, the deepest in knowledge, the most straightforward, people whom Allah chose to accompany His Prophet (ﷺ) and convey His religion, so follow their

example and their ways, for they are the Companions of Muḥammad, they were following true guidance, by the Lord of the Ka'bah"?¹²⁸

Ibn Abi Ḥatīm said concerning them: Allah (ﷻ) enjoins us to adhere to their guidance and follow their way and example, as He says: ﴿And [whoever] follows other than the believers' way, We shall keep him in the path he has chosen, and burn him in hell — what an evil destination!﴾ (*Qur'an* 4: 115)

The soundest report about burning him was what was narrated by at-Ṭabarâni from al-Ḥasan al-Basri, who said: "He captured this evildoer, Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr, in one of the mountain passes of Egypt and put him inside the carcass of a donkey and burned him."¹²⁹ But this report is mursal because al-Ḥasan al-Basri was not present at that event and did not name for us the one from whom he transmitted it, in addition to the fact that the text does not state who did the burning. Moreover, al-Ḥasan would not have called him an evildoer when he knew that 'Ali (ﷻ) praised him and gave him precedence over others.¹³⁰

- e. What was mentioned about 'Ali (ﷻ) saying, "the evildoer son of the evildoer," meaning Mu'âwiyah ibn Abu Sufyân. It is unlikely that 'Ali (ﷻ) would utter such words since his dispute was with Mu'âwiyah, not his father. Abu Sufyân (ﷻ) had entered Islam and become a good Muslim, and he died before the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷻ), so he did not live to witness the turmoil.¹³¹ Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And no bearer of burdens shall bear another's burden﴾ (*Qur'an* 35: 18). The Companions were the most knowledgeable of people about the Book of Allah and the most committed to adhering to its limits, so how can such words be attributed to them?¹³²
- f. What was mentioned about Mu'âwiyah ibn Hudayj (ﷻ), when he was asked by 'Amr ibn al-Âṣ (ﷻ) to capture Ibn

Abi Bakr, reciting the verse, ﴿Are your disbelievers [O Quraysh!] better than these [nations of Nooh (Noah), Loot (Lot), Sâlih, and the people of Fir'awn (Pharaoh), who were destroyed)]? Or have you an immunity [against Our Torment] in the Divine Scriptures?﴾ (*Qur'an* 54: 43) This implies that he was accusing Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr and others of being disbelievers. Such a thing is unknown among the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them); whatever happened among them, it did not reach the level of denouncing one another as disbelievers. Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâṣ (رضي الله عنه) explained that when he said: "Whatever happened among us was not of a religious nature."¹³³ Moreover, Mu'âwiyah ibn Hudayj was one of the troops of 'Amr ibn al-Âṣ, (رضي الله عنه) and he would not have refused the request of his commander.¹³⁴

- g. What was narrated about Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr saying that 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) was unjust and did not rule according to Qur'an. I could not find any origin for this statement to prove that it could be soundly attributed to Ibn Abi Bakr. As for Ibn Abi Bakr's stating that 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) was innocent of all false accusations, this is too well-known to be denied.¹³⁵ I have discussed it in detail in my book *Tayseer al-Kareem al-Mannân fi Seerat 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân* (The Biography of 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân).

1.8. Basra

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه) sent 'Uthmân ibn Ḥaneef al-Anṣârî to govern Basra in place of its former governor Abdullah ibn 'Âmir, who had left and gone to Makkah. 'Uthmân ibn Ḥaneef al-Anṣârî had experience of the region, because he had previously been appointed by 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) to survey the Iraqi

lowlands for tax purposes and to estimate the land tax for it.¹³⁶ 'Uthmân ibn Haneef went to Basra and entered it peacefully, but the people of Basra divided into three groups. One group swore allegiance to 'Ali and joined the main body of the Muslims. A second group took a neutral stance and said, "We will wait and see what the people of Madinah do, then we will do that." The third group refused to swear allegiance to 'Ali.¹³⁷

'Uthmân ibn Haneef did not remain governor for long. The army of Talhah, az-Zubayr and 'Â'ishah came to Basra before the Battle of the Camel, accompanied by those who were seeking revenge for the murder of 'Uthmân. Matters escalated, and fighting took place, so 'Uthmân ibn Haneef went out to join Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ), meeting him on his way to Basra just before the Battle of the Camel. Thus the governorship of 'Uthmân ibn Haneef ended.

'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) came to Basra and remained there for some time, during which the Battle of the Camel took place; we will discuss that in detail below inshallah. When 'Ali (ﷺ) wanted to leave Basra, he appointed Abdullah ibn 'Abbas (ﷺ) as its governor and put Ziyâd ibn Abeehi in charge of the land tax. He instructed Ibn 'Abbâs to consult Ziyâd and follow his opinion, as 'Ali (ﷺ) realised that he had work experience and was smart and diplomatic in dealing with people.¹³⁸ 'Ali also offered some advice to Ibn 'Abbâs, including the following: "I advise you to fear Allah (ﷻ) and be just towards those whom Allah has put you in charge of. Be generous towards people by being cheerful and sharing knowledge and wisdom with them, and beware of bearing grudges, for they deaden the heart and kill the truth. Remember that whatever brings you closer to Allah takes you further away from the fire, and whatever brings you closer to the fire takes you further away from Allah (ﷻ). Remember Allah a great deal, and do not be among the heedless."¹³⁹

Abdullah Ibn 'Abbâs began to do his job, and he was a Companion who was well-known for his vast knowledge of Islamic law and interpretation of the Qur'an. He proved to have administrative skills when he managed to spread security in Sijistan, which had belonged to the province of Basra, and in the region of Persia where he appointed Ziyâd ibn Abi Sufyân as its governor. He also left him in charge when he was away from Basra. He managed to establish security there. Ibn 'Abbâs is regarded as one of the most important helpers of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام); he used to accompany him during serious developments and he would advise him and speak on his behalf, and Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) relied on him and consulted him. Ibn 'Abbâs's governorship of Basra lasted until 39 AH, and the men in charge of the police force and the land tax cooperated with him. According to some reports, Ibn 'Abbâs remained in Basra until the murder of 'Ali (عليه السلام). Aṭ-Ṭabari said, concerning the events of 40 AH: "At that time, Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs left Basra and went to Makkah, according to most of the biographers. But some of them denied that and claimed that he was still in Basra, running it on behalf of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) until he was killed, and after the murder of 'Ali, al-Ḥasan made a peace deal with Mu'âwiyah, then he left and went to Makkah."¹⁴⁰

The character of Ibn 'Abbâs was that of a dedicated leader who combined qualities such as knowledge, alertness, intelligence, patience, resolve and others. He was also well known for his deep understanding and knowledge, because of the prayer of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), who asked that he be given understanding of religion and knowledge of interpretation. In addition to that, he learned from the senior Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), so he was very capable in ijtihâd and deriving rulings. He had a deep interest in the interpretation of the meanings of the Qur'an and had a distinct method of teaching his companions. He was very keen

to spread knowledge. He travelled a great deal, and he died at a relatively late stage.

He was also very close to 'Umar (ؓ);¹⁴¹ he attracted special attention from 'Umar (ؓ), who saw in him signs of smartness, intelligence and alertness. He used to bring him close to him in his gatherings, and he would consult him and ask his opinion about verses he was not sure about, even when Ibn 'Abbâs was still a young man. This had a great impact on him and motivated and encouraged him to acquire knowledge, progress further and achieve more in commentary on the Qur'an and in other fields. It was narrated from 'Âmir ash-Sha'bi that Ibn 'Abbâs (ؓ) said: "My father said to me: 'O my son, I see that Amir al-Mu'mineen ('Umar) brings you close and discusses some matter with you only and also consults you along with other Companions of the Messenger of Allah. So learn three things from me: fear Allah and do not disclose his secrets, never tell lies to him and do not backbite about anyone in his presence.'"¹⁴² 'Umar (ؓ) used to include him with the senior Companions, and that was because he saw in him deep knowledge, clear thinking and subtle understanding in deriving rulings. Ibn 'Abbâs (ؓ) said: "Umar used to ask me along with the Companions of Muḥammad (ؐ). He used to say to me: 'Do not speak until they have spoken,' then when I spoke, he would say to them: 'You have disappointed me by not being able to come up with what this boy, who is still not yet mature, has come up with.'"¹⁴³ Ibn 'Abbâs was very polite, so when he sat in a gathering in which there were people older than him, he would not speak unless permission was given to him. 'Umar (ؓ) saw that in him, so he urged him to speak, in order to give him confidence and encourage him to seek knowledge.¹⁴⁴

'Umar (ؓ) had a gathering in which he would listen to young people and teach them. Ibn 'Abbâs was one of 'Umar's favourites. It was narrated that 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Zayd said: "When 'Umar ibn

al-Khaṭṭâb (ؓ) prayed and had finished offering a voluntary prayer, he would go into a place where dates were stored, then he would call for the young men who had learned Qur'an, among whom was Ibn 'Abbâs. They would come and read Qur'an and discuss its meanings, and when the time came for the afternoon rest, they would leave. They came to this verse: ﴿And when it is said to him, "Fear Allah"﴾, he is led by arrogance to [more] crime. So enough for him is hell, and worst indeed is that place to rest! And of mankind is he who would sell himself, seeking the Pleasure of Allah. And Allah is full of kindness to [His] slaves﴾ (*Qur'an* 2: 206-207). Ibn 'Abbâs said to those who were next to him: 'The two men are going to fight.' 'Umar heard him and said: 'What did you say?' He said: 'Nothing, O Amir al-Mu'mineen.' He said: 'What did you say? The two men are going to fight?' When Ibn 'Abbâs saw that, he said: 'I see in this verse the one who, if he is told to fear Allah, he is led by arrogance to (more) crime, and I see the one who would sell himself, seeking the pleasure of Allah. So he tells the first one to fear Allah, and if he does not accept it and is led by arrogance to (more) crime, he says: I will sell myself. So the two men fight.' 'Umar (ؓ) said: 'By Allah, what a brilliant man you are, O Ibn 'Abbâs!'"¹⁴⁵

'Umar (ؓ) would ask Ibn 'Abbâs about things in the Qur'an, then he would say: "Dive deep [in knowledge], O diver!"¹⁴⁶ If difficult cases were brought to him, he would say to Ibn 'Abbâs: "O Ibn 'Abbâs, there has come to us a difficult case, and you are up to it and similar cases." Then he would follow his opinion, and he would not call anyone else for that purpose if he was faced with a difficult case.¹⁴⁷ It was narrated that Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâs said: "I never saw anyone more quick-witted, more wise, more knowledgeable and more forbearing than Ibn 'Abbâs. I saw 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb call him when there was a difficult case, then he would say: 'Here you are, here is a difficult case.' Then he would not follow any view other

than his, even though he had around him people of the Muhâjireen and Anşâr who had been present at Badr.”¹⁴⁸

‘Umar described him as “the young man of the middle aged; he has an ever-asking tongue and a smart mind.”¹⁴⁹ Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubaydullah said: “I never saw ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ﷺ) give precedence to anyone over Ibn ‘Abbâs.”¹⁵⁰ Ibn ‘Abbâs (ﷺ) stayed very close to ‘Umar (ﷺ), as he was keen to ask him questions and learn from him. Hence he (ﷺ) was one of the Companions who transmitted the most of the Qur’anic commentary and knowledge of ‘Umar (ﷺ). Some scholars have suggested that most of the knowledge of Ibn ‘Abbâs was acquired from ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with them all).¹⁵¹ ‘Umar’s care for him helped him to advance far ahead in knowledge in general and in interpreting the Qur’an in particular.¹⁵² Hence the Makkan school during the era of the Tâbi‘oon was honoured by the presence of the scholar of the Ummah and the interpreter of the Qur’an, Ibn ‘Abbâs (ﷺ).¹⁵³

At the time of ‘Uthmân (ﷺ), Ibn ‘Abbâs was one of those who were close to the caliph, and ‘Uthmân (ﷺ) appointed him to lead the people on hajj in the year in which he was killed.¹⁵⁴ Nevertheless, some of those who have been influenced by the Orientalist school of thought have tried to distort the image of this scholar of the Ummah by disseminating lies and fabrications about his life. We should remember that when it comes to the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs and the history of the early Islamic period, the Orientalist school of thought is an extension of the work of the Râfiḍî historians and extreme Shia, who fabricated reports and distorted the biographies of the noble Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). The Orientalist historians revived these false and fabricated reports, moulding and shaping them in a modern style under the slogans of objectivity and academic research. They are all lies and falsehood, but many researchers, writers and historians have

been influenced by them. Hence you find in contemporary books of history and literature, which are far removed from the methodology of Ahl as-Sunnah and based heavily on Orientalist methodology and style, very weird distortions of the lives of the Companions. One example is the claim made in these books that Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) stole the wealth of the Muslims in Basra, betrayed his cousin 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) and fled with the stolen wealth to Makkah, and that he started planning to join Mu'âwiyah¹⁵⁵ after having supported 'Ali. That was mentioned shamelessly by Dr. Taha Hussein in his book *al-Fitnah al-Kubra: 'Ali wa Banuhu*. I will quote some of what he said:

1. "Ibn 'Abbâs had knowledge of religious and worldly matters, and he had status among Banu Hâshim in particular and among Quraysh in general, and in the hearts of all Muslims, that could be sufficient to protect him from drifting away from his cousin."¹⁵⁶
2. "Ibn 'Abbâs saw that his cousin's star was in decline and that Mu'âwiyah's star was in the ascendancy, so he stayed in Basra, thinking of himself more than his cousin."¹⁵⁷
3. "Even though Ibn 'Abbâs forgot about himself (i.e., his position and how he should behave) for a little while, he did not want to put himself in a position where he should put himself, as 'Ali's governor in one of the Muslim regions."¹⁵⁸

There are also other lies and nonsense which the author took from weak and fabricated reports. It is sufficient honour for Ibn 'Abbâs that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) prayed for him, saying: "O Allah, teach him interpretation of the Qur'an and give him understanding of religion."¹⁵⁹

Ibn 'Abbâs began his work as governor of Basra after 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) left Basra for Kufah, and he joined 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) just before the Battle of Şifteen, having left Ziyâd ibn Abeehi in charge of Basra.¹⁶⁰ During his governorship of Basra, Ibn 'Abbâs accomplished a

number of things, the most important of which was putting the affairs of Sijistan in order after the murder of its governor at the hands of a group of Kharijites. On ‘Ali’s instructions, Ibn ‘Abbās sent a number of troops from Basra who managed to kill the Kharijites there, put its affairs in order and bring security to its people in 36 AH.¹⁶¹

Ibn ‘Abbās and the troops of Basra also played a role with ‘Ali ibn Abi Tālib (ﷺ) in the battle of Şifteen.¹⁶² Ibn ‘Abbās played a role in organising some of the regions belonging to his province and appointing amirs there who were under his authority. He sent Ziyād ibn Abeehi to Persia, where he managed to sort out the situation and discipline the people after they had rebelled.¹⁶³ During his time, the people of Astakhar broke their covenant, so he attacked them and disciplined them.¹⁶⁴ In 38 AH, Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abi Sufyān sent a man to Basra to promote his cause among its people, but Ziyād ibn Abeehi, who was Ibn ‘Abbās’s deputy in Basra, succeeded in resisting him until he killed the man in one of the houses of Basra.¹⁶⁵

Ibn ‘Abbās (ﷺ) accompanied ‘Ali (ﷺ) on many of his ventures in Iraq. If something happened while Ibn ‘Abbās was in Basra, he would keep ‘Ali (ﷺ) informed by means of letters that he sent to him continually; he also wrote letters to ask his opinion about many issues and matters of governorship. In 38 AH, ‘Ali (ﷺ) sent Ibn ‘Abbās as his deputy in charge of the hajj. According to at-Ṭabari, Ibn ‘Abbās (ﷺ) remained as governor of Basra until ‘Ali (ﷺ) was martyred. The governor of Basra had a number of helpers at the time of ‘Ali (ﷺ), including the judge, the chief of police, the official in charge of the land tax and others. The province of Basra also included some areas of Persia.

From the information cited above, it is clear that after allegiance was sworn to him, ‘Ali ibn Abi Tālib (ﷺ) hastened to dismiss Ibn ‘Āmir, who was ‘Uthmān’s governor in Basra, and he appointed instead ‘Uthmān ibn Haneef. Then the Battle of the Camel

led to instability, and 'Uthmân ibn Haneef lost control of Basra and was forced to leave until 'Ali (عليه السلام) got there. After the Battle of the Camel, 'Ali (عليه السلام) strove to put the province's affairs in order.¹⁶⁶ Some turmoil also occurred in Basra later as a result of the Kharijite movement and Mu'âwiyah's attempt to gain control of the region. Despite that, Basra remained one of the Islamic provinces that belonged to the caliphate throughout 'Ali's era, and his opponents did not manage to gain control of it.¹⁶⁷

In Basra, the leadership abilities of Ibn 'Abbâs came to the fore. He benefited from having kept company with 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them both), and he was deeply influenced by him. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) gave him advice and guidance, and he exhorted him from time to time. Ibn 'Abbâs said: I never benefited from the words of anyone after the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as I benefited from a letter written to me by 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام), in which he said: "A man would feel upset to miss out on what he could never have gotten, and he could be pleased to get what he never could have missed, so let your pleasure be in that which you get of matters pertaining to the hereafter, and let your regret be with regard to what you miss of that. Whatever you get of worldly gains, do not be too happy about it, and whatever you miss out on of worldly matters, do not be too upset about it; let your concern be what happens after death."¹⁶⁸

Ibn 'Abbâs was one of those who prayed qiyâm regularly. It was narrated that Ibn Maleekah said: "I accompanied Ibn 'Abbâs from Makkah to Madinah. He used to pray two by two, and he would spend half the night in prayer, reciting Qur'an slowly, letter by letter, and weeping and sobbing a great deal."¹⁶⁹ He (عليه السلام) wept so much that traces of that were left on his cheeks. It was narrated that Abu Raja' said: "I saw Ibn 'Abbâs, and the bottom of his eyes was like a worn out shoelace because of weeping."¹⁷⁰ He also used to fast on

Mondays and Thursdays. It was narrated that Sa'eed ibn Abi Sa'eed said: "I was with Ibn 'Abbâs, and a man came and said: 'O Ibn 'Abbâs, how do you fast?' He said: 'I fast Mondays and Thursdays.' He said: 'Why?' He said: 'Because deeds are taken up at that time, and I like my deeds to be taken up when I am fasting.'" ¹⁷¹

He was also very generous and acknowledged the position and status of the senior Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). Once Abu Ayyoob al-Anṣârî (ؓ) was going through some financial difficulties and was burdened with debts. He came to stay with Ibn 'Abbâs, who emptied his house for him and said: "I shall do for you what you did for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)." ¹⁷² Then he said: "How much is your debt?" Abu Ayyoob said: "Twenty thousand." So Ibn 'Abbâs gave him forty thousand, and twenty slaves, and everything that was in the house. ¹⁷³

He was one of the most eloquent of people and had an amazing ability to make listeners understand. It was narrated that al-A'mash said: "Abu Wâ'il told us: 'Ibn 'Abbâs addressed us when he was the leader of the hajj. He started to recite Soorat an-Noor, reciting and explaining the meaning. I said: I have never seen or heard a man who speaks like that. If the Persians, Romans and Turks heard him, they would become Muslim.'" ¹⁷⁴ He was one of the most handsome, most eloquent and most knowledgeable of people. It was narrated that Masrooq said: "When I saw Ibn 'Abbâs, I thought he was the most handsome of people; when he spoke, I thought he was the most eloquent of people; when he preached, I thought he was the greatest of people." ¹⁷⁵ Al-Qâsim ibn Muḥammad said: "I never saw any talk of falsehood in the gathering of Ibn 'Abbâs." ¹⁷⁶ When he (ؓ) lost his sight before his death, he said in verse concerning that:

*If Allah takes the light from my eyes,
still there is light from that light
on my tongue and in my heart...* ¹⁷⁷

He was one of the most influential people of his age. In brief, he was one of the best examples of the heirs of the Prophets.

1.9. Kufah

When ‘Uthmân (ﷺ) was martyred, his governor in Kufah was Abu Moosa al-Ash‘ari (ﷺ). After allegiance was sworn to ‘Ali (ﷺ) as caliph, ‘Ali (ﷺ) confirmed Abu Moosa in that position. Abu Moosa accepted the people’s oath of allegiance to ‘Ali (ﷺ), and he wrote to tell him about the attitude of the people of Kufah concerning swearing allegiance to him; many of them agreed to it and accepted it.¹⁷⁸ When Amir al-Mu’mineen left Madinah to go to Iraq, he started asking about Abu Moosa in particular. On the way to Iraq, he was met by a man from Kufah. ‘Ali (ﷺ) asked him about Abu Moosa, and he answered: “If you want peace and reconciliation, then Abu Moosa is the man who can help with that, but if you want to fight, then Abu Moosa is not the man who can help with that.” ‘Ali (ﷺ) said: “By Allah, I do not want anything but peace and reconciliation, unless it is rejected (by the other party).” He said: “I have told you what I know.”¹⁷⁹

Later on, it became clear that Abu Moosa was inclined towards reconciliation and making peace, and he did not want there to be fighting among the Muslims. ‘Ali (ﷺ) sent Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr, ‘Ammâr ibn Yâsir, al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Ali and others in delegations to urge the people of Kufah to mobilize before the Battle of the Camel (which we will discuss in detail below inshallah). The people of Kufah asked Abu Moosa about the situation and consulted him about going out to fight. He said: “What is in your best interests with regard to the hereafter is to stay; as for what is in your worldly interests, it is to go out on the campaign. But you know best about your situation.”¹⁸⁰ A number of the people of Kufah were convinced to go out with al-Ḥasan (ﷺ), after numerous lengthy debates

between them and al-Ḥasan. It was said that nearly nine thousand men went out with him.¹⁸¹ A number of reports suggest that the governorship of Abu Moosa ended during this period, just before the Battle of the Camel. Some reports state that al-Ashtar, "who was one of 'Ali's commanders", had expelled Abu Moosa and his workers from the palace of Kufah and had taken it over.¹⁸² There are also reports that 'Ali (ﷺ) wrote to Abu Moosa, dismissing him and appointing Qardāh ibn Ka'b al-Anṣārī as governor of Kufah in his place.¹⁸³

After the Battle of the Camel, 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) came to Kufah, and Kufah became the seat of the caliphate. He was directly in charge of Kufah and the provinces that belonged to it, and it gained a special position for the rest of his era. It was now the capital of the caliphate, from which Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) ran the affairs of the various parts of the state. It was the city to which the delegations came and from which the troops set out. That was also a means of attracting people to come and live in it. This undoubtedly played a major role in reviving commercial and development activity in Kufah throughout 'Ali's caliphate. He (ﷺ) paid a great deal of attention to it and checked on its people himself. He was also keen to appoint someone to act as his deputy in running its affairs whenever he was absent. When 'Ali (ﷺ) wanted to set out for Ṣiffēen, he appointed Abu Mas'ood al-Badrī in charge of Kufah.¹⁸⁴ When he planned to go and fight the Kharijites in Nahrawān¹⁸⁵, he appointed Hānī' ibn Hawdhah an-Nakha'i,¹⁸⁶ who remained there until 'Ali (ﷺ) was martyred.¹⁸⁷

We have seen that Kufah was run by governors until 'Ali (ﷺ) took it as the seat of the caliphate. Then he became in charge of its affairs, and he appointed people to manage its affairs when he was absent. Kufah became a city of particular importance because Amir al-Mu'mineen took up residence there.¹⁸⁸

1.10. Eastern provinces

1.10.1. Persia

The sources state that 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib appointed Sahl ibn Haneef al-Anṣârî (رضي الله عنه) as governor of Persia. He remained there until 37 AH, when the people of Persia rebelled and drove him out. 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) contacted Ibn 'Abbâs, who was in charge of Basra, and discussed with him the situation in Persia. After consulting a number of people, he agreed that Ibn 'Abbâs would send his helper, Ziyâd ibn Abi Sufyân, to handle the situation and take charge of Persia.¹⁸⁹ Here we see the clear connection between the province of Basra and the region of Persia, and how Ibn 'Abbâs felt that he was responsible for that region because he was directly in charge of Basra. Ziyâd headed for Persia accompanied by four thousand troops. He subjugated that land and put an end to the turmoil there, and he managed to put its affairs in order.¹⁹⁰ Ziyâd was well known for his great political ability, which helped him to restore stability to that land with a minimum of losses.¹⁹¹

Aṭ-Ṭabari said: When Ziyâd came to Persia, he sent for its leaders. He promised rewards to those who would support him, and he threatened others, warning them and creating divisions among them, giving intelligence about one group to another. Some of them fled, and some stayed and fought one another. Persia came fully under his control, and he did not encounter any fighting or war. He did something similar in Karmân.¹⁹² Then he went to Persia and marched through different cities, promising rewards. The people were happy with that, and the country submitted to him completely.¹⁹³ Ziyâd put the affairs of Persia in order, built some fortresses there, and organised the land tax. He brought order to many places that were under his governorship, until peace and security spread throughout the land.¹⁹⁴ Ziyâd continued as governor of Persia for the remainder of 'Ali's

caliphate. He was the most famous of ‘Ali’s governors in Persia because of his policies and his ability to control it.¹⁹⁵

There were some administrative divisions within the region of Persia, and mention is made of some governors who were in charge of certain cities within that region. In the case of Astakhar, it is stated that one of its governors was al-Mundhir ibn al-Jarood,¹⁹⁶ and there was some correspondence between ‘Ali (ﷺ) and him.¹⁹⁷ Ziyād ibn Abi Sufyān also settled there and fortified himself after the murder of ‘Ali (ﷺ).¹⁹⁸ The sources also mention Isfahan, which is regarded as one of Persia’s largest cities.¹⁹⁹ One of ‘Ali’s governors in this city was Muḥammad ibn Sulaym.²⁰⁰ One of the most famous of his governors in Isfahan was ‘Umar ibn Salamah, who brought wealth and food from Isfahan to ‘Ali ibn Abi Tālib (ﷺ).²⁰¹ Coins were minted in Persia in the year 39 AH, during the caliphate of ‘Ali (ﷺ). They bear Arabic phrases as well as the date on which they were minted,²⁰² and some of them are still preserved in the Iraqi Museum.

1.10.2. Khorasan

Khorasan was as a large province that was directly and indirectly connected to the province of Basra at the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. During the caliphate of ‘Ali (ﷺ), a number of incidents took place in this province. Many of its governors and some of the rulers of its cities are mentioned. It is narrated that the first of ‘Ali’s governors in Khorasan was ‘Abdur-Raḥmān ibn Abza.²⁰³ Another of ‘Ali’s governors in Khorasan was Ja’dah ibn Hubayrah ibn Abi Wahb,²⁰⁴ whom ‘Ali (ﷺ) sent there after returning from Ṣiffeen in 37 AH. The people of Khorasan had apostatised, and he tried to discipline them and bring order to the land once again.²⁰⁵ It seems that he did not succeed, so ‘Ali (ﷺ) sent one of his commanders to Khorasan; he managed to make a peace deal with its people and bring its affairs under control once more.²⁰⁶

Sijistan was one of the regions bordering Khorasan; both regions were to some extent connected to the governor of Basra, and there was usually an administrative connection between the two regions. The sources mentioned some of the governors of Sijistan at the time of 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام), one of whom was 'Abdur-Rahmân ibn Juz' at-Ṭâ'i.²⁰⁷ 'Ali (عليه السلام) sent him to Sijistan after the Battle of the Camel, but he was killed by some Arab thugs who spread mischief in the land. Then 'Ali (عليه السلام) wrote to Ibn 'Abbâs in Basra, instructing him to send another amir to Sijistan. Ibn 'Abbâs sent Rib'i ibn Ka's al-'Anbari, who managed to put an end to the revolution of the thugs and kill their leader, thus restoring order to the land. He stayed there until 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) was martyred.²⁰⁸

Hamadhân was one of the eastern border regions. During the caliphate of 'Uthmân (عليه السلام), it was distinguished by the presence of an independent governor. At the time of 'Uthmân's death, its governor was Jareer ibn Abdullah al-Bajali. After allegiance was sworn to 'Ali (عليه السلام) as caliph and he reached Iraq, he sent word to Jareer ibn Abdullah in Hamadhân, instructing him to receive the oath of allegiance to 'Ali (عليه السلام) as caliph from the people in this region and then to come to him.²⁰⁹ He sent this letter with a reliable man and said: "I have sent so-and-so to you, so ask him whatever you want to ask him and read this letter of mine to the Muslims."²¹⁰ Jareer came to 'Ali (عليه السلام) in Kufah, and he sent him to Mu'âwiyah in Syria. Then he went back and was exposed to some insults from some of the troops of 'Ali (عليه السلام), including al-Ashtar and others, so Jareer gave up his governorship and went and joined Mu'âwiyah in Syria. That happened just before the battle of Şiffeen.²¹¹

1.10.3. Azerbaijan

Al-Ash'ath ibn Qays was in charge of Azerbaijan when 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân died. When allegiance was sworn to 'Ali ibn Abi

Tâlib (ﷺ) as caliph, he wrote to al-Ash‘ath ibn Qays, asking him to swear allegiance to him and to receive the oath of allegiance from the people in his land.²¹² It seems that ‘Ali (ﷺ) asked al-Ash‘ath ibn Qays to come, and he joined ‘Ali (ﷺ) in Kufah; then he was present with him in all subsequent battles and took part with him in the battle of Şiffeen²¹³ and in fighting the Kharijites. It seems that ‘Ali (ﷺ) appointed Sa‘eed ibn Sâriyah al-Khuzâ‘i as governor of Azerbaijan during this period, then he re-appointed al-Ash‘ath ibn Qays later. Al-Baladhuri stated that ‘Ali (ﷺ) made it part of the province of Armenia.²¹⁴ Al-Ash‘ath ibn Qays did some important tasks for ‘Ali (ﷺ) during his governorship of Azerbaijan, such as settling some Arab groups in Ardabil²¹⁵ and turning it into a Muslim city, then building its mosque after Islam spread among its people.²¹⁶

The names of some of ‘Ali’s governors in other eastern lands are also mentioned. Al-Khirreet ibn Râshid was ‘Ali’s governor in some part of al-Ahwâz before Şiffeen. When ‘Ali (ﷺ) returned from Şiffeen, al-Khirreet began to gather troops and called for the toppling of ‘Ali (ﷺ), and he captured some places. News of that reached ‘Ali, so he sent an army that managed to put an end to this movement and kill al-Khirreet.²¹⁷ This will be discussed in detail below.

One of ‘Ali’s commanders in al-Ahwâz was Maşqalah ibn Hubayrah ash-Shaybâni.²¹⁸ He bought some captives from some of ‘Ali’s troops and bought their freedom, but he was not able to pay their price in full. Then he fled to Mu‘âwiyah in Syria.²¹⁹ Khaleefah ibn Khayyât mentioned ‘Ali’s governor in Sind and stated that he gathered some troops at the time of ‘Ali (ﷺ) and headed towards Sind after the people rallied around him, but he and the troops with him lost one of their battles, and none of his army was left except for a small group.²²⁰ Another of ‘Ali’s governors was Yazeed ibn Hajjiyyah at-Tameemi, whom ‘Ali (ﷺ) appointed as governor of ar-Rayy after Şiffeen. Later, ‘Ali (ﷺ) accused him of stealing from the

land tax revenues, so he detained him in Kufah, but he subsequently fled to Mu'âwiyah in Syria.²²¹

In al-Madâ'in, the governor was Sa'd ibn Mas'ood ath-Thaqafi, who played a principal role in confronting the Kharijites; a number of letters were exchanged among him and 'Ali (عليه السلام) and his commanders when the Kharijites tried to reach al-Madâ'in.²²² Sa'd is regarded as one of the famous commanders of 'Ali (عليه السلام). Perhaps the proximity of his city to Kufah was the main reason for his joining 'Ali (عليه السلام) in many battles. It is well known that Sa'd appointed his nephew al-Mukhtâr ibn Abi 'Ubayd ath-Thaqafi²²³ in charge of al-Madâ'in in his absence. 'Ali (عليه السلام) got angry with al-Mukhtâr ath-Thaqafi as the result of his unlawful handling of the funds from land taxes.²²⁴ The historian Abu Haneefah ad-Deenoori mentioned more names of 'Ali's governors in different regions.²²⁵

It is obvious that 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) expended a great deal of effort to organize the provinces, and that he suffered a great deal of difficulty and many problems in his position as caliph. A number of provinces were lost to him, such as Yemen, the Hijaz and Egypt. He never even gained control of some other provinces, such as Syria, Palestine and neighbouring regions. In the provinces that did remain under his control, such as Iraq and Persia, he suffered many problems, chief among which was the trouble with the Kharijites who emerged in these regions, especially in the final years of his rule. Hence stability in those regions was never complete because the original inhabitants of eastern lands such as Persia, Khorasan and Sijistan launched a number of rebellions, in which some of 'Ali's governors were killed. Some of the most prominent problems faced by 'Ali (عليه السلام) were the disputes with some governors, as a result of which they gave up their positions; these included Jareer ibn Abdullah in Hamadhân, Mafḍalah ibn Hubayrah in al-Ahwâz and others. He was faced with a number of obstacles that took up all his

energy and efforts. Thus it is clear that ‘Ali (عليه السلام) spent his entire caliphate dealing with internal struggles, which in many cases prevented him from putting the affairs of those lands in order as he wanted to do. These problems preoccupied the historians, who focused on them at the expense of discussing the administrative affairs of these provinces.²²⁶

2. Appointment of governors at the time of ‘Ali (عليه السلام)

Allegiance was sworn to ‘Ali (عليه السلام) as caliph after the murder of ‘Uthmân (عليه السلام). There was turmoil in different regions of the state as a result of ‘Uthmân’s murder; hence ‘Ali (عليه السلام) was given allegiance in difficult circumstances, in which the Islamic state began to lose a great deal of its stability and energy. This unrest emerged clearly in Madinah itself, and things became chaotic in other regions of the state, too. The sincere advisers and consultants sensed the seriousness of what was taking place, so some of them offered sincere advice to ‘Ali from the outset, especially with regard to his governors.²²⁷

2.1. Ali’s attitude towards the governors of ‘Uthmân, and his appointment of his relatives

2.1.1. ‘Ali’s attitude towards the governors of ‘Uthmân

Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) understood fully that one of the main causes of the turmoil was that some people were not pleased with the governors of ‘Uthmân (عليه السلام). That was because of the rumours spread by the leaders of the turmoil against ‘Uthmân (عليه السلام)

and his governors, not because they were incapable or unjust. Many contemporary writers, however, in their discussion of 'Ali's policies in appointing governors, start by saying that 'Ali (ﷺ) would not have agreed to leave 'Uthmân's governors in their positions for one minute after he was appointed caliph, and that what prevented him from doing so was his religious commitment and sincerity.²²⁸ How terrible this accusation is against 'Uthmân (ﷺ) and his governors. I have refuted it in my book *Tayseer al-Kareem al-Mannân fi Seerat 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân*, where I devoted an entire section to discussing the facts about the governors of 'Uthmân (ﷺ).²²⁹ Whoever wishes to know more may refer to it.

Those who criticised 'Uthmân's governors relied on reports that are well-known to be worthless, such as:

- (a) The report narrated via al-Wâqidi that Ibn 'Abbâs said: "Uthmân summoned me and appointed me in charge of the hajj, then I came to Madinah after allegiance had been sworn to 'Ali. I went to him in his house, and I found al-Mugheerah ibn Shu'bah talking to him on his own, so he told me to wait until al-Mugheerah left. I said: 'What did he say?' He said: 'He told me previously to send for Abdullah ibn 'Âmir, Mu'âwiyah and the governors of 'Uthmân, to confirm their positions so that they would get allegiance for him from the people, because they can calm people down and maintain order. But I refused at that time and said: "By Allah, if I had only a brief time to decide about them, I would not have confirmed their position, and people like them are not to be appointed as governors." Then he departed, and I knew that he thought I was mistaken. Then he came back to me just now and said: "The first time, I gave you that advice and you disagreed with me. Then I thought about it after that, and now I believe that you should do what you think best. So dismiss them, and appoint those whom you trust. Allah will suffice you,

and they are less powerful than they used to be.” ’ Ibn ‘Abbâs said: I said to ‘Ali: “He gave you sincere advice the first time; but this time he was insincere.” ‘Ali (ﷺ) said: “Why was he not sincere?” Ibn ‘Abbâs said: “Because you know that Mu‘âwiyah and his companions are people of worldly ambitions. If you confirm them in their positions, they would not care who becomes caliph, but if you dismiss them, he will say that this matter was decided without proper consultation and he is the one who killed our caliph, and they will incite the people against you. Thus the people of Syria and Iraq will all turn against you. Moreover, I cannot be certain that Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr will not turn against you.” ‘Ali said: “As for what you mentioned about confirming them in their positions, by Allah I have no doubt that that may serve some immediate worldly interest. But on the basis of what I know about the governors of ‘Uthmân, by Allah I should never appoint any one of them. If they comply, that is good for them; if they refuse, then I have to give them the sword.” Ibn ‘Abbas said: “Listen to me. Go into your house or go and live in your land in Yanbu’, and close your door. Then if you see the Arabs going through some confusion and turmoil, they will realise that they have no one else but you. But by Allah, if you join this group today, the people will blame you for the murder of ‘Uthmân tomorrow.” But ‘Ali (ﷺ) refused and said to Ibn ‘Abbâs: “Go to Syria, for I have appointed you as its governor.” Ibn ‘Abbâs said: “That is not a good idea. Mu‘âwiyah is from Banu Umayyah; he is the paternal cousin of ‘Uthmân (ﷺ), and he is his governor in Syria. I cannot be certain that he is not going to strike my neck in retaliation for ‘Uthmân; the least he can do is detain me and have control over me.” ‘Ali (ﷺ) said to him: “Why is that?” He said: “Because of the blood ties between me and you; whatever he blames you for, he will blame me for it too. Rather write to Mu‘âwiyah and make

him a promise.” But ‘Ali (عليه السلام) refused and said: “By Allah, I will never do that.”²³⁰

- (b) The second report is similar to the first report in meaning, but it contains some additional details and differences that shed doubt on its authenticity. This report says that Ibn ‘Abbās came to Makkah after the murder of ‘Uthmān (عليه السلام). On his way, he met az-Zubayr and Ṭalhah in an-Nawâsif,²³¹ on their way to Makkah with a group of Quraysh. But this is contrary to the truth, because allegiance was sworn to ‘Ali (عليه السلام) after Ibn ‘Abbās returned from hajj, and az-Zubayr and Ṭalhah swore allegiance to ‘Ali (عليه السلام). If they had left at this time, it would have been before allegiance was sworn to ‘Ali (عليه السلام). This is clearly and seriously incorrect.²³²
- (c) The report of Abu Makhnaf, which is narrated without any chain of narration, according to which al-Mugheerah ibn Shu‘bah advised ‘Ali (عليه السلام) to confirm Mu‘âwiyah’s position as governor of Syria and to appoint Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr as governors of Basra and Kufah. Ibn ‘Abbās objected to his opinion because Basra and Kufah represented sources of wealth, and if they were in charge of them, they would put pressure on ‘Ali (عليه السلام), and Mu‘âwiyah’s being governor of Syria would not benefit him and might harm him. ‘Ali listened to what Ibn ‘Abbās said, and he did not accept the suggestion of al-Mugheerah ibn Shu‘bah.²³³
- (d) The first report of al-Wâqidi in brief is narrated from Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr,²³⁴ but it mentions al-Ḥasan instead of Ibn ‘Abbās.²³⁵

The gravity of these reports stems from the fact that they formed the basis for the most important contemporary studies, which drew from them serious conclusions that undermine the status of the senior Companions and the members of the consultative committee with regard to their religious commitment, good character and

sincerity. They depict these Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) as materialistic individuals whose main concern was to accumulate wealth and power, even if that was at the expense of Muslim lives. They also suggest that the turmoil that led to the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) and the Battle of the Camel only came about because of these personal ambitions.²³⁶ The contradictions and oddness of these reports are quite clear in the texts themselves. The idea that Ibn 'Abbâs came to Madinah after allegiance had been sworn to 'Ali (ﷺ) is contrary to the trustworthy reports that say that he came before allegiance was sworn to the new caliph, as we have seen above. The idea that al-Mugheerah suggested to 'Ali (ﷺ) that he should send for Abdullah ibn 'Âmir, Mu'âwiyah and 'Uthmân's governors in order to confirm their posts, is contrary to sounder reports which indicate that most of these governors had already left their posts and headed towards Makkah, so how could he send for them to confirm their posts when they had already left their cities?

The idea that 'Ali (ﷺ) said concerning these governors: "By Allah, if I had only a brief time to decide about them, I would not have confirmed their position, and people like them are not to be appointed as governors" is contradicted by the fact that these governors were clearly qualified for their positions, and the borders of the Islamic state had expanded under their leadership. Under the governorship of Abdullah ibn 'Âmir, the Muslim conquests of Basra had reached as far as Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan. As for Mu'âwiyah, if he was not qualified, he would not have lasted as governor for twenty years. I have explained that the reason why a number of people were not pleased with 'Uthmân's governors was because of the rumours about them that were spread by those who wanted to stir up the turmoil, not because they were incapable, and the historical facts confirm that.

A worthless report depicts al-Mugheerah ibn Shu'bah as a hypocrite and a cheat who did not care about Muslim interests, especially at that critical time of turmoil. But this is not in accordance with his attitude and conduct before and after the turmoil. The report also — albeit with good intentions — depicts 'Ali (عليه السلام) as ignorant of these political issues and suggests that al-Mugheerah and Ibn 'Abbās were the ones who were skilled in such matters.²³⁷ As for the report of Abu Makhnaf that Ibn 'Abbās advised 'Ali to dismiss Mu'āwiyah and suggested that confirming his post as governor would not benefit him politically, this is contrary to the report of al-Wāqidi, in which it says that if he appointed the two great Companions, Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr, as governors of two regions of Iraq, they would keep the financial resources for their own purposes.²³⁸

The reports referred to above are worthless from the point of view of the chain of narration, and this alone is sufficient reason to reject them. But they are also odd and contradictory with regard to the content. They are reports which are based on assumptions of cause and effect. They do not transmit historical facts as they actually happened, because of whims and desires and because of interference on the part of the narrator with his Rāfiḍi inclinations. All of that had an impact on the reports.²³⁹

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali's appointment of new governors would make people more responsive to swearing allegiance to him in those distant lands, renew their energies for conquest and allow the opportunity for new talents to emerge and strive to serve the religion of Allah (ﷻ).²⁴⁰

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام) possessed leadership talent and knew how to choose the right person for the right job, and he knew what was happening at the time. He replaced some governors when he thought it was appropriate, in order to

achieve administrative and political harmony between the caliph and his helpers. 'Umar (ؓ) dismissed some of the governors who had been appointed by Abu Bakr (ؓ), and 'Uthmān (ؓ) dismissed some of the governors who had been appointed by 'Umar (ؓ). Thus 'Ali (ؓ) had the right to dismiss governors if appointing others in their places would be of benefit.²⁴¹

Some contemporary writers were mistaken with regard to 'Ali's dismissal of governors appointed by 'Uthmān, and they got carried away in their attempts to explain this attitude. Some of them interpreted it as 'Ali's being adamant in adhering to the truth and the necessity of change. Others interpreted it as being due to 'Ali's lack of political experience; they said that it may have been more appropriate politically to leave the governors, especially Mu'āwiyah, in place until the situation stabilised and allegiance could be sworn to 'Ali in the regions. These opinions are based on worthless and weak reports that describe al-Mugheerah ibn Shu'bah as giving contradictory advice about this issue.²⁴²

Moreover, as the leader, 'Ali (ؓ) had the right to dismiss all the governors of 'Uthmān if he thought that some interest would be served by that. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), who was infallible, appointed Khâlid ibn Sa'eed ibn al-'Āṣ as governor of San'â' and 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ as governor of Oman,²⁴³ but they were dismissed by the caliph Abu Bakr (ؓ) after the Prophet (ﷺ) died. He dismissed Khâlid and replaced him with al-Muhâjir ibn Abi Umayyah, who was also a Companion; and he dismissed 'Amr and put in his place Ḥudhayfah ibn Muḥsin, who was also a Companion.²⁴⁴ Abu Bakr (ؓ) appointed the two great commanders, Khâlid ibn al-Waleed and al-Muthanna ibn Hârithah (may Allah be pleased with them), but they were dismissed by 'Umar (ؓ) even though they were efficient in their jobs.²⁴⁵ 'Umar (ؓ) chose 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ (ؓ) as governor of Egypt²⁴⁶ and al-Mugheerah ibn Shu'bah (ؓ) as governor of

Kufah²⁴⁷, but they were dismissed by 'Uthmân (ﷺ), who appointed Ibn Abi Sarḥ in Egypt²⁴⁸ and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâṣ in Kufah.²⁴⁹ Would any sensible person criticise Abu Bakr, 'Umar or 'Uthmân for dismissing these capable governors? Each period has different circumstances and situations that arise, hence a successor may develop different views from his predecessor. The one who is present sees what the one who is absent does not see.²⁵⁰

As for the view of some contemporary writers that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) dismissed all the governors of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), the fact is that dismissal only took place in the case of Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân in Syria²⁵¹ and Khâlid ibn Abil-'Âṣ ibn Hishâm in Makkah.²⁵² As for Basra, Abdullah ibn 'Âmir had left it, and 'Uthmân (ﷺ) did not appoint anyone in charge of it.²⁵³ In Yemen, its governor Ya'la ibn Maniyyah (ﷺ) took the tax collected from Yemen and came to Makkah after the murder of 'Uthmân, where he joined Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr and was present with them at the Battle of the Camel. Ibn Abi Sarḥ, the governor of Egypt, came and appointed his cousin in charge in his absence, but when he went back he found that Ibn Abi Ḥudhayfah had taken over; he was expelled from Egypt and went to ar-Ramlah in Palestine, where he remained until he died.²⁵⁴ Thus the governors of Yemen and Basra dismissed themselves, and the governor of Egypt was dismissed by the one who took it over, Ibn Abi Ḥudhayfah. The governor of Kufah was confirmed in his position by 'Ali (ﷺ).

So the issue of dismissal was only applicable in the case of Mu'âwiyah, the governor of Syria, and Khâlid ibn Abil-'Âṣ, the governor of Makkah. Moreover, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) appointed the best of people to rule over the Muslims. Among the governors whom he appointed in various regions was Sahl ibn Ḥaneef in Syria; he was a great Companion who was present at Badr and Uḥud. He stood firm with the Prophet (ﷺ) on the day of Uḥud;

when the people fled, he pledged to fight to the death and began shooting arrows in defence of Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). He was also present at the Battle of the Trench and all other battles with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).²⁵⁵ 'Ali (ﷺ) appointed 'Uthmân ibn Haneef as governor of Basra; he was a Companion, one of the Anşâr, who had worked for 'Umar as a governor in Iraq.²⁵⁶ He (ﷺ) also appointed Qays ibn Sa'eed ibn 'Ubâdah as governor of Egypt;²⁵⁷ he was a generous, wise and intelligent man who had been in charge of the police force of the Prophet (ﷺ).²⁵⁸ He appointed 'Ubaydullah ibn al-'Abbâs ibn 'Abdul-Muttalib as governor of Yemen; he was a Companion²⁵⁹ who was one year younger than his brother, and he was generous, praiseworthy and noble.²⁶⁰

As for the view of some writers, that 'Ali (ﷺ) dismissed governors before receiving the oath of allegiance of the people of the regions, it should be understood that the ruler's right to appoint governors over various regions does not depend on receiving the allegiance of their people, according to all Muslims. When the prominent people and decision-makers swear allegiance to the caliph, then allegiance to him becomes binding upon all lands that are remote from the centre of the caliphate, on the basis of both Sharia and reason. If the caliph's appointment of governors in the regions depended on his receiving allegiance from their people, then one could say that allegiance to Abu Bakr (ﷺ) was not completed when he sent the army of Usâmah and sent troops to fight those who withheld zakâh before he received the allegiance of the people of Makkah, at-Tâ'if and Jawâthi in Bahrain. The same may also be said of 'Umar (ﷺ); he began his caliphate by dismissing Khâlid ibn al-Waleed and appointing Abu 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrâh as commander in chief of the Muslim army in Syria, and this was before he had received the allegiance of the people of Yemen and the Muslim armies in Syria and Iraq. 'Uthmân (ﷺ) also took decisions

concerning the Muslims' affairs before the allegiance of the regions reached him.²⁶¹

2.1.2. 'Ali's appointment of some of his relatives as governors

Contemporary writers discussed the issue of the appointment of relatives as governors by the two caliphs 'Uthmân and 'Ali. 'Uthmân appointed a number of his relatives as governors, as has been discussed, but only five out of eighteen governors were from Banu Umayyah. When 'Uthmân (ﷺ) was martyred, only three governors were from Banu Umayyah: Mu'âwiyah, Abdullah ibn Sa'd ibn Abil-Sarḥ and Abdullah ibn 'Âmir ibn Kurayz. 'Uthmân dismissed al-Waleed ibn 'Uqbah and Sa'eed ibn al-'Âṣ, but he dismissed them from Kufah, from which 'Umar had dismissed Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâṣ, too. Kufah had never accepted any governor, so the fact that 'Uthmân (ﷺ) dismissed them should not be regarded as a criticism of them, and it does not undermine their status; rather it undermines the status of the city to which they were appointed as governors.²⁶²

Moreover, those governors who were relatives of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) had already proven their ability in handling the affairs of their provinces. Allah (ﷻ) had granted conquest of many lands at their hands, and they had treated the people in a just and kind manner. Some of them had been appointed to governorship before 'Uthmân's caliphate, at the time of Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them).²⁶³ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Alî (ﷺ) followed the same method as 'Uthmân (ﷺ) in appointing those of his relatives who were qualified, able and suited to the position of governor; they were sons of his paternal uncle al-'Abbâs ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib and their names, in order, were: Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs, 'Ubaydullah ibn 'Abbâs, Qatham and Tamâm the sons of al-'Abbâs, and his stepson

Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr. In fact, examining the issue will prove that both 'Ali and 'Uthmân appointed those they thought most suitable, and it cannot be imagined that they would give precedence to their relatives because of blood ties. The circumstances in the provinces dictated careful selection of governors with regard to ability and honesty. The conquests in the eastern lands were not yet stable, let alone the problems caused by the Kharijites during 'Ali's caliphate.²⁶⁴ If we study the lineages of 'Ali's governors, we will find that 11 out of 36 governors were Anṣâr while seven of them were from Quraysh, among whom were the four sons of al-'Abbâs ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib. The following is a list of governors during 'Ali's caliphate:²⁶⁵

- 1- Sahl ibn Ḥaneef al-Anṣâri (Madinah)
- 2- Tamâm ibn al-'Abbâs ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib (Madinah)
- 3- Abu Ayyoob al-Anṣâri (Madinah)
- 4- Abu Qatâdah al-Anṣâri (Madinah)
- 5- Qatham ibn al-'Abbâs ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib (Makkah and al-Ṭâ'if)
- 6- 'Umar ibn Abi Salamah (Bahrain)
- 7- Qudâmah ibn al-'Ajlân al-Anṣâri (Bahrain)
- 8- An-Nu'mân ibn al-'Ajlân al-Anṣâri (Bahrain)
- 9- 'Ubaydullah ibn 'Abbâs (Yemen and Bahrain)
- 10- Sa'eed ibn Sa'd ibn 'Ubâdah al-Anṣâri (Najd)
- 11- Mâlik ibn al-Ashtar (Mesopotamia then Egypt)
- 12- Shubayb ibn 'Âmir (Mesopotamia)
- 13- Kameel ibn Ziyâd an-Nakha'i (Mesopotamia)
- 14- Muḥammad ibn Abi Ḥudhayfah ibn 'Utbah (Egypt)
- 15- Qays ibn Sa'd ibn 'Ubâdah al-Anṣâri (Egypt)
- 16- Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq (Egypt)

- 17- 'Uthmân ibn Haneef al-Anşâri (Basra)
- 18- Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs (Basra)
- 19- Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali (Kufah)
- 20- Hâni ibn Hawdhah an-Nakha'i (Kufah)
- 21- Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari (Kufah)
- 22- Abu Mas'ood al-Badri (Kufah)
- 23- Qardhah ibn Ka'b al-Anşâri (Kufah)
- 24- Sahl ibn Haneef al-Anşâri (Persia)
- 25- Ziyâd ibn Abi Sufyân (Persia)
- 26- Al-Mundhir ibn al-Jarood (Astakhar)
- 27- 'Umar ibn Salamah (Isfahan)
- 28- Muḥammad ibn Saleem (Isfahan)
- 29- Khulayd ibn Qurrah at-Tameemi (Khorasan)
- 30- 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Abza (Khorasan)
- 31- Ja'dah ibn Hubayrah ibn Abi Wahb (Khorasan)
- 32- 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Juz' at-Tâ'i (Sijistan)
- 33- Rib'i ibn Ka's al-'Anbari (Sijistan)
- 34- Jareer ibn Abdullah al-Bajali (Hamadhân)
- 35- Al-Ash'ath ibn Qays al-Kindi (Azerbaijan)
- 36- Sa'eed ibn Sariyyah al-Khuzâ'i (Azerbaijan)
- 37- Al-Khirreet ibn Râshid an-Nâji (al-Ahwâz)
- 38- Masqalah ibn Hubayrah ash-Shaybâni (al-Ahwâz)
- 39- Yazeed ibn Hajiyyah at-Tameemi (ar-Rayy)
- 40- Sa'd ibn Mas'ood ath-Thaqafi (al-Madâ'in)
- 41- Al-Ḥârith ibn Murrah al-'Abdi (as-Sind)²⁶⁶

‘Uthmân and ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with them) were two Rightly Guided Caliphs whose example is to be followed and whose deeds are to be regarded as constitutional precedents for this Ummah. Just as ‘Umar set a precedent for those who came after him of being reluctant to bring relatives to help in managing the affairs of state, ‘Uthmân and ‘Ali set a precedent for those who came after them of bringing relatives close if they are qualified.²⁶⁷

2.2. Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali’s keeping an eye on his workers, and some of his instructions

Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ) kept a close eye on his governors, checked on how they were doing in their jobs and enquired about them. He employed a number of means of doing that, such as sending inspectors to the provinces to ask the people about them; asking some governors about others and instructing them to check on them. He wrote to Ka‘b ibn Mâlik: “Appoint someone to be in charge and go out with a group of your companions until you pass through the land of Kawrah as-Sawâd, then ask about my workers and see how they are conducting themselves.”²⁶⁸ ‘Ali (ﷺ) also relied on secret reports sent to him by his inspectors in those provinces, whose mission was unknown to the governors.²⁶⁹ These inspectors may have been employees of the governor or they may have been others who were unknown; they may have been residents of that province or they may have been moving from one province to another. The existence of the secret reports is indicated by what was written by ‘Ali (ﷺ) to these governors, and perhaps the intervention of some people between Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ) and his governors was the reason for some of his governors giving up their posts and refusing to continue working, such as the intervention of al-Ashtar between ‘Ali and Jareer ibn Abdullah al-Bajali, and the intervention of some people between ‘Ali and Maşqalah ibn

Hubayrah.²⁷⁰ 'Ali (ﷺ) threw the door wide open for any complaints against any of his governors, and if he heard a complaint about any of them, he would say: "O Allah, I did not instruct them to wrong any of Your creation or to neglect Your rights."²⁷¹ He detained one of his governors and disciplined him and beat him with a stick after he heard complaints about him and the accusations were proven.²⁷²

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) was always advising his governors. When he appointed Qays ibn Sa'd him as governor of Egypt, he told him: "Go there, and take people whom you trust and love to accompany you. Take troops with you until you get there, because that will be more frightening to your enemies and more encouraging to your followers. When you get there inshallah, be kind to those who do good, and be harsh towards those who do evil. Be kind to the common folk and prominent people alike, for kindness is a blessing."²⁷³ Another example of his advice to Qays ibn Sa'd appears in one of his letters, where he said: "Collect your tax on the basis of truth, treat your troops kindly and fairly and teach those who are around you of that which Allah has taught you."²⁷⁴ Some of the letters that were sent to various regions appointing governors included advice and instructions, such as the letter that 'Ali (ﷺ) sent to Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr concerning the governorship of Egypt, which he read out to the people. It contained some advice to the public and to the governor himself.²⁷⁵

There was frequent communication between 'Ali (ﷺ) and his governors, whether it took the form of written or verbal messages or of direct communication, which took place primarily when the governors came to Kufah to meet Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali or when they joined him in fighting the Kharijites and others. There is no report to suggest that Amir al-Mu'mineen went for hajj and met his governors during the pilgrimage while he was the caliph, as was the way of the previous caliphs; rather he would send one of those whom

he trusted as his deputy, such as the sons of al-'Abbâs and others. The governors of the East were in contact with 'Ali more often because they were closer to Kufah and their delegations came to the city more often. 'Ali often gave instructions in the form of advice explaining to them how to do their work; sometimes this advice was written, and other times it was verbal. One of the letters of Amir al-Mu'mineen to his workers says: "You are the keepers of the people's treasure, the representatives of the Ummah and the envoys of the rulers. Do not prevent anyone from meeting his needs, and do not prevent him from seeking what he wants. When collecting the land tax, do not force the people to sell their winter or summer garments, any mount they need for their work, or any slave. Do not whip anyone for a dirham, and do not touch the wealth of anyone, whether he is a Muslim or a non-Muslim who has been granted protection."²⁷⁶

Some of the chiefs brought a complaint to 'Ali (ﷺ) about one of his workers, so he wrote to that worker, saying: "Some of the chiefs of your people complained about your being harsh, hardhearted, disrespectful and hostile. I studied the issue, and I realised that they are not fit to be brought close to you because they are polytheists, but they should not be pushed away altogether or be treated cruelly, because of the covenant. So wear for them a garment of softness mixed with a little strictness, alternating between strictness and kindness towards them, bringing them close to you sometimes and keeping them away from you sometimes, inshallah."²⁷⁷

2.3. The extent of power and authority granted to governors of the time of 'Ali (ﷺ)

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) refused to grant all authority to a single person; his principle was to distribute powers and limit individual authority. He appointed Ibn 'Abbâs as governor of Basra,

but he appointed Ziyâd in charge of the land tax and the public treasury. He did not stop there, though; he also ordered Ibn 'Abbâs to listen to and obey Ziyâd.²⁷⁸ This was perfect administrative control. Ziyâd was to obey Ibn 'Abbâs as governor of Basra, and Ibn 'Abbâs was to obey Ziyâd within the framework of his work in the public treasury and handling the land tax. As for judiciary matters, 'Ali (ﷺ) appointed Abu al-Aswad ad-Du'ali in charge of them.²⁷⁹

In the covenant that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) drew up for Mâlik ibn al-Ashtar, we may note the powers granted to the governors. We will try to make the picture clearer by mentioning the following details:

2.3.1. Appointment of government ministers

Amir al-Mu'mineen said in the covenant he drew up for Mâlik ibn al-Ashtar: "The worst type of government minister is the one who was a minister for an evil person before him. The one who joined them in their sin should not be part of your inner circle, for they were the helpers of sinners and the brothers of wrongdoers. You will find far better than them to take their places, among those who are as smart and as competent as they are, who do not have burdens of sin like theirs, who did not help the wrongdoer in his wrongdoing or the sinner in his sin. These people will be less of a burden to you and a better help to you; they will be more compassionate and loving towards you."

In this text that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) wrote in the form of advice, we may observe the following points:

- (a) Appointment of government ministers is part of the governor's role.
- (b) The conditions according to which the governor must select his ministers.

- (c) What the relationship between the governor and the minister should be like.
- (d) The role of the minister.

As for the number of government ministers, it was not mentioned by Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام). He referred to them in the plural, and it seems that their number was connected to how much help the governor needed, because the role of the minister is to help the governor in his job. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) listed the following conditions for government ministers:

- The appointee should not previously have been a minister for evil people.
- The governor should select one from among the total number of ministers to be his deputy and helper in running things. He should select him based on what 'Ali (عليه السلام) said:²⁸⁰ "Then let the one who is more favoured by you be the one who can utter the word of bitter truth to you, and the least helpful to you with regard to things that Allah disapproves of for His friends, regardless of whether that pleases you or not."²⁸¹
- As for their roles, they come under the heading of assistance, but the specific details are for the governor to decide, and he may determine the functions of his ministers according to his needs.
- Contact between the ministers and the governor should be direct.²⁸²

2.3.2. Formation of consultative committees

This was to be done by seeking the help of scholars and wise men, who are the decision-makers, and people of experience. The

following text is narrated concerning them: "And discuss a great deal with the scholars, and talk with the wise people, so as to establish that which serves the interests of your province and that which serves the interests of the people."²⁸³

This text is a confirmation of the importance of bringing together scholars and wise people in organised advisory committees. They may be appointed by the governor or elected by the people. There were no specific instructions from Amir al-Mu'mineen as to how these committees were to be formed; he simply asked the governors to "discuss a great deal with the scholars, and talk with the wise people." As to how that was to be done, were they to meet on the instructions of the governor, or were they to be elected by the people? This is something concerning which Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) did not give definitive instructions; he left it to be done according to circumstances which dictated how these committees were to be selected, either by appointment of the governor or election by the people. As for the role of this committee, it was to study and research in order to define the general policies with regard to two issues:

- (a) Defining policies which served the interests of the province.
- (b) Defining policies which served the interests of the people.

This meant drawing up the basic guidelines for everything that had to do with serving the interests of the land and the people, whether it was with regard to how the wealth of the public treasury was spent; appointments to different administrative positions; or offering services to different classes of traders, craftsmen and farmers. This committee was more like what is known as a local council that is established in the type of states where the system is based on decentralisation.²⁸⁴ Elsewhere, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) mentioned the qualities required in these consultants and

assistants: "Then stay close to the people of dignity and prominent people, those who come from righteous families and who have a track record of good deeds; then those who are chivalrous, courageous, generous, tolerant and easy-going, for they are among the noblest of people and the best of them."²⁸⁵ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) mentioned the importance of taking care of these councils and checking on them. He said: "And check on them the way parents check on their child, and never think that it is too much to help them in a way that strengthens and supports them. Do not think little of any kindness that you show them, because that will motivate them to be sincere towards you and to think highly of you. Do not miss out on taking care of their minor affairs while you are taking care of their major affairs, for there is room for your small acts of kindness that may benefit them, just as there is room for your major support that they cannot do without."²⁸⁶

2.3.3. Establishing and equipping the army

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) said to Mâlik an-Nakha'i: "The closest of your troop commanders should be those who would offer the most help and support to the people under them. Be generous with them from your resources so that they will have enough for themselves and their families, and so that they will all focus equally on jihad against the enemy, for your compassion towards them will make their hearts inclined towards you."²⁸⁷ What we learn from this text is:

- (a) It is necessary to have a military force to defend the province.
- (b) Forming this military force and preparing it is the responsibility of the governor, and expenditure on it comes from the provincial treasury.
- (c) Appointment of military commanders is the responsibility of the

governor, and there are conditions to which he must adhere when selecting commanders for the army. It is essential to take care of the commanders so that they will all focus equally on fighting the enemy.²⁸⁸ Your compassion towards them will make their hearts inclined towards you.²⁸⁹

2.3.4. Drawing up foreign policy in war and peace

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) said to his governor Mâlik al-Ashtar: "Do not reject a peace deal that your enemy calls you to if it is pleasing to Allah, for in a peace deal there is rest for your troops, relief from your distress and security for your land. But be very careful with your enemy after the peace deal, for his aim may be to stab you in the back. Be smart, for there is no room for thinking positively of your enemy. If you reach a deal with your enemy and have a covenant with him, then make sure that you fulfil the terms of the deal. Be honest and sincere, and adhere to the deal regardless of the cost; there is nothing among the obligations of Allah, that all people are agreed to venerate despite the differences in their views and inclinations, that is more important than fulfilment of covenants. Even the polytheists among themselves adhere to fulfilment of covenants when they have a deal that excludes the Muslims, because of what they realise of the evil consequences of treachery. So never betray your covenants, and never betray your enemy, for no one has the audacity to challenge Allah except one who is ignorant and doomed. Allah has made a covenant in His name a source of security among people by His mercy, and He has made a covenant like a sanctuary in which they seek protection and under the shade of which they find comfort. So there should be no evil-doing or treachery and no betrayal, and do not enter a covenant that may involve ambiguity.²⁹⁰ Do not resort to misinterpretation after agreeing and confirming. If you have committed yourself to something that is difficult for you but is

binding upon you by the covenant of Allah, do not try to nullify it unlawfully, because your patience in bearing something that is difficult for you, while hoping for relief and good consequences, is better than committing an act of betrayal for which you fear bad consequences and that will bring the punishment of Allah.”

Based on this text, the governor may undertake the following duties:

- Signing peace deals with neighbouring states and nations.
- Preparing for war and taking necessary precautions. (These first two items — being prepared for war and signing peace deals — will involve many activities such as exchanging letters and delegates, exchanging visits and holding dialogues.)²⁹¹
- Fulfilling covenants, which is one of the basic principles of the Islamic religion that every Muslim must adhere to.²⁹² Adhering to covenants and deals, according to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali, was not only something theoretical that was written on paper; rather it was a practical matter in real life. Allah warned against breaking covenants in many verses in the Qur'an. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And fulfil the Covenant of Allah [Bay'ah: pledge for Islam] when you have covenanted, and break not the oaths after you have confirmed them — and indeed you have appointed Allah your surety. Verily, Allah knows what you do﴾ (Qur'an 16: 91). Allah also said: ﴿And fulfil [every] covenant. Verily, the covenant will be questioned about.﴾ (Qur'an 17: 34)

2.3.5. Maintaining internal security

Maintaining internal security is done by following peaceful methods. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) wrote to some of his workers: “Some of the chiefs of your people complained about your

being harsh, hardhearted, disrespectful and hostile. So wear for them a garment of softness mixed with a little strictness, alternating between strictness and kindness towards them, bringing them close to you sometimes and keeping them away from you sometimes.”²⁹³ This policy is for the purpose of maintaining internal security; if something happens to disturb this mission, then the role of the governor is to try to solve problems in a peaceful manner that is furthest removed from using force, rejecting the policy of using force against the people.²⁹⁴ In his letter to Mâlik ibn al-Ashtar, ‘Ali (ﷺ) said: “Do not try to strengthen your authority by shedding blood that is protected by divine law, for that is going to shake and weaken it; it will cause its decline and loss.”²⁹⁵

2.3.6. Forming the judiciary in the province

Amir al-Mu'mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ) said: “Then select to judge between people one whom you think is the best of your people, one who is unflappable, who does not get offended by opponents, who does not get carried away if he makes a mistake, who would not refrain from turning towards the truth when he recognises it, who does not have greed and ambitions, who is not content with one explanation only before listening to all others, who takes his time and does not rush into passing judgement on ambiguous issues, who relies most on evidence, who does not get annoyed with people referring to him and coming back to him, who is most patient in studying and examining the case until it becomes clear, who is the most decisive once the verdict becomes clear in his mind, who does not become too proud if he is praised and is not tempted easily. Such men are few. Then check regularly on the way he handles cases, and be generous towards him so that he will not be in a state of poverty or need, and thus he will not need people. Show great respect to him, so that no one could hope to get his way with him of people who are

close to you, and so that he can feel safe and secure with you from the aggression of people close to you.”²⁹⁶

From this text we learn the following:

- (a) The governor is responsible for appointing judges.
- (b) The governor is required to adhere to strict standards in selecting judges.
- (c) The governor must take care of judges completely, so that they do not feel that they need anything from others.²⁹⁷

2.3.7. Financial administration

The sources for financial expenditure in the province were zakâh, charity, booty (ghaneemah and fay'), land tax revenues and customs duties. These funds were to be placed in the public treasury, which was the place where the Muslim public funds were collected. There was a worker in charge of the public treasury who recorded all the wealth that came into it and all expenditure that went out of it. The public treasury played an important role in decentralised administration. The wealth that was collected was spent first on the province's affairs, such as employees, workers, judges, the needy, development and so on. Whatever was left over was sent to the capital of the caliphate. The public treasury was regarded as the heart of the province which circulated blood through the veins of the different departments.²⁹⁸

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "Look at what you have collected of the wealth of Allah, and spend it on those with you who are in need and hungry."²⁹⁹ As we have mentioned, part of this wealth came from the land tax, which is a levy that was imposed on cultivated land; it was the main source for paying salaries of those employed by the province. Whatever was left over of that was to be distributed to the poor and needy. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali said: "All

people are dependent on the land tax and those who pay it.” What is meant by people here is employees and soldiers in general, of whom Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: “The affairs of the troops cannot be sound without what Allah has granted of the land tax.”

Amir al-Mu'mineen instructed the people to invest in the land by developing and cultivating it. He said: “You should focus more on developing and cultivating the land than on collecting the land tax, because it cannot be gotten except by developing and cultivating the land. Whoever seeks the land tax without developing and cultivating the land will cause ruin to the land and the people.”³⁰⁰ That is because farming the land will provide additional financial resources that may be useful for paying salaries and other expenses. Covering this expenditure is done independently from the central government, which has a share in these resources after the province takes what it needs and sends the rest to the capital. Amir al-Mu'mineen (عليه السلام) said: “What is left over from that, send it to us so that we may spend it on those who are with us.”³⁰¹

Another important expenditure of the province was the development of rivers. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) wrote to Qaradhah ibn Ka'b al-Anṣārī: “Some of the dhimmis and manual workers mentioned a river in their land that disappeared and was buried. They have the right that the Muslims should develop it, so get together and see what you can do, then develop it and restore the river, for by Allah, developing the lands around the river is dearer to me than if they were to leave and fall short in their duties that could serve the best interests of the land.”³⁰²

2.3.8. Workers who work for the governors, and checking on them

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: “Then look at the affairs of your workers, and employ them on a probationary basis. Do not

appoint them on the basis of favouritism and preferences, because that will lead to injustice. Seek those who have experience and are modest, people from righteous families who have seniority in Islam, as they are nobler in character and better in background, have less worldly ambitions and are more farsighted. Then be generous in giving them salaries, for that will help them to take care of themselves and make them have no need of what they are handling, and leave them with no excuse to disobey you or betray you. Check on their work, and send spies from among the trustworthy and loyal people to spy on them, for your checking on them secretly would motivate them to be sincere and kind to the people. If one of them makes a treacherous move, you will get news of him through your spies, and that will be proof enough for you; then you will be able to punish him physically and hold him responsible for his mistakes in his work, and to bring humiliation upon him and label him as a betrayer, putting around his neck a necklace of shame.”³⁰³

Here he is talking about employees who work under the governors and are in charge of cities and villages, as well as tax collectors. They shoulder a great responsibility because their work is directly connected to the people. From this text, the importance of these workers in the administrative system becomes clear, because they represent the executive authority. It is essential that their needs be met, so that they will not covet the wealth or rights of others.³⁰⁴ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) pointed out the importance of spies or watchdogs, whose job involves oversight of departments, administrative bodies and the treasury. They are to be appointed by the governor and are responsible to him. They should be people who are sincere, so that their reports will be realistic and true. They should also be loyal, so that their aim is to serve the state sincerely.

After they submit their reports to the governor, he should carefully verify what is in these reports and not hasten to pass

judgement on individuals. One of the roles of this department is to keep a watchful eye on merchants and tradesmen, so as to prevent them from hoarding and causing harm to the people. In his letter to al-Ashtar, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ؑ) indicated that the governments of the Rightly Guided Caliphs had always been directly concerned with the people's affairs; they monitored their situation and tried to find out about any shortcomings at both the individual and group level. This is a Qur'anic principle which Allah (ﷻ) stated on the lips of the prophet Sulaymân (ؑ): «He inspected the birds, and said: 'What is the matter that I see not the hoopoe? Or is he among the absentees? I will surely punish him with a severe torment or slaughter him, unless he brings me a clear reason.'» (Qur'an 27: 20-21) Just as Sulaymân (ؑ) checked on the birds, the caliphs were required to pay attention to every individual and to show care to each one, especially the weak. No doubt the leadership requires committees, institutions and departments so that it will be able to carry out this great task. Sulaymân (ؑ) was concerned with following up on the troops and tradesmen, especially if he was suspicious about their situation, so when he did not see the hoopoe, he hastened to ask: "What is the matter that I see not the hoopoe?" Meaning, "Is he absent?" It is as if he was asking whether what he thought was correct.³⁰⁵ Then he said: "Or is he among the absentees?" This second question was asked in a more stern tone, after he asked the first question in a gentle manner. Sulaymân (ؑ) wanted it to be understood that he was asking about one who was absent, not only out of compassion, but also out of strictness if his absence was not due to an excuse.³⁰⁶ The era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (may Allah be pleased with them) represented a practical implementation of the Qur'anic concepts. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ؑ) highlighted the importance of the Muslim state's security apparatus, which sought to gather news and information so that it could be employed in the service of the religion, spreading sublime

principles, noble aims and perfect examples, and putting an end to the seeds of corruption in the different departments on which the administration of the state was based.

2.3.9. Levels of society

Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) said: “It should be noted that the people are of different levels; they cannot be sound except with the help of one another and they cannot do without one another. Some of them are the troops of Allah; some of them are scribes both public and private; some of them are judges who judge on the basis of justice; some of them are government employees (civil servants) who deal with people directly; some of them are people among the dhimmis who made a covenant with the Muslims, who pay the jizyah and land tax; some of them are merchants and tradesmen; some of them are the lower levels, the needy and poor. For each of them, Allah has stated the dues and entitlements in His Book or in the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ), and it is a covenant from Allah to which we adhere... None of them can do without tradesmen and craftsmen, what they set up of businesses and markets,³⁰⁷ and what they could supply and do that others cannot do. Then there is the lowest level of society, people of need and poverty, who are entitled to help and support.”

Then he enjoined kindness to the merchants and craftsmen, saying: “Then be kind to the merchants and craftsmen, and advise others to be kind to them, both those who are settled and those who are travelling with their wealth, and the one who puts up with physical hardship during travel. They are the ones who bring all benefits and different types of goods from far and wide, which people cannot go and bring for themselves and would not have the courage to do so. They are peaceful, and there is no fear of them causing trouble. Check on the affairs of those who are around you in your

provinces and those who are scattered in other areas of the province. You should be aware that many of them are stingy and miserly, and that they may resort to hoarding what people need and trying to control the prices. That is harmful to the public, and it is something shameful for the province to allow. So prevent hoarding, for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) forbade it. Transactions should be done on a tolerant and easy-going basis, on the basis of fairness and on the basis of prices that are not unfair to either party. Whoever engages in hoarding after you have forbidden it, punish him, but without going to extremes.”³⁰⁸

We may note from the words of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) that the merchant class is one of the most important sectors of society. Hence he advised his governors to pay attention to them by creating a department to take care of this sector and supervise their work, so that they would not behave in a negative manner, such as being stingy or hoarding and the like. Craftsmen are subject to the same problems as merchants, so it is essential that there should be a department to take care of them and help them to do their work.³⁰⁹

Another of these sectors, or levels, of society are the people who pay the land tax; they are the ones who work the land by farming, tilling and digging wells. They need attention and the formation of committees to be in charge of them and to solve the problems they are facing, because this is the way to develop and invest in the land.

Another level is the dhimmis who live and work in the Islamic state. It is essential for the state to monitor their affairs through a department that looks after their economic and social affairs.³¹⁰

Then there is the last level, that of the poor and needy, including those who are in severe poverty and the chronically ill. This level includes both the beggar and the one who does not ask, as well as orphaned families and the elderly who have no means of

income, but would not ask for themselves. The state is responsible for taking care of them completely by addressing their social, economic and educational needs. The governor has to set aside time to meet with them so that they will not feel deprived, and he should check on their situation himself, directly. He has to create the right environment so that these deprived people have the opportunity to speak to the governor.³¹¹

2.3.10. Training, and disciplining with reward and punishment

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "The one who does good and the one who does evil should not be treated equally, because that will make those who do good lose interest in doing good, and will encourage the evildoers to persist in doing evil. Treat each one of them in the way he deserves. Remember that there is nothing that the leader can do to make the people under him think more positively of him better than treating them kindly, reducing the burden on them, and refraining from forcing them into something that is beyond them. Doing this will create an atmosphere of mutual trust and positive thinking, because mutual trust will prevent a lot of trouble. The one who is more deserving of your trust is the one who tries his best to help you. This is disciplining with reward and punishment. The noble Qur'an speaks of this and clearly shows its features in the story of Dhul-Qarnayn, in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿He said: 'As for him [a disbeliever in the Oneness of Allah] who does wrong, we shall punish him, and then he will be brought back unto his Lord, Who will punish him with a terrible torment [hell]. But as for him who believes [in Allah's Oneness] and works righteousness, he shall have the best reward, [paradise], and we [Dhul-Qarnayn] shall speak unto him mild words [as instructions].'﴾ (Qur'an 18: 87-88)"

The Rightly Guided Caliphs' method of leading by example is what gave a strong incentive to the doers of good to increase their good deeds. It also released the positive energies that made them do more good and feel respected and appreciated, delivered a rebuke to the evildoers so that they would give up doing evil, widened the circle of good and righteousness in society, and narrowed the circle of evil to the smallest possible diameter, according to the laws of reward and punishment. This is what was taught by Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام).

2.3.11. The role of the deputies and leaders in bringing stability to the provincial system

The Muslims acknowledged the leaders in the second oath of allegiance at al-'Aqabah, when the Messenger (ﷺ) appointed twelve leaders from among the Anṣâr over the people, three from the tribe of al-Aws and nine from the tribe of al-Khazraj.³¹² The system of leaders and deputies continued among the Muslim troops during 'Umar's time. In the battle of Qâdisiyyah, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâs used this concept to organise the army, which was made up of a number of assembled tribes. He appointed commanders for the troops and appointed a deputy for every ten men. This system of deputies was also followed at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), and that continued until he began to allocate stipends and put in charge of the banners men who had seniority. He also divided people into groups of ten, and over each group, he appointed a man who was known for his service to Islam.³¹³

'Umar (عليه السلام) is regarded as the first one to organize people in the regions into groups. During this time, the role of the deputies in the provinces became prominent, and they became responsible before the governor for their tribes and the groups who joined them, according to the way in which people were organized at that time.³¹⁴

The system of deputies continued throughout the reigns of 'Uthmân and 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them both). 'Ali (عليه السلام) used to gather the leaders and give them stipends, which they in turn divided among the people under their responsibility.³¹⁵ The governors benefited from the deputies in the administration of their provinces with regard to various civil and military matters. They helped to distribute the stipends to the people, to establish law and order in the provinces, to search for those who were wanted for justice and others, to mobilise the people quickly when needed and to consult with the people. The leaders also played a role in finding out whose name was to be added to the rolls for receiving stipends and whose name was to be erased, and various other matters. Thus the deputies were among the most important employees of the governors in the administration of their regions, even though, in most cases, they were not fully devoted to this job; they were no more than people who would help when needed.

In many cases, the organization of people under the deputies and leaders was done along tribal lines. When the number of non-Arabs becoming Muslim increased, and they began to live in the cities built by the Muslims, the organization of people along tribal lines began to decline gradually.³¹⁶ Still, that system was in operation for most of the time during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (may Allah be pleased with them).³¹⁷

Also under the authority of the governors were some senior army commanders whose role was to lead specific sections of the army; they undertook conquests upon instructions of the governors. The commanders would also accompany the governor, who was the war leader, in various campaigns and help him to organise and lead the army.³¹⁸ The commanders of mobilisation came after the governor; after them came the commanders of the groups of ten, then the banner carriers, then the commanders and tribal chiefs.³¹⁹

The deputies would also listen to their people's suggestions and complaints of social injustice and convey them on their behalf, speaking in their name and defending their rights before the governor and others.³²⁰

2.4. Administrative concepts of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام)

2.4.1. Emphasising the human element

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) wrote to one of his workers: "Some of the chiefs of your people complained about your being harsh, hardhearted, disrespectful and hostile... So wear for them a garment of softness mixed with a little strictness, alternating between strictness and kindness towards them, bringing them close to you sometimes and keeping them away from you sometimes, inshallah."³²¹ The leader should pay attention to the psychological state of the people under him and draw up his administrative plan in the light of this reality. He should strike a balance between the importance of keeping things in order and the reality that results from human and psychological conditions. It is wrong to base administrative theory on strict and fixed rules that do not pay attention to the human factor or to the impact of circumstances, as if the administrative system of any organisation, system, movement, party, group or club is operating in a vacuum in isolation from external and internal influences.³²²

2.4.2. The experience and knowledge factor

In this regard, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) confirmed the importance of the leader having experience and knowledge. If that is the case, then he has the right to be obeyed; otherwise he should not be obeyed. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "You should obey

the one whom you have no reason not to obey on the basis of his ignorance.”³²³ If he is ignorant, then they have no reason to obey him, because he may lead them to doom. He also said: “There is no obedience to any created being if it involves disobedience towards the Creator.”³²⁴ The ignorant one, who has no knowledge of different issues, will end up committing disobedience towards the Creator by doing something *ḥarâm*.³²⁵

2.4.3. Relationship between the leader and the follower

This relationship is not to be based on hierarchy; rather it is to be based on common interests between the leader and his followers. Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) said to his governor when he sent him to Egypt: “There are matters that you have to deal with directly, such as discussing with your workers matters that could not be dealt with by correspondence; and dealing with people’s needs, which your workers could not handle, as soon as you hear about them.”³²⁶ Here we see a situation that cancels out this hierarchy completely; if the governor could not do this task, he may delegate this work to some people whom he trusts. ‘Ali (عليه السلام) said: “Check on those people who cannot meet you, people who are looked down on by others and to whom people show disrespect; allocate to these people a man whom you trust and who is pious and humble, and let him tell you about their needs.”³²⁷ This is clearly ignoring the bureaucratic attitudes that assume that everything should be done in strict accordance with the system, that no one has the right to go against the system, and that whoever goes against it is seen as breaking the system.

Then Amir al-Mu’mineen (عليه السلام) explained the harm that results from irresponsible rigidity and adherence to procedure: “The governors’ creating a barrier between themselves and the people represents a kind of hardship and lack of knowledge of what is

happening; keeping away from them creates a barrier that may make them have no idea of what they are deprived of. A prominent man may become insignificant in their eyes, and an insignificant man may become prominent; what is bad may become good and vice versa; and truth will be mixed with falsehood.”³²⁸ This is the harm of administrative procedures and strict adherence to them; matters become ensnared in longer chains of procedures as they move from one official to another and to a third and fourth and fifth, until they reach the ordinary people. This procedural chain that is occurring away from the direct supervision of the leader may turn things upside down; thus what is minor becomes major, what is true becomes false, what is good becomes bad and what is bad becomes good, as Amir al-Mu'mineen (عليه السلام) said. This is the problem with bureaucratic systems, because they rely on chains of people through which administrative matters go one after another, and the people get diverted from their goals. The remedy offered by Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) is not to create barriers between an official and the people working under him, because doing that causes him to change his decisions or to implement them in a very bad way that is contrary to the good that he was aiming for.

The mission or role of the leader is not limited to meeting with the people under him; rather he should provide a secure environment that enables the people under him to discuss their problems in a safe atmosphere and without any fear. The aim is not to have pointless meetings; it is essential to create a suitable atmosphere for these meetings so that they are useful. 'Ali (عليه السلام) said concerning that: “Allocate some of your time for those who need something from you, and sit with them in a public gathering. Show humility towards Allah Who created you, and keep away from that gathering your soldiers, helpers, bodyguards and police, so that they may be able to speak to you without stumbling over their words.”³²⁹ He sent a letter to his

cousin, Qatham ibn al-‘Abbâs, in which he said: “There should not be any envoy between you and the people except your tongue, and no gatekeeper except your face.”³³⁰ There are other texts confirming the nature of the relationship between the leader and his followers and stating that it should not be based on means or administrative restrictions or procedures; rather it should be based on face-to-face talk when there is a need for that.³³¹

2.4.4. Fighting rigidity

There are some administrative theories and systems which lead to rigidity, a waste of time and effort, and neglect of people’s rights. Moreover, there are many ideas that no one thinks of attempting in the first place, because it would take too long to get approval for them through administrative channels. Hence Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) said that whoever gives in to slow procedures will neglect rights and duties.³³²

2.4.5. Proper and fair supervision

Supervision is important in any administrative system. Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) referred to this supervision when he said: “...and send spies from among the trustworthy and loyal people to spy on them, for your checking on them secretly would motivate them to be sincere and kind to the people.”³³³ According to Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام), supervision and checking is a mercy and support to the one who is supervised, so that he will continue to carry out this work sincerely. Supervision must be done by people who are sincere and honest, so that their evaluation will be fair and not affected by whims and desires. This supervision is a helping factor in achieving progress and motivating individuals to work and to be honest in their work. Rigid laws have no place in the administrative thought of Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali when these laws and regulations

become obstacles preventing individuals from moving forward in the system or a cause of rights and duties being neglected.³³⁴

2.4.6. Appointment to official positions should be done in accordance with guidelines and not personal connections

In this regard, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) confirmed his appointment of his governor in Egypt: "Then look at the situation of your workers, and appoint them after you test them; do not appoint them on the basis of favouritism or for personal reasons. It is essential to carry out preliminary tests on a person whom you plan to employ for some job. The leader has to keep away from personal reasons when employing or promoting people to high positions." Then Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "Then look at the situation of your scribes, and let the best of them be in charge of your affairs,"³³⁵ not the closest of them to your heart or your family. There is no room for connections and emotions; the standard is the truth, in addition to the ability to do the job with honesty and sincerity.³³⁶

2.4.7. Proper management

In the letter of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) to al-Ash'ath ibn Qays, this concept (of proper management) becomes clear: "Your position is not a reward; rather it is a trust placed on your shoulders, and you are responsible to those above you."³³⁷ This indicates that Amir al-Mu'mineen regarded administrative work as a trust, and the person in a position of responsibility has to render this trust as is and take care of it. He is responsible before Allah (ﷻ) to do it properly, and he is responsible before his superiors, "those above you", as an acknowledgement of the importance of the hierarchical system. This was an important factor in bringing about the control and

administration that prevented all aspects of negligence and deviation.³³⁸

2.4.8. Taking part in decision-making

If we reread these texts of Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) that encourage consultation, we will find that the point of this encouragement was to create participation in decision-making. There should not be just one person who makes the decisions, whether that person is a military leader, a financial leader, a manager or an official in a position of responsibility in any field. Joint decision-making usually leads to the correct decision,³³⁹ because many minds are working together. It allows people with experience and knowledge to contribute; the decision, which is based on comprehensive discussion, will be agreed upon by many and thus will be closer to being correct.³⁴⁰ Seeking advice and discussion guarantees success. Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) said: “Seek the advice of others, for success lies in seeking advice.”³⁴¹

Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) did not define a particular way or style for consulting and seeking advice; rather he gave us a general principle and told us about the benefits of applying that principle. No field is exempt from the need for seeking advice; it is necessary in every activity in a person’s life and becomes even more necessary when the activity involves or affects a group of people and not just one individual. If we examine these sayings, we will see that the correct decision comes as a result of exchanging ideas,³⁴² and the importance of lengthy and comprehensive discussion on the part of those who are in charge of reaching the right decision will become clear.³⁴³

2.4.9. Importance of making a good choice of employees for the state and offering them material and psychological protection

Making good choices will prevent problems that may arise as a result of weakness in the employee or as a result of his not feeling able to fit into the work environment. If we examine the letter of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) to Mālik al-Ashtar an-Nakha'i, we will find the important conditions that he set out when selecting his workers: "Then look at the affairs of your workers, and employ them on a probationary basis. Do not appoint them on the basis of favouritism and preferences, because that will lead to injustice. Seek those who have experience and are modest, people from righteous families who have seniority in Islam, as they are nobler in character and better in background, have less worldly ambitions and are more farsighted."³⁴⁴

These are many conditions, and they are not limited to ability to do the work; attention should also be paid to the psychological and social aspects of the worker's character, so that he will not be overcome by worldly ambitions and will not easily change his intentions and goals. It is also essential to note his social attitudes and his ability to adapt to a new social environment. At this point the responsibility of the governor comes into play: "Then be generous in giving them salaries, for that will help them to take care of themselves and make them have no need of what they are handling, and leave them with no excuse to disobey you or betray you."³⁴⁵

Then he said: "When all these qualities are combined in an individual, and he is paid well, then this will be a motive for him to be sincere in his work and persist in his efforts to make the province or the institution prosper." Elsewhere he says: "...be generous towards him so that he will not be in a state of poverty or need, and thus he will not need people. Show great respect to him, so that no one could

hope to get his way with him of people who are close to you.”³⁴⁶ These are the factors that protect senior officials from going down the road of accepting bribes or selling out for money:

- (a) Paying generously and covering all his needs so that he will feel independent.
- (b) Showing respect to him so that he will have job security and feel that his post is safe.

What more could the employee want if his life is secure and his job is stable? This type of security for senior state employees may also be applied in large companies, giant corporations and leaders of Islamic movements; it is a comprehensive guarantee for the employee that should be granted to the workers, according to the best administrative principles. Even the Japanese administrative systems do not grant the employee this level of security of life and provision; the employee receives a fixed salary, but that salary may not be enough to cover all his expenses, so what will he do in that situation? His need may push him to commit immoral actions. The administrative system of Amir al-Mu'mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) dictated that the employee should be given enough security and money so that he could attain independence of means. In other words, it is not sufficient to give a monthly salary only; rather the standard is to fulfil all his needs and, moreover, to give him job security.³⁴⁷ “Show great respect to him, so that no one could hope to get his way with him of people who are close to you.”³⁴⁸

2.4.10. Learning from people of experience

People of experience are a source of real knowledge, and it is natural that the seeker of knowledge can benefit more from traders (people with real-life knowledge) than from those who studied theoretical knowledge only. The Japanese benefited from this principle when they turned their factories into universities in which

'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib

VOLUME TWO

علي بن أبي طالب

Dr. Ali M. Sallabi

Translated by

Nasiruddin al-Khattab

الدار العالمية للكتاب الإسلامي

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Arabic honorific symbols used in this book

(ﷲ) : *Subhânahu wa ta'âla* — “The Exalted”

(ﷺ) : *Şalla-Allâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* — “Blessings and peace
be upon him”

(ﷺ) : *‘Alayhis-salâm* — “May peace be upon him”

(ﷺ) : *Raḍiya-Allâhu ‘anhu* — “May Allah be pleased with him”

(ﷺ) : *Raḍiya-Allâhu ‘anha* — “May Allah be pleased with her”

Pronunciation and Transliteration Chart

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Transliterated as:
أ	short 'a', as in <i>cat</i>	a
آ - ع	longer 'a', as in <i>cab</i> (not as in <i>cake</i>)	â
ب	/b/ as in <i>bell</i> , <i>rubber</i> and <i>tab</i>	b
ت	/t/ as in <i>tap</i> , <i>mustard</i> and <i>sit</i>	t
ة	takes the sound of the preceding diacritical mark sometimes ending in h (when in pausal form): ah, ih, or ooh; or atu(n), ati(n) or ata(n) when in uninterrupted speech	h or t (when followed by another Arabic word)
ث	/th/ as in <i>thing</i> , <i>maths</i> and <i>wealth</i>	th
ج	/j/ as in <i>jam</i> , <i>ajar</i> and <i>age</i>	j
ح	a 'harsher' sound than the English initial /h/, and may occur medially and in word-final position as well	h
خ	as in <i>Bach</i> (in German); may occur initially and medially as well	kh
د	/d/ as in <i>do</i> , <i>muddy</i> and <i>red</i>	d
ذ	as in <i>this</i> , <i>father</i> , and <i>with</i>	dh
ر	/r/ as in <i>raw</i> , <i>art</i> and <i>war</i> ; may also be a rolled r, as with Spanish words	r

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Transliterated as:
ز	/z/ as in <i>zoo</i> , <i>easy</i> and <i>gaze</i>	z
س	/s/ as in <i>so</i> , <i>messy</i> and <i>grass</i>	s
ش	as in <i>ship</i> , <i>ashes</i> and <i>rush</i>	sh
ص	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /sw/ or /s/ farther back in the mouth	ṣ
ض	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing /d/ farther back in the mouth	ḍ
ط	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing /t/ farther back in the mouth	ṭ
ظ	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing 'the' farther back in the mouth	<u>dh</u>
ع	no close equivalent in English: a guttural sound in the back of the throat	‘
غ	no close equivalent in English, but may be closely approximated by pronouncing it like the French /ʁ/ in 'rouge'	gh
ف	/f/ as in <i>fill</i> , <i>effort</i> and <i>muff</i>	f

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Transliterated as:
ق	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing /k/ farther back in the mouth	q
ك	/k/ as in <i>king</i> , <i>buckle</i> and <i>tack</i>	k
ل	/l/ as in <i>lap</i> , <i>halo</i> ; in the word <i>Allah</i> , it becomes velarized as in <i>ball</i>	l
م	/m/ as in <i>men</i> , <i>simple</i> and <i>ram</i>	m
ن	/n/ as in <i>net</i> , <i>ant</i> and <i>can</i>	n
ه - ه - ه	/h/ as in <i>hat</i> ; unlike /h/ in English, in Arabic /h/ is pronounced in medial and word-final positions as well	h
و	as in <i>wet</i> and <i>away</i>	w
و (as a vowel)	long u, as in <i>boot</i> and <i>too</i>	oo
ي	as in <i>yet</i> and <i>yard</i>	y
ي (as a vowel)	long e, as in <i>eat</i> , <i>beef</i> and <i>see</i>	ee
ع	glottal stop: may be closely approximated by pronouncing it like 't' in the Cockney English pronunciation of <i>butter</i> : bu'er, or the stop sound in <i>uh</i> — <i>oh</i> !	' (Omitted in initial position)

Diphthongs:

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Transliterated as:
أَوْ ، و	Long o, as in <i>owe</i> , <i>boat</i> and <i>go</i>	au, aw, ow
أَي ، ي	Long 'a', as in <i>able</i> , <i>rain</i> and <i>say</i>	ay, ai, ei

Diacritical marks (tashkeel):

Name of mark	Pronunciation	Transliterated as:
َ fathah	very short 'a' or schwa (unstressed vowel)	a
ِ kasrah	shorter version of ee or schwa (unstressed vowel)	i
ُ Dammah	shorter version of oo	u
ّ shaddah	a doubled consonant is stressed in the word, and the length of the sound is also doubled	Double letter
◌ sukoon	no vowel sound between consonants or at the end of a word	Absence of vowel

About the word 'Lord'

The word *lord* in English has several related meanings. The original meaning is 'master' or 'ruler', and in this sense it is often used to refer to human beings: 'the lord of the mansion' or 'Lord So-and-So' (in the United Kingdom, for example). The word *Lord* with a capital L is used in the lexicon of Islam to refer to the One and Only God-Allah. In Islam, there is no ambiguity about the meaning of this word. While it is true that one may occasionally use the word *lord* (whether capitalized or not) to refer to a human being, in Islamic discourse the reference of this term is always clear from the context. Whereas for Christians, Hindus and other polytheists, the word *Lord* with a capital L may refer to Allah, to Jesus or to some imagined deity, for Muslims, there can be no plurality of meaning. Allah alone is the Lord, and the Lord is Allah — not Jesus, not Rama, not any other being.

The Editor

CHAPTER SIX

The Battles of the Camel and Šiffeen, and the Issue of Arbitration

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make ye peace between them: but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight ye [all] against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah; but if it complies, then make peace between them with justice, and be fair: for Allah loves those who are fair [and just]. The Believers are but a single Brotherhood: So make peace and reconciliation between your two [contending] brothers: And fear Allah that ye may receive Mercy.﴾

(*Qur'an* 49: 9-10)

It was narrated that Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) said: "It was said to the Prophet (ﷺ): 'Why don't you go to Abdullah ibn Ubayy (to persuade him to accept Islam)?' So he went to him, riding a donkey, and the Muslims set out too, and (they passed over) saline ground. When the Prophet (ﷺ) came to him, he said: 'Do not come near me, for by Allah the stench of your donkey offends me.' One of the Anṣâr said: 'By Allah (ﷻ), the donkey of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) smells better than you do.' One of Abdullah's people got angry on his behalf, then the two groups got angry with one another and hit each another with palm branches, hands and shoes. We heard that the following words were revealed concerning them: ﴿If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make ye peace between them.﴾ (*Qur'an* 49: 9)"¹

It was narrated from al-Ḥasan, from ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭalḥah, from Ibn ‘Abbās concerning that verse, ﴿If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make ye peace between them: but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight ye [all] against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah,﴾ (*Qur’an* 49: 9) that Allah (ﷻ) commanded the Prophet (ﷺ) and the believers that if two groups among the believers fight, they should call them to the ruling of Allah and reach a fair deal between them. If they respond, then they should be judged in accordance with the Book of Allah, so that the group that was wronged may settle scores with the group that wronged them. If they refuse to comply, then they have committed a transgression, and it is the duty of the leader of the believers to fight them until they comply with the command of Allah and accept His ruling.²

The words of Allah (ﷻ), ﴿If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make ye peace between them﴾ mean that the people in authority must try to reconcile between them by advising them and calling them to the rule of Allah (ﷻ), discussing with them and trying to remove any misunderstanding and causes of dispute. The word ‘if’ serves to point out that it is not proper for fighting to take place between the Muslims; if it happens, it is something very rare. This verse is addressed to the people in authority, and the order is binding.³ (Bukhari and others quoted this verse as evidence that no matter how great a sin may be, it does not put one beyond the pale of Islam;⁴ this is contrary to the opinion of the Kharijites, who said that the one who commits a major sin is a disbeliever who will be in hell.) It is recorded in *Şaḥeeḥ al-Bukhari* that Abu Bakrah⁵ (رضي الله عنه) said: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) gave a speech one day, and with him on the minbar was al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه). The Prophet (ﷺ) started looking from him to the people, and he said: ‘This son of mine is a leader, and perhaps Allah will reconcile two great groups of the Muslims through

him.”⁶ It occurred as he said; through him, Allah (ﷻ) brought about reconciliation between the people of Syria and the people of Iraq, after the battles that took place between them.⁷

The words of Allah (ﷻ): ﴿But if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight ye [all] against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah﴾, mean that if one of the two groups transgressed and violated the rights of the other, and then they do not pay attention to the rulings of Allah or to advice, then the Muslims have to fight them until they come back to the ruling of Allah (ﷻ). The instruction in this verse of not transgressing or fighting is applicable whether that is done with or without weapons. The mediator who tries to reconcile between the two sides should do whatever is needed to achieve the goal, as long as it is in accordance with the command of Allah. If the goal can be achieved without resorting to the use of weapons, then that is the best solution; if there is no other option than using force, then he should do that until they comply.

The words of Allah (ﷻ): ﴿But if it complies, then make peace between them with justice, and be fair: for Allah loves those who are fair [and just]﴾, mean that if the group that is wrong gives up its transgression, after fighting, and accepts the command and rule of Allah, then the Muslims must be fair when judging between the two groups. They should judge in accordance with the ruling of Allah and put a stop to the abuse by the disobedient group; it must cease its transgression and give to the other group what is due, so that the fighting will not be resumed later. And be just, O you mediators, in judging between them, for Allah loves those who are just and gives them the best rewards. This is a command to be just in all matters.⁸ The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Those who are fair and just will be with Allah on thrones of light, at the right hand of the Most Merciful (ﷻ), and both of His hands are right hands, those who are fair and just in their

ruulings and towards their families and those who are under their authority.”⁹

Then Allah enjoined reconciliation among the Muslims in cases other than fighting, even in the slightest dispute. He (ﷺ) said: «The Believers are but a single Brotherhood, so make peace and reconciliation between your two [contending] brothers» (*Qur'an* 49: 10). This verse contains one of the basic principles that govern relationships between one Muslim and another.¹⁰ Allah (ﷻ) did not say that either or both groups are disbelievers, even in a case where fighting occurs between them. The most deserving of people to be included in the meaning of this verse are the leaders of the believers, the noble Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), whether that is with regard to the Battle of the Camel or Şiffeen. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) applied this verse as he strove to bring about reconciliation, and Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr responded, but the followers of Abdullah ibn Saba' were the cause of the fighting that broke out between the two sides, as we will discuss below.

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) was also keen to set things straight with the people of Syria, and he did all that he could through peaceful means. However, Mu'âwiyah stipulated that the killers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) should be handed over, and fighting took place. Mu'âwiyah's opinion was mistaken; the correct view was that of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ). He only unsheathed his sword after all attempts at reconciliation had failed, intending for Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ) to follow the command of Allah (ﷻ) and hear and obey, and to bring about unity in the Muslim state.

The words of Allah (ﷻ), «The Believers are but a single Brotherhood» affirmed the brotherhood of faith among all the Muslims who are engaged in fighting each other. It is appropriate that this should be applicable to 'Ali, Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with them all) in the Battle of the Camel and to what

happened with Mu'âwiyah at Şiffeen. Hence it becomes clear to us that the fighters at the Battle of the Camel and at Şiffeen were believers on both sides. These historical events should not be used as a pretext for undermining the position of the Companions, trying to deny that they were believers, or spreading distorted and fabricated stories about them. To refute those false notions concerning them, it is sufficient to note that this verse confirms that they were brothers in faith. We will discuss what happened between them in more detail below.

Allah (ﷻ) states that the believers are brothers in faith. They are united by a single principle, which is faith, so reconciling between two disputing brothers is necessary. To emphasise the importance of reconciling between two brothers, Allah (ﷻ) enjoined taqwa in this context. The basis of this attempt to reconcile, and in all your affairs, should be taqwa, demonstrated by adhering to truth and justice. Do not be biased, and do not incline to one of the two parties; they are all your brothers, and Islam treats all people equally, so there is no differentiation between them. Do that so that you may receive mercy because of piety, which means adhering to the commands and heeding the prohibitions.¹¹

The verse states that reconciling between brothers and fearing Allah (ﷻ) is the cause of the mercy of Allah coming down, so this highlights the great importance of reconciliation between Muslims.¹² It may be noted that he said: Fear Allah when two men dispute; he did not say that with regard to reconciling between two Muslim groups, because when two men dispute, there is the fear that the conflict may widen, but when two groups dispute, the impact of the turmoil and mischief is already affecting everyone.¹³

In the verse, ﴿The Believers are but a single Brotherhood﴾, the Arabic word *innama* (translated here as 'but') is exclusive. It means that there is no brotherhood except among the believers; there is no

brotherhood between a believer and a disbeliever, because Islam is the bond that unites its followers. It also indicates that the command to reconcile is only issued because there is brotherhood in Islam and not among the disbelievers. If a disbeliever is a *dhimmi* or a person living under Muslim protection, then it is obligatory to take care of him, protect him and relieve him of oppression, just as it is obligatory to help the Muslim and support him in general if his opponent is a non-Muslim in a state of war against the Muslims.¹⁴

Ibn al-‘Arabi said: “This verse is the main guideline when fighting Muslims who base their reasons for fighting on misinterpretations. It was a reference point for the Companions on this issue, and the Prophet (ﷺ) referred to it when he said: ‘ ‘Ammâr (ibn Yâsir) will be killed by the group that is in the wrong,’ meaning that fighting the group that is in the wrong is a communal obligation; if some of the Muslims undertake to do that, the obligation is waived from the rest. Hence some of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) stayed away from this matter, such as Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqâs, Abdullah ibn ‘Umar, Muhammad ibn Maslamah and others. Each of them gave his apologies, and Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ) accepted that from them.”¹⁵ There are many rulings that we will discuss when we look at the various events that took place among the Companions.

This system, of arbitration and fighting the group that is in the wrong until it complies with the command of Allah (ﷻ), is regarded as a pioneering system that came before other human attempts at setting up systems of that nature; it is perfect and free from the flaws and defects that are apparent in all imperfect and feeble human attempts. Moreover, it has the attributes of being clean, honest, just and universal, because referring to that system is like referring to something that is not affected by any ulterior motives or whims and desires, and is not affected by any shortcomings or defects.¹⁶ The

attempts to bring about reconciliation did not cease from the moment fighting broke out until they were crowned by the great reconciliation that was planned by Amir al-Mu’mineen al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Ali (عليه السلام).

1. Events that preceded the Battle of the Camel

The murder of ‘Uthmân (عليه السلام) was a cause of many other difficulties, and it cast its shadow over the turbulent events that followed it. Many factors contributed to the murder of ‘Uthmân (عليه السلام), including: prosperity and its impact on society; changes in the nature of society during his reign; the fact that ‘Uthmân (عليه السلام) came after ‘Umar (عليه السلام); the departure of the senior Companions from Madinah; tribalism; the cessation of conquest; ignorant displays of piety; personal ambitions on the part of some people; the conspiracy of those who were full of hate; careful preparation of a list of accusations against ‘Uthmân (عليه السلام); various ways and means that were used to stir up the people; and the role of Abdullah ibn Saba’ in the turmoil. These causes and reasons have been discussed in detail in my book *Tayseer al-Kareem al-Mannân fi Seerat ‘Uthmân ibn ‘Affân*.¹⁷

The people loved ‘Uthmân (عليه السلام) very much because of his good conduct, his closeness to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), the hadiths that praised him, and the fact that he married two of the Prophet’s daughters (which is why he was called Dhun-Noorayn).¹⁸ He was one of the senior Companions who were given the glad tidings of paradise. He was subjected to injustice during his lifetime by some of the thugs; he could have put an end to them, but he refrained for fear of being the first one to shed the blood of the Ummah of Muhammad (ﷺ). His policy in dealing with the turmoil was based on forbearance, deliberation and justice. He prevented the

Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) from fighting the rebels and chose to protect the Muslims by giving his own life. Hence his killing was the cause of a great deal more turmoil, and his murder cast a shadow on the subsequent turbulent events.

His killing had a great impact on the Muslims. The Muslim society fractured as a result of this major event, and the people became divided. What may increase his status and prove his innocence of everything that was attributed to him is the attitude of the other Companions towards his murder. They were all agreed that he was innocent and that those who shed his blood should be punished, but they differed as to how that was to be achieved. This will be discussed below, but first we want to shed some light on the role of Abdullah ibn Saba' in the turmoil in general:

1.1. Impact of the Saba'is in causing turmoil

1.1.1. The Saba'is — fact or fiction?

The reality of Abdullah ibn Saba'

The early scholars were unanimous in agreeing that the Saba'is existed; there were no exceptions among them. A few modern scholars, most of whom are Shias, disagreed with that. They claimed that the Saba'is were a product of the imagination of Sayf ibn 'Umar at-Tameemi. Some of the scholars of biography criticised Sayf in the field of hadith narration, but the scholars regard him as acceptable in the field of historical reports. Moreover, Ibn 'Asâkir narrated many reports that mention Abdullah ibn Saba', and these reports do not include Sayf ibn 'Umar as one of the narrators. Al-Albâni ruled that some of these reports were sound in terms of their chains of narration.¹⁹ These are in addition to the many reports narrated from Ibn Saba' in the Shia books of sects, biographies and hadith, in which there is no mention of this Sayf ibn 'Umar at all.

Creating doubts about the existence of Abdullah ibn Saba' began with two purposes: on the one hand, to deny the role of the Jewish element in planting the seeds of turmoil among the Muslims, and on the other hand, to point the finger of accusation against the Companions. The rogue elements attempted to tarnish the bright image of the Companions in the minds of Muslims, by claiming that the Companions caused the turmoil. Some contemporary writers, all of whom were Râfiḍi Shias, followed in their footsteps and denied the existence of Abdullah ibn Saba' for their own purposes. These failed attempts were aimed at proving that their madh-hab had nothing to do with its real founder, contrary to the facts on which all earlier scholars, including the Shia, were agreed.

It is worth pointing out that those so-called Sunnis who denied the existence of Abdullah ibn Saba' were among those who were influenced by, or studied under, the Orientalists. What level of shamelessness and ignorance have these people reached? His biography filled books of history and Muslim sects, his deeds were transmitted by narrators and his story was known throughout the Muslim world. The historians, scholars of hadith and authors of books on sects and groups, biography, literature and genealogy who discussed the Saba'is were all unanimously agreed that the Abdullah ibn Saba' who appears in accounts of the turmoil was a real historical character. The reports of Ibn Saba's role in the turmoil are not limited to *Tareekh at-Ṭabari* and are not based only on the reports of Sayf ibn 'Umar at-Tameemi contained therein; there are widespread reports in the narrations of earlier scholars and throughout the books that record the events of Islamic history and discuss the views of different sects during that period. However, the advantage that Imam at-Ṭabari had over others is that he had more abundant material and more details. Hence shedding doubts on these events without any evidence, on the grounds that Abdullah ibn Saba' is only mentioned

in reports via Sayf ibn ‘Umar, even after it has been proved that he is mentioned in sound reports that do not include Sayf ibn ‘Umar in their chains of narration, as we have mentioned above, only leads to rejecting all these reports and labelling those narrators and scholars as foolish people who are distorting the historical facts. Since when does an academic methodology based on pure rational thinking form a basis for rejection, as opposed to texts and corroborating reports? Is this methodology based on overlooking and ignoring all the sources, both earlier and later, which prove that Ibn Saba’ was a real person?²⁰ Ibn Saba’ is mentioned in many books of Ahl as-Sunnah, including the following:

The Saba’is are mentioned by A’sha Hamadân²¹ (d. 83 AH). He lampooned al-Mukhtâr ibn Abi ‘Ubayd ath-Thaqafi and his supporters from Kufah, after he fled with the nobles of the tribes of Kufah to Basra, by saying: “I bear witness that you are Saba’is, and I am aware of you, O guardians of disbelief.”²²

There is a report from ash-Sha’bi (d. 103 AH/721 CE) saying that the first one who told lies was Abdullah ibn Saba’.²³ Ibn Ḥabīb²⁴ (d. 245 AH/860 CE) mentioned Ibn Saba’ and regarded him as one of the children of the Ethiopian women.²⁵ Abu ‘Âṣim Khushaysh ibn Aṣram (d. 253 AH) narrated a report about ‘Ali (عليه السلام) burning some of the companions of Ibn Saba’, in his book *al-Istiḳâmah*.²⁶ Al-Jâhidh²⁷ (d. 255 AH) is regarded as one of the first to refer to Abdullah ibn Saba’,²⁸ but his report is not the first, as Dr. Jawâd ‘Ali thinks.²⁹

The story of ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (عليه السلام) burning a group of heretics is mentioned in sound reports that are narrated in the books of *hadith*.³⁰ There is nothing strange about using the word ‘heretic’ with regard to Abdullah ibn Saba’ and his group. Ibn Taymiyah said: “The Râfiḍi ideas started with the heretic Abdullah ibn Saba’.”³¹ Adh-Dhahabi said: “Abdullah ibn Saba’ was one of the extreme

heretics; he was misguided and misled others.”³² Ibn Ḥajar said: “Abdullah ibn Saba’ was one of the extreme heretics... he had followers who were called Saba’is, who believed in the divinity of ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷺ). ‘Ali burned them with fire during his caliphate.”³³

Ibn Saba’ is also mentioned in the books of hadith criticism. Ibn Ḥibbân (d. 354 AH) said: “Al-Kalbi, Muhammad ibn as-Sâ’ib al-Ikhlâ’î, was a Saba’i, one of the followers of Abdullah ibn Saba’, one of those who said that ‘Ali did not die and that he will come back to this world before the Hour begins. If they saw a cloud, they would say: ‘The Amir al-Mu’mineen (meaning ‘Ali) is in it.’”³⁴ The books of genealogy also confirm that the Saba’i group is named after Abdullah ibn Saba’, and that they are a group of extreme Râfiḍis. Abdullah ibn Saba’ was originally from Yemen, a Jew who became a Muslim outwardly. Sayf ibn ‘Umar was not the only source for reports about Abdullah ibn Saba’. In his *Tareekh*, Ibn ‘Asâkir narrated reports which have no connection to Sayf, which confirm the existence of Ibn Saba’.³⁵ Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (d. 728 AH) stated that the origins of the Râfiḍi sect lay with the hypocrites and heretics, and that it was the invention of the heretic Ibn Saba’, who exaggerated about ‘Ali (ﷺ), claiming that he should have been caliph, that he was appointed by a clear text, and that he was infallible.³⁶ Ash-Shâṭibi³⁷ (d. 790 AH) pointed out that the innovation of the Saba’is was one that had to do with belief in the existence of another god besides Allah (ﷻ), and this was an innovation that differed from others.³⁸ In *al-Khuṭaṭ* by al-Maqreezi (d. 845 AH), it says that Abdullah ibn Saba’ appeared at the time of ‘Ali (ﷺ), saying that ‘Ali (ﷺ) was the rightfully appointed successor³⁹ and would return, and promoting belief in the transmigration of souls.⁴⁰

The Shia sources which mention Ibn Saba’ include the following:

Al-Kashshi narrated that Muhammad ibn Qawlawiyyah said: "Sa'd ibn Abdullah told me: Ya'qoob ibn Yazeed and Muhammad ibn 'Eesa told me, from 'Ali ibn Mahziyâr, from Faḍḍâlah ibn Ayyoob al-Azdi, that Abân ibn 'Uthmân said: I heard Abu Abdullah say: 'May Allah (ﷻ) curse Abdullah ibn Saba', for he claimed that ('Ali) was divine, but by Allah, ('Ali) was an obedient slave. Woe to the one who tells lies about us. If people say of us things that we do not say about ourselves, we disavow ourselves of them before Allah.'"⁴¹ The chain of narration of this report is sound.⁴²

In *al-Khiṣâl*, al-Qummi narrated the same report, but in connection with a different chain of narration. The author of *Rawḍât al-Jannât* mentioned Ibn Saba' in a quotation from Imam aṣ-Šâdiq, who cursed Ibn Saba' and accused him of lying, fabricating, broadcasting secrets and misinterpreting.⁴³ In his book, Dr. Sulaymân al-'Awdah mentioned a number of texts with which the Shia books are filled, and their reports from Abdullah ibn Saba', which are more akin to recorded documents that condemn anyone among the later Shia who tries to deny the existence of Abdullah ibn Saba' or shed doubt on the reports that refer to him on the basis of paucity or weakness of the reports.⁴⁴

Ibn Saba' was an actual historical figure, concerning whom there is no confusion in either the Sunni or Shia sources, earlier or later. This is also the view of most of the Orientalists such as Julius Falhausen,⁴⁵ Van Fulton,⁴⁶ Levi de la Vida,⁴⁷ Goldziher,⁴⁸ Ronald Nicholson,⁴⁹ and Dwight Ronaldson.⁵⁰ For a few Orientalists such as Caetani and Bernard Lewis,⁵¹ Ibn Saba' remains a doubtful figure or no more than a myth; Fred Lander remains uncertain.⁵² However, we should remember that we do not rely on these authors with regard to our history.

The one who studies these sources, ancient and modern, Sunni and Shia, will be certain that Abdullah ibn Saba' really existed and

that his existence is supported by the historical reports. The books of ‘aqeedah, hadith, biography, genealogy, literature and language also mention him a great deal. This idea was accepted by modern scholars and researchers. It seems that the first ones to shed doubt on the existence of Ibn Saba’ were some of the Orientalists; then this doubt was shared by the majority of modern Shia, and some of them denied his existence altogether. Among modern Arab researchers, there were some who admired the ideas of the Orientalists and were influenced by the books of the modern Shia. Nevertheless, none of them has anything to support the suspicions and denials except doubt itself, which is based on whims and desires, speculations and assumptions.⁵³ Whoever wishes to find out more about the Sunni, Orientalist and Shia references which mention Ibn Saba’ may refer to *Tahqeeq Mawâqif as-Şaḥâbah fil-Fitnah* by Dr. Muhammad Amhazon and ‘*Abdullah ibn Saba’ wa Atharuhu fi Aḥdâth al-Fitnah fi Şadr al-Islam* by Dr. Sulaymân ibn Ḥamad al-‘Awdah.

1.1.2. The role of Abdullah ibn Saba’ in stirring up fitnah

In the last years of ‘Uthmân’s caliphate, signs of trouble in the Muslim society began to loom on the horizon, due to the changes that we have listed previously. Some of the Jews seized this opportunity to stir up trouble, by using the tactic of taqiyyah and pretending to be Muslim. Among them was Abdullah ibn Saba’, who is also known as Ibn as-Sawda’. We should not exaggerate his role in the fitnah, as some have done,⁵⁴ but we should not cast doubts on it either, or discount the role that he played. His role was only one of several factors, but it was the most prominent and the most dangerous. The atmosphere of turmoil paved the way for him, but there were other factors that helped him too. All that Ibn Saba’ did was to spread views and beliefs that he fabricated himself. They reflected his

hateful nature, and he propagated them for his own purposes, namely to introduce new ideas into the Muslim society in order to destroy its unity and stir up unrest. He planted seeds of division among the people, and that was one of several factors that led to the murder of the caliph ‘Uthmân (ﷺ) and the division of the Ummah into factions and parties.⁵⁵

To summarize what he did, he began quoting correct ideas, but then he leapt to wrong conclusions that found acceptance among the simple-minded, the extremists and those who were swayed by whims and desires. He followed convoluted ways whereby he deceived those who gathered around him. He started quoting Qur’an and misinterpreting it in accordance with his false claims, like when he said: “It is strange that people believe that ‘Eesa is coming back, but they do not accept that Muhammad is coming back, when Allah (ﷻ) says, ﴿Verily, He Who has given you [O Muhammad] the Qur’an [i.e. ordered you to act on its laws and to preach it to others] will surely, bring you back to *Ma’âd* [place of return],﴾ (Qur’an 28: 85) and Muhammad is more deserving of coming back than ‘Eesa.”⁵⁶ He also resorted to false analogy in trying to claim that ‘Ali (ﷺ) was the rightful heir appointed by the Prophet (ﷺ) to succeed him; he said: “There were one thousand prophets, and each prophet had a rightfully appointed heir, and ‘Ali was the rightfully appointed heir of Muhammad.” Then he said: “Muhammad was the seal of the prophets, and ‘Ali was the seal of the heirs.”⁵⁷

When these ideas had become entrenched in the hearts of his followers, he moved on to his ultimate aim, which was to make the people rebel against the caliph ‘Uthmân (ﷺ). That happened to coincide with the whims and desires of some of the people when he said to them: “Who does more wrong than the one who did not fulfil the final wishes of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), who pushed aside ‘Ali, the rightfully appointed successor of the Messenger of Allah

(ﷺ), and took control of the Ummah?" After that, he told them: " 'Uthmân took it unlawfully; here is the rightfully appointed successor of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Get up and do something about it. Start by criticising your governors, and pretend that you are enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, so that people will be inclined towards you, and call them to this matter."⁵⁸

He sent out his agents, and he wrote to people in the regions, who were corrupted by his ideas; they wrote to him and propagated their views in secret, pretending to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil. They started writing to people in the regions, mentioning the faults of their governors, and they corresponded with their counterparts in other regions, telling them what they were doing. They spread their false propaganda all over, aiming for something other than what they appeared to be seeking; they even sent letters to Madinah. The people in the regions said: "We are free of what others are suffering from," but the people of Madinah received letters from all over and said: "We are better off than the rest of the people."⁵⁹

From this, we can see the methods followed by Ibn Saba'. He wanted to give the impression that there was a rift between two of the senior Companions by showing that one of them, 'Ali (ﷺ), had been deprived of his rights, whereas the other, 'Uthmân (ﷺ), was a usurper. Next, he tried to stir up the people against their governors, especially in Kufah, in the name of enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil; as a result, they started to revolt against their governors for the slightest reasons. He focused on the Bedouin in this campaign, because he found in them suitable material for carrying out his plan. He gained the support of the religious people among them by using the idea of enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil. He gained the support of those who had worldly ambitions by means of false rumours against 'Uthmân (ﷺ), such as the claim that he was biased in favour of his relatives and was spending money

from the public treasury of the Muslims on them, that he had allocated grazing land for himself only, and other accusations and criticisms by means of which Ibn Saba' managed to rally the thugs against 'Uthmân (ﷺ). Then he started inciting his followers to send letters relaying terrible news about their cities to people in other provinces, so that people in all regions would think that the situation everywhere had gotten so bad that it could not get any worse. Those who benefited from this situation were the Saba'is, because when the people believed their propaganda, they would be able to light the spark of fitnah in the Muslim society.⁶⁰ 'Uthmân (ﷺ) realised that there were plots in other provinces, and that the Ummah was facing a bad time. He said: "By Allah, the millstone (of fitnah) will soon start turning, and it will be better for 'Uthmân if he dies and does not set it in motion."⁶¹

The place where Ibn Saba' found his niche was in Egypt. He started organizing his campaign against 'Uthmân (ﷺ) there, urging the people to go to Madinah and stir up unrest on the premise that 'Uthmân (ﷺ) had become caliph unlawfully by snatching it from 'Ali (ﷺ), who was the true heir of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).⁶² He deceived them by means of letters that he claimed to have received from the senior Companions, inciting the people against 'Uthmân (ﷺ).⁶³ However, when the Bedouin came to Madinah and met with the Companions, they denied writing the letters that had been attributed to them, and the Bedouins did not receive any encouragement from them. They found that 'Uthmân (ﷺ) paid attention to the rights of others, and he debated with them concerning the accusations against him. He refuted their lies and explained that his deeds were based on sincere intentions, until one of these Bedouin, Mâlik ibn al-Ashtar an-Nakha'i, said: "Perhaps it is a plot that has been drawn up against him and you."⁶⁴

Adh-Dhahabi is of the view that Abdullah ibn Saba' started the fitnah in Egypt, where he planted the seeds of grudges and criticism against the governors first, then against the ruler 'Uthmān.⁶⁵ Ibn Saba' was not alone; his agents were at work among the network of conspirators, using their craftiness and trickery to recruit the Bedouin, the religious people among them and others. Ibn Katheer narrated that among the causes of the incitement against 'Uthmān (ﷺ) was the emergence of Ibn Saba', who went to Egypt and spread rumours among the people that he fabricated himself, by which many people in Egypt were deceived.⁶⁶

The famous historians and scholars of both the earlier and later generations of this Ummah are agreed that Ibn Saba' appeared among the Muslims with ideas, plans and plots aimed at diverting the Muslims from their faith and from obeying their ruler, and spreading division and disputes among them. The thugs rallied around him, leading to the formation of the Saba'i group, which was one of the factors in the fitnah that ended with the murder of the caliph 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān (ﷺ). It seems that the Saba'i plots were very well organized. They were very skilled in directing their 'missionaries' and spreading their ideas, because they had the means of propaganda to influence the thugs and dregs of society. They were also active in forming branches in Basra, Kufah and Egypt, exploiting tribal sentiments and exploiting the weaknesses of the Bedouin, slaves and freed slaves, based on knowledge of what they wanted to hear.⁶⁷

1.2. Different views among the Companions concerning the way to carry out retaliation against the murderers of 'Uthmān (ﷺ)

The difference that emerged between Amir al-Mu'mineen, on the one hand, and Ṭalhah, az-Zubayr and 'Ā'ishah on the other, and

after that between ‘Ali and Mu‘âwiyah, was not because these people rejected the caliphate and leadership of Amir al-Mu‘mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ), or that they denied that he was entitled to be the caliph and ruler in charge of the Muslims. That was something upon which they all agreed.

Ibn Ḥazm said: “Mu‘âwiyah never denied ‘Ali’s virtue or his entitlement to the caliphate. But in his opinion, he believed that priority should be given to settling the issue of retaliation with regard to the murderers of ‘Uthmân (ﷺ) over the issue of allegiance, and he thought that he himself was most entitled to seek retaliation for the blood of ‘Uthmân.”⁶⁸

Ibn Taymiyah said: “Mu‘âwiyah did not claim to be the caliph, and allegiance was not sworn to him as caliph when he fought ‘Ali (ﷺ). He did not fight on the basis that he was a caliph or on the basis that he deserved that position. Mu‘âwiyah’s party affirmed that ‘Ali (ﷺ) was the caliph, and Mu‘âwiyah would confirm to anyone who asked him that ‘Ali (ﷺ) was the caliph. Neither Mu‘âwiyah nor his companions thought of initiating fighting against ‘Ali and his companions, and they did not do that.”⁶⁹ Ibn Taymiyah also said: “Each of the two groups confirmed that Mu‘âwiyah was not as qualified as ‘Ali with regard to being caliph, and that he could not be caliph when it was possible to appoint ‘Ali to that position. ‘Ali’s superiority, seniority, knowledge, religious commitment, courage and all his virtues were obvious and well known to him, as was also the case with regard to his fellow caliphs Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them all).”⁷⁰

The difference of opinion did not result from rejection of ‘Ali’s caliphate; the difference was only concerning the issue of bringing the murderers of ‘Uthmân (ﷺ) to justice. Even then, their difference of opinion was not about this issue itself; rather it was about the way in which to bring them to justice. Amir al-Mu‘mineen

‘Ali (ﷺ) agreed with Mu‘âwiyah in principle that the killers of ‘Uthmân (ﷺ) must be brought to justice, but his view was that the issue of bringing them to justice should be set aside until things settled down and unity was achieved.⁷¹

An-Nawawi said: “It should be noted that the reason for these battles was that the issues were not clear. Because they were so unclear, they held different views, and three groups emerged:

- a group whose view was that one party was in the right, and that those who differed with them were transgressors; they thought that they had to support this party and fight the transgressors, according to what they believed, and that it was not permissible for the one who reached that conclusion to withhold help and support from the leader who was in the right by fighting the transgressors, according to this belief;
- a group that held the opposite view; they thought that the other party was in the right, so it became obligatory for them to support that party and fight those who transgressed against them;
- a third party that was undecided about the issue and confused about it and did not reach any conclusion as to which party was more in the right; they kept away from both and believed that this staying away was what they were required to do with regard to this situation, because it was not permissible for them to help anyone in fighting other Muslims unless it was clear to them that they deserved to be fought, and that if they concluded that one of the two parties was closer to the right, it would not be permissible for them to withhold their support in fighting the transgressors.”⁷²

1.3. Az-Zubayr, Ṭalḥah and ‘Ā’ishah and their supporters set out for Basra to set things straight

Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr went to Makkah and met with ‘Ā’ishah (may Allah be pleased with them all). Their arrival in Makkah came in the month of Rabee‘ al-Ākhir 36 AH, approximately four months after the murder of ‘Uthmān (ؓ).⁷³ In Makkah, negotiations began with ‘Ā’ishah (ؓ) about going out on a campaign in pursuit of the murderers. There was heavy psychological pressure on those who felt that they had done nothing to stop the murder of the wronged caliph. They blamed themselves for letting him down, even though ‘Uthmān (ؓ) was the one who forbade anyone who wanted to defend him from doing so, because he wanted to offer himself as a sacrifice for the sake of Allah (ﷻ). They thought that there was no way to expiate this sin except by going out to seek vengeance. ‘Ā’ishah (ؓ) said: “‘Uthmān was slain wrongfully, and by Allah, I shall certainly seek vengeance for his blood.”⁷⁴ Ṭalḥah said: “There were some shortcomings on my part with regard to ‘Uthmān, and there is no way I can ever repent except to shed my own blood in vengeance for his blood.”⁷⁵ And az-Zubayr said: “Let us inspire the people so that we may seek vengeance for his blood, lest it be forgotten, because forgetting it will lead to the weakening of the authority of Allah (ﷻ) among us forever. If we do not deter people from doing this again, there will be no leader except that people of that kind will kill him.”⁷⁶

This intense pressure on nerves and souls was sufficient to stir people up and motivate them to go out on the campaign. When they went, they realised that they were going out to face unknown turmoils, and each one of them left his home not expecting to return to it. The children bade farewell weeping, and the day when these people left Makkah for Basra was known as the day of wailing, a day that was unprecedented with regard to weeping for Islam.⁷⁷

A number of factors in Makkah made them think seriously of striving to achieve their goal. One was the fact that the Umayyads had fled from Madinah and settled in Makkah. In addition, Abdullah ibn ‘Āmir — the governor of Basra at the time of ‘Uthmān — was in Makkah urging the people to go out and offering them material help. Ya‘la ibn Umayyah, who had left Yemen to help the caliph ‘Uthmān, had learned upon his arrival in Makkah that the caliph had been killed. He had with him considerable amounts of money, weapons and mounts, all of which he offered as help in pursuing the murderers of ‘Uthmān (ﷺ). This was sufficient to encourage those who were looking for a way to pursue the murderers.

They had the means to gather a force to pursue the murderers of ‘Uthmān (ﷺ), but where would they begin? A discussion took place among them as to which direction they should take. Some of them, led by ‘Ā’ishah (ﷺ), said that Madinah was where they should go. Another view was that they should head towards Syria, so that they could rally there against the murderers of ‘Uthmān (ﷺ). After a lengthy discussion, they settled on Basra. There were too many of the rebels in Madinah, and they would not be able to confront them and fight them because they were fewer in number, and Syria was already under control because Mu‘āwiyah was there. Hence going to Basra was most appropriate at that point, because it was the least strong of the cities; from there they hoped to be able to achieve their aims.⁷⁸

Their plan and mission were clear before they set out, during their march and when they reached Basra: the intent was to seek vengeance for the murder of ‘Uthmān (ﷺ), to set things straight, to inform the people of what the murderers had done and to enjoin good and forbid evil.⁷⁹ Their demand was to carry out one of the ḥadd punishments of Allah (ﷻ).⁸⁰ If the murderers of ‘Uthmān (ﷺ) were not punished, then every leader would be vulnerable to murder by people of that nature.⁸¹ As for the way in which they envisaged doing

that, they intended to enter Basra and then Kufah, seeking help from its people and others against the killers of ‘Uthmân (ﷺ). Then they would call upon the people of other cities to join them, so that they could corner the murderers of ‘Uthmân (ﷺ) who were present in the army of ‘Ali and seize them with the minimum possible casualties.⁸²

The campaign to Basra and the anger that stirred the Companions were not as straightforward as they may have appeared to people. Their purpose was not simply to avenge the murder of ‘Uthmân (ﷺ), as if he were just an ordinary person who had been killed, even though this also would involve a transgression of one of the sacred limits of Allah (ﷻ) that dictated getting angry and sending armies to seek revenge. This was much more serious because of the position and character of ‘Uthmân (ﷺ), his status as caliph, and the way in which he was killed. It was the assassination of a Sharia figure, the caliph, whom the Muslims regarded as the deputy of the Lawgiver in his role of protecting the religion and ruling worldly affairs in accordance with Sharia.⁸³ Hence unlawful transgression against him constituted transgressing against the Lawgiver and weakening His authority, as well as disturbing law and order for the Muslims.⁸⁴

‘Â’ishah, Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr, along with the people who accompanied them, were striving to create a groundswell of Islamic public opinion to confront this Saba’i gang who had murdered ‘Uthmân (ﷺ) and had since gained significant power. They meant to do this by making the Muslims aware of what these Saba’i thugs, who came from different regions and tribes, and the Bedouins and slaves who supported them, had done. Among the group of Companions that held the same view as ‘Â’ishah (ﷺ), it became clear that the criminals and Saba’is had a presence in ‘Ali’s army. They believed that this was why it was difficult for ‘Ali (ﷺ) to confront them, because he feared for the people of Madinah.

Hence they had to try to explain the situation to the Muslims and garner support for the party that was demanding implementation of the ḥadd punishments, so that this could be accomplished with the minimal loss of innocent lives. That was undoubtedly a goal which 'Ali (عليه السلام) was striving to achieve, too; in fact, the reports that we have seen about the discussion among az-Zubayr and Ṭalhah and 'Ali refer to that. Their plan, and their intention of informing the people of what was happening and explaining matters to them, proves that they were fully aware of the situation. They recognised that the Saba'is had deceived the masses, and they understood how they had planted their ideas in a way which would continue to weaken the Ummah to such an extent that it would not know any peace.

Hence there was no alternative but to confront the Saba'i plan in the field of ideas, so as to cancel out their actions. This can clearly be seen in the sound reports⁸⁵ in which 'Â'ishah (عليها السلام) speaks of the aims of this campaign. Aṭ-Ṭabari narrated that 'Uthmân ibn Ḥunayf, who was 'Ali's governor in Basra, sent word to 'Â'ishah (عليها السلام) when she arrived in Basra, asking her why she had come. She said: "By Allah, a woman in my position should not go out on a campaign without having a clear reason and making it clear to her children (meaning the Muslims). The thugs of various cities and tribes have invaded the sanctuary of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and have committed a great deal of wrongdoing there, and they have offered refuge to the wrongdoers. Therefore they deserve the curse of Allah (ﷻ) and of His Messenger, as they killed the leader of the Muslims for no reason. They shed blood unlawfully, stole ḥarâm wealth and violated the sanctity of the sacred land and the sacred month. They transgressed against honour and killed troops. They settled in the place of people who did not want them to settle among them; they caused a great deal of harm but did not bring any benefit. I have come out among the Muslims to inform them of what these people have done, and of the pain and suffering of the people we have left behind,

and to tell them (the Muslims) what they should do in order to help set things straight.” Then she recited the verse: ﴿There is no good in most of their secret talks save [in] him who orders *Sadaqah* [charity in Allah’s Cause], or *Ma’roof* [Islamic Monotheism and all the good and righteous deeds which Allah has ordained], or conciliation between mankind﴾ (*Qur’an* 4: 114). Thus people joined for the purpose of setting things straight for those whom Allah (ﷻ) and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) enjoined that, young and old, male and female. “This is what we are trying to achieve, to enjoin you to do what is right and forbid you from doing evil, and we urge you to change it.”⁸⁶

Ibn Hibbân narrated that ‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها) wrote to Abu Moosa al-Ash‘ari, ‘Ali’s governor in Kufah, saying: “You know about the murder of ‘Uthmân, and I have come out to set things right among the people. Tell the people in your city to stay in their houses so that we can achieve what they like of setting the Muslims’ affairs straight.”⁸⁷ ‘Ali sent al-Qa‘qâ’ ibn ‘Amr to ‘Â’ishah and the people with her to ask them why she had come. Al-Qa‘qâ’ entered upon her, greeted her with salâm and said: “O my mother, what caused you to leave your home and come to this city?” She said: “O my son, it is to set the people’s affairs straight.”⁸⁸

After the end of the battle on the day of the Camel, ‘Ali came to ‘Â’ishah (may Allah be pleased with them both) and said to her: “May Allah forgive you.” She said: “And you too. I only wanted to set things straight.”⁸⁹ Thus we learn that she only went out on this campaign to set things straight among the people, and this is the refutation of those among the Râfiḍi Shia who slandered ‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها) and said that she left her house after Allah (ﷻ) had commanded her to stay in it, in the verse ﴿And stay in your houses, and do not display yourselves like that of the times of ignorance﴾ (*Qur’an* 33: 33). The scholarly consensus is that travelling for the purpose of doing a righteous deed does not contradict the idea of staying in one’s

house and not going out. This is what 'Â'ishah, the Mother of the Believers (ؓ), thought when she went out to set things straight among the Muslims, accompanied by her mahram and the son of her sister, Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr.⁹⁰

Ibn Taymiyah said, refuting the Râfîdis concerning this issue: "She (ؓ) did not display herself as in the times of ignorance. The command to stay in their houses does not mean that women should never go out for some purpose that is enjoined, such as going out for hajj and 'umrah, or going out with her husband when he travels. This verse was revealed during the lifetime of the Prophet (ﷺ), and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) took his wives with him on his journeys after that, as he took 'Â'ishah (ؓ) and others with him during his farewell pilgrimage. He sent 'Â'ishah with her brother 'Abdur-Rahmân, who seated her behind him on his mount, and he took her to start her 'umrah from at-Tan'eem. The farewell pilgrimage took place less than three months before the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), after this verse was revealed. Hence the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) performed hajj after he died as they had done with him, during the caliphate of 'Umar (ؓ) and others, and 'Umar would appoint 'Uthmân or 'Abdur-Rahmân ibn 'Awf in charge of their caravan. If the journey is for a legitimate purpose, then it is permissible. 'Â'ishah believed that this journey was in the best interests of the Muslims, and that was her opinion."⁹¹

Ibn al-'Arabi said: "As for her going out to the Battle of the Camel, she did not set out to fight, but the people pinned their hopes on her and complained to her about how bad the turmoil and confusion had become. They hoped by her blessing to set things straight and that the people would show respect for her and comply when she took a stance among them. She also thought that herself, so she set out in compliance with the words of Allah (ﷻ): ﴿There is no good in most of their secret talks save [in] him who orders *Sadaqah*

[charity in Allah's Cause], or *Ma'roof* [Islamic Monotheism and all the good and righteous deeds which Allah has ordained], or conciliation between mankind» (*Qur'an* 4: 114). The command to reconcile between people and set things straight is addressed to all people, male or female, free or slave."⁹²

The following are a number of important issues having to do with her going out:

1.3.1. Was 'Ā'ishah forced to go out?

Al-Ya'qoobi claimed that az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm forced 'Ā'ishah to go out.⁹³ This was the view of the author of *al-Amânah was-Siyâsah*⁹⁴ and Ibn Abil-Ḥadeed;⁹⁵ it was also the opinion of ad-Daynoori.⁹⁶ The report narrated by adh-Dhahabi indicated that the one who forced her was Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr,⁹⁷ the son of her sister Asma'. This report was relied on and quoted by many researchers, such as Muhammad Sayyid al-Wakeel,⁹⁸ who claimed that az-Zubayr and Ṭalhah encouraged 'Ā'ishah to go out; this claim was also made by Zâhiyah Qadoorah⁹⁹ and others, but it is not correct. 'Ā'ishah began to demand vengeance for the slaying of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) from the moment she learned of his murder, long before az-Zubayr and Ṭalhah and other senior Companions reached Makkah.

It is narrated that when she set off to return to Makkah, Abdullah ibn 'Āmir al-Ḥaḍrami came to her and said: "Why are you coming back, O Mother of the Believers?" She said: "I am coming back because 'Uthmân has been killed unlawfully, and the affairs of the Muslims cannot be sound if these thugs continue to cause trouble. Seek vengeance for the blood of 'Uthmân and thus support Islam." Abdullah was the first one to respond.¹⁰⁰ Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr had not yet left Madinah; they did not leave until four months after the murder of 'Uthmân.¹⁰¹

1.3.2. Was she in control of those who were with her?

Among those who went out on the campaign with her (ﷺ) were a number of the Companions.¹⁰² 'Â'ishah was not a woman who was in control and able to make people do what she wanted, as Brockelmann claims.¹⁰³ At-Ṭabari's reports confirm that the rest of the Mothers of the Believers supported her, as did those who were with her in the effort to put things straight; indeed, a considerable number of the people of Basra supported her, too.¹⁰⁴ These supporters, whose numbers were not small, were not insignificant people; Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr described them as the best and most wise of the people of Basra,¹⁰⁵ and 'Â'ishah described them as the righteous.¹⁰⁶ The fact that this number of righteous people supported her cause could only be the result of strong belief in the cause, confidence that something could be achieved by this campaign, and certainty that its purpose was sound. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) knew that, and he refuted the claim made by some people that those who went out with 'Â'ishah were a group of fools, thugs and hooligans.¹⁰⁷ After the Battle of the Camel, Amir al-Mu'mineen stood among those of 'Â'ishah's party who had been slain, praying for mercy for them and recounting their virtues.¹⁰⁸ We shall see below that it was not an unruly campaign in which 'Â'ishah controlled and directed immature people; rather it was a campaign in which some of the senior Companions took part.¹⁰⁹

1.3.3. Attitude of the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) towards those who sought vengeance for the murder of 'Uthmân

The wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) had gone for hajj that year to get away from the turmoil. After news reached the people in Makkah that 'Uthmân (ﷺ) had been murdered, they stayed on in Makkah. They

had left the holy city, but they went and back and followed news of the situation, waiting to see what people would do. When allegiance was sworn to ‘Ali (ﷺ), a number of the Companions left Madinah, not wanting to stay there because of the presence of troublemakers from other regions. Many of the Companions and the Mothers of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with them all) gathered in Makkah.¹¹⁰ The other Mothers of the Believers agreed with ‘Â’ishah about going to Madinah to seek justice. When ‘Â’ishah, and the Companions who were with her, decided to go to Basra instead, the others changed their minds and said: “We will not go anywhere except Madinah.”¹¹¹ So the idea of seeking vengeance for ‘Uthmân was not something on which the Mothers of the Believers differed, but they disagreed when the plan changed from Madinah to Basra. The Mother of the Believers Ḥafṣah bint ‘Umar (ﷺ) agreed with ‘Â’ishah about going to Basra, but her brother Abdullah insisted that she should not go; this was not based on her personal conviction.¹¹² She sent her apologies to ‘Â’ishah, saying: “Abdullah has prevented me from going on the campaign.”¹¹³

The commonly known reports indicate that the Mother of the Believers Umm Salamah (ﷺ) did not share the view of ‘Â’ishah with regard to going out on campaign to Basra; rather she shared ‘Ali’s view.¹¹⁴ The sound reports indicate that she sent her son ‘Umar ibn Abi Salamah to ‘Ali with the message: “By Allah, he is dearer to me than my own self; he will go out with you to fight alongside you.” He went out with ‘Ali (ﷺ) and remained with him.¹¹⁵ This is a report which, upon examination, does not mean that by sending her son she had a different opinion from the other Mothers of the Believers with regard to setting things straight among the Muslims.

‘Â’ishah herself, along with those who were with her, did not think that this campaign meant that they were going against ‘Ali

(ﷺ) or rebelling against his caliphate, as we have seen and as events will confirm to us. We also find nothing in the sound reports to indicate that Umm Salamah went against the consensus of the Mothers of the Believers with regard to the importance of setting things straight.¹¹⁶ The Mothers of the Believers knew that this campaign to set things straight among the Muslims came under the category of a communal obligation, and the guideline concerning such obligations is that it is not expected of all Muslims to carry out that duty; it is expected only of those who are qualified to carry it out. 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) was fully qualified to carry out that duty because of her status, age, knowledge and ability. She (رضي الله عنها) was the most knowledgeable of the Mothers of the Believers regarding Islam and Sharia, according to Muslim consensus.¹¹⁷ Moreover, she took a keen interest in current events and was highly educated and cultured. Her education had begun when she was growing up in the house of Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه), who had a vast knowledge of Arabic history and lineages; then she had lived in the house of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), from which had emerged the principles on which the Muslim state was based. Furthermore, she was the daughter of the first caliph of the Muslims.

The scholars confirmed this high status of 'Â'ishah. 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr said: "I was acquainted with 'Â'ishah, and I have never seen anyone at all who was more knowledgeable of any verse that was revealed, any obligatory duty, any sunnah; anyone who was more well-versed in poetry or narrated more poetry; anyone who was more knowledgeable of Arabic history and lineage and so forth; or anyone who had more knowledge of judiciary matters or medicine than her."¹¹⁸ Ash-Sha'bi used to mention her and express his admiration for her understanding and knowledge, then he would say: "No wonder, when she learned from the Prophet (ﷺ)!" 'Ata' used to say: "'Â'ishah was the most knowledgeable of people and the most

wise.”¹¹⁹ Al-Aḥnaf ibn Qays, the chief of Banu Tameem and one of the most eloquent of the Arabs, used to say: “I heard the speeches of Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmân, ‘Ali and the caliphs who came after them, and I never heard words from the mouth of any person that were more powerful and more beautiful than those of ‘Â’ishah (ﷺ).” Mu‘âwiyah used to say something similar.¹²⁰ The Mothers of the Believers bade farewell to ‘Â’ishah when she left for Basra, and this is indicative of their support and encouragement for her in what she was doing.¹²¹

1.3.4. ‘Â’ishah’s passing by the oasis of al-Ḥaw’ab¹²²

It is proven with sound chains of narration that ‘Â’ishah (ﷺ) passed by the oasis of al-Ḥaw’ab. It was narrated from Yahya ibn Sa‘eed al-Qaṭṭân, from Ismâ‘eel ibn Abi Khâlid, from Qays ibn Ḥâzim that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to his wives: “How will one of you be when the dogs of al-Ḥaw’ab bark at her?”¹²³ It was also narrated via Shu‘bah from Ismâ‘eel that when ‘Â’ishah came to al-Ḥaw’ab, she heard the barking of dogs, and she said: “I think I should go back, because the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘Which one of you will the dogs of al-Ḥaw’ab bark at?’” Az-Zubayr said to her: “Are you going back? Perhaps Allah (ﷻ) will put people’s affairs straight by means of you.”¹²⁴ This version was narrated by Ya‘la ibn ‘Ubayd from Ismâ‘eel, and was recorded by al-Ḥâkim.¹²⁵ Al-Albâni said: “Its chain of narration is very sound.” He also said: “It was classed as such by senior imams of hadith such as Ibn Ḥibbân, adh-Dhahabi, Ibn Katheer and Ibn Ḥajar.”¹²⁶

These are sound reports in which there is nothing misleading or false, because the Companions would not stoop to that level, contrary to what is claimed in false reports,¹²⁷ as we shall see below. The one who studies these reports, which have been classified as sound by the scholars, will not find anything in them to suggest that

'Â'ishah (عليها السلام) should or should not have done the things that she did. Rather what may be understood from them is that the Prophet (ﷺ) was wondering which one of his wives would pass by the oasis of al-Ḥaw'ab. The reports that contain the word 'beware', indicating that the Prophet (ﷺ) warned against going there, were not classified as sound by the scholars; in fact, they were classified as weak. One example is the report which says, "Beware lest you be there, O Ḥumayra."¹²⁸

Hence the correct view, which we follow, is that the fact that 'Â'ishah (عليها السلام) passed by the water of al-Ḥaw'ab did not have the negative effect which was suggested by the fabricated reports. It did not have any far-reaching effect on 'Â'ishah (عليها السلام) herself to the point that she started thinking seriously of turning back and giving up the cause for which she had set out, namely to set matters straight among the Muslims and correct their mistakes. The matter did not go beyond a passing thought on her part, in which the possibility of turning back merely crossed her mind. This is how she expressed it when she said: "I thought about going back, but it was only an idea that did not last for long." Then her mission became clear again, after az-Zubayr reminded her of what Allah (ﷻ) might bring about at her hands in terms of setting things straight among the Muslims.¹²⁹

The issue of the oasis of al-Ḥaw'ab, and the hadiths in which al-Ḥaw'ab is mentioned, were and still are fertile ground for the Shia and others, which they use to criticise the Mother of the Believers 'Â'ishah (عليها السلام). They criticised her for going out and campaigning to seek vengeance for the murder of 'Uthmân (عليه السلام), and they even went so far as to deny that her decision was based on valid ijtihâd on her part; they claimed that she went against the instructions of the Messenger (ﷺ) not to go to the oasis of al-Ḥaw'ab. The historical sources mentioned this story, and it is mentioned by aṭ-Ṭabari in a lengthy report that was narrated by Ismâ'eel ibn Moosa al-Fazâri, of

whom Ibn ‘Adiyy said: “They (the scholars) criticised him for being an extremist and a Shia.”¹³⁰ Al-Fazâri narrated this report from ‘Ali ibn ‘Âbis al-Azraq, who is weak according to Ibn Hajar and an-Nasâ’i.¹³¹ He also narrated this report from al-Khaṭṭâb al-Hajri, who is unknown.¹³² This unknown al-Hajri narrated from another unknown narrator, whose name was Şafwân ibn Qubay‘ah al-Aḥmasi.¹³³ Finally, an even more unknown character is al-‘Azni, the alleged owner of the camel. He was not the owner of the camel; rather its owner was Ya‘la ibn Umayyah.¹³⁴

In the text of this report, the reader may detect a clear whiff of Shia and Râfiḍi influence at the end of the report, where it is claimed that ‘Ali (ﷺ) thought himself more entitled to the caliphate than Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them all). On the contrary, the reports that are proven to be sound indicate something completely different.¹³⁵ Based on the above, it becomes clear to us that this report is not sound.¹³⁶ There are other reports concerning this matter, all of which are false in both chain of narration and text. The message and aim of these reports is to cast aspersions on the senior Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) and to prove that the goal of this campaign was to achieve worldly, personal gains such as wealth, leadership and so on; that the ends justified the means; and that in trying to achieve that, they would not refrain from creating war and turmoil among the Muslims.

These reports focus on two great Companions, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr.¹³⁷ The fabricators of these reports also wanted to confirm that these two Companions and the members of the army who were with them dared to violate the sacred limits of Allah (ﷻ). The reports allege that Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr swore in the strongest terms to the Mother of the Believers that this was not the water of al-Ḥaw‘ab; furthermore, they brought seventy people — and according to another report, fifty people — to testify that what they said was true.

This action, according to the Râfiḍi Shia al-Mas'oodi, was the first false witness given in Islam.¹³⁸ These reports tried to show that Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr and 'Â'ishah were not in harmony and were not united on one goal. They tried to show that 'Â'ishah (ؓ) sided with Ṭalḥah (ؓ) and that deep down in her heart, she was hoping that he would become caliph because he was from the tribe of Taym just like her. These reports also suggest that there was intense competition and rivalry between Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr, and that they were both eager to become the leader. One cannot ignore the fact that these reports are not free of severe weakness. In some of them, the chain of narration is interrupted, and in some, there are narrators about whom nothing is known; in some cases both serious faults are present.¹³⁹ Many writers and historians were influenced by these reports, relied on them and played a part in propagating them, but they have no basis. These writers include al-'Aqqâd in *'Abqariyat 'Ali*, Taha Hussein in *'Ali wa Banuhu*¹⁴⁰ and other contemporary writers.

1.3.5. Their actions in Basra

When Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr, 'Â'ishah and the people with them arrived in Basra, they stopped beside al-Khuraybah.¹⁴¹ From there, they sent word to the prominent figures and nobles of the tribes, seeking their help against the killers of 'Uthmân (ؓ). Many of the Muslims in Basra and elsewhere wanted to bring the murderers of 'Uthmân (ؓ) to justice, but some of them thought that this was the job of the caliph alone, and that going out on campaign for this purpose without his instructions was wrong. Many of the people of Basra, regardless of their different tribal backgrounds, joined them because these were Companions whom the Prophet (ﷺ) had testified were guaranteed paradise; they were members of the consultative committee; they were accompanied by the Mother of the Believers 'Â'ishah (ؓ), the beloved of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and the

most knowledgeable of all women; their quest was undoubtedly legitimate; and no Companion denounced it.

Az-Zubayr sent a message to al-Aḥnaf ibn Qays al-Sa'di at-Tameemi, asking for his support in seeking vengeance for the murder of 'Uthmân (ؓ). Al-Aḥnaf was one of the leaders of Tameem, a man whose word carried weight. He said, describing the seriousness of the situation: "There came to me the most serious decision I was ever faced with, and I said: 'If I let these people down when they have the Mother of the Believers and the two disciples of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) with them, it will be something very serious indeed.'"¹⁴² However, he decided to keep out of it, and he took with him six thousand men who obeyed him, but many others disobeyed him with regard to this matter and joined Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr and the Mother of the Believers.¹⁴³ Az-Zuhri stated that most of the people of Basra followed them.¹⁴⁴ Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr, 'Ā'ishah and their followers were joined by new supporters of the cause for which they had come out. Ibn Ḥunayf tried to calm things down and sort things out as much as he could, but the matter was beyond his control, so much so that one of them said concerning Basra: "Some of the people of Syria have descended among us."¹⁴⁵ Even Mu'âwiyah, later on, tried to take over Basra with the help of its people.¹⁴⁶

Some unreliable sources say that 'Uthmân ibn Ḥunayf allowed Ḥukaym ibn Jablah to fight, but this is not proven, and the sound sources do not confirm that.¹⁴⁷

1.3.6. The slaying of Ḥukaym ibn Jablah and the thugs who were with him

After 'Ā'ishah had addressed the people of Basra, Ḥukaym ibn Jablah came and started fighting. The companions of 'Ā'ishah, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr brandished their spears at them, but they did not engage in combat. They were hoping that the other side would

stop, but Ḥukaym and his gang continued fighting and did not stop. Talḥah and az-Zubayr refrained from fighting except to defend themselves, while Ḥukaym was urging his horse on and charging at them.¹⁴⁸ Despite that, 'Ā'ishah (ؓ) was very keen to avoid all-out fighting, so she ordered her companions to move to the right in order to avoid the fighters. They remained like that until night fell.¹⁴⁹

The next morning, Ḥukaym ibn Jablah, making noise and with his spear in his hand, made his way to where 'Ā'ishah (ؓ) and her companions were. Whenever he passed a man or woman who criticised him for slandering 'Ā'ishah (ؓ), he killed him or her.¹⁵⁰ At that point, the people of the tribe of 'Abdul-Qays became angry and said to Ḥukaym: "You did what you did yesterday, and you have repeated it today. By Allah (ؓ), we will not let you off until we bring you to justice."

Then they went back and left him, and Ḥukaym ibn Jablah continued on his way with those who had taken part in the murder of 'Uthmân (ؓ), accompanied by the thugs of different tribal backgrounds. They realised that they could no longer stay in Basra, so they all rallied behind him and engaged the army of 'Ā'ishah (ؓ), and fierce fighting took place.¹⁵¹ The caller of 'Ā'ishah (ؓ) continued calling out and urging them to stop fighting, but they insisted.¹⁵² 'Ā'ishah (ؓ) continued to say: "Do not fight anyone but those who are fighting you." Ḥukaym did not pay any attention to the caller; he continued to instigate the fighting. At this point, the nature of these people who were fighting became clear to az-Zubayr and Talḥah; they realised that they would not refrain from committing any crime, and that their aim was to provoke the fighting.

They said: "Praise be to Allah, who has brought together for us the people of Basra who took part in the murder of 'Uthmân (ؓ) so that we may wreak revenge on them. O Allah, do not leave any of them alive. Help us to bring them to justice today, and cause them all

to die.” They strove hard in fighting and called out: “Whoever was not one of the killers of ‘Uthmân (ؓ), let him stop fighting us, for we are only seeking the killers of ‘Uthmân, and we will not initiate fighting with anyone else.” They fought fiercely,¹⁵³ and none of the killers of ‘Uthmân (ؓ) among the people of Basra escaped, except for one. The caller of az-Zubayr and Ṭalḥah called out: “If you know any one from your tribes who took part in murdering ‘Uthmân (ؓ) in Madinah, then bring him to us.”¹⁵⁴

A group of these ignorant thugs — as ‘Ā’ishah said — had come to her house at dawn to kill her. They got as far as the door of her room with the help of a guide, but Allah (ﷻ) protected her by means of a group of Muslims who had surrounded her house. The Muslims prevailed over them, then they paraded them about and executed them.¹⁵⁵

Az-Zubayr, Ṭalḥah and those who were with them managed to gain control of Basra, but they needed food and supplies because several weeks had gone by, and no one had offered them hospitality. The army of az-Zubayr went to the governor’s palace and then to the public treasury to get provisions for the army; ‘Uthmân ibn Ḥunayf was released and went to join ‘Ali (ؓ).¹⁵⁶ Thus Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr and the Mother of the Believers gained control of Basra and killed a large number of those who had taken part in the attack on Madinah, some seventy men, including the most prominent leader of the rebels of Basra, Ḥukaym ibn Jablah, who had been very keen to fight and start the war.¹⁵⁷

1.3.7. The letters of ‘Ā’ishah (ؓ) to other regions

‘Ā’ishah (ؓ) was keen to explain what had really happened during the fight with the people of Basra, so she wrote to the people of Syria, Kufah and al-Yamâmah, and the people of Madinah also, telling them what they had done and how things had ended up.

Among the things that she wrote to the people of Syria was: "We only set out to put an end to the turmoil and to establish the rule of the Book of Allah (ﷺ). Once we achieve that, our campaign will be over. The best of the people of Basra and their prominent figures pledged their support for us, and their evil ones and thugs opposed us and confronted us with weapons. Among the things they said was: 'We will take the Mother of the Believers as a hostage, as she is the one who is enjoining them and urging them to adhere to the truth.' The Muslims gave them opportunity (to reconsider) time after time, then when there was no excuse left for them, the murderers of 'Uthmān (رضي الله عنه) were fought. None of them escaped except for Ḥurqooṣ ibn Zuhayr, and Allah (ﷻ) will bring him to justice. We urge you by Allah (ﷻ) that you should carry out the same mission as us, so that we and you may meet Allah (ﷻ) having done what is expected of us."¹⁵⁸

1.3.8. Difference of opinion between 'Uthmān ibn Ḥunayf and the army of 'Ā'ishah, az-Zubayr and Ṭalhah

Aṭ-Ṭabari narrated from Abu Makhnaf from Yoosuf ibn Yazeed that Sahl ibn Sa'd said: "When they caught 'Uthmān ibn Ḥunayf, they sent Abān ibn 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān to 'Ā'ishah to consult her as to what should be done with him, and she said: 'Kill him.' A woman said to her: 'We adjure you by Allah, O Mother of the Believers, concerning 'Uthmān (ibn Ḥunayf) and the fact that he was a Companion of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).' She said: 'Bring Abān back.' So they brought him back, and she said: 'Detain him, and do not kill him.' He said: 'If I had known that you were calling me back for this reason, I would not have come back.' Majāshi' ibn Mas'ood said to them: 'Beat him and pluck out the hair of his beard.' So they gave him forty lashes and plucked out the hair of his beard

and his head, and his eyebrows and eyelashes, and they detained him.”¹⁵⁹ But the chain of narration of this report includes Abu Makhnaf, who is an extremist, hate-filled, Râfiḍi Shia. This report was not proven by any sound chain of narration that can be relied on. The noble Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) are far above doing such an abhorrent action.

What may be understood from the report of Sayf is that the thugs were the ones who did that, and that Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr regarded it as abhorrent and unacceptable. They sent news of that to ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها), who said: “Release him, and let him go wherever he wants.”¹⁶⁰ This report contradicts the details mentioned by Abu Makhnaf because it does not mention the command to kill him or detain him, or the command to pluck out his facial hair. This report, which is the sound one, was favoured by an-Nuwayri and Ibn Katheer.¹⁶¹ Adh-Dhahabi stated that Majâshi’ ibn Mas‘ood was killed before he entered the house of ‘Uthmân ibn Ḥunayf.¹⁶² Even if we assume that Majâshi’ ibn Mas‘ood was not killed, he was not in a position of leadership to issue such instructions.¹⁶³

1.4. Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib sets out for Kufah

The Companions in Madinah did not approve of ‘Ali’s leaving Madinah. That became clear when ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) decided to march to Syria, to visit its people and see what Mu‘âwiyah was thinking and doing.¹⁶⁴ He thought that at that stage, Madinah no longer possessed the advantages that other cities possessed, and he said: “Manpower and wealth are in Iraq.”¹⁶⁵ When Abu Ayyoob al-Anṣârî (رضي الله عنه) found out about this idea, he said to the caliph: “O Amir al-Mu’mineen, stay in this land, because it is the shield that can give protection, the place to which the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) migrated. In it is his grave and his minbar, and it is the heart of Islam. If the Arabs show obedience

to you, you will be fine like the caliphs who came before you; if some people cause trouble to you, then send their enemies against them. If you are forced to leave, then you may leave, after exhausting all possible means of staying." The caliph followed the advice of Abu Ayyoob and decided to stay in Madinah and send governors to the provinces.¹⁶⁶

A number of political developments then took place that forced the caliph to leave Madinah, and he decided to head for Kufah so that he could be close to the people of Syria.¹⁶⁷ While he was preparing to leave, news reached him that 'Â'ishah, Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr had set out for Basra.¹⁶⁸ He asked the people of Madinah to mobilise and support him, but he encountered reluctance on the part of some of the people of Madinah because of the presence of the troublemakers in 'Ali's army and the way in which they were dealt with. Many of the people of Madinah thought that the turmoil was still going on, and that they should wait until things became clearer. They said: "No, by Allah (ﷻ), we do not know what to do. This matter is not clear to us, so we are going to stay where we are until the matter becomes clear to us." Aṭ-Ṭabarī narrated that 'Ali (ﷺ) set out with his army for the purpose of confronting the people of Syria, and some of the people of Kufah and Basra went out with him, a group of seven hundred lightly armed men.¹⁶⁹

There is a great deal of evidence that many of the people of Madinah were reluctant to respond to 'Ali's call to go out on a campaign, such as the speeches of the caliph in which he complained about this reluctance.¹⁷⁰ Many of the Companions withdrew after the murder of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه), as is apparent. Some of the men who had been present at Badr stayed in their houses after the murder of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) and never left until they went to their graves.¹⁷¹ Abu Ḥumayd as-Sâ'idi al-Anṣârî, who had been present at Badr, expressed his sorrow at the murder of the caliph 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) and

said: "O Allah, I promise You that I will not smile until I meet You."¹⁷² They thought that leaving Madinah at that time would lead to getting embroiled in the turmoil, the bad consequences of which, they feared,¹⁷³ would cancel out what they had achieved in the past of righteous deeds and jihad with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).¹⁷⁴

What is mentioned above does not mean that none of the Companions joined the caliph's campaign; there were some who joined him, but they were few. Ash-Sha'bi said: "None of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) were present at the Battle of the Camel except for 'Ali, 'Ammâr, Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr; if they prove that there was a fifth, then I am a liar."¹⁷⁵ According to another report: "Whoever tells you that more than four of those who were present at Badr were present at the Battle of the Camel, do not believe him. 'Ali and 'Ammâr were on one side, and Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr were on the other."¹⁷⁶ According to another report: "No one joined 'Ali when he marched to Basra apart from six of the people of Badr; there was no seventh."¹⁷⁷

This is what is meant by the report mentioned above, which referred only to those Companions who had been at Badr. Whatever the case, those of the Anşâr who took part in the turmoil were few. Ibn Sireen and ash-Sha'bi said: "When the turmoil occurred in Madinah, the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) were more than ten thousand, but those who got involved were no more than twenty men. The battle between 'Ali and Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr and the battle of Şiffeen were called fitnah."¹⁷⁸

From the above, it is clear that the number of Companions who went out with the caliph 'Ali to Basra were very few, and we cannot be certain that they took part in the Battle of the Camel; even though this battle was so fierce and so many events took place during it, the sources do not mention the Companions who took part in it or say that any of them were martyred or wounded.¹⁷⁹ One of the reports

says: "Some seven hundred lightly armed men of Kufah and Basra went out with him."¹⁸⁰ These reports seem to be more in line with how things were developing at that time and more in harmony with the course of events and with the attitude of the people of Madinah, which varied between keeping away completely and reluctance to take part in any events.¹⁸¹

1.4.1. Advice of Abdullah ibn Salâm to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام)

Abdullah ibn Salâm, the companion of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), tried to make Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) change his mind and not go out. He came to him when he had made preparations to march and expressed his fear for him. He told him not to go to Iraq, saying: "I am afraid that you may be struck by the sword." He also told him that if he left the minbar of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), he would never see it again. 'Ali (عليه السلام) knew these things from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and he said: "By Allah, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) told me about that." The people of Basra and Kufah who were with 'Ali (عليه السلام) had reached such a level of audacity that they said to him, "Let us kill him." Killing Muslims who stood in their way or who could pose a danger to their lives with their words and deeds had become something very easy, and they did not see anything wrong with it. But 'Ali told them not to do that, saying: "Abdullah ibn Salâm is a righteous man."¹⁸² What they said, and their aggressive attitude, was indicative of their lack of piety and their lack of respect towards the noble Companions, which the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had enjoined upon the people who came after him.

1.4.2. Advice of al-Hasan ibn 'Ali to his father

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) left Madinah, and when he reached ar-Rabdhah,¹⁸³ he and those who were with him camped

there. A number of Muslims, approximately two hundred, came to him.¹⁸⁴ In ar-Rabdhah, his son al-Ḥasan came to him, weeping and not hiding his sorrow and dismay at what had befallen the Muslims of division and dissent. Al-Ḥasan said: "I told you, but you did not listen to me, and next you will be killed when you are alone with no one to support you." 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "You are still nagging like a little girl."¹⁸⁵ What is it that you told me to do and I did not listen to you?" He said: "I told you on the day that 'Uthmân (ﷺ) was besieged to leave Madinah, so that if he was killed, you would not be there. Then I told you on the day that he was killed not to accept the oath of allegiance until the delegations from different regions and Arab tribes had each sworn their allegiance. Then I told you, when these two men did what they did, to stay at home until things settled down, so if any evildoing took place, it would be at the hands of people other than you, but you did not listen to me in any of that." 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "O my son, as for you telling me to leave Madinah when 'Uthmân (ﷺ) was surrounded, by Allah, we were surrounded as he was surrounded. As for your telling me not to accept the oath of allegiance until the allegiance of the regions came, this matter was something to be decided by the people of Madinah, and we did not want this decision to be made by others. As for what you said when Talḥah and az-Zubayr set out, that was demeaning to the people of Islam. By Allah, I have continued to be saddened and aggrieved since I was appointed, feeling helpless and not able to achieve anything I should achieve. As for your saying that I should stay home, what about my duties? Who do you want me to be? Do you want me to be like the hyena that is surrounded, that is helpless and just yelping? If I do not pay attention to my duties concerning this issue, who will take care of that? Stop worrying about it, O my son."¹⁸⁶

'Ali's attitude concerning this matter was clear, and no one could deter him from what he had decided to do. He (ﷺ) sent word

from ar-Rabdhah, urging the people of Kufah to mobilise and calling upon them to support him. The two envoys were Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr aş-Şiddeeq and Muhammad ibn Ja'far, but they did not succeed in their mission because Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari, 'Ali's governor in Kufah, discouraged the people and told them not to go out and fight in the turmoil. He told them what he had heard from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), warning against taking part in fitnah.¹⁸⁷ After that, 'Ali (ﷺ) sent Hâshim ibn 'Utbah ibn Abi Waqqâs, but he also failed in his mission because of the influence of Abu Moosa on the people.¹⁸⁸

1.4.3. Request of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) from the oasis of Dhu Qâr for support from the people of Kufah¹⁸⁹

'Ali (ﷺ) and his army moved towards Dhu Qâr and camped there, eight days after leaving Madinah, with approximately nine hundred men.¹⁹⁰ At that time, he sent Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs to Kufah, but they did not respond to him. Next he sent 'Ammar ibn Yâsir and al-Hasan ibn 'Ali, and he dismissed Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari, replacing him with Qardhah ibn Ka'b.¹⁹¹ Al-Qa'qâ' played a major role in convincing the people of Kufah to join 'Ali. He addressed them and said: "I am an adviser to you, and I care sincerely about you. I want you to follow true guidance, and I shall tell you something that is true... There should be no alternative but to have a leadership to organise the people's affairs, deter wrongdoers and support those who are wronged. This is 'Ali (ﷺ) who has been appointed to a position of leadership, and his message to the people is fair and just. He is only calling people to that which is best and to set affairs straight, so join him and be in the forefront of support."¹⁹²

Al-Hasan ibn 'Ali had a clear effect on the people. He stood up and addressed them, saying: "O people, respond to the call of your leader. Join your brothers, because no doubt there will be many

people who will support him in this matter. By Allah, it is better that this matter of leadership be taken care of by people of reason and wisdom, both in the short- and long-term. Respond to our call, and help us with regard to this crisis that we and you are going through.”¹⁹³

Many of the people of Kufah responded, and between six and seven thousand went out with ‘Ammâr and al-Ḥasan. They were joined by two thousand men from Basra, from the tribe of ‘Abdul-Qays. Then other tribes came to him until his army, when the battle began, was approximately twelve thousand strong.¹⁹⁴ When the people of Kufah met Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali at Dhu Qâr, he said to them: “O people of Kufah, you confronted the Persians and their kings, you destroyed their armies and inherited what they left behind, and you grew stronger against your enemies. I am calling you to join us in order to deal with our brothers in Basra. If they turn back, that is what we want, but if they persist, we will try to deal with them on the basis of kindness, and we will avoid confrontation unless they wrong us first. We will never leave anything that could lead to putting things straight and achieving something good, but we will prefer it over that which could lead to evil, if Allah wills, and there is no strength except with Allah (ﷻ).”¹⁹⁵

1.4.4. Difference of opinion should not affect the love between people

This applies to the situation of the Companions during this turmoil. Even though they had differences of opinion, none of them developed any resentment against his brother. Let us read this story about an incident that took place in Kufah:

Bukhari narrated that Abu Wâ’il said: “Abu Moosa al-Ash‘ari, Abu Mas‘ood and ‘Uqbah ibn ‘Amr al-Anṣârî entered upon ‘Ammâr when ‘Ali (ﷺ) sent him to the people of Kufah to urge them to join

him. They said: 'We have never seen anything from you that we dislike since you became Muslim like your hastening to take sides in this matter.' 'Ammâr said: 'And I have never seen anything from you that I dislike since you became Muslim like your reluctance in this matter (supporting 'Ali).'" According to another report: Abu Mas'ood, who was well off, said: "O slave, bring me two suits and give one to Abu Moosa and one to 'Ammâr." He said: "Wear it when you go to the Friday prayer."¹⁹⁶

Here we see Abu Mas'ood and 'Ammâr, each thinking that the other is wrong. Despite that, Abu Mas'ood gave 'Ammâr a suit to wear for the Friday prayer because he was wearing travel clothes and battle dress, and Abu Mas'ood did not want him to have to attend the Friday prayer wearing those clothes. This conduct is indicative of deep friendship, even though they each regarded the other's attitude towards the turmoil as wrong. 'Ammâr thought that Abu Moosa and Abu Mas'ood's reluctance to support 'Ali was wrong, and Abu Moosa and Abu Mas'ood thought that 'Ammâr's haste to support Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) was wrong. Each of them had an argument of which he was convinced. Those who were reluctant to support the caliph thought that it was right to refrain from taking part in fighting in the event of fitnah, adhering to those hadiths concerning this, which warned against taking up arms against fellow Muslims. 'Ammâr had the same point of view as 'Ali (ﷺ) with regard to fighting those who transgress the limits or commit outrages, and he adhered to the words of Allah (ﷻ): ﴿Then fight you [all] against the one that rebels﴾ (*Qur'an* 49: 9). He interpreted the warning against fighting as applying to those who were transgressing against their brothers. Neither party wanted to kill the other, and both sides would try to find any reason to prevent fighting before it took place. When fighting did occur, it occurred even though both parties were reluctant to fight.¹⁹⁷

1.4.5. Questions on the road

1.4.5.a. The questions asked by Abu Rifâ'ah ibn Râfi' ibn Mâlik al-'Ajlân al-Anşâri when 'Ali wanted to leave ar-Rabdhah

Abu Rifâ'ah said: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, what do you want? Where are you taking us?" 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "What we want is to set things straight; if they accept that from us and respond, all well and good." Abu Rifâ'ah said: "What if they do not respond?" 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "We will leave them with the reason they have in their mind (their own justification for their conduct) and acknowledge their right to differ, and we will be patient." Abu Rifâ'ah said: "What if they are not content with that?" 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "We will leave them alone as long as they leave us alone." Abu Rifâ'ah said: "What if they do not leave us alone?" 'Ali said: "We will defend ourselves against them." Abu Rifâ'ah said: "Then yes (I will join you)."

He listened to that series of questions and answers, and his mind was put at rest, so he said: "I shall impress you with my deeds as you have pleased me with your words."¹⁹⁸

1.4.5.b. The people of Kufah, including al-A'war ibn Banân al-Manqari, asked questions of 'Ali (ﷺ)

When the people of Kufah came to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) in Dhu Qâr, some of them asked him the reason why he had come; among those who asked these questions was al-A'war ibn Banân al-Manqari. 'Ali (ﷺ) said to him: "I am coming to put things in order and extinguish the fire of enmity, in the hope that Allah (ﷻ) will bring this Ummah together by means of us and prevent fighting. If they respond to me, all well and good." Al-A'war said: "What if they do not respond to us?" 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "We will leave them alone as long as they leave us alone." Al-A'war said: "What if they do not leave us alone?" 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "We will defend ourselves

against them.” Al-A‘war said: “Do they have the same rights and duties as us?” He said: “Yes.”¹⁹⁹

1.4.5.c. Abu Salâmah ad-Da‘lânî, one of those who asked questions of Amir al-Mu‘mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام)

Abu Salâmah said: “Do you think these people have valid grounds for their demand of vengeance for ‘Uthmân, if they are seeking Allah thereby?” ‘Ali said: “Yes.” Abu Salâmah said: “Is there any valid reason for you to delay that (the seeking vengeance)?” ‘Ali (عليه السلام) said: “Yes. If there is something that cannot be done, then the ruling concerning it should be based on precautions and what is in the people’s best interests.” Abu Salâmah said: “What is our situation and theirs if we end up fighting tomorrow?” ‘Ali (عليه السلام) said: “I hope that no one who is sincere towards Allah among us or them will be killed except that Allah will admit him to paradise.”²⁰⁰

1.4.5.d. Mâlik ibn Ḥabīb asked questions of Amir al-Mu‘mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام)

Mâlik said: “What will you do if you meet these people (in battle)?” ‘Ali (عليه السلام) said: “It has become clear to us and to them that what is best is to refrain from that. If they give us allegiance, all well and good, but if they and we insist on fighting, then there is nothing we can do about it.” Mâlik said: “If we start fighting, what is the situation of those among us who are slain?” ‘Ali said: “Whoever is sincere towards Allah will benefit from that, and it may be his salvation.”²⁰¹

The aim of Amir al-Mu‘mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) was to set things straight and put an end to the fitnah. Fighting was not something that he was considering; if it happened, it would be because he could not help it. With regard to whoever was killed on either side, his ultimate fate would depend on his intention, regardless of whether he fought

on 'Ali's side or against him. Thus Amir al-Mu'mineen confirmed that the Muslims who went out for this purpose, after the martyrdom of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), were seeking to set things straight and put an end to turmoil, and their decision was based on sincerity. Their reward would be commensurate with the sincerity of their intentions and the purity of their hearts.²⁰²

1.5. Attempts at reconciliation

Before 'Ali (ﷺ) moved towards Basra with his army, he stayed in Dhu Qâr for a few days. He tried, with all the powers and means at his disposal, to put an end to this division and turmoil by peaceful means and to spare the Muslims the evils of fighting and armed confrontation. The same is also true of Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr. A number of the Companions and senior Tâbi'oon who had refrained from getting involved also took part in the attempts to bring about reconciliation, including:

1.5.1. 'Imrân ibn Huṣayn (ﷺ)

He sent word to the people discouraging both parties (from engaging in fighting). Then he sent word to Banu 'Adiyy, a large group of whom had joined az-Zubayr. His envoy came and said to them in their mosque: "I have been sent to you by 'Imrân ibn Huṣayn, the Companion of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to advise you; he swears by Allah, besides Whom there is no other god, that he would rather be an Abyssinian slave with a cut-off nose, tending goats at the top of a mountain until death comes to him, then to shoot an arrow against either of these two parties, whether it misses or hits its target. So refrain from fighting, may my father and mother be sacrificed for you." The people said: "Leave us alone, for we will never abandon the wife of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) for anything."²⁰³

1.5.2. Ka'b ibn Soor

He was one of the senior Tâbi'oon. He did his utmost and pushed himself beyond his limits, playing a role that many men would be unable to play. He persisted in striving to bring about reconciliation until the thing that he was trying to prevent happened. He died as a victim of his efforts, slain as he stood between the two armies calling each to put down their weapons and refer to the Book of Allah (ﷻ) for judgement.²⁰⁴

1.5.3. Al-Qa'qâ' ibn 'Amr at-Tameemi

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) sent al-Qa'qâ' ibn 'Amr at-Tameemi (ﷺ) on a mission of reconciliation to Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr, instructing him: "Meet with these two men, call them to brotherhood and unity and warn them of the seriousness of differences and division." So al-Qa'qâ' went to Basra, and he started with 'Â'ishah (ﷺ). He said to her: "What has brought you to Basra, O my mother?" She said to him: "O my son, (we have come) for the purpose of setting things straight among the people." Al-Qa'qâ' asked her to send word to Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr asking them to come, and he spoke to them in her presence.

❖ The discussion between al-Qa'qâ' and Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr

When they came, he asked them why they had come, and they said the same as 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) had said: "(We have come) for the purpose of setting things straight among the people." He said to them: "Tell me, in what way are you going to set things straight? For by Allah, if we agree with you, then we will join you in your efforts; and if we disagree with you, we will not join you." They said: "The murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) must be executed; if they are left alone and are not punished in accordance with the Qur'an, this will be

forsaking the Qur'an and disregarding its rulings. If the prescribed punishment is carried out on them, this will be keeping the Qur'an alive." Al-Qa'qâ' said: "In Basra, there were six hundred of the murderers of 'Uthmân, and you killed them all except one man, namely Ḥarqooş ibn Zuhayr as-Sa'di. When he fled from you, he sought protection with his people of Banu Sa'd. When you wanted to seize him from them and kill him, his people prevented you from doing that; six thousand men got angry for his sake and deserted you and stood against you as one. If you leave Ḥarqooş alone and do not kill him, you will be abandoning your principles and what you are calling others to and demanding 'Ali to do. But if you fight Banu Sa'd because of Ḥarqooş, and they overwhelm and defeat you, then you will have come to the opposite of what you are trying to achieve; you will have made them stronger, and you will be greatly harmed. By going after Ḥarqooş, you are angering Rabee'ah and Muḍar in this land, as they have come together to fight you and defeat you in support of Banu Sa'd. This is what happened with 'Ali and the murderers of 'Uthmân who are in his army."

❖ The solution according to al-Qa'qâ'

He advocated deliberation and calming things down first, then carrying out the prescribed punishment. The Mother of the Believers and those who were with her were influenced by the logical argument of al-Qa'qâ'. She said to him: "So what do you suggest, O Qa'qâ'?" He said: "I say that the best thing is to calm things down. It is essential to give it time until the murderers of 'Uthmân are brought to justice. Then when the division is ended, and the Ummah is united behind Amir al-Mu'mineen, he will be free to deal with the killers of 'Uthmân. If you give your allegiance to 'Ali and support him, this will be a good sign and a blessing, and 'Ali will be able to avenge 'Uthmân. But if you refuse and continue to be stubborn and insist on fighting, this will be a bad sign and will lead to the diminishing of

Muslim power. So be on the side of caution, and be the means of good as you have always been; do not expose us to ruin, because that will affect you too, and Allah (ﷻ) may bring about our doom and yours. By Allah, I say this and call you to it, and I am worried lest we do not reach any agreement before Allah (ﷻ) brings destruction upon this Ummah, which has lost a great deal and been stricken by calamity. What has befallen it is very serious; it is not like one man killing another, or a group killing a man, or even a tribe killing a tribe.” They were convinced by the sincere and persuasive words of al-Qa‘qâ’ and agreed to his call for reconciliation. They said to him: “You have spoken well. Go back, and if ‘Ali comes and tells us the same as you have said, the matter will be settled inshallah.” So al-Qa‘qâ’ went back to ‘Ali in Dhu Qâr, having succeeded in his mission, and told ‘Ali about what had happened. ‘Ali was pleased with that, and the people were about to reach a peaceful conclusion, regardless of who approved or disapproved.²⁰⁵

❖ Good signs of a deal between the two parties

When al-Qa‘qâ’ went back and told ‘Ali what had happened, ‘Ali (ﷻ) sent two envoys²⁰⁶ to ‘Â’ishah and Talhah and the people who were with them, to verify what al-Qa‘qâ’ ibn ‘Amr had said. They came to ‘Ali (ﷻ) and told him that they were still agreeing with what al-Qa‘qâ’ had said. So ‘Ali set out and came to a halt near them, and the members of various tribes on each side met with one another, Muḍar with Muḍar, Rabee‘ah with Rabee‘ah, Yemenis with Yemenis. None of them had any doubt that a peace deal was imminent. They camped close to one another and went out to meet one another, and they did not talk about anything except the peace deal.²⁰⁷ Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (ﷻ) decided to move on, and he announced his important decision: “I will leave tomorrow, so leave and go back (meaning to Basra). No one should come with us tomorrow who contributed to the murder of ‘Uthmân in any way.”²⁰⁸

1.6. The outbreak of fighting

1.6.1. The role of the Saba'is in the outbreak of fighting

In the camp of 'Ali (عليه السلام), there were some of those evildoers and rebels who had killed 'Uthmân (عليه السلام). There were those who were not known by name, those who were known but were protected by their tribes, those concerning whom there was no evidence about their role in the murder of 'Uthmân, and those who had hypocrisy in their hearts but were not able to show it openly.²⁰⁹ The followers of Ibn Saba' were eager to fan the flames of fitnah so that they could avoid justice.²¹⁰

When the people had settled down in their camps, 'Ali came out, as did Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr. They met and spoke about that which they differed on, and they did not see anything better than reconciling and giving up war when they saw that things were becoming clearer. They parted on that note. 'Ali (عليه السلام) returned to his camp, and Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr returned to theirs. Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr sent word to the commanders of their army, and 'Ali sent word to the commanders of his army, apart from those who had besieged 'Uthmân (عليه السلام).

The people went to sleep intending to reconcile and avoid trouble, and they did not doubt that there would be a peace deal. They were close to one another, going out to meet one another, and not talking about or planning anything but reconciliation. Those who had been behind the turmoil spent their worst night ever because they felt that the end was looming for them. They spent the entire night in discussion, and one of them said: "As for Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr, we know where they stand, but as for 'Ali, we did not know where he stands until today. That was when he told the people to move on the next day, but none of those who had helped in the murder of 'Uthmân

in any way were to move with them. And, by Allah, the people's view concerning us is the same; if they reconcile, then their agreement will be to shed our blood."²¹¹ Ibn as-Sawda' Abdullah ibn Saba', who was the leader, spoke and said: "O people, your opportunity will be when the people (from both camps) are mixing; show kindness to them, and when the people meet tomorrow, start the fight and do not give them any time to think. The ones whom you are with will have no option but to defend themselves. Allah will distract 'Ali and Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr, and those with them will be distracted from that which you hate. So think about it and then disperse without making the people suspicious about you."²¹² So they agreed to start the fight secretly.

The next morning, they came when it was still dark and their neighbours were unaware of what they were doing. Those from Muḍar went to their counterparts from Muḍar, those from Rabee'ah went to their counterparts from Rabee'ah, those from Yemen went to their counterparts among their fellow Yemenis. They attacked them, and the people of Basra started fighting back, each group fighting those who attacked them. Az-Zubayr, Ṭalḥah and some prominent figures from Egypt came out and sent word to the right flank, who were from Rabee'ah, led by 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn al-Ḥârith ibn Hishâm, and the left flank, who were led by 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn 'Atâb ibn Usayd, while they remained steadfast in the core. They said: "What is this?" They said: "The people of Kufah attacked us this night... We knew that 'Ali would not give up until he shed blood and transgressed the sacred limits, and that he is not going to agree with us." Then they retreated with the people of Basra, and the people of Basra shot arrows at those who attacked them until they pushed them back to their camp.²¹³

'Ali (ﷺ) and the people of Kufah heard the noise. The Saba'is had planted a man close to 'Ali (ﷺ) so that he could tell him

what they wanted him to hear. When he said: "What's going on?," that man said: "We have been taken by surprise. Some of them attacked us at night, and we pushed them back." 'Ali (ﷺ) said to his commander on the right flank: "Stay on the right flank," and he said to his commander on the left flank: "Stay on the left flank." The Saba'is continued their efforts to keep the battle raging.²¹⁴ Despite the way the battle began, the two sides did not rush to fight until they found out what happened. 'Ali (ﷺ) and those who were with him all agreed not to start fighting until the other side started, so as to establish that they were the wrongdoers. Even if they engaged in fighting, they agreed that they would not kill anyone who was running away and would not finish off anyone who was wounded. But the Saba'is were trying hard to instigate the fighting.²¹⁵

On the other hand, Ṭalhah, who was on his mount with the people rushing around him, called out: "O people, can you listen?" But they continued to rush and did not listen to him. He did not say any more than: "Woe to you, moths to the flame, and greed is killing them!"²¹⁶ Were there any moths other than those Saba'is, and was there any greed other than among them? Rather the attempts to bring about reconciliation continued until the last moment of the battle.

From this discussion, the impact of Ibn Saba', and his helpers the Saba'is, on the battle becomes clear. We can also see clearly, beyond any shadow of a doubt, the keenness of the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) to reconcile and unite. This is the truth which is confirmed by the texts and of which one may feel certain.²¹⁷

Before discussing the stages of the battle, we should point out that the impact of the Saba'is in the Battle of the Camel is something that all scholars agree upon, whether they called them the evildoers, thugs of the two parties, the murderers of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه), the fools or hooligans, or they referred to them clearly as Saba'is.²¹⁸ The following are some texts that confirm this:

(a) It says in *Akhbâr al-Baṣrah*, by 'Umar ibn Shubbah, that those to whom the murder of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) was attributed were afraid that the two parties might reconcile and agree to kill them, so they started the fight between them and there happened what happened.²¹⁹

(b) Imam aṭ-Ṭaḥḥawi said: "The fitnah of the camel broke out against the wishes of both 'Ali and Ṭalḥah; rather it was stirred up by the wrongdoers against the wishes of the aforementioned."²²⁰

(c) Al-Bâqillâni said: "A deal was reached, and they parted when both groups were content with the deal, but the killers of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) were afraid that they would be caught and brought to justice. So they got together and discussed the matter, and they differed concerning it; then they agreed to split into two groups and start the fight at dawn in both camps, when they were scattered throughout the camps. The group in 'Ali's camp would shout out: 'Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr have betrayed us!', and the group in the camp of Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr would shout out: "Ali has betrayed us!" They succeeded in their plan, and fighting broke out. Each of the two parties was limiting itself to defending itself and trying not to let the bloodshed go beyond that. This is the correct approach on the part of both parties, showing restraint for the sake of Allah (ﷻ) as fighting broke out and they had to defend themselves. This is what happened according to the sound reports, and this is what we believe."²²¹

(d) Al-Qâḍi 'Abdul-Jabbâr narrated the views of the scholars, which is that 'Ali, Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr and 'Â'ishah reached a peace deal and agreed to avoid war and to defer dealing with the issue (of 'Uthmân's murderers). Those of the enemies of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) who were in the camp did not like that, and they were afraid that the Muslims would focus their efforts on dealing with them, so they planned to disrupt that, as is well known, and that was achieved.²²²

(e) Al-Qâḍi Abu Bakr ibn al-'Arabi said: "'Ali came to Basra, and the two groups came together to talk, but the people of whims and desires

did not leave them alone; they hastened to shed blood, and war broke out. There were a large number of thugs who decided to start the fight so that the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) would not be brought to justice. One person in the army could spoil its plans, so what if there were one thousand?"²²³

(f) Ibn Ḥazm said: "The evidence for that is that the two armies drew close together and no fighting broke out, but when night came, the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) realised that any agreement reached by the two parties would be against them. They attacked the camp of Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr at night, wielding the sword against them. The people had to defend themselves, so they pushed them back until they reached the camp of 'Ali (ﷺ). Then 'Ali's people had to defend themselves, each group no doubt thinking that the other had initiated the fighting. There was a great deal of confusion, but no one went beyond defending himself. The evildoers and killers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) persisted in their attempts to make the fighting continue, and each group thought that it was doing the right thing in defending itself. Ṭalhah was hit by a stray arrow while he was standing, not knowing what was happening. The arrow struck a wound in his lower leg, which he had received at Uhud while defending the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). He left the battlefield and died soon after (ﷺ). Az-Zubayr (ﷺ) left while the battle raged; he was killed after he had withdrawn from the battle, in Wadi al-Sibâ', which is less than a day's march from Basra. That is what happened."²²⁴

Adh-Dhahabi said: "The Battle of the Camel was stirred up by the foolish among the two groups."²²⁵ He also said: "The two groups had reconciled, and neither 'Ali nor Ṭalhah intended to fight; rather their intention was to bring about unity. But the thugs of the two parties traded arrows, and fighting broke out and engulfed everyone."²²⁶

In the book *Duwal al-Islam* it says: "Fighting broke out because of the thugs, and 'Ali, Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr were no longer in control."²²⁷

Dr. Sulayman ibn Ḥamad al-‘Awdah said: “We may say that the report of at-Ṭabari, which speaks of the Saba’i role in the Battle of the Camel, is referring to the same people who are described as thugs in other reports. Even if these thuggish groups, which are referred to in other reports, did not have a direct connection to the Saba’i or share the same aims and goals, it is possible that these thuggish groups became the element that Ibn Saba’ and his helpers took advantage of, which is usually the case in some demagogic movements that may be taken advantage of by some evildoers.”²²⁸

We should not forget that the atmosphere of turmoil played a major role in these events. There can be no doubt that at times of chaos, people may not be able to see things that others can see very clearly. They may have their own justification for doing things while others can clearly see the reality of what they are doing, without any effort. The darkness of turmoil is sufficient to prevent a person from thinking carefully and seeing clearly.²²⁹ For example, we may note that al-Aḥnaf ibn Qays, who is one of those who lived through the events of this battle, went out with the aim of joining ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (عليه السلام), but he was met by Abu Bakrah, who said: “O Aḥnaf, go back, for I heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say: ‘If two Muslims face one another with swords, then the slayer and the slain will be in hell.’ I said — or it was said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, as for the slayer (his case is clear), but what about the one who was slain?’ He said: ‘He wanted to kill his companion.’”²³⁰

Fighting alongside ‘Ali (عليه السلام) was right and correct, and whoever was killed fighting alongside him is a martyr and will have two rewards. However, Abu Bakrah (رضي الله عنه) was quoting a hadith that was mentioned in a different context to that in which ‘Ali (عليه السلام) was fighting those who were transgressing. This was his own understanding, but it was not appropriate in ‘Ali’s case. From this report, we understand that ‘Ali (عليه السلام) faced many obstacles when he

fought others, including fatwas like these, which reflect piety more than the correct fatwa issued for the correct situation.²³¹ Al-Aḥnaf refused to join ‘Ali (عليه السلام), so he was not present with either side in the Battle of the Camel.²³²

Furthermore, az-Zubayr (عليه السلام), who was one of the main figures in the battle, explains to us more about the reality of the matter: “This is the fitnah that we were told about.” His freed slave said to him: “Are you calling it fitnah when you are fighting in it?” Az-Zubayr said: “Woe to you! Sometimes we see clearly, and sometimes we do not see clearly. There was no matter in which I was uncertain where I stood except this matter, for I do not know whether I should go ahead or give up.”²³³ Ṭalḥah also referred to that when he said: “We used to be one against others, but now we are like two mountains of iron, each seeking out the other.”²³⁴

On the other hand, the companions of ‘Ali (عليه السلام) also confirmed that there was fitnah. ‘Ammâr (عليه السلام) said in Kufah, regarding ‘Â’ishah’s coming out on the campaign: “By Allah, she is the wife of your Prophet in this world and in the hereafter but Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, is testing you by means of her.”²³⁵

1.6.2. The first round of the Battle of the Camel

The Saba’is intensified their efforts to stir up fighting, attacking the other side and inciting each side against the other. A tough battle broke out, which was the Battle of the Camel. It is called that because the Mother of the Believers ‘Â’ishah (عليها السلام) was in the midst of the army of Basra during the second round, riding a camel that had been given to her in Makkah by Ya’la ibn Umayyah, who had brought it from Yemen. She set out on this camel from Makkah to Basra, then she rode it during the battle.

The battle took place on Friday, 16 Jumâda ath-Thâniyah 36 AH, in an area called az-Zâbooqah, near Basra. ‘Ali was upset about

what happened, and his caller called out: "Stop fighting, O people!" But no one listened; everyone was busy fighting his opponent.²³⁶ There were two rounds in the Battle of the Camel; in the first round, the two commanders of the army of Basra were Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr, and this round lasted from dawn until just before noon.²³⁷ 'Ali (ﷺ) called out to his army, as Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr called out to theirs: "Do not kill anyone who wants to flee, do not finish off anyone who is wounded, and do not chase anyone who is leaving the battlefield and giving up the fight."²³⁸

Az-Zubayr (ﷺ) asked his son Abdullah to pay off his debts and said: "No one is killed today except the wrongdoer or one who is wronged, and I think that I will be killed wrongfully; what I am most worried about is my debt."²³⁹ At that point, a man came to az-Zubayr and offered to kill 'Ali (ﷺ) by infiltrating his army and then killing him. Az-Zubayr objected strongly to that and said: "No, no believer should kill a believer, for faith protects a believer from killing."²⁴⁰ Az-Zubayr had no desire to kill 'Ali or anyone else who was innocent of the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ). Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali called az-Zubayr (ﷺ) and spoke to him kindly and gently. It was said that he reminded him of a hadith that he had heard from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), who had told az-Zubayr: "You are going to fight him ('Ali) unlawfully."²⁴¹ This hadith has no sound chain of narration, though.²⁴²

Some reports explain that the reason why az-Zubayr left just before the battle was because he realised that 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir (ﷺ) was on the other side. Even though he did not narrate from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) the hadith: "'Ammâr will be killed by the group that is in the wrong,"²⁴³ he may have heard it from other Companions, because it was very well known.²⁴⁴ Some reports give as the reason for his leaving his doubt as to whether his stance towards this turmoil (fitnah, as he called it) was correct.²⁴⁵ According

to another report that suggests his reason for leaving, Ibn ‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) reminded him of his blood ties with ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) by saying: “How would Şafiyyah bint ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib feel if you fought ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib ibn ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib with your sword?”²⁴⁶ Whatever the reasons, az-Zubayr left the battlefield and was met by Ibn Jarmooz, who killed him,²⁴⁷ as we shall see in detail below.

Az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) was aware of his goal, which was to set things straight, but when he saw that fighting had broken out instead of peace, he left and did not fight. The words of Ibn ‘Abbâs, “Will you fight ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib with your sword?”, imply an unspoken question: ‘or have you come to set things straight and bring unity?’²⁴⁸ As a result of this conversation, az-Zubayr left the battlefield and departed. Perhaps numerous, interconnected factors played a role in his decision to abandon the battlefield.

As for Ṭalhah ibn ‘Ubaydullâh (رضي الله عنه), az-Zubayr’s second-in-command of the army of Basra, he was wounded at the beginning of the battle when he was struck by a stray arrow. It is not known who shot it, but it was a direct hit and caused him to bleed heavily. His soldiers said to him: “O Abu Muḥammad, you are wounded. Go in among their houses so that you can be treated.” Ṭalhah said to his slave: “Carry me, and look for a suitable place for me.” He entered Basra and was placed in a house there to be treated, but his wound continued to bleed until he died in that house. Then he was buried in Basra (رضي الله عنه).²⁴⁹

As for the report indicating that az-Zubayr and Ṭalhah (may Allah be pleased with them) urged the people to carry on fighting, and that az-Zubayr only left the battlefield when he saw that the people of Basra were going to be defeated, this report is not sound.²⁵⁰ It is contradicted by that which is proven of the dignity and sound character of the Companions (رضي الله عنهم). It is also contrary to the sound reports stating that the army of the Camel only went out to set things

straight and bring about reconciliation. How could this alleged action of az-Zubayr (ؓ) be in harmony with the aim for which he left Makkah and went to Basra, namely to set things straight among the people? In fact, the attitude of az-Zubayr (ؓ) was one of keenness to set things straight up to the very last moment. Al-Ḥâkim, via Abu Ḥarb ibn Abil-Aswad ad-Du’ali, narrated that az-Zubayr (ؓ) strove to bring about reconciliation between the sides, but when the battle began and chaos prevailed, az-Zubayr left the battlefield,²⁵¹ as did Ṭalḥah. He had come to set things straight, not to shed blood. With regard to the killing of Ṭalḥah (ؓ), that occurred at the beginning of the battle, as was clearly stated by al-Aḥnaf ibn Qays.²⁵²

Az-Zubayr departed the battlefield, and Ṭalḥah died (may Allah be pleased with them both). With the fall of the slain and wounded, the first round of the Battle of the Camel ended, and the army of ‘Ali (ؓ) had prevailed. ‘Ali (ؓ) had been following the progress of the battle and saw the slain and wounded on both sides; he was distressed and saddened by that. He went to his son al-Ḥasan and embraced him. ‘Ali (ؓ) began weeping and saying to him: “O my son, would that your father had died twenty years before this day.” Al-Ḥasan said: “O my father, I warned you about this.” ‘Ali (ؓ) said: “I did not think that it would go this far. What good is life after this? What good can be hoped for after this?”²⁵³

1.6.3. The second round of the Battle of the Camel

News reached the Mother of the Believers ‘Â’ishah (ؓ) of the fighting that had taken place. She came out on her camel, surrounded by the Azdi tribes and accompanied by Ka’b ibn Soor, to whom she had given a muṣḥaf to use to call the people to stop fighting. The Mother of the Believers advanced. She hoped that people would listen to her because of her status in their hearts, and that she would be able to stop them fighting one another and stop the fitnah that had

begun to spread.²⁵⁴ Ka'b held up the muṣḥaf and went before the army of Basra, calling to the army of 'Ali (ﷺ), saying: "O people, I am Ka'b ibn Soor, the judge of Basra; I call you to the Book of Allah, to act upon it and bring about reconciliation on that basis." The Saba'is, who were in the forefront of the army of 'Ali (ﷺ), were afraid that Ka'b's effort would succeed, so they targeted him with their arrows as one man, and he died with the muṣḥaf in his hand.²⁵⁵

The arrows of the Saba'is also struck the camel and howdah²⁵⁶ of 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها), and she started calling out: "O my sons, Allah, Allah, remember Allah and the Day of Reckoning, and refrain from fighting!" The Saba'is did not respond to her; they continued striking the army of Basra. 'Ali (ﷺ) was in the rear, ordering his troops to refrain from fighting and not to attack the Basrans, but the Saba'is in the forefront of his army did not respond to him; they persisted in advancing, attacking and fighting. When 'Ā'ishah saw that they were not responding to her call and saw Ka'b ibn Soor killed in front of her, she said: "O people, curse the killers of 'Uthmān and their supporters." 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) began to pray against the murderers of 'Uthmān (رضي الله عنه) and to curse them, and the people of Basra raised their voices in supplication against the murderers of 'Uthmān (رضي الله عنه) and their supporters, and they cursed them. 'Ali (ﷺ) heard the supplication coming in loud voices from the army of Basra and asked: "What is this?" They said: "It is 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) praying against the murderers of 'Uthmān (رضي الله عنه) and the people praying with her." 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "Pray with me against the murderers of 'Uthmān (رضي الله عنه) and their supporters, and curse them." So the army of 'Ali (ﷺ) raised their voices, cursing the murderers of 'Uthmān (رضي الله عنه) and praying against them.²⁵⁷ 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "O Allah, curse the killers of 'Uthmān in the plains and in the mountains."²⁵⁸

The fighting intensified and spread. The people fought with spears until the spears broke,²⁵⁹ then they unsheathed their swords

and fought until the swords broke, and finally they fought at close quarters.²⁶⁰ The Saba’is directed their efforts towards hamstringing the camel and killing ‘Â’ishah (ﷺ), the Mother of the Believers, so the army of Basra rushed to protect ‘Â’ishah (ﷺ) and her camel. They fought to defend the camel, and they killed anyone who grabbed its reins. The battle raging in front of the camel was so fierce and violent that the howdah began to resemble a hedgehog because of all the arrows that had been shot at it.²⁶¹ Many Muslims from the tribes of al-Azd and Banu ʿAzzab and young men of Quraysh were killed around the camel, after displaying unparalleled bravery and courage.²⁶²

‘Â’ishah (ﷺ) was very upset and frustrated. She had not wanted any fighting, but fighting broke out despite her wishes, and she ended up in the midst of the chaos, calling out for it to stop, but to no avail. Everyone who took hold of the camel’s reins was killed, then Muhammad ibn ʿAlī (as-Sajjād) came and took hold of the reins, and he said to his mother the Mother of the Believers: “O my mother, what do you want me to do?” She said: “Be like the better of the two sons of Adam,” meaning that he should refrain from fighting. He sheathed his sword, after having unsheathed it, and he was killed, may Allah have mercy on him.²⁶³

Also killed was ‘Abdur-Raḥmān ibn ‘Itāb ibn Usayd, who tried to kill al-Ashtar even if it meant that he died too. He wrestled him, and they both fell to the ground. ‘Abdur-Raḥmān ibn ‘Itāb said to those who were around him: “Kill me and Mālik,”²⁶⁴ because of his hatred for him due to the prominent role he had played in inciting the people against ‘Uthmān (ﷺ). But the people did not know al-Ashtar as ‘Mālik’, and his time had not yet come. If ‘Abdur-Raḥmān had said ‘al-Ashtar’, many swords would have struck al-Ashtar.²⁶⁵

As for Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr, he fought in an unparalleled fashion, throwing himself among the swords. He was taken from among the slain with forty-odd wounds, the most severe and last of

which was inflicted by al-Ashtar. Due to the latter's hatred for Ibn az-Zubayr, he did not sit on his horse when he hit him; rather he stood up in the stirrups and struck Ibn az-Zubayr on the head, thinking that he had killed him.²⁶⁶ A large number of people were also killed from the tribes of Banu 'Adiyy, Banu Ḍabbah and al-Azd. Banu Ḍabbah showed a great deal of courage and sacrifice for the Mother of the Believers.

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام), by virtue of the wisdom, strength and military skill with which he had been blessed, realised that as long as the camel remained on the battlefield, the fighting would continue and a large number of people would be killed. The people of the camel would not be defeated or give up fighting as long as the Mother of the Believers remained on the battlefield. Her staying on the battlefield also posed a danger to her life; the howdah in which she was sitting was bristling with arrows like a hedgehog.²⁶⁷

'Ali (عليه السلام) ordered some of his troops, including Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr, the brother of the Mother of the Believers, and Abdullah ibn Badeel, to hamstring the camel and take 'Ā'ishah (عليها السلام) out of the howdah and to the ground; in other words, they were to strike the camel's feet with their swords.²⁶⁸ Her brother Muḥammad and Abdullah ibn Badeel carried her howdah and placed it in front of 'Ali (عليه السلام), who ordered that she be taken into the house of Abdullah ibn Badeel.²⁶⁹ 'Ali's military intuition proved to be correct; as soon as Mother of the Believers left the battlefield, the motive that was making the people of Basra eager to fight to the death disappeared, and they turned and fled. If he had not taken this step, the battle would have continued until the entire army of Basra, which was defending the camel, had been destroyed or the army of 'Ali (عليه السلام) had been defeated.

When the rout began, 'Ali (عليه السلام) or his caller shouted out to his army, telling them not to pursue anyone who was running away, not

to finish off anyone who was wounded, and not to take any booty except for equipment or weapons that had been brought to the battlefield or the camp only; they were not to take anything more than that. He also forbade them to enter the houses. Not only that; 'Ali (عليه السلام) also said to the people of Basra who had fought him that if any of them found any of his property with one of 'Ali's companions, he had the right to take it back. A man found a group from 'Ali's army cooking some meat in a pot that belonged to him. He took the pot from them and threw away the meat that was in it, out of spite.²⁷⁰

1.6.4. The number of people killed

This intense battle led to a large number of people being killed, but there are differing reports as to the actual numbers. Al-Mas'oodi said that these differences were due to the bias of the narrators.²⁷¹

Qatâdah stated that the number of people killed at the Battle of the Camel was twenty thousand.²⁷² It seems that this is greatly exaggerated, because the number of the two armies put together was close to this or less. The Râfiqî Shia Abu Makhnaf exaggerated greatly because of his bias, and he did wrong when he thought that he was doing right. He said that the twenty thousand were from among the people of Basra.²⁷³ Sayf stated that the number was ten thousand, half from among the companions of 'Ali (عليه السلام) and half from among the companions of 'Â'ishah (عليها السلام). According to another report, he said: "It was said that the number was fifteen thousand: five thousand from among the people of Kufah and ten thousand from among the people of Basra; half of them were killed during the first battle and half during the second round."²⁷⁴ But these two reports are weak because of the interruptions in their chains of narration and other faults; they are also grossly overstated. 'Umar ibn Shaybah mentioned, with his chain of narration, that the number of slain was more than six thousand, but this report is also weak in its chain of

narration.²⁷⁵ Al-Ya'qoobi exaggerated further and gave a higher figure; he put the number of slain at thirty-two thousand.²⁷⁶ This figure is highly inflated; the reasons for this overstatement include the following:

- (a) The desire of the enemies of the Companions, namely the Saba'is and their followers, to deepen the dispute and division among the members of the Ummah who are united by the love of the Companions and who are following their example, after that of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).
- (b) The contribution of some poets and ignorant people from numerous tribes to inflating and magnifying the number, so as to match the poetry that they attributed to some of their leaders and knights. In addition to that, the storytellers wanted to attract people's attention with the exciting events of which they spoke.
- (c) The building of confidence for the followers of the thugs and Saba'is in order to prove the success of their plans and arrangements.²⁷⁷

As for the true number of people slain in the Battle of the Camel, it is probably very small, for the following reasons:

- ❖ The short duration of the fight. Ibn Abi Shaybah narrated with a sound chain of narration²⁷⁸ that the combat started in the afternoon and that by the time the sun set, no one who had been defending the camel was still there.
- ❖ The defensive nature of the fighting, since each side was merely defending itself and doing no more than that.
- ❖ The true number of those slain at the Battle of the Camel is regarded as very low in comparison to the number of Muslim martyrs at the Battle of Yarmook (3,000) and the

Battle of Qâdisiyyah (8,500), and those were battles that went on for a number of days. This is also taking into account the ferocity and intensity of those other battles, which were decisive battles in the history of nations.

- ❖ Khaleefah ibn Khayyât narrated a list of those among the slain of the Battle of the Camel whose names were known; there were approximately one hundred names.²⁷⁹ If we assume that the total number was double that, this would mean that the number of people slain at the Battle of the Camel was no more than two hundred. This is what Dr. Khâlîd ibn Muhammad al-Ghayth suggests is most likely, in his dissertation *Istishhâd 'Uthmân wa Waq'at al-Jamal fî Marwiyât Sayf ibn 'Umar fî Tareekh at-Ṭabari — Dirâsah Naqdiyyah* (The martyrdom of 'Uthmân and the Battle of the Camel in the reports of Sayf ibn 'Umar in *Tareekh at-Ṭabari* — A critical study).²⁸⁰

1.6.5. Is it true that Marwân ibn al-Ḥakam killed Ṭalhah ibn 'Ubaydullâh?

Many reports indicate that the killer of Ṭalhah ibn 'Ubaydullâh (عليه السلام) was Marwân ibn al-Ḥakam.²⁸¹ However, if one studies these reports, it becomes clear that Marwân ibn al-Ḥakam is innocent of this accusation for the following reasons:

- (a) Ibn Katheer said: "It was said that the one who shot this arrow was Marwân ibn al-Ḥakam, and it was said that the one who shot this arrow was someone else. In my view, the latter is more likely, even though the former is a well-known view. And Allah (ﷻ) knows best."²⁸²
- (b) Ibn al-'Arabi said: "They said that Marwân killed Ṭalhah ibn 'Ubaydullâh, but how can anyone know that except the One

Who knows the unseen? It was not narrated by anyone trustworthy.”²⁸³

- (c) Muḥibb ad-Deen al-Khaṭīb said: “This report about Ṭalḥah and Marwān is a mystery; no one knows where it came from.”²⁸⁴
- (d) The reason given for Marwān’s desire to kill Ṭalḥah (رضي الله عنه) — that Marwān accused Ṭalḥah of helping in the murder of ‘Uthmān (رضي الله عنه) — is invalid. There is no proof by any sound chain of narration that any of the Companions helped in the murder of ‘Uthmān (رضي الله عنه).
- (e) At the Battle of the Camel, Marwān and Ṭalḥah were both on the same side, which was the side of those who were calling for putting things right among the people.²⁸⁵
- (f) Mu‘āwiyah (رضي الله عنه) appointed Marwān in charge of Madinah and Makkah. If it were true that Marwān had done this, Mu‘āwiyah would not have put him in charge of the Muslims in the places that are most sacred before Allah (ﷻ).
- (g) There is a report from Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam in *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukḥārī*.²⁸⁶ Bukhari is known for being very thorough and careful in accepting reports; if it were true that Marwān killed Ṭalḥah (رضي الله عنه), that would have been sufficient reason to reject his reports and question his character.²⁸⁷

1.6.6. The call of Amir al-Mu’mineen

‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) after the battle

As soon as the battle started to die down, the caller of ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) cried out: “Do not finish off anyone who is wounded, do not pursue anyone who is fleeing, do not enter any house. Whoever lays down his weapon is safe, and whoever locks his door is safe.” His army had no right to any booty except what had been brought onto

the battlefield of weapons and mounts, and nothing beyond that. The caller of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) informed those who had fought him of the people of Basra that if one of them found any of his property with 'Ali's troops, he could take it back.²⁸⁸

Some people thought that the army of 'Ali (عليه السلام) was going to distribute the female captives among themselves, so they spoke about that and spread that notion among the people. 'Ali (عليه السلام) soon surprised them when he announced: "You have no right to any female captive, and the estates are to be divided according to the laws of Allah (ﷻ). Any woman whose husband has been killed must observe 'iddah of four months and ten days." They objected to that, asking: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, is their blood permissible for us and not their women?" 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "This is the right approach when fighting people of the qiblah (fellow Muslims)." Then he said: "Bring your arrows and draw lots concerning 'Â'ishah (عليها السلام), for she is the one who was leading these people!" They were shocked and said: "We ask Allah for forgiveness." It had now become clear to them that what they were saying and thinking was very wrong. In order to please them, though, 'Ali (عليه السلام) gave each of them five hundred from the public treasury.²⁸⁹

1.6.7. Checking on the slain and praying for mercy for them

After the battle ended, 'Ali (عليه السلام) went out with a group of his companions to check on the slain. He saw Muhammad ibn Tālḥah (as-Sajjād) and said: "*Inna Lillâhi wa inna ilayhi râji'oon* (Verily, to Allah we belong and unto Him is our return). By Allah, he was a righteous young man." Then he sat down sorrowfully and prayed for forgiveness and mercy for the slain, and he spoke highly of them.²⁹⁰

After that, he went back to his house and saw his wife and two daughters weeping for 'Uthmân (عليه السلام) and his relatives and for az-

Zubayr, Ṭalḥah and others among their Qurayshi relatives. It was narrated that he said to them: "I hope we will be among those of whom Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And We shall remove from their breasts any deep feeling of bitterness [that they may have]. [So they will be like] brothers facing each other on thrones.﴾ (Qur'an 15: 47)." Then he said: "Who are they if not us? Who are they if not us?" And he kept repeating it until the narrator wished that he would fall silent.²⁹¹

1.6.8. The allegiance of the people of Basra

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) was very keen to unite the people, to respect the people under his authority and to treat them honourably. This treatment had a far reaching effect by convincing the people of Basra to swear allegiance to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ). In the evening following the Battle of the Camel, he put the captives in a special place. When he prayed the dawn prayer, he asked for Moosa ibn Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydullâh. He brought him close, welcomed him and seated him next to him, and asked him how he and his brothers were. Then he told him: "We did not seize your land because we want to take it away from you; we seized it lest the people plunder it." He gave him the harvest of the land and said: "O son of my brother, if you have any need, come to us." He did the same with his brother 'Imrân ibn Ṭalḥah, and the two brothers swore allegiance to him. When the other captives saw that, they entered upon 'Ali (ﷺ) to swear allegiance to him, and he accepted their allegiance. He accepted allegiance from each tribe, one by one.²⁹²

He also asked about Marwân ibn al-Ḥakam, saying: "There is compassion for him because of blood ties; in addition to that, he is one of the noble young men of Quraysh." Marwân sent word to al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and Ibn 'Abbâs asking them to speak to 'Ali on his behalf. 'Ali said: "He is safe. Let him go wherever he wants." Because of this generous and noble treatment, Marwân did not want

to leave until he had sworn allegiance to 'Ali (ﷺ).²⁹³ Marwân (ﷺ) praised the actions of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ), telling his son al-Hasan: "I have never seen anyone more generous in victory than your father. As soon as we began to flee on the day of the Camel, his caller called out: 'Do not finish off anyone who is wounded, do not pursue anyone who is fleeing.'"²⁹⁴

Thus the people of Basra swore allegiance to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ). He appointed his nephew Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs (ﷺ) as their governor and Ziyâd ibn Abeehi in charge of the land tax. 'Ali (ﷺ) wanted to stay there longer, but he hastened to leave because of Mâlik (al-Ashtar). Al-Ashtar had been hoping to become governor of Basra; when he found out that Ibn 'Abbâs had been appointed to the post, he became angry and left with his people. 'Ali (ﷺ) was afraid that he might cause trouble, so he went quickly with the remainder of his army and caught up with him. 'Ali (ﷺ) reprimanded for leaving, but he pretended that he had not heard anything else about him.²⁹⁵

1.6.9. The hadith of Abu Bakrah from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "If two Muslims face one another with swords, then the slayer and the slain will be in hell"²⁹⁶

Al-Qurtubi said: "Our scholars said that this hadith, the hadith of Abu Bakrah, is not speaking about the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) because Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make ye peace between them: but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight ye [all] against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah; but if it complies, then make peace between them with justice, and be fair: for Allah loves those who are fair [and just]. The Believers are but a single Brotherhood: So make peace and

reconciliation between your two [contending] brothers: And fear Allah that ye may receive Mercy» (*Qur'an* 49: 9-10).

“Allah (ﷻ) enjoined fighting the group that is in the wrong. If the Muslims fail to fight the group that is in the wrong, then one of the obligations enjoined by Allah (ﷻ) will have been abandoned. This proves that the words of the Prophet (ﷺ), ‘The slayer and the slain will be in hell,’ are not about the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), because they only fought because of a misunderstanding.” Al-Qurtubi also said: “If what is required of Muslims, in the case of any difference between two groups of Muslims, is to run away from it and stay in their houses and break their swords, then no ḥadd punishments would be carried out and no falsehood would be confronted. Then the hypocrites and evildoers would find it easy to violate all sacred limits, confiscate the Muslims’ wealth, take their women captive and shed their blood, because they would gang up against them, and the Muslims would refrain from confronting them by saying: ‘This is fitnah. We are forbidden to fight in this case; we are instructed to be passive and run away from it.’”²⁹⁷

An-Nawawi said: “With regard to the slayer and the slain being in hell, this applies to cases where there is no (Sharia) justification, when they are fighting for tribal reasons and the like. Moreover, what is meant by hell is that they deserve it and may be punished therein or may be pardoned by Allah (ﷻ). This is the correct view. One may judge or evaluate any incident of fighting between Muslims on this basis, but it should be noted that the blood that was shed among the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) is not included in this warning. According to the view of Ahl as-Sunnah, which is the correct view, we should think positively of them and refrain from debating about the disputes among them. We should understand their fighting on the basis that they had what they thought was a valid reason for it. They did not intend to commit

sin or to seek worldly gains; rather each group believed that it was in the right and that its opposite number was transgressing, so it was obliged to fight it and bring it back to compliance with the command of Allah (ﷻ). Some of them were right, and some of them were wrong, but they are to be excused for their misjudgement; if the one who makes a mistake has based his decision on what he thinks is a valid reason, there is no sin on him. The view of Ahl as-Sunnah is that ‘Ali (ﷻ) was the one who was in the right in this conflict. The issues were so ambiguous that some of the Companions were uncertain, so they stayed away from both groups and did not fight; they were not certain who was in the right, so they refrained from helping them.”²⁹⁸

1.6.10. The date of the Battle of the Camel

The historians differed concerning the date of the Battle of the Camel, and there are numerous opinions, including the following:

- (a) Khaleefah ibn Khayyât narrated via Qatâdah that the two groups met on a Thursday halfway through the month of Jumâda al-Âkhirah in 36 AH, and that the battle took place on Friday.²⁹⁹
- (b) ‘Umar ibn Shabbah narrated that the battle took place in the middle of Jumâda al-Âkhirah in 36 AH.³⁰⁰
- (c) Aṭ-Ṭabari narrated via al-Wâqidi that the battle took place on Thursday, 10 Jumâda al-Âkhirah 36 AH.³⁰¹
- (d) Al-Mas‘oodi stated that the battle took place on Thursday, 10 Jumâda al-Oola.

The most correct opinion is that narrated by Khaleefah ibn Khayyât via Qatâdah, as the chain of narration of this report is the soundest concerning this matter.

1.6.11. "Shouldn't we leave them alone when they are Muslim women?"

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) came to the house where the Mother of the Believers 'Â'ishah (عليها السلام) was staying, and he asked for permission to enter. He greeted her with salâm, and she welcomed him. The women in the house of Banu Khalaf were weeping for those who had been killed, including Abdullah and 'Uthmân, the sons of Khalaf. Abdullah had been killed fighting on 'Â'ishah's side, and 'Uthmân had been killed fighting on 'Ali's side. When 'Ali (عليه السلام) entered, Şafiyyah, the wife of Abdullah, Umm Talhah, said to him: "May Allah make your children orphans as you have made my children orphans!" 'Ali (عليه السلام) did not respond. When he left, she repeated her words, and he again kept quiet. A man said to him: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, are you going to keep quiet when this woman is saying what you can hear?" 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "Woe to you. We were commanded to leave women alone when they were polytheists, so shouldn't we leave them alone when they are Muslims?"³⁰²

1.6.12. Abu Bakrah ath-Thaqafi's request to not be appointed as governor of Basra

'Abdur-Rahmân ibn Abi Bakrah ath-Thaqafi came to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) and swore allegiance to him. 'Ali asked about his father, saying: "Where is the one who is sick?" 'Abdur-Rahmân said: "By Allah, he is indeed sick, O Amir al-Mu'mineen, but he is very keen to please you." 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "Walk in front of me." He went and visited him, and he offered him the position of governor of Basra, but Abu Bakrah refused and said: "How about a man from among your relatives whom the people trust?" He suggested Ibn 'Abbâs, so 'Ali appointed Ibn 'Abbâs as governor of Basra, and he appointed Ziyâd ibn Abeehi to be in charge of the land tax and the public treasury; then he ordered Ibn 'Abbâs to listen to Ziyâd.³⁰³

1.6.13. The attitude of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) towards those who reviled 'Â'ishah (عليها السلام)

A man said: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, there are two men at the door who are reviling 'Â'ishah." 'Ali ordered al-Qa'qâ' ibn 'Amr to flog each of them with one hundred lashes and to strip them of their clothes, and al-Qa'qâ' did that.³⁰⁴

1.6.14. 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir's defence of the Mother of the Believers 'Â'ishah (عليها السلام)

It was narrated that Muhammad ibn 'Urayb said: "A man stood up and mentioned 'Â'ishah (عليها السلام) in 'Ali's presence. 'Ammâr came and said: 'Who is this man who is reviling the wife of our Prophet? Shut up, you ugly, obnoxious and blameworthy man!'"³⁰⁵ According to another report, he said: "Get lost, you ugly man! Are you insulting the beloved of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)?"³⁰⁶ According to another report: "Mention was made of 'Â'ishah (عليها السلام) in the presence of 'Ali (عليه السلام), and he said: 'She is the wife of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).'"³⁰⁷

1.7. Between 'Â'ishah the Mother of the Believers and Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib

'Â'ishah the Mother of the Believers (عليها السلام) is aş-Şiddeeqah, the daughter of aş-Şiddeeq Abu Bakr Abdullah ibn 'Uthmân. Her mother was Umm Roomân bint 'Uwaymir al-Kinâniyyah, and she was born four or five years after the Prophet's mission began. The Prophet (ﷺ) married her when she was six years old and consummated the marriage with her when she was nine years old, in the month of Shawwâl 1 AH (or it was said in 2 AH). She was declared innocent from above the seven heavens. She was the dearest of the Prophet's

wives to him and the only virgin that he married. She was the most knowledgeable of all the women of the Ummah; all of the most prominent among the Companions would consult her if they were uncertain about any religious matter. The Prophet (ﷺ) died when she was eighteen years old, and she (رضي الله عنها) died on the night before 17 Ramadan in 58 AH. Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) led the funeral prayer for her, and she was buried in Baqee' Cemetery — may Allah be pleased with her and make her pleased.³⁰⁸ Her virtues are many and well known, and there are sound hadiths describing virtues that were unique to her among all the Mothers of the Believers, including the following:

1.7.1. The angel brought her image to the Prophet (ﷺ) on a cloth of fine silk³⁰⁹ before her marriage to him

The two shaykhs, Bukhari and Muslim, narrated that 'Ā'ishah said that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "I was shown in my dreams for three nights that an angel brought you to me wrapped in a cloth of silk, saying, 'This is your wife.' I uncovered your face and saw that it was you, and I said: 'If this is from Allah, then He will bring it to pass.'"³¹⁰

1.7.2. The most beloved of the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ)

He stated his love for her clearly when he was asked about the dearest of people to him. Bukhari narrated, with his chain of narration going back to 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ, that the Prophet (ﷺ) sent him at the head of the army of Dhât as-Salâsil.³¹¹ He said: "I came to him and said: 'Who among the people is dearest to you?' He (ﷺ) said: 'Ā'ishah.' I said: 'Who among men?' He (ﷺ) said: 'Her father.'"³¹² Al-Hâfidh adh-Dhahabi said: "This is a proven report in spite of the

Râfidis. The Prophet (ﷺ) never loved anyone except those who were good, and he said: 'If I were to have taken a close friend (khaleel) from among this Ummah, I would have taken Abu Bakr as a close friend, but the brotherhood of Islam is better.' So he loved the best man among his Ummah and the best woman among his Ummah. Whoever hates the two who were beloved to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) deserves to be hated by Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ). The Prophet's love for 'Â'ishah is well known and widely reported."³¹³

1.7.3. The Prophet (ﷺ) received revelation when he was under her blanket with her, but never with his other wives

Bukhari narrated, with his chain of narration going back to Hishâm ibn 'Urwah, that the people would try to take their gifts to the Prophet (ﷺ) when it was 'Â'ishah's day. 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said: "My co-wives went to Umm Salamah and said: 'O Umm Salamah, by Allah, the people try to bring their gifts when it is 'Â'ishah's day, and we want some of this goodness as 'Â'ishah wants it. Tell the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to instruct the people to bring their gifts to him wherever he is and wherever he goes.' Umm Salamah mentioned that to the Prophet (ﷺ), and she (later) said: 'He turned away from me. When he turned back to me, I mentioned it to him again, and he turned away from me. The third time I said it to him, he said: "O Umm Salamah, do not annoy me with regard to 'Â'ishah, for by Allah, the revelation never comes down to me when I am under the blanket of any of you except her.'"³¹⁴ Adh-Dhahabi said: "This response indicates that the superiority of 'Â'ishah to the other Mothers of the Believers was something that was divinely ordained and was not just because he loved her; rather this was one of the reasons he loved her."³¹⁵

1.7.4. Jibreel (ﷺ) sent his greeting of salâm to her with the Prophet (ﷺ)

Bukhari narrated, with his chain of narration going back to ‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها), that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to her one day: “O ‘Â’ishah, this is Jibreel sending greetings of salâm to you.” She said: “And upon him be peace and the mercy of Allah and His blessings. You see what I cannot see,” referring to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).³¹⁶

1.7.5. The Prophet (ﷺ) went to her first when the verse instructing him to give his wives the choice was revealed

That was also accompanied by the instruction to consult her parents about the matter, because he knew that they would not tell her to leave him. She chose Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ) and the home of the hereafter, and the rest of his wives followed her example. Bukhari and Muslim narrated, with their chain of narration going back to ‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها), that she said: “When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was commanded to give his wives the choice, he started with me, and he said: ‘I am going to tell you something, but you do not have to rush until you consult your parents.’ He knew that my parents would never tell me to leave him. Then he said: ‘Allah, may He be glorified and praised, said: ﴿O Prophet [Muhammad]! Say to your wives: ‘If you desire the life of this world, and its glitter, then come! I will make a provision for you and set you free in a handsome manner [divorce]. But if you desire Allah and His Messenger, and the Home of the hereafter, then verily, Allah has prepared for Al-Muhsinât [good-doers] amongst you an enormous reward.﴾’ (Qur’an 33: 28-29)’ I said: ‘Do I need to consult my parents about this? I desire Allah and His Messenger and the Home of the hereafter.’ Then the other wives of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did the same as I had done.”³¹⁷

1.7.6. The revelation of verses of the Book of Allah because of her

These include verses that speak about her in particular and others that are for the Ummah as a whole. Those that are about her in particular, which speak of her virtue and high status, are the verses in which Allah (ﷻ) testifies that she is innocent of the accusations and slanders against her. He (ﷻ) says:

«Verily, those who brought forth the slander [against 'Ā'ishah the wife of the Prophet] are a group among you. Consider it not a bad thing for you. Nay, it is good for you. Unto every man among them will be paid that which he had earned of the sin, and as for him among them who had the greater share therein, his will be a great torment.»

(Qur'an 24: 11)

«Bad statements are for bad people [or bad women for bad men] and bad people for bad statements [or bad men for bad women]. Good statements are for good people [or good women for good men] and good people for good statements [or good men for good women]: such [good people] are innocent of [every] bad statement which they say; for them is forgiveness, and Rizqun Karīm [generous provision, i.e. paradise].»

(Qur'an 24: 26)

Ibn al-Qayyim said: "One of her virtues is that Allah (ﷻ) declared her innocent of that which the people of the slander accused her of, and He (ﷻ) sent down concerning her innocence revelation that will be recited in the mosques (in the prayer niches that face Makkah) and prayers of the Muslims until the Day of Resurrection. He testified that she is one of the good, and He promised her forgiveness and a generous provision (referring to paradise). He (ﷻ) stated that the lies that were told about her were good for her, and that what was said about her was not bad for her and did not undermine her position; rather Allah (ﷻ) raised her in status thereby, and her

goodness and innocence became well-known among all the inhabitants of heaven and earth. What a great virtue this is! Think about this honour that stemmed from her extreme modesty and humbleness when she said: 'I thought of myself as too insignificant for Allah to speak about me in revelation that would be recited, but I was hoping that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would see a dream in which Allah would prove my innocence.'"³¹⁸

This is the Şiddeeqah of this Ummah, the Mother of the Believers, the beloved of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). She knew that she was innocent and had been wronged, and that those who were accusing her were wrongdoers and fabricators. Their accusations also hurt her parents and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).³¹⁹ Ibn Katheer said: "When the people of the slander spoke against her on the basis of fabrications and lies, Allah (ﷻ) got angry and sent down, to prove her innocence, ten verses of Qur'an that will be recited until the end of time. The scholars are unanimously agreed that whoever slanders her after she has been proven innocent is a disbeliever."³²⁰

With regard to that which was revealed because of her but for the Ummah in general, it is the verse that permits dry-earth ablution to be performed when no pure water is available. This was a mercy and made things easy for the entire Ummah. Bukhari narrated, with his chain of narration going back to 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها), that she borrowed a necklace from Asma' and lost it, so the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent some of his Companions out to look for it. The time for prayer came, and they prayed without wuḍoo'. When they came to the Prophet (ﷺ), they complained to him about that, and the verse of dry-earth ablution was revealed. Usayd ibn Huḍayr said: "May Allah reward you with good, for by Allah nothing happened to you that you dislike but Allah caused it to bring good to you and to the Muslims."³²¹

1.7.7. When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was ill, he wanted to be cared for in 'Â'ishah's house

He (ﷺ) died leaning on her chest, on the day of her turn. Allah (ﷻ) caused his saliva to be mixed with hers during his last moments in this world and his first moments in the hereafter, and he was buried in her house.³²² Bukhari narrated, with his chain of narration going back to 'Â'ishah, that when the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was ill, he used to go around to his wives and say: "Where will I be tomorrow?" because he looked forward to being in 'Â'ishah's house. She said: "When it was my day, he settled down there."³²³ Muslim narrated that she said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to check and ask: 'Where will I be today? Where will I be tomorrow?', hoping that the turn of 'Â'ishah was close. When it was my day, Allah (ﷻ) took his soul when he was between my neck and my chest."³²⁴

His wives gave him permission to go wherever he wanted, and he remained in 'Â'ishah's house until he died there. 'Â'ishah said: "He died on the day that was my day, in my house. Allah took his soul when his head was between my neck and my chest, and his saliva was mixed with mine." Then she said: " 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Abi Bakr came in, with a stick used as a natural toothbrush. The Messenger of Allah looked at it, and I said to him: 'Give me this toothbrush, O 'Abdur-Raḥmân.' He gave it to me and I cut it, then I chewed it and gave it to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), who brushed his teeth with it while he was leaning on my chest." Another report adds: "So Allah mixed my saliva with his on his last day in this world and his first day in the hereafter."³²⁵

1.7.8. He (ﷺ) told her that she was one of the people of paradise

Al-Ḥâkim narrated, with his chain of narration going back to 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها), that she said: "I said: 'O Messenger of Allah, who will

be your wives in paradise?' He said: 'You will be one of them.'" She said: "I thought that the reason was that he did not marry any other virgin except me."³²⁶ Bukhari narrated with his chain of narration going back to al-Qâsim ibn Muḥammad that when 'Â'ishah fell sick, Ibn 'Abbâs came to her and said: "O Mother of the Believers, you are going to meet those who went ahead of you, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and Abu Bakr."³²⁷ This is indicative of the great virtue of 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) because he confirmed to her that she would enter paradise; he would not have said that on the basis of his own thoughts, so he must have heard it from the Prophet.³²⁸

1.7.9. The superiority of 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) over other women is like the superiority of *thareed* ³²⁹ over other kinds of food

Bukhari and Muslim narrated, with their chain of narration going back to Abdullah ibn 'Abdur-Raḥmân, that he heard Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) say: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: 'The superiority of 'Â'ishah over other women is like the superiority of thareed over other kinds of food.'"³³⁰

An-Nawawi said: "The scholars said: it means that thareed is better than broth, and thareed with meat is better than broth without thareed, and the thareed that has no meat is better than broth. What is meant by better is that it is more nutritious, more filling, easier to digest, more enjoyable and easier to eat, a person may eat his fill of it quickly, and so on. It is better than all kinds of broth and all kinds of food. The superiority of 'Â'ishah over other women is great, as great as the superiority of thareed over other kinds of food. This does not clearly state that she is better than Maryam and Âsiyah; it could be that what is meant is that she is superior to the women of this Ummah."³³¹

These are a few of the hadiths which point to the virtue, status and seniority of 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) and to the high esteem in which she is held in Islam. Despite that, 'Â'ishah, the Mother of the Believers, has been subjected to slander, criticism, lies and fabrications by the Râfiḍī Shia and those who were influenced by their fabricated reports. They also discussed sound reports and sound hadiths, but they misinterpreted them and understood them in a way that differed from the actual meanings. This is what was done by the author of the book *Thumma Ihtadaytu*, who did not come up with anything new; he simply followed in the footsteps of his predecessors among the Râfiḍī Shia. He slandered the Mother of the Believers by misinterpreting the words of 'Ammâr: "By Allah, she is the wife of your Prophet in this world and in the hereafter but Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, is testing you by means of her, so that He may know whether you will obey Him or her."³³² There is nothing in these words of 'Ammâr that could be understood as undermining 'Â'ishah (ﷺ); in fact, it mentions her greatest virtue, which is that she is the wife of our Prophet (ﷺ) in this world and in the hereafter. What virtue could be greater than that?

The aim of every believer is to please Allah (ﷻ) and attain paradise, and 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) attained that, according to the testimony of 'Ammâr (ﷺ). He held a different view than hers with regard to that turmoil, but he testified that she would be in the highest degrees of paradise, in the company of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).³³³ Thus the sound hadith, which can be attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ), according to what al-Hâkim narrated in *al-Mustadrak* from 'Â'ishah (ﷺ), says that the Prophet (ﷺ) said to her: "Would it not please you to be my wife in this world and in the hereafter?" She said: "Yes, by Allah." He said: "You are indeed my wife in this world and in the hereafter."³³⁴ This hadith points to one of the greatest virtues of 'Â'ishah (ﷺ). Hence Bukhari narrated the previous report from 'Ammâr under the heading of "The virtues of 'Â'ishah (ﷺ)."³³⁵

As for his words in the last part of the report, "...but Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, is testing you by means of her, so that He may know whether you will obey Him or her," this is not undermining the position of the Mother of the Believers 'Â'ishah (عليها السلام) at all, for the following reasons:

- (a) 'Ammâr's words represent his own opinion; 'Â'ishah (عليها السلام) held a different opinion and thought that what she was doing was right. Each of them was a noble Companion and possessed a high level of religious commitment and knowledge, so the view of one of them was not binding upon the other.³³⁶
- (b) All that may be understood from the words of 'Ammâr is that she was going against the command of Allah in that particular case, but not everyone who takes a contrary stance is blameworthy unless proof is shown to them and they realise that they are wrong. Otherwise, they may be excused if they did not deliberately go against the command of Allah, because they may have been unaware, or their actions may have been based on misinterpretation, so they are not to be blamed for that.
- (c) 'Ammâr (عليه السلام) did not intend thereby to criticise or undermine 'Â'ishah; his intention was to point out her mistaken stance out of sincerity towards the Ummah. Nevertheless, he recognised her status and virtue.³³⁷

According to some versions of this report from 'Ammâr (عليه السلام), he heard a man reviling 'Â'ishah (عليها السلام), and he said: "Shut up, you ugly, hateful man! By Allah, she is the wife of your Prophet in this world and in the hereafter, but Allah is testing you by means of her, so that He may know whether you will obey Him or her."³³⁸

The Râfiqî Shia say that the Prophet (ﷺ) once stood up to deliver a speech, and he pointed towards 'Â'ishah's house and said:

"Here is fitnah, from where the horns of the Satan emerge." This is a slander against 'Â'ishah (ﷺ), as they claim that the Messenger (ﷺ) meant that fitnah would emerge from her house. These are misleading words, which turn the facts upside down and confuse those among the common people who have no knowledge. They explained what the narrator said, "Then he pointed (towards 'Â'ishah's house)," as meaning that he was pointing towards 'Â'ishah's house and that she would be the cause of turmoil. But the hadith does not indicate that in any way whatsoever, and this phrase cannot be interpreted as meaning that by anyone who has the slightest knowledge of what words mean. The narrator said he pointed 'towards 'Â'ishah's house'; he did not say 'at 'Â'ishah's house'. The difference between the two expressions is quite clear. The report in question was narrated by Bukhari in *Kitâb Farq al-Khums*³³⁹ and was also narrated in the books of Sunnah, the two *Ṣaḥeeḥs* of Bukhari and Muslim and elsewhere, with a number of chains of narration and in more than one version. The text states the land referred to, which refutes the claim of the Râfiḍi Shia, and there is no need to refute the argument in any other way. The following are some of the versions of the hadith via many chains of narration from Ibn 'Umar (ﷺ):

It was narrated from Layth from Nâfi' from Ibn 'Umar (ﷺ) that he heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, when he was facing towards the east: "Verily fitnah is there, where the horn of the Satan will emerge."³⁴⁰

It was narrated that 'Ubaydullah ibn 'Umar said: Nâfi' narrated to me from Ibn 'Umar that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) stood at Ḥaḥṣah's door and pointed towards the east and said: "Fitnah will appear from where the horn of the Satan is."³⁴¹ He said it two or three times.

It was narrated from Sâlim ibn Abdullah from his father that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, while facing towards the east:

“Verily fitnah is there, verily fitnah is there, verily fitnah is there, where the horn of the Satan will appear.”³⁴²

In these reports, the direction referred to is clearly specified; it is the east. This explains what is meant by the pointing that is referred to by the Râfiḍi Shia.³⁴³ In some other versions of the hadith, the country referred is specified. It was narrated from Nâfi‘ that Ibn ‘Umar said: “The Prophet (ﷺ) said: ‘O Allah, bless us in our Syria; O Allah, bless us in our Yemen.’ They said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, and in our Najd.’³⁴⁴ I think he said the third time: ‘There are earthquakes and fitnah there, and in it the horn of the Satan will appear.’”³⁴⁵

It was narrated from Sâlim ibn Abdullah ibn ‘Umar that he said: “O people of Iraq, how much you ask about minor sins, and how many major sins you commit! I heard my father, Abdullah ibn ‘Umar, say: I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: ‘Turmoil will come from there,’ and he pointed towards the east, where the horn of the Satan will appear.”³⁴⁶

According to some reports, the names of some of the tribes who live in that land are mentioned, and the situation of their people is described. It was narrated that Abu Mas‘ood said: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) pointed with his hand towards Yemen and said: ‘Faith is there, and harshness and hardheartedness are among the uncouth owners of camels, where the horns of the Satan rise, Rabee‘ah and Muḍar.’”³⁴⁷ This report definitively indicates that what the Prophet (ﷺ) meant when he said “fitnah is there” was the eastern lands, as the reports clearly state. In some of the reports, the people of that land are described and some tribes are mentioned by name, which clearly demonstrates the falseness of the claims made by the Râfiḍi Shia that what he was pointing at was ‘Â’ishah’s house. This is an invalid opinion and a worthless point of view; no one came up with this understanding or spoke of it except the Râfiḍi Shia.³⁴⁸

1.7.10. Comparative virtues of ‘Â’ishah, Khadeejah and Fâtimah (may Allah be pleased with them all)

Ibn Taymiyah said: “The best women of this Ummah are Khadeejah, ‘Â’ishah and Fâtimah, but as to which of these three is better than the others, there is some dispute.”³⁴⁹ Ibn Taymiyah was asked about which of the two Mothers of the Believers was better, Khadeejah or ‘Â’ishah. He replied: “In terms of seniority, influence at the beginning of Islam and support of the religion, Khadeejah is superior, and neither ‘Â’ishah nor any of the other Mothers of the Believers share that virtue with her. As for ‘Â’ishah’s influence later on, her devotion to Islam and conveying it to the Ummah and her attainment of knowledge, neither Khadeejah nor any of the others share that virtue with her, which distinguishes her from others.”³⁵⁰

Ibn Hajar said: “It was said that there was consensus on the superiority of Fâtimah, and that the difference of opinion remained with regard to whether ‘Â’ishah or Khadeejah was more virtuous.”³⁵¹ Commenting on the hadith of Abu Hurayrah about the angel Jibreel (as) coming to the Prophet (ﷺ) and telling him to convey salâm to Khadeejah from her Lord, Ibn Hajar said that as-Suhayli said: “Abu Bakr ibn Dâwood quoted this story as evidence that Khadeejah is superior to ‘Â’ishah, because Jibreel sent greetings to ‘Â’ishah from himself, but to Khadeejah he conveyed greetings from her Lord. Ibn al-‘Arabi claimed that there was no disputing that Khadeejah was superior to ‘Â’ishah. He narrated that this argument was an old issue, and that it was more likely that Khadeejah was superior because of this (the salâm being conveyed to her from her Lord) and because of what is mentioned above.”³⁵²

From studying the texts that were narrated concerning the virtues of each one of them (may Allah be pleased with them), we find that they point to the superiority of Khadeejah and Fâtimah, then ‘Â’ishah (may Allah be pleased with them all) because the Prophet

(ﷺ) said: “Khadeejah was given precedence over the women of my Ummah,”³⁵³ and, “The best of the women of paradise are Khadeejah, Fâtimah, Maryam and Âsiyah.”³⁵⁴ Ibn Hajar said: “This is a clear statement that cannot be interpreted in any other way.”³⁵⁵ The Prophet (ﷺ) also said: “The best of the women of this world are Maryam bint ‘Imrân, Khadeejah bint Khuwaylid, Fâtimah bint Muhammad and Âsiyah the wife of Pharaoh.”³⁵⁶ This states that Khadeejah (رضي الله عنها) is the best of the women of this Ummah. Moreover, the wording of the reports about the superiority of Fâtimah, in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “O Fâtimah, does it not please you to be the leader of the believing women or the leader of the women of this Ummah?”³⁵⁷ — or, according to another version: “the leader of the women of the people of paradise”³⁵⁸ — is a clear statement in which there is no ambiguity, and it cannot be interpreted in any other way. It is the statement that she is the best of the women of this Ummah and the leader of the women of the people of paradise. Fâtimah shared with her mother in this superiority, for she and her mother are the best of the women of the people of paradise, and she and her mother are the best of the women of this Ummah. This is what the texts say.³⁵⁹

With regard to what is narrated about the superiority of ‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها) in the hadith, “The superiority of ‘Â’ishah over other women is like the superiority of thareed over all other kinds of food,” this wording does not imply absolute superiority. Ibn Hajar³⁶⁰ said: “This does not imply that ‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها) is superior to all others, because the virtue of thareed, in comparison to other foods, is that it is easy to cook and easy to digest, and it was the best of their food at that time. None of these attributes necessarily implies superiority in every way. It may be inferior to other types of food in other ways.”³⁶¹ So the hadith indicates that ‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها) is superior to all the women of this Ummah except Khadeejah and Fâtimah, because of the evidence to that effect, which puts a limit on ‘Â’ishah’s superiority.³⁶²

With regard to the hadith of 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ, in which he asked the Prophet (ﷺ): "Who among women his dearest to you?", and he (ﷺ) said 'Ā'ishah.³⁶³ Ibn H̥ibbân suggested that this was a question that was about his wives only, and he wrote this heading in his *Ṣaḥeḥ*: "Quoting a report and misinterpretation of one who does not have proper understanding of the science of hadith." Under this heading, he quoted the hadith of 'Amr as follows: "I said: 'O Messenger of Allah, who among the people is dearest to you?' He said: 'Ā'ishah.' I said: 'I do not mean women; rather I mean men.' He said: 'Abu Bakr' or 'her father.'" Then Ibn H̥ibbân said: "I am going to quote the report indicating that the question was about his wives and not about women in general, such as Fāṭimah and others." He narrated, with his chain of narration from Anas, that the latter said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was asked: 'Who is the dearest of people to you?' He said: 'Ā'ishah.' It was said to him: 'We are not asking about your family.' He said: 'Her father.'" ³⁶⁴ Thus it is clear that 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) comes after Khadeejah and Fāṭimah in virtue, so all the reports that indicate her superiority in general are to be understood in light of the reports about Khadeejah and Fāṭimah, which limit that superiority. No doubt 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) had many virtues, such as her knowledge, which were exclusively hers and which she did not share with Khadeejah and Fāṭimah, but the fact that a virtue is proven does not necessarily mean that she was superior in every aspect."³⁶⁵

Whatever the case, the superiority of one of them over another does not undermine the lesser one; rather this is the greatest evidence of the high status of these three women, Fāṭimah, Khadeejah and 'Ā'ishah (may Allah be pleased with them), as the difference of opinion is not about the fact that these women are the best of the women of this Ummah. What harm does it do to the Mother of the Believers 'Ā'ishah if she is the third of the women of this Ummah in

virtue? Is this a call to respect and honour her, or to undermine and slander her, as the Râfiḍi Shia do?³⁶⁶

❖ Did ‘Ā’ishah, the Mother of the Believers (ﷺ), regard it as permissible to fight the Muslims at the Battle of the Camel?

We have seen above that she did not set out to do that, and she did not want to fight. Az-Zuhri narrated that she said after the Battle of the Camel: “I wanted my status to prevent people from fighting, and I did not think that there would be any fighting among the people. If I had known that, I would never have adopted this stance.”³⁶⁷ The view that ‘Ā’ishah (ﷺ) regarded fighting the Muslims as permissible is false and cannot stand up to the sound reports showing that ‘Ā’ishah (ﷺ) only went out in order to set things straight, as we have seen. In fact, this opinion stems from the reports which were fabricated by the Râfiḍi Shia, which distorted the history of early Islam and described what took place between ‘Ali and Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr and ‘Ā’ishah as civil war. Some researchers were influenced by these reports to the extent that one of them said that ‘Ā’ishah was taken prisoner, and they present the issue as a civil war that was previously planned for. This is a view which is to be expected from researchers who took their information concerning this matter only from fabricated reports and sources that cannot be trusted, including the books *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah*, *al-Aghâni*, *Murooj adh-Dhahab* and *Tareekh al-Ya’qoobi*, and even *Tareekh al-Tamaddun al-Islami* by Georgy Zaydân.³⁶⁸

❖ Can this hadith be true: “You will fight ‘Ali, and you will be in the wrong”?

It is not to be found in any of the reliable books of knowledge, and it has no known chain of narrators; it is more likely to be found among the fabricated hadiths than among the sound ones. In fact, it is

a blatant lie because 'Ā'ishah did not fight, and she did not go out to fight; she went out with the aim of setting things straight among the people. She did not fight, and she did not enjoin fighting. This is what has been stated by more than one of those who have knowledge of reports.³⁶⁹

❖ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) wanted to send 'Ā'ishah (ﷺ) back home honoured and respected

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) prepared everything that 'Ā'ishah needed of mounts, provisions and so on, and he sent with her those who had survived of the people who had come out with her, except for those who wanted to stay. He chose forty well-known women of Basra to accompany her, and he said: "Get ready, O Muḥammad (ibn al-Hanafīyyah) to take her there." On the day of her departure, 'Ali (ﷺ) came and stood. The people came, and she came out to the people; they bade farewell to her, and she bade farewell to them. She said: "O my sons, we got angry with one another because some of us thought that action should be taken more quickly. None of you should use recent events as a reason for transgressing against others. By Allah, there was nothing between me and 'Ali in the past except what there may be between a woman and her in-laws. For me, despite this misunderstanding, he is one of the best." 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "O people, she has spoken the truth, and by Allah, she has been sincere. There is nothing between me and her except that (meaning that which there may be between a woman and her in-laws). She is the wife of your Prophet (ﷺ) in this world and the hereafter."

She departed on a Saturday at the beginning of the month of Rajab in 36 AH. 'Ali (ﷺ) walked with her for many miles, and he sent his sons to walk with her for a day.³⁷⁰ By this noble treatment on the part of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ), we see that he was following the advice of the Prophet of this Ummah (ﷺ) when he had said to him: "There is going to be some issue between you and

‘Ā’ishah.” ‘Ali (ﷺ) had asked: “Me, O Messenger of Allah?” He said: “Yes.” ‘Ali said: “Me?” He said: “Yes.” ‘Ali said: “Then I must be the most doomed of all, O Messenger of Allah.” The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “No, but if that happens, send her back to her safe place.”³⁷¹

Those people were mistaken who said that ‘Ā’ishah (ﷺ) went out on a campaign to Basra because she had a grudge against ‘Ali (ﷺ) due to his stance towards her when the hypocrites accused her of immorality during the incident of the slander. At that time, the Prophet (ﷺ) had consulted him with regard to leaving her, and ‘Ali (ﷺ) had said: “O Messenger of Allah, Allah has not made things restricted for you, and there are many women other than her. If you ask the slave woman, she will tell you the truth.”³⁷² ‘Ali (ﷺ) said these words to show more care to the Prophet (ﷺ), because he saw the worries and distress that he was suffering due to what was being said. ‘Ali (ﷺ) was a man of strong protective jealousy, so he thought that if the Prophet (ﷺ) separated from ‘Ā’ishah (ﷺ), the anxiety that he was feeling because of her would be eased until her innocence was established, at which time he could take her back. This may have been a case of choosing the lesser of two evils so as to ward off the greater.³⁷³

An-Nawawi said: “ ‘Ali thought that this was in the Prophet’s best interests, because he saw how distressed he was. He tried to offer the best advice, as he wanted to put his mind at rest.”³⁷⁴ ‘Ali (ﷺ) did not say anything bad about ‘Ā’ishah (ﷺ) that would give the slightest indication that he doubted her morals. Even though he said to the Prophet (ﷺ): “Allah has not made things restricted for you,”³⁷⁵ he followed that by advising him: “If you ask the slave woman, she will tell you the truth.”³⁷⁶ He recommended that he investigate before separating from her; in other words, he retracted his first advice to separate from her and suggested that instead of that,

he could ask the slave woman and find out the truth.³⁷⁷ The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) asked the slave woman, who was very close to 'Ā'ishah, and she confirmed that she did not know anything but good about her (ﷺ). On the same day, the Messenger of Allah went out to the people to ask for support against Abdullah ibn Ubayy, saying: "O Muslims, who will support me against a man who has offended me with regard to my family? By Allah, I know nothing but good about my family."³⁷⁸ Therefore 'Ali's advice was in 'Ā'ishah's best interest, as the Prophet (ﷺ) became more convinced of what he already believed about his wife's innocence.³⁷⁹ 'Ali's attitude concerning the slander incident was not something that made 'Ā'ishah (ﷺ) angry with him or made her carry a grudge that led her to falsely accuse him of murdering 'Uthmân (ﷺ) and go out inciting huge numbers of Muslims against him, as claimed by many researchers who based their claims on the reports fabricated by the Râfiḍi Shia.

❖ Their regret for what they had done

Ibn Taymiyah said: "That was the case for all the Companions who got involved; they regretted the fighting in which they had engaged. Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr, 'Ali and others all regretted it. On the day of the Camel, none of them intended to fight, but fighting broke out against their wishes."³⁸⁰

- (a) It was narrated that when 'Ali (ﷺ) looked and saw that men had drawn their swords and started to fight, he said: "Would that I had died twenty years before this."³⁸¹
- (b) Na'eem ibn Ḥammâd narrated, with his chain of narration going back to al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali, that he said to Sulaymân ibn Ṣard: "I saw 'Ali, when the fighting grew intense, staying close to me and saying: 'O Ḥasan, would that I had died twenty years before this.'"³⁸²

- (c) It was narrated that al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī said: “Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Alī wanted one thing, but matters spun out of control, and he could not do anything about it.”³⁸³
- (d) It was narrated from Sulaymān ibn Ṣard, from al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī, that he heard ‘Alī say, when he saw the swords that the people were wielding: “O Ḥasan, would that I had died twenty or forty years before this.”³⁸⁴
- (e) With regard to ‘Ā’ishah, it was narrated that she used to say, when remembering the Battle of the Camel: “Would that I had stayed away like my co-wives. It would have been dearer to me to give birth to many children from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), all of them like ‘Abdur-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Hishām or Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr.”³⁸⁵
- (f) When she recited the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says, ﴿And stay in your houses﴾ (Qur’an 33: 33) she would weep until her headcover became wet.³⁸⁶
- (g) ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) said: “Would that I had had twenty children from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), all of them like ‘Abdur-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Hishām, and I had been bereft of them, and that I did not do what I did on the day of the Camel.”³⁸⁷
- (h) Ibn Taymiyah said: “‘Ā’ishah did not fight, and she did not go out to fight; she went out with the aim of settings things straight among the Muslims. She thought that her going out was in the Muslims’ best interests, then later on it became clear that not going out would have been better. When she remembered going out, she would weep until her headcover became wet. This is how the majority of the earliest Muslims were; they regretted the fighting in which they had become involved. Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr, ‘Alī and

others regretted it. On the day of the Camel, the people had no intention of fighting, but fighting broke out against their wishes.”³⁸⁸

- (i) Adh-Dhahabi said: “No doubt ‘Ā’ishah completely regretted going out to Basra and being present on the day of the Camel, and she did not think that the matter would reach the point it did.”³⁸⁹

1.8. The life and martyrdom of az-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwâm (ﷺ)

His full name was Abu Abdullah az-Zubayr ibn Khuwaylid ibn Asad ibn ‘Abdul-‘Uzza ibn Quṣayy ibn Kilâb al-Qurashi al-Asadi.³⁹⁰ He shared a common ancestor with the Prophet (ﷺ) in Quṣayy, and he was the disciple of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and the son of his paternal aunt. His mother was Ṣafīyyah bint ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib. He was one of the ten whom the Prophet (ﷺ) testified would be in paradise and one of the members of the consultative committee.³⁹¹ He became Muslim when he was a young man, at the age of sixteen,³⁹² and he was tortured because of that. It was narrated that az-Zubayr’s paternal uncle used to roll him up in a mat and hang it up, then he would light a fire underneath so that the smoke would reach him. His uncle would tell him to go back to disbelief, but az-Zubayr would say: “I will never go back to disbelief.”³⁹³ He never missed any campaign that was led by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).³⁹⁴

1.8.1. The first one to unsheathe his sword for the sake of Allah (ﷺ)

It was narrated that Sa‘eed ibn al-Musayyab said: “The first one to unsheathe his sword for the sake of Allah was az-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwâm. While az-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwâm was taking a nap, he

heard someone shouting that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had been killed, so he came out of his house unsheathing and brandishing his sword. He was met head-on by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), who said: 'What is the matter, O Zubayr?' He said: 'I heard that you had been killed.' The Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'What were you going to do?' He said: 'By Allah, I was going to take revenge on all the people of Makkah.' The Prophet (ﷺ) prayed for good for him." Sa'eed said: "I am certain that the Prophet's prayer for him will not be overlooked by Allah (ﷻ)." ³⁹⁵

1.8.2. His migration to Abyssinia

When the persecution of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and his Companions by Quraysh grew intense, he suggested to them that they should migrate to Abyssinia, where they could live under the care of the Negus, the just king. They stayed with him in the best land and under the best care, and they remained there safe and secure until an Abyssinian man came to fight the Negus for his kingdom. The Muslims grieved deeply; they were afraid that this new man would prevail and would not recognise the virtue and status of the pure Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). The Companions wanted to find out about the conflict that was taking place between the Negus and that man on the other side of the Nile.³⁹⁶ Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) said: "The Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Who will go out to see the battle and bring back news?' Az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm said, 'I will.' They said, 'You?', because he was the youngest of the people. They inflated a waterskin for him, and he put it under his chest; then he swam across until he reached that point of the Nile where the people had met (in battle). He continued until he reached them. Meanwhile we prayed to Allah (ﷻ) to give the Negus victory over his enemy and to establish him in his own country. By Allah, we were doing that, waiting for what might happen, when az-Zubayr came running, waving his garment and

saying: 'Be of good cheer. The Negus has prevailed, and Allah has destroyed his enemies and established him in his land.'"³⁹⁷ After az-Zubayr returned from Abyssinia to Makkah, he stayed under the care of the Beloved Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), learning from him the principles, commands and prohibitions of Islam. When the Messenger of Allah migrated to Madinah, az-Zubayr was among those who migrated there.

1.8.3. At the Battle of Badr

Az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) was a courageous horseman and fearless hero. He did not stay behind from any military campaign; he was present on every campaign and at every battle. He possessed extraordinary courage, rare heroism, utter sincerity and devotion to making the word of truth reign supreme.³⁹⁸ Az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) sacrificed a great deal for the sake of Allah (ﷻ) and dedicated his life and his wealth to Allah (ﷻ), so Allah (ﷻ) honoured him and raised his status in this world and in the hereafter. It was narrated that 'Urwah said: "On the day of Badr, az-Zubayr was wearing a yellow turban, and Jibreel came down in the form of az-Zubayr."³⁹⁹ What a great virtue, which cannot be rivalled by all the adornments of this world.

It was narrated that az-Zubayr said: "On the day of Badr, I met 'Ubaydah ibn Sa'eed ibn al-Âs, who was so heavily armed that nothing could be seen except his eyes. He was known by the kunyah Abu Dhât al-Kursh. He said: 'I am Abu Dhât al-Kursh.' I charged at him and stabbed him in the eye. I put my foot on him, then I pulled my spear out, and I had to use great force in order to pull it out, because both ends were bent. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) asked for the spear, and I gave it to him." When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died, az-Zubayr took the spear back; then Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) asked for it, and he gave it to him. When Abu Bakr died, 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) asked for

it, and he gave it to him. When ‘Uthmân (ؓ) was killed, it remained with the family of ‘Ali, (ؓ) then Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr asked for it, and it was with him when he was killed.⁴⁰⁰

This report shows us the precision of az-Zubayr in hitting the target. He was able to aim his spear at the eye of Abu Dhât al-Kursh, even though that space was very narrow and his attention was divided between attacking and defending himself. Killing that man was very unlikely because he had protected his body with so much armour, but az-Zubayr managed to hit him in the eye, and that was the end of him. The wound was very deep, which is indicative of az-Zubayr’s physical strength, in addition to his precision and skill in hitting the target.⁴⁰¹ On the day of Badr, there were two knights with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): az-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwâm on the cavalry of the right flank and al-Miqdâd ibn al-Aswad on the cavalry of the left.⁴⁰²

1.8.4. At the battle of Uḥud

Az-Zubayr (ؓ) said: “On the day of Uḥud, the Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned both of his parents to me.” (In other words, he said: ‘May my father and mother be sacrificed for you’).⁴⁰³ This indicates that he was skilful in fighting and strong during that battle. He (ؓ) displayed great steadfastness, resolve and love of martyrdom for the sake of Allah (ﷻ). He described for us what Abu Dujânah al-Anṣârî did during that battle. When the two armies met and the fighting grew intense, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) began to encourage his Companions and boost their morale. He picked up a sword and said: “Who will take this from me?” They stretched out their hands, each man among them, including az-Zubayr, saying, “Me!” He said: “Who will take it and give it its due?” The people withdrew their hands, but Simâk ibn Kharashah Abu Dujânah said: “What is its due, O Messenger of Allah?” He said: “That you should strike the enemy

with it until is bent.” He said: “I will take it and give it its due.” He gave it to him, and he was a courageous man who walked with pride in battle. When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) saw him walking with pride among the ranks, he said: “This is a way of walking that Allah hates except in this situation.”⁴⁰⁴

Az-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwâm described what Abu Dujânah did on the day of Uhûd, saying: “I felt upset when I asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) for the sword and he withheld it from me, giving it to Abu Dujânah and not me. I decided that, by Allah, I would watch what Abu Dujânah did. I followed him, and he took out a red headband of his and wrapped it around his head. The Anṣâr said: ‘Abu Dujânah has taken out the headband of death (meaning that he wants to fight to the death).’ He killed every person that he engaged in combat. Among the polytheists, there was a man who would not leave any wounded person without finishing him off. The two of them began to draw close to one another, and I prayed to Allah (ﷻ) to bring them together. They met, and each dealt a blow to the other. The polytheist struck Abu Dujânah, who protected himself with his shield; the polytheist’s sword got stuck in the shield, and Abu Dujânah struck him and killed him. Then I saw him holding his sword over the head of Hind bint ‘Utbah, but he moved his sword away from her, and I said: ‘Allah and His Messenger know best.’”⁴⁰⁵

Ibn Ishâq said: “Abu Dujânah said: ‘I saw someone urging the people on, so I charged at him and wielded my sword at him, and he screamed. Then I realised that it was a woman, and I respected the sword of the Messenger of Allah too much to strike a woman with it.’”⁴⁰⁶ It was narrated from Hishâm, from his father, that ‘Â’ishah said: “O son of my sister, your forefathers — meaning az-Zubayr and Abu Bakr — were among *‘Those who answered [the Call of] Allah and the Messenger [Muhammad] after being wounded’* (*Qur’an* 3: 172).”

When the polytheists left Uḥud, and there befell the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions what befell them, the Prophet (ﷺ) was worried lest the polytheists come back. He said: "Who will go out and follow the tracks of these people, so that they may know that we still have power?" Abu Bakr, az-Zubayr and seventy others volunteered. They went out and followed the tracks of the polytheists, who left when they heard about them. Allah (ﷻ) said: ﴿So they returned with grace and bounty from Allah. No harm touched them,﴾ (*Qur'an* 3: 174) and they did not meet any enemy.⁴⁰⁷

When Ḥamzah ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib (رضي الله عنه) was martyred at Uḥud, Umm az-Zubayr Şafiyyah bint 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib came to look at her brother. He had been mutilated by the polytheists; they had cut off his nose, opened his belly and cut off his ears and genitals. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to her son az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm: "Go and find her, and send her back, lest she see what has happened to her brother." Az-Zubayr said to her: "O my mother, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is telling you to go back." She said: "Why? We have heard that my brother has been mutilated, but that was for the sake of Allah, so we are content with what has happened, and we will seek reward and be patient inshallah." When az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) came to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and told him that, he said: "Let her go." So she went and looked at Ḥamzah. She offered the funeral prayer for him and said, "Verily to Allah we belong, and to Him is our return." She also prayed for forgiveness for him.⁴⁰⁸

According to another report from 'Urwah, he said: "My father az-Zubayr told me that when the battle of Uḥud took place, a woman came walking. When she was about to reach the place where the slain were, the Prophet (ﷺ) did not want her to see them, so he said 'The woman, the woman!'" Az-Zubayr said: "I thought she was my mother Şafiyyah, so I went out and rushed towards her. I caught up with her before she reached the slain, but she shoved me in the chest,

and she was a strong woman. She said, ‘Get out of my way, may you perish!’ I said: ‘The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is insisting that you (should not see the dead).’ She stopped and took out two pieces of cloth, saying: ‘These are two pieces of cloth that I have brought for my brother Hamzah.’ Beside him there was a man of the Anṣâr who had been killed, and the same had been done to him as had been done to Hamzah. We did not think it was right to shroud Hamzah in two pieces of cloth when the Anṣâri did not have any shroud, so we said: ‘One cloth for Hamzah, and one for the Anṣâri.’ We measured them, and we found that one piece was larger than the other, so we cast lots between them, and we shrouded each one in the cloth that was picked for him.”⁴⁰⁹

1.8.5. During the Battle of the Trench:

“Each Prophet has a disciple,
and my disciple is az-Zubayr”

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said on the day of the Trench: “Who will bring me news of Banu Quraydhah?” Az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) said: “I will.” So he went on a horse and brought news of them. The Prophet (ﷺ) said that a second time, and az-Zubayr said again: “I will.” The same thing happened a third time, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Each Prophet has a disciple, and my disciple is az-Zubayr.”⁴¹⁰

What is meant by his words “my disciple is az-Zubayr” is “the closest to me of my companions and supporters”. The same Arabic word (*hawâri*) is used to refer to the disciples or companions of ‘Eesa (عليه السلام), those who were his inner circle and supporters. The helper or disciple is one who offers support and is a close companion. This hadith refers to this great virtue by which az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) was distinguished. Hence when Abdullah ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) heard a man saying: “I am the son of the disciple,” he said: “If you are one of the sons of az-Zubayr, that is correct; otherwise it is not.”⁴¹¹

In *‘Umdat al-Qâri fi Sharh Şaḥeeḥ al-Bukhârî* by al-‘Ayni, it says: “If you say: all of the Companions are supporters of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and close to him, so why is az-Zubayr singled out for this title?, we would say: He said this on the day of the Trench, when the Prophet (ﷺ) asked: ‘Who will bring me news of the people?’ and az-Zubayr said, ‘I will.’ That happened three times, and undoubtedly on that occasion he offered more support than anyone else.”⁴¹²

On the day of the Trench, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to him: “May my father and mother be sacrificed for you.” It was narrated that Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr said: “On the day of the Trench, ‘Umar ibn Abi Salamah and I were put in charge of the women. I looked and saw az-Zubayr on his horse, going through the area of Banu Quraydhah two or three times. When I went back, I said: ‘O my father, I saw you going a few times.’ He said: ‘Did you see me, O my son?’ I said: ‘Yes.’ He said: ‘The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Who will go to Banu Quraydhah and bring me news of them?”’, so I went out, and when I came back, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) mentioned me and his parents in the same sentence, saying: “May my father and mother be sacrificed for you.””⁴¹³ This hadith clearly indicates the virtue of az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه), because the words spoken by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), in which he expressed his appreciation for his actions and the high esteem in which he held him, are only said to a person whom one respects and for whom one would sacrifice oneself or the dearest of one’s family.⁴¹⁴

At the Battle of the Trench, az-Zubayr earned an immortal badge of honour which will last until the end of time: “Each prophet had a disciple, and my disciple is az-Zubayr.”⁴¹⁵ The Prophet (ﷺ) described az-Zubayr as a disciple, which has a profound and far-reaching meaning. The one who studies this meaning will understand all the ramifications of this word disciple (*ḥawâri*), and its secrets and

depths. Those who are in greatest need of paying such attention to these meanings are the scholars, the callers to Islam and the educators. Islamic da’wah requires the preparation of helpers and disciples who will present a living example, because a practical example is more powerful and effective in spreading principles and ideas. It is an embodiment and practical implementation of those ideas that can easily be seen and followed, because true disciples follow the Sunnah of the Messenger (ﷺ) and obey his commands.⁴¹⁶

As it says in the hadith: “There is no prophet whom Allah sent to any nation before me who didn’t have from among his nation helpers and companions who followed his way and obeyed his commands.”⁴¹⁷

It is the nature of things that the da’wah will go through trials and tribulations and be tested by means of both friends and enemies. The Messenger (ﷺ) was keen to guide the Muslims with regard to these variables and developments, so he said: “Then there will come after them generations who say what they do not do and do what they do not believe.”⁴¹⁸ What is the mission of the disciple? Setting a good example of applied faith, sincerity and sacrifice are among the most prominent attributes of the disciples; thus they are a true example of the heirs of the Prophets. They strive to spread the truth and goodness, to guide the Ummah and to lead it out of its backwardness. They sacrifice everything precious for the sake of Allah, in order to bring back the vitality and radiance of Islam at a time when those with little ambition do not care about anything but their personal interests.⁴¹⁹

Az-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwâm (رضي الله عنه) is a brilliant example of the embodiment of these principles. He grew up in the lap of da’wah, under the care of the Prophet (ﷺ), and received a proper education that enabled him to carry its burdens from an early age. Az-Zubayr’s attitude at the Battle of the Trench shows us his character and his upbringing in the qualities of courage, support and love of the

Messenger (ﷺ). History shows us that he was a man of difficult missions, imbued with qualities of courage and bravery, so he was given the mission of finding out enemy secrets. What happened to az-Zubayr indicates that it is prescribed to divide tasks and categorize the people of da'wah according to their sincerity, spirit of sacrifice, talents and abilities.⁴²⁰ Az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) took part in all the campaigns of the Messenger (ﷺ) and carried out honourable exploits. At the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (may Allah be pleased with them), he was one of the pillars of the state during the major conquests.

1.8.6. At the Battle of Yarmook

It was narrated from 'Urwah that the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) on the day of Yarmook: "Why don't you charge, and we will charge with you?" He said: "If I charge, you will let me down." They said: "We will not do that." So he charged at the enemy, penetrating their ranks and passing through them, but there was no one with him. He came back, and they took hold of his reins and struck him twice on his shoulder, and one of them struck a wound that he had received on the day of Badr. 'Urwah said: "I used to put my fingers in those scars when I was small, playing with them." 'Urwah also said: "Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr was with him that day, and he was ten years old. He put him on a horse and entrusted him to a man to look after him."⁴²¹ Adh-Dhahabi said in *as-Siyar*, commenting: "This battle was al-Yamâmah, inshallah, because at that time Abdullah was ten years old."⁴²² Ibn Katheer said that the battle was Yarmook, but there is no reason why it could not have happened on both occasions.

Ibn Katheer said: "Among those who were present at Yarmook was az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm, who was the best of the Companions there; he was a brave and courageous knight. A number of heroes

rallied around him on that day and said: ‘Why don’t you attack, and we will attack with you?’ He said: ‘You will not be steadfast.’ They said: ‘Yes, we will.’ So he attacked, and they attacked, but they stopped when they were met by the Byzantine ranks. He went ahead and penetrated the Byzantine ranks until he came out the other side and returned to his companions. Then they came to him again, and the same happened as had happened the first time. On that day, he received two wounds between his shoulders, and according to another report, he was injured.”⁴²³ Ibn Katheer said on another occasion: “He went out with the people to Syria as a fighter of jihad; he was present at Yarmook, and they were honoured by his presence. He performed brilliant acts of courage on that day, penetrating the Byzantine ranks twice from front to back.”⁴²⁴

1.8.7. The conquest of Egypt

When ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ went to conquer Egypt, he did not have sufficient forces, so he wrote to ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (رضي الله عنه) asking for support and reinforcements. ‘Umar was worried about the small number of ‘Amr’s forces, so he sent az-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwâm with twelve thousand men. It was also said that ‘Umar sent four thousand, led by the great Companions az-Zubayr, al-Miqdâd ibn al-Aswad, ‘Ubâdah ibn aṣ-Ṣâmit and Maslamah ibn Makhlad. (Other narrators said that Khârijah ibn Hudhâfah was the fourth.) He wrote to ‘Amr: “I have sent to you four thousand men, each thousand of whom is led by a man who is equal to a thousand.” Az-Zubayr was the leader of those men.”⁴²⁵

When az-Zubayr reached ‘Amr, he found him besieging the fortress of Babylon. Az-Zubayr quickly mounted his horse and went around the trench surrounding the fortress, then he spread his men out around the trench. The siege lasted for seven months, then az-Zubayr was told that there was a plague inside it. He said: “We have

come to stab and plague them.”⁴²⁶ Conquest was slow for ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ, so az-Zubayr said: “I will offer myself for the sake of Allah, hoping that Allah may grant victory thereby to the Muslims.” He set up a ladder against the wall of the fortress, on the side of the marketplace of al-Ḥamâm, then he climbed up. He told them that when they heard his takbeer, they should all respond. It was not long before az-Zubayr was at the top of the fortress, shouting takbeer and wielding his sword. The people began to climb up the ladder until ‘Amr told them not to, for fear that the ladder might break. When the Byzantines saw that the Arabs had captured the fortress, they withdrew. The fortress of Babylon opened its gates to the Muslims, thus ending a decisive battle in the conquest of Egypt. The rare courage of az-Zubayr was the direct cause of the Muslims’ victory over Muqawqis.⁴²⁷

1.8.8. The protective jealousy of az-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwâm (ﷺ)

It was narrated that Asma’ bint Abi Bakr aṣ-Şiddeeq (ﷺ) said: “When I got married to az-Zubayr, he owned nothing in this world apart from a camel for carrying water and a horse. I used to feed his horse, bring water, prepare his saddle and make dough, but I was not good at baking. Some women of the Anṣâr who were my neighbours used to bake my bread for me, and they were good women. I used to bring the dates from some land which the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had given to az-Zubayr, carrying them on my head. The land was two-thirds of a *farsakh* (approximately three miles) away. One day, I was coming with the dates on my head, and I met the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) with a group of the Anṣâr. He called me and made his camel kneel down so that I could ride behind him. But I felt too shy to go with the men, and I remembered az-Zubayr and how jealous he was, for he was the most jealous of men. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) realised that I felt too shy, so he went on his way. I came to az-

Zubayr and told him, ‘I met the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) while I was carrying the dates on my head, and there was a group of his companions with him. He made his camel kneel down so that I could ride on it, but I felt too shy, because I remembered your jealousy.’ He said, ‘By Allah, your having to carry the dates is harder for me than your riding with him.’ Later on, Abu Bakr sent a servant who took care of the horse, and it was as if I had been set free from slavery.”⁴²⁸

1.8.9. Az-Zubayr named his sons after martyred Companions

Due to of az-Zubayr’s deep love of martyrdom, he named his sons after martyred Companions. Hishâm ibn ‘Urwah narrated that his father said: “Az-Zubayr said: Ṭalhah named his sons after Prophets when he learned that there would be no Prophet after Muhammad (ﷺ). But I named my children after martyrs, in the hope that they will attain martyrdom: Abdullah after Abdullah ibn Jaḥsh, al-Mundhir after al-Mundhir ibn ‘Amr, ‘Urwah after ‘Urwah ibn Mas‘ood, Ḥamzah after Ḥamzah, Ja‘far after Ja‘far ibn Abi Ṭâlib, Muṣ‘ab after Muṣ‘ab ibn ‘Umayr, ‘Ubaydah after ‘Ubaydah ibn al-Ḥârith, Khâlid after Khâlid ibn Sa‘eed and ‘Amr after ‘Amr ibn Sa‘eed ibn al-‘Âṣ, who was killed at Yarmook.”⁴²⁹

1.8.10. Az-Zubayr concealing acts of worship

Az-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwâm (رضي الله عنه) said: “If anyone can conceal any of these righteous deeds, let him do so.”⁴³⁰

1.8.11. Poetry of Ḥassân ibn Thâbit in praise of az-Zubayr

Az-Zubayr passed by a gathering of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) where Ḥassân was reciting his poetry to them, but they were not listening attentively to him. Az-Zubayr sat

down with them, then he said: "Why do I see you not listening attentively to the poetry of Ibn al-Furay'ah? The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to listen attentively to him, reward him generously and not get distracted from him." Then Ḥassân spoke in verse, praising az-Zubayr in many lines in which he described his great commitment to Islam, his adherence to the way of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and his sacrifice and service for Islam.⁴³¹

1.8.12. Generosity of az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm

It was narrated that 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr said: "Seven of the Companions appointed az-Zubayr to be the guardian of their children after they died, including 'Uthmân, Ibn Mas'ood and 'Abdur-Raḥmân. He would spend on the heirs from his own wealth and protect their wealth."⁴³²

This is an excellent example of generosity and sincerity that embodies noble ideals that will have a strong impression on the heart of every man of dignity. A person may show generosity time after time and then tire of it, but for this generous man to be in charge of spending on the heirs of many of the Companions and protecting their wealth is a unique example in real life and an indication of the sublime attitude that the Companions attained, may Allah be pleased with them.⁴³³

1.8.13. The time has come to depart... and the Prophet's testimony of entering paradise

Az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwâm (رضي الله عنه) left the Battle of the Camel during the first round, for reasons that we have explained above. When he left the battlefield, he was repeating these lines of poetry:

*Giving up on things that I fear may have bad consequences,
for the sake of Allah, is better in both worldly and religious terms.*

It was also said that he spoke the following lines of verse:

*I know, and I hope that I will benefit from what I know,
that life is very close to death.*⁴³⁴

After he left, he was followed by 'Amr ibn Jurmooz, Faḍḍâlah ibn Hâbis and Nafee', along with a group of the evildoers of Banu Tameem. It was said that when they caught up with him, they ganged up on him and killed him; it was also said that the one who caught up with him was 'Amr ibn Jurmooz. 'Amr said to him: "I need something from you." He said: "Come closer." The freed slave of az-Zubayr, whose name was 'Aytah said: "He has a weapon!" He said: "Even so." So he came to him and started talking to him, and it was time for prayer, so az-Zubayr said to him: "Let's pray." He said: "Let's pray." Az-Zubayr (ﷺ) went forward to lead them both in prayer, and 'Amr ibn Jurmooz stabbed him and killed him. It was also said that 'Amr caught up with him while he was taking a nap in a valley that was known as Wadi as-Sibâ', and he attacked and killed him there. This is the most well-known version, and the poetry of his wife 'Âtikah bint Zayd ibn 'Amr ibn Nufayl testifies to that. She was the last of his wives; before him, she was married to 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb, who left her a widow when he was killed. Before 'Umar, she was married to Abdullah ibn Abi Bakr as-Ṣiddeeq, who was also killed and left her a widow. When az-Zubayr was killed, she eulogised him in beautiful verse.⁴³⁵

When 'Amr ibn Jurmooz killed az-Zubayr (ﷺ), he cut off his head and brought it to 'Ali (ﷺ), thinking that this would bring him closer to him. He asked for permission to enter, and 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "Give the killer of Ṣafīyyah's son (meaning az-Zubayr) the tidings of hell." Then 'Ali said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: 'Each prophet had a disciple, and my disciple is az-Zubayr.'"⁴³⁶ When 'Ali (ﷺ) saw the sword of az-Zubayr, he said: "How often this sword defended the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and brought cheer

to him.”⁴³⁷ According to another report, Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) refused to let Ibn Jurmooz enter upon him, and he said: “Give the killer of Şafiyyah’s son the tidings of hell.”⁴³⁸ It was said that ‘Amr ibn Jurmooz killed himself during ‘Ali’s reign; it was also said that he lived until Muş‘ab ibn az-Zubayr became governor of Iraq. He hid from him, and it was said to Muş‘ab: “‘Amr ibn Jurmooz is here and is in hiding. Do you want to capture him?” He said: “Let him show himself, for he is safe. By Allah, I am not going to kill him in retaliation for az-Zubayr, because he is too insignificant for me to make him equal to az-Zubayr.”⁴³⁹

The Prophet (ﷺ) foretold that az-Zubayr would die as a martyr. It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was once atop Mount Uhud when the mountain shook. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Be still, for there is no one on you but a Prophet, a Şiddeeq and a martyr.” On top of the mountain were the Prophet (ﷺ), Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmân, ‘Ali, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with them).⁴⁴⁰ An-Nawawi said: “This hadith represents one of the miracles of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), for he foretold that these people would be martyrs, and all of them, except the Prophet (ﷺ) and Abu Bakr, died as martyrs. ‘Umar, ‘Uthmân, ‘Ali, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with them) were all killed unlawfully and died as martyrs. The deaths of the first three are well known. Az-Zubayr was killed in Wadi as-Sibâ’, near Basra, as he was leaving the battlefield, not wanting to fight. Ṭalḥah also withdrew from the battle because he did not want to fight, but an arrow struck him and killed him. It is proven that whoever is killed unlawfully is a martyr.”⁴⁴¹ Ash-Sha’bi said: “I met five hundred or more of the Companions who said: “‘Ali, ‘Uthmân, Ṭalḥah and az-Zubayr are in paradise.” Adh-Dhahabi said: “I say: Because they are among the ten about whom it was testified that they would be in paradise; they were present at Badr; they were among the people who swore allegiance in the Pledge of Radwân; and they were

among the foremost to embrace Islam,⁴⁴² of whom Allah said that He is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. All four were killed and were granted martyrdom, so we love them and we hate the four who killed these four.”⁴⁴³

1.8.14. Az-Zubayr’s eagerness that his debts should be paid off when he died

It was narrated that Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr said: “On the day of the Camel, az-Zubayr left instructions that I was to pay off his debts. He said: ‘If you have any difficulty in doing so, then seek help from my Master.’ By Allah, I did not understand what he meant until I said: ‘O my father, who is your Master?’ He said: ‘Allah is my Master; I never had any difficulty paying a debt but I would say, “O Master of az-Zubayr, pay it off on his behalf,” and He paid it off.’ The debt that he owed was that a man would come to him and give him some wealth as a trust, but az-Zubayr would say: ‘No; rather it is a loan, for I fear that it may be lost.’ When he was killed, he did not leave behind any dinars or dirhams, but he had a piece of land. I sold it and paid off his debts. The sons of az-Zubayr said: ‘Share out our inheritance.’ I said: ‘By Allah, I will not share it out among you until I announce for four years during the hajj season: If anyone has a debt owed by az-Zubayr, let him come to us so that we may pay it off.’” He made this announcement every year during the hajj season, then when four years had passed, he shared it out among them. Az-Zubayr had four wives, and each wife got 1,200,000. The total sum of his wealth was 50,200,000.⁴⁴⁴ The report of Bukhari is to be understood as referring to the total of his wealth at the time of his death, which is different from the surplus that was left four years later.⁴⁴⁵ There was a great deal of blessing in his estate,⁴⁴⁶ and Allah (ﷻ) blessed his land after he died; his debt was paid off, and his wealth increased a great deal. From this story we learn a number of lessons:

- (a) Az-Zubayr said to his son: "O my son, if you have any difficulty in doing so (paying off the debts), then seek help from my Master." This is an example of his deeply-rooted certainty and strong faith that resulted from sincere trust in Allah (ﷻ) and turning to Him to meet his needs and relieve his distress. The true believer firmly believes that everything is in the hands of Allah (ﷻ). If he finds himself in hardship and distress, the first thing that crosses his mind is Allah (ﷻ) and how He dominates and controls everything. Those created beings who may have some connection to his situation are also in the hands of Allah (ﷻ); their hearts are in His hand, and He directs them as He wills. So the believer turns to Allah (ﷻ) before anyone else and asks Him (ﷻ) to meet his needs and relieve his distress. Then he follows the principle of cause and effect that Allah (ﷻ) has made a means of reaching the desired results, while believing that they are no more than means and that the One Who does and decrees things is Allah (ﷻ). He (ﷻ) is able to cause the means to have no impact, so that they do not lead to the usual results.⁴⁴⁷
- (b) Was az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) a wealthy man? From the text above, we see that az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) was not one of the wealthy who were known for their wealth. Instead, he felt a sense of hardship and was concerned about the trusts and debts that he owed; he was afraid that his land and property would not be sufficient to pay off all that he owed. This text also shows us that Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr, like his father, was expecting that the debts would be more than the wealth and land. When his father asked him: "Do you think that what we owe will leave anything of our wealth?" Abdullah could not answer him. If he was expecting anything other than what his father was expecting, he would have given him an answer to put his mind at rest at this critical moment, to tell him that the matter was different from what he thought and was expecting; however, he went along with his father in his

expectations. When az-Zubayr suggested seeking help from his Master, Abdullah asked: “Who is your Master?”, expecting him to mention some individual whom he could ask for help.

No one can claim that Abdullah was not aware of his father’s wealth or did not know about his property, because at that time Abdullah was thirty-five years old, and a man that old is a great help to his father and knows all about his situation and his wealth, especially if he is the oldest son. Az-Zubayr’s question to his son: “Do you think that what we owe will leave anything of our wealth?”, indicates that Abdullah was aware of his father’s situation and finances. Indeed, az-Zubayr stated that the matter of paying off the debts was not easy, as he said: “Allah is my Master; I never had any difficulty paying a debt but I would say, ‘O Master of az-Zubayr, pay it off on his behalf,’ and He paid it off.”⁴⁴⁸

Another sign that az-Zubayr was not regarded as one of the rich and wealthy, and that what he expected with regard to the amount of his debts in comparison to his wealth was correct, is the fact that Ḥakeem ibn Ḥizām (رضي الله عنه), the paternal cousin of az-Zubayr, met Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr and said to him: “I do not think that you will be able to pay off all these debts. If you are unable to pay any of them, come to me for help.”⁴⁴⁹

A fourth point is that Abdullah ibn Ja‘far, who was owed four hundred thousand by az-Zubayr, came to Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr and said: “If you wish, I will leave it for you.” Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr said: “No.” Abdullah ibn Ja‘far said: “Then if you wish, you may leave it and pay later than others.”⁴⁵⁰

This is testimony that two of the senior Companions expected that the property of az-Zubayr would not be enough to pay off all the debts that he owed, and that they regarded him as one who needed help. Moreover, those two were close to az-Zubayr and

aware of his situation. One of them was Ḥakeem ibn Ḥizâm, az-Zubayr's paternal cousin; the other was his maternal cousin, because the mother of az-Zubayr was Šafiyyah bint 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib, the paternal aunt of the Messenger (ﷺ), and he used to deal with him, giving and taking, borrowing and entrusting. These four points constitute evidence about which there is no doubt that az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) was not a wealthy man.⁴⁵¹

There were many rumours about the wealth of az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) and how rich he was, and there was a great deal of talk about his slaves and horses. In some sources, it says that he had a thousand slaves and that the thousand slaves used to pay him land tax every day, but that none of this wealth entered his house because he used to give it all in charity.⁴⁵² The famous Orientalist Will Durant put the figure at ten thousand, saying: "Az-Zubayr owned ten thousand slaves, and he added one thousand horses."⁴⁵³ Of course, this smart Orientalist omitted the part that says that he gave the land tax of his slaves in charity.⁴⁵⁴ This report cannot stand up to the report of Bukhari, in which it says: "When az-Zubayr was killed, he did not leave behind any dinar or dirham, but there was some land which included al-Ghâbah, eleven houses in Madinah, two houses in Basra, a house in Kufah and a house in Egypt."⁴⁵⁵ The report is clear and states that he did not have anything except those properties, in the context of talking about the distress caused by debt and difficulties in seeking to pay it off.

If there were a thousand slaves, they would have been mentioned and their value estimated; wasn't one slave worth at least two thousand dirhams?⁴⁵⁶ In that case, the value of the slaves alone would have covered almost the entire debt, and that is if we assume that there were only one thousand. If we go along with the wild exaggeration of Will Durant, which suggests that there

were ten thousand slaves, this would mean rejecting Bukhari’s report completely, because ten thousand slaves and one thousand horses, even if their price was low, would have been enough to pay off his debts and drown his heirs in a sea of wealth. Az-Zubayr would not have needed to say to his son, “One of my greatest worries is my debt”; or to ask him, “Do you think that what we owe will leave anything of our wealth?”; or to instruct him, “If you have any difficulty in doing so (paying off the debts), then seek help from my Master.”⁴⁵⁷

Discussing the biographies of az-Zubayr, Ṭalḥah, ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ, Abu Moosa al-Ash‘ari and the Mother of the Believers ‘Â’ishah (may Allah be pleased with them all) is in harmony with the aim of this book, which is to present the life and times of Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام). These individuals are regarded as focal points in his life and times, and their biographies have been distorted in history books and literary works that speak of internal conflict and turmoil. It is essential to highlight their biographies, character and attitudes so that the reader will come away with correct knowledge and will not be influenced by weak reports or false stories that were fabricated by the Râfiḍi Shia historians to distort the image of these noble characters. Talking about the biography of az-Zubayr and other senior Companions who contributed to the events that took place during the lifetime of ‘Ali (عليه السلام) is in harmony with the author’s aims and what he wants to convey in his study of the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs.

1.9. Biography and martyrdom of Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubaydullah (عليه السلام)

‘Ubaydullah’s full name was Abu Muhammad Ṭalḥah ibn Abdullah ibn ‘Uthmân ibn ‘Amr ibn Ka‘b ibn Sa’d ibn Taym bin Murrah ibn Ka‘b ibn Lu’ayy ibn Ghâlib al-Qurashi at-Taymi.⁴⁵⁸ He

shares a common ancestor with the Prophet (ﷺ) in Murrah ibn Ka'b and with Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq in Taym ibn Murrah; the number of grandfathers they share is the same.⁴⁵⁹ His mother was aṣ-Ṣa'bah bint al-Ḥaḍrami, a woman from Yemen; she was the sister of al-'Ala' ibn al-Ḥaḍrami.⁴⁶⁰ She became Muslim and was a Companion of the Prophet (ﷺ); she also had the honour of migrating.⁴⁶¹ Ṭalḥah (رضي الله عنه) was one of the ten given the glad tidings of paradise, one of the first eight people to become Muslim, one of the five people who became Muslim at the hands of Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq (رضي الله عنه) and one of the six members of the consultative committee.⁴⁶²

1.9.1. His conversion to Islam, persecution and migration

Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydullah said: "I was at the marketplace in Buṣra, when a monk in his cell said: 'Ask the people of this gathering whether there is among them any of the people of the sanctuary.' Ṭalḥah said: 'Yes, me.' He said: 'Has Aḥmad appeared yet?' I said: 'Who is Aḥmad?' He said: 'The son of Abdullah ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib. This is the month in which he will appear, and he is the last of the prophets. He will appear in the sanctuary and will migrate to (a place where there are) palm trees, lava fields and wet and salty land. Beware lest others believe in him before you.' I was moved by what he said, so I left quickly and came to Makkah. I asked: 'Is there any news?' They said: 'Yes, Muhammad ibn Abdullah al-Ameen is claiming to be a prophet, and Ibn Abi Quḥāfah (Abu Bakr) has become his follower.' I went out and entered upon Abu Bakr and said: 'Have you become a follower of this man?' He said: 'Yes. Go to him, enter upon him and follow him, for he is calling to the truth and to goodness.'" Ṭalḥah told Abu Bakr what the monk had said, and Abu Bakr took him to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Ṭalḥah became Muslim and told the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) about what the monk had said, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was happy with that.

When Abu Bakr and Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubaydullah (may Allah be pleased with them both) became Muslim, Nawfal ibn Khuwaylid ibn al-‘Adawiyyah took them and tied them up with one rope, and Banu Taym did not protect them. Nawfal was called ‘the Lion of Quraysh’; hence Abu Bakr and Ṭalḥah were called ‘the pair tied together’.⁴⁶³ Ṭalḥah was persecuted for the sake of Allah (ﷺ) and was severely tortured by the polytheists and by his nearest kinsmen, but he (ﷺ) persisted, patiently bearing the torture and persecution until Allah (ﷻ) granted permission to migrate. When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) set out to migrate to Madinah, he was met by Ṭalḥah, who was coming from Syria with a caravan. He gave the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and Abu Bakr some Syrian garments, then went on to Makkah where he finished up his trade. After that, he left with the family of Abu Bakr (ﷺ) and brought them to Madinah. Ṭalḥah (ﷺ) was one of the earliest of those who migrated.⁴⁶⁴ When he came to Madinah, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) established brotherhood between him and Abu Ayyoob al-Anṣârî⁴⁶⁵ (or it was said Ka‘b ibn Mâlik al-Anṣârî) when he established bonds of brotherhood between the Muhâjiroon and Anṣâr.⁴⁶⁶

1.9.2. At the Battle of Badr

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was expecting a caravan to come to Quraysh from Syria, so he (ﷺ) sent Ṭalḥah with Sa‘eed ibn Zayd, instructing them to find out where the caravan of Quraysh was and to bring him the news. They set out and reached al-Ḥawra’, where they stayed until they saw the caravan pass by and take the coastal route, then they went back to Madinah with this news. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had set out with the Muslims on the campaign of Badr, so they hastened to join the army. They did not get there in time for the battle, but the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) allocated to them a share of the booty and a reward like that of those who had fought.⁴⁶⁷

1.9.3. At the Battle of Uḥud

During this battle, Ṭalḥah performed a deed that made him deserve paradise. It was narrated that Jâbir said: "On the day of Uḥud, when the people fled, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was on his own in some part of the battlefield with twelve men, including Ṭalḥah, and the polytheists caught up with him. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'Who will confront these people?' Ṭalḥah said: 'I will.' He told him: 'Stay where you are.' One of the Anṣâr said: 'I will,' and he fought until he was killed. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) turned and saw the polytheists and said: 'Who will confront these people?' Ṭalḥah said: 'I will.' He told him: 'Stay where you are.' One of the Anṣâr said: 'I will,' and he fought until he was killed. It continued like that until only Ṭalḥah was left with the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ). He said: 'Who will confront these people?' Ṭalḥah said: 'I will.' Ṭalḥah fought like the eleven before him, until his fingers were cut off, then he said: 'That's enough for me.' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'If you had said, "In the name of Allah", the angels would have taken you up while the people were looking on.' Then Allah (ﷻ) drove back the polytheists."⁴⁶⁸ According to Aḥmad, the Prophet (ﷺ) said to him: "If you had said 'In the name of Allah', you would have seen a house built for you in paradise while you were still alive in this world."⁴⁶⁹

It was narrated that Qays ibn Ḥâzim said: "I saw the paralysed hand of Ṭalḥah, with which he had protected the Prophet (ﷺ) on the day of Uḥud."⁴⁷⁰ During that battle, he received thirty-nine or thirty-five wounds, and his fingers — the index finger and the one next to it — were paralysed.⁴⁷¹ Abu Dâwood at-Ṭayâlisi narrated that 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said: "When Abu Bakr remembered the day of Uḥud, he would say: 'That day was all for Ṭalḥah.'"⁴⁷² It was narrated that 'Â'ishah and Umm Ishâq, the two daughters of Ṭalḥah, said: "Our father received twenty-four wounds on the day of Uḥud, among which was a square cut on his head. His sciatic nerve was damaged and his

fingers paralysed; the rest of the wounds were on his body. He fell unconscious, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) moved him backwards. Every time one of the polytheists drew near, Ṭalḥah fought to defend the Prophet (ﷺ), until his back was against the mountain."⁴⁷³ The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Ṭalḥah did a deed that made paradise his due, when he did for the Messenger of Allah what he did."⁴⁷⁴

1.9.4. A martyr walking on the face of the earth

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was once atop the mountain of Uhud when it began shaking. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Be still, for there is no one on you but a Prophet, a Ṣiddeeq and a martyr." On it were the Prophet (ﷺ), Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân, 'Ali, Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâs (may Allah be pleased with them all).⁴⁷⁵ After Ṭalḥah learned that he had been named as a martyr, that news of glad tidings from the Beloved (ﷺ), he continued seeking his martyrdom where it is usually sought. Thus he was present at every battle with the Prophet (ﷺ) except for Badr;⁴⁷⁶ as we have seen, he missed that because he had been sent on a mission by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). The Prophet (ﷺ) said concerning him: "Whoever would like to see a martyr walking on the face of the earth, let him look at Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydullah."⁴⁷⁷

1.9.5. ﴿Among the believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allah.﴾ (Qur'an 33: 23)

It was narrated from Moosa and 'Eesa, the sons of Ṭalḥah, from their father, that a Bedouin came and asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) about who those "who have fulfilled their obligations"⁴⁷⁸ were. They did not usually ask him such questions, out of respect and awe. The Bedouin asked him, and the Prophet (ﷺ) turned away from

him; he asked him again, and he turned away from him again. Ṭalḥah said: "Then I came in from the door of the mosque, and I was wearing a green garment. When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) saw me, he said: 'Where is the one who was asking about the one who fulfils his obligation?' The Bedouin said: 'It was me, O Messenger of Allah.' He said: 'This is one of those who have fulfilled their obligation.'"⁴⁷⁹

1.9.6. Ṭalḥah's defence of his brothers and his thinking positively of them

It was narrated that Mâlik ibn Abi Âmir said: "A man came to Ṭalḥah and said: 'What do you think about this Yemeni (Abu Hurayrah)? Is he more knowledgeable of the hadith of the Messenger of Allah than you? We hear things from him that we do not hear from you.' He said: 'As to whether he heard things from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that we did not hear, there is no doubt about that. I will explain to you: we were people with families, and we only came to the Messenger of Allah in the morning and in the evening. But Abu Hurayrah was a poor man with no wealth. He was the doorkeeper of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), so I do not doubt that he heard what we did not hear. Do you think that anyone who has anything good in him could fabricate things that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not say?'"⁴⁸⁰

1.9.7. Spending for the sake of Allah (ﷻ)

It was narrated that Qubayṣah ibn Jâbir said: "I accompanied Ṭalḥah, and I have never seen anyone who could give more generously without being asked than him."⁴⁸¹ It was narrated from Moosa from his father Ṭalḥah that when he received his share of wealth from Haḍramawt, seven hundred thousand, he was restless all night and said: "What punishment could a man expect from his Lord when he spent all night with this money in his house?" His wife said:

“How about some of your close friends? In the morning, call for some bowls and share it out.” He said to her: “May Allah have mercy on you. You are a guided daughter of a guided one.” (She was Umm Kulthoom, the daughter of Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq.) The next morning, he called for some bowls and shared it out among the Muhājireen and Anṣār, and he sent a bowl of it to ‘Ali (ﷺ). Then Ṭalḥah’s wife said to him: “O Abu Muhammad, don’t we have a share of this wealth?” He said: “Where have you been all day? You can keep what is left.” She said: “There was a bundle in which there was approximately one thousand dirhams.”⁴⁸²

It was narrated that Ṭalḥah’s wife Su‘da bint ‘Awf al-Murriyyah said: “I entered upon Ṭalḥah one day when he was looking tired. I said: ‘What is the matter with you? Are you upset with your wife (meaning herself) at all?’ He said: ‘No, by Allah, what a good wife for a Muslim you are. I have money that is making me depressed.’ I said: ‘What is bothering you? Share it among your people.’ He said: ‘O slave, call my people for me,’ and he shared it out among them. I asked the storekeeper: ‘How much did he give?’ He said: ‘Four hundred thousand.’”⁴⁸³

It was narrated from al-Ḥasan al-Basri that Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubaydullah sold some land of his for seven hundred thousand, and he could not sleep all night because of fear of that wealth, until he distributed it the next morning.⁴⁸⁴

It was narrated that ‘Ali ibn Zayd said: “A Bedouin came to Ṭalḥah to ask him for something, approaching him on the basis of his ties of kinship. Ṭalḥah said: ‘No one asked me on the basis of ties of kinship before you. I have some land for which ‘Uthmân offered me three hundred thousand; go and take it, or if you wish, I can sell it to ‘Uthmân and give you the money.’ He said: ‘(I will take) the money,’ so he gave it to him. He (ﷺ) did not leave anyone among Banu Taym poor; he would give him what he needed and pay off his debts.

He used to send ten thousand every year to ‘Â’ishah (ؓ), the Mother of the Believers.”⁴⁸⁵ He was Ṭalḥah the good, Ṭalḥah who gave in abundance, Ṭalḥah the generous.⁴⁸⁶ The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) called him ‘the generous’ because of his generous giving and spending on good causes. Abu Abdullah al-Ḥākim narrated, with his chain of narration going back to Moosa ibn Ṭalḥah, that on the day of Dhu Qarad,⁴⁸⁷ Ṭalḥah slaughtered a camel and dug a well to provide them with food and water, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “O Ṭalḥah the generous.”⁴⁸⁸

1.9.8. Unique and beautiful sayings of Ṭalḥah

Among his sayings was: “The least shame for a man is his staying at home.”⁴⁸⁹ It was also narrated that he said: “Clothing shows the blessings of Allah (ﷻ), and kind treatment of a servant suppresses enemies.”⁴⁹⁰ Ṭalḥah (ؓ) had deep insight into people’s natures and qualities. He never consulted a miserly man when he wanted to uphold ties of kinship with people, and he never consulted a coward with regard to matters of war.⁴⁹¹

1.9.9. Martyrdom of Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubaydullah (ؓ)

On the day of the Battle of the Camel, after ‘Ali (ؓ) met and talked to him, Ṭalḥah (ؓ) withdrew and stood in one of the lines. A stray arrow hit him on the knee; it was also suggested that it hit him on his neck, but the former is better known. The arrow hit the side of his horse as well as his leg, and the horse reared and nearly threw him off. He started calling: “Come to me, slaves of Allah.” A freed slave of his caught up with him and rode behind him; he took him to Basra, and Ṭalḥah (ؓ) died in a house there. It was also suggested that he died in the battle and that when ‘Ali (ؓ) walked among the slain, he saw him and began to wipe the dust from his face,⁴⁹² saying: “It is hard for me, O Abu Muhammad, to see you lying slain in these

valleys." According to this version, 'Ali (عليه السلام) also said: "To Allah I complain of my sorrow and sadness;" he prayed for mercy for him and said: "Would that I had died twenty years before this."⁴⁹³

Undoubtedly Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydullah (عليه السلام) is one of the people of paradise. At-Tirmidhi narrated, with his chain of narration going back to 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf, that he said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Abu Bakr will be in paradise, 'Umar will be in paradise, 'Uthmân will be in paradise, 'Ali will be in paradise, Ṭalḥah and Sa'd will be in paradise, Sa'eed will be in paradise, Abu 'Ubaydah will be in paradise, az-Zubayr and 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn 'Awf will be in paradise.'" Then he said: "This hadith was narrated from 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Ḥumayd from his father from Sa'eed ibn Zayd from the Prophet (ﷺ)."⁴⁹⁴ This hadith clearly speaks of the virtue of Ṭalḥah (عليه السلام), as the Prophet (ﷺ) testified that he would be one of the people of paradise. What a sublime testimony this is, for it tells of his being blessed in this world and in the hereafter.⁴⁹⁵

1.9.10. Allah (ﷻ) preserved his body after he died

Allah (ﷻ) preserved the body of Ṭalḥah ibn 'Ubaydullah (عليه السلام) after he died. His grave was opened more than thirty years later so that they could move him to another place, and no part of him had changed except for a few hairs on one side of his beard. It was narrated that al-Muthanna ibn Sa'eed said: "A man came to 'Â'ishah bint Ṭalḥah and said: 'I saw Ṭalḥah in a dream, and he said: "Tell 'Â'ishah to move me from this place, for the moisture or water is bothering me.'" So she rode with her entourage, and they erected a tent over his grave and exhumed him. No part of him had changed except for a few hairs on one side of his beard, or on his head. And that was thirty-some years (after his death)."⁴⁹⁶ May Allah be pleased with Ṭalḥah and all the Companions.

1.9.11. Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâş prayed against those who impugned 'Uthmân, 'Ali, Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr (may Allah be pleased with them all)

It was narrated from Sa'eed ibn al-Musâ'ib that a man used to impugn Ṭalhah, az-Zubayr, 'Uthmân and 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them). Sa'd told him to stop, saying: "Do not impugn my brothers." The man refused to stop, so Sa'd stood up and prayed two rak'ahs, then he said: "O Allah, if what he says displeases You, then show me a sign today and make an example of him." The man went out, and there was a camel driver going through crowds of people. A camel stumbled on a stone and fell on him, and he was crushed to death between the camel's chest and the ground. Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyib said: "I saw the people following Sa'd and saying: 'Congratulations to you, O Abu Ishâq, for your prayer was answered.'"⁴⁹⁷

2. The Battle of Şiffeen (37 AH)

2.1. Chain of events leading up to the battle

2.1.1. Umm Ḥabeebah bint Abi Sufyân (رضي الله عنها) sends an-Nu'mân ibn Basheer with 'Uthmân's chemise to Mu'âwiyah and the people of Syria

After 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) was killed, the Mother of the Believers Umm Ḥabeebah bint Abi Sufyân (رضي الله عنها) sent word to 'Uthmân's family, saying: "Send me the garment in which 'Uthmân was killed." They sent her his bloodstained chemise, along with pieces of hair that had been plucked from his beard. Umm Ḥabeebah called an-Nu'mân ibn Basheer and sent him to Mu'âwiyah, so he left carrying that and

her letter.⁴⁹⁸ According to one report, an-Nu‘mân ibn Basheer took with him the bloodstained chemise of ‘Uthmân and the fingers of Nâ’ilah that had been cut off when she tried to defend him with her hand.⁴⁹⁹ Nâ’ilah bint al-Farâfiṣah al-Kalbiyyah was the wife of ‘Uthmân (ﷺ), from the tribe of Kalb in Syria.⁵⁰⁰

An-Nu‘mân came to Mu‘âwiyah (ﷺ) in Syria; Mu‘âwiyah placed him on the minbar so that the people could see him, and he hung the fingers on the sleeve of the chemise, raising it sometimes and lowering it sometimes. The people around him were weeping, urging one another to seek vengeance.⁵⁰¹ Shuraḥbeel ibn as-Samaṭ al-Kindi came and said to Mu‘âwiyah: “‘Uthmân was our caliph. If you are able to bring his murderers to justice, then do so; otherwise, resign.”⁵⁰² The men of Syria swore that they would not be intimate with their wives or sleep on their beds until they killed the murderers of ‘Uthmân (ﷺ) and those who tried to prevent them from doing so, or they died trying.⁵⁰³ This was what Mu‘âwiyah wanted. The picture that an-Nu‘mân ibn Basheer presented to the people of Syria was an ugly one: the murder of the caliph, swords unsheathed by the thugs and wielded over the people’s necks, the public treasury plundered and the fingers of Nâ’ilah cut off. The people were deeply moved; their hearts were shaken and their eyes filled with tears. After this, it is little wonder that the people’s feelings ran high and that Mu‘âwiyah, and the people who were with him in Syria, insisted on bringing the murderers of ‘Uthmân (ﷺ) to justice. They wanted the murderers to be handed over for retaliatory punishment before they would agree to swear allegiance. Can we imagine the caliph and leader of the Muslims being murdered by haters and conspirators who had come from outside Madinah and taken over the city, and the Muslim world not becoming outraged and sending demands from the farthest corners of the Islamic regions for the perpetrators of this heinous crime to be brought to justice?⁵⁰⁴

2.1.2. Mu'âwiyah's motives for not swearing allegiance

Mu'âwiyah (رضي الله عنه) had been the governor of Syria during the caliphates of 'Umar and 'Uthmân. When 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was appointed as caliph, he wanted to dismiss Mu'âwiyah and appoint Abdullah ibn 'Umar in his place, but Ibn 'Umar apologised and declined the post. 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) sent Sahl ibn Hunayf instead, but he had hardly reached the border of Syria (Wadi al-Qura) when he was met by Mu'âwiyah's cavalry under the leadership of Ḥabīb ibn Maslamah al-Fihri, who said to him: "If you have been sent by 'Uthmân, then you are welcome, but if you have been sent by anyone else, then go back."⁵⁰⁵ He turned around and went back.

Mu'âwiyah and the people of Syria refused to swear allegiance to 'Ali (رضي الله عنه). They thought that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) should bring the murderers of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) to justice first, and then they would swear allegiance to him.⁵⁰⁶ They said: "We will not swear allegiance to one who gives refuge to the murderers."⁵⁰⁷ They feared for their lives because of the murderers of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) who were in 'Ali's army; his killers were in 'Ali's camp, and they were powerful. They thought that swearing allegiance to 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was not obligatory for them and that if they fought him, they would be the ones who were being wronged because 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) had been killed wrongfully, according to the consensus of the Muslims. They said: "If we swear allegiance, they will wrong us and transgress against us, and the blood of 'Uthmân will go unavenged."

Mu'âwiyah (رضي الله عنه) was related to 'Uthmân, and he thought that it was 'Ali's duty to stand up for 'Uthmân and bring to justice those who had killed him. Allah (ﷻ) says: *And whoever is killed wrongfully [Mazlûman intentionally with hostility and oppression and not by mistake], We have given his heir the authority [to demand Qisâs, — Law of Equality in punishment — or to forgive, or to take*

Diyah (blood money)). But let him not exceed limits in the matter of taking life [i.e. he should not kill except the killer]. Verily, he is helped [by the Islamic law].» (*Qur'an* 17: 33)

Hence Mu'âwiyah brought the people together and addressed them concerning 'Uthmân's case, stating that he had been killed unlawfully at the hands of foolish hypocrites who did not respect sacred blood (referring to blood that was protected by Sharia); they had shed his blood during the sacred month in the sacred land. The people were agitated, and their voices grew loud in denouncing the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ). Among them were a number of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). One of them, whose name was Murrah ibn Ka'b, stood up and said: "Were it not for a hadith I heard from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), I would not have spoken. The Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned the turmoil and gave some details concerning it. Then a man passed by whose face was covered with a cloth, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'This man will be following true guidance at that time.' I went up to him and found that he was 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân. I turned to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked: 'This man?' He (ﷺ) said: 'Yes.'"⁵⁰⁸

There is another hadith that had an effect on the pursuit of justice for the killers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ); it motivated Mu'âwiyah and his followers and strengthened their resolve to achieve this goal. It was narrated from an-Nu'mân ibn Basheer that 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent for 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân. He came, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) turned to him. The last words he said, when tapping his shoulder, were: 'O 'Uthmân, Allah may clothe you with a chemise which, if the hypocrites want you to take it off, do not take it off until you meet me.' He said it three times." I [an-Nu'mân] said to her: "O Mother of the Believers, why did you not tell us this before?" She said: "I forgot it, and by Allah I did not remember it." He said: "I told Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân about it,

and he did not like what I told him. He wrote to the Mother of the Believers, asking her to write to him about it, and she wrote a letter to him about it.⁵⁰⁹

This great keenness to implement the ruling of Allah (ﷻ) on the murderers was the main reason for the refusal of the people of Syria, led by Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân (رضي الله عنه), to swear allegiance to 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه). They thought that implementing the ruling of retaliation took precedence over swearing allegiance. It was not a matter of Mu'âwiyah's having ambitions in Syria or his demanding something that was not rightfully his; he fully understood that the issue of caliphate was limited to whoever was left of the six members of the consultative committee, and that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was superior to him and more entitled to it than he was.⁵¹⁰ However, allegiance had been sworn to 'Ali on the basis of the consensus of the Companions in Madinah, so Mu'âwiyah's view was contrary to what was correct.

2.1.3. Mu'âwiyah (رضي الله عنه) responds to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه)

'Ali (رضي الله عنه) sent letters to Mu'âwiyah (رضي الله عنه), but he did not respond. This happened several times in the first few months after the murder of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه), then Mu'âwiyah sent a man to take a letter to 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) in the month of Şafar. 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said to him: "Tell me what you have for me." He said: "I have come to you from people who do not want anything but the ḥadd punishment for the murderers, and each of them is seeking vengeance. I have left behind sixty thousand men who are weeping in front of 'Uthmân's chemise, which is on the minbar of Damascus." 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said: "O Allah, I declare my innocence before You of the blood of 'Uthmân." As the envoy of Mu'âwiyah left 'Ali (رضي الله عنه), some of those rebels who had killed 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) tried to kill him, and he only escaped with difficulty.⁵¹¹

2.1.4. Amir al-Mu‘mineen ‘Ali’s preparations for the march to Syria, and al-Ḥasan’s objection to that

After Mu‘âwiyah’s response reached Amir al-Mu‘mineen ‘Ali, the caliph decided to fight the people of Syria. He wrote to Qays ibn Sa‘d in Egypt, instructing him to mobilise people to fight them, and he sent similar instructions to Abu Moosa in Kufah and to ‘Uthmân ibn Ḥunayf. He addressed the people, urging them to join the fight, and he started to make preparations. He was determined to fight with those who obeyed him against those who disobeyed him and did not swear allegiance to him. His son al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Ali came to him and said: “O my father, do not do this, because it involves shedding the blood of the Muslims and creating division among them.” ‘Ali (ﷺ) did not accept that from him, though; he insisted on fighting. He organised the army, giving the banner to Muhammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah and putting Ibn ‘Abbâs in charge of the right flank and ‘Umar ibn Abi Salamah in charge of the left. It was also said that he put ‘Amr ibn Sufyân ibn ‘Abdul-Asad in charge of the left flank and Abu Layla ibn ‘Umar ibn al-Jarrâḥ, his nephew, in charge of the vanguard. He appointed Qutham ibn ‘Abbâs to be in charge of Madinah in his absence, and there was nothing left to do except to leave Madinah and head for Syria, when something happened to distract him from that.⁵¹² We have discussed in detail how ‘Ā’ishah, Ṭalhah and az-Zubayr went out to Basra and the Battle of the Camel.

2.1.5. After the Battle of the Camel, Amir al-Mu‘mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ) sent Jareer ibn Abdullah to Mu‘âwiyah

It is said that the period between the appointment of Amir al-Mu‘mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ) to the caliphate and the second Saba’i fitnah, which is called Basra or the Battle of the Camel, was five months and twenty-one days. Between that and his entering Kufah was one

month, and between his entering Kufah and his going out to Şiffeen was six months,⁵¹³ or it was said that it was two or three months.⁵¹⁴

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) entered Kufah on Monday, 12 Rajab 36 AH. It was suggested to him that he should stay in the white palace, but he said: "No, 'Umar ibn al-Khaţţâb (عليه السلام) would not like to stay there, so I dislike it too." He stayed in ar-Rahbah and prayed two raka'ahs in the great mosque, then he addressed the people, urging them to do good and forbidding them from doing evil. He praised the people of Kufah in his speech, then he sent word to Jareer ibn Abdullah, who had been the governor of Hamadhân from the time of 'Uthmân, and al-Ash'ath ibn Qays, who had been governor of Azerbaijan from the time of 'Uthmân (عليه السلام), telling them to accept the oath of allegiance to him from the people there, then to come to him, and they did that.

When 'Ali (عليه السلام) wanted to send word to Mu'âwiyah (عليه السلام) calling on him to swear allegiance to him, Jareer ibn Abdullah al-Bajali said: "I will go to him, O Amir al-Mu'mineen, for there was friendship between me and him, and I will accept his oath of allegiance to you." Al-Ashtar said: "Do not send him, O Amir al-Mu'mineen, for I fear that he is inclined towards him." 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "Let him be," and he sent him with a letter to Mu'âwiyah. The letter told him that there was consensus among the Muhâjireen and Anşâr on swearing allegiance to 'Ali (عليه السلام), informed him of what had happened at the Battle of the Camel, and called on him to join the people in swearing allegiance. When Jareer ibn Abdullah reached Mu'âwiyah and gave him the letter, Mu'âwiyah summoned 'Amr ibn al-Âş and the leaders of the people of Syria and consulted them. They refused to swear allegiance to 'Ali (عليه السلام) until the murderers of 'Uthmân (عليه السلام) were executed or handed over to them. They said that if 'Ali (عليه السلام) did not do that, they would not swear allegiance to him, and they would fight to the last man.

Jareer went back to ‘Ali (ﷺ) and told him what they had said. Al-Ashtar said: “Did I not tell you, O Amir al-Mu’mineen, not to send Jareer? If you had sent me, Mu‘âwiyah would not have opened any door but I would have closed it.” Jareer said to him: “If you had gone there, they would have killed you in retaliation for ‘Uthmân.” Al-Ashtar said: “By Allah, if you had sent me, I would have found an answer to Mu‘âwiyah’s questions, and I would have given him an answer before he even asked. If Amir al-Mu’mineen had listened to me, he would have detained you and others like you until the affairs of this Ummah were straightened out.” Jareer got up angrily and went to stay in Qarqaysa’. He wrote to Mu‘âwiyah, telling him what he had said and what had been said to him; Mu‘âwiyah wrote back, telling him to come to him.⁵¹⁵ Thus al-Ashtar was a factor in the alienation of the Companion Jareer ibn Abdullah, who was ‘Ali’s governor in Qarqaysa’ and elsewhere, and the leader of his tribe Bajeelah. This Companion, Jareer ibn Abdullah al-Bajali said: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) never saw me without smiling at me.” The Prophet (ﷺ) said concerning him: “There will enter upon you from this door a man who is the best of those who are blessed; on his face there is an angelic look.”⁵¹⁶

2.1.6. ‘Ali’s march to Syria

Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ) prepared to go on the campaign to Syria, and he sent word to mobilise the people.⁵¹⁷ He prepared a huge army; the reports differ concerning the size, but they are all weak reports⁵¹⁸ apart from one with a reliable chain of narration, which states that he set out with fifty thousand men.⁵¹⁹

The place where the troops of Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ) gathered was an-Nukhaylah,⁵²⁰ which was two miles from Kufah. The tribes came to it from all regions of Iraq.⁵²¹ Amir al-Mu’mineen appointed Abu Mas‘ood al-Anṣārī and sent Ziyād ibn an-Naḍr al-

Ḥârithi from an-Nukhaylah ahead of the army with eight thousand fighters, and Shurayḥ ibn Hânî' with four thousand. Then 'Ali (عليه السلام) set out with his army towards Baghdad, where he was joined by more men; he appointed Sa'd ibn Mas'ood ath-Thaqafi in charge of them. From there he sent a detachment of three thousand to Mosul.⁵²² 'Ali (عليه السلام) travelled on the main road to al-Jazeerah along the eastern bank of the Euphrates, until he drew close to Qarqaysiya'.⁵²³ News reached him that Mu'âwiyah had set out to meet him and was camping in Şiffeen, so 'Ali went to ar-Raqqah,⁵²⁴ from which he crossed the Euphrates, heading west, and came to Şiffeen.⁵²⁵

2.1.7. Mu'âwiyah's going out to Şiffeen

Mu'âwiyah was serious about bringing the murderers of 'Uthmân (عليه السلام) to justice. He managed to ambush and kill a group of Egyptians who had invaded Madinah, including Abu 'Amr ibn Budayl al-Khuzâ'i, as they were returning to Egypt.⁵²⁶ Moreover, he had supporters in Egypt and among the people of Kharbata who were also seeking vengeance for the murder of 'Uthmân (عليه السلام). This group managed to defeat Muhammad ibn Abi Ḥudhayfah in a number of confrontations in 36 AH. Mu'âwiyah also managed to capture the Egyptian leaders and planners of the invasion of Madinah, such as 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn 'Udaysi, Kinânah ibn Bishr and Muhammad ibn Ḥudhayfah, whom he detained in Palestine during the period that preceded his going out to Şiffeen. He executed them in Dhul-Ḥijjah 36 AH.⁵²⁷ When Mu'âwiyah learned of the movements of the Iraqi army, he gathered his consultants among the prominent people of Syria and addressed them, saying: " 'Ali is coming towards you with the people of Iraq." Dhul-Kilâ' al-Ḥimyari said: "Tell us what to do, and we will do it."⁵²⁸

The people of Syria gave their pledge to Mu'âwiyah that they would fight to seek vengeance for the murder of 'Uthmân (عليه السلام).⁵²⁹

‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ (عاصم) prepared the army and appointed commanders, and he stood up to address and encourage the army, saying: “The people of Iraq are divided and weak. The people of Basra are opposed to ‘Ali because he killed some of them, and the strongest of the people of Kufah were killed in the Battle of the Camel. ‘Ali is marching with a small group, among whom are those who killed your caliph, so do not fail in your duty to bring them to justice.”⁵³⁰

Mu‘āwiyah set out with a huge army. Reports differ on the number, but they all have interrupted chains of narration; they are the same reports that estimated the size of ‘Ali’s army. The number was put at one hundred and twenty thousand,⁵³¹ or seventy thousand, or much more than that.⁵³² The closest to the truth is a report that they numbered sixty thousand. Although the chain of narration of this report is interrupted, its narrator is Ṣafwān ibn ‘Amr as-Saksi, a Homsī from Syria who was born in 72 AH and is proven to be trustworthy. He met a number of those who had been present at Ṣiffeen, as is clear from studying his biography.⁵³³ The chain of narration to him is sound.⁵³⁴

The commanders of Mu‘āwiyah’s army were as follows: ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ in charge of the entire cavalry of Syria; aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Qays in charge of the entire infantry; Dhul-Kilā‘ al-Ḥimyari in charge of the right flank of the army; Ḥabeeb ibn Maslamah in charge of the left flank; and Abu al-A‘war as-Sulami in charge of the vanguard. These were the senior commanders; with each of these commanders, there were other officers, organised along tribal lines. They marched to Ṣiffeen in this order, but during the battle, some of the commanders were changed and other commanders appointed, as dictated by circumstances. This may be the reason for the differences concerning the names of the commanders in some sources.⁵³⁵

Mu‘āwiyah sent Abu al-A‘war as-Sulami in the vanguard of the army, and their route led northeast from Damascus. When he

reached Şiffeen, by the lower part of the Euphrates, he camped in a vast plain beside a branch of the Euphrates; in that place there was no other branch on the river, so he made it his own.⁵³⁶

2.1.8. The fight for the water

The army of ‘Ali (عليه السلام) reached Şiffeen, where Mu‘âwiyah (عليه السلام) was already camping. ‘Ali (عليه السلام) could not find sufficient level ground for the army, so they camped in a place that was somewhat rugged, on land that was mostly covered with jagged rocks.⁵³⁷ His army was caught by surprise when Mu‘âwiyah prevented them from reaching the water, and some of them rushed to complain to ‘Ali (عليه السلام) about that. He sent al-Ash‘ath ibn Qays out with two thousand men, and the first battle took place between the two sides. Al-Ash‘ath was victorious and gained control of the water.⁵³⁸

(However, there is a report denying that any fighting took place at all. This report says that al-Ash‘ath ibn Qays went to Mu‘âwiyah and said: “I urge you by Allah, O Mu‘âwiyah, to think of the Ummah of Muhammad (ﷺ)! Suppose you kill the people of Iraq. Who will guard the border and the women and children? Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And if two parties [or groups] among the believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them both.﴾ (Qur’an 49: 9) Mu‘âwiyah said: “What do you want?” They said: “Let us reach the water.” He said to Abu al-A‘war: “Let our brothers reach the water.”)⁵³⁹

The fight for the water took place on the first day they met at the beginning of Dhul-Ĥijjah, and this was a bad start for both parties of Muslims, because fighting continued between them for the entire month. The fighting took the form of encounters between small groups. ‘Ali (عليه السلام) would send out a small group led by a commander, and it would engage in fighting once a day, either in the morning or the afternoon; on a few occasions they fought twice in a day. On most occasions, the commanders in ‘Ali’s army who would go out with

small groups to fight were al-Ashtar, Hajar ibn ‘Adiyy, Shabath ibn Rab‘i, Khâlîd ibn al-Mu‘tamir and Ma‘qil ibn Yasâr ar-Riyâhi. In Mu‘âwiyah’s army, those who went out most often were Hâbeeb ibn Maslamah, ‘Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Khâlîd ibn al-Waleed, ‘Ubaydullah ibn ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb, Abu al-A‘war as-Sulami and Shurahbeel ibn as-Samaṭ. They avoided fighting with the entire army for fear of complete destruction and ruin of the Ummah, and in the hope of reaching a peace deal between the two sides whereby loss of lives and bloodshed could be avoided.⁵⁴⁰

2.1.9. Cooling off and attempts at reconciliation

No sooner had the month of Muḥarram begun than the two sides hastened to suspend the fighting and call for a truce, in the hope of reconciliation that would protect Muslim lives. They took advantage of this month to correspond with one another, but the information about the correspondence during this period — the month of Muḥarram — was narrated via weak but well-known chains of narration.⁵⁴¹ The fact that they are weak does not mean that it did not take place, though. The one who started the correspondence was Amir al-Mu‘mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام). He sent Basheer ibn ‘Amr al-Anṣârî, Sa‘eed ibn Qays al-Hamadâni and Shabath ibn Rab‘i at-Tameemi to Mu‘âwiyah (عليه السلام), calling on him as he had before to join the main body of Muslims and swear allegiance to ‘Ali. Mu‘âwiyah responded in the same manner as he had previously, demanding that ‘Ali hand over ‘Uthmân’s killers or bring them to justice before he would give him his oath of allegiance. We have already discussed ‘Ali’s attitude concerning this matter.⁵⁴²

The pious worshippers on both sides, of whom there was a large number, had camped in an area separate from Şiffeen. They tried to mediate between the two sides, but their efforts did not succeed because each group insisted on its own opinion.⁵⁴³ Two of

the Companions, Abu ad-Dardâ' and Abu Umâmah, also tried to reconcile the two parties but were not able to, for the same reasons; they abandoned both parties and did not get involved in this issue of fighting.⁵⁴⁴ Masrooq ibn al-Ajda', one of the senior Tâbi'oon, also came and exhorted them and told them to fear Allah (ﷻ), but he did not fight.⁵⁴⁵

Ibn Katheer criticised the lengthy details that were narrated in reports of Abu Makhnaf and Naşr ibn Muzâhim with regard to the correspondence between the two sides. He said: "...Then the biographers mentioned a lengthy discussion that took place between them and 'Ali. The soundness of this material is subject to further examination. In the reports, there are some words which are attributed to 'Ali in which there is criticism of Mu'âwiyah and his father; it says that they entered Islam but still had some doubts about it, and other things that undermine Mu'âwiyah. It also says that 'Ali said concerning that: 'I do not say that 'Uthmân was killed unlawfully or lawfully.' In my view, this cannot be soundly attributed to 'Ali (ﷺ)."⁵⁴⁶

The attitude of 'Ali (ﷺ) concerning the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) is quite clear. I have discussed it in my book about 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân (ﷺ) and in the present volume.

2.2. Outbreak of fighting

Fighting resumed after the sacred months, in the month of Dhul-Hijjah, with encounters between battalions, groups and individuals, for fear of all-out fighting taking place. More than twenty skirmishes had taken place between the two sides during the first week of Dhul-Hijjah; it was also said that the number was ninety.⁵⁴⁷ 'Ali (ﷺ) announced to his army that on the next day, Wednesday, there would be an all-out battle involving the entire army; then he sent word to Mu'âwiyah informing him of that.⁵⁴⁸ That

night, the people rushed to repair and sharpen their weapons. 'Amr ibn al-Âṣ brought weapons out of storage for those whose weapons had worn out and who needed them, and he encouraged people to be steadfast in fighting.⁵⁴⁹ Both armies spent the night planning and organising the commanders and banners.

2.2.1. The first day of the battle

On Wednesday morning, the two armies had organised their ranks in the manner followed in major battles, with a core, a right flank and a left flank.

'Ali's army was organised in the following manner:⁵⁵⁰ 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) was in charge of the core, Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs was in charge of the left flank, 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir was in charge of the infantry, Muhammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah was carrying the flag, Hishâm ibn 'Utbah (al-Marqâl) was carrying the banner and al-Ash'ath ibn Qays was in charge of the right flank.

As for the Syrian army, Mu'âwiyah was in charge of the ash-Shahba' battalion, with their helmets and shields, on a hill, and he was the commander of the army; 'Amr ibn al-Âṣ was in charge of the entire Syrian cavalry; Dhul-Kilâ' al-Ḥimyari was in charge of the right flank, which was composed of Yemeni troops; Ḥabeeb ibn Maslamah al-Fihri was in charge of the left flank, which was composed of Muḍar tribesmen; and al-Makhâriq ibn aṣ-Ṣabâh al-Kilâ'i was the banner carrier.⁵⁵¹

The two Muslim armies faced one another, filling the horizon with their vast numbers. Ka'b ibn Ju'ayl at-Taghlibi,⁵⁵² one of the Arab poets, said when he saw the people on Tuesday night, rushing to mend their arrows and swords in preparation for battle:

*This Ummah is in a very odd situation;
power will belong tomorrow to the one who prevails.*

*I shall say something true, not a lie:
tomorrow prominent Arabs are going to die.*⁵⁵³

Some weak reports say that ‘Ali (ﷺ) addressed his troops and urged them to be patient and courageous, and to remember Allah (ﷻ) a great deal.⁵⁵⁴ They also say that ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âş inspected his troops and instructed them to straighten their ranks.⁵⁵⁵ There is no reason not to accept these reports, because all commanders encourage and motivate their troops and pay attention to anything that may lead to victory. The two armies met in a violent conflict that remained intense until sunset, and they only stopped to offer the prayers. Each group prayed in its own camp, with the bodies of the slain in the battlefield between them. When ‘Ali (ﷺ) finished praying, one of his troops asked him: “What do you say about our dead and their dead, O Amir al-Mu’mineen?” He said: “Whoever has been killed among us and them, seeking the countenance of Allah and the home of the hereafter will enter paradise.”⁵⁵⁶ The two armies stood firm, and neither prevailed; no one was seen fleeing until that day ended. In the evening, ‘Ali (ﷺ) went out to the battlefield and looked at the people of Syria, and he called upon his Lord, saying: “O Allah, forgive me and them.”⁵⁵⁷

2.2.2. The second day

On Thursday, the reports say that ‘Ali (ﷺ) prayed the dawn prayer when it was still quite dark. He prepared to attack, and he changed some of his commanders. He put Abdullah ibn Budayl al-Khuzâ‘i in charge of the right flank instead of al-Ash‘ath ibn Qays al-Kindi, whom he moved to the left flank.⁵⁵⁸ The two parties marched towards one another and engaged in fighting that was even more intense than the day before. The people of Iraq began to advance, and they started to gain the upper hand over the people of Syria. Abdullah ibn Budayl managed to penetrate Mu‘âwiyah’s left flank, which was

led by Ḥabeeb ibn Maslamah, and he advanced towards Mu'âwiyah's battalion (ash-Shahba'), demonstrating unparalleled courage and zeal. This partial advance was accompanied by a general advance of the Iraqi army, until Mu'âwiyah thought of leaving the battlefield, but he stood firm and urged his battalion ash-Shahba' to do likewise. They managed to kill Abdullah ibn Budayl, who was replaced by Al-Ashtar as commander of the right flank.

The people of Syria stood firm, and some of them swore to fight to the death. They attacked again with firm resolve, and a number of them were killed, the most prominent of whom were Dhul-Kilâ', Ḥawshab and 'Ubaydullah ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (ؓ). Then the balance tipped in favour of the Syrian army, and they gained the upper hand, while the Iraqi army started to fall back, with many of them being killed and wounded. When 'Ali (ؓ) saw that his army was falling back, he began calling out to them and encouraging them. He fought fiercely, aiming for the core where the Rabee'ah tribe was. They were incensed by this, and their commander Khâlîd ibn al-Mu'tamir swore to fight to the death, for they were people who excelled at fighting.⁵⁵⁹

'Ammâr ibn Yâsir (ؓ), who was over ninety-four years old, fought fiercely and encouraged and motivated the people to do likewise, but he was far removed from extremism. He heard a man next to him saying: "The people of Syria have become disbelievers." 'Ammâr rebuked him for saying that and said: "Rather they have transgressed against us, and we are fighting them because of their transgression. Our God is One, our Prophet is one, and our qiblah is one."⁵⁶⁰

When 'Ammâr (ؓ) saw his companions falling back and his opponents advancing, he started encouraging them and telling them that they were in the right and should not be deceived by the heavy blows of the Syrians. He (ؓ) said: "Whoever would like the *hoor*

'een ('firm-breasted' women with beautiful eyes, promised to male believers in paradise) to surround him, let him advance between the ranks, seeking reward with Allah, for I can see that the Syrians are fighting us so fiercely that it may create doubt in the minds of some. By the One in Whose hand is my soul, if they pushed us back until they made us reach Sa'fât Ḥajar, we would still believe that we are in the right and they are in the wrong; we would still believe that our righteous people are in the right, and they are the wrong."⁵⁶¹ Then he began to advance with a spear in his hand, trembling because of old age. He was urging the banner carrier Hâshim ibn 'Utbah ibn Abi Waqqâş to advance and seek the blessings that are with Allah (ﷺ), and encouraging his companions too, saying: "Paradise is close at hand, and the ḥoor 'een are adorned. Whoever would like to be surrounded by the ḥoor 'een, let him advance between the ranks, seeking the reward of Allah (ﷺ)." This was a moving scene, for he was a great Companion who had been present at Badr. He was over ninety-four years of age and possessed great zeal, resolve, high morale and strong faith. He was an important factor in the enthusiasm of the Iraqi army and in raising their morale, which made them tougher and fiercer and willing to sacrifice until they managed to tip the balance in their favour. Hishâm ibn 'Utbah ibn Abi Waqqâş advanced as 'Ammâr was saying: "Advance O Hishâm, for paradise lies in the shade of the swords, and death is at the edges of the spears; the gates of heaven are open and the ḥoor 'een are adorned. Today I will meet my loved ones, Muhammad and his companions."⁵⁶²

When the sun set that Thursday, 'Ammâr asked for a drink of milk, then he said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to me: 'The last drink you will drink in this world will be a drink of milk.'"⁵⁶³ Then he advanced and urged the banner carrier Hishâm ibn 'Utbah ibn Abi Waqqâş az-Zuhri to advance with him, and neither of them came back; both were slain.⁵⁶⁴ May Allah have mercy on them and be pleased with them.

2.2.3. The night of clamor and Friday

Fighting resumed the same night, with energy that had not been seen before. The people of Iraq fought with enthusiasm and high spirits until they pushed the people of Syria back from their positions. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) fought fiercely and pledged to fight to the death.⁵⁶⁵ It was said that 'Ali (عليه السلام) led his army in praying the fear prayer at the time of sunset.⁵⁶⁶ Ash-Shâfa'i said: "It was narrated from 'Ali (عليه السلام) that he offered the fear prayer on the night of clamor."⁵⁶⁷

An eyewitness said: "We fought for three days and three nights until the spears were broken and the arrows ran out, then we started using swords. We battled until the middle of the night, until we reached the point of hand to hand combat. When the swords became like sickles, we started hitting one another with pieces of iron, and we could hear nothing except the grunting and groaning of the people. Then we threw stones at one another, threw dust at one another, and bit one another with our teeth until morning came on Friday and the sun rose, although it could not be seen because of the dust of battle. The banners and flags fell, and the army was worn out; our hands were exhausted, and our throats were dry."⁵⁶⁸

Ibn Katheer said, describing the night of clamor and the following Friday: "They started fighting one another, and two men would fight until they were exhausted. Then they would sit down to rest, each one grunting at the other; then they would get up and fight again. To Allah we belong, and unto Him is our return. They continued like that until Friday morning came, and the people prayed the dawn prayer with gestures while still fighting, until it became very light outside, and the people of Iraq began to gain the upper hand over the people of Syria."⁵⁶⁹

2.2.4. The call for arbitration

After the night of clamor, the two armies found themselves in such a state that they could not withstand any more fighting. Al-Ash'ath ibn Qays, the leader of Kindah, addressed his companions after the night of clamor and said: "O Muslims, you have seen what happened yesterday and how many of the Arabs were killed. By Allah, I have reached old age as Allah willed, and I have never seen anything like this. Let those who are present tell those who were absent. If we resume fighting tomorrow, that will be the end of the Arabs, and there will be no one left to protect what is sacred. By Allah, I am not saying this for fear of fighting, but I am an old man, and I fear that there will be no one to protect the women and children if we all die tomorrow. O Allah, You know that my intention is to do what is best for my people and my co-religionists, and I have not fallen short."⁵⁷⁰

News of that reached Mu'âwiyah, who said: "He is right, by the Lord of the Ka'bah. If we meet in battle tomorrow, the Byzantines will attack our women and children, and the Persians will attack the people of Iraq and their children. Only those with wisdom and understanding can see that." Then he said to his companions: "Tie the muşhafs to the ends of the spears."⁵⁷¹ This is an Iraqi report in which there is no mention of 'Amr ibn al-Âş or any trick or deceit; rather it was the desire of both parties. Neither Mu'âwiyah nor 'Amr would be harmed if one of them had the courage to take this initiative and save what was left of the strength of this Ummah that was fighting itself. It was only the Saba'is who were upset by that; they had started this turmoil, and they left for us a pile of misleading reports, which presented truth as falsehood and virtue — such as calling for referral to the Qur'an for judgement in order to protect Muslim life — as a crime, a conspiracy and a trick.⁵⁷²

They attributed to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) words that he did not say and that were contrary to what is mentioned in the sound reports. They attributed to him the words, "They never held it in high esteem, and they will never act upon it; they have only raised it as a trick and a plot to appease us."⁵⁷³ One of the obscene things that they said about the lifting up of the muṣḥafs was: "This is the idea of the son of the promiscuous woman."⁵⁷⁴ They also widened the circle of propaganda against 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ (أبو العاص), to the extent that you can hardly find any book of history that does not contain words undermining 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ and claiming that he was a trickster and plotter; this is because of the fabricated reports made up by the enemies of the noble Companions and transmitted by aṭ-Ṭabari, Ibn al-Atheer and others. Many contemporary historians, such as Ḥasan Ibrâheem Ḥasan in *Tareekh al-Islam*, Muhammad al-Khuḍari Beg in *Tareekh ad-Dawlah al-Umawiyyah*, 'Abdul-Wahhâb an-Najjâr in *Tareekh al-Khulafa' ar-Râshideen* and others were fooled by them and played a role in distorting the historical facts.

The report of Abu Makhnaf suggests that 'Ali (عليه السلام) rejected the idea of referring to the Qur'an for judgement when it was first suggested by the people of Syria, then he accepted it due to pressure from the worshippers who later became known as Kharijites.⁵⁷⁵ This report suggests that 'Ali (عليه السلام) slandered Mu'âwiyah and his companions, which is beneath the people of that blessed generation, so how about their leaders, foremost among whom was Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام)? It is sufficient reason to reject the report that it was narrated by the Râfiḍi fabricator Abu Makhnaf. It is a report that cannot stand up to unbiased review, and it cannot stand before other reports whose narrators cannot be accused of bias, such as that which was narrated by Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal via Ḥabeeb ibn Abi Thâbit, who said: "I came to Abu Wâ'il, one of the men of 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib, and he said: 'We were in Şiffeen, and when many of the people of

Syria were killed, ‘Amr said to Mu‘âwiyah: “Send the muṣḥaf to ‘Ali, and call him to the Book of Allah; he will not refuse.” A man brought the muṣḥaf to ‘Ali and said: “Between us and you is the Book of Allah: ﴿Have you not seen those who have been given a portion of the Scripture? They are being invited to the Book of Allah to settle their dispute, then a party of them turn away, and they are averse﴾ (Qur’an 3: 23).” ‘Ali (عليه السلام) said: “Yes, I should be the first to accept that.” The worshippers — those who rebelled later on and became known as Kharijites — stood up with their swords on their shoulders and said: “O Amir al-Mu‘mineen, shouldn’t we keep on fighting these people until Allah decides the matter between us and them?” Sahl ibn Ḥunayf al-Anṣârî (عليه السلام) stood up and said: “O people, you should be suspicious of your motives. We were with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) on the day of Ḥudaybiyah, and if we had the opportunity to fight, we were ready to fight.” He was referring to the peace deal that was drawn up between the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and the polytheists. Then he told them about ‘Umar’s objection to the treaty on the day of Ḥudaybiyah and the revelation of Soorat al-Fath to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). ‘Ali said: “O people, this is a victory.” ‘Ali accepted the offer and went back, and the people went back too.”⁵⁷⁶

Sahl ibn Ḥunayf (عليه السلام) expressed his annoyance with those who called for continuing the war between brothers, saying: “O people, you should be suspicious of your motives.”⁵⁷⁷ He explained to them that there was no option except dialogue and a peace deal, because the alternative was ongoing internal conflict, the consequences of which no one knew. He said: “Before this, whenever we went out to fight for a cause, we were certain of the result and how far we would go with it; we do not finish with one opponent but another opponent appears to us, and we do not know how to deal with him.”⁵⁷⁸ In these sound reports is a refutation of those who advocated fitnah and hated the Companions, who

fabricated false reports and poetry, which they then falsely attributed to the most prominent Companions and Tâbi'oon who took part in the Battle of Şiffeen. They tried to make them appear very eager for this war, so as to instil hatred in people's hearts; they did their utmost to perpetuate the turmoil.⁵⁷⁹

The call for referring to the Book of Allah for judgement without any assurance that the killers of 'Uthmân would be handed over to Mu'âwiyah, and the acceptance of this arbitration without any assurance that Mu'âwiyah would obey 'Ali and swear allegiance to him, are developments that were dictated by the consequences of Şiffeen. The battle had led to the killing of a large number of Muslims, and it created a common inclination towards the idea that stopping the fighting and bloodshed had become a necessity because it was important to preserve the Ummah's strength against its enemies. This was indicative of the vitality and awareness of the Ummah and its impact on decision-making.⁵⁸⁰

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) agreed to stop fighting at Şiffeen and he agreed to arbitration, which he regarded as a breakthrough; then he went back to Kufah.⁵⁸¹ He hoped that the arbitration would put an end to the dispute, unite the Ummah, strengthen the state and revitalise the conquest movement. A number of factors contributed to both sides reaching the idea of arbitration and accepting it:

- (a) It was a final attempt to stop the conflict and bloodshed. Previous attempts, both collective and individual, had begun after the Battle of the Camel but had not succeeded. The letters that had been exchanged between the two sides, expressing the view of each, did not lead to any resolution either. The last of these attempts was that made by Mu'âwiyah during the days when fighting had intensified. He wrote to 'Ali (عليه السلام), asking him to stop fighting; he said,

“I think that if you and we had known that the fighting would reach the level that it has reached, we would not have brought it upon ourselves. If we did not use our reason before, then it is not too late to refer to reason so that we may regret what has passed and put right what is left.”⁵⁸²

- (b) Many had been slain, and a great deal of blood had been shed. There was the fear that the Ummah might be wiped out; thus the call to stop the fighting was something that everyone was hoping for.
- (c) The people were exhausted from the fighting that had gone on for so long; it was as if the call for a peace deal and reconciliation came at the right time. The majority of ‘Ali’s army was inclined towards making peace, and they kept saying: “War has consumed us. We think that we cannot survive unless we make a peace deal.”⁵⁸³ This is contrary to the worthless view alleging that raising the muṣḥafs on the spears was a trick suggested by ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ. In fact, the idea of raising the muṣḥafs was not invented by ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ; the muṣḥaf had been raised during the Battle of the Camel when its carrier Ka‘b ibn Soor, the judge of Basrah, was struck by an arrow and killed.
- (d) This was a response to the verse that calls for peace. Allah says: ﴿[And] if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger﴾ (*Qur’an* 4: 59). This is supported by what ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib said when he was called to refer to the Book of Allah for judgement. He said: “Yes, I should be the first to accept that; between us and you is the Book of Allah.”⁵⁸⁴

2.2.5. The killing of 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir (ؓ) and its effect on the Muslims

The hadith of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), in which he said to 'Ammâr (ؓ): "You will be killed by the group that is in the wrong,"⁵⁸⁵ is a sound hadith that is proven from the Prophet (ﷺ). The killing of 'Ammâr (ؓ) had an impact on the outcome of the Battle of Şifteen. He was one of the prominent Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), who had followed him wherever he went. Khuzaymah ibn Thâbit was present at Şifteen, and he kept his sword sheathed. When he saw that 'Ammâr had been killed, he unsheathed his sword and fought the people of Syria, because he had heard this hadith.⁵⁸⁶ He continued fighting until he was killed.⁵⁸⁷

The killing of 'Ammâr had an impact on Mu'âwiyah's camp. Abu 'Abdur-Rahmân as-Sulami entered the camp of the Syrians and saw Mu'âwiyah, 'Amr ibn al-Âş, 'Amr's son Abdullah ibn 'Amr and Abu al-A'war as-Sulami drinking at the water source, which was the only water source available to both sides. They were talking about the killing of 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir, and Abdullah ibn 'Amr said to his father: "We have killed this man, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said concerning him: 'He will be killed by the group that is in the wrong.'" 'Amr said to Mu'âwiyah: "We have killed the man of whom the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said what he said." Mu'âwiyah said: "Be quiet! By Allah, you are unstable. Did we kill him? Those who brought him out are the ones who killed him."⁵⁸⁸

Mu'âwiyah's interpretation spread like wildfire among the Syrians. It is narrated in a sound report that 'Amr ibn Hâzim entered upon 'Amr ibn al-Âş and said: " 'Ammâr has been killed, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said of him: 'He will be killed by the group that is in the wrong.'" 'Amr ibn al-Âş got up in a panic and went to Mu'âwiyah, who said to him: "What is the matter with you?" He said: " 'Ammâr has been killed." Mu'âwiyah said: "So what?" 'Amr

said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say to him: 'You will be killed by the group that is in the wrong.'" Mu'âwiyah said to him: "You are unstable. Did we kill him? He was killed by 'Ali and his companions; they brought him out and threw him among our spears (or our swords)."⁵⁸⁹

According to another sound report, two men came to Mu'âwiyah arguing over the killing of 'Ammâr, with each of them saying: "I killed him." Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-Âṣ said: "Let one of you give up this claim to the other, for I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: 'He will be killed by the group that is in the wrong.'" Mu'âwiyah said: "Why are you with us then?" Abdullah said: "My father complained about me to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and he said: 'Obey your father as long as he is alive, and do not disobey him.' I am with you, but I am not fighting."⁵⁹⁰

From the above reports, we may note that the Companion with deep understanding, Abdullah ibn 'Amr (رضي الله عنه), was keen to speak the truth and offer sincere advice. He thought that Mu'âwiyah and his troops were the group that was in the wrong because they killed 'Ammâr, and he repeated this denunciation on different occasions. No doubt the killing of 'Ammâr (رضي الله عنه) had an effect on the Syrians because of this hadith, but Mu'âwiyah (رضي الله عنه) interpreted the hadith inappropriately. It is not right to say that those who killed 'Ammâr were those who brought him to the battlefield.⁵⁹¹ The killing of 'Ammâr also upset 'Amr ibn al-Âṣ; in fact, the martyrdom of 'Ammâr motivated him to try to bring an end to the battle.⁵⁹² 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) said: "Would that I had died twenty years before this day."⁵⁹³

In Bukhari, it is narrated that Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه) said: "We would carry one brick, and 'Ammâr would carry two bricks that time. The Prophet (ﷺ) saw him, and he wiped the dust from him and said: 'Poor 'Ammâr; he will be killed by the group that is in the wrong. He will call them to paradise, and they will call him to hell.' 'Ammâr

said: ‘I seek refuge with Allah from tribulations.’”⁵⁹⁴ Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr said: There are many reports that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “‘Ammâr will be killed by the group that is in the wrong.” This is an example of the Prophet’s giving news of the unseen. It is one of the signs of his prophethood, and it is one of the soundest hadiths.⁵⁹⁵ Adh-Dhahabi said, after quoting the hadith: “This was narrated from a number of the Companions, and thus reaches the level of being mutawâtir.”⁵⁹⁶

2.2.6. The scholars’ understanding of the hadith

- (a) Ibn Ḥajar said: “This hadith contains one of the signs of prophethood and reflects the clear virtue of ‘Ali and ‘Ammâr. It is also a refutation of the Nâṣibis who claimed that ‘Ali (عليه السلام) was not in the right with regard to his wars.”⁵⁹⁷ He also said: “The hadith says, ‘Ammâr will be killed by the group that is in the wrong,’ but ‘Ali was in the right in those battles, because it was the companions of Mu‘âwiyah who killed him.”⁵⁹⁸
- (b) An-Nawawi said: “On the day of Ṣiffeen, the Companions followed him (‘Ammâr) wherever he went, because they knew from this hadith that he would be with the group that was in the right.”⁵⁹⁹
- (c) Ibn Katheer said: “‘Ali and his companions were the closer of the two groups to the truth than the companions of Mu‘âwiyah, and the companions of Mu‘âwiyah were transgressing against them. It is proven in *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*, in the hadith of Shu‘bah from Abu Salamah from Abu Naḍrah that Abu Sa‘eed al-Khudri said: ‘One who is better than me — meaning Abu Qatâdah — told me that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to ‘Ammâr: “You will be killed by the group that is in the wrong.”’”⁶⁰⁰ He also said: “Here we see that ‘Ammâr ibn Yâsir (عليه السلام) was fighting alongside Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام), and he was killed by the people of Syria. This was the manifestation of

the hidden meaning of the words of the Prophet (ﷺ), who said that he would be killed by the group that was in the wrong. Thus it became clear that ‘Ali (ﷺ) was in the right, and Mu‘āwiyah was in the wrong. This was one of the signs of prophethood.”⁶⁰¹

- (d) Adh-Dhahabi said: “They were a group of the believers who transgressed against Imam ‘Ali (ﷺ), according to the statement of the Prophet (ﷺ) to ‘Ammâr: ‘You will be killed by the group that is in the wrong.’”⁶⁰²
- (e) Al-Qâdi Abu Bakr ibn al-‘Arabi said concerning the verse, ﴿And if two parties [or groups] among the believers...﴾ (Qur’an 49: 9): “This verse provides basic guidelines with regard to Muslims fighting Muslims and is the reference point with regard to fighting those who justify their transgression on the basis of misinterpretation. The Companions referred to it, and the prominent people of this Ummah also turned to it. This is what the Prophet (ﷺ) meant when he said: ‘ ‘Ammâr will be killed by the group that is in the wrong.’”⁶⁰³
- (f) Ibn Taymiyah said: “This is indicative of the soundness of ‘Ali’s caliphate — that it was obligatory to obey him, and that the one who called for obeying him was calling people to paradise and the one who called for fighting him was calling people to hell, even if he had some justification for that based on misinterpretation. It also indicates that it was not permissible to fight ‘Ali (ﷺ); based on that, the one who was fighting him was wrong, even if he thought that he had a reason, or was transgressing without any justification. This is the more correct of the two views of our companions; it is the ruling that those who fought ‘Ali (ﷺ) were wrong. This is also the view of the leading jurists, who based their research on that verse with regard to fighting rebels and transgressors who have their own justification.”⁶⁰⁴

He also said: "Although 'Ali was closer to the truth than his opponents, and although 'Ammâr was killed by the group that was in the wrong, as is mentioned in the text, we have to believe everything that came from Allah (ﷻ) and submit to the truth in totality; we should not follow whims and desires or speak without knowledge. Rather we should follow the path of knowledge and justice, which means following the Qur'an and Sunnah. As for those who adhere to part of the truth and not other parts, this is the cause of division and disputes."⁶⁰⁵

- (g) 'Abdul-'Azeez ibn Bâz said: "The Prophet (ﷺ) said in the hadith of 'Ammâr: "Ammâr will be killed by the group that is in the wrong," and he was killed by Mu'âwiyah and his companions in the Battle of Şiffeen. Therefore Mu'âwiyah and his companions were transgressors and were in the wrong, but their stance was based on their own reasoning, as they thought that they were doing right in seeking vengeance for the murder of 'Uthmân."⁶⁰⁶
- (h) Sa'eed Hâwa said: "After 'Ammâr — whom the texts confirmed would be killed by the group that was in the wrong — was killed, it became clear to those who had been hesitant that 'Ali (ﷺ) was in the right, and that fighting on his side was obligatory. Hence Ibn 'Umar expressed his regret for keeping out of it, and he felt sorry for that because he had abandoned his duty, which was to support the true leader against those who had rebelled against him without proper justification, as was stated by the jurists."⁶⁰⁷

2.2.7. Refuting the statement of Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ) that 'Ammâr was killed by those who had brought him to the battlefield⁶⁰⁸

The majority of the Companions and Tâbi'oon understood from the words of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to 'Ammâr, "You will be killed by the group that is in the wrong,"⁶⁰⁹ that what was meant

was the army of Mu‘âwiyah (رضي الله عنه), even though Mu‘âwiyah and his army may be excused for basing their decision on their own reasoning, as their aim was to do the right thing. But what they did was not the right thing, and ‘Ali’s group was closer to the truth than they were, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said.⁶¹⁰ Even though the scholars did not like Mu‘âwiyah’s interpretation — as we shall see below — they tried to find an excuse for him because he based his decision on his own reasoning.

With regard to the Prophet’s words, “He will call them to paradise, and they will call him to hell,” Ibn Hajar says:⁶¹¹ “If it is said that he was killed at Şiffeen when he was with ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه), and those who killed him were on Mu‘âwiyah’s side, and there was a group of the Companions with Mu‘âwiyah, then how can we say that that they were calling people to hell? The answer is that they thought that they were calling him to paradise, and they had their own reasoning for that, so there should be no blame on them for following what they thought best. What is meant by calling to paradise is calling to the means that lead to paradise, which is obeying the caliph. What ‘Ammâr was doing was calling them to obey ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه), who was the caliph who was to be obeyed at that time. They were calling him to something other than that, but they are to be excused because they had their own reasoning that they thought was correct.”⁶¹²

Al-Qurtubi said: “Imam Abu al-Ma‘âli said in *al-Irshâd*: “‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) became the true Imam or leader after he was appointed to the caliphate, and those who fought him were transgressing, but thinking positively of them requires us to think that their intention was good, even though they got it wrong.”⁶¹³ He also said: “‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) responded to Mu‘âwiyah’s argument by saying: ‘Then in that case, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) killed Ḥamzah when he took him out with him in the army.’ What ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) said was to draw attention to

the implications of such a statement. This was suggested by Imam al-Hâfidh Abu al-Khaṭṭâb ibn Diḥyah.”⁶¹⁴

Ibn Katheer said: “Mu‘âwiyah’s suggestion that ‘Ammâr ‘was killed by those who brought him to our swords’ is a very far-fetched misinterpretation, because if that were so, then the commander of the army would be the killer of those who were killed fighting for the sake of Allah (ﷻ), as he brought them to the swords of the enemy.”⁶¹⁵

Ibn Taymiyah said: “I do not know of anyone who held this view among the followers of the four Imams and others among Ahl as-Sunnah, although it is the opinion of a large number of the Marwânîs and those who agreed with them.”⁶¹⁶

Ibn al-Qayyim said, commenting on this misinterpretation: “Yes, the misinterpretation of the people of Syria is invalid, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said to ‘Ammâr: ‘You will be killed by the group that is in the wrong.’⁶¹⁷ They said: ‘We did not kill him; rather he was killed by those who brought him and make him stand in front of our spears.’ This is an invalid interpretation that is contrary to the wording and apparent meaning. The one who killed him is the one who did the action of killing him, not the one who had him on his side fighting for him.”⁶¹⁸

2.2.8. Who was the killer of ‘Ammâr ibn Yâsir?

Abu al-Ghâdiyah al-Juhani said, speaking of his killing of ‘Ammâr: “On the day of Şifteen, I marched to the area between the two armies, and I saw a man with his *‘awrah* ⁶¹⁹ showing. I stabbed him on his knees with a spear, and he fell. His helmet fell from his head, and I struck him on his head, then I realised that it was the head of ‘Ammâr. Thus ‘Ammâr was killed.” The narrator said: “Abu al-Ghâdiyah asked for water, and water was brought in a glass, but he

refused to drink from it; then water was brought in an (earthenware) vessel, and he drank. A man said: 'He is too pious to drink from a glass, but he is not too pious to kill 'Ammâr!'"⁶²⁰ 'Amr ibn al-Âs (رضي الله عنه) commented on this report: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: 'The one who kills 'Ammâr and the one who strips the booty from him will be in hell.'" ⁶²¹ Ibn Katheer said: "It is known that 'Ammâr was in 'Ali's army at the Battle of Şiffeen, and he was killed by the Syrian companions of Mu'âwiyah. The one who actually killed him was called Abu al-Ghâdiyah, who was an ordinary man, and it was said that he was a Companion."⁶²²

Ibn Ḥajar said: "Our view of the Companions who were involved in these wars is that they had their own reasons and justifications for doing so. The one who bases his action on valid reasoning but gets it wrong will have one reward, and if this is the case for ordinary people, then it is likely to be even more applicable to the Companions."⁶²³

Adh-Dhahabi said: "According to the Râfiḍis, Ibn Maġjam (the one who killed 'Ali) will be the most wretched of creation in the hereafter. For us Sunnis, he is one of those whom we hope will be in hell, but it is possible that Allah (ﷻ) may forgive him, contrary to the view of the Kharijites and Râfiḍis. He comes under the same ruling as those who killed 'Uthmân, az-Zubayr, Ṭalhah, Sa'eed ibn Jubayr, 'Ammâr, Khârijah and al-Ḥusayn; we disavow ourselves of them and hate them for the sake of Allah (ﷻ), but we leave their cases to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted."⁶²⁴

Al-Albâni made an intelligent comment on what Ibn Ḥajar said: "This is true, but applying it to every individual involved is problematic, because this contradicts what is mentioned in the hadith under the chapter heading, 'The one who kills 'Ammâr and the one who strips the booty from him will be in hell.'⁶²⁵ It is not possible to say that Abu al-Ghâdiyah, the killer of 'Ammâr, will be rewarded

because he killed him on the basis of some justification that he had in his mind, when the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said that the killer of ‘Ammâr would be in hell.⁶²⁶ The correct view is to say that the principle is sound unless there is definitive evidence to the contrary, in which case it is an exception, as is the case here. This way of understanding the issue is better than contradicting the sound hadith.”⁶²⁷

Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr mentioned the biography of Abu al-Ghâdiyah al-Juhani and said: “There was a difference of opinion concerning his name. It was said that it was Yasâr ibn Sabu‘, or Yasâr ibn Azhar, or Muslim. He lived in Syria, in Wâsiṭ, and is regarded as Syrian. He met the Prophet (ﷺ) when he was young, and it is narrated that he said: ‘I met the Prophet (ﷺ) when I was a teenager, tending my family’s sheep.’ He heard from the Prophet (ﷺ) the words, ‘Do not return to disbelief after I am gone, striking one another’s necks.’ He loved ‘Uthmân (رضي الله عنه), and he is the one who killed ‘Ammâr ibn Yâsir. He would describe how he killed ‘Ammâr if he was asked, and he would not mind. His story is astounding to scholars.”⁶²⁸

2.2.9. Noble conduct during battle

The Battle of Şiffeen was one of the most remarkable battles among Muslims. This conflict was so amazing that the reader cannot believe what he is reading, and he is shocked by the behaviour of people on both sides. Each of them stood in the midst of battle, with his sword unsheathed and firmly convinced of the cause for which he was fighting. It was not a battle in which people were driven by leaders who were pushing the troops into a fight of which they were not convinced. Rather it was a battle that was unique in its motives and in the way it was conducted, as well as the impact it left behind. The motives in the hearts of the participants were highlighted by some stories that have reached us in the historical sources.

They were like brothers, going together to the water source, all drinking from it and crowding one another, scooping up the water, but no man harmed another.⁶²⁹ When the fighting stopped, they behaved like brothers living together. One of the participants said: "When we had a break from fighting, we would go to one another's camp and speak to one another."⁶³⁰ They were members of one tribe, each with his own opinion, so people of one tribe on one side might fight bitterly with people of the same tribe on the other side,⁶³¹ each believing that he was in the right and prepared to be killed for his cause. Two men would fight until they were exhausted, then they would sit and rest and talk to one another a great deal, then they would get up and fight again.⁶³² They belonged to one religion, which was dearer to them than their own souls. When the time for prayer came, they would stop fighting so that they could pray.⁶³³ When 'Ammâr (ؓ) was killed, both sides offered the funeral prayer for him.⁶³⁴

An eyewitness who took part in the Battle of Şiffeen said: "Fighting broke out at Şiffeen, and we kept fighting for days; many of us were killed until even the horses were stabbed and killed. 'Ali (ؓ) sent word to 'Amr ibn al-Âş telling him that the number of slain had increased, and he should stop fighting so that each side could bury its dead. He agreed, and the people mixed with one another until they were like that," and he intertwined his fingers. "One of the companions of 'Ali would charge and be killed in the camp of Mu'âwiyah, then he would be brought out from it. The companions of 'Ali (ؓ) carried one of their dead before 'Amr, and when he saw him, he said: 'He strove hard and adhered strongly to the command of Allah (ﷻ).'"⁶³⁵

They would hasten to forbid evil, even in this situation. There was a group of pious people who were among the Syrian students of Abdullah ibn Mas'ood; they did not join either Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali or Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân. They said to Amir al-

Mu'mineen: "We will go out with you, but we will not join your camp. We will camp on our own until we see how things turn out between you and the people of Syria. If we see someone wanting that which is not permissible for him or transgressing, then we will be against him. 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: 'Welcome; this is a deep understanding of Islam and knowledge of the Sunnah. Whoever does not approve of this is a transgressor and betrayer.'"⁶³⁶

In fact, this attitude is based on conviction and views that were deeply rooted in their souls, and they fought on that basis.⁶³⁷

2.2.10. Treatment of captives

Good treatment of the captives and kindness towards them is something to be expected at Şiffeen, since we have discussed the noble conduct of both sides when fighting. Islam has outlined how captives are to be treated. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) encouraged kind treatment of captives and giving them the best available food. This was in the case of non-Muslims, so how about if the captives are Muslims? Undoubtedly honouring them and treating them kindly is emphasised even more.

However, a prisoner of war is regarded as a potential reinforcement for his group if he is released.⁶³⁸ Hence 'Ali (عليه السلام) instructed that they should be detained. If any prisoner swore allegiance to him, he was to be released; if he refused, his weapon and mount were to be confiscated or given to the one who had captured him, and he was asked to swear an oath that he would not fight. According to one report, he would give him four dirhams.⁶³⁹ 'Ali's aim in doing that is quite clear; it was to weaken the rebel side. A prisoner was brought to him on the day of Şiffeen, and he said: "Do not kill me in captivity." 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "I will not kill you in captivity, for I fear Allah, the Lord of the worlds." He let him go, then he said: "Is there any goodness in you to swear allegiance?"⁶⁴⁰

From these reports, it seems that the treatment of captives was as follows:

- ❖ They were honoured and treated kindly.
- ❖ They were given the option of swearing allegiance and obeying the caliph, in which case they would be released.
- ❖ If a prisoner refused to swear allegiance, his weapon would be confiscated and he would be asked to swear an oath that he would not go back to fighting; if he did so, then he would be released.
- ❖ If the prisoner insisted on fighting, then he would be kept in captivity, but he would not be killed.⁶⁴¹ On one occasion, fifteen prisoners were brought to ‘Ali (عليه السلام), and it seems that they were wounded. Those who died were washed and shrouded, and the funeral prayer was offered for them.⁶⁴² Muhibb ad-Deen al-Khaṭeeb said, commenting on this battle: “Nevertheless, this exemplary battle was the first humane war in history, in which both sides adhered to the principles of virtue that the wise men of the West wish were implemented in their wars, even in the twenty-first century. Many of the principles of war in Islam would not have been known and written down were it not for this battle taking place, and Allah (ﷻ) has wisdom in all affairs.” Ibn al-‘Adeem said: “I say: All of that shows the rulings and guidelines on fighting the transgressing group (rebels). Hence Abu Ḥaneefah said: ‘Were it not for ‘Ali’s treatment of them, no one would know how to deal with Muslims (who rebel against authority).’”⁶⁴³

2.2.11. The number of people slain

The scholars have conflicting views concerning the number of people slain at Şiffeen. Ibn Abi Khaythamah said that it was seventy

thousand: twenty-five thousand of the people of Iraq and forty-five thousand of the people of Syria.⁶⁴⁴ Ibn al-Qayyim said that it was seventy thousand or more.⁶⁴⁵ Undoubtedly these numbers are not accurate; they are wildly inflated.

The real fighting and all-out battle lasted for three days, during which the fighting was stopped at night except for the Friday evening, so the total period of fighting was approximately thirty hours.⁶⁴⁶ No matter how violent the fighting was, it could not have been more intense than Qâdisiyyah, where the number of martyrs was 8,500.⁶⁴⁷ Logically, it is difficult to accept the reports that mention these huge figures.

2.2.12. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Alī's inspection of the dead and praying for mercy for them

After the end of each round of the battle, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Alī (ﷺ) would check on the dead. An eyewitness said: "I saw 'Alī on the Prophet's mule ash-Shahba', going around among the slain."⁶⁴⁸

While he was checking on the slain, accompanied by al-Ashtar, he passed by the body of a man who had been one of the well-known judges and worshippers in Syria. Al-Ashtar (or according to another report, 'Adiyy ibn Ḥâtim) said: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, is Ḥâbis⁶⁴⁹ with them? I thought he was a good believer and had strong faith." 'Alī (ﷺ) said: "He is still a good believer today." Perhaps this man who had been killed was the judge who came to 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb and said: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, I had a dream that alarmed me." He said: "What was it?" He said: "I saw the sun and moon fighting, and the stars were divided between them, half and half." He said: "Which of them were you with?" He said: "With the moon against the sun." 'Umar said: "Allah says: ﴿And We have appointed the night and the day as two *Ayât* [signs etc.]. Then, We

have obliterated the sign of the night [with darkness] while We have made the sign of the day illuminating» (*Qur'an* 17: 12). Depart, for by Allah you will never do any work for me.” The narrator said: “I heard that he was killed fighting for Mu‘âwiyah at Şiffeen.”⁶⁵⁰

‘Ali (عليه السلام) stood over the slain of his party and the slain of Mu‘âwiyah’s party and said: “May Allah forgive you, may Allah forgive you,” for both parties.⁶⁵¹ It was narrated that Yazeed ibn al-Aşamm said: “When the peace deal was agreed between ‘Ali and Mu‘âwiyah, ‘Ali went out and walked among the slain of his party and said: ‘They are in paradise.’ Then he went to the slain of Mu‘âwiyah’s party and said: ‘They are in paradise, then judgement will be passed between me and Mu‘âwiyah.’”⁶⁵² He used to say of them that they were believers.⁶⁵³ What ‘Ali (عليه السلام) said about the people who were killed at Şiffeen was not much different from what he said about the people who were killed at the Battle of the Camel.⁶⁵⁴

2.2.13. Attitude of Mu‘âwiyah towards the Byzantine ruler

The ruler of Byzantium tried to take advantage of the difference of opinion that occurred between Amir al-Mu‘mineen ‘Ali and Mu‘âwiyah (may Allah be pleased with them both) by acquiring some of the lands that were under Mu‘âwiyah’s control. Ibn Katheer said: “The ruler of Byzantium got his hopes up of attacking Mu‘âwiyah, after Mu‘âwiyah had scared and humiliated him and had defeated him and his troops. When the ruler of Byzantium saw that Mu‘âwiyah was preoccupied with fighting ‘Ali (عليه السلام), he marched to some Muslim territory with a large number of troops, hoping to gain control of it. Mu‘âwiyah wrote to him, saying: ‘By Allah, if you do not give up and go back to your own country, O cursed one, I shall reconcile with my cousin against you, and I shall drive you from all

of your land and leave you no room on earth, vast as it is.' At that point, the ruler of Byzantium got scared and refrained from fighting, and he sent a message asking for a truce."⁶⁵⁵ This is indicative of Mu'āwiyah's integrity and his love of Islam.

2.2.14. A false story about 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ at Šifteen

Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim al-Kufi said: "The people of Iraq charged and engaged in fighting with the Syrians, and they fought hard. 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ charged but was intercepted by 'Ali." The story goes on to say: "Then 'Ali stabbed 'Amr and threw him down, and 'Amr tried to protect himself with his legs, and his 'awrah (the part of a person's body that must be screened from public view) became uncovered. 'Ali turned his face away from him and looked away. The people said: 'The man has gotten away, O Amir al-Mu'mineen.' He said: 'Do you know who he is?' They said: 'No.' He said: 'He is 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ. He showed me his 'awrah, so I turned my face away.'"⁶⁵⁶ This story was also mentioned by Ibn al-Kalbi, as stated by as-Suhayli in *ar-Rawḍ al-Anif*. 'Ali (ﷺ) supposedly said: "He protected himself by showing his 'awrah and reminded me of the ties of kinship." Something similar is narrated from 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ (رضي الله عنه) with regard to the day of Šifteen.⁶⁵⁷

The response to this fabrication and blatant lie is as follows: the narrator of the first report, Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim al-Kufi, the author of the book *Waq'at Šifteen*, was an extreme Shia, so it comes as no surprise that he would tell lies and fabricate stories about the Companions. Adh-Dhahābi said concerning him in *al-Mizān*: "Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim al-Kufi is an extreme Rāfiḍi, and they rejected him." Al-'Aqeeli said concerning him: "He is a Shia, and his hadīths contain a lot of flaws and mistakes." Abu Khaythamah said: "He was a liar."⁶⁵⁸ Ibn Ḥajar said concerning him: "Al-'Ajli said: 'He was an

extreme Râfiḍi and is not trustworthy at all.”⁶⁵⁹ Hishâm ibn Muhammad ibn al-Sâ’ib al-Kalbi said: “They were agreed that he was an extreme Shia.” Imam Aḥmad said: “Who narrates from him? I do not think that anyone narrates from him.” Ad-Dâraquṭni said: “He is rejected.”⁶⁶⁰ Via these two Râfiḍis, this story became widely known, and the Shia historians who came after them welcomed it warmly, as did some of the Sunnis who were deceived by the lies of the Râfiḍis.⁶⁶¹

This story may be regarded as an example of the lies and fabrications of the Râfiḍi Shia against the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). The enemies of the Companions among the Râfiḍi historians fabricated bad qualities that they ascribed to the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and they wrote them in the form of stories and poetry that could be spread easily among the Muslims, aiming to undermine the status of the righteous Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). Sunni Muslims were not paying attention; they started at a late stage to examine and verify the reports of Islamic history, after those poems and stories had spread everywhere and become widely known among the storytellers. By then, many of them had unfortunately come to be accepted, even among Sunni historians.⁶⁶²

2.2.15. Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ) visits a graveyard on his way back from Şiffeen

After Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ) had finished at Şiffeen, he passed by a graveyard and said: “Peace be upon you, people of the desolate and isolated abode, believing men and women, Muslim men and women. You have gone before us, and we are following in your footsteps and will join you soon. O Allah, forgive us and them, and bestow Your mercy on us and them. Praise be to Allah Who has made the earth a receptacle for the living and the dead. Praise be to

Allah Who has created you, and on it He will gather you, and from it He will raise you. Glad tidings to the one who remembers the Resurrection, prepares himself for the Reckoning and is content with the little that he has been given.”⁶⁶³

2.2.16. Insistence of ‘Uthmân’s murderers that the battle should continue

The murderers of ‘Uthmân (ؓ) were very keen that the battle between the two sides should continue until the people were wiped out and the strength of both sides was lessened, so that they would be safe from retaliation and punishment. They panicked when they saw the people of Syria raising up the muṣḥafs and ‘Ali (ؓ) responding to their request by ordering that the fighting and bloodshed be stopped. They tried to make ‘Ali change his mind, but the battle stopped; as a result, they felt helpless and had no alternative but to rebel against ‘Ali (ؓ). So they fabricated the idea that the ruling belongs to Allah (and not to people), and they kept away from both sides.

What is strange is that the historians did not pay as much attention to what these people did at this stage as they did with regard to the Battle of the Camel, even though they were present in ‘Ali’s army, or to the reason why these negotiations that went on for many months failed, or the role that the murderers of ‘Uthmân (ؓ) may have played in the Battle of Ṣiffeen to cause the failure of all attempts at reconciliation between the two sides — because reconciliation between ‘Ali and Mu‘âwiyah would have been like reaching a deal to bring them to justice and execute them. It does not make sense to suggest that they strove hard during the Battle of the Camel to make the fighting continue, but did not do the same thing at Ṣiffeen.⁶⁶⁴

2.2.17. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) forbids impugning Mu'âwiyah and cursing the people of Syria

It was narrated that when 'Ali (عليه السلام) heard that two of his companions were openly reviling Mu'âwiyah and cursing the people of Syria, he sent word to them telling them to stop what they were doing. They came to him and said: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, are we not in the right and they in the wrong?" He said: "Yes indeed, by the Lord of the Ka'bah." They said: "Then why are you stopping us from reviling and cursing them?" He said: "I do not want you to be people who curse; rather you should say: 'O Allah, protect our blood and theirs, reconcile between us and them. Save them from their misguidance, so that truth will become clear to those who are unaware of it and those who got carried away in misguidance will give up their stubborn ways.'"⁶⁶⁵

With regard to what is said about 'Ali cursing Mu'âwiyah and his companions in his supplications during the prayer, and Mu'âwiyah cursing 'Ali, Ibn 'Abbâs, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn when he said supplications during the prayer, this is not true, because the Companions were more eager than others to adhere to the commands of the Lawgiver, which forbid reviling or cursing a Muslim.⁶⁶⁶ It was narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Whoever curses a believer, it is as if he killed him."⁶⁶⁷ He (ﷺ) also said: "The believer is not given to slandering and cursing."⁶⁶⁸ And he (ﷺ) said: "Those who are given to cursing cannot be intercessors or witnesses on the Day of Resurrection."⁶⁶⁹ Moreover, the report in which it is narrated that Amir al-Mu'mineen cursed Mu'âwiyah and his companions in his supplications, and that Mu'âwiyah cursed Amir al-Mu'mineen, Ibn 'Abbâs, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, is not proven in terms of its chain of transmission. It includes Abu Makhnaf Loot ibn Yahya, the extreme Râfiḍi, so these reports are not to be trusted. Furthermore, in

the soundest books of the Shia, there is a prohibition on reviling the Companions, and ‘Ali (ﷺ) denounced those who reviled Mu‘āwiyah and the people with him, saying: “I do not want you to be people who revile others; if you describe their actions and attitudes, that is better to say and is more helpful in leaving no excuse for them. Instead of reviling them, you can say: ‘O Allah, protect our blood and theirs from being shed and reconcile between us and them.’”⁶⁷⁰ This reviling and denouncing them as disbelievers was not part of ‘Ali’s practice, according to the soundest Shia books.⁶⁷¹

3. Arbitration

Both sides agreed to refer to arbitration after the end of the battle of Şiffeen. Each side was to appoint a man as an arbitrator to represent it, then the two arbitrators were to reach an agreement that was in the best interests of the Muslims. Mu‘āwiyah appointed ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ, and ‘Ali appointed Abu Moosa al-Ash‘ari (may Allah be pleased with them all), and a document was written concerning that. The place where the two arbitrators were to meet was Doomat al-Jandal, in the month of Ramadan 37 AH. Some of ‘Ali’s army thought that this action was a sin that implied disbelief and that he should repent to Allah; they rebelled against him and became known as the Kharijites (rebels). ‘Ali (ﷺ) sent Ibn ‘Abbās (ﷺ) to debate with them, and then ‘Ali (ﷺ) himself debated with them. A group of them rejoined him, but others refused, and there were battles between them and ‘Ali (ﷺ), which weakened and exhausted his forces. They kept causing trouble until they assassinated him; we will discuss this in detail below.

The issue of arbitration is regarded as one of the most serious issues in the history of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Many writers lost their way when discussing it and wrote about it in a confused manner

in their books. They relied on weak and fabricated reports that distorted the image of the noble Companions, especially Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari. He was described as a feeble-minded and weak character who was easily deceived with words, and as a man who was so heedless that he was tricked by 'Amr ibn al-Âṣ with regard to the matter of arbitration. They described 'Amr ibn al-Âṣ (رضي الله عنه) as a crafty and deceitful man. These writers, who had ulterior motives and a grudge against Islam, tried to ascribe to these two great men many blameworthy characteristics, even though these were the two men whom the Muslims chose to make a decision regarding a serious dispute that had led to the killing of many Muslims. Many historians, writers and researchers treated these reports, which were fabricated by the opponents of the Companions, as if they were historical facts. People accepted them without examining them, as if they were sound and as if there was no doubt concerning them. It may be because of the exciting, narrative style in which they were written, or because the claims of trickery and deceit made people interested in it and made the historians keen to write it down. We are speaking about the details of what happened, not the issue of arbitration itself, because there is no doubt that it took place.⁶⁷²

I decided to begin this discussion with a look at the biography of the two great Companions, Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari and 'Amr ibn al-Âṣ (may Allah be pleased with them both).

3.1. Biography of Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari

His full name was Abdullah ibn Qays ibn Haḍḍâr ibn Ḥarb. He was the great leader and Companion of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari at-Tameemi, the prominent scholar and reciter of Qur'an.⁶⁷³ Abu Moosa became Muslim during the early days in Makkah. Ibn Sa'd said: "He came to Makkah and formed an alliance with Sa'eed ibn al-Âṣ. He became Muslim early on and migrated to

Abyssinia.”⁶⁷⁴ Some reports say that he went back to his people to call them to Allah. Ibn Ḥajar reconciled the reports about his becoming Muslim, saying: “There is some confusion about the reports that said that Abu Moosa migrated to Abyssinia, because what is mentioned in the sound report is that Abu Moosa left his land with a group of people, heading towards the Prophet (ﷺ) in Khaybar. It is possible to reconcile these reports by noting that Abu Moosa migrated first to Makkah, where he became Muslim, and the Prophet (ﷺ) sent him with those whom he sent to Abyssinia. Abu Moosa went to his people’s land, which was opposite Abyssinia on the eastern side. When he realised that the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions had settled in Madinah, he headed for Madinah, along with those of his people who had become Muslim, but the ship that was carrying them ended up in Abyssinia because the wind blew it off course. That is possible and thus the reports may be reconciled and should be adopted.”⁶⁷⁵

3.1.1. The badge of honour that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) pinned to the chest of Abu Moosa

3.1.1.a. “You migrated twice: your migration to Abyssinia and your migration to me”

It was narrated that Abu Moosa said: “We set out from Yemen with more than fifty of my people. We were three brothers: myself, Abu Ruhm and Abu ‘Āmir. But our ship took us to Abyssinia, where Ja‘far and his companions were, and we came when Khaybar was conquered. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘You migrated twice: your migration to Abyssinia and your migration to me.’”⁶⁷⁶

It was also narrated that Anas said: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘Tomorrow people will come to you whose hearts are more receptive to Islam than yours.’ The Ash‘aris came, and when they drew close they began to recite poetry: ‘Tomorrow we will meet all

our loved ones, Muhammad and his party.' When they arrived, they shook hands; they were the first ones to start the tradition of shaking hands."⁶⁷⁷

3.1.1.b. "They are your people, O Abu Moosa"

It was narrated that 'Iyâd al-Ash'ari said: "When the verse, ﴿Allah will bring a people whom He will love and they will love Him﴾ (*Qur'an* 5: 54) was revealed, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'They are your people, O Abu Moosa,' and he pointed to him."⁶⁷⁸

3.1.1.c. "O Allah, forgive Abdullah ibn Qays for his sins, and admit him to a gate of great honour on the Day of Resurrection"

It was narrated that Abu Moosa said: "When the Prophet (ﷺ) had finished with Ḥunayn, he sent Abu 'Âmir al-Ash'ari at the head of an army to Awṭâs, where he met Durayd ibn as-Sammah. Durayd was killed, and Allah caused his companions to be defeated. Abu 'Âmir was struck in the knee with an arrow, and it was stuck in his knee. I came to him and said: 'O uncle, who struck you?' Abu 'Âmir pointed him out, and I went and caught up with him, but he ran away when he saw me. I started saying: 'Don't you feel ashamed? Aren't you an Arab? Won't you stand firm?' So he stopped, and we met and traded blows; then I killed him. I went back to Abu 'Âmir and said: 'Allah has killed your opponent.' He said: 'Pull this arrow out.' I pulled it out, and water came out of the wound. He said: 'O son of my brother, go to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and convey greetings of salâm to him from me, and say to him: "Abu 'Âmir says to you: 'Pray for forgiveness for me.'"' Abu 'Âmir appointed me in charge of the people, and it was not long before he died. When we returned, I told the Prophet (ﷺ) what had happened. He made wuḍoo', then he raised his hands until I could see the whiteness of his armpits, and he said: 'O Allah, forgive Abu 'Âmir'. Then he said: 'O Allah, on the Day of

Resurrection make him above many of Your creation.' I said: 'And me, O Messenger of Allah?' He said: 'O Allah, forgive Abdullah ibn Qays for his sins, and admit him to a gate of great honour⁶⁷⁹ on the Day of Resurrection.'"⁶⁸⁰

3.1.1.d. "This one has rejected glad tidings; you two should accept it"

It was narrated that Abu Moosa said: "I was with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in al-Ji'rânah⁶⁸¹ when a Bedouin came and said: 'Will you fulfil your promise to me, O Muhammad?' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to him: 'Be of good cheer.' The Bedouin said to him: 'How often you say to me, "Be of good cheer."' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) turned to Bilâl and me, saying: 'This one has rejected glad tidings; you two should accept it.' They said: 'We accept it, O Messenger of Allah.' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) called for a vessel of water. He washed his hands and face in it and rinsed his mouth, then he said: 'Drink from it and pour some on your heads and chests.' We did that, and Umm Salamah called out to us from behind the curtain: 'Leave some of that which is in your vessel for your mother.' So we left some of it for her."⁶⁸²

3.1.1.e. "He has been given a beautiful voice like that of Dâwood"

It was narrated from Abdullah ibn Buraydah that his father said: "I came out of the mosque one night and saw the Prophet (ﷺ) standing at the door of the mosque, and a man was praying. He said to me: 'O Buraydah, do you think he is showing off?' I said: 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' He said: 'Rather he is a devoted believer. He has been given a beautiful voice like that of Dâwood.' I went to him and saw that he was Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari, and I told him."⁶⁸³

3.1.1.f. "O Abdullah ibn Qays, shall I not tell you of one of the treasures of paradise?"

It was narrated that Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari said: "We were with the Prophet (ﷺ) on a journey, and the people were climbing a hill. Every time a man reached the top of a hill, he would say: '*Lâ ilâha illâ Allâh wa Allâhu Akbar* (There is none worthy of worship other than Allah and Allah is the Greatest)' — and I think he said it at the top of his voice. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was on his mule, climbing up the mountain. He said: 'O people, you are not calling upon One Who is deaf or absent.' Then he said: 'O Abdullah ibn Qays — or O Abu Moosa — shall I not tell you of one of the treasures of paradise?' I said: 'Yes, O Messenger of Allah.' He said: 'Say: *Lâ ḥawla wa lâ quwwata illâ Billâh* (There is no might and no power except with Allah).'"⁶⁸⁴

3.1.1.g. "Be easygoing, and do not be harsh. Give glad tidings, and do not put people off"

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) appointed Abu Moosa in charge of Zubayd and 'Aden.⁶⁸⁵ It was narrated from Abu Moosa that when the Prophet (ﷺ) sent him to Yemen with Mu'âdh, he advised them: "Be easygoing, and do not be harsh. Give glad tidings, and do not put people off." Abu Moosa said to him: "In our land, there is a drink called *at-tabagh* that is made from honey, and there is another drink called *al-mizr* that is made from barley." The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Every intoxicant is ḥarâm." Then both of them went on their way, and later Mu'âdh asked Abu Moosa: "How do you recite the Qur'an?" Abu Moosa replied: "I recite it in my prayer and when riding my mount, standing and sitting, a little at a time." Mu'âdh said: "I sleep then I get up, so I hope for reward from Allah when I sleep as I seek reward from Him for my night prayer."⁶⁸⁶

3.1.2. The status of Abu Moosa (رضي الله عنه) in the view of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (رضي الله عنه)

Abu Moosa was one of the pillars of the Muslim state at the time of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه). He was a commander of the army during the conquest of Qum⁶⁸⁷ and Qâthân and at the Battle of Tastar.⁶⁸⁸ He was also one of the founders of the Basri school at the time of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه); he went to Basra and taught there.⁶⁸⁹ He was regarded as one of the most knowledgeable of the Companions. He was influenced by 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (رضي الله عنه), and there was correspondence between them; this is mentioned in the discussion of the institutions of governors and judges.

Abu Moosa (رضي الله عنه) was famous for his knowledge, worship, piety, modesty, dignity, lack of interest in worldly gains and steadfastness in adhering to Islam. He is regarded as one of the senior scholars, jurists and muftis among the Companions. He was mentioned by adh-Dhahabi in *Tadhkirat al-Huffadh* as being at the highest level of the Companions. He was knowledgeable and acted upon his knowledge. He was a righteous man who constantly recited the Book of Allah, and he had the most beautiful voice when reciting Qur'an. He was the most knowledgeable of the people of Basra in Qur'an and in deep understanding of Islam, and he conveyed that excellent and blessed knowledge.

He spent a great deal of time with the Prophet (ﷺ), and he learned from senior Companions such as 'Umar, 'Ali, Ubayy ibn Ka'b and Abdullah ibn Mas'ood (may Allah be pleased with them all). Abu Moosa was influenced in particular by 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb, who gave him a great deal of advice and sent letters to him during his lengthy governorship of Basra. Abu Moosa used to refer to 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) concerning all cases that came to him, to the extent that ash-Shu'bi regarded him as one of the leading and most famous judges of the Ummah. He said: "The judges of the Ummah are

‘Umar, ‘Ali, Zayd ibn Thâbit and Abu Moosa.”⁶⁹⁰ When Abu Moosa came to Madinah, he was keen to attend ‘Umar’s gatherings and sometimes spent a long time with him. It was narrated from Abu Bakr ibn ‘Umar that Abu Moosa (ؓ) came to ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb after the evening prayer, and ‘Umar (ؓ) said to him: “What brings you here?” He said: “I have come to talk to you.” He said: “At this hour?” He said: “It is to discuss a matter of knowledge.” So ‘Umar (ؓ) sat down, and they talked for a long time, then Abu Moosa said: “The prayer, O Amir al-Mu’mineen.” ‘Umar (ؓ) said: “We are in a state of prayer.”⁶⁹¹

Just as Abu Moosa was keen to seek knowledge, he was also enthusiastic about spreading that knowledge and teaching people. In his sermons, he would teach the people and encourage them to learn. It was narrated that Abu al-Muhallab said: “I heard Abu Moosa on his minbar saying: ‘Whoever is granted knowledge by Allah, let him teach it, but he should not speak of that of which he has no knowledge, lest he become one of those who make things up and thus go beyond the pale of Islam.’”⁶⁹²

Abu Moosa made the mosque of Basra a centre for his academic activity, and he allocated a large portion of his time to academic gatherings. He did not stop there, though; he did not let any opportunity pass without making the most of it to teach and educate the people. After he said the salâm at the end of the prayer, he would turn to face the people, teaching them and checking on their recitation of the noble Qur’an. Ibn Shawdhab said: “When Abu Moosa had prayed the dawn prayer, he would turn to face the rows of people and ask them to recite, one by one.”⁶⁹³ Abu Moosa was well known among the Companions for his beautiful voice and recitation. The people would gather around him when they heard him reading. When Abu Moosa sat with him, ‘Umar (ؓ) would ask him to recite for him whatever he could of Qur’an.⁶⁹⁴

Allah (ﷻ) enabled him to teach the Muslims, and he did all he could to teach Qur'an and spread it among the people in every land he stayed in. The people would gather around him to hear his beautiful voice and recitation. Seekers of knowledge crowded around him in the mosque of Basra, and he divided them into groups arranged in circles. He would go around reciting to them, listening to them and correcting their recitation.⁶⁹⁵ The noble Qur'an was his main preoccupation; he devoted most of his time to it, whether or not he was not travelling. It was narrated that Anas ibn Mâlik said: "Al-Ash'ari sent me to 'Umar (رضي الله عنه), and 'Umar said: 'How was al-Ash'ari when you left him?' I said: 'I left him teaching people the Qur'an.' He said: 'He is wise and smart,'⁶⁹⁶ but do not tell him (that I said that).'"⁶⁹⁷

Even when he went out for jihad, he would teach and educate others. It was narrated that Ḥaṭṭâb ibn Abdullah ar-Riqâshi said: "We were with Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari (رضي الله عنه) in an army on the banks of the Tigris when the time of prayer came, so his caller gave the call for the noon prayer. The people went to perform wuḍoo', and he made wuḍoo'. He led them in prayer, and then they sat in a circle. When the time came for the afternoon prayer, his caller gave the call for that prayer, and the people got up to do wuḍoo' again. His caller said: 'No wuḍoo' is required except for the one who broke his wuḍoo'.'"

His academic efforts bore fruit, and he had the joy of seeing large numbers of people around him who had memorised the noble Qur'an and had become scholars. In Basra alone, their number was more than three hundred. When 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (رضي الله عنه) asked his employees to send him the names of those who had memorised the Qur'an, so that he could honour them and increase their stipends, Abu Moosa wrote to him, telling him that the number of people with him who had learned the Qur'an by heart was three hundred plus.⁶⁹⁸

Abu Moosa (ﷺ) also paid attention to teaching and narrating the Sunnah. A number of Companions and senior Tâbi'oon narrated from him. Adh-Dhahabi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Buraydah ibn al-Ḥuşayb, Abu Umâmah al-Bâhili, Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri, Anas ibn Mâlik, Ṭâriq ibn Shihâb, Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyab, al-Aswad ibn Yazeed, Abu Wâ'il Shaqeeq ibn Salamah, Abu 'Uthmân an-Nahdi and others narrated from him."⁶⁹⁹ He (ﷺ) adhered strongly to the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ); this is indicated by his conduct during his life and by what he instructed his children to do after he died. Despite his great enthusiasm for the Sunnah, he did not narrate a large number of hadiths, and this was true of the senior Companions; they were very cautious in narrating from the Prophet (ﷺ).

One of the people who was close to Abu Moosa in Basra was Anas ibn Mâlik, who is regarded as one of his inner circle. It was narrated from Thâbit that Anas said: "We were with Abu Moosa on a journey, and the people were talking and mentioning worldly matters. Abu Moosa said: 'O Anas, these people are talking too much. Come, let us remember our Lord for a while.' Then he said: 'What slowed the people down (in pursuing matters of the hereafter)?' I said: 'Worldly matters, Satan and whims and desires.' He said: 'No, it is the fact that this world is close, and they can see it, while the hereafter is hidden from them. By Allah, if they could see it with their own eyes, they would not drift or turn away from it.'"⁷⁰⁰

Since Abu Moosa trusted Anas, he appointed him to be his envoy to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Umar (ﷺ). Anas said: "Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari sent me from Basra to 'Umar, who asked me about the people's situation." After the battle of Tastar, Abu Moosa sent him to 'Umar with the prisoners and booty, and he took its Persian commander Hormozan to 'Umar.⁷⁰¹

3.1.3. Governorship of Abu Moosa at the time of 'Umar and 'Uthmān (may Allah be pleased with them)

Abu Moosa is rightfully regarded as the most famous of the governors of Basra during the time of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (ؓ). During the time of Abu Moosa, many places in Persia were conquered; he used to go out for jihad himself, and he would send the commanders in different directions from Basra. The period of his governorship was filled with jihad, and the people of Basra managed to conquer a number of important places, including al-Ahwāz and its environs. Abu Moosa cooperated with neighbouring governors in many wars and conquests. He put a great deal of effort into organising the conquered regions, appointing governors over them, securing them and organising their affairs.

There was a great deal of correspondence between Abu Moosa and 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (ؓ) concerning different issues, and 'Umar gave him valuable advice about how he should deal with the people when he received them in his councils, and about fearing Allah (ﷻ) and trying to help the people. 'Umar (ؓ) said: "The most blessed of people is the one whose subjects are blessed because of him, and the most wretched of people is the one whose subjects are wretched because of him. Beware of indulging in the people's wealth, lest the people working for you also indulge; then your example would be like that of the animal that looks at the green land and starts grazing in order to grow fat, but its death will be caused by its fatness."⁷⁰² There are a number of letters between 'Umar and Abu Moosa relating to various administrative and executive issues that Abu Moosa was taking care of with the help of instructions from 'Umar. Most of this correspondence has been compiled by Muhammad Ḥameedullah in his valuable book on political documents.⁷⁰³

The period of Abu Moosa's governorship in Basra is regarded as one of its best periods, to the extent that one of the descendants of the people of Basra, namely al-Hasan al-Basri (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "No rider ever came and brought more blessing to its people than Abu Moosa."⁷⁰⁴ That was because Abu Moosa (ؓ), in addition to being a governor, was the best teacher of its people, as he taught them the Qur'an and various matters of religion.⁷⁰⁵

A number of cities in Persia were conquered during the caliphate of 'Umar ibn al-Khattâb (ؓ). They were put under the administration of Basra and run by its governor, who appointed workers to be in charge of them; these employees were under his authority and reported to him directly. Thus Abu Moosa is regarded as one of the greatest governors of 'Umar (ؓ), and the correspondence between 'Umar and Abu Moosa is regarded as one of the most important sources for shedding light on Umar's conduct with his governors and explaining the way he dealt with them.⁷⁰⁶ 'Umar (ؓ), in his instructions to the caliphs who would come after him, recommended that no governor whom he had appointed should be left in his post for more than a year except for Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari, whom he said should be left in his post for four years.⁷⁰⁷

Abu Moosa (ؓ) was also appointed as the judge during the time of 'Umar (ؓ), and 'Umar wrote him a letter about judiciary matters. The guidance in this letter may benefit any judge, or indeed any administrator, in any time or place.⁷⁰⁸ Ibn al-Qayyim said concerning it: "This is an important letter, which the scholars welcomed and used as a basis for rulings on passing judgement and giving testimony. Muftis are in urgent need of studying it and learning what is in it."⁷⁰⁹

Abu Moosa was also appointed as a governor at the time of 'Uthmân (ؓ), who asked him to be the judge in Basra. When

'Uthmân (ؓ) was killed, Abu Moosa was the governor of Kufah, and when 'Ali (ؓ) was appointed as caliph, Abu Moosa accepted the oath of allegiance for him from the people of Kufah, because he had been its governor for 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân (ؓ).

When 'Ali (ؓ) was in Dhu Qâr and urged the people of Kufah to lend him their support, Abu Moosa saw the beginning of fitnah and division among the Muslims. He advised the people of Kufah to stay in their houses and keep away from this issue, because it was fitnah in which one who was sitting would be better than one who was standing, and one who was standing would be better than one who was walking. Because of his difference of opinion with the caliph, he was dismissed from his position as governor of Kufah.⁷¹⁰

From the time he became a Muslim, Abu Moosa (ؓ) spent his life spreading Islam and teaching knowledge to the people, especially the Qur'an, as he was famous for his recitation; taking part in jihad for the sake of Allah (ﷻ) and encouraging others to do so; judging disputes between people; spreading justice; and running the affairs of the province by means of the judiciary and administration. There is no doubt that these tasks are difficult and require unique skills and characteristics of knowledge, understanding, quick wit, cleverness, piety and asceticism. Abu Moosa had an abundant share of these characteristics. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and then the four Rightly Guided Caliphs after him, relied on Abu Moosa.⁷¹¹ Can it be imagined that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), then the caliphs who succeeded him, relied on a man who could be tricked in such a way as is narrated in the story of arbitration?⁷¹²

The fact that Abu Moosa (ؓ) was chosen by 'Ali (ؓ) and his companions to be an arbitrator on behalf of the people of Iraq is in complete harmony with the sequence of events, because the next stage was to be the stage of reconciliation and uniting the Muslims. Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari was one of those who had called for

reconciliation and peace; at the same time, he was loved and trusted by the tribes of Iraq. The earlier sources state that 'Ali is the one who chose Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari. Khaleefah says in his *Târeekh*: "In that year (37 AH) the two arbitrators met: Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari on behalf of 'Ali and 'Amr ibn al-Âş on behalf of Mu'âwiyah."⁷¹³ Ibn Sa'd said: "The people got fed up with war and were calling for peace. They appointed two arbitrators. 'Ali appointed Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari, and Mu'âwiyah appointed 'Amr ibn al-Âş."⁷¹⁴

Hence we can say that the reports about the role attributed to the pious, devoted worshippers at Şiffeen — of being responsible for stopping the fighting and resorting to arbitration, and imposing Abu Moosa as an arbitrator — are no more than historical lies that were fabricated by the Shia storytellers, who never stopped fabricating and distorting the history of Islam by means of false reports. It annoyed them that 'Ali (ﷺ) seemed to be someone who showed compassion to Mu'âwiyah and the people of Syria and wanted to reconcile with their traditional enemies. On the other hand, these Shia considered their enemies the Kharijites to be responsible, but they made the Kharijites' actions contradict themselves; the Kharijites are the ones who allegedly forced 'Ali (ﷺ) to accept the arbitration, and they are also the ones who rebelled against him because of his accepting the arbitration.⁷¹⁵

This brief look at the character of Abu Moosa is strongly connected to our topic, the life and times of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ). Abu Moosa was one of the people who had a profound impact on his era, but his character has been subjected to distortion. In most cases, whenever anyone discussed Şiffeen and the arbitration, the characters of Abu Moosa and 'Amr ibn al-Âş were subjected to distortion, lies and fabrications because of weak and fabricated reports. Hence it is necessary to talk about the biographies of these two great men, and this is one of the aims of writing this book.

3.2. The biography of 'Amr ibn al-'Âş (ؓ)

His full name was 'Amr ibn al-'Âş ibn Wâ'il as-Sahmi; his kunyahs are Abu Muhammad and Abu Abdullah. Ibn Ishâq⁷¹⁶ and az-Zubayr ibn Bakkâr⁷¹⁷ agreed that he became Muslim while he was with the Negus in Abyssinia, and he migrated to Madinah in Safar 8 AH. Ibn Hajar stated that he became Muslim in 8 AH before the conquest of Makkah, and it was said that it was between Hûdaybiyah and Khaybar.⁷¹⁸

3.2.1. His becoming Muslim

'Amr ibn al-'Âş (ؓ) himself told the story of his coming to Islam. He said: "When we came away from the Battle of the Trench, I gathered together some men who shared my opinion and would listen to me, and I said: 'You know, by Allah, that in my opinion, this affair of Muhammad will go to extraordinary lengths. I am thinking of something, and I would like to know what you think of it.' They said: 'What are you thinking of?' I said: 'I think that we should go to the Negus and stay with him. If Muhammad conquers our people, we will be with the Negus, and we would prefer to be subject to his authority rather than to Muhammad. On the other hand, if our people prevail, they know us and will treat us well.' They thought that my suggestion was excellent, so I told them to collect something that we could take as a gift to the Negus. Leather was the product of our land that he most valued, so we collected a large quantity and took it to him.

"By Allah, while we were with him, 'Amr ibn Umayyah ad-Damri came to him; he had been sent by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to find out about Ja'far and his companions. He had an audience with the Negus. When he came out, I said to my companions that if I were to go to the Negus and ask him to let me have him, he would give him to me. Then we could cut off his head, and if I did that, Quraysh

would see that I had served them well by killing Muhammad's messenger. So I went in to the Negus and prostrated before him as I usually did. He welcomed me as a friend and asked if I had brought anything from our country. When I told him that I had brought a large quantity of leather, and I produced it, he was greatly pleased and wanted it. I said: 'O King, I have just seen a man leave your presence. He is the messenger of an enemy of ours, so let me have him that I may kill him, for he has killed some of our chiefs and best men.' He was enraged, and reaching out his hand he gave his nose such a blow that I thought he must have broken it. If the ground had opened up, I would have gone into it to escape his anger. Then I said to him: 'O King, by Allah, if I had thought that this would be distasteful to you, I would not have asked it.' He said: 'Are you asking me to give you the messenger of a man to whom the great Namoos [Jibreel (ﷺ)] comes as he used to come to Moosa — so that you can kill him?' I said: 'O King, is he really like that?' He said: 'Woe to you, O 'Amr! Obey me and follow him, for by Allah, he is right. He will triumph over his adversaries as Moosa triumphed over Pharaoh and his armies.' I said: 'Will you accept my oath of allegiance to him in Islam?' He said: 'Yes,' and stretched out his hand, and I swore my allegiance to him in Islam. Then I went out to my companions; my opinion had changed from what it was before, but I concealed my Islam from them.

"Then I went out, heading towards the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) so that I might become Muslim, and I met Khâlid ibn al-Waleed. That was just before the conquest of Makkah, and he was coming from Makkah. I said: 'Where are you going, O Abu Sulaymân?' He said: 'By Allah, the way has become clear. The man is indeed a Prophet, and I am going to become Muslim, by Allah. How much longer should I delay?' I said: 'By Allah, I have only come to become Muslim.' So we went to Madinah, to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Khâlid ibn al-Waleed went ahead of me and became Muslim and

gave his oath of allegiance, then I came close and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, I will give you my oath of allegiance on the basis that my previous sins will be forgiven and no mention will be made of what went before.' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'O 'Amr, give your oath of allegiance, for Islam erases all that came before it, and hijrah erases all that came before it.' So I gave my oath of allegiance and departed."⁷¹⁹

According to another report, he said: "...when Allah put Islam in my heart, I came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: 'Hold out your right hand so that I might swear allegiance to you.' He held out his right hand, but I withdrew my hand. He said: 'What is the matter, O 'Amr?' I said: 'I want to stipulate a condition.' He said, 'What do you want to stipulate?' I said: 'That I will be forgiven.' He said: 'Do you not know, O 'Amr, that Islam destroys whatever came before it, and that hijrah destroys whatever came before it, and that hajj destroys whatever came before it?'"⁷²⁰

3.2.2. 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ leads a campaign to Dhât as-Salâsil 7 AH

The Prophet (ﷺ) prepared an army, led by 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ, to go to Dhât as-Salâsil in order to punish Quḍâ'ah, who had gathered with the aim of advancing on Madinah. They had developed a high level of confidence against the Muslims because of what had happened at Mu'tah, where they had taken part in the battle on the Byzantine side. 'Amr ibn al-'Âṣ went to their land, accompanied by three hundred of the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr. When he reached the place of the enemy's gathering, he heard that they had gathered in huge numbers, so he sent word to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) asking for reinforcements, who arrived under the leadership of Abu 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrâh.⁷²¹ The Muslims fought the disbelievers, and 'Amr penetrated deep into the land of Quḍâ'ah, whose people

scattered and ran away. ‘Amr succeeded in reinstating the position of Islam on the Syrian border and restoring the allies of the Muslims to the way they had been. Other tribes also entered into an alliance with the Muslims, and many people from the tribes of Banu ‘Abs, Banu Murrah and Banu Dhubyân became Muslim. The tribe of Fazârah and its chief ‘Uyaynah ibn Ḥuṣn also entered into an alliance with the Muslims, and they were followed by Banu Sulaym, under the leadership of al-‘Abbâs ibn Mirdâs and Banu Ashja’. The Muslims became the strongest power in northern Arabia, if not in the entire land.⁷²²

From this campaign we learn a number of lessons and issues regarding ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ, including the following:

3.2.2.a. The sincerity of ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ

‘Amr said: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent word to me saying: ‘Put on your garment and take up your weapon, then come to me.’ I came to him while he was making wuḍoo’. He looked up at me, then he looked away and said: ‘I want to send you at the head of an army. Allah will keep you safe and grant you booty, and I hope that you will acquire some wealth from it.’ I said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, I did not become Muslim for the sake of wealth; I became Muslim out of love for Islam and to be with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).’ He said: ‘O ‘Amr, good (ḥalâl) wealth is good for the good man.’”⁷²³

This attitude is indicative of the strong faith and sincerity of ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ and his desire to be close to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) explained that ḥalâl wealth is a blessing when it is possessed by a righteous man, because he is seeking the countenance of Allah and will spend it in good ways, such as sponsoring orphans and widows, calling people to Islam, supporting the mujâhideen, charitable projects and other good

causes, as well as maintaining dignity for himself and his family⁷²⁴ and helping Muslims. From this hadith, we may understand that if a person strives to acquire ḥalāl wealth, this is something praiseworthy that was encouraged by the Prophet (ﷺ). If a man has wealth, and we can manage to guide him and make him righteous, then he may combine ḥalāl wealth with righteousness, as in this hadith. This is also something desirable and praiseworthy; it is good for him and for Islam and the Muslims.

3.2.2.b. 'Amr's keenness to keep his troops safe

When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent 'Amr on the campaign to Dhât as-Salâsil, it got cold, but 'Amr told his troops that no one should light a fire. When they came back, they complained about him. He explained: "O Prophet of Allah, they were few in number, and I was afraid that the enemy might realise that they were few in number. I told them not to pursue the enemy lest they be ambushed." The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was impressed by that.⁷²⁵

3.2.2.c. 'Amr's understanding of Islam

'Amr ibn al-Âṣ (رضي الله عنه) said: "I had a wet dream on a cold night during the campaign to Dhât as-Salâsil. I was afraid that I would die if I did ghusl, so I performed the dry-earth ablution, then I led my companions in praying the dawn prayer. They mentioned that to the Prophet (ﷺ) and he said: 'O 'Amr, did you lead your companions in prayer when you were in a state of impurity?' I told him what had prevented me from doing ghusl, and I said: 'I heard that Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And do not kill yourselves [nor kill one another]. Surely, Allah is Most Merciful to you﴾ (Qur'an 4: 29). The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) smiled and did not say anything."⁷²⁶

This ijtihād on the part of 'Amr ibn al-Âṣ is indicative of his deep understanding of Islam, his mature thinking and his subtle derivation of the ruling from the evidence.⁷²⁷ The scholars derived

many rulings from this incident, but what is particularly notable⁷²⁸ is the speed with which ‘Amr established a connection with the Qur’an, to the point that he was able to understand matters through these verses although he had only been a Muslim for four months. This is indicative of his keenness to learn about the religion of Allah (ﷻ). It may be, and this is likely, that ‘Amr had been in touch with the Qur’an before he became Muslim, following whatever verses he could hear. In that case, we have another example of the greatness of this Qur’an, which had a great impact even on the disbelievers and made them, despite their great enmity towards the religion, try to listen to it. We saw that during the Makkan period, and this is supported by what we see here of his knowledge of the Qur’an when he suggested that the Negus ask the Muslims who had emigrated to Abyssinia about their opinion of ‘Eesa (ﷺ).⁷²⁹

3.2.3. Virtues of ‘Amr

3.2.3.a. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) testified to his faith

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “The people have become Muslims, but ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ has become a believer.”⁷³⁰ According to another hadith, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “The two sons of al-‘Âṣ are believers: ‘Amr and Hishâm.”⁷³¹ ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ said: “The people in Madinah with the Prophet (ﷺ) panicked and scattered, but I saw Sâlim put on a sword and sit in the mosque, and when I saw that I did the same. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came out and saw Sâlim and me, and he said: ‘O people, your refuge should be with Allah and His Messenger; why did you not do what these two men did?’”⁷³²

3.2.3.b. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) gave him precedence over others and testified that he was one of the righteous men of Quraysh

It is narrated that ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ (رضي الله عنه) said: “Since we became Muslim, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) never regarded anyone as equal to Khâlid and me in fighting.”⁷³³ It was narrated that Abu Mulaykah said: “Talhah ibn ‘Ubaydullah said: ‘I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: “‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ is one of the righteous men of Quraysh.”’”⁷³⁴ This is an example of the Prophet’s knowledge of people’s qualities and of how to make the most of those qualities.

3.2.3.c. Supplication of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) for him

It was narrated from Zuhayr ibn Qays al-Balawi that his paternal uncle ‘Ilqimah ibn Ramthah al-Balawi said: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ to Bahrain, then the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) dozed off. He woke up and said: ‘May Allah have mercy on ‘Amr.’ We discussed which ‘Amr it was, then he dozed off a second time. He woke up and said: ‘May Allah have mercy on ‘Amr.’ He dozed off a third time, then he woke up and said: ‘May Allah have mercy on ‘Amr.’ We said: ‘Which ‘Amr, O Messenger of Allah?’ He said: “Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ.’ We said: ‘What about him?’ He said: ‘I remembered him because every time I asked people to give in charity, he would bring his charity and be very generous. I would ask him: “Where did you get this from, O ‘Amr?”’, and he would say: “From Allah.” ‘Amr spoke the truth; ‘Amr has a great deal of good with Allah.’” Zuhayr said: “When the fitnah broke out, I said, ‘I will follow this man, of whom the Messenger of Allah said what he said, and I never left him.’”⁷³⁵

3.2.4. His deeds at the time of Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent 'Amr to call the two sons of al-Jilindi, Jayfar and 'Abbâd, to Islam. He called them to Islam, and they believed in the Prophet (ﷺ); they allowed 'Amr to collect zakâh and judge disputes between their people, and they supported him against those who opposed him.⁷³⁶ After the death of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), Abu Bakr sent 'Amr ibn al-Âṣ with an army to Palestine, after giving him the choice between staying in the post to which the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had appointed him or choosing something that would be better for him in this world and the hereafter. 'Amr ibn al-Âṣ wrote to him, saying: "I am one of the arrows of Islam, and after Allah, you are the one to shoot it and collect (the arrows). So choose the strongest, most pious and best of them and use it."⁷³⁷ When he came to Madinah, Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) told him to stay outside Madinah and camp until he had urged the people to join him, then he sent him with an army to Syria.⁷³⁸ During the Battle of Yarmook, 'Amr was in charge of the right flank, and his participation had a great impact on the Muslim victory.

After the death of Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه), 'Amr remained in Syria and played an effective role in the Islamic conquest of Syria. Along with Shurahbeel ibn Ḥasanah, he conquered Beesân, Tiberias and Ajnadeen.⁷³⁹ He also conquered Gaza, al-Ludd (Lod), Yubna, 'Amwâs (Emmaus), Bayt Jibreen, Yafa (Jaffa), Rafaḥ and Jerusalem. Not only did 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) conquer Syria; he also conquered famous cities in Egypt. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (رضي الله عنه) issued instructions to 'Amr ibn al-Âṣ (رضي الله عنه), after he had finished conquering Syria, to march to Egypt with the troops who were with him. He set out until he reached al-'Areesh and conquered it, and he also conquered al-Farma, al-Fusṭât, the Fortress of Babylon, 'Ayn Shams, al-Fayyoom, al-Ashmooneen, Akhmeem, al-Bashrood, Tanees, Dimyât

(Damietta), Toona, Daqhalah, Alexandria and other North African cities such as Barqah, Zuwaylah, and Tripoli.⁷⁴⁰ 'Umar (ﷺ) testified to his leadership qualities by saying: "Abu Abdullah should not walk on the earth except as a leader."⁷⁴¹

At the time of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), he was one of those who was close to the caliph and one of his consultants. When 'Uthmân (ﷺ) was besieged, 'Amr ibn al-Âṣ left Madinah and headed for Syria, saying: "O people of Madinah, anyone who stays there while this man is killed will be humiliated by Allah. Whoever cannot support him, let him flee." He left, and his two sons Abdullah and Muhammad left with him, after which Ḥassân ibn Thâbit and many others followed suit.⁷⁴² When news came of the murder of 'Uthmân and the people's swearing allegiance to 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib, 'Amr ibn al-Âṣ said: "May Allah have mercy on 'Uthmân (ﷺ) and forgive him." Salâmah ibn Zanzâ al-Judhâmi said: "O Arabs, there was between you and the fitnah a door, so find another door when that door is broken." 'Amr said: "That is what we want, but nothing can fix the door except a drill, a drill that can ensure justice between the people." He left on foot, weeping and saying: "O 'Uthmân, I weep for the death of modesty and religious commitment." Then he went to Damascus.⁷⁴³ This is a true picture of 'Amr (ﷺ), which is in harmony with his character, his biography and his closeness to 'Uthmân.

As for the distorted image that shows him as a man of personal interests and ambitions who ran after worldly gains, this is based on the weak and rejected report of al-Wâqidi from Moosa ibn Ya'qoob.⁷⁴⁴ A number of writers and historians were influenced by these weak reports, so they depicted 'Amr in the worst possible manner, as in the descriptions given by Maḥmoud Sheet Khaṭṭâb⁷⁴⁵ and 'Abdul-Khâliq Sayyid Abu Râbiyah.⁷⁴⁶ 'Abbas Maḥmoud al-'Aqqâd stubbornly refused to examine the chains of narration; he

insulted the intelligence of his readers by presenting an image of Mu'âwiyah and 'Amr as opportunists who were pursuing personal interests. All historical critics agree that the reports to which he refers in his analysis are false, but that does not mean anything to al-'Aqqâd. After narrating weak and strange reports, on which no argument can be based, he said: "Let the historical critics say what they want about whether this conversation took place and whether these words are sound. Regardless of whatever is proven to be sound or otherwise with regard to the chain of narration or the text, what there can be no doubt about, even if all history books got together to prove the opposite, is that the deal between the two men was a deal to share authority and power, and the deal between them was based on the share of authority that each of them would have. Were it not for that, there would have been no deal."⁷⁴⁷

The true character of 'Amr ibn al-Âş is that of a man of principle. He left Madinah when he found himself unable to defend 'Uthmân (ﷺ), for whom he wept bitter tears when he was killed. He was part of the consultative committee at the time of 'Uthmân (ﷺ), even though he was not a governor. He went to join Mu'âwiyah (ﷺ) and cooperated with him to fight the killers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) and seek justice for the martyred caliph.⁷⁴⁸ The murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) was sufficient to make him very angry with all those criminals who shed blood. He thought it essential to choose a place other than Madinah as a base for seeking vengeance against those who had the audacity to transgress against the sanctuary of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and slay the caliph before the people's eyes. What is strange about 'Amr getting angry for the sake of 'Uthmân (ﷺ)? If anyone doubts this matter, then his doubt is based on fabricated reports, which depict 'Amr as a man whose main concern was authority and power.⁷⁴⁹

3.3. The text of the arbitration document

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

1. This is what has been agreed upon between ‘Abi ibn Abi Ṭālib and Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abi Sufyān and their supporters, as they have agreed to refer to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ) for judgement.

2. In this case, ‘Ali represents the people of Iraq, both those who are present and those who are absent, and Mu‘āwiyah represents the people of Syria, both those who are present and those who are absent.

3. We have agreed to accept the ruling of the Qur’an and adhere to what is mentioned in the Book from beginning to end; we will do what it commands and refrain from what it tells us to refrain from. This is the basis of our agreement.

4. ‘Ali and his supporters accept Abdullah ibn Qays as a representative and arbitrator, and Mu‘āwiyah accepts ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ as a representative and arbitrator.

5. ‘Ali and Mu‘āwiyah have taken from Abdullah ibn Qays and ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ a pledge to adhere to the covenant of Allah and His Messenger, to take the Qur’an as their guide and not to refer to anything else with regard to arbitration, which will be done on the basis of what is written in the Book. With regard to that which they do not find in the Qur’an, they will refer to the comprehensive Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah, and they will not accept anything that goes against it or overlook the Sunnah for some specious argument.

6. Abdullah ibn Qays and ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ have taken a pledge from ‘Ali and Mu‘āwiyah to accept their verdict, which is based on the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet. They have no right to reject that or to go against it.

7. Both arbitrators are to be granted safety and security when they give their verdict. Their lives, wealth, hair, skin, families and children are safe as long as they do not transgress the limits, no matter who agrees or disagrees with them, and the Ummah should support their verdict, which is based on the Book of Allah.

8. If one of the two arbitrators dies before reaching a verdict, his party has the right to appoint someone else in his place from among the people of good character and piety, on the same basis as the covenant to which his predecessor agreed.

9. If one of the two leaders dies before the set time for deciding this matter ends, his group may appoint a man in his place with whose character they are pleased.

10. The two parties agree, with immediate effect, to engage in negotiations and lay down their weapons.

11. What we have mentioned in this document is binding with immediate effect on the two leaders, the two arbitrators and the two parties. Allah is the best of witnesses and is sufficient witness. If they transgress the limits, then the Ummah has nothing to do with their verdict, and their covenant is to be rejected.

12. The people are safe; their lives, families, children and wealth are safe until the end of the set period. Weapons are to be laid aside, the roads are to be safe, and anyone of either party who is absent is like those who are present in this regard.

13. The two arbitrators may stay in a place in the middle between the two camps of the people of Iraq and Syria.

14. No one should attend their meetings except with the approval of both arbitrators.

15. The set time for reaching a verdict is the end of the month of Ramadan. If the two arbitrators decide to reach a verdict earlier, then

they may do so. If they decide to delay it until the end of the specified time, they may do so.

16. If they do not rule in accordance with the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet by the end of the fixed time, then the two groups will resume fighting.

17. The Ummah is bound by the deal that is reached with regard to this matter; all of the Ummah should be united against any party that inclines to evil actions and does wrong.⁷⁵⁰

The contents of this document were witnessed by al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, the two sons of 'Ali, Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs, Abdullah ibn Ja'far ibn Abi Tâlib, al-Ash'ath ibn Qays al-Kindi, al-Ashtar ibn al-Ḥârith, Sa'eed ibn al-Qays al-Hamadâni, al-Ḥuşayn and aṭ-Ṭufayl the two sons of al-Ḥârith ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib, Abu Sa'eed ibn Rabee'ah al-Anşâri, Abdullah ibn Khabbâb ibn al-Aratt, Sahl ibn Hunayf, Abu Bishr ibn 'Umar al-Anşâri, 'Awf ibn al-Ḥârith ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib, Yazeed ibn Abdullah al-Aslami, 'Uqbah ibn 'Âmir al-Juhani, Râfi' ibn Khadeej al-Anşâri, 'Umar ibn al-Ḥamaq al-Khuzâ'i, an-Nu'mân ibn 'Ajlân al-Anşâri, Ḥajar ibn 'Adiyy al-Kindi, Yazeed ibn Ḥajiyyah al-Kindi, Mâlik ibn Ka'b al-Hamadâni, Rabee'ah ibn Shuraḥbeel, al-Ḥârith ibn Mâlik, Ḥajar ibn Yazeed and 'Ulbaḥ ibn Ḥujiyyah.

Among the people of Syria, it was witnessed by Ḥabeeb ibn Maslamah al-Fihri, Abu al-A'war as-Sulami, Bisr ibn Arṭâ'ah al-Qurashi, Mu'âwiyah ibn Khadeej al-Kindi, al-Makhâriq ibn al-Ḥârith az-Zubaydi, Muslim ibn 'Amr as-Saksi, Abdullah ibn Khâlid ibn al-Waleed, Ḥamzah ibn Mâlik, Subay' ibn Yazeed ibn Abjar al-'Absi, Masrooq ibn Jablah al-'Akki, Yusr ibn Yazeed al-Ḥimiyari, Abdullah ibn 'Âmir al-Qurashi, 'Utbaḥ ibn Abi Sufyân, Muhammad ibn Abi Sufyân, Muhammad ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Âş, 'Ammâr ibn al-Aḥwaş al-Kalbi, Mas'adah ibn 'Amr al-'Utbi, aṣ-Ṣabbâḥ ibn Jalhamah al-

Ḥimyari, ‘Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Dhil-Kilâ’, Tamâmah ibn Ḥawshab and ‘Ilqimah ibn Ḥakam. It was written on Wednesday 17 Şafar 37 AH.⁷⁵¹

3.4. The famous story of the arbitration, which is incorrect for many reasons

A great deal has been said about the story of the arbitration, which was narrated by historians and writers on the basis that it was true and proven, with no doubt about it. Some narrated lengthy versions, and some summarised it; some commented on it and derived lessons from it, basing their rulings on the contents of the story. It is very rare to find anyone who examined it in a critical manner. Ibn al-‘Arabi did well when he rejected it in general terms, even though he did not go into detail. This is indicative of his strong critical sense in examining texts, because none of the texts of this arbitration story can stand up to critical academic examination. They are false for a number of reasons.⁷⁵²

3.4.1.

All of its chains of transmission are weak. The strongest chain by which it was narrated is that narrated by ‘Abdur-Razzâq and aṭ-Ṭabari, with a chain of narration whose men are trustworthy, from az-Zuhri with a missing link. They said:

Az-Zuhri said: “In the morning, the people of Syria put up their muşhafs and called for applying what they contained, and the people of Iraq were filled with awe, at which point they appointed the two arbitrators. The people of Iraq chose Abu Moosa al-Ash‘ari, and the people of Syria chose ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âş. The two armies at Şiffeen parted when the arbitrators were appointed. They (the two arbitrators) stipulated that what the Qur’an enjoined was to be followed and what

it forbade was to be avoided, and that they would choose what was best for the Ummah of Muhammad (ﷺ). They were to meet in Dumat al-Jandal, and if they did not meet for some reason, they would meet the following year in Adhrah.

“When ‘Ali left, the Kharijites disagreed and rebelled. This was the first time they appeared as a group, and they declared war against him. The reason for their rebellion was that human beings had been appointed to decide about the ruling of Allah (ﷻ). They said that there is no ruling except the ruling of Allah, so they fought.

“When the two arbitrators met in Adhrah, al-Mugheerah ibn Shu‘bah joined them, along with some other people. The two arbitrators sent for Abdullah ibn ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb and Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr, and they came to them with many men. Mu‘âwiyah came with the people of Syria, but ‘Ali and the people of Iraq refused to come. Al-Mugheerah ibn Shu‘bah said to some prominent people of Quraysh: ‘Do you think there is anyone out there who can tell whether these two arbitrators will agree on something or will never agree?’ They said: ‘We do not think that anyone knows that.’ He said: ‘By Allah, I think that I should be able to find that out from them when I speak to each one on his own and discuss it with him.’

“He entered upon ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ, starting with him. He said: ‘O Abu Abdullah, tell me about what I am going to ask you. What do you think of those of us who remained neutral, for we were unsure about the matter that was clear to you, namely fighting, and we thought that it was better to take our time until we became certain and the Ummah became united?’” He said: ‘I think of you who remained neutral as being behind the righteous and ahead of the evildoers.’ Al-Mugheerah left and did not ask him about anything else.

“Then he entered upon Abu Moosa and said something similar to what he had said to ‘Amr. Abu Moosa said: ‘I think you are the

wisest of people; you are what is left of the righteous Muslims.'

"Al-Mugheerah left without asking him about anything else. Then he met with the wise people of Quraysh, to whom he had spoken earlier, and said: "These two will never agree on anything.'

"The two arbitrators met and talked. 'Amr ibn al-Âş said: 'O Abu Moosa, I think the first thing we should decide about is to rule in favour of those who fulfilled their promise and against those who betrayed, because of their betrayal.' Abu Moosa said: 'What do you mean?' He said: 'Don't you know that Mu'âwiyah and the people of Syria fulfilled their promise and came to the appointment that we made with them?' He said: 'Yes.' 'Amr said: 'Write it down.'" So Abu Moosa wrote it down. 'Amr said: 'O Abu Moosa, would you like to suggest a man to be in charge of this Ummah? Tell me his name. If I agree with it, I will follow you in that; otherwise I will suggest a name and you should follow me.' Abu Moosa said: 'Do you want me to suggest Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân to you?' They did not end their meeting before trading insults; then they went out to the people, and Abu Moosa said: 'I found the likeness of 'Amr to be the likeness of the one of whom Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And recite [O Muhammad] to them the story of him to whom We gave Our Ayât [proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.], but he threw them away﴾ (Qur'an 7: 175).

"Then when Abu Moosa fell silent, 'Amr spoke, saying: 'O people, I found the likeness of Abu Moosa to be the likeness of those of whom Allah says: ﴿The likeness of those who were entrusted with the [obligation of the] Tawrât [Torah] [i.e. to obey its commandments and to practise its laws], but who subsequently failed in those [obligations], is as the likeness of a donkey which carries huge burdens of books [but understands nothing from them]﴾ (Qur'an 62: 5).' Each of them wrote a letter explaining his opinion to the various regions."⁷⁵³

Az-Zuhri was not present at this incident, so this report is missing a link in its chain of narration, and his reports with missing links carry no weight and cannot be taken as evidence,⁷⁵⁴ as determined by the scholars.

There is another chain of transmission, through which Ibn ‘Asâkir narrated this report with his chain of narration going back to az-Zuhri. It is also missing a link, and it includes Abu Bakr ibn Abi Sabrah, of whom Imam Aḥmad said: “He was a fabricator of hadith.”⁷⁵⁵ Its chain of narration also includes al-Wâqidi, whose reports are rejected.⁷⁵⁶ This is the text of his report:

“The people of Syria lifted up the muṣḥafs and said: ‘We call you to the Book of Allah and to rule in accordance with what it contains.’ This was a plot by ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ. They reached a deal and wrote a document stating that they would meet at the beginning of the year in Adhraḥ. They appointed two arbitrators to judge between the people, and everyone was to accept their verdict. ‘Ali appointed Abu Moosa al-Ash‘ari, and Mu‘âwiyah appointed ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ. Then the people parted; ‘Ali went back to Kufah with divisions and trouble among his party. Some of his companions disagreed with him, and the Kharijites among his party rebelled against him. They objected to his appointing an arbitrator, and they said: ‘There is no ruling except the ruling of Allah.’ Mu‘âwiyah went back to Syria with his followers in harmony and united. One year later, the two arbitrators met in Adhraḥ in Sha‘bân 38 AH, and the people gathered around them. There was a discussion between them in which they agreed on something in private, but ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ went against it in public. He let Abu Moosa speak first and declare that he was deposing both ‘Ali and Mu‘âwiyah, then ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ spoke, deposing ‘Ali but affirming Mu‘âwiyah. The two arbitrators and those who were with them parted, and the people of Syria swore allegiance to Mu‘âwiyah in the month of Dhul-Qa‘dah 38 AH.”⁷⁵⁷

All of the chains of narration of Abu Makhnaf are weak because of him. The first reason is that Abu Makhnaf Loot ibn Yahya is weak and not trustworthy.⁷⁵⁸ He was a dishonest narrator and an extreme Râfiḍi. The second reason is that Ibn Sa'd said concerning him: "He was weak."⁷⁵⁹ Bukhâri and Abu Hâtim said: "Yahya al-Qaṭṭân regarded him as weak."⁷⁶⁰ 'Uthmân ad-Dârimi said: "He is weak."⁷⁶¹ An-Nasâ'i said: "He is weak."⁷⁶²

These are the versions of the well-known story of the arbitration and the alleged debate between Abu Moosa and 'Amr ibn al-Âṣ. Can proof be based on something like this, or can these reports be relied on with regard to the history of the noble Companions and the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, the most exemplary of eras? If there was nothing wrong with these reports except some contradictions in their texts, that would be sufficient to regard them as weak. So how about if we add to that the weakness of their chains of narration?⁷⁶³

3.4.2.

This issue is very important with regard to belief and legislation. Despite its importance, it is not transmitted by any sound chain of narration. It is impossible that the scholars would unanimously ignore it, even though it is so important and there is such a great need for it.⁷⁶⁴

3.4.3.

There is a report which refutes these reports completely. It was narrated in brief by Bukhari in his *Tareekh*, with a chain of narration whose narrators are trustworthy. It was also narrated by Ibn 'Asâkir from al-Ḥuşayn ibn al-Mundhir, that Mu'âwiyah sent him to 'Amr ibn al-Âṣ, instructing him: "I have heard about 'Amr something that I dislike; go to him and ask him about the matter concerning which 'Amr and Abu Moosa met, and what happened in their meeting."

‘Amr said: “People talked too much about this issue, but nothing of what they describe happened. When I met Abu Moosa, I said to him: ‘What do you think about this matter?’ He said: ‘I think that he (‘Ali) is one of those with whom the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was pleased when he died.’ I said: ‘How about me and Mu‘âwiyah? Where do we fit in?’ He said: If he (‘Ali) seeks your help, then you are a good help, and if he decides not to seek your help, he can run his affairs without your help.”⁷⁶⁵

Abu Moosa spoke of ‘Amr’s piety and how he used to take stock of himself and remember the lives of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with them), as well as his worries about what had happened after they were gone. Abu Moosa said: ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ said to me: “By Allah, if Abu Bakr and ‘Umar forsook this wealth when it was permissible for them, is it possible that they had an unfair deal and were wronged, or was it a misjudgement on their part? By Allah, they did not have an unfair deal and they were not wronged, and their decision was not based on misjudgement. By Allah, weakness only came to us because of our deeds.”⁷⁶⁶

3.4.4.

Mu‘âwiyah affirmed ‘Ali’s superiority over him and that he was more entitled to the caliphate than him. He did not dispute with him for the caliphate or seek it for himself during ‘Ali’s lifetime. Yaḥya ibn Sulaymân al-Ja‘fi narrated, with a good chain of narration, from Abu Muslim al-Khawlânî that he said to Mu‘âwiyah: “Are you disputing with ‘Ali for the caliphate or are you like him?” He said: “No; I know that he is better than me and is more entitled (to the caliphate). But don’t you know that ‘Uthmân was killed wrongfully, and I am his paternal cousin and next of kin, who should seek retaliation for him? Go to ‘Ali and tell him to hand over the killers of ‘Uthmân to us, and I will submit to his rule.” They went to ‘Ali and

spoke to him, but he did not hand them (the murderers) over to him.⁷⁶⁷

This is the basis of the dispute between ‘Ali and Mu‘âwiyah (may Allah be pleased with them), and the arbitration was aimed at resolving this matter of conflict, not choosing or dismissing a caliph.⁷⁶⁸ Ibn Ḥazm said concerning this matter that ‘Ali fought Mu‘âwiyah because the latter refused to carry out his instructions in Syria, and he was the caliph who was to be obeyed. Mu‘âwiyah never denied ‘Ali’s superiority and entitlement to the caliphate, but his reasoning led him to think that bringing the murderers of ‘Uthmân to justice took precedence over swearing allegiance to ‘Ali (ﷺ), and he thought that he was more right to seek retaliation for the murder of ‘Uthmân and to speak of it than the sons of ‘Uthmân and al-Ḥakam ibn Abil-‘Âṣ, because of his age and his ability to pursue the matter. He was correct in that regard, but he was wrong with regard to giving this matter precedence over swearing allegiance to the caliph.⁷⁶⁹

Understanding the dispute on this basis — which is the reality of the dispute — highlights the extent to which the reports quoted above about the arbitration are mistaken in the way in which they depicted the ruling of the two arbitrators. The two arbitrators were given authority to issue a verdict concerning the dispute between ‘Ali and Mu‘âwiyah, but the dispute between them was not concerning the caliphate and which of them was more entitled to it; rather it had to do with carrying out a retaliatory punishment on the murderers of ‘Uthmân. This had nothing to do with the issue of caliphate at all. If the two arbitrators had ignored this basic issue that they had been asked to decide about, and taken a decision concerning the caliphate instead, as the widely circulated reports claim, then what that means is that they did not solve the disputed issue and did not understand the issue of this case, and this is something that is very unlikely.⁷⁷⁰

3.4.5.

The conditions that must be met by the caliph are good character, knowledge and wisdom to enable him to conduct his subjects' affairs and take care of their interests. He should also be of Qurayshi descent.⁷⁷¹ These conditions were met by ‘Ali (عليه السلام). Was allegiance to him valid or not? If it was valid — and there is no doubt concerning that — and the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr, the decision-makers, swore allegiance to him, and his opponents confirmed that to him, then the words of Mu‘âwiyah indicate that “if the caliph is not devoid of the qualities of a leader and those who appointed him decide to depose him, they have no right to do that according to consensus, because once a caliph is appointed and allegiance is sworn to him, obedience to him becomes binding, and there is no option of deposing him without a reason that dictates that. Caliphate cannot be effective, and the position cannot achieve the required purpose, unless obedience is binding. If the people are given the option of deposing the caliph because they prefer someone else, then the caliph can never be in full control, and he will have no power or ability. The post of caliph would make no sense at all.”⁷⁷²

Therefore the issue is not as depicted in these reports, which suggest that anyone who does not like a caliph may depose him. No one has the right to depose the caliph except those who appointed him, namely the decision makers, provided that the caliph has gone against the conditions of his appointment. Did ‘Ali (عليه السلام) do anything to make the decision-makers decide to dismiss him from the caliphate, when he was the Rightly Guided Caliph, in which case it might be suggested that the two arbitrators had agreed on that? He did nothing until he died that might dictate dismissing him from his post; he did nothing except act justly, strive hard, fear Allah (ﷻ) and do good.⁷⁷³

3.4.6.

The time when the arbitration took place was a time of fitnah, and the Muslims were in a situation of confusion despite the fact that they had a caliph, so how would they have ended up if the caliph was deposed? Undoubtedly the situation would have gotten worse, but the Companions were too wise and rational to do such a thing. Hence it is clear that this idea is invalid according to both reason and the texts.

3.4.7.

‘Umar ibn al-Khattâb (ؓ) limited the caliphate to the members of the consultative committee, of whom there were six, and the Muhâjireen and Anşâr approved of that. This was a hint that the caliphate should not go beyond these six men as long as any of them were still alive. At the time of the arbitration, none of them was left except Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqâs, who withdrew, showing no interest in any position of authority, and ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ؓ), who held the position of caliph and was the best of the six after ‘Uthmân (ؓ). So how could this matter of caliphate be passed to someone else?⁷⁷⁴

3.4.8.

The reports state that the people of Syria swore allegiance to Mu‘âwiyah following the arbitration. The question is, what reason prompted the people of Syria to swear allegiance to Mu‘âwiyah? The two arbitrators did not reach any conclusion, so there was no reason to attribute that action to the results of the arbitration. Moreover, Ibn ‘Asâkir narrated, with a chain whose narrators are trustworthy, that Sa‘eed ibn ‘Abdul-‘Azeez at-Tanookhi,⁷⁷⁵ the most knowledgeable of the people about Syrian affairs,⁷⁷⁶ said: “ ‘Ali in Iraq was called ‘Amir al-Mu’mineen’, and Mu‘âwiyah in Syria was called ‘the Amir’. When ‘Ali died, Mu‘âwiyah in Syria was called Amir al-

Mu'mineen."⁷⁷⁷ This text shows that allegiance was not given to Mu'âwiyah as caliph until after the death of 'Ali. This was also the view of at-Ṭabari, who said, concerning the last events of the year 40 AH: "In this year, allegiance was sworn to Mu'âwiyah in Aylia".⁷⁷⁸ Ibn Katheer commented on this, saying: "In other words, when 'Ali died, the people of Syria swore allegiance to Mu'âwiyah as caliph, because in their view there was no one left to dispute this position with him."⁷⁷⁹ The people of Syria knew that Mu'âwiyah was not equal to 'Ali in terms of being qualified for the caliphate and that it was not permissible for him to become caliph when it was possible to appoint 'Ali (ﷺ), whose virtue, seniority, knowledge, religious commitment, courage and all other virtues were well known to them, just like the virtues of his brethren Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them).⁷⁸⁰

In addition to that, the texts forbid swearing allegiance to a new caliph when the first caliph is already present. Muslim narrated in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* that Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'If allegiance is sworn to two caliphs, then execute the second one.'"⁷⁸¹ There are many similar texts.⁷⁸² It is impossible that the Companions would have unanimously agreed to go against that.⁷⁸³

3.4.9.

Bukhari narrated in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* that Ibn 'Umar said: "I entered upon Ḥafṣah and said: 'You see the fitnah that is taking place among the people, and I was not asked to get involved at all.' She said: 'Go and catch up with them, because they are waiting for you, and I fear that your staying away from them may lead to division.'" She kept on at him until he went. After the meeting ended, Mu'âwiyah said: "Whoever wants to say anything concerning this issue, let him raise his head, for we have more right to it than him and his father."

Ḥabeeb ibn Maslamah said: "Why don't you answer him?" Abdullah said: "So I changed the way I was sitting, and I wanted to say, 'The one who is more entitled to this position than you is the one who fought you and your father for the sake of Islam.' But I was afraid to say something that might cause division and bloodshed and could be misinterpreted, so instead I talked about what Allah has prepared in paradise." Ḥabeeb said: "Allah has protected you from causing any fitnah."⁷⁸⁴

It may be understood that this report is referring to the time when allegiance was sworn to Mu'âwiyah as caliph, but it does not contain any clear indication to that effect. Some of the scholars said that this report refers to the meeting in which al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī (عليه السلام) reconciled with Mu'âwiyah (عليه السلام). Ibn al-Jawzī said: "This speech was given at the time of Mu'âwiyah, when he wanted to make his son Yazeed his heir (to the caliphate)." And Ibn Ḥajar said that it was at the time of arbitration.⁷⁸⁵ However, the apparent meaning of the text supports the first two views. The words "I was afraid to say something that might cause division and bloodshed" are indicative of the unity that existed at the time of Mu'âwiyah, because at the time of the arbitration there was division and dissent, not unity and harmony.⁷⁸⁶

3.4.10.

The real conclusion of the arbitration. There is no doubt that the disputed issue, which the two arbitrators decided to refer to the Ummah and to the members of the consultative committee, was nothing other than the point of dispute between 'Alī and Mu'âwiyah, namely the issue of the murderers of 'Uthmân. Mu'âwiyah was not laying claim to the caliphate or denying 'Alī's right to it, as has been established above. Rather, he refused to swear allegiance to him and obey his instructions in Syria, since he had authority there (in reality

if not legitimately), and what helped him was the people's obedience to him, for he had been its governor for twenty years.⁷⁸⁷ Ibn Diḥyah al-Kalbi said in his book *A'lâm an-Naṣr al-Mubeen fil-Mufâḍalah bayna Ahl Şiffeen*: "Abu Bakr Muhammad aṭ-Ṭayyib al-Ash'ari — al-Bâqillâni — said in *Manâqib al-A'imma*: "The two arbitrators never reached a decision to depose 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام). Even if they had reached a decision to depose him, he could not have been deposed unless the Qur'an or Sunnah, which were the reference points for them both, dictated that he should be deposed, provided that the two arbitrators both agreed to that, or until they could explain what dictated deposing him on the basis of the Qur'an and Sunnah. The text of 'Ali's letter stipulated that the two arbitrators should judge in accordance with the Book of Allah from beginning to end, and that they should not go beyond that, drift away from it, follow their whims and desires or be biased. He took the most solemn pledge from them that if they went beyond the Book of Allah, their verdict would not count. The Qur'an and Sunnah confirmed his position as caliph and praised him, and they testified to his sincerity, good character, leadership, seniority in Islam, impressive efforts in jihad against the polytheists, closeness to the leader of the Messengers, unique qualities of deep knowledge of rulings, wisdom and the fact that he was entitled to leadership and qualified to carry the burden of caliphate."⁷⁸⁸

3.4.11.

Where the meeting was held. The appointment for the meeting between the two arbitrators, as it says in the document, was to be in Ramadan 37 AH, if nothing happened to prevent it, in a place between Iraq and Syria. The place chosen was Doomat al-Jandal,⁷⁸⁹ according to trustworthy reports, and Adhraḥ,⁷⁹⁰ according to other reports which are less authentic. Perhaps the fact that the two places

are close to one another is the reason for the difference in the reports, as Khaleefah ibn Khayyât⁷⁹¹ said: "Adhraḥ, which is close to Dooṃat al-Jandal, was also mentioned. The meeting took place at the appointed time with no problems."⁷⁹²

The place where the two arbitrators met was Dooṃat al-Jandal. This is contrary to what was stated by Yaḡoot al-Ḥamawī, who said that the arbitration took place in Adhraḥ and mentioned as evidence for that some reports, which he did not actually quote, as well as some lines of poetry.⁷⁹³

3.4.12.

Was Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâṣ present at the meeting of the two arbitrators? The two arbitrators met at the appointed time and place, each of them accompanied by a few hundred people who represented the two delegations, one group representing the people of Iraq and the other representing the people of Syria. The two arbitrators asked a number of prominent people from Quraysh to be present so that they could consult them and ask for their opinions, but many of the senior Companions, who had kept out of the fight from the beginning, were not present. The best of these was Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâṣ (ؓ), who was not present at the arbitration; he did not want that, and he never thought of it.⁷⁹⁴ It was narrated from 'Āmir ibn Sa'd that his brother 'Umar went to Sa'd, who was tending his sheep outside Madinah. When he came to him, he said: "O my father, are you content to be like a Bedouin, tending your sheep, while the people are disputing power in Madinah?" Sa'd struck 'Umar on the chest and said: "Be quiet! I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: 'Allah loves the slave who is pious, pure and not prominent.'"⁷⁹⁵

3.5. Is it possible to learn from the arbitration incident in resolving conflicts among Muslim states?

From the arbitration incident, we can learn about resolving conflicts among Muslim states by making all the leaders of Islamic states, and hence the Muslim Ummah that they rule, face up to their responsibilities by putting serious pressure on the two disputing parties so that they will stop fighting and will resort to arbitration, as prescribed in Islam. Thus each side may send an arbitrator to reach a verdict concerning this dispute in light of the following:

1. Deciding the extent of their authority with regard to issuing the verdict that is required to solve the problem which is the cause of the conflict.
2. Making the sources of Islamic legislation the only reference points for issuing these rulings and solutions that could decide the issues of the dispute.
3. Taking a solemn pledge from each side involved in the conflict, and from all the leaders of Muslim countries, to accept the rulings and legitimate solutions issued by the two arbitrators to put an end to the current conflict. The decision is binding and must be executed in accordance with the rulings of Islam; going against it, or approving of going against it, will be regarded as a sinful action according to Sharia.
4. If the two arbitrators issue the rulings and solutions that they have agreed upon, and the two sides submit to that, then the matter is settled.
5. If one or both parties refuse to accept the verdict of the two arbitrators, any party that refuses is regarded to be the

party that was in the wrong, whether the refusal comes from one or both of them. In that case, it is Islamically binding upon Muslim forces in other countries to follow the instructions and military decrees issued by the two arbitrators to put an end to the conflict by force, by intervening in a way that does not lead to harm or risk that is greater than that of the current conflict.

6. Part of the authority of the two arbitrators, on the basis of the agreement, is to issue decrees that have to do with mobilising armed forces in other Muslim countries, so as to resolve the current conflict in the manner described above.⁷⁹⁶

Perhaps resorting to this method of solving conflicts among different countries is a means of blocking foreign forces who interfere in Muslim conflicts on the grounds that one of the parties called on them to intervene. They take advantage of this opportunity to conspire against the Muslims, strive to make these conflicts escalate, and impose a solution that appeals to them and serves their interests only. This leaves the Muslims to suffer, after that, from the consequences of that solution in a manner that is worse than what they suffered during the conflict itself. This suffering does not concern the foreign forces at all; in fact, this suffering is one of the aims of the poor solutions they offer. We say: perhaps resorting to arbitration in the manner described above will block the way for those foreign forces which try to cause division in the Muslim ranks. Moreover, it should be noted that the Islamically binding nature of the solution reached through arbitration, as we have discussed, is based on the consensus of the Companions. The Companions, at the time of the conflict that arose between 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah, were all agreed on resorting to arbitration and accepted it unanimously, whether these Companions were on the side of 'Ali or on the side of Mu'âwiyah, or were among those who kept

away from both sides, such as Sa‘d ibn Abi Waqqâs, Ibn ‘Umar and others (may Allah be pleased with them all.)⁷⁹⁷

3.6. Attitude of Ahl as-Sunnah towards these wars

The attitude of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ‘ah towards this war that took place between the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) is to refrain from discussing what happened between them except in a manner that is befitting to them (may Allah be pleased with them), because deliberating about what happened among them may generate enmity, hatred and resentment against one of the two parties. It is obligatory for every Muslim to love all of the Companions, to ask Allah (ﷻ) to be pleased with all of them and to have mercy on all of them, to acknowledge their virtues and recognise their great deeds and noble character. What happened between them was based only on independent judgements (ijtihâd), and they will all be rewarded, whether they were right or wrong, but the reward of those who got it right will be double that of those who got it wrong on the basis of their independent reasoning. Of the Companions, both the one who killed and the one who was killed will be in paradise. Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ‘ah do not regard it as permissible to debate about the conflict between them.

Before quoting the opinions of a number of Sunni scholars explaining their attitude towards the dispute among the Companions, I shall quote some texts relating to the fighting that occurred among the Companions, to see how it was described in those texts:⁷⁹⁸

3.6.1.

Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And if two parties [or groups] among the believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them both. But if

one of them outrages against the other, then fight you [all] against the one that which outrages till it complies with the Command of Allah. Then if it complies, then make reconciliation between them justly, and be equitable. Verily, Allah loves those who are the equitable. ﴿Qur'an 49: 9﴾

In this verse, Allah (ﷻ) enjoins reconciliation among the believers if fighting occurs among them. They are brothers, and this fighting does not mean that they are no longer believers, since Allah (ﷻ) calls them believers here and enjoins reconciliation among them. If fighting does take place among ordinary believers, and it does not mean that they are no longer believers, then the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) who fought at the Battle of the Camel and in subsequent battles are the first who should be included under the heading of believers that is mentioned in this verse. Before their Lord, they are still true believers, and the conflict that arose among them does not affect their faith at all because it came about on the basis of independent reasoning.⁷⁹⁹

3.6.2.

It was narrated that Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه) said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'There will be a group who will go beyond the pale of Islam at the time of Muslim division, and they will be killed by the group that is closer to the truth.'"⁸⁰⁰

The division referred to in this hadith is the dispute between 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah (may Allah be pleased with them both). The Prophet (ﷺ) described both groups as being Muslims and connected to the truth. This hadith is one of the signs of his prophethood, because things turned out exactly as foretold by the Prophet (ﷺ). The hadith also rules that both groups were Muslims, both the people of Syria and the people of Iraq. It is not true that the people of Syria were regarded as disbelievers, as the Râfidis and ignorant folk claim.

This also indicates that the companions of 'Ali (ﷺ) were the closer of the two groups to the truth. It is the view of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah that 'Ali (ﷺ) was in the right, but that Mu'âwiyah will be rewarded inshallah, since he acted on the basis of what he thought was correct. 'Ali was the ruler, though, and he will have two rewards, as is proven in *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhâri*: "If the ruler or judge strives to reach a verdict and gets it right, he will have two rewards; if he strives to reach a verdict and gets it wrong, he will have one reward."⁸⁰¹

3.6.3.

It was narrated that Abu Bakrah said: "While the Prophet (ﷺ) was delivering a sermon, al-Ḥasan came, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'This son of mine is a leader, and perhaps Allah will reconcile two great groups of the Muslims through him.'"⁸⁰²

In this hadith, we see the Prophet's testimony that both the people of Iraq and the people of Syria are Muslim. This hadith is also a clear refutation of the Kharijites, who regarded both 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah, and their supporters, as disbelievers; the testimony included in this hadith is that they were all Muslims. Hence Sufyân ibn 'Uyaynah used to say: "We liked it very much that he referred to the two groups as being two groups of Muslims." Al-Bayhaqi said: "He liked it because the Prophet (ﷺ) called them all Muslims. This is a case of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) foretelling that after the death of 'Ali, al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali would hand the reins of power to Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân."⁸⁰³

The hadiths mentioned above refer to the people of Iraq who were with 'Ali (ﷺ) and the people of Syria who were with Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân (ﷺ). The Prophet (ﷺ) described them as being part of his Ummah⁸⁰⁴ and also described them as all being connected to the truth and not going beyond it. He (ﷺ) testified that they would continue to be believers and would not go beyond that

because of the fighting that took place between them; they were included in the general meaning of the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And if two parties [or groups] among the believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them both﴾ (*Qur'an* 49: 9). We have seen above that this verse encompasses all of them, may Allah be pleased with them all. They did not become disbelievers or evildoers because of that fighting; rather their actions were based on what they thought was correct. The ruling on their fighting was explained by 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ؓ), as we have seen.

What the Muslim must do with regard to what he believes about what happened among the noble Companions (ؓ) is to follow the way of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah, which means refraining from taking sides concerning what happened among them and not indulging in discussing that except in a manner that befits their status. The books of Ahl as-Sunnah are full of explanations of their sound and pure belief with regard to those who were chosen to be the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ). Ahl as-Sunnah defined their attitude towards that war that broke out among them in good terms, such as the following:

1. 'Umar ibn 'Abdul-'Azeez (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about the fighting that took place among the Companions, and he said: "This is blood that Allah (ﷻ) kept our hands free from, so why should I not keep my tongue out of it, too? The likeness of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is that of the eye; the best way to heal the eye is not to touch it."⁸⁰⁵ Al-Bayhaqi said, commenting on these words of 'Umar ibn 'Abdul-'Azeez (may Allah have mercy on him): "This is very good, because keeping quiet about what does not concern one is the right thing to do."⁸⁰⁶
2. Al-Hasan al-Basri (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about the Companions fighting amongst themselves, and he

said: "That was fighting in which the Companions of Muhammad (ﷺ) were present, and we were not; they knew, but we do not know. In the issues on which they agreed, we follow; on the issues on which they differed, we refrain from taking a stance."⁸⁰⁷

The meaning of these words of al-Ḥasan al-Basri is that the Companions had more knowledge of what they got involved in than we do. All we have to do is follow them in that on which they were agreed, refrain from taking a stance on that concerning which they differed, and not introduce our own opinion. We may be certain that they based their actions on what they thought was correct, seeking Allah (ﷻ) thereby, because they were sincere in their commitment to Islam.⁸⁰⁸

3. Ja'far ibn Muhammad aṣ-Ṣâdiq was asked about what happened among the Companions, and he replied: "I say what Allah said: ﴿The knowledge thereof is with my Lord, in a record. My Lord neither errs nor does He forget﴾ (*Qur'an* 20: 52).

Imam Aḥmad (may Allah have mercy on him) said, after he was asked about what happened between 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah: "I do not say anything about them except that which is best."⁸⁰⁹ It was narrated that Ibrâheem ibn Âriz al-Faqeeh said: I was with Aḥmad ibn Hanbal when a man asked him about what happened between 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah. He turned away from him, and it was said to him: "O Abu Abdullah, he is a man of Banu Hâshim." So he turned towards him and recited the verse: ﴿That was a nation who has passed away. They shall receive the reward of what they earned, and you of what you earn. And you will not be asked of what they used to do﴾ (*Qur'an* 2: 141).

4. Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawâni said, in the context of his discussion about what the Muslim is obliged to believe about the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and how they should be mentioned: "None of the Companions of the Messenger should be mentioned except in the best way, and we should refrain from debating about the dispute that occurred among them because they are the most deserving of people of finding the best way of interpreting what they said and did, and of being thought of in the most positive manner."⁸¹⁰
5. Abu Abdullah ibn Baṭṭah said, in his discussion on the belief of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah: "Moreover, we refrain from deliberating about the dispute that arose among the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). They were with him during major events, and they have precedence over others for that reason. Allah has forgiven them and has enjoined you to pray for forgiveness for them and to draw close to Him by loving them; that was enjoined on the lips of His Prophet. He knew what would happen between them and that they would fight; the reason they were given precedence over all other people is because all their mistakes, deliberate or otherwise, have been pardoned, and all their disputes have been forgiven."⁸¹¹
6. Abu Bakr ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib al-Bâqillâni said: "It must be noted that with regard to the disputes that occurred among the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), we should refrain from examining them and ask Allah (ﷻ) to have mercy on all of them; we praise them and ask Allah (ﷻ) to be pleased with them and to grant them safety (in the hereafter), victory and paradise. We believe that 'Ali (ﷺ) was right in what he did and will have two rewards, and that what the Companions

(ﷺ) did was based on what they thought was best, so they will have one reward; they are not to be regarded as evildoers or innovators. The evidence for that is the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says: «Indeed, Allah was pleased with the believers when they gave the *Bay'ah* [pledge] to you [O Muhammad] under the tree, He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down *As-Sakeenah* [calmness and tranquillity] upon them, and He rewarded them with a near victory» (*Qur'an* 48: 18), and the words of the Prophet (ﷺ): 'If the ruler or judge strives to reach a verdict and gets it right, he will have two rewards; if he strives to reach a verdict and gets it wrong, he will have one reward.' If the judge in our time will have two rewards for his effort to reach the right judgement, then what do you think about the effort of those with whom Allah (ﷻ) is pleased and they are pleased with Him? The soundness of this view is indicated by the words of the Prophet (ﷺ) to al-Ḥasan (رضي الله عنه): 'This son of mine is a leader, and perhaps Allah will reconcile two great groups of the Muslims through him.'⁸¹² The greatness of each of the two groups was confirmed, and it was ruled that their Islam was sound. Allah promised to remove the resentment from their hearts when He (ﷻ) said: «And We shall remove from their breasts any deep feeling of bitterness [that they may have]. [So they will be like] brothers facing each other on thrones» (*Qur'an* 15: 47). So we must refrain from debating about the conflict that occurred among them and keep quiet about it.»⁸¹³

7. Ibn Taymiyah said, when discussing the belief of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah concerning the conflict among the Companions: "They refrain from debating the conflict among the Companions and say: 'These reports that mention bad conduct on their part include reports to which things have been

added, or from which things have been omitted, or which have been interpreted in the wrong way. As for those reports that are sound, they are excused for their conduct; or they based their conduct on what they thought was right, and they got it right; or they based their conduct on what they thought was right, but they got it wrong.”⁸¹⁴

8. Ibn Katheer said: “With regard to that concerning which they differed amongst themselves after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), some of it happened without their intending it to, such as the Battle of the Camel; some of it was based on what they thought was correct, such as the Battle of Şiffeen. A decision may be mistaken, but the person is excused; even if it is wrong, he will be rewarded for it, and the one who gets it right will have two rewards.”⁸¹⁵
9. Ibn Hajar said: “Ahl as-Sunnah are unanimously agreed that it is not allowed to criticise any of the Companions because of what happened to them, even if we know who was in the right, because they did not fight these battles except on the basis of what they believed was right. Indeed, it is proven that (the one who got it wrong) will have one reward, and the one who got it right will have two rewards.”⁸¹⁶

Ahl as-Sunnah are unanimously agreed that it is obligatory to refrain from becoming too involved in examining the fitnah that occurred among the Companions after the murder of ‘Uthmân (رضي الله عنه), and that we should pray for mercy for them, recognise the virtues of the Companions, acknowledge their precedence and spread reports of their good qualities.⁸¹⁷

3.7. Warning against some books which distort the history of the Companions

3.7.1. *Al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah*, which is attributed to Ibn Qutaybah

One of the books that distort the history of early Islam is *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah*, which is attributed to Ibn Qutaybah. Dr. Abdullah ‘Usaylân, in his book *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah fî Mizân at-Taḥqeeq al-‘Ilmi*, lists a number of points proving that this book attributed to Imam Ibn Qutaybah is false and is a fabrication. The evidence to that effect includes the following:

- None of those who wrote biographies of Ibn Qutaybah said that he wrote a book on history called *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah*, and we do not know of any book of history that he wrote except for a book called *al-Ma‘ârif*.
- Reading through the book gives one the impression that Ibn Qutaybah lived in Damascus and the Maghreb;⁸¹⁸ in fact, he never left Baghdad except to go to ad-Daynoor.
- The methodology and style used by the author of *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah* is completely different from the methodology and style of Ibn Qutaybah, as seen in those of his books that still exist. Ibn Qutaybah wrote lengthy introductions to his books, explaining his methodology and his aim in writing the book. In contrast, the author of *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah* writes a very short introduction that is no more than three lines. In addition, there are differences in style. We do not see this methodology in the books of Ibn Qutaybah.
- The author of *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah* narrates from Ibn Abi Layla in a way that gives the impression that he met him. But

this Ibn Abi Layla is Muhammad ibn ‘Abdur-Rahmân ibn Abi Layla al-Faqeeh, the judge of Kufah, who died in 148 AH. It is well known that Ibn Qutaybah was not born until 213 AH, sixty-five years after the death of Ibn Abi Layla.

- The narrators and shaykhs from whom Ibn Qutaybah usually narrates in his books are not mentioned anywhere in this book.
- A large segment of his reports are narrated using phrases that indicate a problem with the reports. It often says: “They mentioned from some of the Egyptians”, “They mentioned from Muhammad ibn Sulaymân from some of the shaykhs of the people of Egypt”, “Some of the shaykhs of the Maghreb told us”, or “They mentioned from some of the shaykhs.” Such phrases are far removed from the usual style and phraseology of Ibn Qutaybah and are not used in any of his books.
- The author of *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah* narrates from two of the senior scholars in Egypt, but Ibn Qutaybah never went to Egypt and never learned from these two scholars.⁸¹⁹
- Ibn Qutaybah is held in high esteem by the scholars, who regard him as one of Ahl as-Sunnah, trustworthy in his knowledge and religious commitment. As-Salafi said: “Ibn Qutaybah was one of the trustworthy and one of Ahl as-Sunnah.” Ibn Hâzim said concerning him: “He was trustworthy in his knowledge and religious commitment.” Al-Khaṭeeb al-Baghdadi said likewise. Ibn Taymiyah said concerning him: “Ibn Qutaybah is one of the followers of Aḥmad and Ishâq and one of the supporters of the Sunni madh-hab.”⁸²⁰ If a man is held in such high esteem by the authentic scholars, does it make sense for him to be the author of a book like *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah*, which distorts history and attributes to the Companions that which is not true?⁸²¹

Dr. 'Ali Nufay' al-'Alyâni says in his book *'Aqeedat al-Imam Ibn Qutaybah*, concerning *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah*: "After a critical reading of the book *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah*, in my view it is most likely that the author of *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah* was an evil Râfiḍi who wanted to attribute this book to Ibn Qutaybah because his books are numerous and because he was well known among the people for supporting Ahl al-Hadith (the people of hadiths). He may have been one of the Râfiḍis of the Maghreb, as Ibn Qutaybah enjoyed a good reputation in the Maghreb."⁸²²

What makes it likely that the author of *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah* was a Râfiḍi is the following:

- ❖ The author of *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah* claims that 'Ali (ﷺ) said to the Muhâjireen: "I urge you by Allah, O Muhâjireen, not to take the authority of Muhammad among the Arabs out of his house and home to yours and not to deprive his family of their rights, for by Allah, O Muhâjireen, we are more entitled to that because we are Ahl al-Bayt (the members of the Prophet's household) and are more entitled to this than you. By Allah, this is our right; do not follow whims and desires lest you go astray from the path of Allah."⁸²³ No one believes that the caliphate is the hereditary right of Ahl al-Bayt except the Shia.
- ❖ The author of *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah* harshly criticises the Companions of the Messenger of Allah. He depicts Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) as a coward and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâs as jealous; he says that Muhammad ibn Maslamah got angry with 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib because he killed the Jew Marḥab in Khaybar, and that 'Ā'ishah ordered that 'Uthmân be killed.⁸²⁴ Criticism of the *Companions* is one of the most well-known characteristics of the Râfiḍis; the Kharijites do something similar, but they do not criticise the majority of the Companions.⁸²⁵

- ❖ The author of *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah* says that al-Mukhtâr ibn Abi ‘Ubayd was killed by Muş‘ab ibn az-Zubayr because he called people to rally behind the household of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), but he neglects to mention the myths introduced by al-Mukhtâr or his claim of receiving revelation.⁸²⁶ The Râfiḍis are the ones who love al-Mukhtâr ibn Abi ‘Ubayd because he took revenge on the murderers of al-Ḥusayn. It should also be noted that Ibn Qutaybah (may Allah have mercy on him) mentioned al-Mukhtâr among those who rebelled against legitimate authority, and he said that al-Mukhtâr used to claim that Jibreel (ﷺ) came down to him.⁸²⁷
- ❖ The author of *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah* wrote only about twenty-five pages concerning the caliphates of the three caliphs Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmân, whereas he wrote two hundred pages about the fitnah that occurred among the Companions. In other words, he reduced the greatest period of history to a few pages but wrote pages upon pages of false history, of which nothing is proven except a little. This is one of the known attributes of the Râfiḍis. We seek refuge with Allah (ﷻ) from misguidance and betrayal.
- ❖ As-Sayyid Maḥmoud Shukri al-Aloosi says in *Mukhtaṣar al-Fitnah al-Ithna ‘Ashariyyah*: “Part of their (the Râfiḍis’) crafty tricks is that they look at the names of scholars who are respected by Ahl as-Sunnah, and whenever they find one who has the same name as one of their own scholars, they attribute the reports of that Shia scholar to him (the Sunni scholar). Those Sunnis who are unaware of this will think that this is one of their (Sunni) imams and will accept his words and rely on his reports. For example, as-Suddi is the name of two men, one of whom is as-Suddi the elder and the other is as-Suddi the younger. The elder as-Suddi is one of the trustworthy Sunni scholars, whereas

the younger is one of the fabricators and liars and is an extreme Râfiḍī. Abdullah ibn Qutaybah is an extreme Râfiḍī whereas Abdullah ibn Muslim ibn Qutaybah is a trustworthy Sunni scholar who wrote a book called *al-Ma‘ârif*; that Râfiḍī wrote a book which he also called *al-Ma‘ârif*, with the aim of misleading people.”⁸²⁸ This is what makes it likely that the book *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah* was written by the Râfiḍī Ibn Qutaybah and not by the trustworthy Sunni Ibn Qutaybah; people got confused by the similarity of names.⁸²⁹ And Allah (ﷻ) knows best.

3.7.2. Nahj al-Balâghah

One of the books that played a role in distorting the history of the Companions is the book called *Nahj al-Balâghah*. This book is faulty in terms of both its chains of narration and its text. It was compiled three and a half centuries after ‘Ali (ﷻ) died, without any chain of narration. The Shia attributed *Nahj al-Balâghah* to ash-Shareef ar-Raḍiy, who was not accepted by the hadith scholars even when he gave a chain of narrators, in cases where the reports support his innovations, so how about if no chain of narration is given at all, as is the case in *Nahj al-Balâghah*? As for the one whom the scholars accused of lying, that is his brother ‘Ali.⁸³⁰ The scholars discussed him and said:

- Ibn Khallikân said in *Tarjamat ash-Shareef al-Murtaḍiy*: “The scholars differed concerning the book *Nahj al-Balâghah*, which is a compilation of the words of Imam ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷻ), as to whether it was compiled by ‘Ali or his brother ar-Raḍiy. It was said that these were not the words of ‘Ali; rather that the one who compiled it and attributed it to him was the one who fabricated it. And Allah knows best.”⁸³¹
- Adh-Dhahabi said: “The one who studies *Nahj al-Balâghah* will be certain that it is falsely attributed to Amir al-Mu‘mineen ‘Ali

(ﷺ). It contains blatant insults and criticism of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) as well as contradictions, and is written in a weak and pallid style such that anyone who knows anything about the Qurayshi Companions and those who came after them, and their way of thinking, will be certain that most of it is false.”⁸³²

- Ibn Taymiyah said: “The scholars know that most of the speeches in this book are fabricated and falsely attributed to ‘Ali (ﷺ), hence we do not find most of it in earlier books, and it has no known chain of transmission.”⁸³³
- Ibn Hajar accuses ash-Shareef al-Murtaḍiy of fabricating it and says: “The one who studies it will be certain that it is falsely attributed to Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (ﷺ), and most of it is false.”⁸³⁴

Based on the above comments and others, a number of researchers discussed this topic and said that this book cannot be soundly attributed to Imam ‘Ali (ﷺ).⁸³⁵

We may note some of the most important reasons why the early and modern scholars doubted the attribution of *Nahj al-Balâghah* to Imam ‘Ali:

- ❖ It is devoid of documented chains of narration that would support the attribution of its words to ‘Ali.
- ❖ It contains a large number of lengthy speeches, which would have been difficult to memorise without getting mixed up at that time, before the era of compiling and writing things down. Even the speeches of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) have not reached us in complete form, despite the great deal of care and attention given to them.
- ❖ We can see many of its statements and speeches in trustworthy

sources where they are attributed to someone other than 'Ali (عليه السلام), but the author of *Nahj al-Balâghah* attributes them to him.

- ❖ This book contains words that criticise the Rightly Guided Caliphs who preceded 'Ali, in a manner that is not befitting him or them; these words contradict what is known about 'Ali's respect for them. One example is the report of the speech known as Shaqshaqiyyah, in which his keenness to become caliph is demonstrated, even though he was known to be an ascetic who cared little about worldly matters.
- ❖ The prevalence of rhymed prose in the book. A number of literary critics think that so much rhymed prose is not in accordance with the spirit of 'Ali's era, when people sought to avoid overdoing things, even though the kind of rhymed prose that comes without much effort was not far removed from the spirit of that time.
- ❖ Writing in a very ornate manner, which is a demonstration of literary ability. This is a feature of the 'Abbasid era, with its love of flowery speech such as we find in the description of peacocks, bats, bees, ants, plants, clouds and so on.
- ❖ The philosophical style that is scattered throughout the book was unknown to the Muslims until the third century AH, when Greek, Persian and Indian books were translated. This is more like the words of the philosophers and orators than the words of the Companions and the Rightly Guided Caliphs.⁸³⁶

We should beware of this book when talking about the Companions and what happened between them and Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام). We should measure its texts against Qur'an and Sunnah; whatever is in accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah, there is nothing wrong with referring to it, but whatever is contrary to them, we should pay no attention to it.

3.7.3. *Al-Aghâni* by al-Isfahâni

The book *al-Aghâni* by Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahâni is regarded as a book of literature, entertainment and poetry that is to be sung; it is not a book of knowledge, history and Islamic jurisprudence. It is very famous in the realm of literature and history, but that does not mean that we should keep quiet about what is mentioned in it of *shu'oobiyyah*,⁸³⁷ fabrication, blatant lies, slander and criticism. The Iraqi poet, Professor Waleed al-A'dhami, has written a valuable book called *as-Sayf al-Yamâni fî Nahṛ al-Isfahâni Şâhib al-Aghâni*, in which he makes a serious effort to distinguish between what is rubbish and what may be accepted, what is poison and what is honey. He highlights what the book contains of lies, inflammatory *shu'oobiyyah* and hatred, which seethes in the heart like a boiling cauldron. He refutes the false and unauthenticated reports that al-Isfahâni compiled, which undermine the people of the Prophet's household and distort their history and their image. He also discusses the false claims made by al-Isfahâni with regard to Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân and the Umayyad Rightly Guided Caliphs, as well as the reports that are fabricated and falsely attributed to them. In this valuable book, the great scholar and poet Professor Waleed al-A'dhami also discusses other kinds of falsehood, including the fabricated stories that undermine Islamic belief and religion and give precedence to ignorance over Islam.⁸³⁸

The early scholars commented on Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahâni:

- Al-Khateeb al-Baghdadi said: "Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahâni was the worst of liars; he used to buy a lot of worthless books, then all that he wrote was based on them."⁸³⁹
- Ibn al-Jawzi said: "The reports of such a man cannot be trusted, and you will find in his books evidence to prove that he is an evildoer. He encourages the drinking of

alcohol and may even attribute that to himself. The one who studies the book *al-Aghâni* will see all kinds of evils.”⁸⁴⁰

- Adh-Dhahabi said: “I saw our Shaykh Ibn Taymiyah classifying him as weak, criticising him with regard to his reports and finding what was in his book outrageous.”⁸⁴¹

3.7.4. *Tareekh al-Ya‘qoobi*

The author’s full name is Aḥmad ibn Abi Ya‘qoob Ishâq ibn Ja‘far ibn Wahb ibn Wâḍih. He was from Baghdad, and he died in the year 290 AH. He was an Imami Shia historian who worked as a scribe in the ministries of the Abbasid state, so he was known as ‘the Abbasid scribe’. Al-Ya‘qoobi presented the history of the Islamic state from a purely Imami Shia point of view. He did not acknowledge the caliphate of anyone except ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib and his sons (may Allah be pleased with them), in the sequence of Imams accepted by the Shia, and he referred to ‘Ali as the rightful, appointed heir of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). When he spoke of the caliphates of Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them), he did not give them the title of caliph; rather he said: “So-and-so took charge.” He did not mention any of them without reviling him. He narrated bad reports about ‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها) and treated other senior Companions in like manner, narrating corrupt reports about ‘Uthmân (رضي الله عنه)⁸⁴² and also about Khâlid ibn al-Waleed,⁸⁴³ ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âs⁸⁴⁴ and Mu‘âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân.⁸⁴⁵ He discussed in a very negative light the meeting in which Abu Bakr was first given the oath of allegiance after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ),⁸⁴⁶ claiming that it was a conspiracy to take the caliphate away from ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه) who, in his view, was the rightful successor. His way of fabricating false accusations is typical of the way of his fellow Shia and Râfiḍis; it involves either fabricating the report altogether,⁸⁴⁷ adding

something to the report,⁸⁴⁸ or quoting it out of context to distort its meaning.

When he mentions the Umayyad caliphs, he describes them as kings, but when he mentions the Abbasid caliphs, he calls them caliphs. In his book *al-Buldân*, he also calls their state 'the blessed state',⁸⁴⁹ which is a reflection of his hypocrisy and practice of taqiyyah (dissimulation). This book is an example of the deviation and distortion to be found in the writing of Islamic history, but it was used as a reference by many Orientalists and westernised Muslims who undermined Islamic history and the images of its figures. In fact, this book is worthless from an academic point of view; the first part is mostly filled with stories, myths and legends, and the second part is written from a partisan point of view. It is also lacking the simplest principles of academic authentication.⁸⁵⁰

3.7.5. Al-Mas'oodi (d. 345 AH)

The book *Murooj adh-Dhahab wa Ma'âdin al-Jawhar* was written by al-Mas'oodi, whose full name is Abu al-Ḥasan 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali al-Mas'oodi; he was one of the descendants of Abdullah ibn Mas'ood (ؓ).⁸⁵¹ It was said that he was a man from 'the Maghreb',⁸⁵² but al-Mas'oodi himself stated that he was from Iraq and that he moved to Egypt.⁸⁵³ If what was meant by 'the Maghreb' was the western part of the Arab world as opposed to the eastern part, then Egypt is part of the western part of the Muslim world, so there is no contradiction.⁸⁵⁴

Al-Mas'oodi was a Shia, of whom Ibn Ḥajar said: "His books are filled with proof that he was a Shia and Mutazilite."⁸⁵⁵ Al-Mas'oodi argued that the concept of the rightful, appointed heir for the imamate was known and established from the time of Adam, and that it was transmitted from generation to generation until the time of our Messenger (ﷺ). Ibn Ḥajar mentioned the differences among the

people after that with regard to whether there is a divine text or it is to be left for people to choose, and the Imami Shia believe that there is a text.⁸⁵⁶ In his book *Murooj adh-Dhahab*, Al-Mas'oodi paid a great deal of attention to the events surrounding 'Ali ibn Abi Tālib (عليه السلام); he paid more attention to him than he did to the life of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in the same book.⁸⁵⁷ He focused his attention on the household of 'Ali (عليه السلام) and followed reports on them very clearly in his book *Murooj adh-Dhahab*.⁸⁵⁸ He tried shamelessly to distort the history of the first generation of Islam.

These are some of the classical books that we warn against, and which had a great impact on the writings of some contemporary authors such as Taha Hussein (*al-Fitnah al-Kubra* — '*Ali wa Banuhu*') and al-'Aqqād (*al-'Abqariyât* series). They quoted numerous fabricated and weak reports and based their analysis on them; hence they were mistaken in their conclusions and made serious errors concerning the Companions (رضي الله عنهم). The same is true of 'Abdul-Wahhāb an-Najjār in his book *al-Khulafā' ar-Rāshideen*, where he quotes texts of the Rāfiḍi reports from *al-Imāmah was-Siyāsah*, and Ḥasan Ibrāheem in his book '*Amr ibn al-Āṣ*', in which he concludes, on the basis of fabricated Rāfiḍi reports, that 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ was a man in pursuit of his own interests and ambitions who would not get involved in any matter unless he could see some worldly interest or benefits for himself.⁸⁵⁹ There are also other researchers who followed the same methodology and thus entered dark tunnels because of their being far removed from the methodology of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah when dealing with the huge accumulation of historical reports.

3.8. The Orientalists and Islamic history

One of the worst groups when it comes to distorting Islamic history is the Rāfiḍi Shia, of all groups and types. They were among

the earliest of the groups to emerge, and they have a hierarchical political system and their own set of deviant beliefs and ideology. This is the group that tells the most lies against its opponents, and they are among the most vehemently opposed of people towards the Companions, as we will see. Among the basic foundations of their belief are impugning the Companions and denouncing them as disbelievers, especially the 'two shaykhs' Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them), whom they refer to as 'sorcery and evil'.⁸⁶⁰ The Shia have the greatest number of narrators and storytellers who took on the mission of spreading their lies and fabrications and compiling them in books and essays about the events of Islamic history, especially internal events. Shu'oobiyyah and tribalism also had an effect on the fabrication of historical reports and stories aimed at distorting Islamic history and 'proving' the superiority of one sect or people or race over another, ignoring the Sharia criterion of superiority, namely taqwa. ﴿Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is that [believer] who has *At-Taqwa* [i.e. he is one of the *Muttaqoon* (the pious)]﴾ (*Qur'an* 49: 13).

The deviant sects took advantage of the prevalence of storytellers, the ignorance and lack of knowledge of the Sunnah on the part of most of the people, and the fact that some of them had drifted away from the truth while seeking to earn a living. They spread their lies and fabricated stories, which these storytellers welcomed and spread among the common folk, without realising the situation. Hundreds of fabricated reports about the Companions, Tâbi'oon and Muslim scholars, which undermined them and distorted their history, were disseminated through them. But by His grace and blessing, Allah (ﷻ) guided a number of scholarly critics, who strove hard to examine the narrators and narrations, distinguishing between true and false and defending the beliefs and history of the Ummah. The Sunni scholars put a great deal of effort

into pointing out the fabricated reports by quoting them and highlighting those narrators who were weak, suspicious, or followers of whims and desires. They drew up a methodology for examining the reports and determining which to accept, and they were successful in these efforts.

Among the most prominent of those who took on the mission of explaining historical errors and pointing out flaws in the false reports were: al-Qâḍi Ibn al-'Arabi in *al-'Awâṣim min al-Qawâṣim*; Imam Ibn Taymiyah in many of his books and essays, especially his valuable book *Minhâj as-Sunnah an-Nabawiyyah fî Naqd Kalâm ash-Shia wal-Qadariyyah*; the critic adh-Dhahabi in many of his historical writings such as *Siyar A'lâm an-Nubala'*, *Tareekh al-Islam* and *Mizân al-I'tidâl fî Naqd ar-Rijâl*; al-Hâfidh⁸⁶¹ Ibn Katheer, the interpreter of Qur'an and historian, in his book *al-Bidâyah wan-Nihâyah*; al-Hâfidh Ibn Hajar al-'Asqallâni in his books *Fath al-Bâri fî Sharḥ Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Bukhâri*, *Lisân al-Mizân*, *Tahdheeb at-Tahdheeb* and *al-Iṣâbah fî Ma'rifat aṣ-Ṣahâbah*.

With regard to the methods used by the Shia to distort the historical events and images of the early generation of the Companions and Tâbi'oon, there were many ways, including:

- ❖ Outright fabrications and lies.
- ❖ Mentioning a true story or incident, but adding or omitting details so as to distort it and give the opposite idea.
- ❖ Quoting reports out of context, so that the meaning is distorted, and a false interpretation of events is given.
- ❖ Highlighting shortcomings and mistakes while concealing well-established facts.
- ❖ Fabricating poetry and attributing it to some poets, in order to support some so-called historical events, because

Arabic poetry is regarded as a historical document and proof that helps to authenticate reports.

- ❖ Fabricating books and essays and falsely attributing them to scholars and well known characters, as the Râfiḍis fabricated the book *al-Imâmah was-Siyâsah*, which they attributed to Abu Muhammad Abdullah ibn Muslim ibn Qutaybah ad-Daynoori because he was famous among and trusted by the Sunnis, as we have seen above.

In the last century, these lies and distortions were welcomed by Western scholars and writers, such as Orientalists and missionaries, during the period in which they invaded and colonised Muslim countries. They found in this material what they were looking for, and they started to highlight it and focus on it. Motivated by their fanaticism and hatred of the Muslims, they added lies by inventing events that never happened or misinterpreting historical events, purposely distorting and misinterpreting the facts to support their beliefs. This group was then supported by a large number of the students of the Orientalists from Arab and Muslim countries, who adopted their research methodology and their ideas and concepts for analysing and interpreting history; they took up the banner after the Europeans departed from the Muslim lands. Thus the harm that they did was worse and greater than that of their Orientalist teachers and their predecessors among the misguided and innovating groups. That is because they, like their teachers, claimed to be following a pure academic spirit and scientific method in research by giving up any and all preconceptions, but in fact most of them gave up nothing but their faith.

They had no sincerity towards the truth and no knowledge of following a sound academic methodology in proving historical events, such as comparing reports, knowing the value of the sources to which they were referring and the extent to which the narrators

were authentic and accurate, and studying the context of those narrators in terms of human nature and development.⁸⁶² They did not learn anything of scientific or academic methodology except for superficial matters such as how to write footnotes and put together bibliographies, and so on. This is probably what scientific methodology meant to them.⁸⁶³ Muḥibb ad-Deen al-Khaṭeeb said: "Those who received a foreign education are controlled by the illusion that they are disconnected from that past, and their attitude towards its figures is like that of a public attorney towards the accused. Indeed, some of them even went to extremes to appear in front of others as if they had no connection with any part of Arab and Muslim history, following in the footsteps of the Orientalists with their suspicious views of the past. They have a sense of contentment and follow their whims and desires, at the time when fairness dictates that they should verify the matter, in order to reach a conclusion and feel at ease with it before they have enough evidence to prove it."⁸⁶⁴

One of the most important means by which the Orientalists and their students sought to distort the facts of Islamic history is:

Misinterpreting historical events on the basis of modern concepts and ideas and in accordance with whatever crossed their minds, without even verifying the historical events in the first place and without paying any attention to the historical context in which the event took place, the people's circumstances at that time, or the beliefs that were guiding them and that they were following. Before discussing any event, it is essential to first verify that it took place; the fact that it is mentioned in some book is not sufficient to prove it.⁸⁶⁵ The stage of verifying precedes the stage of discussing and interpreting historical events.

The interpretation should also be in accordance with the wording of the historical report, as well as the context of the research and the general nature of the society, era and environment in which

the event took place. This interpretation of the historical event should not contradict another incident or series of incidents that are proven to have happened. Examination of an event should not be limited to one aspect only, as is the habit of many contemporary schools of thought when studying history; instead, all the factors that have an impact on the event should be scrutinised, especially ideological and intellectual factors. Even after paying attention to all of the above, the interpretation of historical events is no more than a human effort, which may be right or wrong. Some have given prominence to the history of misguided groups and tried to exaggerate their role, depicting them as reformers who were wronged or oppressed. They have tried to suggest that Muslim historians were unfair to groups like the Qarâmiṭah, Isma'îlis, Imâmi Râfiḍis, Fâtimids, Zanj, Ikhwân aş-Şafa and the Kharijites. In the view of these historians, all of these groups were advocates of reform, justice, freedom and equality, and their uprisings were aimed at putting an end to injustice and oppression.

This propaganda against Islamic history, and trying to crowd out the biographies of heroes and callers to Islam with the biographies of the leaders of misguided groups, is something that comes as no surprise from people who are not Muslims, because they are motivated by their own beliefs and aims to plot against Islam with all possible efforts by night and day, in secret and openly. One cannot expect people who have no faith and who belong to the disbelieving groups to do anything other than to support their brothers in misguidance.

What some may find strange however is that after the collapse of Orientalism, the banner of distortion was taken up by writers who have Muslim names and are Muslims, who tried to spread this poison among their fellow Muslims so as to divert the ignorant away from the straight path. These writers rely on dubious, weak, worthless

reports which they pick up from literature, fairy stories, folktales and weak or falsely attributed books. These books are what they use as proof, along with what they find of fabricated reports in aṭ-Ṭabari and al-Mas'oodi, even though they know that they are not regarded as reliable academic references. This transgression against and distortion of Islamic history — especially the history of the early generations — has been done by a number of means, namely:

- (a) Choosing and focusing on particular events, such as battles and wars, and depicting them incorrectly so as to take away the idea of jihad for the sake of Allah (ﷻ), or focusing on events and internal turmoil with the aim of presenting the dispute among the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) as if it were a typical example of conflict and political scheming like those of modern times.
- (b) Concealing and ignoring everything that could set a good example and motivate people.
- (c) Shedding doubt by targeting history and its celebrated figures, as well as the Muslim historians themselves, and casting aspersions on their knowledge and authenticity.
- (d) Fragmenting Islamic history into small, disparate parts as if there is no connection between them, such as dividing Islamic history on the basis of regions, race and so on.

All of these means are attempts to destroy our Islamic history and its beautiful features, and to prevent it from becoming a good example to follow and a means of sound education.

Hence the Muslim historians have to know about these things and be wary of them. They should also be aware of those who followed the Orientalists in their views and methodology, and they should not accept anything from them except with great caution. If

our scholars (may Allah have mercy on them) criticise many narrators of history and regard their reports as weak because they quote from the People of the Book and their Jewish and Christian sources, then we should be equally cautious in accepting the views and interpretations of those who learned from the Orientalists. As a matter of fact, we should reject and disregard them unless there is clear proof to support them.⁸⁶⁶

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CHAPTER SEVEN

'Ali's attitude towards the Kharijites and Shia

1. The Kharijites

1.1. Origin and definition of the Kharijites

The scholars have defined the Kharijites in several ways. According to Abu al-Ḥasan al-Ash'ari, the name Kharijites was given to the group that rebelled against the fourth Rightly Guided Caliph 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام). He said: "The reason why they are called Kharijites is because of their rebellion (*khurooj*) against 'Ali when he agreed to arbitration."¹

Ibn Ḥazm stated that the name Kharijite applies to everyone who resembles the group that rebelled against 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام) and who shares their beliefs. He said: "Whoever agreed with the Kharijites in rejecting the arbitration, regards anyone who commits a major sin as a disbeliever, says that the people should rebel against unjust rulers, believes that people who commit major sins will abide in hell forever, and thinks that the caliph may be other than a Qurayshi, is a Kharijite. If he differs with them with regard to other issues concerning which the Muslims differed, and he differs with them concerning the issues mentioned above, then he is not a Kharijite."²

Ash-Shahraṣṭānī defined the Kharijites in general terms and for any era, saying: "Anyone who rebels against the rightful ruler of the Muslims, on whom they are agreed, is called a Kharijite, whether that rebellion took place at the time of the Companions against the Rightly Guided Caliphs or it happened after that against those who followed them in truth and the rulers of every era."³

Ibn Ḥajar said concerning them: "The Kharijites are those who objected to 'Ali (عليه السلام) for appointing arbitrators, disavowed him and 'Uthmān and his descendants, and fought them. If they regard them as disbelievers, then they are extreme."⁴ Giving another definition, he said: "The Kharijites are a rebellious group. They are innovators who were given this name because of their rebellion (khurooj) against Islam and against the best of the Muslims."⁵

Abu al-Ḥasan al-Malṭī thinks that the first Kharijite group was al-Muhakkimah, whose slogan was "There is no ruling except the ruling of Allah (الله)." They said that when 'Ali (عليه السلام) agreed to arbitration and gave Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari the authority to rule and judge, 'Ali (عليه السلام) committed an act of disbelief, because there is no ruling except the ruling of Allah (الله). The Kharijites were so called because of their rebellion (khurooj) against 'Ali (عليه السلام) at the time of arbitration.⁶

Dr. Nāṣir al-'Aql says: "They are those who regard people as disbelievers for committing sins and those who rebel against unjust rulers."⁷

So the Kharijites are those people who rebelled against 'Ali (عليه السلام) after he agreed to arbitration following the battle of Ṣiffeen. They have other names by which they are also known, such as the *Ḥarooriyyah*,⁸ *ash-Shurāh*,⁹ *al-Mâriqah* and *al-Muhakkimah*.¹⁰ They accepted all of these names except the name *al-Mâriqah* (the renegades); they did not accept that they were renegades from Islam who passed out of the faith as the arrow passes out of the prey.¹¹

Some scholars suggest that the origins of the Kharijites go back to the time of the Messenger (ﷺ), and they recognise Dhul-Khuwayṣirah as the first of the Kharijites. He objected to the way the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) distributed some gold that 'Ali (ﷺ) had sent to him from Yemen. It is narrated from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه) that he said: " 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) sent to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) some gold from Yemen in a tanned leather bag that had not been purified of the earth clinging to it. He shared it out among four men: 'Uyaynah ibn Ḥaṣn, al-Aqra' ibn Ḥâbis, Zayd al-Khayl and the fourth, who was either 'Alqamah ibn 'Ulâthah or 'Âmir ibn at-Tufayl. One of his companions said: 'We had more right to it than these men.' News of that reached the Prophet (ﷺ), who said: 'Do you not trust me, when I am the trustee of the One Who is above the heaven, and the news of heaven comes to me morning and evening?' A man with sunken eyes, prominent cheeks, a prominent forehead, a thick beard and shaven head stood up, tucking up his waist wrapper, and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, fear Allah!' He said: 'Woe to you! Am I not the one who should fear Allah the most among the people of earth?' Then the man turned and left, and Khâlid ibn al-Waleed (رضي الله عنه) said: 'O Messenger of Allah, should I not strike his neck (kill him)?' He said: 'No, perhaps he prays.' Khâlid said: 'How many of those who pray say with their tongues what is not in their hearts?' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'I have not been commanded to check people's hearts or split open their bellies (meaning checking what is in their hidden thoughts).' Then he looked at the man as he was going back, and he said: 'From among the progeny of this man will emerge people who recite the Book of Allah fluently, but it will not go any further than their throats. They will pass out of the faith as an arrow passes out of the prey.' He [the narrator] said: I think he said: 'If I live to see them, then I will certainly kill them like the killing of Thamood.'"¹²

Ibn al-Jawzi said, commenting on this hadith: "The first of the Kharijites, and the worst of them, was Dhul-Khuwayṣirah at-Tameemi. According to one version, he said to the Prophet (ﷺ), 'Be fair,' and the Prophet (ﷺ) replied: 'Woe to you! Who will be fair if I am not fair?'"¹³ This was the first Kharijite to rebel in Islam. His problem was that he was content with his own opinion, but if he had thought carefully, he would have realised that no opinion could supersede that of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). The followers of this man are those who fought 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (ﷺ)."¹⁴

Among those who suggested that Dhul-Khuwayṣirah was the first of the Kharijites were Abu Muhammad ibn Ḥazm¹⁵ and ash-Shahraṣṭānī, in his book *al-Milal wan-Niḥal*.¹⁶ Some scholars think that the Kharijites originated at the time of the rebellion against 'Uthmān (ﷺ), when they stirred up the fitnah that led to his being killed wrongfully and unlawfully; the unrest that they stirred up was called 'the first fitnah'.¹⁷ The commentator on *at-Taḥḥâwiyyah* said: "The Kharijites and the Shia emerged during the first fitnah."¹⁸ Ibn Katheer labelled as Kharijites the thugs who rebelled against and killed 'Uthmān (ﷺ), and he said when discussing them after their slaying of 'Uthmān (ﷺ): "The Kharijites came and seized the wealth of the public treasury, in which there was a great deal of wealth."¹⁹

The most correct opinion about the origins of the Kharijites, despite the strong connections between Dhul-Khuwayṣirah and the thugs who rebelled against 'Uthmān (ﷺ) on the one hand, and the Kharijites who rebelled against 'Ali (ﷺ) because of the arbitration on the other, is that this terminology — in the most accurate sense of the word — can only be applied to those who rebelled because of the arbitration. They were an organised group who formed a sect with its own political inclinations and views, and the group had a clear ideological and intellectual impact, which was not the case in the previous incidents.²⁰

1.2. Hadiths which criticise the Kharijites

There are many hadiths from the Prophet (ﷺ) which criticise the renegade Kharijites; they are described in these hadiths as having the most reprehensible characteristics, which make them the worst of people. Among the hadiths in which they are criticised is that which was narrated by the two shaykhs (Bukhari and Muslim) in their *Ṣaḥeeḥs* from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه): "While we were with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and he was sharing out some wealth, Dhul-Khuwayṣirah, a man from Banu Tameem, came and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, be fair!' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Woe to you! Who will be fair if I am not fair? I will be doomed and lost if I am not fair.' 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (رضي الله عنه) said: 'O Messenger of Allah, give me permission to strike his neck.' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Let him be, for he has companions in comparison to whose prayer one of you would regard his prayer as insignificant, and he would regard his fasting as insignificant in comparison to their fasting. They recite the Qur'an, but it does not go any further than their collarbones. They will pass out of Islam as an arrow passes out of the prey; when he looks at the tip of it, there is nothing on it; then he looks at the sinews (which tie the arrowhead to the shaft), and there is nothing on them; then he looks at its base, and there is nothing on it; then he looks at its feathers, and there is nothing on them, because it has gone too fast to be smeared with excrement or blood. Their sign will be a black man, one of whose upper arms will be like a woman's breast or like a piece of quivering flesh. They will emerge when there is division among the people.'" Abu Sa'eed said: "I bear witness that I heard this from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and I bear witness that 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه) fought them when I was with him. He ordered that that man be sought, and he was found and brought. I looked at him and saw that he was just as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had described him."²¹

The two shaykhs (Bukhari and Muslim) also narrated from Abu Salamah and 'Ata' ibn Yasâr that they came to Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri and asked him about the Ḥarooriyyah, saying: "Did you hear the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) mention them?" He said: "I do not know who the Ḥarooriyyah are, but I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: 'There will emerge among this Ummah' — and he did not say: from them — 'people in comparison to whose prayer you will regard your prayer as insignificant. They will recite the Qur'an, but it will not go any further than their throats. They will pass out of Islam like an arrow passes out of the prey; then the archer looks at his arrow, at its tip and at its end and its notch, wondering whether there are any traces of blood on it.'"²²

Bukhari narrated that Usayd ibn 'Amr said: "I said to Sahl ibn Hunayf: 'Did you hear the Prophet (ﷺ) say anything about the Kharijites?' He said: 'I heard him say, pointing towards Iraq: "There will emerge from it people who recite the Qur'an, but it does not go any further than their collarbones. They will pass out of Islam as the arrow passes out of the prey.'"²³

In these three hadiths, there is clear condemnation of the Kharijites. The Prophet (ﷺ) described them as a group of renegades who will be inappropriately strict in religion; in fact, they will pass out of it, meaning that they will enter it and then leave it quickly, and no part of it will adhere to them. The first of these hadiths also says that they will fight the group that is in the right, that the group that is in the right will destroy them, and that among them will be a man whose arm is like such and such. All of that happened as foretold by the Prophet (ﷺ).

With regard to the words "it does not go any further than their collarbones," there are two interpretations. It may mean that they do not understand it with their hearts, so they interpret it in a way that was not meant, or it may mean that their recitation will not be taken up to Allah (ﷻ).²³

One of their blameworthy characteristics, for which the Messenger (ﷺ) criticised them, is that all they have of faith is mere lip service. Because their reasoning is weak and poor, and their understanding is incorrect, they recite Qur'an and think that it supports them, when in fact it is against them. Bukhari (may Allah have mercy on him) narrated that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said: "If I narrate to you a hadith from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), by Allah, being dropped from heaven would be dearer to me than telling a lie about him. But if I tell you of something that is between me and you, then war is deceit, and I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: 'There will emerge some people at the end of time²⁴ who are young in age, feeble-minded and foolish. They will quote from the best of words, but their faith will go no further than their throats, and they will pass out of Islam as the arrow passes out of the prey.'"²⁵

In these two hadiths, the Kharijites are criticised for having mere words instead of true faith. The first hadith indicates that their belief is verbal only and that they do not believe in their hearts.²⁶ In the latter hadith, which was narrated by Zayd ibn Wahb al-Juhani from 'Ali (رضي الله عنه), the word 'faith' refers to prayer. Both hadiths indicate that their faith is a matter of words only, and that it goes no further than their throats or collarbones. This is the worst criticism.²⁷

Another of the reprehensible characteristics for which the Prophet (ﷺ) criticised them is that they will pass out of Islam and will never be guided to return to it, and he said that they are the worst of creation. Muslim (may Allah have mercy on him) narrated from Abu Dharr (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "After me, there will be among my Ummah people who recite the Qur'an, but it does not go any further than their throats. They will pass out of the faith as an arrow passes out of the prey, then they will not return to it. They are the most evil of mankind and of all creation."²⁸ He narrated from Abu Sa'eed that the Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned some people among his

Ummah who would rebel as a group, and whose characteristic feature was that they would have shaven heads. He said: "They are the most evil of mankind — or among the most evil of mankind — and they will be killed by the group that is closer to the truth."

Another of the characteristics for which they were condemned by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is that they are the most hated of creation to Allah. It is narrated in *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim* from 'Ubaydullah ibn Abi Râfi', the freed slave of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), that he was with 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام) when the Ḥarooriyyah rebelled. They said: "There is no ruling except the ruling of Allah." 'Ali said: "These are true words being used for false purposes."²⁹ The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) described some people, and I recognise their characteristics in these people: 'They will speak the truth on their lips, but it will not go any further than this,' — and he pointed to his throat — 'and they are the most hated of Allah's creation to Him. Among them will be a black man, one of whose arms is like the teat of a sheep or a nipple.'" When 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام) killed them, he said: "Look (for that man)." They looked but did not find anything. He told them two or three times: "Go back, for by Allah, I did not lie, nor was I lied to." Then they found the man in a ruin, and they brought him and placed him before 'Ali (عليه السلام). 'Ubaydullah said: "I was present when that happened, and 'Ali said that to them."³⁰

Another of the blameworthy characteristics for which they were criticised by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was that they were deprived of knowing the truth and being guided to it.³¹ Muslim narrated in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ*, in the hadith of Usayd ibn 'Amr from Sahl ibn Ḥunayf, that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Some people from the east, who have shaven heads, will be misguided."³² An-Nawawi said that this means that they will go astray from the right path and the path of truth.³³

Another of the reprehensible characteristics that the Prophet (ﷺ) said would be manifested in them is that they regard it as a religious duty to kill the Muslims while they spare those who worship idols and the cross.³⁴ The two shaykhs (Bukhari and Muslim) narrated in their *Ṣaḥeeḥs* that Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri said: "When he was in Yemen, 'Ali (ﷺ) sent some gold, still encased in earth, to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) shared it out among four men... There came a man with a thick beard, prominent cheeks, sunken eyes, a prominent forehead and a shaven head, who said: 'Fear Allah, O Muhammad!' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Who will obey Allah if I disobey Him? Would He trust me with the people of earth, but you do not trust me?' Then the man turned and left, and a man who was among the people asked for permission to kill him. (They think that he was Khâlid ibn al-Waleed.) Then the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Among the progeny of this man will be people who will recite the Qur'an, but it will not go any further than their throats. They will kill the people of Islam and leave the idol worshippers alone. They will pass through Islam as an arrow passes through the prey. If I live to see them, then I will certainly kill them like 'Âd.'"³⁵

This prediction is a marvellous miracle of the Messenger (ﷺ) because they behaved as he foretold; they wielded their swords and killed the Muslims, but they spared the disbelievers — the Jews and Christians³⁶ — as we shall see below.

Another sign of the corruption of the Kharijites is reflected in the fact that the Messenger (ﷺ) encouraged killing them when they appeared. He said that if he lived to see them, he would eradicate them by killing them as 'Âd and Thamood were eradicated, and he said that the one who killed them would have a reward with Allah (ﷻ) on the Day of Resurrection. Allah (ﷻ) bestowed upon the fourth Rightly Guided Caliph, 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, the honour of

fighting and killing them, because they emerged during his reign as the Prophet (ﷺ) described them. 'Ali (عليه السلام) went out to meet the Kharijites with the army that he had prepared to take to Syria; he attacked them at Nahrawân, and fewer than ten of them survived, as we shall see below. He did not fight them until they had shed blood that was protected by Sharia and attacked the property of the Muslims, then he fought them in order to defend against their aggression and because of what they had demonstrated of their evil actions and words.

The hadiths that we have quoted criticising the Kharijites are sufficient; there are so many hadiths criticising them that hardly any books of hadith are devoid of such reports.³⁷ We will discuss below how they started to gather in Ḥaroora', how Ibn 'Abbâs debated with them, and how Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) was keen to enlighten and guide them, as well as the reasons for the battle of Nahrawân and its consequences. We will also discuss the basic beliefs of the Kharijites and whether Kharijite thought still exists among people, what its causes are and how it should be dealt with.

1.3. The gathering of the Kharijites in Ḥaroora' and the debate of Ibn 'Abbâs with them

The Kharijites split in a large group from 'Ali's army on the way back from Şifteen to Kufah. According to one report, they numbered more than ten thousand; other reports put the number at twelve thousand,³⁸ eight thousand³⁹ or fourteen thousand.⁴⁰ There is also a report saying that they were twenty thousand,⁴¹ but this report was narrated without any chain of transmission.⁴² These people split from the army in several stages before reaching Kufah, which was a cause of worry and alarm for the companions of 'Ali (عليه السلام). The caliph marched to Kufah with those in his army who remained loyal

to him. 'Ali (عليه السلام) became preoccupied with the Kharijite issue, especially after he heard about them organising their group by appointing one man to lead the prayers and another man to lead the fighting. Their view that allegiance was to be given to Allah (ﷻ), as well as their emphasis on enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, meant a practical split from the main body of the Muslims.

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) was also keen to bring them back to the main body of Muslims, so he sent Ibn 'Abbâs to debate with them. Ibn 'Abbâs himself narrated what happened: "I went out to them wearing the best suit that Yemen had to offer, and I entered upon them in a house in the middle of the day." Ibn 'Abbâs was a handsome and good-looking man. "They said: 'Welcome, O Ibn 'Abbâs; what is this suit?' I said: 'Why are you criticising me? I saw the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) wearing the best kind of suit, and the words ﴿Say [O Muhammad]: Who has forbidden the adornment with clothes given by Allah, which He has produced for His slaves, and At-Tayyibât [all kinds of Halâl (lawful) things] of food?﴾ (Qur'an 7: 32) were revealed.'

"They said: 'What brings you here?' I said: 'I have come to you from the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr, and from the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet (ﷺ), among whom the Qur'an was revealed and who have more knowledge of its interpretation than you. None of them is among you, so I need to convey to you what they are saying and to convey to them what you are saying.' A group of people took me aside, and I said: 'Tell me what you are upset about with regard to the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and his cousin.' They said: 'There are three things.' I said: 'What are they?' They said: 'Firstly, he left the judgement or decision to men concerning a matter of religion, and Allah says: ﴿The decision is only for Allah.﴾ (Qur'an 6: 57). What does man have to do with decisions and ruling?'

"I said: 'This is one; what is the second?' They said: 'He fought and did not take the womenfolk of his opponents captive or take any booty. If they are disbelievers, we should be allowed to take their womenfolk captive; if they are believers, it is not permissible to take their womenfolk captive or to fight them.'

"I said: 'This is the second; what is the third?' They said: 'He erased his title of Amir al-Mu'mineen [in the arbitration document]. If he is not the leader of the believers, then he is the leader of the disbelievers.' I said: 'Do you have anything else?' They said: 'That is all.' I said to them: 'If I bring evidence to you from the Book of Allah (ﷻ) and the Sunnah of His prophet (ﷺ) to answer your questions, do you think that you will recant?' They said: 'Yes.'

"I said: 'With regard to what you said about him leaving the judgement or decision to men concerning a matter of religion, I shall recite to you from the Book of Allah to show that Allah delegated His ruling and decision to men with regard to something worth one-quarter of a dirham, and Allah (ﷻ) instructed them to issue a ruling concerning it. Do you not see that Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿O you who believe, kill not the game while you are in a state of iḥrām [for hajj or 'umrah (pilgrimage)], and whosoever of you kills it intentionally, the penalty is an offering, brought to the Ka'bah, of an eatable animal [i.e. sheep, goat, cow] equivalent to the one he killed, as adjudged by two just men among you﴾ (Qur'an 5: 95)? This verse refers to something concerning which men are to judge. I adjure you by Allah, is the ruling or decision of men with regard to reconciling between people and sparing their blood more important than the ruling on a rabbit?' They said: 'Yes, this is more important.'

"I said: 'Concerning a woman and her husband, Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿If you fear a breach between them twain [the man and his wife], appoint [two] arbitrators, one from his family and the other from hers﴾ (Qur'an 4: 35). I adjure you by Allah, is the ruling or

decision of men to bring reconciliation between people and spare their blood more important than their ruling or decision concerning a woman and her husband? Have I answered this point?" They said: 'Yes.'

"I said: 'With regard to your saying that he fought and did not take the women captive or take any booty, would you take your mother 'Â'ishah (ﷺ) captive and regard (intimacy with) her as permissible like any other woman, when she is your mother? If you say, "We regard (intimacy with) her as permissible like any other woman," then you have become disbelievers, and if you say, "She is not our mother," you have become disbelievers. ﴿The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves, and his wives are their [believers'] mothers [as regards respect and marriage].﴾ (Qur'an 33: 6). Either way, it is misguidance, so how could you answer this? Have I answered your point?" They said: 'Yes.'

"I said: 'As for your saying that he has erased the title of Amir al-Mu'mineen, I shall quote to you something that you will accept. On the day of Ḥudaybiyah, the Prophet made a treaty with the polytheists. He said: "O 'Ali, write: This is what was agreed by Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah." They (the disbelievers of Quraysh) said: "If we accepted that you were the Messenger of Allah, we would not have fought you." The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Erase it, O 'Ali. O Allah, You know that I am the Messenger of Allah. Erase it, O 'Ali, and write: 'This is what was agreed by Muhammad ibn Abdullah.'" By Allah, the Messenger of Allah is better than 'Ali, and he erased it. Erasing this title does not mean that he gave up prophethood. Have I answered this point?" They said: 'Yes.'

"Two thousand of them recanted, but the rest of them continued their rebellion and fought on the basis of their misguidance, and the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr killed them."⁴³

We can learn a number of lessons from the debate of Ibn ‘Abbâs with the Kharijites:

1.3.1. Making a good selection when choosing the one who is going to debate with opponents

Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) chose his cousin Abdullah ibn ‘Abbâs, who was a scholar of the Ummah and an interpreter of the Qur’an. The people he was going to debate were known for being well-versed in the Qur’an; they relied for their guidance on the Qur’an and the way they interpreted it, so the one who was most qualified to debate with them was the one who was most knowledgeable of the Qur’an and its interpretation. We might say that Ibn ‘Abbâs (عليه السلام) was the one who was specialised in this kind of debate, because of his sincere intention towards Allah (ﷻ), his shunning of whims and desires, his patience and forbearance, his deliberation, his gentle approach to his opponents, his ability to listen properly to all opponents and avoid getting into arguments, and the clarity of his proof and the strength of his evidence.

1.3.2. Starting the debate by noting the points that are agreed upon

Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) and his opponents, the Kharijites, were agreed on adhering to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Hence Abdullah ibn ‘Abbâs (عليه السلام) said to them: “If I bring evidence to you from the Book of Allah (ﷻ) and the Sunnah of His prophet (ﷺ) to answer your questions, do you think that you will recant?” In this way, Abdullah ibn ‘Abbâs (عليه السلام) tried to get agreement with them on this issue before starting the debate.

1.3.3. Knowing what arguments the opponents have

Knowing the opponents' arguments, having a complete list of them and being prepared before starting the debate, is important. We assume that before the debate with them, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) knew their arguments and discussed with his companions how to answer them.

1.3.4. Refuting the opponents' claims one after another

This is done so that they will not have a leg to stand on, as is clear from the words of Ibn 'Abbâs (عليه السلام) in his debate with them. Every time he finished refuting one point, he said: "Have I answered this point?"

1.3.5. Before starting the debate, saying something that helps to reach the right conclusion for the sake of truth

Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs (عليه السلام) said at the beginning, before the debate: "I have come to you from the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr, and from the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet (ﷺ), among whom the Qur'an was revealed and who have more knowledge of its interpretation than you. None of them is among you..."⁴⁴

1.3.6. Showing respect for the views of the opponents during the debate

This is so that they will be more inclined to listen to and respect whatever he has to say. This is what we see in the debate between Ibn 'Abbâs and the Kharijites.⁴⁵

1.3.7. Allah guided thousands of those people

The number of Kharijites who were present at the battle of Nahrawân was fewer than four thousand, as we shall see below. They realised the truth, and their confusion was dispelled by the grace of Allah and by what Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) had been given of knowledge, strength of argument and the ability to explain things clearly. The falseness of their argument became clear to them by means of proper interpretation of the verses on which they were basing their arguments, and by means of the Sunnah of the Prophet, which explains the meanings of the noble Qur'an.⁴⁶

1.3.8. The words of Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه): "None of them is among you"

This is a clear statement on the part of Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) that not one of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was with them, and none of the Kharijites disputed that fact. This report is sound and proven. As far as I know, there is no one among the Sunni scholars who said that any of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) were with the Kharijites. As for the claims that some of the Companions were with the Kharijites, that is the claim of the Kharijites themselves, but they have no documented academic proof for what they say.

1.3.9. Defining the reference point (for solving the problem)

Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) said: "If I bring evidence to you from the Book of Allah (ﷻ) and the Sunnah of His prophet (ﷺ) to answer your questions, do you think that you will recant?" They said yes.

These words of Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) offer an important lesson, which is that the reference point with the debaters should be defined so that it will be possible to reach a sound outcome to the debate.

1.4. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) goes out to debate with the remainder of the Kharijites, and his policy on dealing with them after they came back to Kufah then rebelled again

After the debate of Ibn 'Abbâs with the Kharijites, in which two thousand of them responded to him, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) himself went out to them to speak to them, and they came back to Kufah. This period of calm did not last long, though. The Kharijites understood from 'Ali (عليه السلام) that he had changed his mind about arbitration and had repented for his mistake, as they saw it, and they began to broadcast this claim among the people. Al-Ash'ath ibn Qays al-Kindi came to 'Ali and said to him: "The people are saying that you have recanted disbelief for them." 'Ali (عليه السلام) gave a sermon on the next Friday in which he praised and glorified Allah (سبحانه) and reminded them how they had split from the people and the issue over which they had split from him.⁴⁷

According to one report, a man stood up and said: "There is no ruling except the ruling of Allah." Then another one stood up and said the same thing, then others stood up in different parts of the mosque repeating the same slogan. He gestured with his hand for them to sit down and said: "Yes, there is no ruling except the ruling of Allah. This is a word of truth intended for a false purpose. I am waiting for the ruling of Allah concerning you."⁴⁸ From the minbar, he started gesturing for them to be quiet, but some of them started putting their fingers in their ears and saying: ﴿If you join others in worship with Allah, [then] surely, [all] your deeds will be in vain, and you will certainly be among the losers﴾ (*Qur'an* 39: 65). Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) responded by saying: ﴿So be patient [O Muhammad]. Verily, the promise of Allah is true; and let not those who have no certainty of faith discourage you from conveying Allah's Message [which you are obliged to convey].﴾ (*Qur'an* 30: 60).

Amir al-Mu'mineen announced his just policy towards this extremist group, telling them: We can grant you three things:

1. We will not prevent you from praying in this mosque.
2. We will not withhold your share of this fay' as long as you are with us.
3. We will not fight you unless you fight us.⁴⁹

Amir al-Mu'mineen granted them these rights as long as they did not fight the caliph or rebel against the main body of the Muslims; at the same time, they could maintain their own interpretation within the framework of Islamic belief. Initially, he did not regard them as being outside of Islam, so he granted them the right to be different without that leading to division or fighting.⁵⁰

Amir al-Mu'mineen did not throw the Kharijites in jail or send spies against them or limit their freedom, but he was keen to establish proof and show the truth to them and to others who might be deceived by their views and pious appearance. He instructed the muezzin to let the pious worshippers come to him but not to admit anyone who had not memorised the Qur'an; thus the house was filled with people who had memorised the Qur'an. He called for a large muṣḥaf and started tapping it with his hand, saying: "O muṣḥaf, tell the people." The people called out: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, how can you ask it? It is only ink and paper, but we can speak on the basis of what we understand from it."

He said: "These companions of yours who rebelled, between them and me is the Book of Allah, and Allah says in His Book concerning a woman and her husband: ﴿If you fear a breach between them twain [the man and his wife], appoint [two] arbitrators, one from his family and the other from hers﴾ (*Qur'an* 4: 35). The Ummah of Muhammad is more important with regard to life and sanctity than a woman and her husband.

"They got angry with me when I wrote, on a document between Mu'âwiyah and me, '‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib' [without adding the title 'Amir al-Mu'mineen']. But we were with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) when he made a peace deal with Quraysh at Hudaibiyah, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) dictated, 'In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.' Suhayl ibn 'Amr said: 'Do not write, "In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful."' The Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'What should I write?' Suhayl said: 'Write: "In Your name, O Allah."' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Write it,' so I wrote it. He said: 'Write: "This is what was agreed by Muhammad the Messenger of Allah."' Suhayl said: 'If I accepted that you were the Messenger of Allah, I would not have opposed you.' So he wrote: 'This is what was agreed by Muhammad ibn Abdullah with Quraysh.' And Allah (ﷻ) says: *¶Indeed in the Messenger of Allah [Muhammad] you have a good example to follow for him who hopes for [the Meeting with] Allah and the Last Day¶* (Qur'an 33: 21).⁵¹

When the Kharijites became certain that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) was determined to send Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari (عليه السلام) as an arbitrator, they asked him to give up this idea. 'Ali (عليه السلام) refused to do so. He explained to them that this could be regarded as a betrayal and breaking of a covenant and promise, since a covenant had been drawn up with the people, and Allah (ﷻ) says: *¶And fulfil the Covenant of Allah [Bai'ah: pledge for Islam] when you have covenanted, and break not the oaths after you have confirmed them — and indeed you have appointed Allah your surety.¶* (Qur'an 16: 91).

The Kharijites decided to split from Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) and appoint their own amir, or leader. They gathered in the house of Abdullah ibn Wahb ar-Râsibi, who addressed them in an eloquent speech, reminding them of the insignificance of this world

and encouraging them to seek the hereafter and paradise. He urged them to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil; then he said: "Let us leave this town, whose people are wrongdoers, and go to the villages in the mountains or some of these towns, objecting to these unjust rules." Then Ḥarqooş ibn Zuhayr stood up and said, after praising Allah (ﷻ): "The conveniences of this world are few, and soon one will depart from it, so its adornments or pleasures should not make you want to stay in it or distract you from seeking truth and opposing wrongdoing. 'Truly, Allah is with those who fear Him [keep their duty unto Him], and those who are *Muhsinoon* [good-doers]'" (Qur'an 16: 128). Ḥamzah ibn Sinân al-Asadi said: "O people, what you say is right and you speak the truth, so appoint a man from among you to be in charge, for you need a leader and a banner to rally behind and refer to." They sent word to Zayd ibn Ḥuṣn at-Ṭâ'i, who was one of their prominent figures, and offered him the position of leader, but he refused. Then they offered it to Ḥarqooş ibn Zuhayr, then to Ḥamzah ibn Sinân, then to Shurayḥ ibn Abi Awfa al-'Absi; they all refused. They offered it to Abdullah ibn Wahb ar-Râsibi, and he accepted it, saying: "By Allah, I am not accepting it for worldly reasons, and I will never give it up for fear of death."⁵²

They also gathered in the house of Zayd ibn Ḥuṣn at-Ṭâ'i as-Sanbeesi, who addressed them and urged them to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil. He recited verses of Qur'an to them, including:

«O Dâwood [David]! Verily, We have placed you as a successor on the earth; so judge you between men in truth [and justice] and follow not your desire — for it will mislead you from the path of Allah. Verily, those who wander astray from the path of Allah [shall] have a severe torment, because they forgot the Day of Reckoning.»

(Qur'an 38: 26)

«And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, such are the *Kâfiroon* [i.e. disbelievers — of a lesser degree as they do not act on Allah's Laws].» (Qur'an 5: 44)

«And whosoever does not judge by that which Allah has revealed, such are the *Dhâlimoon* [polytheists and wrongdoers — of a lesser degree].» (Qur'an 5: 45)

«And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, [then] such [people] are the *Fâsiqoon* [the rebellious, i.e. disobedient (of a lesser degree)] to Allah.» (Qur'an 5: 47)

Then he said: "I bear witness against our people who turn to the same qiblah as us, that they have followed their whims and desires and rejected the ruling of the Qur'an and done wrong in word and deed. Fighting them is the duty of the believers." A man named Abdullah ibn Shajarah as-Sulami wept, then he urged those who were with him to fight the people, saying: "Strike their faces and foreheads with the sword until the Most Gracious, Most Merciful is obeyed. If you prevail and Allah is obeyed as you want, He will give you the reward of those who obey Him and follow His commands. If you fail, what is better than ending up with the pleasure of Allah and His paradise?"

Ibn Katheer said, after mentioning what Satan inspired them to say, as cited above: "These kinds of people are among the strangest of the sons of Adam. Glory be to the One Who created variety among people as He willed and decreed. How splendid are the words of one of the early generation concerning the Kharijites: They are the ones who are mentioned in the verses in which Allah (ﷻ) says: «Say [O Muhammad]: Shall We tell you the greatest losers in respect of [their] deeds? Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life while they thought that they were acquiring good by their deeds. They are those who deny the Ayât [proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.] of their Lord and the Meeting with Him [in the

hereafter]. So their works are in vain, and on the Day of Resurrection, We shall assign no weight for them.﴾ (*Qur'an* 18: 103-105)"

What is meant is that those ignorant people, who were misguided in both word and deed, agreed to rebel and split from the Muslims, to march to certain towns in order to gain control of them against the inhabitants' wishes and then fortify themselves there, then to send word to their brethren, and others of their ilk in Basra who shared the same opinions and beliefs, to come and join them there. Zayd ibn Ḥuṣn at-Ṭâ'i said to them: "You cannot gain control of the cities, because armies are stationed there and will keep you out. Make an agreement with your brethren to meet at the bridge over the River Jookhi. Do not leave Kufah in groups; go out individually so that no one will pay any attention to you." They wrote an open letter to those who were following their path in Basra and elsewhere and sent word to them telling them to meet them at the river so that they could be united against other people.

Then they departed, sneaking out one by one, lest anyone realise and prevent them from leaving. They departed from among their fathers and mothers, uncles and aunts, leaving behind all their relatives. In their ignorance and lack of knowledge, they believed that this would please the Lord of the heavens and earth. They did not realise that it was a serious mistake, an act of wrongdoing, and a major sin that would doom them to hell. They did not realise that it was something that had been made attractive to them by the accursed Satan, who had been cast out of heaven and who took our father Adam (ﷺ) and his progeny as enemies as long as their souls were still in their bodies. Some people realised what their children and brothers were up to, so they stopped them and rebuked them. Some of them turned back to righteousness and continued on that path, but others fled after that to join the Kharijites and thus were doomed until the Day of Resurrection. The rest went to the specified place and were

joined by those from Basra and elsewhere to whom they had written. They all met at Nahrawân and became powerful and strong.⁵³

After the two arbitrators parted without reaching a deal, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) wrote to the Kharijites who were gathered in Nahrawân. He gave them the news and said: "...So come back to us, and let us march to fight the people of Syria." They refused to do that, saying: "Not until you testify that you committed an act of disbelief and repent," and 'Ali (ﷺ) refused to do that.⁵⁴ According to another report, they wrote to him saying: "You did not get angry for your Lord's sake; you got angry for your own sake. If you testify that you committed an act of disbelief and you turn to repentance, we will think about the issue between us; otherwise there is no deal between us, and Allah does not love the treacherous." When he read their letter, he despaired of them and thought that he should leave them alone and go with the people to Syria until he met them and fought them.⁵⁵

The issue of the Kharijites regarding 'Ali (ﷺ) as a disbeliever and asking him to repent cannot be proven from these reports, but it is in accordance with Kharijite views regarding 'Ali and 'Uthmân as disbelievers and testing people with regard to that issue.⁵⁶

1.5. The battle of Nahrawân, 38 AH

1.5.1. The cause of the battle

The conditions that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) had stipulated for the Kharijites stated that they should not shed blood, terrorise people, or engage in banditry by attacking people on the roads. If they committed any of these transgressions, then he would declare war on them. Since the Kharijites regarded those who disagreed with them as disbelievers, whose blood and wealth they thought were permissible for them, they started to shed the blood of

people whose lives were protected in Sharia. There are numerous reports that speak of them committing ḥarām actions.

One sound report was narrated by an eyewitness who had been one of the Kharijites and later left them. He said: "I accompanied the people of the river (the Kharijites), then I turned against them, but I concealed that for fear that they might kill me. While I was with a group of them, we came to a village, and between us and the village was a river. A man came rushing out of the village in fear, dragging his upper garment, and they said to him: 'Have we scared you?' He said: 'Yes.' They said: 'Don't be scared.' I said: 'By Allah, they know this man, but I do not know him.' They said: 'Are you the son of Khabbâb, the Companion of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)?' He said: 'Yes.' They said: 'Do you have a hadith you can tell us from your father from the Prophet (ﷺ)?' He said: 'I heard him say that he heard the Prophet (ﷺ) mention fitnah and say: "The one who is sitting at that time will be better than the one who is standing, and the one who is standing will be better than the one who is walking, and the one who is walking will be better than the one who is running. If you live to see that time, then be the slave of Allah who is killed."'

"They seized him and his slave woman and took them with them. One of them passed by a fruit that had fallen from a tree, and he took it and put it in his mouth. Another of them said: 'It is fruit that belongs to dhimmis; how can you regard it as permissible?' So the first man took it out of his mouth. Then they passed by a pig, and one of them struck it with his sword. Another of them said: 'It is a pig that belongs to a dhimmi; how can you regard it as permissible?'

"Abdullah ibn Khabbâb said: 'Shall I not tell you about what is more serious and ḥarām than this?' They said: 'Yes.' He said: 'Killing me.' They took him to the river and struck his neck, and I saw his blood flowing on the water like a shoelace thrown in the water, until it disappeared.⁵⁷ Then they called for the slave woman,

who was pregnant, and they slit her belly open. I never accompanied any people whose company was more abhorrent to me than them, and when I found an opportunity, I fled.”⁵⁸

This action spread fear among the people and showed the extent of their terror, as they slit open the belly of this woman and slaughtered Abdullah like a sheep. They did not stop there, though; they started threatening to kill people until some of their own number objected to what they were doing and said: “Woe to you! We did not leave ‘Ali for this.”⁵⁹

Despite the evil atrocities committed by the Kharijites, Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) did not hasten to fight them. Instead, he sent word to them telling them to hand over the killers so that the ḥadd punishment might be carried out on them. They responded with stubbornness and arrogance, saying: “All of us are killers.”⁶⁰ He marched towards them in the month of Muḥarram in 38 AH, with the army that he had prepared to fight the people of Syria.⁶¹ He camped on the western bank of the river of Nahrawān, and the Kharijites camped on the eastern bank, level with the city of Nahrawān.⁶²

1.5.2. Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) encourages his army to fight

Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) realised that these people were the Kharijites whom the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had predicted would pass out of Islam. During their march towards them, he began to urge his companions to fight them. The hadiths of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) about the Kharijites had an effect on the Companions and the followers of Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام). ‘Ali (عليه السلام) urged his army to start with these Kharijites, and he said: “O people, I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: ‘There will emerge some people from my Ummah who will recite the Qur’an, and your recitation would seem insignificant in comparison to theirs, your prayer would

seem insignificant in comparison to theirs, and your fasting would seem insignificant in comparison to theirs. They will recite the Qur'an, thinking that it is in their favour, when in fact it is against them, and their prayer will not go any further than their collarbones. They will pass out of Islam as an arrow passes out of the prey.' If the army that encountered them knew what has been decreed for them on the lips of their Prophet (ﷺ), they would rely upon that action. The sign is that there is a man among them who has an upper arm but no forearm, and the end of his upper arm is like a nipple with white hairs. You will go to Mu'âwiyah and the people of Syria, and you will leave these people to look after your families and wealth. By Allah, I believe that these are the people in question, for they have shed forbidden blood and raided the flocks of the people. So march forth, in the name of Allah."⁶³

'Ali (ﷺ) said on the day of Nahrawân: "I have been commanded to fight the renegades, and these are the renegades."⁶⁴

The army was camped opposite the Kharijites, separated from them by the river of Nahrawân. 'Ali (ﷺ) ordered his army not to start the fighting until the Kharijites crossed the river towards the west. He sent his messengers, urging them by Allah to recant. He sent al-Bara' ibn 'Âzib (رضي الله عنه) to them, calling them for three days, but they refused.⁶⁵ Messengers kept coming and going until they killed his messengers and crossed the river.⁶⁶

The Kharijites went so far that all hope of any reconciliation and avoiding bloodshed was lost. They stubbornly and arrogantly refused to come back to the truth and insisted on fighting, so Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) organised his army and prepared to fight.⁶⁷ He put Hajar ibn 'Adiyy in charge of the right flank; Shabath ibn Rab'i and Ma'qil ibn Qays ar-Riyâhi in charge of the left flank; Abu Ayyoob al-Anṣârî in charge of the cavalry and Abu Qatâdah al-Anṣârî in charge of the infantry. Qays ibn Sa'd ibn 'Ubâdah was put in charge

of the people of Madinah, who numbered some seven hundred. ‘Ali (ﷺ) ordered Abu Ayyoob al-Anṣārī to raise a banner of safety for the Kharijites and to say to them: “Whoever comes to this banner will be safe; whoever goes to Kufah or al-Madâ’in will be safe. We are not after any of you except those who killed our brothers.” Many of their groups left, some four thousand in total. There were no more than one thousand men who remained with Abdullah ibn Wahb ar-Râsibi to wage war on ‘Ali (ﷺ). Zayd ibn Ḥuṣn aṭ-Ṭâ’i as-Sanbeesi was in charge of their right flank; Shurayḥ ibn Awfa was in charge of their left flank; Ḥamzah ibn Sinân was in charge of their cavalry; and Ḥarqooṣ ibn Zuhayr as-Sa’di was in charge of their infantry. They stood to confront ‘Ali (ﷺ) and his companions.⁶⁸

1.5.3. The outbreak of fighting

The Kharijites marched towards ‘Ali (ﷺ). ‘Ali (ﷺ) sent his cavalry ahead of his army, with the archers in front; the infantry marched behind the cavalry. He instructed his companions: “Do not fight until they start it.”

The Kharijites came, saying: “There is no ruling except the ruling of Allah. Today is the day of departure to paradise.” They charged at the cavalry whom ‘Ali (ﷺ) had sent forth and scattered them, with some of ‘Ali’s cavalry moving to the right and some to the left. Then the archers started shooting their arrows and striking their faces. Some of the cavalry came back at them from the right and the left. The infantry started attacking them with spears and swords, smashing the Kharijites, who ended up trampled beneath the horses’ feet. Their leaders, Abdullah ibn Wahb, Ḥarqooṣ ibn Zuhayr, Shurayḥ ibn Awfa and Abdullah ibn Sakhbarah as-Sulami were killed.⁶⁹ Abu Ayyoob said: “I stabbed one of the Kharijites with a spear, which came out through his back. I said to him: ‘Receive the tidings of hell, O enemy of Allah!’ He said: ‘You will come to know which of us is more deserving of it.’”⁷⁰

Many of the Kharijites withdrew from the fighting because of something they heard from their leader Abdullah ibn Wahb ar-Râsibi, which indicated that there was no certainty about their cause. When 'Ali (عليه السلام) struck one of the Kharijites with his sword, the Kharijite said: "How beautiful it is to depart to paradise." Abdullah ibn Wahb commented: "I do not know whether it is to paradise or to hell."⁷¹ A man from Banu Sa'd, whose name was Farwah ibn Nawfal al-Ashja'i, said: "I only joined them because I was impressed by that leader, but I could see that he was in doubt." So he withdrew with a number of his companions. Almost one thousand of them joined Abu Ayyoob al-Anṣârî, and the people started sneaking away.⁷²

The battle was short and decisive, taking a brief period of time on 9 Ṣafar 38 AH.⁷³ This swift battle resulted in the deaths of large numbers among the Kharijite ranks and the exact opposite in the army of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام). According to a report narrated by Muslim in his *Ṣaheeh*, and from Zayd ibn Wahb, the number of 'Ali's companions who were killed was only two.⁷⁴ According to another report with a reliable chain of narration, he said: "Of 'Ali's companions, twelve or thirteen were killed."⁷⁵ According to a sound report, Abu Majlaz⁷⁶ said: "Only nine of the Muslims — meaning the army of 'Ali — were killed. If you wish, you may go to Abu Barzah⁷⁷ and ask him, for he was there."⁷⁸ With regard to the number of Kharijites slain, the reports state that all of them were killed.⁷⁹ Al-Mas'oodi stated that a small number, no more than ten, managed to escape, after a crushing defeat.⁸⁰

1.5.4. Dhul-Thadyah, or 'the deformed one', and the effect of his killing of the army of 'Ali (عليه السلام)

There are different reports about the identity of Dhul-Thadyah; some of these reports are weak in terms of their chains of narration, and others are strong. In the hadiths of the Prophet (ﷺ), there are

descriptions of Dhul-Thadyah. Some reports say that he was black skinned⁸¹ or, according to one report, an Abyssinian. They say that he had a deformed arm, meaning that it was incomplete and short; it extended only from the shoulder to the elbow, with the forearm missing. At the end of the elbow, there was something that looked like a nipple, with some white hairs on it. The upper arm was not steady; it wobbled as if there was no bone in it.⁸² With regard to this man's name, those who said that Dhul-Thadyah was Ḥarqooṣ ibn Zuhayr as-Sa'di were mistaken.⁸³ Ḥarqooṣ was a well-known man who played a role in the Islamic conquests. Later he rebelled against 'Uthmân (ﷺ), and he fled following the lesser Battle of the Camel, in which az-Zubayr and Ṭalhah killed the murderers of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) in Basra. Ḥarqooṣ became one of the prominent leaders of the Kharijites,⁸⁴ but it was narrated in one report that his name was Ḥarqoos and that his father was unknown. According to another report, his name was Mâlik, and they looked for him. When they found him, 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "Allâhu akbar. Is there anyone who can tell you who his father is?" The people started saying: "This is Mâlik, this is Mâlik." 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "Son of who?"⁸⁵ But no one knew.

According to a report classified as sound by aṭ-Ṭabari, his name was Nâfi' Dhul-Thadyah, as narrated by Ibn Abi Shaybah and Abu Dâwood; their chains of narration are the same, and what is narrated in the three sources is regarded as three reports with one chain of narration.⁸⁶ 'Ali (ﷺ) had spoken of the Kharijites since the beginning of their innovation, and he frequently mentioned Dhul-Thadyah, describing him and stating that he was a sign of these people. After the end of the decisive battle, 'Ali (ﷺ) instructed his companions to look for the body of 'the deformed one', because the presence of his body would be one of the signs that 'Ali (ﷺ) was in the right and following the truth. After searching for a while, 'Ali (ﷺ) and his companions came to a heap of bodies piled one on top of the other on the riverbank. He said: "Bring them out." They found

the deformed man underneath all of them, lying directly on the ground. 'Ali (عليه السلام) said, "*Allâhu akbar*," then said: "Allah spoke the truth, and His Messenger conveyed it." He performed the prostration of thankfulness, and the people said *Allâhu akbar* and rejoiced when they saw him.⁸⁷

1.5.5. 'Ali's treatment of the Kharijites

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) treated the Kharijites as Muslims, both before and after the battle. No sooner had the battle ended but he issued orders to his troops, saying: "Do not pursue anyone who is fleeing, do not finish off anyone who is wounded, and do not mutilate anyone who has been killed." Shaqeeq ibn Salamah, who was known as Abu Wâ'il, one of the jurists of the Tâbi'oon who was present with 'Ali during his battles, said: "'Ali did not take any female prisoners either on the day of the Camel or on the day of Nahrawân."⁸⁸ After the battle of Nahrawân, he took the property of the slain to Kufah and said: "Whoever recognises anything, let him take it." The people started taking things until there was one pot left, then a man came and took it.⁸⁹ 'Ali (عليه السلام) did not divide anything among his troops except what the Kharijites had brought into battle with them: weapons and horses only.

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) did not regard the Kharijites as disbelievers. Before the battle, he tried to bring them back to the main body of Muslims, and many of them did come back. He exhorted them and reminded them of the seriousness of fighting. Ibn Qudâmah said: "He did this because his aim was to restrain them and fend off their evil, not to kill them. If it was possible to achieve this by talking, that should take precedence over fighting because of the harm that may be caused to both parties as a result of fighting. This indicates that the Kharijites were a group of Muslims, as was stated by many of the scholars."⁹⁰

Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâs (ؓ) called them evildoers (*fâsiqoon*). It was narrated that Muṣ'ab ibn Sa'd said: "I asked my father about this verse; are they the Ḥarooriyyah (Kharijites)?: ﴿Say [O Muhammad]: 'Shall We tell you the greatest losers in respect of [their] deeds? Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life while they thought that they were acquiring good by their deeds.'﴾ (*Qur'an* 18: 103-104). My father said: 'No, they are the People of the Book, the Jews and the Christians. As for the Jews, they disbelieved in Muhammad (ﷺ); as for the Christians, they disbelieved in paradise and said, "There is no food or drink there." The verses that refer to the Ḥarooriyyah are: ﴿And He misleads thereby only those who are Al-Fâsiqoon [the rebellious, disobedient to Allah]. Those who break Allah's Covenant after ratifying it, and sever what Allah has ordered to be joined [as regards Allah's religion of Islamic Monotheism, and to practise its laws on the earth and also as regards keeping good relations with kith and kin], and do mischief on earth, it is they who are the losers.﴾ (*Qur'an* 2: 26-27).'" According to a report narrated from Sa'd, when he was asked about them, he said: "They are people who turned away (from the path of Allah), and Allah turned their hearts away (from the right path)."⁹¹

'Ali (ؓ) was asked whether they were disbelievers. He said: "They have fled from disbelief." He was asked: "Are they hypocrites?" He said: "The hypocrites only remember Allah a little." He was asked: "What are they?" He said: "They are people who transgressed against us, so we fought them." According to another report: "They are people who transgressed against us, therefore we prevailed over them." According to a third report: "They are people upon whom a fitnah came, and they became blind and deaf."⁹² 'Ali (ؓ) also offered this advice to his army and to the Muslim Ummah after him: "If they go against a just ruler, then fight them, but if they go against an unjust ruler, do not fight them, because they have a reason."⁹³

It may be noted that ‘Ali (عليه السلام) regretted and was grieved by the fighting in the Battle of the Camel and Şiffeen, while he expressed satisfaction and contentment about fighting the Kharijites. Ibn Taymiyah said: “The texts and scholarly consensus differentiate between the two cases. He fought the Kharijites on the basis of a text from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and was happy about that, and none of the Companions objected to that. As for his fighting on the day of Şiffeen, he showed a great deal of sorrow and regretted it.”⁹⁴

1.6. Rulings of Islamic law resulting from the battles of Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام)

Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) managed, on the basis of his abundant knowledge and deep understanding, to set out some principles or rulings which form Sharia guidelines on fighting transgressors who rebel against legitimate authority. Sunni scholars and jurists based their rulings on the way he dealt with transgressors and rebels, and they derived rulings and guidelines from his rightly-guided conduct in this area. The majority of scholars say that if it were not for the wars of ‘Ali (عليه السلام) against those who opposed him, we would not know the proper Sharia way of fighting transgressors and rebels from among the Muslims.⁹⁵ ‘Ali (عليه السلام) himself said: “What do you think (would happen) if I was not there? Who would be able to manage the Muslims’ affairs or treat them the way I am treating them?”⁹⁶ Al-Aḥnaf said to ‘Ali: “O ‘Ali, our people in Basra are claiming that if you prevail over them tomorrow, you will kill their men and take their women captive.” He said: “That should not be feared from a man like me. Is it permissible to do that to anyone except the one who turns away and disbelieves?”⁹⁷

Based on that, fighting fellow Muslims is different from fighting disbelievers and apostates in several ways:

1. The aim of fighting is to deter them. They should not be killed deliberately, because the aim is to bring them back to obedience and to stop their evil, not to kill them, whereas it is permissible to deliberately kill the polytheists and apostates [in the case of war].⁹⁸
2. If slaves, women or children fight on the side of the transgressors, they all come under the same ruling as free, adult men. They are only being fought to protect against their harm, so they are to be fought when they are attacking but left alone when they are fleeing, whereas apostates and disbelievers may be killed whether they are attacking or fleeing.⁹⁹
3. If the transgressors refrain from fighting — whether that involves coming back to obedience, laying down their weapons, being defeated, or becoming incapable because of injury, sickness or being captured — it is not permissible to finish off their wounded or kill the captives, whereas it is permissible to kill wounded polytheists or apostates, and to execute prisoners. Ibn Abi Shaybah narrated in his *Muṣannaf* from 'Ali that he said on the day of the Camel: "Do not pursue anyone who is running away or finish off anyone who is wounded. Whoever throws down his weapon is safe."¹⁰⁰ According to a report narrated by 'Abdur-Razzâq, 'Ali (عليه السلام) instructed his caller to call out on the day of Basra: "Do not finish off anyone who is wounded, do not pursue anyone who is fleeing, do not enter any house. Whoever lays down his weapon is safe, and whoever locks his door is safe." He also did not take any of their belongings.¹⁰¹ 'Ali said on the day of the Camel: "Do not pursue anyone who is running away, finish off anyone who is wounded, or kill any captive. Stay away from the women even if they impugn your honour and slander your leaders, for I remember that during the pre-Islamic time of ignorance, if a man hit a woman with a palm

branch or a stick, he would be shamed because of that, he and his descendants after him.”¹⁰² It was narrated that Abu Umâmah al-Bâhili (رضي الله عنه) said: “I was present at Şiffeen, and they did not finish off anyone who was wounded, kill anyone who was fleeing, or strip anyone who had been killed of his weapons.”¹⁰³

4. The way in which captured transgressors are to be treated depends on the circumstances. If it is certain that the prisoner will not go back to fighting, then he is to be released. If there is no such certainty, then he is to be detained until the war is over, at which time he is released. It is not permissible to detain him after that, whereas it is permissible to keep the disbeliever captive.¹⁰⁴
5. When fighting other Muslims, it is not permissible to seek help from the polytheists or from people of the Book living under Muslim rule. When fighting apostates and hostile non-Muslims, it is permissible to seek their help.¹⁰⁵
6. A truce should not be made with Muslim opponents specifying a fixed period of time, nor should a peace deal be made with them in return for money. If a truce is made with them, it is not binding, and if the Muslim leader is not able to fight them, he should wait until he has the power to do so. If he makes a peace deal with them in return for money, it is not valid; the money should be examined and the source checked. If it came from their zakâh and fay', it should not be returned, but it should be distributed to those who are entitled to the zakâh and fay'. However, if it came from their own wealth, it is not permissible to take possession of it; it must be returned to them.¹⁰⁶ 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) did not regard the wealth of those who fought him in the Battle of the Camel as permissible.
7. If the Muslims rebel against the ruler on the basis of what may be a valid reason, he should communicate with them. If they say

that they were wronged in any way, he should set things right. If their argument is confused or false, he should explain to them; when 'Ali (ﷺ) explained to the Kharijites what was wrong with their argument, many of them came back to the ranks of the main body of Muslims.¹⁰⁷ If they recant, all well and good; otherwise it is an obligation upon him and the Muslims to fight them.¹⁰⁸

8. If the Muslim malcontents do not stop showing obedience to the ruler, they do not gather together in a place where they stay together away from everybody else, and they are just individuals who can be easily controlled, then they are to be left alone and not fought. They should be subject to just and fair rules with regard to their rights and duties.¹⁰⁹
9. Muslim transgressors should not be fought in ways that will cause widespread ruin and destruction, such as using fire, catapults that hurl heavy or burning objects, or other such weapons. (Unless it is necessary to do that, such as when they fortify themselves in a place and cannot be defeated otherwise. In that case, it is permissible for the ruler to attack them with catapults and fire, according to the view of ash-Shâfa'î and Abu Haneefah.¹¹⁰) Their houses should not be burned, and their trees should not be cut down, whereas all of that is permissible in the case of fighting the disbelievers and polytheists.
10. It is not permissible to seize booty from their wealth or to take their women and children captive, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "It is not permissible to take the wealth of a Muslim unless he gives it willingly."¹¹¹ It was narrated that 'Ali (ﷺ) said on the day of the Camel: "Whoever recognises anything of this wealth that belongs to him, let him take it."¹¹²

This was one of the reasons why the Kharijites opposed him. They said: "He fought and did not take his opponents'

womenfolk captive or take any booty. If they are disbelievers, we should be allowed to take their womenfolk captive; if they are believers, it is not permissible to take their womenfolk captive or to fight them." Ibn 'Abbâs (ؓ) said to them in his discussion with them: "With regard to your saying that he fought and did not take the women captive or take any booty, would you take your mother 'Â'ishah (ؓ) captive and regard (intimacy with) her as permissible like any other woman, when she is your mother? If you say, 'We regard (intimacy with) her as permissible like any other woman,' then you have become disbelievers, and if you say, 'She is not our mother,' you have become disbelievers."¹¹³

Ibn Qudâmah commented: "The reason for fighting the transgressors is to keep them at bay and bring them back to the truth, not because they are regarded as disbelievers. Nothing is permissible with regard to them except what is necessary for self defence, as in the case of an attacker or a bandit. The ruling on his property and his womenfolk and children remains the same, namely that they are protected in Sharia."¹¹⁴

From the reports narrated from 'Ali (ؓ), it seems that it is permissible to make use of their weapons. Ibn Abi Shaybah narrated that Abu al-Bakhtari said: "When the people of the Camel were defeated, 'Ali (ؓ) said: 'Do not pursue anyone who is leaving the battlefield, but whatever is left of mounts or weapons, you can have it.'"¹¹⁵ According to another report, he said: "Do not take anything of their property except what you find in their camp."¹¹⁶

11. Whoever among the transgressors is killed is to be washed and shrouded, and the funeral prayer offered over them, because they are Muslims, according to the opinion of ash-Shâfa'i and aṣḥâb ar-Ra'y.¹¹⁷

12. If the transgressors are not innovators, then they are not evildoers, and the fighting of the ruler and the people of justice against them is only because of their misinterpretation. Their case is similar to that of scholars who try to derive rulings from texts. According to the view of ash-Shâfa'i, if one of them is of good character, his testimony is to be accepted. As for the Kharijites and innovators, if they rebel against the ruler, their testimony is not to be accepted because they are considered evildoers.¹¹⁸
13. It is permissible for one who is on the side that is in the right to kill his relative who is on the transgressing side, because killing him is lawful and is like carrying out a ḥadd punishment against him; however, it is not permissible to seek to do that.¹¹⁹
14. If the transgressing group previously had control of the city, and they collected land tax and zakâh and carried out ḥadd punishments, they should not be asked to pay back what they collected when the group that is in the right regains control of that city. When 'Ali (عليه السلام) defeated the people of Basra after the Battle of the Camel, he did not ask them for anything that they had collected.¹²⁰
15. The ruling on one who is in the right inheriting from one who is in the wrong, and vice versa. A transgressor who killed a person who was with the group that is in the right cannot inherit from him and vice versa, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "The killer does not inherit."¹²¹ Abu Ḥaneefah's opinion was that: "One who is in the right may inherit from a transgressor, but not the other way round." Abu Yoosuf said: "Each of them may inherit from the other, because each is fighting for what he thinks is the right cause."¹²² This was also the view of an-Nawawi.¹²³
16. If the transgressors cannot be fought off except by killing them, then it is permissible to kill them. In this case, there is no sin or liability on those who kill them, nor is any expiation required of

them; they did what was enjoined upon them, and they killed for the sake of Allah (ﷻ). ﴿Then fight ye [all] against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah﴾ (Qur'an 49: 9). If a Muslim is attacked, and the only way he can ward off the attacker or protect himself is by killing him, then it is permissible for him to defend himself by killing the one who wanted to kill him.

In the case of war, there is no liability for property of the transgressors that is destroyed by those who are in right.¹²⁴ By the same token, the transgressors are not liable for lives or property that they destroy in the case of war, according to the more correct opinion, as an-Nawawi said.¹²⁵ Az-Zuhri narrated that there was consensus among the Companions that the transgressor was not liable if he killed one who was in the right. He said: "The first fitnah broke out when the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) were still alive, among whom were those who had been at Badr. They were agreed that no one should be subjected to retaliatory punishment, or have his wealth confiscated, for actions he based on his own understanding of Qur'an."¹²⁶ According to a report narrated by 'Abdur-Razzâq, the first turmoil broke out when many of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) who had been present at Badr were still alive. They were unanimously agreed that no ḥadd punishment was to be carried out on anyone for taking female captives on the basis of their own interpretation of the Qur'an, no retaliatory punishment was to be imposed for blood that they regarded as permissible to shed on the basis of their own interpretation of the Qur'an, and they were not to be required to return property that they had regarded as permissible to take on the basis of their own interpretation of the Qur'an, unless it was something specific whose owner was known, in which case it was to be returned to its owner.¹²⁷

1.7. Most significant characteristics of the Kharijites

The one who researches the history of the Kharijite sect will note a number of distinctive characteristics of the followers of this sect, including the following:

1.7.1. Going to extremes in religious issues

Undoubtedly the Kharijites were people of devotion and worship. They were very enthusiastic about adhering to Islam by applying its rulings and keeping away from everything that it forbids. They also tried hard to completely avoid falling into any sin that is contrary to Islam. That became a prominent feature of this group, and no one could come anywhere close to them in this regard. There is nothing more indicative of that than the words of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): “They will recite Qur’an, and your recitation will be as nothing in comparison to theirs; your fasting will be as nothing in comparison to theirs.”¹²⁸ Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said, describing them when he entered upon them to discuss with them: “I entered upon people, and I have never seen anyone strive harder in worship than them. Their foreheads bore marks because of prostration, their hands were like the knees of camels, they wore washed shirts and strove hard, and their faces were pale and wan from spending their nights in prayer.”¹²⁹ It was narrated that Jundub al-Azdi said: “We went to the camp of the Kharijites when we were with ‘Ali ibn Abi Tālib, and we heard them humming like bees, because of their reciting Qur’an.”¹³⁰

They were people who fasted, prayed and read Qur’an a great deal, but they overstepped the mark of moderation and went to extremes. They became overly strict, to the extent that this strictness made them go against the principles of Islam by following what their reasoning suggested to them, such as the idea that the one who

commits a major sin is to be regarded as a disbeliever. (We will discuss their beliefs and ideas below.) Some of them went to such extremes in that regard that they applied this opinion to one who commits any sin, even a minor sin; they regarded him as a disbeliever and polytheist who was doomed to spend eternity in hell.¹³¹ As a result of this strictness, which took them beyond the boundaries of Islam and its sublime goals, they accused every Muslim who disagreed with them of being a disbeliever or a hypocrite. They even regarded it as permissible to shed the blood of those who disagreed with them.¹³² Some of them, such as the Azâriqah, regarded it as permissible to kill the women and children of those who differed with them.¹³³

Undoubtedly because of their ignorance, strictness and harshness, the Kharijites distorted the beauties of Islam in a very strange way. This going to extremes, using far-fetched interpretations, took them away from the spirit of Islam and its beauty and moderation. In their extreme ways, they followed a path that was never preached by Muhammad (ﷺ) or encouraged in the noble Qur'an. The piety that they showed outwardly was like a kind of blind piety; their outward righteousness was in fact superficial. Their interpretation of Islam was artificially attractive. They hoped for paradise and wanted to strive for it by means of strictness, extremism and exaggeration, in a way that put them beyond the boundary of what is right.¹³⁴ The Prophet (ﷺ) warned against going to extremes or being overly strict with regard to religious matters, because it is contrary to the moderate and easy nature of Islam, and he told us that the one who goes to extremes is deserving of doom and loss. It is narrated in a sound report that he (ﷺ) said: "Those who go to extremes are doomed,"¹³⁵ and he said it three times. Thus the oddness of the Kharijites becomes clear. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Religion is very easy. Whoever overburdens himself in religion will be defeated, so try your best to do what is right. If you cannot attain perfection, then strive to do that which will bring you close to it."¹³⁶

1.7.2. Ignorance of religion

Among the greatest problems of the Kharijites are ignorance of the Qur'an and Sunnah, poor understanding, lack of contemplation, lack of reasoning and failure to apply the texts to the right situation. Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) thought they were the worst of Allah's creation, and he said: "They picked out verses that were revealed concerning the disbelievers, and they applied them to the believers."¹³⁷ If he was asked about the Harooriyyah, he would say: "They regard Muslims as disbelievers and regard their blood and their wealth as permissible, they marry women during their 'iddahs, and if a woman comes to them, one of them will marry her although she has a husband. I do not know of anyone who is more deserving of being fought than them."¹³⁸

Due to their ignorance of the laws of Allah (ﷻ), they thought that arbitration was a sin that implied disbelief, meaning that the one who became involved in that should admit that he was a disbeliever for doing so and then repent.¹³⁹ This is what they demanded from 'Ali (رضي الله عنه); they wanted him to confess that he was a disbeliever and then repent. The Kharijites' thinking of him, and the Muhājireen and Anṣār with him, as being wrong, while regarding themselves as having more knowledge and understanding than them, is indeed the essence of ignorance and misguidance.¹⁴⁰

One of the signs of their extreme ignorance may be seen in the incident where they came across Abdullah ibn Khabbâb (رضي الله عنه), who was with his pregnant slave woman. They discussed some issues with him, then they asked him about his opinion of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) and 'Ali (رضي الله عنه), and he spoke highly of them. They got angry with him and threatened to kill him in the worst manner; they killed him and slit open the woman's belly.¹⁴¹ A pig belonging to the non-Muslims passed by them, and one of them killed it. They thought that this was not appropriate, so they looked for the owner of the pig and gave him

compensation for his pig. How strange it is that a pig would have greater sanctity than a Muslim, in the eyes of someone who claimed to belong to Islam.¹⁴² Such is the devotion of the ignorant, which was dictated to them by whims and desires and by Satan.¹⁴³

Ibn Hajar said: "When the Kharijites ruled that those who differed with them were disbelievers, they regarded it as permissible to shed their blood, but they kept away from the people of the Book who were under Muslim protection, saying: 'We have to adhere to the covenant with them.' They refrained from fighting the polytheists and focused on fighting the Muslims. All of that was the result of ignorant devotion on the part of people whose hearts were not illuminated by the light of knowledge and who did not have a strong, solid base of knowledge to protect them. It is sufficient for them that their leader rejected what the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said and accused him of being unfair. We ask Allah to keep us safe and sound."¹⁴⁴ Ibn Taymiyah said concerning them: "They are ignorant, and they departed from the way of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah because of ignorance."¹⁴⁵

Thus it is clear that ignorance was one of the most prominent characteristics of that group, which was one of the groups that are attributed to Islam. Ignorance is a serious sickness, which causes doom in such a way that the individual does not realise it; in fact, he may intend to do good but fall into the opposite.¹⁴⁶

1.7.3. Rebelling against authority

Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Due to their misguidance, these people believed that the leaders of guidance and the main group of Muslims were unjust and misguided. This is the view of those who drifted away from the Sunnah, such as the Râfiqis and their ilk. They regarded what they saw of oppression and injustice as disbelief; then they based the rulings of their own

innovation on that.”¹⁴⁷ Therefore they rebelled against authority and strove to create division among the Muslims.

This is explained by their attitude towards Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام); at the most critical time, they let him down, opposed him and rebelled against him.¹⁴⁸ That has remained one of their characteristics throughout history. If anyone disagrees with them concerning any issue, they label him as an enemy and cast him aside, to the point where they divide into many groups, each group regarding the others as disbelievers. Hence there has been a great deal of fighting, division and rebellion among them.¹⁴⁹

1.7.4. Denouncing people as disbelievers because of sin, and regarding the blood and wealth of the Muslims as permissible

Ibn Taymiyah said: “The other difference of the Kharijites and followers of innovation is that they regard people as disbelievers because of sin and bad deeds; as a consequence of that, they regard the blood and wealth of the Muslims as permissible, believing that the Muslim lands are the lands of war and that their own land is the land of faith. The majority of Râfîdis say the same. This is the root of innovation, which is proven by the Sunnah of the Messenger (ﷺ) and the consensus of the early generation to be innovation; what is permissible is regarded as a sin, and sin is regarded as disbelief.”¹⁵⁰ The Kharijites were distinguished by their particular views and opinions, through which they parted ways with the main body of the Muslims and regarded their views as part of the only religion that is acceptable to Allah (ﷻ). In their view, those who disagreed with them concerning that had gone beyond the bounds of Islam, so they must be disavowed. Indeed, some of them went to extremes in that regard and thought it obligatory to fight those who differed with them; they regarded it as permissible to shed their blood.¹⁵¹

For example, they killed Abdullah ibn Khabbâb for no other reason than that he did not agree with their opinion.¹⁵² Ibn Katheer said: "They started to kill women and children, slitting open the bellies of pregnant women and doing things that no one else did."¹⁵³ Ibn Taymiyah said: "The first innovation, such as that of the Kharijites, came about because of their poor understanding of the Qur'an. They did not intend to go against it, but they understood from it something that was not indicated by it. Therefore they thought that those who commit sin are to be regarded as disbelievers, because the believer is the one who is righteous and pious. They said: 'The one who is not righteous and pious is a disbeliever who will abide in hell forever.' Then they said: 'Uthmân and 'Ali and those who supported them and loved them are not believers, because they judged by something other than that which Allah has revealed.' Thus their innovation was based on two ideas: that the one who goes against the Qur'an in his actions or mistaken opinion is a disbeliever, and that this notion applied to 'Uthmân and 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them) and those who supported them. Hence it is essential to avoid labelling believers as disbelievers because of their sins and mistakes. This was the first innovation that appeared in Islam, and those who followed it denounced the Muslims as disbelievers and regarded their blood and wealth as permissible. There are sound, proven hadiths from the Prophet (ﷺ) that criticise them (these innovators) and enjoin fighting them."¹⁵⁴

1.7.5. Believing it to be possible for the Prophet (ﷺ) to do something that is not appropriate for him to do, such as being unjust

Ibn Taymiyah said: "The Kharijites regarded it as possible for the Messenger (ﷺ) himself to be unjust and for his Sunnah to be misguided, and they did not regard it as obligatory to obey and follow him. Instead, they believed in what he conveyed of the Qur'an but not

what he prescribed of the Sunnah that — according to their claim — contradicted the apparent meaning of the Qur’an. The majority of the innovators and Kharijites followed them in that regard. If they think that the Messenger said something that differs from their views, they will not follow him; rather they try to avoid the evidence, either by rejecting the chain of transmission or by misinterpreting the report itself; sometimes they criticise the chain of narrators and sometimes they criticise the text. Therefore they are neither following nor adhering to the true Sunnah, which was brought by the Messenger (ﷺ); in fact, they are not even following the Qur’an.”¹⁵⁵

1.7.6. Criticising and regarding others as misguided

One of the most prominent characteristics of the Kharijites is their criticising the imams of guidance and regarding them as misguided, unjust and mistaken. This characteristic is embodied in the attitude of Dhul-Khuwayṣirah towards the Messenger of guidance (ﷺ) when he told him: “O Messenger of Allah, be just.”¹⁵⁶ Dhul-Khuwayṣirah regarded himself as more pious than the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and he judged the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to be unjust and unfair in dividing the spoils. This characteristic has been constant throughout their history and has had the worst effect, because so many meanings and actions were based on it.¹⁵⁷

1.7.7. Thinking in negative terms

This attribute of the Kharijites was embodied in Dhul-Khuwayṣirah’s ignorant verdict regarding the Messenger of guidance (ﷺ) as lacking in sincerity, when he said: “By Allah, this is a division in which there is no fairness and which was not intended for the sake of Allah.”¹⁵⁸ When Dhul-Khuwayṣirah saw that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had given to the rich leaders and not to the poor, he did not interpret this conduct in a good way. This was strange, especially

when there were many reasons to interpret this action in a positive way. Even if there were no other reason but that the one who did it was the Messenger of guidance (ﷺ), that would have been sufficient reason to think positively of it. Dhul-Khuwayṣirah refused to do so and had negative thoughts because of his psychological problem, then he tried to conceal this problem by pretending to call for justice. Hence Satan laughed at him and tricked him, making him fall into his trap. Man should watch himself and examine his motives and aims. He should beware of his whims and desires and be alert to the tricks of Satan, who often makes bad deeds appear attractive by adorning them with a bright cover, and justifies abhorrent behaviour on the basis of adhering to principles of truth. One of the means of protecting oneself against the tricks and traps of Satan is knowledge. If Dhul-Khuwayṣirah had had the slightest trace of knowledge or understanding, he would not have made this mistake.¹⁵⁹

1.7.8. Harshness towards the Muslims

The Kharijites are known for their harshness and roughness. They were very harsh and violent towards the Muslims, and this reached terrible levels. They regarded the blood, honour and wealth of the Muslims as permissible, and they terrorised them and killed them. As for the enemies of Islam, such as idol worshippers and others, they left them alone, maintaining peace with them and not bothering them. History has recorded dark pages for the Kharijites in this regard.¹⁶⁰ The story of Abdullah ibn Khabbāb and his murder has not yet been forgotten.

While the Kharijite attitude towards the Muslims was accompanied by harshness, cruelty and violence, they were gentle, peaceful and kind with the disbelievers.¹⁶¹ The Lawgiver describes Sharia as easygoing and tolerant; it recommends strictness towards the disbelievers and kindness towards the believers, but the Kharijites

did the opposite.¹⁶² Allah says: ﴿Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. And those who are with him are severe against disbelievers, and merciful among themselves,﴾ (*Qur'an* 48: 29) and, ﴿O you who believe! Whoever from among you turns back from his religion [Islam], Allah will bring a people whom He will love and they will love Him; humble towards the believers, stern towards the disbelievers, fighting in the way of Allah, and never afraid of the blame of the blamers﴾ (*Qur'an* 5: 54). The Kharijites did the opposite of what is mentioned in these verses; they terrorised the Muslims.¹⁶³ These are some of the characteristics for which the Kharijites are well known.

The most important manifestations of extremism in modern times

The manifestations of extremism in modern times are many and include the following:

1.7.8.i. Being overly strict with oneself in religious commitment and making things difficult for others

The phenomenon of extremism in modern times is a drifting away from the path of moderation in religious commitment, which was the way of the Prophet (ﷺ). He warned us against that in the hadith which was narrated by Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه). The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Religion is very easy. Whoever overburdens himself in religion will be defeated, so try your best to do what is right. If you cannot attain perfection, then strive to do that which will bring you close to it."¹⁶⁴

Extremism in religion often stems from a lack of understanding of the faith. These are among the most prominent characteristics of the Kharijites, namely extremism in religious commitment and lack of proper understanding. Most of those who have some inclination towards the ideas of the Kharijites today are

people in whom these two characteristics may be found.¹⁶⁵ One of the manifestations of extremism is making things difficult instead of making them easy. Extremists require people to do things that they are not able to do, or oblige them to do things that they are not required to do according to Islam, which is of an easy nature. They do not pay attention to the variations in people's abilities and level of understanding, so they address them concerning concepts that they do not understand and demand of them things that they cannot do.

One of the causes of harshness is a corrupt kind of piety, ignorance of the prioritising of rulings and a failure to understand that not all people are on the same level. Some of the manifestations of making things difficult are: obliging everyone to refer to Sharia texts and derive rulings, talking to people about things that they cannot comprehend, ignoring concessions granted in Sharia, and making obligatory things that are not obligatory according to Sharia.¹⁶⁶

1.7.8.ii. Arrogance and looking down on people,
and what that leads to of young people
taking positions of leadership

One of the prominent features of the phenomenon of extremism in modern times is arrogance and looking down on others, as well as claiming to have knowledge when one of them does not even know the basic principles and simplest rulings of Islam. One may have a little knowledge, without any proper understanding of the fundamentals, but he thinks that he has acquired the knowledge of the earlier and later generations. In his arrogance, he may even think that the scholars have little knowledge, and he gives up seeking knowledge. Thus he will be doomed because of his arrogance, and he will cause others to be doomed. This is how the early Kharijites were; they claimed to be scholars and people of knowledge. They insulted the scholars, when in reality, it was they who were among the most ignorant of people.¹⁶⁷

This pretence of knowledge and this arrogance leads to young and foolish people trying to become prominent in calling to Islam without knowledge or proper understanding. Although they are ignorant, some people take them as leaders. They issue fatwas without knowledge and judge matters without understanding; they confront major events without any experience or wisdom and without referring to the people who have the knowledge, understanding, experience and wisdom. Indeed, many of them look down on the scholars and shaykhs and do not appreciate their status. If one of the shaykhs issues a fatwa that does not appeal to their whims and desires, or is not in harmony with their way of thinking or attitude, they will start accusing him of a lack of knowledge, cowardice, hypocrisy, naïveté, lack of awareness and other shortcomings. Spreading these rumours causes division, corruption, resentment against the scholars and undermining of their value and status. This causes a great deal of harm to the Muslims in both religious and worldly terms.¹⁶⁸

1.7.8.iii. Persisting in one's opinion and regarding others as ignorant

One of the most prominent features of extremism in modern times is fanatical adherence to one's opinion without acknowledging the validity of other opinions, and rejecting any truth they have as long as it is different from one's own view. Among the causes that generate fanatical adherence to one's own opinion are lack of knowledge, lack of awareness of any other view, admiring one's own stance and following whims and desires.

The problem of admiring one's own view and being fanatical in adhering to it was the cause of doom in the past. For example, what caused the doom of the ignorant Dhul-Khuwayṣirah? Ibn al-Jawzi says: "His problem was that he was pleased with his own opinion.

Had he thought a little, he would have realised that no view is superior to that of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).”¹⁶⁹ What caused the doom of the followers of Dhul-Khuwayṣirah was their admiration of their own opinions and their thinking badly of others. The Kharijites were devoted in worship, but they believed that they were more knowledgeable than ‘Ali (عليه السلام), and this was a serious problem¹⁷⁰ that caused their doom. These wretches fell prey to some phrases which they did not understand well, and they would not listen to anyone who could explain them and help them to understand them, because they thought that they were right and everyone else was wrong.

Muhammad Abu Zahrah says: “They were obsessed with some slogans such as ‘faith’, ‘there is no ruling except the ruling of Allah’, and ‘disavowing the wrongdoers’. In the name of these slogans, they regarded it as permissible to shed Muslim blood and spread killing throughout the Muslim lands, attacking everywhere.”¹⁷¹ This hateful fanaticism prevented them from responding to the truth after it became clear. Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) debated with them, and Ibn ‘Abbâs (عليه السلام) debated with them, and they left no excuse for them. They rebutted their flawed arguments, established clear proof against them and refuted them with decisive arguments, but only a few of them responded; most of them rushed to shed the blood of the Muslims. Adhering fanatically to one’s point of view and regarding others as ignorant is contrary to important Islamic principles such as consultation and offering sincere advice.

1.7.8.iv. Criticising the righteous scholars

The current era is witness to a strange campaign and weird phenomenon, namely a kind of aggression that is aimed at undermining the position of devoted scholars by criticising them and accusing them of being misguided and confused. Newspapers, magazines, books, articles, classrooms and study circles have seen many examples of this campaign, which has caused a great deal of

harm to the Muslim Ummah by creating and deepening division. Undoubtedly there are reasons for criticising and undermining the scholars, such as: learning without a teacher, misunderstanding some statements of the scholars, following whims and desires, and envy.

Some young people have resorted to bad conduct, namely seeking out the faults and mistakes of the scholars, looking for some odd views they may have, and misinterpreting their words in a way that is different from what was intended. They did that to justify their senseless campaign, the aim of which is to undermine scholars, both classical and contemporary, whose views differ from theirs and who do not approve of their way of thinking, which is not the way of moderation. This action of theirs has caused a great deal of harm to Islam and a great deal of joy to the enemies of Islam, such as the Zionists and idol worshippers.

This shameful attitude, which is indicative of ignorance, sickness and resentment, is something that the scholars have warned against because of the danger it poses to the Muslims and because it is carrying out the plans of the enemies of Islam and achieving their goals for them, without any effort on their part.¹⁷²

Ibn Taymiyah said, forbidding the narration of weak views from imams and scholars: “No one should narrate such weak opinions from any of the imams of the Muslims, whether by way of condemning him or by way of following him in this view. That is a kind of undermining of the imams and seeking to follow weak views. By following this method, the ruling official of the Tatars created turmoil among the Sunnis, so that he could lead them to leave Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ‘ah altogether and make them follow the way of the Râfidis and heretics.”¹⁷³

Those who challenge the devoted scholars of the Ummah are serving the interests of the Jews, Christians, tyrants and intelligence

agencies, whether they realise it or not. Those who are still criticising the scholars of the Ummah in this way have drifted away from the path of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah, who say: "The scholars of the earliest generation, and the Tâbi'oon who came after them, are people of righteousness and good conduct, people of deep knowledge and understanding, who should not be referred to except in the best way. Whoever mentions them in a bad way is not following the way of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah."¹⁷⁴

Those who criticise the devoted scholars of the Ummah should realise that backbiting about the scholars is a very serious sin, and the way in which Allah exposes those who undermine them is well known. This one who pretends to be a scholar does not realise that what matters when judging people is the numerous virtues and good deeds they have to their credit. Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "The one who has knowledge of Islam and experience of life will know for certain that the prominent man who has served Islam and done righteous deeds, who holds a prominent position in Islam and among the people of Islam, may slip and make mistakes, but he may be excused for his mistake; indeed, he may be rewarded for his efforts to make the right decision. Therefore, it is not permissible to follow him in that mistake; at the same time, it is not permissible to weaken his position and status in the hearts of the Muslims."¹⁷⁵

Who would be left for the Ummah of Islam if its scholars were undermined? It would be left with young people who cannot recite Qur'an well, do not understand Arabic, and do not have much knowledge about many branches of Islamic knowledge. This attitude of criticising the scholars fills the hearts of the enemies of Islam with joy, because it creates a generation without leaders. Have you ever seen a generation without leaders succeed?

The worst of people in previous nations were their scholars and rabbis, many of whom went astray and led others astray. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿O you who believe! Verily, there are many of the [Jewish] rabbis and the [Christian] monks who devour the wealth of mankind in falsehood, and hinder [them] from the way of Allah [i.e. Allah's religion of Islamic Monotheism]﴾ (*Qur'an* 9: 34).

The best of the Muslims are their devoted, active scholars. Ash-Shu'bi said: "In every nation, their scholars are the worst — except for the Muslims, whose scholars are the best of them."¹⁷⁶ Ibn Taymiyah explained it this way: "Every nation apart from the Muslims is astray, and the ones who led them astray are their scholars, so their scholars are the worst of them. But the Muslims are following true guidance, and guidance is explained to the people by their scholars, so their scholars are the best of them."¹⁷⁷

1.7.8.v. Thinking negatively

This problem is very widespread and is causing a great deal of harm at the present time. This disease may be fatal and a means of destruction and ruin; it may lead to serious consequences and a great deal of evil and corruption. There are causes for this disease such as ignorance, which means not being able to understand the reality of what one sees, hears and reads and the aim behind it, or not being able to understand the subtle rulings of Sharia with regard to some issues, especially if those issues are strange and require subtle understanding and farsightedness. This ignorance makes a person hasten to be suspicious, think negatively and undermine the position of a particular scholar.

Another cause of this problem is whims and desires, which is the worst of diseases. In this case, seeing or hearing something that one does not like, agree with or want is sufficient to make a person's suspicions run wild. He avoids weighing matters according to a precise Sharia standard, trying to find excuses, or pausing to ponder

and re-examine the issue, let alone look critically at his own understanding. Whims and desires prevent all of that.

Another cause is self-admiration and arrogance, which means thinking highly of oneself and feeling proud of one's own understanding (if one has any understanding). This self-admiration prompts one to praise himself and look down on others. In his estimation, he is right and everyone else is wrong; he is guided and everyone else is misguided.

We have seen some people whose suspicion and negative thinking has reached a very peculiar level, leading them to exclude all other people, living and dead, and to accuse them of being deviant and misguided, guilty of following corrupt beliefs. According to this view, everyone else has a problem with his beliefs; these people alone are sincere. Everyone else is doomed, but they are saved. This negative thinking is a disease, and every disease has serious effects. Bad only leads to bad, and among its bad effects are the following:

- ❖ It prompts a person to seek out faults and look for mistakes. By doing so, he exposes himself to the wrath and punishment of Allah, because the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) warned people in whose hearts there is this sickness: "O you who have believed with your tongues but faith has not entered your hearts, do not backbite the Muslims or seek out their faults, for the one who seeks out their faults, Allah will seek out his faults. When Allah seeks out a person's faults, He will expose him even if he is in his house."¹⁷⁸
- ❖ It prompts a person to backbite and slander the honour of others, and instils a vengeful attitude.
- ❖ Finally, negative thinking sows division among the Muslims, breaks the bonds of brotherhood, severs the ties of love and creates enmity, hatred and resentment.

It is quite clear that this disease is very serious, so Islam's attitude towards it is decisive. It calls for and enjoins avoiding most suspicion, because real-life events prove that being controlled by suspicion and following what it dictates leads to adverse consequences and a great deal of harm.¹⁷⁹ Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿O you who believe! Avoid much suspicion; indeed some suspicions are sins﴾ (*Qur'an* 49: 12).

Ibn Katheer said: "Here Allah (ﷻ) is forbidding His believing slaves to engage in much suspicion, which means making accusations and believing that one's family, relatives and other people are betraying you when there is no cause to do so, because that may be pure sin. So a lot of suspicion is to be avoided as a precautionary measure."¹⁸⁰

One of the ways of averting suspicion or negative thinking is by seeking excuses for your brother. 'Umar ibn al-Khaţţâb (رضي الله عنه) said: "Do not think anything but good about the word spoken by your believing brother when there is a way to interpret it in a good manner."¹⁸¹

1.7.8.vi. Being harsh and cruel with others

One of the manifestations of extremism in modern times is harshness and cruelty in dealing with others, when being harsh is not appropriate. It is as if the basic principle when dealing with others is to be cruel and harsh, not gentle and merciful. This harshness is the usual feature of some young people, whose violence and cruelty may go beyond words to actions, so that innocent blood is shared and buildings are destroyed because of it. This violence may cause a great deal of harm to its perpetrators and to the Ummah. There are a number of main reasons why some young people use violence, harshness and cruelty, which we may sum up as follows:

— Going through hard times. Many of these young people

have been subjected to various trials that have had an impact on their psyches, hence there is an extreme reaction. They responded to violence with violence, which then became second nature to them.

- Ignorance of the rules connected to enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil. Enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil make up one of the most important duties that Allah (ﷻ) has made obligatory upon this Ummah. However, the one who does it should be knowledgeable about it, so that he can achieve the interests and avoid making matters worse. It should be done in the gentlest and most straightforward way, and there are matters that should be understood and known by the one who wants to carry out this duty. For example, one must know that this duty may be fulfilled sometimes in the heart (by feeling discontent with the evil or hating it); it may be fulfilled sometimes on the tongue (by speaking out and giving advice); and it may be fulfilled sometimes by taking action (by physically removing evil). Fulfilling it in the heart is obligatory in every case, but some people make a mistake here; they want to enjoin good and forbid evil either verbally or physically in all cases, without any understanding, forbearance or patience, and without looking at what is and is not more appropriate to the situation and what is or is not achievable. So they enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, believing that they are obeying Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ), when in fact they are violating the prescribed limits.¹⁸²
- It is essential to have knowledge of what is good and what is evil, and to know how to distinguish between them. It is also essential to have knowledge of the people being

addressed. Part of righteousness and proper conduct is to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil in accordance with the straight path, which is the shortest path that leads to the desired results in the most straightforward manner. It is essential to be gentle and kind, and it is also essential to be forbearing and patient in putting up with the inevitable inconvenience and discomfort; otherwise, the person will cause more harm than good. So the three essential things are knowledge, kindness and patience: knowledge before enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, kindness when doing it and patience afterwards. He must have all three with him when enjoining what is good or forbidding what is evil. Al-Qâḍi Abu Ya‘la said: “No one should enjoin what is good or forbid what is evil except one who has proper understanding of what he is enjoining and forbidding.”¹⁸³ Being ignorant of these issues and not paying attention to them will lead to strictness and violence in calling people to Islam.

- Some young people use harsh and cruel methods when trying to guide people, debate with them and call them to give up what is contrary to Sharia. They think that being harsh will give results and deter people, but they forget that being kind and gentle is the original principle that is not to be forsaken until after all gentle and kind means have been exhausted. Gentleness is what yields good results and has an impact on people’s hearts; harshness, on the other hand, puts people off in most cases and makes the transgressor persist in his ways. It is very strange that these people did not differentiate between the one who transgresses the limit knowingly and the one who does so unknowingly; between the one who promotes innovation and the duped, misguided victim; and between mistakes concerning which

there is a difference of scholarly opinion and mistakes on which there is consensus that they are wrong.

One of the causes of the harshness adopted by some of these people is roughness in dealing with their parents; they do not show them any respect or help them or serve them. These people forget that parents have a special status unlike other people, especially when it comes to calling and guiding them. That does not mean that one should compromise on religious commitment or adherence to any issue of Islam, or that one should commit sins in order to please their whims and desires — far from it. We are referring instead to good manners when dealing with them, such as being gentle in speech, being kind and patient with them and showing them compassion and mercy. Allah says:

﴿And We have enjoined on man [to be dutiful and good] to his parents. His mother bore him in weakness and hardship upon weakness and hardship, and his weaning is in two years — give thanks to Me and to your parents. Unto Me is the final destination. But if they [both] strive with you to make you join in worship with Me others that of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not; but behave with them in the world kindly, and follow the path of him who turns to Me in repentance and in obedience. Then to Me will be your return, and I shall tell you what you used to do.﴾ (*Qur'an* 31: 14-15)

We have seen some young people refraining from helping people who mix good deeds with bad; in their view, these people are not deserving of any service, kind words or help. These young people do not have a clear idea of the concept of love and hate for the sake of Allah (ﷻ) and the limits of each of them. For them, hating the bad deeds takes precedence over loving the good deeds. They forget that

providing social services is one of the most successful means of calling people to Islam, because it is a practical means that has a greater impact on people than mere words. They forget that their harsh treatment and refraining from helping deepens the gap between them and people and causes people to go and join the ranks of the deviants who are the enemies of Islam.

Another example of this extreme violence is what some of the people do, going beyond harshness of speech to killing and shedding blood — the blood of scholars, innocent soldiers or innocent civilians. Finally, it comes as no surprise to learn that these people of violence often turn against each other and attack one another, sometimes verbally and sometimes physically. This will come as no surprise if you study a little of the history of these groups which have abandoned the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ) and the methodology of the righteous predecessors. These groups opposed one another and regarded one another as misguided disbelievers.

This is the fate of those who abandoned the methodology brought by the Seal of the Prophets (ﷺ). Islam's stance on violence and harshness when calling to Islam and interacting with people is very clear. Allah (ﷻ) says, enjoining Moosa and his brother Haroon: ﴿Go, both of you, to Fir'aun [Pharaoh], verily, he has transgressed [all bounds in disbelief and disobedience and behaved as an arrogant and as a tyrant]. And speak to him mildly; perhaps he may accept admonition or fear [Allah].﴾ (*Qur'an* 20: 43-44)

These were the instructions of our Lord (ﷻ) to Moosa and Haroon (ﷺ) when calling the tyrant Pharaoh: to speak mildly or gently when explaining the truth because it is more beneficial and more likely to be accepted and to instil fear of Allah (ﷻ). Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿The good deed and the evil deed cannot be equal. Repel [the evil] with one which is better [i.e. Allah orders the faithful believers to be patient at the time of anger, and to excuse those who treat them

badly] then verily he, between whom and you there was enmity, [will become] as though he was a close friend. But none is granted it [the above quality] except those who are patient — and none is granted it except the owner of the great portion [of happiness in the hereafter, i.e., paradise and of a high moral character] in this world.﴾ (Qur'an 41: 34-35)

The caller to Islam will inevitably encounter things that upset and anger him in his work, so it is essential for him to train himself to be patient and to protect himself by suppressing his anger and pardoning people. ﴿O my son! *Aqim-iş-Şalâh* [perform aş-Şalâh], enjoin [on people] *Al-Ma'roof* [Islamic Monotheism and all that is good], and forbid [people] from *Al-Munkar* [i.e. disbelief in the Oneness of Allah, polytheism of all kinds and all that is evil and bad], and bear with patience whatever befalls you. Verily, these are some of the important commandments [ordered by Allah with no exemption].﴾ (Qur'an 31: 17)

The caller to Islam should avoid things that provoke and annoy people and should avoid reviling and impugning others: ﴿And insult not those whom they [disbelievers] worship besides Allah, lest they insult Allah wrongfully without knowledge.﴾ (Qur'an 6: 108)

There are many texts from the Prophet (ﷺ) which confirm this and focus on adhering to the principle of kindness and avoiding harshness and violence. He (ﷺ) said: "There is never any kindness in a thing but it beautifies it, and kindness is never absent from a thing but it makes it ugly."¹⁸⁴

Kindness is the basic principle in calling people to Islam. That does not mean cancelling out strictness altogether — not at all. Strictness does have its place, after all means of kindness and patience have been exhausted. The guided one is the one whom Allah (ﷻ) guides to differentiate among different situations and whom He protects from whims and desires.¹⁸⁵

2. Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali and Shiite thought

2.1. The meaning of the words ‘Shia’ and ‘Rafd’ in the Arabic language and in Sharia terminology

2.1.1. The meaning of the word ‘Shia’ in Arabic

In Arabic, a man’s *shia* refers to his followers and supporters. The phrase *tashayya’a ar-rajulu* means ‘the man claimed to believe in Shiism’. The phrase *tashâyya’a al-qawm* means ‘the people divided into different groups’. Any group of people who are united and follow one another’s opinions may be described as *shay’*. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿As was done in the past with the people of their kind [ashyâ’ihim]﴾ (Qur’an 34: 54), referring to people like them among the past nations.¹⁸⁶ In *al-Miṣbâḥ al-Muneer*, it says: “(The word) *Shia* refers to followers and supporters. Any group of people who unite on an issue are a ‘*shia*’ (party). Then the word *Shia* began to be used to describe a specific group.”¹⁸⁷ So in linguistic terms, the word *Shia* refers to people, companions, followers and helpers. This meaning is used in some verses of the noble Qur’an, such as the following two verses:

﴿And he [Moosa] found there two men fighting, — one of his party [shi’atihi] [his religion — from the Children of Israel], and the other of his foes. The man of his [own] party asked him for help against his foe.﴾
(Qur’an 28: 15)

﴿And, verily, among those who followed his [Nooh’s (Noah’s)] way [shi’atihi] [Islamic Monotheism] was Ibrâheem [Abraham].﴾
(Qur’an 37: 83)

In the first verse, the word Shia refers to people; in the second verse it refers to the followers who agree with a view or method and take part in it.

2.1.2. The meaning of the word 'Shia' in Islamic terminology

The definition of the word 'Shia' is connected to different stages of their development and the development of their ideology or belief. It should be noted that the beliefs and ideas of the Shia are constantly developing and changing; Shiism during the early period was not like the Shiism that appeared later on. In the early period, no one was called a Shia except one who preferred 'Ali to 'Uthmân.¹⁸⁸ The words 'Shia' and 'Uthmâni' were used, with a Shia being one who preferred 'Ali over 'Uthmân. On this basis, the definition of the Shia in the earliest period is that they were those who preferred 'Ali to 'Uthmân only.¹⁸⁹ Ibn Taymiyah said: "The early Shia were those who, at the time of 'Ali (ﷺ), believed in the superiority of Abu Bakr and 'Umar."¹⁹⁰ Shurayk ibn Abdullah, who was one of those who were described as being Shia, disagreed with giving the name of Shiism to those who preferred 'Ali over Abu Bakr and 'Umar, because this was contrary to the mutawâtir reports from 'Ali which stated the superiority of Abu Bakr and 'Umar.

Tashayyu' (Shiism) means supporting and following, not opposing and differing.¹⁹¹ Ibn Baṭṭah narrated that his shaykh, who was known as Abu al-'Abbâs ibn Masrooq, said: "Muhammad ibn Ḥumayd told us, Jareer told us, from Sufyân, that Abdullah ibn Ziyâd ibn Jareer said: Abu Ishâq as-Subay'i came to Kufah, and Shahr ibn 'Atiyyah said: 'Let us go and see him.' They spoke, and Abu Ishâq said: 'I left Kufah when no one doubted the superiority and precedence of Abu Bakr and 'Umar. Now I have come,¹⁹² and they are saying — by Allah, I do not know what they are saying.'" Muḥibb ad-

Deen al-Khaṭeeb said: "This is an important historical text that highlights the development of Shiism. Abu Ishâq as-Subay'î was the shaykh and scholar of Kufah.¹⁹³ He was born during the caliphate of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Uthmân (عليه السلام), three years before he was martyred, and he lived a long life, until he died in 127 AH. He was a child during the caliphate of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام), and he said of himself: 'My father lifted me up so that I could see 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib delivering a sermon, with white hair and beard.' If we knew the date when he left Kufah and when he came back to visit it, we would know the exact date when the Shia in Kufah believed in what their Imam believed in of the superiority of Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and when they began to differ with 'Ali with regard to what he used to believe and proclaim from the minbar of Kufah with regard to the superiority of his two brethren, the two companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), his two advisors, the two caliphs who became in charge of the Ummah at the best and purest time in our history."¹⁹⁴ Layth ibn Abi Sulaym said: "I met the first Shia and saw how they never regarded anyone as superior to Abu Bakr and 'Umar."¹⁹⁵

The author of *Mukhtaṣar at-Tuḥfah* said: "Those of the Muhājireen and Anṣâr who lived at the time of 'Ali's caliphate, and those who followed them in truth, all acknowledged 'Ali's virtue and rights and recognised his status. They never undermined the position of any of his fellow Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), let alone accused one of being a disbeliever or slandered him."¹⁹⁶

Over the years, Shiism did not maintain this level of purity, soundness and decency; the principles of Shiism changed, and the Shia became divided into many groups. Shiism became a cover used by everyone who wanted to plot against Islam and the Muslims, encompassing the enemies who harboured grudges and envy. This is why we call those who slander Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) Râfiḍis, because they do not deserve to be

described as Shia.¹⁹⁷ Anyone who knows about the ideological development of the Shia will not be surprised to find that there are a number of prominent scholars of hadith, other scholars and other prominent figures who were described as Shia, and they may be among the prominent Sunni scholars. This is because Shiism, as a concept and definition, at the time of the earliest generations was different from the concept and definition of Shiism later on.

Adh-Dhahabi said, when talking about those who were accused of following the innovation of Shiism: "Innovation is of two types: minor innovation, such as being extreme in Shiism or Shiism without going to extremes. This is found a great deal among the Tâbi'oon and their followers, even though their religious commitment, piety and sincerity were great. If we were to reject the narrations of these men, we would lose a large number of hadith reports, and this would be a serious problem. Then there is major innovation, such as complete Râfiḍism, going to extremes in that, undermining the position of Abu Bakr and 'Umar (ؓ) and promoting such ideas. The reports of this type of people are not to be accepted, and there is no respect for them. I cannot think of any of this type who is sincere or trustworthy; rather their way is lying, dissimulation (taqiyyah) and hypocrisy. How can the reports of such a man be accepted? That is utterly impossible. At the time of the earliest generation and according to their definition, the extreme Shia was the one who criticised and slandered 'Uthmân, az-Zubayr, Ṭalhah, Mu'âwiyah and a group of those who fought 'Ali (ؓ). But the extreme Shia nowadays, in our view, is the one who regards these leaders as disbelievers and disavows Abu Bakr and 'Umar. Such a person is misguided and a fabricator of lies."¹⁹⁸

So Shiism is of varying degrees, levels and stages, and the Shia include various groups and sects. Before we begin our discussion on the definition of Shiism, we may note that the definition of the Shia

that is mentioned in most of the books that talk about different sects of Islam is that which persisted in describing the Imâmi Shia as being followers of 'Ali and the like.

This has led to a misconception that is contrary to the consensus of the Ummah. This misconception states that 'Ali was a Shia harbouring the same beliefs as the Shia, but in fact, 'Ali (عليه السلام) was innocent of what the Shia believe about him and his descendants. It is essential to be more precise and careful when giving a definition, so as to avoid confusion. It should be said that they are those who **claim to be** followers of 'Ali. They did not follow 'Ali in any true sense because Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) did not believe in what they believed.¹⁹⁹ Or it may be said that they are the ones who **claim to be** supporters of 'Ali (عليه السلام), or they are Râfîdis. Hence some of the scholars describe them as the Râfîdis who claim to be supporters of 'Ali (عليه السلام).²⁰⁰ Moreover, they are not following in the footsteps of the supporters and followers of 'Ali; they are impostors and Râfîdis.²⁰¹

2.1.3. The meaning of the word 'rafḍ' in Arabic

The word 'rafḍ' means rejecting, giving up, or abandoning. For example, the phrase *rafaḍtu ash-shay'* means 'I rejected the thing'.²⁰²

2.1.4. The meaning of the word 'Râfîḍah' in Islamic terminology

The Râfîḍah are one of the groups that claimed to be supporters of Ahl al-Bayt, while also disavowing Abu Bakr, 'Umar and most of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) except a few of them, denouncing them as disbelievers and reviling them.²⁰³ Imam Aḥmad (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The Râfîḍah are those who disavowed, reviled and impugned the Companions of Muhammad the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).²⁰⁴ Abdullah ibn Aḥmad

(may Allah have mercy on him) said: "I asked my father about the Râfiḍah, and he said: 'They are the ones who revile or impugn Abu Bakr and 'Umar (ﷺ).'"²⁰⁵

Abu al-Qâsim at-Taymi said in *Qawâm as-Sunnah*, defining them: "They are the ones who impugn Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) and those who love them."²⁰⁶ The Râfiḍah were unique, among all the groups who claim to belong to the Muslim Ummah, in reviling the two shaykhs Abu Bakr and 'Umar. This is indicative of the severity of their doom and loss, may Allah (ﷻ) destroy them.²⁰⁷

Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Abu Bakr and 'Umar (ﷺ) are hated and cursed by the Râfiḍah to the exclusion of all other sects."²⁰⁸ The books of the Râfiḍah confirm this, because they regard love and support for the two shaykhs, or the lack thereof, as the criteria that differentiates between them and others whom they call Nâṣibis. Al-Darâzi narrated that Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Moosa said: "I wrote to 'Ali ibn Muhammad²⁰⁹ about the Nâṣibi: 'With regard to testing him, is there any need for anything more than his giving precedence to *al-jibt waṭ-ṭaghoot*²¹⁰ and believing in their right to the caliphate?' The answer came back: 'Whoever believes that is a Nâṣibi.'"²¹¹

2.1.5. The reason why they are called Râfiḍah

The majority of scholars think that the reason why the Râfiḍis are so called is because they rejected (*rafaḍa*) Zayd ibn 'Ali and abandoned him after being part of his army, when he rebelled against Hishâm ibn 'Abdul-Malik in 121 AH. That was after they had declared their disavowal of the two shaykhs [Abu Bakr and 'Umar], and he told them not to do that. Abu al-Ḥasan al-Ash'ari said: "Zayd ibn 'Ali did not give precedence to 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib over the rest of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ); he loved Abu Bakr

and 'Umar, but he believed that it was a religious duty to rise up against unjust rulers. When he started his rebellion in Kufah with the supporters who had sworn allegiance to him, he heard some of them disparaging Abu Bakr and 'Umar. Zayd denounced those from whom he heard that, and those who had sworn allegiance to him separated from him. He said to them: 'You have rejected me (*rafaḍtumooni*).''²¹² This was the view of the author of *Qawām as-Sunnah*,²¹³ ar-Râzi,²¹⁴ ash-Shahrastâni²¹⁵ and Ibn Taymiyah,²¹⁶ may Allah have mercy on them. Al-Ash'ari had a different opinion; according to him, they were called Râfiḍis because they rejected the right to caliphate of Abu Bakr and 'Umar.²¹⁷

2.1.6. The Râfiḍis today

The Râfiḍis today hate this name and do not accept it; they think that it is a name that was given to them by their opponents. Muḥsin al-Ameen says: "Ar-Râfiḍah is a derogatory name that is given to those who give precedence to 'Ali (ﷺ) with regard to the caliphate, and this word is usually used as an insult and a put-down."²¹⁸ Hence today they are called Shia and have become known by this name to most people. Some writers and educated people have been influenced by that, so we see them using this term (Shia), whereas in fact the word Shia is a general term which includes everyone who supported 'Ali (ﷺ).²¹⁹ The authors of books on groups and sects stated that they are three types:

- (a) Extremists, who are those who exaggerated about 'Ali (ﷺ) and claimed that he was divine or a prophet.
- (b) Râfiḍis, who claimed that there is a divine text appointing 'Ali (ﷺ) as caliph. They disavow the caliphs who came before him and most of the Companions.
- (c) Zaydis, who are the followers of Zayd ibn 'Ali. They give precedence to 'Ali (ﷺ) over the other Companions, but

they also love Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both).²²⁰

Calling the Râfiḍis 'Shia' without giving a proper definition of the term is not correct, because this term 'Shia' includes the Zaydis,²²¹ who love Abu Bakr and 'Umar (ﷺ). Calling the Râfiḍis 'Shia' may give the impression that they are like the early Shia at the time of 'Ali (ﷺ) and afterwards, and all the earlier Shia were unanimously agreed on the superiority of 'Abu Bakr and 'Umar over 'Ali. They only thought that 'Ali was superior to 'Uthmân, and this group included many of the scholars and good and righteous people.

Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Hence the early Shia who supported 'Ali or lived at that time did not dispute the superiority of Abu Bakr and 'Umar; their dispute was as to whether 'Ali or 'Uthmân was superior."²²² Calling the Râfiḍis 'Shia' is one of the obvious errors that some contemporary writers fell into by following in the footsteps of the Râfiḍis, who attempted to rid themselves of this name because they realised that the early generations condemned and hated them. They wanted to rid themselves of the name by claiming to belong to the Shia in general, as a kind of camouflage and deceit before those who do not know about them. One effect of that is the mistake made by some beginner seekers of knowledge, who do not fully understand the exact meanings of terminology. They confuse the rulings that apply to the Râfiḍis with the rulings that apply to the Shia, because of the practice of using the word 'Shia' to include the Râfiḍis too. So they think that what was mentioned by some early scholars concerning the Shia is also applicable to the Râfiḍis, whereas the scholars differentiate between the two groups in all their rulings.²²³

Therefore it is essential to call the Râfiḍis by their real name, which was given to them by the scholars, and not to call them Shia in an absolute sense, because that is causing confusion and

misunderstanding. If they are called 'Shia,' then something should be added to it to indicate the particular group in question, such as saying 'the Imami Shia' or the 'Twelver Shia,' according to the custom of the scholars when mentioning them.²²⁴ And Allah (ﷻ) knows best.

2.2. Origin of the Râfiḍi Shia and the role of the Jews therein

The first one to promote the principles of Râfiḍi Shia beliefs, on which their other beliefs are based, was a Jewish man from Yemen whose name was Abdullah ibn Saba'. He became Muslim at the time of the Rightly Guided Caliph 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân (رضي الله عنه) and travelled throughout the Muslim regions to promote these corrupt beliefs.

Aṭ-Ṭabari wrote in his book of history: "Abdullah ibn Saba' was a Jew from Ṣan'â', whose mother was a black woman. He became Muslim at the time of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه), then he travelled through the lands of the Muslims, trying to misguide them. He started in the Hijaz, then went to Basra, then Kufah, then Syria, but he was not able to achieve what he wanted with anyone among the people of Syria. They expelled him, and he went to Egypt and lived there. Among the things that he said to them was: 'It is very strange that there are people who claim that 'Eesa will return but do not believe that Muhammad will return, when Allah says: ﴿Verily, He Who has given you [O Muhammad] the Qur'an [i.e. ordered you to act on its laws and to preach it to others] will surely, bring you back to *Ma'âd* [place of return, either to Makkah or to paradise after your death].﴾ (Qur'an 28: 85) Muhammad is more deserving of returning than 'Eesa.' This was accepted from him, and he explained to them the concept of some of the Companions returning from the dead to be judged before the Day of Resurrection, and they discussed it. After that, he told them that there were one thousand prophets, that each prophet had an appointed heir, and that 'Ali was the appointed heir of

Muhammad. Then he said: 'Muhammad was the seal of the prophets, and 'Ali was the seal of the appointed heirs.' He told them after that: 'Who is a greater wrongdoer than the one who did not carry out the instruction of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), who pushed away the appointed heir of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and took control of the Ummah's affairs?' Then he said to them: "Uthmân took it unlawfully, and 'Ali is the appointed heir of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), so do something about this matter and spread it among the people. Start by criticising your governors, and show people that you are enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, so that you may gain the people's support and tell them about this matter.' Then he sent his callers and wrote to those whose beliefs he managed to corrupt in various regions, and they wrote to him."²²⁵

This was the beginning of the Râfiḍi movement. Those beliefs to which Ibn Saba' called people continued to spread among people of misguidance and deviation and continued to have an impact on their hearts and minds until they resulted in the murder of the Rightly Guided Caliph Dhun-Noorayn 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân (رضي الله عنه) at the hands of this corrupt gang. At the time of 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه), these beliefs began to appear more than before, until they reached 'Ali (رضي الله عنه), who denounced them in the strongest terms, disavowing them and those who believed in them. One of the sound reports from 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) concerning that is the report narrated by Ibn 'Asâkir from 'Ammâr ad-Duhani, who said: "I heard Abu at-Tufayl say: 'I saw al-Musayyab ibn Lajabah bringing Ibn Saba', dragging him by the collar, when 'Ali was on the minbar. 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said: "What is the matter with him?" He said: "He is telling lies about Allah and His Messenger."'"²²⁶ It was narrated via Yazeed ibn Wahb from Salamah from Shu'bah that 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه) said: "What do I have to do with this rough black man?", referring to Abdullah ibn Saba', who used to slander Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be

pleased with them).²²⁷ This report is proven to be from 'Ali (ﷺ) with a sound chain of narration.²²⁸

The historians and those who studied sects and groups narrated that Ibn Saba' claimed that 'Ali (ﷺ) was divine, so 'Ali (ﷺ) burned him and his companions with fire.²²⁹ Al-Jurjâni said: "The Saba'is among the Râfiḍis are named after Abdullah ibn Saba', who was the first of the Râfiḍis to go beyond the pale of Islam. He said that 'Ali was the Lord of the Worlds, so 'Ali burned him and his companions with fire."²³⁰ Al-Maṭṭi said, while discussing the Saba'is: "They are the followers of Abdullah ibn Saba'. They said to 'Ali: 'You.' He said: 'Who am I?' They said: 'The Creator.' He asked them to repent but they did not recant, so he lit a huge fire and burned them."²³¹ Some of the historians are of the view that 'Ali (ﷺ) did not burn Ibn Saba'; they say that he banished him to al-Madâ'in, and that after 'Ali (ﷺ) died, Ibn Saba' claimed that he had not died, saying to the one who announced his death: "Even if you brought us his brain wrapped in seventy cloths, we would not believe that he had died."²³²

The first view is more likely to be correct, and it is supported by what is narrated in *Ṣaḥeḥ al-Bukhârî* from 'Ikrimah who said: "Some heretics were brought to 'Ali (ﷺ), and he burned them. News of that reached Ibn 'Abbâs, who said: 'If it were me, I would not have burned them because of the prohibition of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "Do not punish with the punishment of Allah." But I would have killed them, because the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Whoever changes his religion, execute him."'"²³³ Ibn Ḥajar (may Allah have mercy on him) commented on this hadith and quoted some reports about these people who were burned, in which it was said that they were people who used to worship idols; some reports said that they were people who apostatised from Islam. Even though the reports differ as to who exactly they were, Ibn Ḥajar said after

that: "Abu al-Mudhaffar al-Isfarâyeeni said in *al-Milal wan-Nihâl* that those whom 'Ali burned were a group of the Râfiḍis who claimed that he was divine. They were the Saba'is. Their leader Abdullah ibn Saba' was a Jew who pretended to be a Muslim and introduced this idea. This may be based on what we have reported from Abu Ṭâhir al-Mukhlis via Abdullah ibn Shurayk al-Âmiri who said: 'It was said to 'Ali (ﷺ): "There are some people at the door of the mosque who are claiming that you are their Lord." He called them and said: "Woe to you, what are you saying?" They said: "You are our lord, creator and provider."'"²³⁴ Then he quoted the rest of the report, in which it says that 'Ali (ﷺ) asked them to repent three times, but they would not recant, so he burned them with fire in ditches that were dug for them. Ibn Ḥajar said: "This is a reliable chain of narration."²³⁵

The point here is that the beliefs of the Râfiḍi Shia that have to do with exaggeration about 'Ali (ﷺ) emerged during that period, and 'Ali (ﷺ) took harsh measures in punishing them until Ibn 'Abbâs said what he said. 'Ali (ﷺ) also denounced all the other beliefs that appeared during his time under the umbrella of loving and supporting him, such as preferring him to the rest of the Companions and giving him precedence over Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both). The practice of reviling and disparaging the Companions was widespread among these misguided people. Ibn Taymiyah said: "When the Shia introduced innovations during the caliphate of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ), he opposed them. There were three groups: the extreme group, those who reviled the Companions, and those who gave precedence to 'Ali (ﷺ). As for the extreme group, he burned them with fire. He went out one day from the gate of Kindah, and some people prostrated to him. He said: 'What is this?' They said: 'You are Allah.' He asked them to repent three times, but they did not recant, so the third time he ordered that ditches be dug and fire be lit in them, then he threw them into them.

As for those who reviled the Companions, when news reached him of the one who reviled Abu Bakr and 'Umar, he wanted to kill him, but the man fled to Qarqaysiya' and (the governor there) spoke to him concerning him. 'Ali (عليه السلام) was very careful with his governors, because he was not in full control, and they did not obey him in everything he instructed them to do. As for those who gave him precedence, he said: 'No one who prefers me over Abu Bakr and 'Umar is brought to me but I shall flog him as the ḥadd punishment for fabricators or liars.' It was narrated from him with more than eighty chains of narration that he said: 'The best of this Ummah after its Prophet is Abu Bakr, then 'Umar.'"²³⁶

Whatever the case may be, the beliefs of the Râfiḍis that appeared at the time of 'Ali (عليه السلام) were limited to a few individuals; they did not reach the level of becoming a group or sect. When 'Ali's caliphate came to an end, the situation was still like this.

Dr. Sa'di al-Hâshimi wrote an essay on the ideology of Ibn Saba' and the innovations that he promoted, entitled 'Ibn Saba' is a Reality, not Myth', and he quoted it in his book *Narrators Who Were Influenced by Ibn Saba'*. The most significant innovation that was promoted by Ibn Saba' was the idea of appointing an heir. He was the first one to say that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) appointed 'Ali as his heir and that he was to be his successor in ruling his Ummah after his death, according to an instruction in which 'Ali was mentioned by name. He was also the first one to disavow the enemies of 'Ali (عليه السلام), according to his claim; he took a stand against them and deemed them to be disbelievers. He was the first to say that 'Ali (عليه السلام) was divine and the first one among the extreme Shia to claim to be a prophet. He introduced the idea that 'Ali (عليه السلام) would return to this world after he died and that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would return. He was the first one to claim that 'Ali was the 'beast of the earth',²³⁷ and that he was the one who created the universe and

granted provision. The Saba'is said that they would not die and that they would fly after death, so they were referred to as something that flies. Some of the Saba'is believed in the passing of the spirit from one Imam to another, and they believed in the passing of souls from one body to another at death. The Saba'is said: "We have been guided to revelation from which people have gone astray and to knowledge that is hidden from them." They said that 'Ali is in the clouds, that the thunder is his voice and that the lightning is his whip. These are the most prominent innovations believed by Ibn Saba' and his followers, and they became extremists as a result.²³⁸

The Râfiḍi Shiite sect, as an ideology and belief, did not appear all at once; it took time and went through various stages. The initial Shiite Râfiḍi beliefs and basic principles appeared at the hands of the Saba'is, as is admitted in the Shiite books, which say that Ibn Saba' was the first one to state that the imamate of 'Ali was a must and that 'Ali was the appointed heir of Muhammad, as we have seen above. According to this belief, there were instructions from the Prophet (ﷺ) that mentioned 'Ali by name and stated that he was to be the Imam or caliph. This is the basis of Râfiḍi Shiism, as the Râfiḍi shaykhs see it. Abu al-Ḥasan said in *al-Kâfi*: "The imamate of 'Ali was written in all the books of the prophets, and Allah never sent any Messenger without telling him of the prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ) and the imamate of 'Ali (عليه السلام)." ²³⁹

The books of the Râfiḍi Shia, as we shall see below, testify that Ibn Saba' and his group were the first ones to begin reviling Abu Bakr, Umar and 'Uthmân, the in-laws, relatives and caliphs of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and the closest of people to him, and reviling other Companions. This is the belief of the Râfiḍi Shia about the Companions, as it appears in their reference books.

Ibn Saba' believed that 'Ali would return,²⁴⁰ and the return of 'Ali is one of the basic beliefs of the Râfiḍi Shia, as we shall see

below. Ibn Saba' also believed that 'Ali and Ahl al-Bayt were given secret knowledge that was exclusive to them, as was mentioned by al-Ḥasan ibn Muhammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah²⁴¹ in *Risâlat al-İrja'*.²⁴² This issue became one of the basic beliefs of the Shia. There is a proven report in *Sahih Bukhari* which indicates that this belief appeared at an early stage, and that 'Ali (ﷺ) was asked about it. It was said to him: "Do you have anything (of knowledge) that is not in the Qur'an and is not known to people?" He denied that categorically.²⁴³

These are the most important of the basic principles in which the Râfiḍi Shia believe.²⁴⁴ These ideas came into existence after the murder of 'Uthmân (ﷺ) and during the caliphate of 'Ali (ﷺ), but they were not embraced by a particular, known group. As soon as the Saba'is began to raise their heads, Ali (ﷺ) fought them, as we have seen. Later, though, events took place that created the right environment for these beliefs to surface and take the shape of a group; these incidents included the battle of Şifteen and the arbitration that followed it, as well as the killing of 'Ali and al-Ḥasan.

All these events created passion, sympathy and love for Ahl al-Bayt, and these new ideas snuck in under the pretext of support and love for 'Ali (ﷺ) and the members of his family. Shiism became a means for everyone who wanted to destroy Islam, whether he was a heretic or a hypocrite or an evildoer. It introduced to the Muslims foreign ideas and beliefs in the name of love for 'Ali and Ahl al-Bayt, and it made it easy for these ideas to penetrate smoothly in that guise. Ibn Saba' had many successors, so with the passage of time, this innovation began to broaden and its danger became great. At the time of 'Ali (ﷺ), the word Shia was used only in the sense of love and support for 'Ali (ﷺ), and it did not mean believing in any of the ideas of the Râfiḍi Shia as they are known today at all.²⁴⁵

Shiism in the sense of love for Ahl al-Bayt is something natural. It is love that does not differentiate among the different members of the Prophet's family and does not exaggerate about them or undermine any of the Companions, as the groups that are attributed to Shiism do. The love of Ahl al-Bayt grew and increased after the pain and suffering that they went through, starting with the murder of 'Ali and then al-Ḥusayn, and so on. These incidents unleashed the emotions of the Muslims, and those who bore grudges against Islam entered through this door. The views of Ibn Saba' did not find a suitable atmosphere in which to grow and spread until after these events.

However, Shiism in the sense of believing that 'Ali (عليه السلام) was mentioned by name to be the Imam or caliph and believing in the return of some of the Companions from the dead to be judged before the Day of Resurrection, in the doctrine of change in the divine will, in the hidden Imam, in the infallibility of the Imams and so on is undoubtedly a set of beliefs for which Allah (ﷻ) has revealed no authority, and these beliefs are foreign to the Muslims. Their origins go back to various sources, because many people rode the wave of Shiism — people who wanted to plot against Islam and its people and who wanted to be able to continue living in the shade of their previous beliefs in the name of Islam, whether they were Jews, Christians, Magians or something else. Many corrupt beliefs were introduced into Shiism, as we shall see below when we study their basic beliefs. Ibn Taymiyah was of the view that those who claimed to be Shia had adopted ideas from the Persians, Byzantines, Greeks, Christians, Jews and others and mixed them with Shiism. He said: "This is a confirmation of what the Prophet (ﷺ) said," and he quoted some hadiths saying that this Ummah would follow in the footsteps of those who came before them. He also said that this happened with those who claimed to be Shia.²⁴⁶

2.3. Stages that the Râfiḍi Shia went through

The Râfiḍi Shia went through a number of stages in their development before they became an independent group with distinct beliefs and a distinct name, separate from the other groups of the Ummah. We may highlight four main stages of that development:

2.3.1.

The call of Abdullah ibn Saba' to whatever he promoted of basic beliefs on which Râfiḍi doctrine was based, such as his promotion of the belief that some Companions would return from the dead to be judged before the Day of Resurrection, his introduction of the idea that the Prophet (ﷺ) had appointed 'Ali to be his successor, and his slandering of the caliphs who came before 'Ali (رضي الله عنه). Two things helped Ibn Saba' to promote his misguided ideas, which are far from the spirit of Islam:

- (a) He chose a suitable environment. He spread his call in Egypt and Iraq and moved between these regions a great deal, as is mentioned by aṭ-Ṭabari.²⁴⁷ This appeal developed in societies that had not managed to understand Islam properly and did not have deep knowledge of the religion of Allah (ﷻ) because they were new to Islam. Those regions had only been conquered at the time of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه), and the people were far away from the society of the Companions in the area around Makkah and Madinah, so they did not learn and study at their hands.
- (b) By way of trickery and deceit, he concealed his call and operated in secrecy. His call was not directed to everyone; it was only directed to those whom he knew would accept it, such as ignorant people and those with evil motives who had only entered Islam in order to plot against its people,

after the Muslim armies had destroyed the thrones of their kings and conquered their lands. We have seen above what at-Ṭabari said about Ibn Saba': "He spread his call and wrote to those whom he managed to corrupt in other regions, and they wrote to him. They called people in secret to their ideas."²⁴⁸ At-Ṭabari said, describing them: "They started spreading a lot of rumours (against the governors) in Muslim lands, but their real aim was different from what they showed."²⁴⁹

2.3.2.

The second stage came when they started promoting their beliefs openly. This came after the murder of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه), when the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) were focusing on suppressing the unrest that had resulted in his murder. These misguided people found breathing space in those circumstances, and their corrupt beliefs grew strong and became deeply rooted in their hearts, but these beliefs were still limited to a small, specific group of those whom Ibn Saba' himself had taught. They had no power or influence with anyone apart from those of the rebel thugs who joined them in the murder of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه). What is indicative of that is what was narrated by at-Ṭabari: "Ibn Saba' spoke and said: 'O people, your victory could come by mixing with the people, so show kindness to them.'"²⁵⁰ Such words would not be said by one who was in a position of power or influence. Yet no one denies the role played by these Saba'is and the killers of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) in fanning the flames of war among the Companions; this was stated by scholars who studied the fitnah and its events. Ibn Ḥazm says, confirming this: "The proof of that is that the two armies came together (at the Battle of the Camel) and did not fight, but at night the murderers of 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) realised that the two parties were going to be united against them, so they attacked the

camp of Talhah and az-Zubayr at night, wielding their swords against them, and the people had to defend themselves.”²⁵¹

2.3.3.

The third stage involved their gaining strength and power and rallying behind one leader. This happened after the murder of al-Ḥusayn (عليه السلام), and the purpose was to avenge al-Ḥusayn by retaliating against his enemies. Aṭ-Ṭabari says concerning the events of 64 AH: “In this year, the Shia began to mobilise in Kufah, preparing to meet in an-Nakheelah in 65 AH in order to march on the Syrians in a quest for vengeance for the blood of al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Ali. They corresponded with one another concerning that.”²⁵²

Their story was narrated by aṭ-Ṭabari in a report from Abdullah ibn ‘Awf ibn al-Aḥmar al-Azdi, who said: “When al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Ali was killed and Ibn Ziyâd returned from his camp in an-Nakheelah and entered Kufah, the Shia met and blamed themselves, regretting what had happened. They thought that they had made a grievous mistake by calling al-Ḥusayn and promising support, then abandoning him so that he was killed near them without their lending him any support. They thought that nothing could erase their shame and the sin resulting from his murder except killing the ones who had killed him or being killed in the attempt. So in Kufah, they turned to five people who were leaders of the Shia: Sulaymân ibn Ṣurad al-Khuzâ‘i, who had met the Prophet (ﷺ); al-Musayyab ibn Najiyyah al-Fizâri, who had been one of the most prominent companions of ‘Ali (عليه السلام); Abdullah ibn Sa’d ibn Nufayl al-Azdi; Abdullah ibn Wâ’il at-Taymi; and Rifâ’ah ibn Shaddâd al-Bajali. These five people then met in the house of Sulaymân ibn Ṣurad. They were among the most prominent of ‘Ali’s companions, and they were joined by some of the most prominent of the Shia.”²⁵³

This meeting was public and included all the Shia. Approximately seventeen thousand rallied behind Sulaymân, but he was not happy with their small numbers. He sent Hakeem ibn Munqidh to give the call in Kufah, and the people came out to join them until their number reached nearly twenty thousand.²⁵⁴ During this time, al-Mukhtâr ibn Abi 'Ubayd ath-Thaqafi came to Kufah and found that the Shia had rallied behind Sulaymân ibn Şurad; they were showing him a great deal of respect and were preparing for war. When al-Mukhtâr settled among them in Kufah, he called for the imamate of al-Mahdi Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib, namely Muhammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah; he called him al-Mahdi, and many of the Shia followed him in that, leaving Sulaymân ibn Şurad.

Thus the Shia split into two groups. The majority of them were with Sulaymân, wanting to go out to fight people so that they could avenge the murder of al-Ḥusayn. Another group was with al-Mukhtâr, wanting to proclaim the imamate of Muhammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah, albeit without any instruction from Ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah himself; they attributed that to him in order to deceive the people and achieve their corrupt ulterior motives.²⁵⁵ This is how the Shia began to come together.

Then the historians tell us that Sulaymân ibn Şurad set out for Syria with those Shia who were still with him. They met the Syrians at a spring called 'Ayn al-Wardah, where a great battle took place that lasted for three days. Ibn Katheer said: "No one, old or young, had ever seen anything like that day, when nothing interrupted the fighting except the times for prayer, until night fell."²⁵⁶ The fighting between them ended with the killing of Sulaymân ibn Şurad (may Allah have mercy on him) and many of his companions; they were defeated, and those of his companions who were left returned to Kufah.²⁵⁷

As for al-Mukhtâr ibn Abi 'Ubayd ath-Thaqafi, when those who survived of Sulaymân's army returned to Kufah, they told him what had befallen them. He prayed for mercy for Sulaymân and those who had been killed with him and said: "I am the trusted leader who will kill the corrupt tyrants inshallah. Get ready and prepare yourselves, and be of good cheer." Ibn Katheer said: "Before (the defeated army) arrived, he had told the people that they had been defeated on the basis of revelation that he had received from Satan, as a devil used to come to him and reveal things to him in a manner similar to the way Satan used to reveal things to Musaylimah."²⁵⁸ Al-Mukhtar sent instructions to different regions, cities and towns in Iraq and Khorasan and organised his army. Then he started to pursue the murderers of al-Ḥusayn, whether they were of prominent or lowly position, and kill them.²⁵⁹

2.3.4.

The fourth stage was the split of the Râfiḍi Shia from the Zaydis and other Shia groups, and their becoming distinct in name and beliefs. That happened specifically in 121 AH, when Zayd ibn 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn rebelled against Hishâm ibn 'Abdul-Malik, as mentioned previously.²⁶⁰ Some of the Shia in his army openly reviled Abu Bakr and 'Umar. He told them not to do that and denounced them, but they rejected (*rafaḍa*) what he said and thus became known as Râfiḍis, while the group that remained with him became known as Zaydis.²⁶¹ Ibn Taymiyah said: "The first time that the word Râfiḍi was known in Islam was when Zayd ibn 'Ali rebelled at the beginning of the second century AH. He was asked about Abu Bakr and 'Umar (ﷺ), and he expressed love and respect for them, but some people rejected him and became known as Râfiḍis."²⁶² He said: "From the time of Zayd's rebellion, the Shia split into Râfiḍis and Zaydis. When Zayd was asked about Abu Bakr and 'Umar, he prayed for mercy for them, and some people rejected that. He said to

them: 'You have rejected me.' So they were called Râfiḍis because of their rejection of him, and those Shia who did not reject him were called Zaydis, after him."²⁶³ From that date, the Râfiḍis became distinct from other Shia groups and became a separate sect with their own name and beliefs.²⁶⁴ And Allah (ﷻ) knows best.

The scholars who discussed different sects talked about different groups which claimed to be Shia, among whom they mentioned the Saba'is, the Ghurâbis, the Bayâtis, the Mugheeris, the Hâshimis, the Khaṭṭâbis, the 'Ilbâ'is, the Kaysânis, the Zaydis, the Jaroodis, the Sulaymânis, the Şâliḥis and the Batris. Some of these groups went to extremes, and others were less extreme. The one who wants to know more about them may refer to *Maqâlât al-Islâmiyyeen* by Abu al-Ḥasan al-Ash'ari, *al-Milal wan-Niḥal* by ash-Shahrastâni, *Al-Farq bayna al-Firaq* by Abudh-Dhâhir al-Baghdadi and *Firaq Mu'âşirah* by Dr. Ghâlib ibn 'Ali 'Awâji, who is one of the best contemporary writers I have come across.

3. Beliefs of the Imami Râfiḍi Shia

The Twelver Râfiḍi Shia believe that imamate is an important pillar of Islam and one of the fundamentals of faith; a person's faith is not complete, and no deed may be accepted from him, unless he believes in it. The first person who spoke of the concept of imamate as believed in by the Râfiḍi Shia was Ibn Saba'. He spread the idea that imamate was something about which the Prophet (ﷺ) gave instructions, that it is limited to the one whom he mentioned in those instructions (the appointed heir), and that if anyone other than him takes the position of imamate (or caliphate), he must be disavowed and regarded as a disbeliever.

The books of the Shia admit that Ibn Saba' was the first one to spread the idea of 'Ali's imamate being obligatory, openly

disavowing his enemies, standing up to his opponents and denouncing them as disbelievers.²⁶⁵ He was of Jewish origin, and he believed that the one who was instructed by Moosa to take his place was Joshua; when he became Muslim he applied this same idea to 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib.²⁶⁶ This is what was agreed upon by the shaykhs of the Râfiḍi Shia.

Ibn Bâbawayh al-Qummi recorded the beliefs of the Shia in the fourth century AH, and he said that they believed that every prophet had an appointed heir whom Allah (ﷻ) instructed should come after the prophet.²⁶⁷ He stated that the number of appointed heirs was 124,000.²⁶⁸ Al-Majlisi stated in his *Akhhbâr* that 'Ali was the last of the appointed heirs.²⁶⁹ One of the chapter headings in *al-Kâfi* says: "Imamate is a covenant from Allah (ﷻ), which is passed on from one to another."²⁷⁰ Another heading says: "What Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger instructed with regard to the Imams and mentioning their names one after another."²⁷¹ He included a number of their reports, which they regard as evidence beyond any shadow of a doubt.

Hence their shaykh Miqdâd al-Ḥilli (d. 821 AH) said: "The one who is entitled to the position of imamate has to be a man who is appointed by Allah and His Messenger, not just by any man."²⁷² Muhammad Ḥusayn Âl Kâshif al-Ghaṭa', one of the senior religious authorities of the Twelver Shia in modern times, stated: "Imamate is a divinely-appointed position like prophethood. Just as Allah chooses whomever He wills among His slaves for prophethood and messengership and supports them with miracles which are like a statement from Allah concerning him, so He also chooses for imamate whomever He wills and enjoins His Prophet to mention him by name as his successor and issue instructions that he should be a leader (Imam) for people after he is gone."²⁷³

So you see that the concept of imamate in their view is like the concept of prophethood. Just as Allah chose prophets from among

His creation, He also chooses Imams, mentioning them by name, telling mankind about them, establishing proof through them, supporting them with miracles, and sending down Books and revelation to them. They do not say or do anything except by the command and revelation of Allah. In other words, imamate is the same as prophethood, and the Imam is a Prophet; the change is in name only.

Hence al-Majlisi said: "Trying to work out the difference between a Prophet and an Imam based on these reports may be problematic."²⁷⁴ Then he said: "We do not know the reason why they are not given the title of prophet except as a kind of respect to the Seal of the Prophets; our minds cannot fathom the difference between prophethood and imamate."²⁷⁵ This is what they say with regard to the concept of imamate, and it is sufficient criticism of it that they have no support for this view except (the words of) Ibn Saba', the Jew.²⁷⁶

3.1. The status of the Imam in their view, and the ruling on the one who denies it

For the Sunnis, the issue of imamate (caliphate or rulership) is not one of the basic fundamentals of religion that a Muslim cannot afford to be unaware of, and this has been stated by a number of scholars.²⁷⁷ According to the Râfiḍi Shia, though, it is something else altogether. In *al-Kâfi*, there are reports that describe imamate as the greatest pillar of Islam. Al-Kulayni narrated, with his chain of narration from Abu Ja'far, that the latter said: "Islam is built on five (pillars): the prayer, zakâh, fasting, hajj and imamate. There is no issue that is emphasised as much in Islam as imamate. The people took four and they abandoned this — meaning imamate."²⁷⁸

You can see that they dropped the twin declaration of faith from the five pillars of Islam and replaced it with imamate, which they regard as the greatest of the pillars, as is indicated by their

saying: "There is no issue that is emphasised as much in Islam as imamate," and by other words of theirs, such as the text quoted above, to which the narrator added: "I said: 'Which is the best of these?' He said: 'Imamate is the best.'"²⁷⁹

Al-Majlisi said: "No doubt belief in the imamate of the Imams and submitting to their authority are among the fundamentals of faith, and better than all physical acts of worship because these are the starting point."²⁸⁰

Al-Mudhaffar, who is one of their contemporary scholars, says: "We believe that imamate is one of the fundamentals of religion, and that faith is not complete without believing in it. It is not permissible to imitate parents, family or educators, no matter how great they are; rather it is essential to examine the issue, just as it is essential to examine the issues of tawḥeed and prophethood."²⁸¹ The reports go even further than that, as they say: "The Prophet (ﷺ) taught more about the imamate of 'Ali and the Imams who came after him than he taught about obligatory duties."²⁸²

These reports of the Râfiḍi Shia, and others like them in the books of the Râfiḍi Shia, were enough to make the issue of imamate the criterion to judge whether a man was a believer or a disbeliever, and to leave the Muslim exposed to accusations of disbelief for merely differing with the Imami Shia with regard to the issue of imamate, in which they believe. Hence we see some senior Shiite scholars, both earlier and later, frankly stating this bitter truth.

Ibn Bâbawayh al-Qummi said, in his essay *al-I'tiqâdât*: "Our belief about those who deny the imamate of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام) is the same as that about one who denies the prophethood of all the prophets, and our belief about the one who affirms the imamate of 'Ali and denies one of the Imams who came after him is that he is like one who affirms all the prophets but denies the prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ)."²⁸³

Yoosuf al-Baḥrānī says in his encyclopaedia *al-Ḥadā'iq an-Nādirah fī Ahkām al-'Itrah at-Ṭāhirah*: "I wonder what difference there is between one who disbelieves in Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger, and one who disbelieves in the Imams, even though it is proven that imamate is one of the fundamentals of religion."²⁸⁴

Al-Majlisi says: "It should be noted that the fact that the words polytheism and disbelief are applied to the one who does not believe in the imamate of 'Ali and the Imams who are descended from him, and believes that others are superior to them, indicates that they will abide forever in hell."²⁸⁵

Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥilli said: "Imamate is a general mercy, and prophethood is a more specific mercy, because it is possible for there to be a time without a living prophet, which is not the case with regard to the Imam. Denying general mercy is worse than denying specific mercy."²⁸⁶

He describes the one who does not believe in their Imams as being worse in disbelief than the Jews and Christians. Based on that, he says that there should never be any time without an Imam. This is a reference to their belief in the existence of a hidden, awaited Imam, which is something that is rejected by many Shiite groups. The scholars of genealogy and history who examined this issue stated that this Imam was never even born, but here a shaykh of the Rāfiḍī Shia says that denying him is worse than disbelief!²⁸⁷

Their shaykh, al-Mufeed, stated that there was consensus among them on this view of regarding the Ummah of Islam as disbelievers. He says: "The Imamis are agreed that the one who denies the imamate of one of the Imams, and rejects what Allah (ﷻ) has enjoined upon him of obedience to the Imams, is a misguided disbeliever who deserves to abide forever in hell."²⁸⁸ The matter went so far that their shaykh Ni'matullah al-Jaz'iri declared the Shia

to be separate from the Muslims because of the issue of imamate. He said: “We do not have either a God or a Prophet or an Imam in common with them, because they say that their Lord is the one Whose Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is, and his successor who came after him was Abu Bakr, but we do not believe in that Lord or in that Prophet; rather we say that the Lord whose Prophet’s successor was Abu Bakr is not our Lord, and that Prophet is not our Prophet.”²⁸⁹

So imamate is at the same level as prophethood, if not greater. It is the basic foundation of religion, in their view. Hence the ruling of the Twelver Shia against anyone who denied the imamate of any one of their twelve Imams gave the final shape to their extremism, as they deemed him to be a disbeliever who was doomed to spend eternity in hell, and they included in their curses and rulings of apostasy all Muslim groups except the Twelvers. They included in their denunciation as disbelievers all of the following:

3.1.1. Their denunciation of the Companions (رضي الله عنهم)

The books of the Râfiḍi Shia are filled with curses and condemnation as disbelievers for those with whom Allah (ﷻ) is pleased and who are pleased with Him: the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr, those who were present at Badr, those who swore allegiance to the Prophet (ﷺ) in the pledge of Raḍwân, and the rest of the Companions, with only a very few exceptions who can be counted on the fingers of one hand. After it appeared in their books and became widely known, this became one of the issues that could not be concealed by means of taqiyyah.²⁹⁰

Some of the scholars who studied Shiite sects and groups examined this issue among the Twelver Shia. Al-Qâḍi ‘Abdul-Jabbâr said: “As for the Imamis, they are of the view that the way to prove the imamate of the twelve Imams is by means of the clear text that denounces as disbelievers those who deny it, as they must be

denounced as disbelievers. Hence they regard the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) as disbelievers.”²⁹¹ Something similar was said by ‘Abdul-Qâhir al-Baghdadi.

As for the Imamis, most of them²⁹² claimed that the Companions apostatised after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), except for ‘Ali (عليه السلام), his two sons and a small number of others, making a total of thirteen.²⁹³ Ibn Taymiyah said: “The Râfiḍis say that the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr concealed the Prophet’s clear instructions (to appoint ‘Ali as caliph) and disbelieved, apart from a small group, a little over ten or more. Then they said: ‘Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and others like them had always been hypocrites,’ and they said: ‘Rather, they believed then they disbelieved.’ The books of the Twelvers say that the Companions apostatised because they appointed Abu Bakr as caliph, with the exception of three of them. Some of their reports add three or four others to Imam ‘Ali, bringing the total to seven, but they did not add more than that. The Shia narrated this myth in their so-called reliable books and recorded it in the first book of theirs that appeared, which was the book of Sulaym ibn Qays.”²⁹⁴

Then their books came one after another to confirm and propagate this idea. Foremost among them are *al-Kâfi*, which is regarded as the most authentic of their four books; *Rijâl al-Kashshî*,²⁹⁵ which is their main reference concerning the biographies of narrators; and other references of theirs.²⁹⁶ We will discuss the attitude of the Râfiḍi Shia towards the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) in detail below.

3.1.2. Their denunciation of Ahl al-Bayt as disbelievers

The reports accusing the members of that unique and ideal society of apostasy do not make exceptions for any of them except seven individuals, according to the highest estimate. These seven do

not include any member of the household of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), apart from a few of their reports which make an exception only for 'Ali (عليه السلام). This is the report of al-Fuḍayl ibn Yasâr from Abu Ja'far, who said: "All of the people became people of ignorance except four: 'Ali, al-Miqdâd, Salmân and Abu Dharr. I (al-Fuḍayl) said: 'And 'Ammâr?' He said: 'If you want those who never faltered at all, then it is these three.'"²⁹⁷

The verdict of apostasy in these texts includes all of the Companions and the household of the Prophet, such as the wives and relatives of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), even though the fabricator claims to be a supporter of Ahl al-Bayt. This is clear evidence that claiming to be supporters of the Prophet's household (Shiism) was no more than a cover under which to carry out evil ulterior motives against Islam and its people, and that the fabricators of these reports were enemies of the Companions and relatives of the Prophet (ﷺ).²⁹⁸

The Râfiḍî Shia focused their slander and accusations of disbelief on a number of the members of the family of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). They said that the verse ﴿And whoever is blind in this world [i.e., does not see Allah's Signs and believes not in Him], will be blind in the hereafter, and more astray from the Path﴾ (*Qur'an* 17: 72) was revealed concerning his paternal uncle al-'Abbâs. They also singled out Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs, the scholar of the Ummah and the interpreter of the Qur'an; they cursed him and described him as a 'foolish man',²⁹⁹ as it says in *al-Kâfi*. In *Rijâl al-Kashshi*, it says: "O Allah, curse the two sons of so-and-so, blind them as You blinded their hearts, and make the blindness of their eyes a proof of the blindness of their hearts."³⁰⁰ Their Shaykh Ḥasan al-Mustafawi commented on this: "They are Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs and 'Ubaydullah ibn 'Abbâs."³⁰¹

The daughters of the Prophet (ﷺ) are also included in the hatred and resentment of the Twelver Shia, who do not mention them

among those excluded from their accusations of becoming disbelievers (after the death of the Prophet). Some of them even denied that the Prophet (ﷺ) had any daughters apart from Fâtimah (ؓ).³⁰² Can the one who says such things about the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and his daughters really love the Messenger of Allah?³⁰³

The author of *al-Kâfi* said in his reports that everyone who does not believe in the twelve Imams is a disbeliever, even if he is descended from 'Ali and Fâtimah.³⁰⁴ In reality, this implies that the entire generation of the Companions and those who came after them, including Ahl al-Bayt and the Companions, are disbelievers because they did not know about the idea of the twelve Imams, which did not exist until after 260 AH.

This also implies that the Mothers of the Believers, the wives of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), were disbelievers, since they did not exempt a single one of them in their texts. They particularly focused on 'Â'ishah³⁰⁵ and Ḥafṣah³⁰⁶ (may Allah be pleased with them) for their criticism, curses and denunciation as disbelievers.³⁰⁷ Their shaykh al-Majlisi wrote a chapter entitled *Bâb Aḥwâl 'Â'ishah wa Ḥafṣah* in which he quoted seventeen reports,³⁰⁸ and referred the reader to more reports in other chapters,³⁰⁹ which offend the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) with regard to the members of his household, in the most abhorrent terms. In their reports, they even accused the one whom Allah (ﷻ) declared to be innocent from above seven heavens, 'Â'ishah bint aṣ-Ṣiddeeq, of immoral conduct. In the most prominent of their tafseers, *Tafseer al-Qummi*,³¹⁰ there is a horrible slander which implies disbelief in the noble Qur'an. Ibn Katheer said in his commentary on Soorat an-Noor: "The scholars (may Allah have mercy on them) are unanimously agreed that the one who reviles her and accuses her after this which is mentioned in this verse is a disbeliever, because he is stubbornly rejecting the Qur'an."³¹¹ Al-Qurtubi said: "Everyone who reviles her by accusing

her of that which Allah (ﷻ) has declared her innocent of is disbelieving Allah (ﷻ), and whoever disbelieves Allah (ﷻ) is a disbeliever.”³¹²

3.1.3. Their denunciation of the Rightly Guided Caliphs and their governments as disbelievers

According to the Imami Râfiḍi Shiite religion, any government other than an Imami Râfiḍi government is invalid; its ruler is an unjust oppressor who is being worshipped instead of Allah (ﷻ), and the one who swears allegiance to him is worshipping something other than Allah (ﷻ). Al-Kulayni confirms this in a number of chapters, such as his chapter on “One who claims to be a ruler but is not qualified to rule, one who denies the Imams or some of them, and one who affirms the imamate (rulership) of one who is not qualified for it,” in which he mentions twelve hadiths from their Imams;³¹³ and his chapter on “The one who accepts the authority of the ruler who has no sanction from Allah (ﷻ),” which includes five hadiths.³¹⁴

According to their point of view, all the caliphs of the Muslims — apart from ‘Ali (ﷻ) and al-Ḥasan — are unjust and evil, even if they call people to the truth, treat Ahl al-Bayt kindly and establish the religion of Allah (ﷻ). They say, “Every banner that is raised before the banner of the awaited Mahdi, the one who raises it is unjust and evil.”³¹⁵ The commentator on *al-Kâfi* said: “Even if the one who raises it calls people to the truth.”³¹⁶ Al-Majlisi deemed this report to be sound³¹⁷ according to their standards.³¹⁸

3.1.4. Judging Islamic regions to be ‘the abode of disbelief’

In some of their reports, many Muslim countries are singled out for slander, and their people are deemed to be disbelievers in

particular. Usually they target regions where the people are adhering more to Islam and following the Sunnah. They stated that the people of Makkah and Madinah were disbelievers during the best generations. At the time of Ja'far aṣ-Ṣâdiq, they said of the people of Makkah and Madinah: "The people of Syria are worse than the people of Byzantium (meaning, worse than the Christians); the people of Madinah are worse than the people of Makkah, and the people of Makkah openly show disbelief in Allah."³¹⁹ They also said: "The people of Makkah openly show disbelief in Allah, and the people of Madinah are more evil than the people of Makkah, seventy times more evil."³²⁰

It is well known that the people of Madinah, especially during the best generations, were following in the footsteps of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) more than the people of other regions, and the people of Madinah continued to adhere to their Mâliki madh-hab until the beginning of the sixth century AH or thereabouts, when some of the Râfiḍis from the east came and corrupted many of them.³²¹

They said of Egypt and its people: "The sons of Egypt are cursed on the lips of Dâwood (ﷺ), and Allah (ﷻ) turned some of them into monkeys and pigs."³²² They said: "When Allah (ﷻ) got angry with the children of Israel, He caused them to enter Egypt, and when He was pleased with them, He caused them to leave it."³²³ They also said: "What a bad land Egypt is. It was a prison for those of the children of Israel with whom Allah (ﷻ) was angry."³²⁴ And they said: "Avoid Egypt and do not seek to stay there, because staying there makes one a cuckold."³²⁵

They have a number of reports that criticise Egypt, slander its people and warn against living there. They attribute these reports to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), Muhammad al-Bâqir and 'Ali al-Bâqir. This was the Râfiḍi view of Egypt at the time when Islam was

flourishing. Al-Majlisi commented on these texts by saying that Egypt had "become one of the worst of lands at that time, because its people were among the most wretched and doomed of disbelievers."³²⁶

These texts express the Râfiḍi's resentment and grudges against Egypt and its people, and it is not far-fetched to suggest that these feelings were due to the fall of the state of their brethren the Ismaili 'Ubaydis at the hand of Saladin, who cleansed Egypt of their filth and impurity. What comparison can there be between these unjust words against Egypt and its people and the chapter that Muslim included in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* under the title "The Prophet's instructions to be kind to the people of Egypt"?³²⁷ The Râfiḍis criticised many regions of the Islamic world and their people,³²⁸ and they did not exempt anyone except those who followed their sect, who were very few at that time. It is even narrated that they said: "Allah commanded people to love and support us and offered that to the people of different regions, but no one accepted it except the people of Kufah."³²⁹

3.1.5. The Muslim judges

Their reports regard the Muslim judges as evildoers because of their connection to the caliphate, which they see as a 'false authority'. It is narrated in *al-Kâfī* that 'Umar ibn Handh^{al}alah said: "I asked Abu Abdullah (ﷺ) about two of our companions who had a dispute about a debt or inheritance, and they referred their case to the ruler and to the judge; is that permissible?" He said: "Whoever refers to them for judgement, whether the case is valid or not, he is referring for judgement to false judges. Whatever is ruled in his favour, he is only taking something harâm, even if it is his proven right, because he is taking it on the basis of the ruling of false judges, and Allah has enjoined us to reject it."³³⁰ Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And they wish to go for

judgement [in their disputes] to the *Tâghoot* [false judges] while they have been ordered to reject them (Qur'an 4: 60). This report criticises the judges and judiciary system at the time of Ja'far aṣ-Ṣâdiq, as is clear from their chains of narration going back to him. If this was their opinion of the Muslim judges during the best generations, then what do you think is the opinion about those who came after them?³³¹

3.1.6. The imams and scholars of the Muslims

They warned against learning from the shaykhs and scholars of the Muslims, regarding them as people of polytheism. It was narrated that Haroon ibn Khârijah said: "I said to Abu Abdullah (عليه السلام): 'We go to those people who differ from us'³³² and listen to their talk, so that it might be proof for us against them.' He said: 'Do not go to them and do not listen to them, may Allah curse them and their polytheist ways.'"³³³ In *al-Kâfi*, it is narrated from Sudayr that Abu Ja'far said: "O Sudayr, shall I show you those who divert people away from the religion of Allah?" Then he looked towards Abu Ḥaneefah and Sufyân ath-Thawri, who were sitting in circles in the mosque, and he said: "These are the ones who divert people away from the religion of Allah without knowledge, or guidance, or a Book giving light."³³⁴ These are the evildoers; if they sat at home, people would look for someone to learn from, and they would not find anyone tell to them about Allah (الله) or about His Messenger (عليه السلام), so they would come to us, and we would tell them about Allah (الله) and about His Messenger (عليه السلام)."³³⁵

Ibn Taymiyah explained their attitude towards the early generations and leading scholars of this Ummah, the Anṣâr, and those who followed them in truth, those with whom Allah is pleased and who are pleased with Him. They describe as disbelievers the majority of the Ummah of Muhammad (عليه السلام), both the earlier and later

generations. They describe as disbelievers everyone who believes Abu Bakr, 'Umar, the Muhâjireen and the Anşâr to be of good character, or who is pleased with them as Allah (ﷻ) is pleased with them, or who prays for forgiveness for them as Allah (ﷻ) has enjoined us to pray for forgiveness for them. Hence they regard as disbelievers the most prominent scholars of the Ummah, such as Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyab, Abu Muslim al-Khawlâni, Uways al-Qurani, 'Aṭa' ibn Abi Rabâh and Ibrâheem an-Nakha'i, as well as Imam Mâlik, al-Awzâ'i, Imam Abu Ḥaneefah, Ḥammâd ibn Zayd, Ḥammâd ibn Salamah, ath-Thawri, Imam ash-Shâfa'i, Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Fuḍayl ibn 'Iyâd, Abu Sulaymân ad-Dârâni, Ma'roof al-Karkhi, al-Junayd ibn Muhammad, Sahl ibn Abdullah at-Tastari and others.

This alleged disbelief is worse than that of the Jews and Christians, because the latter in their view are originally disbelievers, but these people are considered apostates — and according to scholarly consensus, the disbelief of apostasy is worse than original disbelief. Most of their scholars regard Abu Bakr, 'Umar, the majority of the Muhâjireen and Anşâr, the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) such as 'Â'ishah and Ḥafṣah, the rest of the leaders and scholars of the Muslims and their common folk as not having believed in Allah (ﷻ) even for a second, because faith which is followed by disbelief, in their view, is invalid in the first place. Some of them even suggest that the private parts of the Prophet (ﷺ), with which he had intimate relations with 'Â'ishah and Ḥafṣah, should be touched by fire in order to be purified from having had intercourse with women whom they claim to be disbelievers, because intercourse with disbelieving women is harâm in their view.³³⁶

No one was safe from this comprehensive denunciation of people as disbelievers. Does it need any further examination? Its falseness is too apparent to require additional explanation. Regarding the Ummah as disbelievers is an extension of regarding the

Companions as disbelievers; the reason for it is the same and not different. It is not surprising that the one who resents the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), reviles them and regards them as disbelievers will also resent the entire Ummah and regard them as disbelievers. As one of the early generation said: "Anyone who bears grudges in his heart against any of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) will have more resentment in his heart towards the Muslims."³³⁷

If such a person does not approve of Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân, those who were present at Badr, those who swore allegiance in the pledge of Raḍwân, and the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr, who represent the pinnacle of virtue and goodness, will he approve of anyone after them? The basis of this attitude is the claim of the Râfiḍis that the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) denied the divine instruction appointing an heir to the Prophet (ﷺ), and we will explain that this so-called divine instruction is false on the basis of texts, reason and well known facts. What is based on falsehood is also false.

Their verdict of apostasy against the generation of the Companions is one of the clearest signs of the utter falseness of the Râfiḍi Shiite madh-hab.³³⁸ Hence Aḥmad al-Kasrawi, an Iranian of Shiite background, said: "As for what they said about the apostasy of the Muslims after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), this is a blatant lie and fabrication on their part. One might ask: How could they apostatise when they were the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), who believed in him when others disbelieved, who protected him and put up with persecution? How could they then apostatise during the caliphate of Abu Bakr and leave their religion in order to make him the caliph? Which of the two matters is easier to believe or more likely to have happened: to disbelieve one or two men who had corrupt motives or that a few hundred of the most sincere Muslims would apostatise? Give us your answer, if you have any answer."³³⁹

In the noble Qur'an, Allah (ﷻ) explains the basic principles of faith, and it is an explanation or exposition of all things. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And We have sent down to you the Book [the Qur'an] as an exposition of everything﴾ (*Qur'an* 16: 89). Allah (ﷻ) says, describing His Book, that it omits no matter on which religion is based: ﴿We have neglected nothing in the Book﴾ (*Qur'an* 6: 38). If that is the case, one may wonder: what is the basis of Shiite beliefs? The sacred book of Islam, the Qur'an, mentions prayer, fasting, zakâh and hajj many times, but it makes no reference to the twelve Imams or to the imamate (caliphate) after the Messenger, even though the imamate — according to the theory of the Râfiḍi Shia — is the most important pillar of Islam! Is it not strange that the Qur'an mentions the details of how to do wuḍoo', lists the ḥarâm types of food and drink, speaks of jihad sometimes and of peace sometimes, and discusses moral issues, but it ignores the imamate of the twelve Imams, which is described by Âl Kâshif al-Ghaṭa' as being a "divinely-ordained position like prophethood"? These Qur'anic texts clearly testify that the noble Qur'an did not neglect any issue that people need. So how could it neglect the issue of imamate, which is supposed to be based on a text? The Imami Shia talk about it and then leave it for their scholars to shape and define this idea, when the appointment of the Imams was supposed to come from Allah (ﷻ) and not from them.³⁴⁰

3.2. Infallibility according to the Râfiḍi Shia

Infallibility of the Imam, according to the Imami Râfiḍi Shia, is one of the conditions of imamate, and it is one of the basic principles and foundations of their belief. It is of major importance for them and is a result of the qualities, abilities and unlimited intellectual talents that the Shia ascribed to their Imams. They believe that the Imam is not answerable to any person, and that it is impossible for him to make a mistake, no matter how many actions

he does. It is essential to believe that everything he does is good, with nothing evil in it, because he has knowledge that no one else can possess. Hence the Shia ascribed infallibility to the Imam, among other things. They believe that the Imams are infallible throughout their lives and do not commit any sin, major or minor. They commit no act of disobedience, and it is not possible for them to make mistakes or forget.³⁴¹

Their Shaykh al-Mufeed narrated that there was consensus on this point, and he said: "The Imams, who take the place of the prophets in fulfilling Sharia rulings, carrying out ḥadd punishments, protecting the religion of Islam and disciplining the people, are infallible like the prophets. It is not possible for them to commit any major or minor sin, and it is not possible for them to be forgetful or make mistakes in any matter of religion or rulings. This is the view of all the Imamiyyah, except for those who are regarded as odd among them and adhered to the apparent meaning of some reports that could have an interpretation different than their corrupt understanding in this regard."³⁴² Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥilli said: "The Imamis and Ismailis are of the view that the Imam must be infallible, and they differed in that from all other groups."³⁴³

This was also stated by al-Majlisi when he said: "It should be noted that the Imamis, may Allah be pleased with them, agree on the infallibility of the Imams (عليه السلام), who are free from sin, both minor and major. They do not commit any sin at all, whether deliberately, or because of forgetfulness or mistakes in interpretation, or because Allah (ﷻ) caused them to forget."³⁴⁴

Aṣ-Ṣadooq narrated with a chain of narration going back — falsely — to Ibn 'Abbâs that he said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: 'I, along with 'Ali, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and nine of the descendants of al-Ḥusayn, are infallible.'"³⁴⁵ He also said, affirming that: "Our belief concerning the Prophets, Messengers and Imams is

that they are infallible and purified from all impurity. They do not commit sin, minor or major; they do not disobey Allah (ﷻ) in what He commands them; and they do what they are instructed. Whoever denies that they are infallible in any way is ignorant of them, and the one who is ignorant of them is a disbeliever.”³⁴⁶

This belief was not limited to the early generations of the Râfiqis; it is also shared by many contemporary Shia. Muhammad Riḍa al-Mudhaffar says: “We believe that the Imam, like the Prophet, must be infallible and protected against all things and immoral actions, both open and hidden, from childhood until death, whether those actions are deliberate or by mistake. He must also be infallible and protected against absentmindedness, mistakes and forgetfulness.”³⁴⁷ This was stated by az-Zanjâni in *'Aqâ'id al-Imamiyyah*³⁴⁸ and also by al-Bahrâni in *Manâr al-Huda*³⁴⁹ and as-Sayyid Murtaḍa al-'Askari in *Ma'âlim al-Madrasatayn*.³⁵⁰

However, there are some reports in the Imami Shi'ite madh-hab that contradict this view. Al-Majlisi was baffled when he saw texts that are contrary to the consensus of his companions, and he said: “The matter is very problematic because there are many reports and verses which indicate that it is possible for them to err, yet there is consensus of all our companions, except a few, that it is not possible for the Imams to err.”³⁵¹ This is an admission on the part of al-Majlisi that the consensus of the later Shia on the infallibility of the Imams is contrary to their own reports. This is real life evidence and a clear admission that they may all agree on misguidance, even though there is no evidence for it in their own books.³⁵²

It seems that the idea of infallibility went through various stages, and that the Shia initially differed in their beliefs and definitions of infallibility. For example, during the era of Abu Ja'far ibn Bâbawayh (d. 381 AH) and his shaykh Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Qummi, the opinion of most of the Shia was that the first level of

extremism was to deny forgetfulness on the part of the Prophet (ﷺ).³⁵³ In other words, they regarded anyone who said that the Prophet (ﷺ) could not forget as being one of the extreme Shia.

Things changed after that, and denying that the Imam could be absent-minded or could forget was equivalent to putting the Imams at the level of Allah (ﷻ), the One whom neither slumber nor sleep overtakes. Infallibility in that extreme form, denying that the Imams could be absent-minded or forgetful, was the belief of an unknown Shiite group in Kufah. In *al-Bihâr*, al-Majlisi says: "It was said to al-Riḍa — the eighth Imam of the Shia — that there were some people in Kufah who claimed that the Prophet (ﷺ) never forgot or made a mistake in his prayer. He said: "They are lying, may Allah (ﷻ) curse them; the One who never forgets or makes a mistake is Allah (ﷻ), besides Whom there is no other god."³⁵⁴

This indicates that the belief that the Imam cannot make a mistake was the belief of an unspecified group of people and was considered strange and odd. They said that the Prophet (ﷺ), who was the best of the Imams, could not make mistakes, but they did not say that about their Imams. Then this belief expanded to include the twelve Imams of the Shia, and the notion spread to all of the Imami Shia. The contemporary Shiite shaykh and 'Grand Ayatollah', Abdullah al-Mamqâni, affirms that believing that the Imams cannot make mistakes became one of the fundamentals of the Shiite madh-hab.³⁵⁵ He does not deny that their earlier shaykhs regarded that as extreme, but he says: "What was regarded as extreme in the past has today become one of the fundamentals of the Shiite madh-hab."³⁵⁶ If this belief in the infallibility of the Imams means taking them to the level of the Prophet, then believing that they cannot err is taking them to the level of divinity, as was indicated by the eighth Imam of the Shia, 'Ali ar-Riḍa. Ibn Bâbawayh al-Qummi and others stated that this belief was the line that separates the extremists from others,³⁵⁷

but their contemporary shaykh, al-Mamqâni, thinks that believing that the Imams cannot err is one of the fundamentals of the Shiite madh-hab, and that the one who rejects the fundamentals is a disbeliever. This view was also confirmed by their contemporary shaykh, Muhsin al-Ameen.³⁵⁸

What this means then is that their later scholars regarded their earlier scholars as disbelievers, and vice versa. Al-Mamqâni believes that a fundamental belief of the Shiite madh-hab is that the Imams cannot make mistakes, and some of them even say that there is consensus on this point.³⁵⁹ However, in some books that are addressed to the Sunnis,³⁶⁰ we are told that the view of all the Shia is that the Imams can make mistakes.³⁶¹ Thus they denounce one another as disbelievers and contradict one another, each one claiming that what he says is the Shia view.³⁶² Belief in the infallibility of the Imams was one of the reasons for belief in changes in the divine will and taqiyyah — as we shall see below. This is because the real lives of the Imams were not at all in harmony with the claims of infallibility, so when differences or contradictions were found in their statements, the Shia explained them by saying that this was due to a change in the divine will or a case of taqiyyah, as some of the Shia have admitted.³⁶³

One of the most serious academic implications of the claims of infallibility is that they regard everything that was uttered by their twelve Imams as having a status similar to the words of Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ). Hence in their sources, most of the chains of narration for the reports end at one of their Imams instead of going back to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). The Shia claim for their Imams a level of infallibility that was not even achieved by the prophets and messengers of Allah, as clearly indicated in the Qur'an, Sunnah and consensus.³⁶⁴

3.2.1. Their evidence from the Noble Qur'an for the infallibility of their Imams

Even though the Book of Allah makes no mention at all of the twelve, as we have seen above, let alone their infallibility, the Twelver Shia quote the Qur'an to support their belief in the infallibility of their Imams. All their shaykhs agree on quoting as evidence the verse: ﴿And [remember] when the Lord of Ibrâheem [Abraham] [i.e., Allah] tried him with [certain] Commands, which he fulfilled. He [Allah] said [to him], 'Verily, I am going to make you an *Imam* [a leader] for mankind [to follow you].' [Ibrâheem (Abraham)] said, 'And of my offspring [to make leaders].' [Allah] said, 'My Covenant [prophethood] includes not *Dhâlimoon* [polytheists and wrongdoers].﴾ (Qur'an 2: 124)

With this verse, al-Majlisi begins the chapter that he wrote in *al-Bihâr* entitled: "The Necessity of the Imam's Infallibility."³⁶⁵ Many contemporary Shiite shaykhs regard this verse as their main evidence from the Qur'an and do not quote any other verses to establish this point. Two of them are Muḥsin al-Ameen³⁶⁶ and Muhammad Ḥusayn Âl Kâshif al-Ghata', who says that this verse is 'clear evidence which proves the infallibility of the Imams'.³⁶⁷

The author of *Majma' al-Bayân* explained how his companions found evidence in this verse for what they wanted, as he said: "Our companions quoted this verse as evidence that the Imams must inevitably be infallible and protected from bad deeds, because Allah (ﷻ) stated that no evildoer can attain the Covenant, which is imamate."³⁶⁸ Whoever is not infallible may be a wrongdoer who transgresses either against himself or others. If someone suggests that this verse confirms that no wrongdoer will attain the Covenant when he is in the state of being a wrongdoer, but that if he repents he will no longer be a wrongdoer, so it is possible for him to attain that Covenant, the answer is that even if he repents, the verse still

excluded him when he was a wrongdoer. If it excluded him when he was a wrongdoer, then it is decreed that he will never attain it. The verse is general in meaning and is not limited to any particular time, so it should be applied to all times. Thus no wrongdoer will attain that status, even if he repents later on.”³⁶⁹

Refutation of their interpretation of the verse

- (a) The early generations differed concerning the meaning of the word *al-'ahd* (translated here as ‘the Covenant’). Ibn ‘Abbās and as-Suddi said: “It refers to prophethood. Allah (ﷻ) said, ‘My Covenant (prophethood) includes not *Dhâlimoon* (polytheists and wrongdoers),’ meaning prophethood.” Mujâhid said: “It refers to leadership, meaning ‘I will not appoint a wrongdoer as a leader whom others may follow.’” Qatâdah, Ibrâheem an-Nakha‘i, ‘Aṭa’, al-Ḥasan and ‘Ikrimah said: “The Covenant of Allah (ﷻ) in the hereafter will not include the wrongdoers, but in this world, wrongdoers may attain it and thus be granted security, food and sustenance.” Az-Zajjâj said: “This is a good opinion, meaning ‘My safety and security are not granted to the wrongdoers;’ in other words, ‘I will not grant them security from My punishment.’ What is meant by wrongdoer is the polytheist.” Ar-Rabee‘ ibn Anas and aḏ-Ḍaḥḥâk said: “The Covenant of Allah (ﷻ) that is given to His slaves is His religion, and He says the wrongdoers do not follow His religion. Do you not see that He says: ﴿We blessed him and Ishâq [Isaac]. And of their progeny are [some] that do right, and some that plainly wrong themselves?﴾ (*Qur'an* 37: 113) He says: Not all of your descendants, O Ibrâheem, will do right and follow the truth.”

Ibn ‘Abbās also said, concerning the words: “My Covenant (prophethood) includes not *Dhâlimoon* (polytheists and wrongdoers),” that “the wrongdoers have no Covenant, and if you give them a covenant, then break it.”³⁷⁰ As we can see,

the early generations differed as to the interpretation of this verse, but according to the majority, it has nothing to do with the imamate or leadership at all. Those who did interpret it along the lines of imamate (leadership) interpreted it as referring to leadership in knowledge, righteousness and setting an example, not imamate according to the Râfiḍi concept.³⁷¹

- (b) Even if the verse was about imamate (rulership), there is nothing to indicate infallibility. It cannot be said that one who is not a wrongdoer is thus infallible — that he never makes a mistake, forgets anything, is absent-minded, or the like, as with the Shia concept of infallibility. According to their view, the one who forgets and the one who makes a mistake are both wrongdoers, but no one agrees with them on that, and it is not in accordance with the basic principles of Islam. It is quite clear that there is a big difference between denying the attribute of wrongdoing and affirming infallibility, because saying that someone is not a wrongdoer is an affirmation of his good character, not of infallibility in the Shiite sense.³⁷²
- (c) Their argument that the one who does wrong and then repents from it is still described as a wrongdoer, and that repentance does not help to take away this description of being a wrongdoer, is not acceptable. The greatest of wrongdoing is polytheism, and Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿It is those who believe [in the Oneness of Allah and worship none but Him Alone] and confuse not their Belief with *Dhulm* [wrong, i.e. by worshipping others besides Allah]...﴾ (*Qur'an* 6: 82) He also explains what is meant by wrongdoing in the verse: ﴿Join not in worship others with Allah. Verily, joining others in worship with Allah is a great *Dhulm* [wrong] indeed﴾ (*Qur'an* 31: 13). Yet despite this, Allah says concerning the disbelievers: ﴿Say to those who have disbelieved, if they cease [from disbelief], their past will be forgiven﴾ (*Qur'an* 8: 38).

But the implication of what these Shia say is that the one who associates something else with Allah (ﷻ) even for a moment, or commits a sin, even if it is a minor sin, is a wrongdoer who will never be free of the attribute of wrongdoing. What this implies is that the polytheist, even if he becomes Muslim, will still be a polytheist, because wrongdoing is polytheism.³⁷³ Thus they became even harsher than the Kharijites, because the Kharijites do not confirm the warning of punishment to the one who commits major sin unless he does not repent. It is well known on the basis of common sense, let alone Sharia, custom and linguistics that the one who disbelieves or does wrong and then repents and becomes righteous can no longer be called a disbeliever or wrongdoer. Otherwise it would be possible to call an old man a boy, one who is awake a sleeper, one who is rich poor, one who is full hungry, one who is dead alive, and vice versa. Moreover, if that is applied in other situations, it means that, for example, a person who swore that he would never greet a disbeliever then greets a believer, who had been a disbeliever many years ago, has broken his oath. However, no one says that.³⁷⁴

It is well known that a person who repents from wrongdoing may be better than one who never did anything wrong. Asserting that the person who never did an act of disbelief or killed or sinned is better than anyone who believed after disbelieving, or was guided after going astray, or repented after committing sin, is going against what is well-established in Islam. It is well known that the early generations were better than their children; is there anyone with any sense who would compare the children of the *Muhâjireen* and *Anṣâr* with their fathers?³⁷⁵ Moreover, this conclusion would imply that all the Muslims — including the Shia and *Ahl al-Bayt*, except those whom the Shia believe are infallible — are wrongdoers because they are not infallible.

Their shaykh at-Ṭoosi said that the word *dhulm* (wrongdoing) implies something bad, so it cannot be applied to anyone except one who deserves to be cursed, because Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿No doubt! the Curse of Allah is on the *Dhâlimoon* [polytheists, wrongdoers, oppressors].﴾ (Qur'an 11: 18)

- (d) One of the Zaydî Shiite scholars stated, criticising the Twelver interpretation of this verse: The Râfiḍîs quote the verse as evidence that the one who does wrong, even once, is not deserving of the position of imamate (rulership), and they wanted to undermine the caliphate of Abu Bakr and 'Umar. However, this is not correct because if the word *al-'ahd* (the Covenant) is interpreted as referring to prophethood, then there is no evidence for them in the verse, but if it is interpreted as referring to imamate (rulership), then the one who repents from wrongdoing can no longer be described as a wrongdoer, and thus Allah (ﷻ) will not exclude him from attaining the Covenant (*al-'ahd*) except if he is a wrongdoer.³⁷⁶

3.2.2. The verse of purification and the hadith of the cloak

The verse of purification is the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Allah wishes only to remove *Ar-Rijs* [evil deeds and sins] from you, O members of the family [of the Prophet], and to purify you with a thorough purification﴾ (Qur'an 33: 33). As is well known, this is part of the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And stay in your houses, and do not display yourselves like that of the times of ignorance. And perform *As-Salât* (*Iqâmat-as-Salât*), and give *Zakât* and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah wishes only to remove *Ar-Rijs* [evil deeds and sins] from you, O members of the family [of the Prophet], and to purify you with a thorough purification.﴾ (Qur'an 33: 33)

The Twelver Shiite scholars deliberately took the verse of purification out of its Qur'anic context in which Allah (ﷻ) was

addressing the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ), because they wished to exclude the wives of the Prophet. Then they added to that the hadith of the cloak, which was narrated by Muslim in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* from the Mother of the Believers 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها).³⁷⁷ She said: "The Prophet (ﷺ) went out one morning wearing a striped cloak of black camel hair. Al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali came, and he enfolded him in the cloak, then al-Ḥusayn came and he enfolded him in it, then Fāṭimah came and he enfolded her in it, then 'Ali came and he enfolded him in it, then he said: ﴿Allah wishes only to remove *Ar-Rijs* [evil deeds and sins] from you, O members of the family [of the Prophet], and to purify you with a thorough purification﴾ (*Qur'an* 33: 33)." They also added the hadith of the Mother of the Believers Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) referring to when this verse was revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ). Umm Salamah asked: "Am I included with them, O Prophet of Allah?" He said: "You are still as you are (one of Aḥl al-Bayt), and you are good," in order to confirm the meaning that they wanted for this verse.³⁷⁸ The Twelver Shiite scholars think that in this verse there is evidence for the infallibility of the people of the cloak, 'Ali, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, and that they are protected from sins, both major and minor, and even from human error and forgetfulness.³⁷⁹

Their interpretation may be refuted in several ways:

3.2.2.a.

The hadith of Umm Salamah quoted above was narrated in a number of versions. It was narrated from Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) that she said: "The Prophet (ﷺ) was in my house, along with 'Ali, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, and I made some *khazeerah* (a dish made with ground meat and flour) for them. They ate and slept, and he covered them with an *'abayah* or blanket, then he said: 'O Allah, these are the people of my household, remove from them *ar-rijs* (evil deeds and sins) and purify them with a thorough purification.'" According to another report, the Prophet (ﷺ) made them sit on a cloak, then he took

hold of its four edges in his left hand and held it above their heads, and he gestured with his right hand to his Lord and said: "These are the people of my household, remove from them *ar-rijs* (evil deeds and sins) and purify them with a thorough purification." These two reports are in accordance with the report of Muslim from 'Â'ishah (ؓ), that these five are included in the verse, but this does not necessarily mean that others are not included.³⁸⁰

There are other reports from Umm Salamah (ؓ) that contain additional material indicating that she was not included with the people of the cloak. Most of these reports have some weaknesses, although some of them are sound, including the following report: "When this verse was revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ): ﴿Allah wishes only to remove *Ar-Rijs* [evil deeds and sins] from you, O members of the family [of the Prophet], and to purify you with a thorough purification﴾ (*Qur'an* 33: 33) in the house of Umm Salamah (ؓ), he called Fâtimah and al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, and covered them with a cloak; 'Ali was behind him and he covered him with a cloak, then he said: 'O Allah, these are the people of my household, remove from them *ar-rijs* (evil deeds and sins) and purify them with a thorough purification.' Umm Salamah said: 'Am I included with them, O Prophet of Allah?' He said: 'You are still as you are (one of *Ahl al-Bayt*), and you are good.'"³⁸¹

There is a very important report, with a reliable chain of narration, which indicates that Umm Salamah (ؓ) was included under the cloak after the people of the cloak went out from under it.³⁸² Perhaps the reason for that is that it would not have been proper to include Umm Salamah with 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ؓ) under one cloak, so the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) took her under it after they had come out. It was narrated that Shahr said: "I heard Umm Salamah, the wife of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), when news came of the death of al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali. She cursed the people of Iraq and said: "They have

killed him, may Allah kill them. They have deceived him and let him down, may Allah curse them. I saw the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) when Fâṭimah came to him one morning with a pot in which she had made some *'aṣeedah* (a gruel made of flour with butter and honey) for him, which she was carrying on a tray of hers, and she put it down in front of him. He said to her: "Where is your cousin (meaning 'Ali)?" She said: "He is in the house." He said: "Go and call him, and bring me his two sons." So she came with her two sons, holding each one by the hand, and 'Ali was walking behind her, until they entered upon the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). He seated the two children in his lap, and 'Ali sat on his right, and Fâṭimah sat on his left.' Umm Salamah said: 'He picked up a cloak from Khaybar that had been spread out on the sleeping place in Madinah, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) covered them all with it, then he took hold of the two edges of the garment in his left hand, gestured with his right hand towards his Lord (ﷻ) and said twice: "O Allah, (these are) the people of my household, remove from them *ar-rijs* (evil deeds and sins) and purify them with a thorough purification." I said: "O Messenger of Allah, am I not part of your family?" He said: "Of course, come under the cloak.'" So she went under the cloak after he finished his supplication for his cousin 'Ali and (Ali's) two sons and his daughter Fâṭimah."³⁸³

So the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) testified that Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) was part of his household, and he admitted her under the cloak after he had offered supplication for them.³⁸⁴

3.2.2.b.

Another indication that the verse does not refer to infallibility or imamate (caliphate) is that the entire verse is addressed to the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ); it starts with them and ends with them. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O Prophet [Muhammad]! Say to your wives: 'If you desire the life of this world, and its glitter, then come! I will make a provision for

you and set you free in a handsome manner [divorce]. But if you desire Allah and His Messenger, and the Home of the hereafter, then verily, Allah has prepared for Al-Muḥsinât [good-doers] amongst you an enormous reward.' O wives of the Prophet! Whoever of you commits an open illegal sexual intercourse, the torment for her will be doubled, and that is ever easy for Allah. And whosoever of you is obedient to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), and does righteous good deeds, We shall give her her reward twice over, and We have prepared for her *Rizq Karim* [a noble provision — paradise]. O wives of the Prophet! You are not like any other women. If you keep your duty [to Allah], then be not soft in speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease [of hypocrisy, or evil desire for adultery] should be moved with desire, but speak in an honourable manner. And stay in your houses, and do not display yourselves like that of the times of ignorance, And perform *Aṣ-Ṣalât* [Iqâmat-aṣ-Ṣalât], and give *Zakât* and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah wishes only to remove *Ar-Rijs* [evil deeds and sins] from you, O members of the family [of the Prophet], and to purify you with a thorough purification. And remember [O you the members of the Prophet's family, the Graces of your Lord], that which is recited in your houses of the Verses of Allah and *Al-Ḥikmah* [i.e. Prophet's Sunnah — legal ways, so give your thanks to Allah and glorify His Praises for this Qur'an and the Sunnah]. Verily, Allah is Ever Most Courteous, Well-Acquainted with all things. ﴿

(Qur'an 33: 28-34)

It is addressed to all the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ). The command, prohibition, promise and warning are for them, but as there is benefit which may include them and other members of the Prophet's household, the masculine pronoun [in the original Arabic] is used with regard to the issue of purification, because if there are both males and females, words appear in the masculine form. This is the case here, since the purification issue includes all the members of the household (Ahl al-Bayt). 'Ali, Fâtimah, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn

(may Allah be pleased with them) are more entitled to that than others, so the Prophet (ﷺ) singled them out in his supplication for them. Moreover, a man's wife is part of his household, so it is common in Arabic for a man to say to his friend "*Kayfa ahluka* (how is your family)?" meaning, "How are your wife and womenfolk?" The answer will be, "*Hum bikhayr* [They (using the masculine plural) are fine]." Allah (ﷻ) says: "They said: ﴿Do you wonder at the Decree of Allah? The Mercy of Allah and His Blessings be on you, O the family [of Ibrâheem (Abraham)]﴾ (*Qur'an* 11: 73). The person addressed in this verse, according to scholarly consensus, is Sârah the wife of Ibrâheem (ﷺ). This indicates that a man's wife is one of his household.³⁸⁵

Allah (ﷻ) also says: ﴿Then, when Moosa [Moses] had fulfilled the term, and was travelling with his family, he saw a fire in the direction of Tûr [Mount]. He said to his family: 'Wait, I have seen a fire; perhaps I may bring to you from there some information, or a burning firebrand that you may warm yourselves'﴾ (*Qur'an* 28: 29). The person addressed here is the wife of Moosa (ﷺ).

Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And mention in the Book [the Qur'an] Ismâ'eel [Ishmael]. Verily, he was true to what he promised, and he was a Messenger, [and] a Prophet. And he used to enjoin on his family and his people Aş-Şalâh [the prayers] and the Zakât, and his Lord was pleased with him﴾ (*Qur'an* 19: 54-55). Who are his family whom he used to enjoin to pray? This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says, addressing the Prophet (ﷺ): ﴿And enjoin Aş-Şalâh [the prayer] on your family, and be patient in offering them [i.e. the Şalâh (prayers)].﴾ (*Qur'an* 20: 132). Undoubtedly the word family here includes his wives, or at least Khadeejah, as this soorah was revealed in Makkah.³⁸⁶

Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿So they raced with one another to the door, and she tore his shirt from the back. They both found her lord [i.e. her

husband] at the door. She said: 'What is the recompense [punishment] for him who intended an evil design against your wife [ahlīka], except that he be put in prison or a painful torment?' (Qur'an 12: 25) This refers to the ruler of Egypt. In the phrase, "What is the recompense (punishment) for him who intended an evil design against your wife [ahlīka]," the word translated as wife here is *ahl* (which is usually translated as 'family'). This is quite clear.³⁸⁷

3.2.2.c.

The idea of removing *ar-rijs* (evil deeds and sins) does not, in either the Arabic language or the language of the Qur'an, imply infallibility at all. Ar-Râghib al-Isfahâni said in *Mufradât Alfâdh al-Qur'an*, under the heading *rajasa*: "The word *ar-rijs* refers to something dirty, so it may be said *rajul rajsi* (a dirty man) or *rijâl arjâs* (dirty men). Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿...are an abomination [rijs] of Satan's handiwork﴾ (Qur'an 5: 90). From the point of view of Sharia, *rijs* refers to alcohol and gambling. The disbelievers are regarded as *rijs* because believing in polytheism is the most abhorrent of all things. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿But as for those in whose hearts is a disease [of doubt, disbelief and hypocrisy], it will add suspicion and doubt [rijsan] to their suspicion, disbelief and doubt [ila rijsihim]﴾ (Qur'an 9: 125). Allah also says: ﴿And He will put the wrath [al-rijs] on those who are heedless.﴾ (Qur'an 10: 100). It was said that *ar-rijs* means stench, or torment, as in the verses ﴿Verily, the Mushrikoon [polytheists, pagans, idolaters, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah, and in the Message of Muhammad] are Najasun [impure]﴾ (Qur'an 9: 28) and ﴿or the flesh of swine [pork]; for that surely, is impure [rijs]﴾ (Qur'an 6: 145). To sum up, the basic meaning of the word *rijs* is dirt or filth, and it is used to refer to polytheism, as in the verse, ﴿So shun the abomination [rijs] [worshipping] of idols, and shun lying speech [false statements]﴾ (Qur'an 22: 30). The word is also used to refer to *haram* and evil things, such as food and drink, as in the verses: ﴿Say

[O Muhammad]: ‘I find not in that which has been revealed to me anything forbidden to be eaten by one who wishes to eat it, unless it be *Maytah* [a dead animal] or blood poured forth [by slaughtering or the like], or the flesh of swine [pork]; for that surely, is impure or impious [unlawful] meat...’ (Qur’an 6: 145) and ‘Intoxicants [all kinds of alcoholic drinks], and gambling, and *Al-Ansâb* [stone altars for sacrifices to idols, etc.], and *Al-Azlâm* [arrows for seeking luck or decision] are an abomination [*rijs*] of *Shaytân*’s [Satan’s] handiwork’ (Qur’an 5: 90). There is no proof that the Qur’an uses the word *rijs* to refer to sin in a general sense, such that removing *rijs* would imply infallibility.”³⁸⁸

3.2.2.d.

Purification from *rijs* is not an affirmation of infallibility for anyone. Just as the word *rijs* does not refer to a man’s sins or errors in *ijtihâd* (reasoning and deriving rulings) and instead refers to dirt, stench and impurities — both *tangible and intangible*, so too the word purification does not imply infallibility. Allah (ﷻ) wants to purify all the believers, not just the members of the Prophet’s household, even though Ahl al-Bayt are the most entitled and most deserving of purification among people. Allah (ﷻ) says in His Book about the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): ‘Allah does not want to place you in difficulty, but He wants to purify you, and to complete His Favour to you’ (Qur’an 5: 6).

Allah (ﷻ) also says: ‘Take *Sadaqah* [alms] from their wealth in order to purify them and sanctify them with it’ (Qur’an 9: 103).

‘Truly, Allah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves.’ (Qur’an 2: 222)

Just as Allah (ﷻ) tells us that He wants to purify the members of the Prophet’s household (Ahl al-Bayt), He also tells us that He wants to purify the believers. If the fact that Allah (ﷻ) wants to

purify them meant infallibility, then that would have happened to the Companions and to all the believers, because of the verses stating that Allah (ﷻ) wanted to purify them. Allah (ﷻ) says of the Companions who frequented the mosque of Qubâ': «In it are men who love to clean and to purify themselves. And Allah loves those who make themselves clean and pure» (*Qur'an* 9: 108). However, these people were not infallible or protected from sin, according to consensus.

Allah (ﷻ) also says of the people of Badr, of whom there were three hundred and thirteen men: «And He caused water [rain] to descend on you from the sky, to clean you thereby and to remove from you the *Rijz* [whispering, evil suggestions] of *Shaytân* [Satan].» (*Qur'an* 8: 11). This is not an affirmation of their infallibility. Moreover, there is no difference in wording between this verse and the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says of Ahl al-Bayt: «to remove *Ar-Rijs* [evil deeds and sins] from you, O members of the family [of the Prophet], and to purify you with a thorough purification» (*Qur'an* 33: 33). The words *rijz* and *rijs* are very close in meaning, and the purification mentioned in both verses is the same. It is whims and desires that made the second verse, and not the first, evidence for infallibility.

What is strange is that the Shiite scholars adhere to the verse and apply it to the people of the cloak, then interpret Allah's wanting to purify them as confirming the infallibility of the people of the cloak, yet at the same time they deliberately forget the verses in which Allah (ﷻ) speaks of wanting to purify the Companions. On the contrary, they take the opposite view and criticise the Companions, accusing them of turning back on their heels, even though Allah (ﷻ) stated that He wanted to purify them, according to the verse: «And he for whom Allah has not appointed light, for him there is no light.» (*Qur'an* 24: 40).³⁸⁹

3.2.2.e.

The divine will referred to in the verse is His legislative will, which is different from His universal decree. In other words, it means: Allah (ﷻ) loves to remove *ar-rijs* (evil deeds and sins) from you. The Sunni scholars have discussed the two aspects of the divine will — the religious, legislative will and the universal, foreordaining will — and they said:

“The religious, legislative will includes that which Allah (ﷻ) loves and approves of, as in the verses where Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Allah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you.﴾ (*Qur’an* 2: 185) and ﴿Allah wishes to accept your repentance, but those who follow their lusts, wish that you [believers] should deviate tremendously away [from the Right Path]. Allah wishes to lighten [the burden] for you; and man was created weak﴾ (*Qur’an* 4: 27-28).

“The universal, foreordaining will is that which encompasses all of His creation, as in the verses where Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿But Allah does what He likes﴾ (*Qur’an* 2: 253) and ﴿And my advice will not profit you, even if I wish to give you good counsel, if Allah’s Will is to keep you astray﴾ (*Qur’an* 11: 34).

“Sin comes under the heading of the universal, foreordaining will. Allah (ﷻ) does not love, approve of or enjoin sin; rather He despises it, hates it and forbids it. This is the view of all the early generations and the imams (leading scholars); they differentiated between the divine will, which encompasses that which He loves and is pleased with, and the universal, foreordaining divine will and decree, which does not necessarily include that which He loves and approves of.”³⁹⁰

Undoubtedly Allah (ﷻ) removed *ar-rijs* from Fâṭimah, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn, ‘Ali and the wives of the Prophet (may Allah be

pleased with them all), but the divine will referred to in this verse is the legislative will. Hence it says in the hadith that when the Prophet (ﷺ) wrapped them in the cloak, he said: "O Allah, these are the people of my household, remove from them *ar-rijs*."³⁹¹

3.2.2.f.

The supplication of the Prophet (ﷺ) settles the matter. If there was any indication in the verse of purification that purification of the people of the cloak had already taken place, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would not have covered them with the cloak and prayed for them by saying, "O Allah, these are the people of my household, remove from them *ar-rijs*."³⁹² This is clear evidence that the verse was revealed concerning the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ), and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) wanted the people of the cloak to be included in this divine revelation of purification, so he gathered them and covered them with the cloak and prayed for them, and Allah (ﷻ) accepted his supplication for them³⁹³ and purified them as He (ﷻ) purified the wives of the Prophet, as indicated by the text of the verse.

3.2.2.g.

Among the refutations proving that the verse does not indicate imamate and infallibility is the fact that what they claim as being unique to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali, al-Hasan and al-Husayn (may Allah be pleased with them) on the basis of this verse would also apply to Fâtimah (ؓ). However, the position of leadership cannot be proven for women. If this is evidence that those who are included in the verse are infallible and deserve to be leaders, then Fâtimah (ؓ) would be like that too, in the same (true) sense. This indicates that the verse is not speaking about imamate or infallibility. Another point is the fact that nine of their Imams are not referred to in this verse, because it refers to three of the twelve only.³⁹⁴

3.2.3. Their evidence from their own reports

The Twelvers base their beliefs in infallibility and other matters on the reports narrated by the author of *al-Kāfi*, Ibrāheem al-Qummi, al-Majlisi and others of their kind. The reports that affirm this so-called infallibility for the twelve Imams are strange both in their texts and their chains of narration.

In his book about the infallibility of their Imams, al-Majlisi quoted twenty-three reports from his shaykhs such as al-Qummi, al-'Ayyāshi, al-Mufeed and others, after quoting this verse as evidence: «And [remember] when the Lord of Ibrāheem [Abraham] [i.e., Allah] tried him with [certain] Commands, which he fulfilled. He [Allah] said [to him], 'Verily, I am going to make you an *Imam* [a leader] for mankind [to follow you].' [Ibrāheem (Abraham)] said, 'And of my offspring [to make leaders].' [Allah] said, 'My Covenant [prophethood] includes not *Dhâlimoon* [polytheists and wrongdoers]'» (*Qur'an* 2: 124).

This shows that their interpretation of the verse to prove their point is false. In *al-Kāfi*, al-Kulayni wrote a number of chapters about this so-called infallibility, in which he quoted reports with chains of narration from the twelve Imams, claiming that they were infallible and even partners in prophethood; they even claimed to have some divine attributes. You will find some examples of that in *al-Kāfi*, in the chapter on their beliefs in the basic principles of faith. In the chapter entitled, "The Imams are the pillars of the earth," there are three reports which say that the twelve Imams are like the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in that they must be obeyed; they are like the Prophet (ﷺ) in virtue and with regard to the duties that they were given, and obedience was due to 'Ali (ﷺ) after the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as it was due to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).³⁹⁵

Soon after that, the author raises 'Ali to a status higher than that of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), to the status of the Lord of the

Worlds, when he says that 'Ali said: "I have been given attributes that were not given to anyone before me. I have been given knowledge of death and calamities, so I did not miss knowledge of what came before me, and knowledge of what is in the future is not withheld from me."³⁹⁶ In reality, the only One who has knowledge of death and calamities is Allah (ﷻ): ﴿No person knows what he will earn tomorrow, and no person knows in what land he will die﴾ (Qur'an 31: 34). Nothing escapes His knowledge, for He is the Creator (ﷻ). Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Not even the weight of an atom [or a small ant] or less than that or greater escapes His Knowledge in the heavens or in the earth﴾ (Qur'an 34: 3). The one who studies the chapter of *al-Kâfi* on this topic will note that it includes claims similar to those of false prophets and heretics throughout history; the only difference is that they attributed these fabrications to a number of the members of Ahl al-Bayt.³⁹⁷

3.2.4. Their rational evidence for infallibility

They say that it is essential for the Ummah to have an infallible leader to correct its mistakes because if it were possible for him to make mistakes, then he would need someone else to correct him, and thus there would be an endless chain... so there must be a leader who is infallible. This is because their reliance is on the leader (the Imam) and not on the Ummah. They say that he is the protector of Sharia, that there can be no reliance on the Qur'an, Sunnah or scholarly consensus without him, and so on.³⁹⁸

As a matter of fact, the exact opposite is true. The Ummah is protected from error (infallible) by means of the Book of its Lord and the Sunnah of its Prophet (ﷺ), for the Ummah cannot be united on misguidance. The infallibility of the Ummah means that there is no need for the ruler (the Imam) to be infallible himself. This was stated by the scholars with regard to the wisdom behind the infallibility of

the Ummah; they said: "When the nations before us changed their religion, Allah sent a Prophet to show them the truth. But there is no Prophet after the Prophet of this Ummah; therefore its infallibility takes the place of prophethood. If anyone tries to alter the religion, Allah will enable and inspire someone to explain the error of his ways. Hence Allah mentioned the way of the believers alongside obedience to His Prophet when He (ﷺ) said: ﴿And whoever contradicts and opposes the Messenger [Muhammad] after the right path has been shown clearly to him, and follows other than the believers' way, We shall keep him in the path he has chosen, and burn him in hell — what an evil destination!﴾ (*Qur'an* 4: 115). So the infallibility of the Ummah and its protection against misguidance, as mentioned in the Islamic texts, is completely different from the idea that one of the Muslims must be infallible and that it is possible for the entire Muslim community to fall into error if there is no infallible leader among them."³⁹⁹

All the words that they wrote, filling many pages with their rational evidence to confirm the need for an infallible Imam, are fulfilled in the Messenger (ﷺ). Hence in the case of a dispute, the Ummah refers to what the Messenger brought, namely the Qur'an and Sunnah; they do not refer to the ruler (the Imam). ﴿[And] if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger﴾ (*Qur'an* 4: 59). The scholars said that this means: "Refer to the Book of Allah and to His Prophet (ﷺ), and after he dies, refer to his Sunnah."⁴⁰⁰ With the guidance provided by the Qur'an and Sunnah, the Ummah cannot unite on misguidance, because it will never be without those who adhere to both, until the Hour begins. Hence proof was established for the Ummah by means of the Messengers. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily, We have sent the Revelation to you [O Muhammad] as We sent the Revelation to Nooh [Noah] and the Prophets after him; We

[also] sent the Revelation to Ibrâheem [Abraham], Ismâ'eel [Ishmael], Ishâq [Isaac], Ya'qoob [Jacob], and Al-Asbât [the offspring of the twelve sons of Ya'qoob (Jacob)], 'Eesa [Jesus], Ayyoob [Job], Yoonus [Jonah], Hâroon [Aaron], and Sulaymân [Solomon]; and to Dâwood [David] We gave the Zaboor [Psalms]. And Messengers We have mentioned to you before, and Messengers We have not mentioned to you, — and to Moosa [Moses] Allah spoke directly. Messengers as bearers of good news as well as of warning in order that mankind should have no plea against Allah after the [coming of] Messengers. ﴿١٦٥﴾

(*Qur'an* 4: 163-165)

Allah (ﷻ) did not add "and the Imams". This proves false the view of those who believe that people need someone other than the Messengers, such as the Imams.⁴⁰¹

Their claim of infallibility has no proof except for their suggestion that Allah (ﷻ) will never leave the world devoid of infallible Imams, because of the interests and mercy to be found in that. But it is well known that no interest or mercy has been achieved by this supposed absent, awaited Imam; the same is true of his grandfathers who preceded him. No interest or mercy was achieved by any infallible Imam as was achieved after the Hijrah by the Prophet (ﷺ). He was the leader of the believers, whom they had to obey and through whom they achieved happiness. After he died, authority was not acquired by anyone whom they can claim was infallible except 'Ali (عليه السلام). It is also known that the interests and mercy enjoyed by the believers at the time of the three previous caliphs were greater and better than those during 'Ali's caliphate, which was a time of killing, turmoil and division.⁴⁰²

With regard to the other Imams, who are lower than 'Ali (عليه السلام) in status, people could acquire from their knowledge and examples what they could acquire from others like them. 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn and his son Abu Ja'far, and the two sons of Ja'far ibn Muhammad,

taught people that which Allah (ﷻ) taught them, in the same manner as other imams of their time. During their eras, there were other scholars who were more knowledgeable and more beneficial than them, and this is well known among the scholars. Even if they were more knowledgeable and more religiously committed, people of knowledge and religious commitment could not achieve what could be achieved by people in positions of power and authority, who were able to oblige the people to adhere to the truth and prevent them from indulging in falsehood. The Imams after these three, such as the two al-‘Askaris, did not show great knowledge from which the Ummah could benefit, and they did not perform any actions from which the Ummah could benefit. They were just like other members of Banu Hâshim who had a certain sanctity and status, and they had enough knowledge about Islam to fulfil their religious duties, which is knowledge that many ordinary Muslims also had; that should be expected of people like them. Hence the scholars did not take from them as they had taken from the first three.⁴⁰³

3.2.5. General discussion of the idea of infallibility of the Imams

The claim of infallibility of the Imams is similar to giving them a share of prophethood. The infallible one must be followed in all that he says, and it is not permissible to go against him in any way. This is something that is only for the Prophets, hence we are enjoined to believe in what was revealed to them. Allah (ﷻ) says: ‘Say [O Muslims]: We believe in Allah and that which has been sent down to us and that which has been sent down to Ibrâheem [Abraham], Ismâ‘eel [Ishmael], Ishâq [Isaac], Ya‘qoob [Jacob], and to Al-Asbât [the offspring of the twelve sons of Ya‘qoob (Jacob)], and that which has been given to Moosa [Moses] and ‘Eesa [Jesus], and that which has been given to the Prophets from their Lord. We make no

distinction between any of them, and to Him we have submitted [in Islam]» (*Qur'an* 2: 136).

We are directed to say: "We believe in what was given to the Prophets." Belief in what the Prophets brought is one of the tenets that we are obliged to say and believe in; this is something on which there is consensus among the Muslims. The one who regards anyone after the Prophet as infallible in all that he says has given him the status of prophethood, even if he does not call him such.⁴⁰⁴ This is contrary to the religion of Islam; it is contrary to the *Qur'an*, the *Sunnah* and the consensus of the early generations and leading scholars of the *Ummah*.

With regard to the *Qur'an*, Allah says: «O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger [Muhammad], and those of you [Muslims] who are in authority. [And] if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger» (*Qur'an* 4: 59). He commands us, in the case of a dispute, to refer only to Allah (ﷻ) and the Messenger. If the people had any figure who was infallible, apart from the Messenger (ﷺ), Allah would have enjoined us to refer to him, so the *Qur'an* indicates that there is no infallible figure after the Messenger (ﷺ).⁴⁰⁵

Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And whoso obey Allah and the Messenger [Muhammad], then they will be in the company of those on whom Allah has bestowed His Grace, of the Prophets, the *Ṣiddeeqoon* [those followers of the Prophets who were first and foremost to believe in them, like Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq], the martyrs, and the righteous. And how excellent these companions are!» (*Qur'an* 4: 69)

«And whosoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, then verily, for him is the fire of hell, he shall dwell therein forever.» (*Qur'an* 72: 23)

So the Qur'an, in more than one place, indicates that the one who obeys the Messenger is one of the blessed, and it is not stipulated that he obey any other infallible figure. In the same way, the one who disobeys the Messenger is one of the doomed, even if he obeys one whom he thinks is infallible. The scholars are unanimously agreed that the words of every person may be accepted or rejected except the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). He must be believed in everything he says and followed in everything he commands. His prohibitions must be heeded, and Allah should only be worshipped in the ways he prescribes. He is the one who is infallible, and he does not speak of (his own) desire; it is only a revelation revealed.⁴⁰⁶

The Sunnah also indicates this, but the Shia only refer to the words of their Imams. Below are some words of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام), which prove that their understanding is flawed.

There are reports narrated in *Nahj al-Balâghah*, a book in which the Shia believe, which demolish all that they have built of claims that the Imams are infallible. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) says, according to what is narrated by the author of *Nahj al-Balâghah*: "Do not try to flatter me, do not think that I would be upset when you tell me the truth and do not think that I want to be above people, for if a person finds truth burdensome when it is told to him or finds justice burdensome when it is discussed with him, he will find acting upon them to be even more burdensome. So do not refrain from speaking the truth or advising me to be fair and just, for I myself am not above making mistakes and am not safe from error."⁴⁰⁷ Here he does not claim what the Shia claim for him, that he does not make mistakes; on the contrary, he confirms that he is not safe from error. Similarly, he does not say that he has no need of people's advice; rather he seeks advice on the basis of truth and justice, because the Ummah cannot unite on misguidance, but each individual on his own is vulnerable to misguidance. Thus we know that the claim of infallibility comes from the extreme Shia.⁴⁰⁸

It also says in *Nahj al-Balâghah*: "The people have no choice but to have a leader, whether he is righteous or a wrongdoer, under whose leadership the believer will strive and under whose authority the fay' will be collected, the enemy will be fought, the roads will be kept safe and the weak will be supported against the strong."⁴⁰⁹ We can see that infallibility is not stipulated for the ruler and is not referred to at all. He thought that it was essential to appoint a leader to serve the interests of the people and the country, but he did not say that no one should be in charge of the people's affairs except an infallible Imam, or that every banner that is raised other than the banner of the infallible one is a banner of ignorance, as the books of the Shia say. He did not limit rulership to the twelve who are regarded as infallible by the Shia, or regard as disbelievers those who take positions of leadership, such as the caliphs of the Muslims — as is the view of the Shia. He thought that it was essential for there to be a ruler, even if he is a wrongdoer, and he regarded his leadership as legitimate. He considered it permissible to engage in jihad under the leadership of a bad ruler. What does this have to do with what the Shia believe — that jihad is not permissible until the Awaited One⁴¹⁰ emerges, because legitimate rulership is limited to the twelve Imams?

The Imams admitted their sins and asked Allah for forgiveness for them. According to *Nahj al-Balâghah*, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) said in his supplication: "O Allah, forgive me for what You know better than I, and if I repeat it, then forgive me again. O Allah, forgive me for what I have promised but which You did not find fulfilled with me. O Allah, forgive me for what I said for the purpose of drawing close to You but which was different from what was in my heart. O Allah, forgive me for brief glances, saying what I did not mean, desires of the heart and slips of the tongue."⁴¹¹ We can see this admission of sin and of returning to it after repentance, this admission of saying what is not meant and desires of the heart. All of that is contrary to what the Shia claim of infallibility, because if 'Ali and the

Imams were infallible, then seeking repentance for their sins would be in vain. The books of the Shia narrate that each of their Imams sought forgiveness from Allah for sins and errors, but if they were infallible, they would not have any sin.⁴¹² The Shiite shaykhs did not know how to interpret such supplications, which are contrary to their belief in infallibility.⁴¹³

There is another matter from the books of the Shia themselves that shows the claim of infallibility to be false: differences and contradictions in their views on various issues. The actions of those who are infallible should not be contradictory; they should confirm and support one another. Differences of opinion are contrary to the concept of infallibility, and infallibility is a condition of imamate in their view; hence they contradict the principle of imamate itself. The fact that there are differences and contradictions in the actions of the Imams was a direct cause of many people leaving Shiism, because they were confused about this contradiction. For example, al-Qummi and an-Nawbakhti mentioned that after the killing of al-Ḥusayn, a number of his companions were confused and said: “We see a contradiction between the actions of al-Ḥasan and the actions of al-Ḥusayn (عليه السلام). If what al-Ḥasan did — making peace with Mu‘āwiyah and giving up his leadership to him because he was unable to fight him, despite the large number and strength of his supporters — was right, correct and essential, then what al-Ḥusayn did — fighting Yazeed ibn Mu‘āwiyah, despite the small numbers and weakness of his supporters and the large number of Yazeed’s supporters, until he and all his companions were killed — was an invalid action that was not essential. Al-Ḥusayn had a greater excuse to refrain from fighting Yazeed and to seek a peace deal than al-Ḥasan had to refrain from fighting Mu‘āwiyah. If what al-Ḥusayn did by fighting Yazeed until he and his children and companions were killed, was right, correct and essential, then al-Ḥasan’s giving up the

fight against Mu'âwiyah, despite the large numbers that he had with him, was wrong." They had doubts about the validity of the leadership of both, so they recanted and joined the common folk.⁴¹⁴

As for examples of differences and contradictions in the opinions of the Imams, there are many of them, and this was another reason why some of the Shia gave up Shiism. One of the prominent Shiite scholars, aṭ-Ṭoosi, testified to that and said that the reports narrated from them contradicted and differed from one another to such an extent that you cannot find any report without finding another that conflicts with it. This is regarded as one of the greatest flaws of the Shiite madh-hab and as one of the reasons why some of the Imami Shia left the madh-hab. The books *at-Tahdheeb* and *al-Istibṣâr*, which are two of the four main reference books of the Shia, bear witness to this contradiction in many of their reports.

Aṭ-Ṭoosi tried to reconcile these differences and deal with these contradictions by interpreting some of the reports as being an example of taqiyyah, but he only succeeded in making matters worse, as aṭ-Ṭoosi is the one who was deciding which of these reports were and were not examples of taqiyyah and hence which reports were to be acted upon and which were not. What is agreed upon is that aṭ-Ṭoosi himself was not infallible and would inevitably make mistakes in his decision on some of these reports. He may have regarded some things that were not taqiyyah as being taqiyyah, and the Shia followed him in his verdicts. It is clear that in their religious affairs, the Shia are following people like aṭ-Ṭoosi, and they are not following one who is infallible.

The Râfiḍi Shia came up with their beliefs in taqiyyah and changes in the divine will, which we will discuss below, as a means of explaining these differences in the reports and actions of the Imams. Some of the Shia discovered these attempts and found out the reason for the fabrication of these two doctrines, so they left Shiism

and said: The Râfiḍi Imams invented two doctrines for their followers whereby they will never notice any of the lies of their Imams, namely the idea of changes in the divine will and the permissibility of taqiyyah.

There is another matter which shows the claim of infallibility to be false, which is that the infallible one whom they supposedly follow could not protect them from developing differences with regard to the foundation of their religion, namely the imamate. We find that they differ, forsake one another, curse one another and regard each other as disbelievers due to their differences with regard to the number and identities of their Imams and the question of whether to await the return of the Imam or to go ahead and choose another Imam. This is in addition to the various contradictory reports that discuss many religious issues, both basic and minor. The so-called infallibility did not prevent the Shia from differing among themselves, and the fact that the concept of infallibility did not benefit them indicates that it does not exist at all. It could be said that their belief in the infallibility of the Imams is irrelevant today anyway, since the line of the Imams effectively came to an end in 260 AH, and there is nothing left but to wait for the promised 'absent Imam'. However, this belief has an impact on the lives of the Shia today in several ways:

1. They follow the reports narrated from the twelve Imams in the same way that other Muslims follow the Qur'an and Sunnah.
2. They exaggerate about the graves and tombs of the Imams, and they exaggerate about their infallibility. This reached the extent of ascribing divine attributes to them and turned into such exaggeration about their graves and shrines that they circumambulate them and call upon their occupants instead of upon Allah (ﷻ).

3. The Shiite scholars are given some of these attributes (of infallibility), so they think that the one who rejects what the scholar says is like the one who rejects what Allah (ﷻ) says. This is a very serious matter that is like associating partners with Allah (ﷻ).
4. They believe in this corrupt belief that has nothing to do with Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali and his sons and grandsons (may Allah be pleased with them).⁴¹⁵

3.3. Appointment by name is one of the conditions of imamate according to the Twelver Imami Shia

The Râfiḍi Shia believe that imamate is like prophethood and can only be by divine instruction on the lips of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ). They believe that imamate, like prophethood, is a mercy from Allah, and that no era should be without an Imam, to whom obedience is obligatory and who is appointed by Allah (ﷻ). The people do not have the right to choose and appoint the Imam, and the Imam does not have the right to appoint his successor. They fabricated and attributed to their Imams dozens of reports concerning this, including the reports attributed to Imam Muhammad al-Bâqir (may Allah have mercy on him), in which he is supposed to have said: "Do you think that this matter is up to us to decide as we wish? No, by Allah, it is a covenant from the Messenger of Allah, in which man after man is named until the last man."⁴¹⁶

The Twelver Shia believe that the Messenger (ﷺ) spoke of and mentioned by name the Imams who were to come after him, and that there are twelve Imams, no more and no less. Their names are:

1. 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (d. 40 AH)
2. Al-Hasan ibn 'Ali (ﷺ) az-Zakiy (d. 50 AH)

3. Al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali (عليه السلام), the leader of the martyrs (d. 61 AH)
4. 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn Zayn al-Ābideen (d. 95 AH)
5. Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Bâqir (d. 114 AH)
6. Ja'far ibn Muhammad aṣ-Ṣâdiq (d. 148 AH)
7. Moosa ibn Ja'far al-Kâdhim (d. 183 AH)
8. 'Ali ibn Moosa ar-Riḍa (d. 203 AH)
9. Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Jawâd (d. 220 AH)
10. 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Hâdi (d. 254 AH)
11. Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Mahdi (d. 256 AH)
12. Al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali al-'Askari (d. 260 AH)

According to Ibn Saba', the appointment of rightful heirs stopped at 'Ali (عليه السلام), but those who came later included a number of his descendants in this concept. The Shiite cells were working quietly and secretly, but nevertheless these claims reached some members of Ahl al-Bayt, and they denied them categorically, as their forefather Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) had done. Hence those liars fabricated the concept of taqiyyah, which they falsely ascribed to Ahl al-Bayt, so that it would be easy for them to spread their ideas, making sure that their followers would not be affected by the sincere public statements of Ahl al-Bayt to the people.⁴¹⁷

One of the most serious matters fabricated by the Shia is the idea of the rightfully appointed heir. This means that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) instructed the people that after his death, the caliphate should go directly to 'Ali (عليه السلام), and it means that those who came before him usurped his rights. It says in the book *al-Kâfi* that those who died without knowing their Imam died a death like those during the time of pre-Islamic ignorance. 'Ali was the rightful heir of the Prophet (ﷺ), according to their claim.⁴¹⁸ However, in studying the history of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, we find no mention of rightfully appointed heirs during the caliphates of Abu Bakr and Umar (عليه السلام). This idea began to emerge during the last years of the

caliphate of 'Uthmân (ؓ), when fitnah began to appear. The Companions rejected this idea when they heard it and explained that it was false; among the most famous of those who did so were 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ؓ) and the Mother of the Believers 'A'ishah (ؓ). During the caliphate of 'Ali (ؓ), we see this idea crystallising in the form of a belief to which people were called and which was propagated. This notion of the so-called rightfully appointed heir, which is promoted by the Râfiqis and confirmed by their scholars, was the fabrication of Abdullah ibn Saba', as was mentioned by an-Nawbakhti and al-Kashshi and as we have seen above. What is narrated in sound reports from a number of the Companions, including 'Ali (ؓ) himself, is sufficient to refute their claim. There is a great deal of such evidence, including the following:

3.3.1.

It was said in the presence of 'Â'ishah (ؓ) that the Prophet (ﷺ) appointed 'Ali by name as his successor, and she said: "Who said that? I saw the Prophet (ﷺ) as he was leaning on my chest. He called for a vessel of water, then he fell to one side and died, without me realising. So how could he have issued instructions that 'Ali should be his successor?"⁴¹⁹

This clear statement from 'Â'ishah (ؓ) that the Prophet (ﷺ) did not appoint 'Ali by name as his successor is the greatest evidence that there was no appointed heir. The Prophet (ﷺ) died in her lap, so if there had been any instruction, she would have been the most aware of it of all people.⁴²⁰

3.3.2.

It was narrated that Ibn 'Abbâs (ؓ) said: " 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ؓ) came out of the house of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) during the illness from which he died, and the people said: 'O Abu al-Ḥasan,

how is the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) this morning?' He said: 'He is better this morning, praise be to Allah.' 'Abbâs ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib took his hand and said to him: 'By Allah, after three days you will be driven by the stick (you will be under the authority of someone else). By Allah, I think that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) will die of this sickness, for I know how the faces of Banu 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib look when they are dying. Let us go to the Messenger of Allah and ask him who is to be in charge. If we are to be in charge, then we will know it; if someone else is to be in charge, then we will know it, and he will advise him to be kind to us.' 'Ali said: 'By Allah, if we ask the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) for it (leadership), and he denies it to us, the people will never give it to us after that and, by Allah, I will never ask the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) for it.'"⁴²¹

In these words, there is evidence of the extent of the Companions' commitment to carrying out the instructions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). If there had been any appointed successor, no one would have gone against it, and the Anṣâr would not have expressed their opinions so freely, bravely and honestly when they met, after the Prophet (ﷺ) died, to discuss a successor, saying: "A ruler from among us and a ruler from among you."⁴²² They would have sworn allegiance to the one whom the Prophet (ﷺ) had instructed should be his successor, or at least some of them would have mentioned these instructions. If there had been some instruction to that effect before this, 'Ali would have said to al-'Abbâs: "How can we ask him who will be his successor when he has already appointed me as his successor?" The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died the same day, and as there were no instructions of that nature, it becomes clear that the contention that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) had clear instructions is a claim that has no sound basis. All the reports that they narrate, referring to the instructions that Ali (رضي الله عنه) should be the successor, are to be rejected because they are contrary to this clear statement from 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) himself. All the texts that they quote as

evidence either do not refer to the man concerned ('Ali) or they do refer to him, but they are fabricated.⁴²³

3.3.3.

'Ali (عليه السلام) was asked: "Did the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) tell you anything that was for you only?" He said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not tell us anything that was for us only, that he did not tell all the people, except that which is in this sheath of my sword." He took out a document on which was written: "May Allah curse the one who offers a sacrifice to anything other than Allah, may Allah curse the one who steals the boundary markers, may Allah curse the one who curses his parents, and may Allah curse the one who gives refuge to an innovator."⁴²⁴

Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "This hadith, which is proven in Bukhari and Muslim and elsewhere from 'Ali (عليه السلام), refutes the Râfiḍi claim that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) gave instructions that 'Ali should be his successor. If the matter was as they claim, none of the Companions would have rejected that (instruction of the Prophet). They were too obedient towards Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger, during his lifetime and after his death, to reject his instructions and give precedence to someone other than the one to whom he gave precedence and to reject someone to whom the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had given precedence in his instructions. They are far above doing any such thing. The one who thinks that the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) could do that is accusing them all of corruption and of agreeing to go against the wishes of the Messenger (ﷺ) and against his ruling and instructions. Any person who goes so far in doing evil has gone beyond the pale of Islam and has become a disbeliever, according to the consensus of the prominent scholars."⁴²⁵ An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "This disproves the claim made by the Imami and Râfiḍi

Shia that there were instructions appointing 'Ali as caliph and other fabrications of theirs."⁴²⁶

3.3.4.

It was narrated that 'Amr ibn Sufyân said: "When 'Ali prevailed at the Battle of the Camel, he said: 'O people, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not appoint any successor. Therefore we decided to appoint Abu Bakr as his successor, and he followed the true path in his leadership until he passed away.'"⁴²⁷

3.3.5.

Abu Bakr al-Bayhaqi narrated, with his chain of narration going back to Shaqeeq ibn Salamah, that the latter said: "It was said to 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ): 'Why don't you appoint a successor to rule us?' He said: 'The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not appoint a successor, so why should I appoint a successor? But if Allah wills good for the people, He will unite them after my death under the leadership of the best of them, as He united them after the death of their Prophet under the leadership of the best of them.'"⁴²⁸

This clearly indicates that the claim of instruction to appoint 'Ali (ﷺ) is a fabrication of the Râfiḍis, whose hearts were filled with resentment and hatred of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), including 'Ali (ﷺ) and the members of his household. They only claimed to love them as a cover under which they plotted against Islam and its people.⁴²⁹

From these definitive texts, it is clear that there is no basis for this so-called appointment of a rightful heir, and that what the Râfiḍis rely on is the fabrication of Abdullah ibn Saba'. He was the first one to introduce the idea, after which chains of narration and texts (of reports) were fabricated and falsely attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ).

Their aim was to slander the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) for allegedly going against the command of the Messenger (ﷺ) and agreeing on that, so that they could undermine and reject what the Companions narrated of Qur'an and hadith to future generations of Muslims.⁴³⁰

Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his refutation of al-Ḥilli: "As for the appointment of 'Ali by name, there is nothing of that nature in the reliable books of the hadith scholars; all the scholars of hadith are unanimously agreed that it is false. Abu Muhammad ibn Ḥazm said: 'We did not find any report with anyone about this so-called instruction, except one report which goes back to an unknown narrator who goes by the kunyah of Abu al-Hamra', but we do not know who he was at all.'"⁴³¹ Elsewhere he said: "Therefore we conclude that what the Rāfiḍis claim about 'Ali being appointed as the Prophet's successor is something that none of the scholars, past or present, who have knowledge of the words of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), heard anything about. Hence the scholars of hadith know for certain that this report is false, as they know that other reports are false."⁴³²

However, among later extremists, there were those who revived Ibn Saba's theory concerning Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام). They expanded it to include the descendants of 'Ali and al-Ḥusayn, using this as a cover to stir up people's emotions and reach their hearts, in order to achieve their aims against the Islamic state. The first one to start spreading the idea that leadership was limited to specific members of Ahl al-Bayt was Shayṭān aṭ-Ṭāq, whom the Shia call Mu'min aṭ-Ṭāq.⁴³³ When Zayd ibn 'Ali found out about that, he sent for him to ask about this rumour. Zayd said to him: "I have heard that you are claiming that among the family of Muhammad, there is an Imam to whom obedience is obligatory." Shayṭān aṭ-Ṭāq said: "Yes, your father 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn was one of them." He said:

"How can that be, when he would take a mouthful of food, and if it was hot, he would cool it with his hand and then put it in my mouth? Do you think that he could protect me from the heat of this mouthful and not protect me from the fire of hell?" Shaytân at-Ṭâq said: "He did not want to tell you lest you reject it and thus become a disbeliever, then he would not be able to intercede for you."⁴³⁴

This story, which was narrated in the most reliable book of biography they have, shows that this theory was circulating in secret to the point that it was unknown to one of the imams of Ahl al-Bayt, namely Imam Zayd. Muḥibb ad-Deen al-Khateeb stated that Shaytân at-Ṭâq was the first one to fabricate this misguided belief, limiting the position of the imamate and legislation to them and claiming infallibility for specific people among Ahl al-Bayt.⁴³⁵ Shaytân at-Ṭâq was joined by another man, Hishâm ibn al-Ḥakam (d. 179 AH).⁴³⁶ It seems that the belief in limiting imamate to specific people started in Kufah,⁴³⁷ with the efforts of a group of followers of Hishâm and Shaytân at-Ṭâq. Thus the foundations for the idea of limiting the imamate to a specific number were laid down in the second century by a group of people who claimed to have connections to Ahl al-Bayt, such as Shaytân at-Ṭâq and Hishâm ibn al-Ḥakam.⁴³⁸ Beliefs and ideas about the number of Imams differed among the various Shiite groups. It says in *Mukhtaṣar at-Tuhfah*: "It should be noted that the Imamis limit the number of Imams, but they differed as to the exact number. Some of them said it is five, some said it is seven, some said it is eight, some said it is twelve and some said it is thirteen."⁴³⁹

The books of the Shia give an idea of these differences and contradictions, whether the books are those of the Ismailis, such as *Masâ'il al-Imamah* by an-Nâshi' al-Akbar or *az-Zeenah* by Abu Ḥâtim ar-Râzi, or of the Twelvers, such as *al-Maqâlât wal-Firaq* by al-Ash'ari al-Qummi and *Firaq ash-Shia* by an-Nawbakhti. The

issue of imamate is not a minor issue for them, in which differences might be regarded as normal. It is the basic foundation of their religion, and they say that the one who does not believe in their Imam has no religion. Hence they regard one another as disbelievers; even the followers of one Imam may regard each other as disbelievers and curse one another.⁴⁴⁰ The Twelvers later settled on limiting the imamate to twelve Imams, but there was no one in the Prophet's family, Banu Hâshim, at the time of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân or 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them) who believed in the imamate of twelve Imams.⁴⁴¹ This belief was only known after the death of al-Ḥasan al-'Askari in 260 AH.⁴⁴²

Limiting the Imams to a specific number is a false and corrupt belief of which Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) and his sons and grandsons are innocent. In the major Shiite reference book, *Nahj al-Balâghah*, it is narrated from 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) that he said: "Leave me alone and find someone else, for we are facing new developments of different types, which are overwhelming and confusing. There are clouds on the horizon, and the path is not clear. You should understand that if I accept your offer, I will lead you to what I believe to be right, and I will not listen to the rebuke of anyone. But if you leave me alone, I will be like one of you, and probably I will be more obedient to whoever you appoint as your leader. I can serve you better as an adviser than as a ruler."⁴⁴³

If the imamate of 'Ali had been something decreed by Allah (ﷻ), it would not have been permissible for 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه) under any circumstances to say to the people, "Leave me alone and find someone else," or to say, "I can serve you better as an adviser than as a ruler." How could he do that when the people wanted him to be a ruler and came to swear allegiance to him?⁴⁴⁴

He says something even clearer in *an-Nahj*: "The people have sworn allegiance to me who swore allegiance to Abu Bakr, 'Umar

and 'Uthmân, and on the same terms. The one who was present could not have a say in the matter, and the one who was absent has no right to object. Rather decision-making belongs to the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr; if they are unanimously agreed on a man and appoint him as leader, this must reflect the approval of Allah (ﷻ). If someone rebels against them by rejecting what they agreed to or by introducing innovation, they will have the right to try to bring him back to that which he rebelled against; if he persists, they will fight him for following a way other than the believers' way, and Allah (ﷻ) will keep him in the path he has chosen."⁴⁴⁵

With these words, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) highlighted some facts worth paying attention to:

- (a) The ones among the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) who had the right to reach a decision on the basis of mutual consultation were the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr; they were the decision-makers.
- (b) Their agreement on a person was a reason for Allah's approval and a sign that He was pleased with their choice.
- (c) No one could become the leader or attain authority during their era without their choosing him or their consent.
- (d) No one rejected their decision or rebelled against their ruling except an innovator and transgressor who was following a way other than that of the believers.

How do the Twelver Shia understand these important statements?⁴⁴⁶

The appointment of 'Ali (ﷺ) as Imam by name could not be proven by any means, and the issue of limiting the number of Imams to a specific number is to be rejected according to the Qur'an and Sunnah. It is neither rational nor realistic, because after this specific number, is the Ummah to remain without an Imam or ruler? The era of the visible Imams, according to the Twelvers, was little more than

two and a half centuries. The Shia were compelled to find a way out of the problem of limiting the number of Imams, so they introduced the idea of the scholar acting on behalf of the Imam, but they differed concerning the extent of this deputation.⁴⁴⁷ In modern times, they were forced to abandon this principle completely, even though it is the foundation of their religion. They made the appointment of their head of state something that could be done by means of election; they abandoned the idea of limiting the number and instead limited the quality or type, restricting leadership of the state to 'the Shi'ite jurists'.⁴⁴⁸

What the Twelver Shia quote as evidence from the Sunni books for limiting the number of Imams

It was narrated that Jâbir ibn Samurah said: "There will be twelve rulers. Then he said something that I did not hear, and my father said that he said: 'All of them from Quraysh.'"⁴⁴⁹ In Muslim, it is narrated that Jâbir said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: 'Islam will continue to prevail for the time of twelve caliphs,' then he said a word that I did not understand, and I said to my father: 'What did he say?' He said: 'All of them from Quraysh.'"⁴⁵⁰ According to another version: "This religion will continue to prevail and be strong for the time of twelve caliphs."⁴⁵¹ According to yet another version: "The people's affairs will continue to be prosperous during the reign of twelve men."⁴⁵² Abu Dâwood narrated: "This religion will continue to prevail until you have had twelve caliphs, under all of whom the Ummah will be united."⁴⁵³ Abu Dâwood narrated a similar report via al-Aswad ibn Sa'eed from Jâbir, and he said that he added: "When he returned to his house, Quraysh came to him and said: 'Then what will happen?' He said: 'Killing.'"⁴⁵⁴

The Twelvers cling to this text and quote it as evidence against Ahl as-Sunnah, not because they believe in what is mentioned in the

books of the Sunnis,⁴⁵⁵ but they quote the hadiths they believe in. However, by examining the text with neutrality and objectivity, we find that these twelve men are described as becoming caliphs, and it is said that at their time, Islam will be strong and prevailing, the people will be united behind them, and they will still be in a good state. None of these attributes is applicable to those whom the Twelvers claim as their Imams. None of them became caliph except Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali and al-Ḥasan for a short time. The Ummah was *not* prosperous or prevailing during the periods of any of these twelve Imams, even according to the Shia themselves. On the contrary, the Ummah "continued to deteriorate and was ruled by evildoers and even by disbelievers,"⁴⁵⁶ and "the Imams themselves concealed their religious affairs by means of taqiyyah."⁴⁵⁷ The era of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام), when he was in a position of power and was a caliph, was 'an era of taqiyyah,' as was clearly stated by their shaykh al-Mufeed.⁴⁵⁸ He "could not bring out the Qur'an or rule in accordance with many Islamic rulings," as was clearly stated by their shaykh al-Jazâ'iri.⁴⁵⁹ He was "forced to go along with his companions and appease them at the expense of religion," as was stated by their shaykh al-Murtaḍa.⁴⁶⁰

Thus this hadith has nothing to do with their claims at all. Moreover, it does not limit the Imams to this number; it is a prediction from the Prophet (ﷺ) that Islam would continue to prevail during the era of these people. The eras of the Rightly Guided Caliphs and the Umayyads were periods of power and strength.⁴⁶¹ Ibn Taymiyah said: "Islam and the rule of Islam were stronger and more far-reaching at the time of the Umayyads than after their time." He quoted as evidence the hadith, "This matter will continue to prevail for the time of twelve caliphs, all of whom are from Quraysh." Then he said: "This is how it was. The caliphs were Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân and 'Ali, then those who took over under whom the people united and who had power and strength, namely Mu'âwiyah and his

son Yazeed, then 'Abdul-Malik and his four sons, among whom was 'Umar ibn 'Abdul-'Azeez. After that came the decline which has continued until today." Then he explained that.⁴⁶²

Concerning the hadith, 'all of them from Quraysh,'⁴⁶³ he said: "This means that they are not limited to 'Ali (ﷺ) and his descendants. If they were limited to 'Ali (ﷺ) and his descendants, he would have mentioned something to refer to that exclusivity. Don't you see that he did not say: all of them from among the descendants of Ismâ'eel or from among the Arabs. If they were distinguished by the fact that they were all from Banu Hâshim or from among the descendants of 'Ali, then the hadith would have referred to that. But as he said that they would all be from among Quraysh in general, it is known that they are from Quraysh, but they are not from a particular clan or tribe; rather they are from Banu Taym, Banu 'Adiyy, Banu 'Abd Shams and Banu Hâshim. The Rightly Guided Caliphs were from these tribes."⁴⁶⁴ So there is nothing left of the description to match the description that they want except the number only, and the number does not mean anything.⁴⁶⁵

Their evidence from the Qur'an

The Shia did not find anything that would support their belief in imamate on the basis of Qur'anic texts, so they quoted verses from the Book of Allah that praised His righteous slaves and pious close friends, and they interpreted them as if they referred exclusively to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) on the basis of this corrupt belief, just as they fabricated many hadiths to support this reprehensible innovation. They did this in order to ensnare ignorant Muslims and those who had little knowledge about this subject. The arguments they presented concerning this are clearly false, and their argument is not free of two issues:

- (a) Either what they quoted as evidence for that claim is sound, such as the verse of purification, the verse of

mubâhalah, the hadith of the banner, the hadith of Khumm and other hadiths,

- (b) or the hadiths were fabricated, and fabricated reports cannot be used as evidence.

Hence it is well established among the scholars that the Râfiḍis are the most mendacious of the groups that claim to belong to Islam. Ibn Taymiyah stated that there was consensus among the scholars of hadith who know about narrations and chains of narration that the Râfiḍis are the most untruthful of all groups, and this attribute is ancient in them. Hence the leading scholars of Islam know that this group is distinguished by its lying.⁴⁶⁶ The following are some examples of how they quoted Qur'an as evidence:

1. The verse of the imamate (Qur'an 5: 55)

Allah (ﷻ) says: ¶Verily, your *Walî* [Protector or Helper] is none other than Allah, His Messenger, and the believers, — those who perform *As-Salâh* [*Iqâmah-as-Salâh*], and give *Zakâh*, and they are *Râki'oon* [those who bow down or submit themselves with obedience to Allah in prayer].¶ (Qur'an 5: 55)

Their commentary on this verse is indicative of their claim that it is speaking about the imamate of 'Ali. Shaykh aṭ-Ṭâ'ifah, whom they call aṭ-Ṭoosi, said: "As for evidence of his imamate in the Qur'an, the strongest evidence for it is the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says...", then he goes on to quote the verse mentioned above.⁴⁶⁷ Aṭ-Ṭubrusi said: "This verse is one of the clearest indications of the validity of the imamate of 'Ali after the Prophet, with no dispute."⁴⁶⁸ Their shaykhs are virtually agreed that this is the strongest evidence they have, and they present it as the main proof when quoting the evidence in their books.⁴⁶⁹ As to how they derive any evidence from this verse to support their claim, they say: "The regular and prominent interpreters of Qur'an and scholars of Hadith are agreed that it was revealed concerning 'Ali (ﷺ), when he gave his ring in

charity to the poor man when he was praying, in the presence of the Companions, and it is mentioned in the six sound books.”⁴⁷⁰

The word *innama* (translated here as ‘verily’) is indicative of exclusivity (as in ‘no one but...’), according to the consensus of the linguists. The word ‘wali’ means the most fitting to be in charge; in other words, the most fitting to be the Imam or caliph.⁴⁷¹ We can see that when they quote this verse as evidence, they rely on what was narrated about the reason for its revelation, because there is nothing in the text of the verse to support what they are trying to prove. Thus their argument ends up being based on the report about the reason for revelation and not on the Qur’an itself. But is the report proven, and is that argument sound? This question may be answered by noting the following points:

1.a.

Their claim that the Sunnis are unanimously agreed that this verse was revealed concerning ‘Ali (عليه السلام) is one of the greatest false claims. On the contrary, the scholars of hadith agreed that it was not revealed specifically about ‘Ali (عليه السلام) and that he did not give his ring in charity while praying; they agreed that this story is false and fabricated.⁴⁷² The assertion that it is mentioned in the six sound books⁴⁷³ is also a lie, because this report does not appear in any of the six books. Ibn Katheer quoted the reports saying that this verse was revealed concerning ‘Ali (عليه السلام) when he gave his ring in charity, and he commented on them by noting: “None of them is sound at all because of the weakness of their chains of narration and the fact that the men (in these chains of narration) are unknown.”⁴⁷⁴ ‘Abdul-‘Azeez ad-Dahlawi said: “As for the idea that it was revealed concerning ‘Ali ibn Abi Tālib (عليه السلام), and the reports about the beggar and ‘Ali giving his ring to him in charity while he was bowing in prayer, this was narrated by ath-Tha‘labi⁴⁷⁵ only. He is the only one who narrated it, and the Sunni scholars of hadith do not pay any attention to ath-Tha‘labi at all. They called him ‘one who cuts wood

at night and cannot tell fresh wood from dry wood'; in other words, they said that he does not know what he is doing. Most of these reports come from al-Kalbi from Abu Şâlih, and these are the weakest of reports on Qur'anic interpretation according to them."⁴⁷⁶

According to sound reports, the reason for the revelation of this verse was that Banu Qaynuqa' betrayed the Messenger (ﷺ) and went to 'Ubâdah ibn aş-Şâmit — as Ibn Jareer mentioned in his *Tafseer* — wanting 'Ubâdah to join them. He rejected them, regarding them as enemies, and he declared his love and support for Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger. Then Allah (ﷻ) revealed these words: «Verily, your *Walî* [Protector or Helper] is none other than Allah, His Messenger, and the believers — those who perform *As-Salâh* [*Iqâmah-as-Salâh*], and give *Zakâh*, and they are *Râki'oon* [those who bow down or submit themselves with obedience to Allah in prayer]» (*Qur'an* 5: 55). This means that when they pray and give zakâh, they do so with humility and submission to Allah (ﷻ) in all their affairs.

At the beginning of this passage, Allah (ﷻ) says: «O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians as *Awliyâ'* [friends, protectors, helpers], they are but *Awliyâ'* of each other. And if any amongst you takes them [as *Awliyâ'*], then surely, he is one of them. Verily, Allah guides not those people who are the *Dhâlimoon* [polytheists and wrongdoers and unjust]» (*Qur'an* 5: 51). This refers to Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salool; he allied himself with Banu Qaynuqa' and when a dispute arose between them and the Prophet (ﷺ), he showed loyalty to them and stood with them, and he went to the Prophet (ﷺ) to intercede for them. 'Ubâdah ibn aş-Şâmit, on the other hand, disavowed them and rejected them. Allah (ﷻ) followed that with a description of the attributes of the believers, which applied to 'Ubâdah ibn aş-Şâmit and those who were with him: «Verily, your *Walî* [Protector or Helper] is none other than Allah, His Messenger,

and the believers» (Qur'an 5: 55). So this verse was revealed concerning 'Ubâdah ibn aṣ-Ṣâmit.⁴⁷⁷

These verses enjoin helping and supporting the believers and forbid taking disbelievers as friends. This meaning is also clearly supported — after one learns the real reason for its revelation — by the context of the verse. Before this verse, Allah (ﷻ) says: «O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians as *Awliyâ'* [friends, protectors, helpers], they are but *Awliyâ'* of each other. And if any amongst you takes them [as *Awliyâ'*], then surely, he is one of them. Verily, Allah guides not those people who are the *Dhâlimoon* [polytheists and wrongdoers and unjust]» (Qur'an 5: 51). This is a clear prohibition on taking the Jews and Christians as close friends or loving and supporting them. '*Wilâyah*' in this context, according to scholarly consensus, does not refer to leadership; there is no reference to leadership in these verses at all. This is followed by mention of those to whom loyalty must be shown, namely Allah (ﷻ), His Messenger and the believers. It is clear that the loyalty, love and support that Allah (ﷻ) forbids in the first part of the verse are exactly the same as that which He enjoins on the believers in this verse; the one is the opposite of the other, as is clear in the Arabic.⁴⁷⁸ Ar-Râzi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Whereas in the previous verse, Allah forbade loyalty to the disbelievers, in this verse He enjoined loyalty to those to whom loyalty is due."⁴⁷⁹ Ibn Taymiyah said: "It is well established and well known among the scholars of Qur'anic commentary, of the earlier and later generations, that this verse was revealed to prohibit loyalty and love towards the disbelievers and to enjoin loyalty and love towards the believers."⁴⁸⁰

1.b.

Allah (ﷻ) does not praise anyone except for that which is praiseworthy before Him, whether it is obligatory or recommended. According to scholarly consensus, giving in charity while praying is

not recommended. If it were, the Messenger (ﷺ) would have done it and encouraged others to do it, and he would have done it repeatedly. During prayer, a person is preoccupied, and giving to a beggar is something that can be done later, so the one who wants to give charity can give it after saying the salâm (at the end of the prayer). In fact, being distracted by giving to people who are begging invalidates the prayer, in the view of a number of scholars.⁴⁸¹

1.c.

Even if we assume that this is allowed during prayer, what reason is there for specifying the position of bowing? How can it be said that there is no walî (friend, helper or protector) except those who give charity while they are bowing? If it is said that this was for the purpose of identifying 'Ali (عليه السلام), the response is that 'Ali (عليه السلام) had many other obvious qualities by which he could be identified, so why would he not be identified by his known qualities and instead be identified by this, by which no one would recognise him except those who heard this story and believed in it? The majority of the Ummah has never heard of this report, which is not in any of the reliable books of the Muslims.⁴⁸²

1.d.

Their idea that 'Ali (عليه السلام) gave his ring in zakâh when he was bowing, then this verse was revealed, is contrary to reality. He was poor, and the zakâh on silver is only required one year after taking possession of it, so 'Ali (عليه السلام) was not one of those from whom zakâh was due at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ).⁴⁸³

1.e.

The basic principle with regard to zakâh is that it must be given at the initiative of the one who is paying it; he should not wait until someone comes to him seeking it. Which is better: hastening to pay zakâh or sitting in your house with your zakâh beside you, waiting

for someone to knock at your door before you give the zakâh due on your wealth? Undoubtedly the former is better.⁴⁸⁴

1.f.

Their saying that leadership is meant by the word 'wali' in this verse is not in accordance with the words of Allah (ﷻ): «Verily, your Walî [Protector or Helper] is none other than Allah, His Messenger, and the believers» (*Qur'an* 5: 55). Allah (ﷻ) cannot be described as being the ruler and leader of His slaves. He is their Creator, Provider, Lord and Sovereign, and His is the creation and commandment,⁴⁸⁵ but it cannot be said that Allah (ﷻ) is the leader (amir) of the believers as it is said that a ruler such as 'Ali is Amir al-Mu'mineen.⁴⁸⁶ With regard to its meaning friendship as opposed to enmity, Allah takes care of His believing slaves. He loves them, and they love Him; He is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him. Whoever takes a friend of His as an enemy, Allah (ﷻ) declares war on him.⁴⁸⁷ This type of friendship is what is meant in the verse.

Moreover, the phrase «and they are *Râki'oon* [those who bow down or submit themselves with obedience to Allah in prayer]» (*Qur'an* 5: 55) means that they are submitting to their Lord and following His commands. The word *rukoo'* (which may mean bowing) originally means submission, so it means that they establish prayer and pay zakâh in a state of submission, which is humility and humbleness before Allah.⁴⁸⁸ Allah (ﷻ) said, concerning Dâwood (ﷺ): «And Dâwood [David] guessed that We have tried him and he sought forgiveness of his Lord, and he fell down prostrate [*kharra râki'an*] and turned [to Allah] in repentance» (*Qur'an* 38: 24). He fell down in prostration, but it is described as *râki'an* [*lit.* bowing] here because it was an expression of his state of humility and submission to Allah (ﷻ). Allah also says: «And when it is said to them: 'Bow down [*irka'u*]!' They bow not down» (*Qur'an* 77: 48). Here, 'bow down' means humble yourselves and submit to the command of Allah.⁴⁸⁹

1.g.

They quote as evidence the word *innama*; as we noted above, it is translated here as 'verily', but it indicates exclusivity. They argue that it refers to 'Ali (عليه السلام) in particular and thus declares invalid the rulership of the previous caliphs, but if this were the case, it would also declare invalid the rulership of the later Imams. According to this logic, the imamate of the two sons of 'Ali and the Imams who came after them is also rendered invalid. If their response to this dilemma is to say that what is meant by limiting imamate or rulership is limiting it to a particular time, as in the time when he was a ruler and not the time of the Imams after him, then this means that they are agreeing with the Sunnis that general rulership was for him only during the time when he was the Imam or ruler, and not before that.⁴⁹⁰

If — as their shaykhs say — this is the strongest evidence they have, then it is clear that they do not have a leg to stand on. The basic principle with regard to such an important and fundamental issue — which for the Râfiḍis is the most important matter of religion, and the one who denies it is regarded as a disbeliever — is that it should be based on texts with very clear wording that can be grasped by people of all levels. It should be understood by the common folk as it is understood by the scholars, understood by later generations as it was understood by those who heard it directly, and understood by desert people as it is understood by city dwellers. Since there is no such clear text in the Book of Allah, this proves that there is no statement appointing 'Ali (عليه السلام) by name to be the Prophet's successor as they claimed.⁴⁹¹ This is the strongest verse they quoted as evidence from the Book of Allah, and they call it the verse of the imamate. They also cling to other verses which were quoted by Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥilli, to which Ibn Taymiyah gave a comprehensive answer.⁴⁹²

2. The verse of mubâhalah (Qur'an 3: 61)

The verse of mubâhalah, which was revealed concerning the Christian delegation of Najrân, is regarded by the Twelver Shia as another proof for their claims of imamate. In this verse, Allah says:

«Then whoever disputes with you concerning him [‘Eesa (Jesus)] after [all this] knowledge that has come to you [i.e. ‘Eesa (Jesus) being a slave of Allah, and having no share in Divinity], say [O Muhammad]: ‘Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves — then we pray and invoke [sincerely] the Curse of Allah upon those who lie.’» (Qur'an 3: 61)

The way they interpret this verse to prove the imamate of ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib, according to aṭ-Ṭoosi and other Shiite scholars, is by saying that the verse refers to the superiority of ‘Ali in two ways:

- (i) The aim of the mubâhalah is to distinguish who is following truth from who is following falsehood, and no one should issue such a challenge except one who is sincere, whose belief is definitely sound and who is the best of people before Allah (ﷺ).
- (ii) The Prophet (ﷺ) made ‘Ali the same as himself, based on the words ‘ourselves and yourselves’, because what is meant by the words ‘our sons’ is al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, what is meant by ‘our women’ is Fâtimah, and what is meant by ‘ourselves’ is himself and ‘Ali (عليه السلام). Because he made him like himself, then no one else should come anywhere near his superiority and virtue.⁴⁹³

The verse of mubâhalah is so called because everyone who follows the truth would wish that Allah (ﷻ) would destroy the follower of falsehood who is debating with him, especially if there is proof (in this challenge) that he is following the truth and manifesting it. The challenge was that the wrongdoers were to die, and life was

very dear to them because of what they knew of their bad fate after death. There is no support in the verse of mubâhalah for what the Twelver Shia claim about imamate, for a number of reasons:

2.a.

Despite the many meanings and synonyms of the Arabic word for 'self', which the Imamis quoted as evidence that the text refers to the caliphate of 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام), there is no meaning of this word, either literal or metaphorical, that indicates the meaning of caliphate. What the Sunnis understand from this verse is that it refers to the Prophet (ﷺ) praying, alone or in the presence of his brothers in Islam or through blood and ties, and this is something that is in accordance with Arabic usage and with religious terminology. Az-Zubaydi said: "Ibn Khâlawayh said: 'The [Arabic for the] word 'self' may mean brother.'" Ibn Barriy said: "The evidence for that is the verse in which Allah says: ﴿But when you enter the houses, greet one another [lit. greet yourselves]﴾ (*Qur'an* 24: 61)." Ibn 'Arafah interpreted the words ﴿Why then, did not the believers, men and women, when you heard it [the slander], think good of their own people [lit. think good of themselves] and say: 'This [charge] is an obvious lie?'﴾ (*Qur'an* 24: 12) as referring to people of faith or people of their own religion.⁴⁹⁴ Ad-Dahlawi said, concerning the verse of mubâhalah: "What is meant by 'let us call' is 'let us bring ourselves'. Moreover, even if we agree that the ruler, Imam 'Ali, was appointed by the Prophet (ﷺ) on the basis of the word 'ourselves', then who is referred to as ruler of the disbelievers in the word 'yourselves', even though they are all included in the word for 'let us call'? There is no point in the Prophet (ﷺ) calling himself and his children after the word 'come'."⁴⁹⁵

The words 'ourselves' and 'yourselves' are like the usage in the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says, ﴿Why then, did not the believers, men and women, when you heard it [the slander], think good of their

own people [*lit.* think good of themselves] and say: 'This [charge] is an obvious lie?'» (*Qur'an* 24: 12), which was revealed about the Mother of the Believers 'Â'ishah (ؓ) and the slander incident. One person could be meant by the Arabic word for 'selves' here. Similarly, in the verse «So turn in repentance to your Creator and kill yourselves [the innocent kill the wrongdoers among you]» (*Qur'an* 2: 54), what is meant is some killing others. In the verse: «And [remember] when We took your covenant [saying]: Shed not the blood of your [people], nor turn out your own people [*lit.* do not turn out yourselves] from their dwellings,» (*Qur'an* 2: 84) what is meant is 'do not expel one another'. So the Arabic word that is translated as 'selves' may refer to brothers, either by blood or by faith.⁴⁹⁶

Allah (ؓ) says concerning His Messenger (ؐ): «Verily, there has come unto you a Messenger [Muhammad] from amongst yourselves. It grieves him that you should receive any injury or difficulty. He [Muhammad] is anxious over you; for the believers [he is] full of pity, kind, and merciful» (*Qur'an* 9: 128). This verse contains clear proof against the argument that the word 'selves' (in the verse of mubâhalah) refers to individuals that are identical, because here it is speaking of the Messenger of Allah (ؐ) and the disbelievers of Makkah, yet it says 'from amongst yourselves'. Who could say that the 'self' of the Messenger of Allah (ؐ) is the same as the 'selves' of the disbelievers of Makkah? Allah forbid!

This discussion illustrates how they follow whims and desires in explaining the verse of mubâhalah. The Shiite scholars ignore all of these texts, then they come to this verse and exaggerate its meaning to the extent that they say that 'Ali (ؓ) is the same as Muhammad (ؐ) except in prophethood. Some Shiite reports even indicate that using the word for 'ourselves' to refer to a brother or relative or people of the same group is something that was known among the Arabs. It was narrated that Abu Abdullah (ؓ) said:

"Amir al-Mu'mineen ['Ali] (ﷺ) sent Abdullah ibn al-'Abbâs to Ibn al-Kawa' and his companions, and he was wearing a thin chemise and a suit. When they looked at him, they said: 'O Ibn 'Abbâs, you are the best among ourselves, yet you are wearing such [fine] clothes.' He said: 'I am the first to dispute with you concerning that. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Say [O Muhammad]: 'Who has forbidden the adornment with clothes given by Allah, which He has produced for His slaves, and *At-Tayyibât* [all kinds of *Halâl* (lawful) things] of food?﴾ (Qur'an 7: 32) and ﴿O Children of Adam! Take your adornment [by wearing your clean clothes] while praying [and going round (the *Tawâf* of) the Ka'bah]﴾ (Qur'an 7: 31).'"

After all this Qur'anic evidence and this Shi'ite report, is there any room for the extremists to speak?⁴⁹⁷

2.b.

One of the prominent Shi'ite scholars, ash-Shareef ar-Raḍiy, admitted that the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) mentions 'ourselves' does not mean that 'Ali (ﷺ) is the same as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), as the Shia say. He said: "The Arabs, in their language, may refer to a cousin who is close or a relative as being 'the self' of his cousin, or a close friend as being 'the self' of his close friend. The evidence for that is the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Nor defame one another [*lit.* yourselves], nor insult one another by nicknames﴾ (Qur'an 49: 11). What Allah (ﷻ) means is: 'Do not criticise your believing brothers,' so He refers to the brotherhood of faith as being like the brotherhood of blood. If the word for 'self' may be applied to a distant relative, it is more appropriate to be applied to a close relative. The poet said: 'On the day of Qura, we were killing ourselves,' meaning that it was as if we were killing ourselves by killing our brothers, and he regarded the 'self' of his kinsmen as being the same as his own 'self'. With regard to the verse in Soorat an-Noor in which Allah (ﷻ) says, ﴿But when you enter the houses,

greet one another [*lit.* greet yourselves]] (Qur'an 24: 61), it may be interpreted in a similar manner, because in the commentary it says that it means to greet one another. It is not possible for a person to greet himself, and it is inappropriate to interpret it in this way. The 'selves' of the believers are like one 'self' since they are following one religion, and this is a religious instruction. So if one of them greets his brother, it is like greeting himself, because the differences are lifted and the 'selves' have become one."⁴⁹⁸

Thus it becomes clear that the Shia have no argument to support their claim that this verse indicates that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and 'Ali (عليه السلام) are equal and the same. The Arabic word that is translated as 'self' may apply to one who is a distant relative, so applying it to one who is a close relative is more appropriate than that, but this does not refer to imamate in any way whatsoever.⁴⁹⁹

2.c.

The aim of mubâhalah is for the one who is calling for it to prove his sincerity and truthfulness by assembling himself and his family — whom he naturally loves more than he loves others who are more distant from him — and calling for destruction if he is not sincere.⁵⁰⁰ The fact that the Prophet (ﷺ) called the most closely-related of people to him is clear evidence that he was a true Prophet. When the Christians of Najrân saw that, they feared for themselves and gave up the idea of mubâhalah. As for the Râfiqî innovators, they did not understand the meaning of these verses of the noble Qur'an because they rejected the truth and did not want to submit to it.⁵⁰¹

2.d.

The contention of the Imami Shia, that the verse is indicative of equality between 'Ali (عليه السلام) and the Prophet (ﷺ) except in prophethood, is something that is not to be accepted at all. No one, whether it is 'Ali (عليه السلام) or anyone else, is equal to the Prophet in matters of religion. What comparison can there be between the

Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and the level of human perfection he reached, and any other person?

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) himself would not accept what the Imami Shia say about him, and any wise and fair-minded person would understand this issue clearly.⁵⁰² The position of prophethood is one that was held in great esteem by Amir al-Mu'mineen, and we have discussed that in this book.

2.e.

Major issues of belief and basic fundamentals of religion must be proven by clear Qur'anic verses with definitive meanings. For example, the verse, ﴿None has the right to be worshipped but He, the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists﴾ (*Qur'an* 2: 255) is about tawhîd; ﴿Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah﴾ (*Qur'an* 48: 29) is about the prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ); and ﴿And perform As-Salât [Iqâmat-as-Salât]﴾ (*Qur'an* 24: 56), is about the obligatory nature of prayer.⁵⁰³

3. "Say (O Muhammad): 'No reward do I ask of you for this except to be kind to me for my kinship with you.'" (*Qur'an* 42: 23)

In their commentary on this verse, the Imami Shia narrate a hadith, which they attribute to the Prophet (ﷺ), in which he defined kinship (in this verse) as referring to 'Ali, Fâtimah and their sons. The Imami Shia say that this supports the belief in their superiority and the duty to love them, and hence the duty to obey them and take them as Imams or leaders to the exclusion of others.⁵⁰⁴

The response to the above is as follows:

3.a.

This verse appears in Soorat ash-Shoora, which was revealed in Makkah before the migration to Madinah, according to the consensus of Ahl as-Sunnah.⁵⁰⁵ It is well known that 'Ali did not

marry Fâtimah until after the battle of Badr, which was in 2 AH; al-Ḥasan was born in 3 AH and al-Ḥusayn in 4 AH. This verse was revealed many years before the existence of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, so how could the Prophet (ﷺ) interpret it as referring to the obligation to honour relatives who were not yet known or born? ⁵⁰⁶

3.b.

The commentary on this verse that appears in *aṣ-Ṣaḥeeḥ* is contrary to that. Bukhari narrated, with his chain of narration going back to Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه), that he was asked about the verse ﴿except to be kind to me for my kinship with you﴾ (*Qur'an* 42: 23). Sa'eed ibn Jubayr said: "It refers to the relatives of Muhammad (ﷺ)." Ibn 'Abbâs said: "You are being too hasty. There was no clan of Quraysh to whom the Prophet (ﷺ) was not related through blood ties, so he said: 'All I ask of you is to uphold the ties of kinship between you and me.'"⁵⁰⁷ Ibn Taymiyah said: "Here is Ibn 'Abbâs, the interpreter of the Qur'an and the most knowledgeable of Ahl al-Bayt after 'Ali, saying: 'This does not mean being kind to my relatives. Rather it means: I do not ask you, O Arabs and O Quraysh, for any reward; instead, I ask you to uphold the ties of kinship between me and you.' So he asked the people to whom he was sent first of all to uphold these ties of kinship with him and not to transgress against him, so that he could convey the message of his Lord."⁵⁰⁸

3.c.

The hadith that they regard as explaining the verse is false and fabricated, according to the consensus of the scholars of hadith who decide such issues; this was stated by Ibn Taymiyah.⁵⁰⁹ Ibn Katheer also compiled all the hadiths that were narrated concerning the interpretation of this verse and determined that the hadiths stating that the kinship mentioned here refers to Fâtimah and her sons have weak chains of narration. He narrated a report from Ibn Abi Hâtim that says: "A man whom he named told us, Ḥusayn al-Ashqar told us,

from Qays, from al-A'mash, from Sa'eed ibn Jubayr, from Ibn 'Abbâs (ؓ), who said: 'When the verse ﴿Say [O Muhammad]: 'No reward do I ask of you for this except to be kind to me for my kinship with you'﴾ (Qur'an 42: 23) was revealed, they said: "O Messenger of Allah, who are these whom Allah has enjoined us to be kind to?" He said: "Fâtimah and her two sons, may Allah be pleased with them."''' But the chain of narration of this report includes someone who is dubious and is not known; he narrated from a fanatic Shiite shaykh, namely Husayn al-Ashqar, whose reports cannot be accepted in this context. Stating that this verse was revealed in Madinah is far-fetched, because it is Makkan, and at that time Fâtimah (ؓ) did not have any children at all, since she did not get married to 'Ali (ؓ) until after the battle of Badr in 2 AH. The correct interpretation of this verse is the one given by the scholar of the Ummah and the interpreter of the Qur'an, Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs (ؓ). Ibn Hajar also discussed the weakness of the reports mentioned and the fact that they are contrary to the sound hadiths.⁵¹⁰

Their evidence from the Sunnah

1. The speech at Ghadeer Khumm

Ghadeer Khumm is located between Makkah and Madinah at al-Juhfah,⁵¹¹ twenty-six miles to the east of Râbigh. Now it is called al-Ghurbah.⁵¹² It is said that in this place, the Prophet (ﷺ) addressed the people and mentioned the virtues of 'Ali (ؓ). The Râfiqîs used this event as the basis for their extremist views concerning him on the one hand, and they relied on it with regard to his entitlement to the caliphate on the other hand. They gave this incident more importance than any other incident during the era of the Prophet (ﷺ).⁵¹³ A book of eleven volumes was written concerning it, entitled *Kitâb al-Ghadeer (The Book of Ghadeer)*; this is a book whose author filled it with fabricated and weak hadiths.

The sound version of the hadith is that which was narrated by Imam Muslim in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* from the hadith of Zayd ibn Arqam (رضي الله عنه), who said: "One day the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) stood and addressed us at a watering place called Khumm, between Makkah and Madinah. He praised and glorified Allah (ﷻ), and he exhorted and reminded us, then he said: 'O people, I am only human. Soon the messenger of my Lord will come to me, and I will respond. I am leaving among you two weighty things, the first of which is the Book of Allah, in which is guidance and light. Follow the Book of Allah and hold fast to it.' He encouraged us to adhere to the Book of Allah, then he said: 'And the people of my household, I remind you of Allah with regard to the people of my household, I remind you of Allah with regard to the people of my household, I remind you of Allah with regard to the people of my household.'" Ḥusayn [one of the narrators] asked him: "Who are the people of his household, O Zayd? Aren't his wives among the people of his household?" He said: "His wives are among the people of his household, but the people of his household are those to whom zakâh is forbidden after he is gone." Ḥusayn asked: "Who are they?" Zayd replied: "They are the family of 'Ali, the family of 'Aqeel, the family of Ja'far, and the family of 'Abbâs." He asked: "Was zakâh forbidden to all of these?" He answered: "Yes."⁵¹⁴

It was narrated by scholars other than Muslim, such as at-Tirmidhi,⁵¹⁵ Aḥmad,⁵¹⁶ an-Nasâ'i in *al-Khaṣâ'iṣ*,⁵¹⁷ al-Ḥâkim⁵¹⁸ and others, with sound chains of narration, that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "If I am a person's *mawla*,⁵¹⁹ 'Ali is also his *mawla*."⁵²⁰ With regard to additional material, such as the words "O Allah, support those who support him and take as enemies those who take him as an enemy," this material is regarded as sound by some of the scholars, but the correct view is that it is not sound. As for the addition "support those who support him and humiliate those who humiliate him, and make

truth connected to him wherever he goes," this is something that is attributed falsely to the Prophet (ﷺ).⁵²¹

There was a good reason for the speech given by the Prophet (ﷺ) at Ghadeer Khumm. It was narrated that: "The Prophet (ﷺ) sent 'Ali to Khâlid ibn al-Waleed in Yemen to work out the one-fifth of the booty and take it. When he had worked out the one-fifth of the booty, there was a slave woman among the one-fifth who was the best of the female captives and had ended up being counted as part of the one-fifth. Then 'Ali (ﷺ) came out with his head covered, and he had done ghusl. They asked him about that, and he told them that the slave woman who had been among the prisoners had become his, and he had been intimate with her. Some of them objected to that, and Buraydah ibn al-Huṣayb brought the letter of Khâlid to the Prophet (ﷺ). Buraydah was one of those who did not like 'Ali (ﷺ), and he confirmed the contents of Khâlid's letter, which referred to what 'Ali (ﷺ) had done. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'Do not hate him, for he has more right to the one-fifth than that.'"⁵²²

When the Farewell Pilgrimage took place, 'Ali (ﷺ) returned from Yemen to join the hajj and brought the sacrificial animals with him.⁵²³ He appointed one of his companions to be in charge of the troops, and he hastened to meet the Messenger (ﷺ) in Makkah. That man gave the troops some garments that 'Ali (ﷺ) had, and when the army drew close to Makkah, 'Ali (ﷺ) went out to meet them and saw them wearing those suits. He said to his deputy: "Woe to you, what is this?" He said: "I clothed them like this today so that they would look good when they came to the people." 'Ali said: "Woe to you, take them off before you meet the Messenger (ﷺ)." So the deputy took away the suits and put them with the rest of the garments, and the army started to complain about what 'Ali (ﷺ) had done to them.⁵²⁴ When the people complained about 'Ali (ﷺ), the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) stood up to address them. Ibn Katheer said:

"There was a lot of talk and complaining about 'Ali (عليه السلام) from that army, because he had prevented them from using the zakâh camels and had taken back the suits that his deputy had let them have. And Allah (الله) knows best."

When the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was on his way back to Madinah after finishing his hajj rituals, he passed by Ghadeer Khumm. There he addressed the people and defended 'Ali (عليه السلام), confirming his high status and pointing out his virtues so as to remove whatever negative feelings the people might have developed about him.⁵²⁵

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) did not give this speech when he was in Makkah during the Farewell Pilgrimage on the day of 'Arafah; instead he delayed the matter until he was on his way back to Madinah. This indicates that the matter concerned the people of Madinah only. Those who spoke against 'Ali (عليه السلام) were from among the people of Madinah, as they were the ones who were with 'Ali on that campaign. Ghadeer Khumm is in al-Juhfah, which is approximately 250 km from Makkah. Those who say that it was the point where the pilgrims part ways are not correct; the gathering point of the pilgrims is Makkah, so the place where the pilgrims part ways could not be as far as 250 km away. The people of Makkah stay in Makkah, the people of Tâ'if return to Tâ'if, the people of Yemen return to Yemen, the people of Iraq return to Iraq, the Arab tribes return to their original places and so on; when they have finished their hajj, each returns to his own land. There was no one with the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) except the people of Madinah and those who were on their way to their homes along the road to Madinah, so these are the people whom the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) addressed.

The difference between the Sunnis and the Râfiḍi Shia has to do with their understanding of what the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, not whether or not he said it. The Râfiḍis say that the words "If I am a person's mawla, 'Ali is also his mawla" mean: "Whoever I am in

charge of, 'Ali is also in charge of." The Sunnis say that what is meant by the Prophet's words "If I am a person's mawla, 'Ali is also his mawla" refers to support and love, the opposite of which is enmity. This is correct for a number of reasons:

1.a.

This was classed as sound by some scholars because of the additional material, namely the words of the Prophet (ﷺ): "O Allah, support those who support him, and take as an enemy those who take him as an enemy."⁵²⁶ Enmity explains the phrase " 'Ali is also his mawla," so it refers to people loving 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ).

1.b.

The word mawla may indicate a number of meanings. Ibn al-Atheer said: "It may be applied to the master, owner, benefactor, supporter, one who loves, ally, slave, freed slave, cousin (son of paternal uncle) or son-in-law."⁵²⁷ The Arabs give all of these meanings to the word mawla.

1.c.

There is no evidence in the hadith for the idea of imamate (caliphate). If the Prophet (ﷺ) had been referring to caliphate, he would not have used a word that may have all of these meanings that were mentioned by Ibn al-Atheer. The Prophet (ﷺ) was the most eloquent of the Arabs, and he would have said clearly, "'Ali is my successor after me," or "'Ali is the ruler after me," or "If I die, then listen to and obey 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib." However, the Prophet (ﷺ) did not say any of these decisive words that could have put an end to the dispute if any arose. He said: "If I am a person's mawla, 'Ali is also his mawla."⁵²⁸

1.d.

Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Your abode is the fire. That is your *mawlâ* [friend — proper place], and worst indeed is that destination﴾ (*Qur'an*

57: 15). He called it mawla because it is close to the disbelievers — we seek refuge with Allah (ﷻ).

1.e.

In the case of 'Ali (ﷻ), the fact that he is a mawla was proven during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and after his death, and after the death of 'Ali (ﷻ). 'Ali (ﷻ) was the mawla of the believers after the death of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and he was a mawla to the believers after his own death (ﷻ). Even now he is our mawla, as Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Verily, your *Wali* [Protector or Helper] is none other than Allah, His Messenger, and the believers﴾ (*Qur'an* 5: 55). 'Ali (ﷻ) is one of the leaders of the believers.

1.f.

Imam ash-Shâfa'i said concerning the hadith of Zayd: What is meant by that is the concept of love for the sake of Islam, as Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿That is because Allah is the *Mawlâ* [Lord, Master, Helper, Protector] of those who believe, and the disbelievers have no *Mawlâ* [lord, master, helper, protector]﴾ (*Qur'an* 47: 11).⁵²⁹ So the hadith does not say that 'Ali (ﷻ) should be the caliph after the death of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ); it indicates that 'Ali is one of the close friends of Allah (ﷻ) to whom love and support is due for the sake of Allah (ﷻ).⁵³⁰

In general, in this speech given in Ghadeer Khumm, the Prophet (ﷺ) wanted to confirm the good character of 'Ali (ﷻ), raise his status and point out his virtues, so as to remove the ideas harboured by some of these companions who had been with him in Yemen, who had developed reservations about some of his conduct. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not want to do that during hajj, because even though this incident had become widely known, it remained limited to the people of Madinah. On the other hand, he did not delay it until he reached Madinah, lest the hypocrites take

advantage of this incident in order to plot against the Muslims.⁵³¹ There is another indication that the Prophet (ﷺ) intended in this speech to point out the virtues of ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) to those who were unaware of them. When Buraydah ibn al-Huṣayb began to criticise ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) in his presence — because he felt that ‘Ali was no longer showing him kindness — the Prophet’s expression changed, and he said: “O Buraydah, am I not closer to the believers than their own selves?” Buraydah said: “Yes indeed, O Messenger of Allah.” He said: “If I am a person’s mawla, ‘Ali is also his mawla.”⁵³²

Some valuable research on this topic has been undertaken by Dr. Muhammad ‘Ali as-Saloos, who discussed the speech at Ghadeer and the advice to adhere to the Qur’an and Sunnah. He studied the reports about adhering to the Qur’an and Sunnah and the reports about adhering to the Qur’an and the family of the Prophet (ﷺ) and examined them critically, then he said: “From the above, we can see that the hadith of the two weighty matters is one of the hadiths which are sound in both chain of narration and text. However, of the eight reports which enjoin adhering to the family of the Prophet (ﷺ) alongside the noble Qur’an, not one of them is free of some weakness in the chain of narration.”⁵³³ The texts of these reports say that the Qur’an and Ahl al-Bayt will never separate until they come to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) at the reservoir, and because of this, it is essential to adhere to both. In fact, the reality is contrary to these reports. Some of the supporters (Shia) of Ahl al-Bayt went astray and led others astray. Most of the groups that plotted against Islam and its people found in Shiism and love for Ahl al-Bayt a screen to conceal and protect them, and you may find that some of those who claim to be descendants of Ahl al-Bayt encourage them for worldly interests, such as taking one-fifth from the wealth acquired by their followers.

Avoiding going astray can only be achieved by adhering to the Qur’an and Sunnah. If Ahl al-Bayt adhere to both, then they have

both the virtue of descent [from the Prophet (ﷺ)] and the virtue of adherence (to the Qur'an and Sunnah), and deserve to be leaders of guidance whose example we follow, as Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And make us leaders of the *Muttaqoon* [the pious]﴾ (Qur'an 25: 74). This means leaders who follow the example of those who came before us, and whose example will be followed by those who come after us. This is not limited to Ahl al-Bayt; rather it applies to all who adhere to the Qur'an and Sunnah. In the case of reports with chains of narration that were classed as weak, the text itself does not make sense either, and this is a further weakness. Despite all that, even if these reports were sound, that would not offer any proof at all for the imamate of the twelve or their entitlement to the caliphate.⁵³⁴

The great scholar al-Mannâwi said in *Fiqh Riwâyât al-Hadeeth*: "If you follow the commands of His Book and heed its prohibitions, and follow the guidance and example of my family, you will be guided and will not go astray."⁵³⁵

Ibn Taymiyah said, after stating that this hadith is weak and cannot be sound: "A number of scholars responded with a comment indicating that Ahl al-Bayt would never agree on misguidance. They said: 'We say that as al-Qâdi Abu Ya'la and others said it.'" He also said: "The consensus of the Ummah is binding proof on the basis of the Qur'an and Sunnah and scholarly consensus. Ahl al-Bayt are part of the Ummah, so if there is consensus among the Ummah, it implies that there is consensus among Ahl al-Bayt."⁵³⁶

The hadith of the two weighty matters is the report in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "I am leaving behind among you that which, if you adhere to it, you will never go astray after I am gone: the Book of Allah and my family."⁵³⁷ There is some discussion as to whether it is sound and can be proven to be from the Prophet (ﷺ). What is proven in *Shaheeh Muslim* is that the command was to adhere to the Book of Allah, and the instruction was to show respect and kindness to Ahl al-

Bayt, as we have seen in the hadith of Zayd ibn Arqam in Muslim. The Prophet (ﷺ) enjoined adherence to the Book of Allah, then he said: "And the people of my household. I remind you of Allah with regard to the people of my household, I remind you of Allah with regard to the people of my household, I remind you of Allah with regard to the people of my household." What he enjoined was adherence to the Qur'an. With regard to Ahl al-Bayt, the Prophet (ﷺ) enjoined taking care of them and giving them their rights, which had been granted to them by Allah (ﷻ).⁵³⁸

The refutation of the distorted Shiite understanding of the hadith of the two weighty matters is as follows:

- (a) A man's family are the members of his household, and the family of the Prophet (ﷺ) are those to whom zakâh was forbidden. They are Banu Hâshim, who are the family of the Prophet (ﷺ). The Râfîdis have no chains of narration going back to the Messenger (ﷺ), and they admit that they have no chains of narration for the narrations in their books. Rather they are books that they found and said: "They narrated it, so it must be true."⁵³⁹ As for their chains of narration, as al-Hurr al-'Âmili and other Râfîdî Shiite scholars said: "The Shia have no chains of narration at all, and they do not rely on chains of narration."⁵⁴⁰ So how can they prove what they narrated in their books from the family of the Prophet (ﷺ)? Rather it is Ahl as-Sunnah (the Sunnis) who were the followers of the family of the Prophet (ﷺ) and respected their rights, and did not add or subtract anything, since the Prophet (ﷺ) said concerning himself: "Do not praise me as the Christians praised 'Eesa the son of Maryam; rather say: The slave of Allah and His Messenger."⁵⁴¹
- (b) The leader of the family of the Prophet (ﷺ) was 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ), and after him in knowledge comes Abdullah ibn 'Abbâs, who was the scholar of the Ummah and who believed in

the caliphate of Abu Bakr and 'Umar before 'Ali (عليه السلام). In fact, it is proven in mutawâtir reports that 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "The best of the people after the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) are Abu Bakr and 'Umar."⁵⁴² So 'Ali (عليه السلام) affirmed the superiority of the two shaykhs (Abu Bakr and 'Umar), even though he was the head of the family of the Prophet (ﷺ).⁵⁴³

- (c) This hadith is like the hadith in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "I am leaving behind among you that which, if you adhere to it, you will never go astray: the Book of Allah and my Sunnah."⁵⁴⁴ The Prophet also said: "You must adhere to my Sunnah and the way of the Rightly Guided Caliphs after me; hold on firmly to it."⁵⁴⁵ He enjoined clinging firmly to it and said: "Follow the example of those who come after me: Abu Bakr and 'Umar."⁵⁴⁶ He also said: "Follow the guidance of 'Ammâr, and adhere to the advice of Ibn Mas'ood."⁵⁴⁷ This does not refer to imamate at all; rather it indicates that these people were following the guidance of the Messenger (ﷺ). Similarly, the family of the Messenger (ﷺ) can never agree upon misguidance.⁵⁴⁸
- (d) The Râfiḍi Shia undermine the status of al-'Abbâs,⁵⁴⁹ his son Abdullah and the sons of al-Ḥasan, by saying that they were jealous of the sons of al-Ḥusayn. They also undermine the status of the sons of al-Ḥusayn himself, apart from those who they claim were Imams, such as Zayd ibn 'Ali.⁵⁵⁰ They also undermine the status of Ibrâheem, the brother of al-Ḥasan al-'Askari,⁵⁵¹ and others. As such, they are not supporters of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his family; the supporters of the Prophet and his family are those who praised them and respected their rights, and did not undermine their status.⁵⁵²
- (e) How the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) understood the text. The Companions (رضي الله عنهم) understood that what was meant was love, support and obedience. Hence they

expressed their obedience and respect to the leader of Ahl al-Bayt, 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib, by calling him 'our mawla'. It was narrated that Riyâḥ al-Ḥârith said: "Some people came to 'Ali in ar-Raḥbah and said: 'Peace be upon you, O our mawla.' He said: 'How can I be your mawla when you are Arabs?' They said: 'We heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say on the day of Ghadeer Khumm: 'If I am a person's mawla, 'Ali is also his mawla.'"" Riyâḥ said: "When they left, I followed and asked: 'Who are these people?' They said: 'Some of the Anṣâr, among whom was Abu Ayyoob al-Anṣârî.'"⁵⁵³

The most important thing we learn from this hadith is that 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (عليه السلام) himself did not understand the word 'mawla' as referring to imamate and rulership. It may be noted that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) found it strange that they called him 'our mawla'. If Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام), who was an Arab and had a good command of the language, thought it was synonymous with 'Amir' (ruler) or 'Imam' (caliph), why would he find it strange that the people were calling him by this title?⁵⁵⁴

- (f) The books of the Twelver Shia narrated some reports of Ahl al-Bayt in which they denied that what is meant in the hadith of Ghadeer Khumm is the imamate or rulership of 'Ali (عليه السلام) after the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). It was said to Imam al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali, who was the leader of the descendants of 'Ali (عليه السلام) at his time, the appointed heir of his father and the one who was in charge of his grandfather's charity: "Didn't the Messenger of Allah say 'If I am a person's mawla, 'Ali is also his mawla'?" He said: "Yes indeed, but the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not mean thereby imamate and rulership. If he had meant that, he would have said it clearly to them." His son, Imam Abdullah, said: "We do not have any right concerning this issue (rulership) that no one else has, and there is no one among Ahl al-Bayt who

is appointed by Allah as an Imam (ruler) whom everyone should obey." He denied that the imamate or caliphate of 'Ali (عليه السلام) was on the instruction of Allah (ﷻ).⁵⁵⁵ If these are the words of Ahl al-Bayt, and they are the descendants and supporters of 'Ali (عليه السلام), what do you think others should say?⁵⁵⁶

2. The hadith about 'Ali (عليه السلام) being appointed in charge of Madinah when the Prophet (ﷺ) went to Tabook

The campaign to Tabook took place in Rajab 9 AH. This was a very important event in the life of the Prophet (ﷺ), in which he achieved goals that had a far-reaching effect on the Muslims and the Arabs, and on the course of Islamic history.⁵⁵⁷ The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) appointed 'Ali (عليه السلام) in charge of Madinah, and the hypocrites found an opportunity to express what was in their hearts of resentment and hypocrisy. They started talking about 'Ali (عليه السلام) in offensive terms, such as saying: "He [meaning the Prophet (ﷺ)] only left him behind because he finds him burdensome." This talk about him on their part was a clear and prominent sign of their hypocrisy. According to the sound hadith, 'Ali (عليه السلام) said: "By the One Who split the seed and created the soul, the unlettered Prophet (ﷺ) affirmed to me that no one loves me except a believer, and no one hates me except a hypocrite."⁵⁵⁸

At that point, he went and caught up with the army and wanted to go on the campaign with them. He said: "O Messenger of Allah, why did you leave me behind with the children and women?" The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Does it not please you to be to me like Haroon was to Moosa, except that there is no Prophet after me?"⁵⁵⁹ There is nothing in this hadith to support what the Shia understand from it, that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tālib (عليه السلام) was the successor of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). That view may be refuted in several ways:

2.a.

There is an important reason for this hadith, and we should not try to understand the hadith without looking at that reason. The hypocrites had criticised 'Ali (عليه السلام), so the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) explained his status and virtue and proved that the hypocrites were telling lies.

2.b.

It is proven that Haroon (عليه السلام) died before Moosa (عليه السلام); therefore, quoting this hadith as evidence for the imamate of 'Ali after the Messenger of Allah is not valid. If the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had wanted to appoint 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام) as his heir, he would have said to him for example: "You are to me like Joshua to Moosa," because the Prophet of Allah Joshua (عليه السلام) became the leader of the children of Israel after the death of Moosa (عليه السلام). However, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) mentioned Haroon (عليه السلام), who was Moosa's deputy while Moosa was alive, not after he died. This can only mean one thing, which was that he wanted to calm 'Ali (عليه السلام) down, as he was upset because the Messenger (ﷺ) had left him behind in Madinah to be in charge of the weak, the women and children and those who had stayed behind from the campaign. The Prophet (ﷺ) explained to him that just as Moosa (عليه السلام) had left his brother Haroon (عليه السلام) in charge of his people when he went to Sinai to meet his Lord (ﷻ), the Prophet's leaving 'Ali (عليه السلام) behind was of the same nature. Moosa did not leave Haroon behind because he thought little of him or to undermine his status; he did it because he trusted him, and this was also the case with 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام).

2.c.

Haroon (عليه السلام) was not the appointed heir of Moosa (عليه السلام); he was a Prophet and a helper, according to the text of the Qur'an. Making an analogy with Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام), who according to the Shia was an appointed heir and not a Prophet, is an

analogy with a difference, although they reject the concept of analogy in the first place.

2.d.

Citing as evidence the fact that Haroon (ﷺ) was a helper to Moosa (ﷺ) in order to demonstrate that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) was a helper to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is even stranger than the previous example. That is because Allah (ﷻ), Who made Haroon (ﷺ) a helper to His Prophet Moosa (ﷺ), mentioned in His Book the request of Moosa (ﷺ): *And appoint for me a helper from my family, Hâroon [Aaron], my brother. Increase my strength with him, And let him share my task [of conveying Allah's Message and prophethood].* (Qur'an 20: 29-32)

Do those who think that the two cases are identical believe that 'Ali (ﷺ) was a partner with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in his prophethood, as was the case when Haroon (ﷺ) shared the task of Moosa (ﷺ)? Whoever believes that is undoubtedly a disbeliever who is beyond the pale of Islam.⁵⁶⁰

2.e.

At other times, the Prophet (ﷺ) appointed people other than 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) to be in charge of Madinah. During the campaign of Badr, he appointed Abdullah ibn Umm Maktoom; during the campaign of Sulaym, he appointed Sibâ' ibn 'Urtafah al-Ghifârî or Ibn Umm Maktoom, according to different opinions; during the campaign of as-Saweeq, he appointed Basheer ibn 'Abdul-Mundhir; during the campaign of Banul-Muṣṭaliq, he appointed Abu Dharr al-Ghifârî; during the campaign of Ḥudaybiyah, he appointed Numaylah ibn Abdullah al-Laythi, whom he also appointed during the campaign of Khaybar; during 'Umrat al-Qaḍa', he appointed 'Uwayf ibn al-Aḍbaṭ ad-Dayli; during the conquest of Makkah, he appointed Kulthoom ibn Huṣayn ibn

‘Utbah al-Ghifârî; and during the Farewell Pilgrimage, he appointed Abu Dhujânah. This was stated by Ibn Hishâm in various places in his biography of the Prophet (ﷺ).⁵⁶¹ Moreover, appointing ‘Ali in charge of Madinah (on this occasion) was not the last time this was done. During the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Prophet (ﷺ) appointed someone other than ‘Ali to be in charge of Madinah. This was the Prophet’s way of training leaders, as when he appointed Abu Bakr in charge of the hajj. Abu Bakr was also the only one whom he asked to lead the people in prayer.⁵⁶²

2.f.

The Prophet’s likening ‘Ali to Haroon was an honour, just as the Prophet (ﷺ) likened Abu Bakr and ‘Umar to people greater than Haroon. During the battle of Badr, when the issue of prisoners of war arose, the Prophet (ﷺ) consulted Abu Bakr, who thought that he should pardon them and let their people ransom them. ‘Umar, on the other hand, thought that they should be executed. The Prophet (ﷺ) said to Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه): “Your likeness is that of Ibrâheem (رضي الله عنه) on the day when he said: ﴿But whoso follows me, he verily, is of me. And whoso disobeys me, still You are indeed Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾ (*Qur’an* 14: 36); and your likeness is the likeness of ‘Eesa (رضي الله عنه) when he said: ﴿If You punish them, they are Your slaves, and if You forgive them, verily, You, only You, are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise﴾ (*Qur’an* 5: 118).” Then he turned to ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) and said: “O ‘Umar, your likeness is the likeness of Nooh (رضي الله عنه) when he said: ﴿My Lord! Leave not one of the disbelievers on the earth!﴾ (*Qur’an* 71: 26); and your likeness is the likeness of Moosa (رضي الله عنه) when he said: ﴿Our Lord! Destroy their wealth, and harden their hearts, so that they will not believe until they see the painful torment.﴾ (*Qur’an* 10: 88).”⁵⁶³

The Prophet (ﷺ) likened Abu Bakr to Ibrâheem and ‘Eesa, and he likened ‘Umar to Nooh and Moosa. These are all ‘Messengers

of strong will', and they are the best of mankind after the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ); they are also superior to Haroon by several degrees (may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon them all). Therefore the Prophet's likening 'Ali to Haroon was an honour to him, just as the Prophet (ﷺ) honoured Abu Bakr and 'Umar when he likened them to Ibrâheem and 'Eesa, and Moosa and Nooh (peace be upon them).⁵⁶⁴

2.g. Comments of the scholars on the hadith

An-Nawawi said: "There is no proof in this hadith for any of them; rather it confirms the virtue of 'Ali, but there is no indication in it that he is better than anyone else or like anyone else, and there is no indication in it that he is to be appointed caliph after him, because the Prophet (ﷺ) only said that to 'Ali when he left him in charge in Madinah during the campaign to Tabook. This is supported by the fact that Haroon, to whom he likened him, was not the successor of Moosa; rather he died during Moosa's lifetime, approximately forty years before the death of Moosa, according to what is well known from the accounts narrated by the storytellers, who said that he was only appointed to be in charge when Moosa went to speak with his Lord at the time and place appointed by Him."⁵⁶⁵

Ibn Hazzam (may Allah have mercy on him) said, after mentioning the Râfiḍis' quoting this hadith as evidence: "This does not indicate that he is superior to others or that he was entitled to the caliphate after him, because Haroon did not take charge of the children of Israel after Moosa (ﷺ) died; rather the one who took charge after Moosa (ﷺ) died was Joshua, the servant of Moosa and his companion, who travelled with him to seek al-Khiḍr (ﷺ). Similarly, the one who took charge after the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died was the one who had been his companion in the cave, who travelled with him to Madinah. Since we know that 'Ali was not a prophet, unlike Haroon who was a prophet, and Haroon was not a

successor who was to lead the children of Israel after the death of Moosa, then it is true to say that the way in which he was to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as Haroon was to Moosa was only in terms of being closely related. Moreover, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) only said this to him when he appointed him in charge of Madinah during the campaign to Tabook; before and after that, he (ﷺ) appointed men other than 'Ali in charge of Madinah when he travelled. So it is true to say that this appointment did not mean that 'Ali (ﷺ) was superior to others or that he was to be the ruler after him, just as it did not mean that for the others who were appointed.”⁵⁶⁶

Ibn Hajar said: “They quoted this hadith to prove that 'Ali (ﷺ), and no one else among the Companions, was entitled to the caliphate, because Haroon was the successor to Moosa. My response to that is that Haroon was not the successor of Moosa except during his lifetime (when he acted as his deputy), and not after Moosa's death, because he died before Moosa, according to consensus. That was referred to by al-Khattâbi.”⁵⁶⁷

Ibn Taymiyah said, refuting the Râfiḍi Shia's use of this hadith as evidence: “If a person says this is like that, or this is akin to that, likening one to the other, this has to be understood in the right context; it does not mean that they are equal or identical in all ways. This is how we should understand it in this case, where 'Ali is described as being like Haroon. This appointment as deputy in charge of Madinah is not something unique to 'Ali; actually, this appointment was not at the same level as other cases when the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) appointed others to be in charge of Madinah, let alone better than it. Indeed, people to whom 'Ali was superior were left in charge during many campaigns, but these appointments did not mean that these people were superior to 'Ali (ﷺ) even if 'Ali stayed behind too. How can that mean that the person is superior to 'Ali (ﷺ) when more than one person was

appointed in charge of Madinah? Were those who were appointed also, in relation to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), like Haroon was to Moosa, because their appointments were like 'Ali's? Those appointments were over people who were greater in number and more prominent than those over whom 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was appointed at the time of Tabook, and the need to appoint someone in charge was greater, because the Prophet (ﷺ) was afraid that his enemies might attack Madinah. By the time of the Tabook campaign, the Arabs of the Hijaz had become Muslim, Makkah had been conquered and Islam had prevailed. Hence Allah (ﷻ) commanded His Prophet to go out on campaign, and he did not leave any fighters with 'Ali (رضي الله عنه), as he used to do during all other campaigns; instead he took all the fighters with him.”⁵⁶⁸

2.h. The wisdom behind the Prophet's not singling out a specific person to take charge of the Ummah after him

The reason why the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not single out anyone to take charge of the Ummah after him becomes clear when we understand the reality of Islam as a divinely-revealed religion. If the Messenger (ﷺ) had appointed a man to rule after him, that would have given legitimate justification for people to claim — as they did without any evidence — that the right to leadership belonged to one particular family, and this hereditary rulership would have become the custom in Islam. However, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) — who did not speak on the basis of his whims and desires but only a Revelation revealed⁵⁶⁹ — wanted to leave this matter completely to the Muslims to choose the one who was the most suited and the best of them. He gave some hints referring to Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه), and he could have stated that clearly, but he did not do so for this reason; hinting does not give legitimacy for appointing him immediately after his death. If there had been any instruction appointing a specific

person, there could not have been any difference of opinion in the meeting in Saqeefah at the beginning. Abu Bakr (ﷺ) would not have consulted the people with regard to appointing ‘Umar (ﷺ), ‘Umar (ﷺ) would not have left the matter to be decided by the Muhâjireen, and so on. If it were the case that the matter was hereditary, Banu Hâshim would have been the most entitled to it.⁵⁷⁰

This religion is for all of mankind, and it is not right under any circumstances for it to be limited to one ruling family or to remain hereditary, like property. Even though that happened in subsequent eras, such as those of the Umayyads and the Abbasids and others, it is contrary to Sharia principles. Whatever is contrary to Sharia principles is alien to the religion of Allah (ﷻ), and such flawed concepts should be eliminated completely from Islamic thought so that it might be restored to its pure and correct state.⁵⁷¹

The following are some of the weak and fabricated hadiths that the Imamis quote as evidence.

1. The hadith of the bird

One of the most important texts that the Imami Shia quote as evidence is the hadith of the roasted bird. Al-Hâkim narrated in *al-Mustadrak* that Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) said: “I used to serve the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). A roasted chicken was offered to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and he said: ‘O Allah, bring me the dearest of Your creation to You so that he can eat this bird with me.’ I said: ‘O Allah, make him one of the Anşâr.’ ‘Ali (ﷺ) came, and I said: ‘The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is busy.’ Then he came (again), and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘Open the door.’ He came in, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: ‘What kept you, O ‘Ali?’ He said: ‘This is the third time that Anas sent me back; he said that you were busy.’ The Prophet (ﷺ) said: ‘What made you do that?’ I said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, I heard your supplication, and I wanted it to be a

man from among my people.' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Any man loves his people.'⁵⁷²

This hadith was narrated via a number of chains of narration, none of which is free from flaws. Moreover, there are many (similar) reports with chains of narration going back to Anas (رضي الله عنه), and the fact that none of these chains of narration is sound is something astonishing. Why did the companions of Anas not narrate this hadith, when they accompanied him for many years? We have not seen even one of them narrate this hadith, and they are known for their trustworthiness and accuracy. People such as al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Thâbit al-Banâni, Ḥumayd at-Taweel, Ḥabeeb ibn Abi Thâbit, Bakr ibn Abdullah al-Muzani, As'ad ibn Sahl ibn Ḥunayf, Ishâq ibn Abdullah ibn Abi Ṭalhah, Abân ibn Ṣâliḥ, Ibrâheem ibn Maysarah narrated from Anas, as well as many others who are not known.

Ibn Katheer said: "Then I came across a large volume by al-Qâḍi Abu Bakr al-Bâqillâni proving that it (the hadith of the bird) is rejected and weak in terms of both its chain of narration and its text."⁵⁷³ Ibn al-Jawzi said: "Ibn Mardawayh narrated it via twenty chains of narration, all of which are weak or flawed and have something wrong with them, so he did not think there was any need to discuss it in detail."⁵⁷⁴ Ibn Taymiyah said: "The hadith of the bird is one of the false and fabricated reports, according to the scholars who know about transmission of reports and chains of narration."⁵⁷⁵ Az-Zayla'î said: "How often one finds hadiths that were narrated by so many and have so many chains of narration, yet they are weak."⁵⁷⁶

2. The hadith of the house

Another of the hadiths that the Twelver Shia quote as evidence that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was named as the successor of the Prophet (ﷺ) is the hadith of the house. The Shia think that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) appointed 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) as the Imam from the outset of his mission, from

the time he began calling the disbelievers of Makkah to Islam and asking them to abandon idols and worship Allah (ﷻ) alone.

According to this hadith, ‘Ali (ؓ) said: “When the verse ﴿And warn your tribe [O Muhammad] of near kindred﴾ (*Qur’an* 26: 214) was revealed to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), he called me and said: ‘O ‘Ali, Allah has commanded me to warn your tribe of near kindred. I felt anxious about that, and I thought that if I started telling them about this matter, I would see from them something that I would not like, so I kept quiet until Jibreel (ؑ) came to me and said: “O Muhammad, unless you do what you are instructed to do, your Lord will punish you.” So make a *ṣâ* [a measurement roughly equivalent to three kilograms, or four times the volume of a *mudd*] of food for us and put a leg of mutton on it, and fill a vessel with milk for us, then call Banu ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib for me so that I may speak to them and convey what I have been instructed to convey.’ So I (‘Ali) did what he told me, then I called them for him. At that time, they were forty men, more or less, among whom were his maternal uncles Abu Tālib, Ḥamzah, al-‘Abbās and Abu Lahab. When they had gathered with him, he called me to bring the food that I had made for them, and I brought it. When I put it down, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) picked up a piece of meat and tore it apart with his teeth, then he spread it throughout the platter and said: ‘Take in the name of Allah.’ The people ate until they were full, and I could not see anything but the imprint of their hands. By Allah in whose hand is my soul, all of them ate their fill, even though one man could have eaten everything that was on the plate. Then he said: ‘Give the people to drink.’ So I brought that vessel and they drank until they had all drunk their fill by Allah, even though one man could have drunk it all.

“When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) wanted to speak to them, Abu Lahab spoke up first (and did not give him a chance to speak), saying: ‘Your companion has bewitched you.’ So the people

departed, and the Messenger of Allah did not speak to them. He said: 'Tomorrow, O 'Ali (we will do the same thing). This man spoke first; you heard what he said, and the people departed before I could speak to them. Prepare for us the same food as before, then gather them to me.' So I did that, and I gathered them together. Then he called for the food, and I brought it to them, and he did the same as he had done the day before. They ate until they were full, then he said: 'Give them to drink.' So I brought that vessel, and they drank until they had all drunk their fill.

"Then the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) spoke and said: 'O Banu 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib, I do not know of any young man among the Arabs who brought his people anything better than what I have brought to you. I have brought you the best of this world and the hereafter. Allah has commanded me to call you to Him. Which of you will support me in this matter and be my brother and my appointed heir and my successor among you?' ('Ali said:) All of them refrained, but I — and I was the youngest of them, with the bleariest eyes, biggest belly and thinnest legs⁵⁷⁷ — said: 'O Messenger of Allah, I will be your supporter in this matter.' He took hold of my neck and said: 'This is my brother, my appointed heir and my successor among you; listen to him and obey.' The people started laughing and saying to Abu Ṭālib: He has commanded you to listen to your son and obey him."

According to another version: "No one responded to him, but 'Ali (ﷺ) stood up and said: 'I will, O Messenger of Allah.' He said: 'Sit down.' Then he repeated it to the people a second time, and they kept quiet, but 'Ali stood up and said: 'I will, O Messenger of Allah.' He said: 'Sit down.' Then he repeated it to the people a third time, and they kept quiet but 'Ali (ﷺ) stood up and said: 'I will, O Messenger of Allah.' He said: 'Sit down, you are my brother.'"⁵⁷⁸

This hadith is false in terms of both its chain of narration and its text. As for its chain of narration, it includes 'Abdul-Ghaffâr ibn

al-Qāsim and Abdullah ibn 'Abdul-Quddoos. As for 'Abdul-Ghaffār ibn al-Qāsim, he is unreliable and his hadiths are rejected; he cannot be quoted as evidence. 'Ali ibn al-Madeeni said concerning him: "He fabricated hadith." Yahya ibn Ma'een said: "He is nothing."⁵⁷⁹ 'Abbās ibn Yahya narrated: "He is nothing." Bukhari said: "He is not strong according to them" — meaning the scholars who examined the soundness of narrators. Ibn Hibbān said concerning him: "He alters reports, and it is not permissible to quote him as evidence." He was rejected by Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal and Yahya ibn Ma'een. An-Nasā'i said: "His hadith is to be rejected."⁵⁸⁰ Abdullah ibn 'Abdul-Quddoos is no better than his predecessor; his hadith is to be rejected as well, according to the majority of hadith scholars. An-Nasā'i said: "He is not trustworthy." Ad-Dāraqūṭni said: "He is weak."⁵⁸¹

With regard to the text of the hadith, it is clearly false for a number of reasons, namely:

- 2.a. This report is contrary to another report, which the scholars of hadith are agreed is sound and proven. It was narrated by Bukhari and Muslim in their collections of sound hadiths from Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) that he said: "When the verse ﴿And warn your tribe [O Muhammad] of near kindred﴾ (*Qur'an* 26: 214) was revealed, the Prophet (ﷺ) ascended the hill of Ṣafā and started calling out: 'O Banu Fihir, O Banu 'Adiy,' calling the clans of Quraysh until they gathered. Those who could not come themselves sent their messengers to see what was there. Abu Lahab and other people from Quraysh came, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'If I told you that there was an army in this valley marching to attack you, would you believe me?' They said: 'Yes; we have never known you to be anything but truthful.' He said: 'I am a warner to you of impending severe punishment.' Abu Lahab said: 'May your hands perish for the rest of the day! Is it for this that you called us together?' Then it was revealed:

«Perish the two hands of Abu Lahab [an uncle of the Prophet] and perish he! His wealth and his children will not benefit him!»
(*Qur'an* 111: 1-2)⁵⁸²

- 2.b. The Twelver Shia always claim that there is a clear text stating that 'Ali (عليه السلام) should be the caliph, and that he is the rightfully appointed heir and the only one who deserved this position. They claim that the texts support one another to confirm that. However, this hadith proves their view to be flawed because in it, the Prophet (ﷺ) called these people to support him and said that whoever agreed to support him would become his brother, appointed heir and successor after he was gone. He did not single out 'Ali (عليه السلام) for that; in fact, he overlooked him three times, and only when he did not find any other supporter did he say to him what he said. This indicates that the Prophet (ﷺ) did not think that 'Ali (عليه السلام) deserved the position at first, but that he accepted him in the role because he had no other choice after his people refused. Is this in accordance with what they claim, that 'Ali (عليه السلام) was divinely appointed to this position?⁵⁸³

3. The hadith, "I am the city of knowledge, and 'Ali is its gate..." and other fabricated hadiths

There are very many fabricated hadiths of this type. Jâbir ibn Abdullah narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he said: "I am the city of knowledge, and 'Ali is its gate." This report is flawed, and it was rejected by Bukhari. Yahya ibn Ma'een said concerning it: "It has no basis." Ibn al-Jawzi quoted it in *al-Mawḍoo'ât* (*The Fabricated*). An-Nawawi and adh-Dhahabi said: "It is fabricated."⁵⁸⁴ Al-Albâni said: "The hadith, 'I am the city of knowledge, and 'Ali is its gate, so whoever desires knowledge let him come to the gate' is fabricated. It was narrated by al-'Aqeeli in *aḍ-Ḍu'afa'*, by Ibn 'Adiy in *al-Kâmil*, by aṭ-Ṭabarâni in *al-Kabeer* and by al-Ḥâkim from Ibn 'Abbâs. Ibn 'Adiy and al-Ḥâkim also narrated it from Jâbir (عليه السلام)."⁵⁸⁵

The same may be said of the hadith, “Whoever opposes ‘Ali’s caliphate is a disbeliever.” There is no trace of this whatsoever in the books of Ahl as-Sunnah.⁵⁸⁶ These examples highlight the weakness of the reports on which the Râfiḍis rely as evidence to prove that ‘Ali (عليه السلام) was singled out and exclusively appointed as caliph. Ibn Khaldoon supported this when he said that the texts quoted and narrated by the Râfiḍi Shia, which they interpret in ways that support their views, are not known to the prominent scholars of the Sunnah or narrators of hadith; most of them are fabricated or flawed in their chains of narration or have nothing to do with the interpretations given to them.⁵⁸⁷ What Ibn Ḥazm said, that all the hadiths to which the Râfiḍis adhere are fabricated, is something that anyone with the slightest knowledge of hadith and how the reports were narrated would know.⁵⁸⁸

The Shiite writer Ibn Abi al-Hadeed acknowledged the role of the Shia in fabricating hadiths to support their view regarding imamate. He said: “The original lies in the hadiths about the virtues (of ‘Ali) were all started by the Shia, because they initially fabricated different hadiths about ‘Ali, motivated by their grudges against their opponents. When the Bakris (meaning some of the Sunnis) saw what the Shia had done, they fabricated hadiths in favour of Abu Bakr, in response to these hadiths (about ‘Ali). Then when the Shia saw what the Bakris had done, they went to extremes in fabricating hadiths. The two parties need not have done all that, because there are proven, sound reports about the virtues of ‘Ali and the virtues of Abu Bakr, which are well established and known, which meant that there was no need for all of this extremism.”⁵⁸⁹

Despite the weakness of this evidence, we find that some of the contemporary Shia are still repeating it in their books and quoting it to prove their beliefs about imamate. One of them is of the view that the Messenger (ﷺ) would not have been regarded as having

conveyed the message if he did not appoint 'Ali to be the caliph after him.⁵⁹⁰ He says: "Allah spoke to the noble Messenger through revelation, telling him to convey what Allah had sent down to him with regard to who was to succeed him in running the people's affairs. Because of this instruction, he conveyed what he was commanded to do and he appointed Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali to be the caliph."⁵⁹¹ This view of theirs is contrary to the verses and hadiths they quote as evidence for imamate, because the implication of this view is that until the incident of Ghadeer Khumm, Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ) did not mention 'Ali (ﷺ) by name to be the Imam.

It is sufficient criticism of the Shias' imamate theory to note that they have no proof for it except the words of Abdullah ibn Saba'. He was the Jew who started spreading the idea that imamate was based on instructions from the Prophet (ﷺ) and was limited to the one mentioned by the revelation, and that if anyone else took charge of it, he should be disavowed and regarded as a disbeliever. The books of the Shia admit that Ibn Saba' was the first one to spread the idea that the imamate of 'Ali was obligatory and to express disavowal of his enemies, stand up to his opponents and regard them as disbelievers.⁵⁹² He was of Jewish origin and thought that Joshua (ﷺ) was the appointed heir of Moosa (ﷺ), so when he became Muslim, he applied this idea to 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ).⁵⁹³

3.4. Tawḥeed and the Twelver Shia

The Shia regard belief in the Imam as a foundation of their madh-hab and one of the pillars of their faith. In their view, the Imam is part of belief, and they attribute to one of their Imams the idea that whoever of this Ummah has no Imam to follow will go astray and be lost, and that if he dies in that state, he will have died a death of jāhiliyyah.⁵⁹⁴ That is because the Imam, according to the Shiite

concept, is something completely different from the caliph as all Muslims understand the concept. The Muslims regard the imam (leader) or caliph of the Muslims as an ordinary person with regard to his make-up and knowledge, and his role does not go beyond implementing the laws of Allah (ﷻ). It is possible for him to err or to deviate, as is possible for all other people, so he must be corrected and opposed if he goes against the command of Allah (ﷻ). Over and above that, the caliph is to be chosen and elected by the Muslim community on the basis of consultation.⁵⁹⁵

In contrast, the Shia believe that the Imams were lights before this universe came into being, and that they have authority over the universe in addition to their authority as rulers of the people. They attribute to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) a hadith, which they traced back to 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام).⁵⁹⁶ One of the contemporary Shiite imams says: "The fact that the Imam has the proven right to authority and rulership does not mean giving up his status that he has before Allah, and it does not make him like other rulers. The Imam has a high status, sublime position and universal authority whereby all the atoms of the universe are subject to that authority. One of the fundamentals of our madh-hab is that our Imams occupy a status that was not attained by any angel who is close to Allah or any Prophet who was sent. According to the reports and hadiths that we have, the greatest Messenger (ﷺ) and the Imams (عليهم السلام) were lights before this universe came into existence. Allah placed them surrounding His throne and bestowed upon them high status and closeness to Him that no one knows except Allah. Jibreel said, as is narrated in the reports of the Prophet's ascent to heaven: 'If I come one fingertip closer, I will be burned.' It was narrated from them (عليهم السلام) (that they said): 'We go through some states of being that no angel who is close to Allah, and no Prophet who was sent, ever went through.'"⁵⁹⁷

According to this concept of the Imam, his role is not limited to implementing the laws of Allah; he actually has dominion over the

affairs and events of the universe. In their view, 'Ali (عليه السلام) is the legitimate, dominant ruler with Sharia authority over the affairs of the land and the people. The angels submit to him, and the people are subjugated to him, even his enemies. They are subject to the truth when he stands and when he sits; when he speaks and when he is silent; when he delivers speeches, prays and fights.⁵⁹⁸ Because of this exaggeration, the Shiite belief in the Imams had an impact on their belief in the Oneness of Allah (tawḥeed), which may be explained as follows:

3.4.1. Their interpretation of the texts on tawḥeed as referring to the imamate (authority) of the Imams

The first thing that we find shocking is that they altered the meaning of the texts of the Qur'an, which enjoin worshipping Allah (الله) alone, to suggest believing in the imamate of 'Ali (عليه السلام) and the Imams, and they interpreted the texts which forbid associating partners with Allah (الله) as referring to partners in the authority of the Imams.

In *al-Kâfi*,⁵⁹⁹ which is the soundest of their books in narration; *Tafseer al-Qummi*,⁶⁰⁰ which is the foremost of their books of Qur'anic commentary; and other major reference works,⁶⁰¹ the interpretation of the verse ﴿And indeed it has been revealed to you [O Muhammad], as it was to those [Allah's Messengers] before you: 'If you join others in worship with Allah, [then] surely, [all] your deeds will be in vain...'﴾ (*Qur'an* 39: 65) is as follows:

"This means: if you associate someone else with him in imamate."⁶⁰² In another version, the meaning is: "If you enjoin the authority of someone else alongside the authority of 'Ali after you [O Muhammad], then all your deeds will be in vain."⁶⁰³ In his interpretation of the Qur'an, the author of *al-Burhân* quoted four

reports of theirs to explain the verse in accordance with the meanings mentioned above.⁶⁰⁴ With regard to the reason for its revelation, they said, "When Allah (ﷻ) revealed to His Prophet (ﷺ) that he should appoint 'Ali to be in charge of the people, Mu'adh ibn Jabal snuck in and said to him: 'Associate with his authority the first and the second (referring to Abu Bakr and 'Umar), so that people could accept what you say and believe you.' But when the verse: ﴿O Messenger [Muhammad]! Proclaim [the Message] which has been sent down to you from your Lord﴾ (*Qur'an* 5: 67) was revealed, the Messenger of Allah complained to Jibreel, saying: 'The people may disbelieve me and not accept anything from me.' Then Allah (ﷻ) revealed the words ﴿And indeed it has been revealed to you [O Muhammad], as it was to those [Allah's Messengers] before you: If you join others in worship with Allah, [then] surely, [all] your deeds will be in vain...﴾ (*Qur'an* 39: 65)"

In order to understand the extent of their distortion of the verses of Allah (ﷻ) and their conspiracy to change the verse, we should look at the verse in context to see what comes before and after it. Allah (ﷻ) said: ﴿Say [O Muhammad to the polytheists]: 'Do you order me to worship other than Allah, O you fools?' And indeed it has been revealed to you [O Muhammad], as it was to those [Allah's Messengers] before you: 'If you join others in worship with Allah, [then] surely, [all] your deeds will be in vain, and you will certainly be among the losers.' Nay! But worship Allah [Alone and none else], and be among the grateful.﴾ (*Qur'an* 39: 64-66)

The verse, as is clear from its context, has to do with worshipping Allah (ﷻ) alone, but they changed the meaning and regarded the verse as having to do with 'Ali (ﷺ), even though there is no mention of him in the verse at all. It is as if they regarded him as the one referred to by the word 'Allah' and they interpreted the word 'worship' as referring to imamate. In reality, the meaning of the verse

is quite clear, and there is not the slightest connection between its true meaning and their interpretation.⁶⁰⁵

The scholars said, commenting on the meaning of this verse, "Allah (ﷻ) commanded His Prophet to say this to the polytheists when they called him to their religion of idol worship, saying, 'This is the religion of your forefathers.'"⁶⁰⁶ What is meant is: "Say, O Muhammad, to the polytheists among your people: 'Are you commanding me to worship gods other than Allah, O you who are ignorant of Allah, when worship cannot be directed to anyone other than Him?'" Since the command to worship anyone other than Allah (ﷻ) can only come from one who is ignorant and foolish, He (ﷻ) gave them a befitting description when he said: ﴿O you fools!﴾ (Qur'an 39: 64) Then Allah (ﷻ) stated that He had revealed to His Prophet and to the Messengers before him: "If you associate anything or anyone else with Allah (ﷻ), your deeds will be in vain." This is to highlight the seriousness and abhorrent nature of polytheism; its seriousness is confirmed by the fact that the warning against it is addressed to one (namely, the Prophet) who would have nothing to do with it, so how about others? Then He (ﷻ) said: ﴿Nay! But worship Allah [Alone and none else]﴾ (Qur'an 39: 66). Do not worship what the polytheists tell you to worship; rather worship Allah (ﷻ) alone, to the exclusion of all other false gods and idols.⁶⁰⁷

As one can see, the meaning is very clear. No one could misinterpret it except one who has an ulterior motive, whose whims and desires have blinded him to the truth. The main concern of this group who fabricated these reports, and their only objective, was to find support for their claim of imamate in the Qur'an, even if that meant distorting the words of Allah (ﷻ). Thus they distorted the meaning a great deal, and their interpretation was not based on any knowledge of Arabic or reason, let alone any religious text. It is also clear from the report they narrated that they were showing disrespect towards the Prophet (ﷺ) by depicting him as being scared and afraid

of his people and hesitant in carrying out the instructions of his Lord, to the extent that he could not overcome this attitude until the revelation of a threat that all his deeds would be in vain.⁶⁰⁸

3.4.2. Their opinion that belief in the imamate is the basis of deeds being accepted

They said that Allah (ﷻ) appointed 'Ali (ﷺ) to be the Imam as a sign between Him and His creation: "The one who recognises it is a believer, and the one who rejects it is a disbeliever; the one who does not know it is astray, and the one who sets up any rival to him is a polytheist; the one who comes (on the Day of Judgement) believing in his imamate will enter paradise."⁶⁰⁹ They also said: "Whoever affirms our belief in imamate then dies, his prayer, fasting, zakâh and hajj will be accepted; but whoever does not affirm our belief in imamate before Allah (ﷻ), He will not accept any of his deeds."⁶¹⁰

They claim that Jibreel (ﷺ) came down to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: "O Muhammad, As-Salâm (a name of Allah that means The Source of Peace and Perfection) conveys salâm to you and says: 'I created the seven heavens and what is in them and the seven earths and what is on them, and I have not created any place greater than ar-Rukn (the corner of the Ka'bah) and Maqâm Ibrâheem. If any slave calls upon Me there, from the time I created the heavens and the earths, then he meets Me denying the imamate of 'Ali, I will throw him in hell.'"⁶¹¹

There are many similar reports; they are all false, and none of them is sound. All these reports have nothing to do with Islam at all. We have the Book of Allah (ﷻ), which is the final verdict and first reference point in any dispute; there is nothing of what they claim in it. The noble Qur'an states that the basic requirement with regard to deeds is tawḥeed, and the reason for doom is polytheism. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Verily, whosoever sets up partners [in worship] with Allah,

then Allah has forbidden paradise to him, and the fire will be his abode.﴾ (Qur'an 5: 72)

﴿Verily, Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him [in worship], but He forgives except that [anything else] to whom He wills.﴾ (Qur'an 4: 48)

Everything that we have mentioned here of the exaggerations of the Shia is proven false by the verses of the Qur'an. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Surely, those who believe [in the Oneness of Allah, in His Messenger Muhammad and all that was revealed to him from Allah], and those who are the Jews and the Sabians and the Christians, — whosoever believed in Allah and the Last Day, and worked righteousness, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.﴾ (Qur'an 5: 69)

The Shia claim that belief in the twelve Imams is more important than prayer and the other pillars of Islam, but prayer is mentioned in more than eighty places in the Qur'an, while their belief in imamate is not mentioned even once. Did Allah want to misguide His slaves? Did He not explain to them the way to reach Him? Glory be to You (O Allah)! This is a great lie.⁶¹²

﴿And Allah will never lead a people astray, after He has guided them, until He makes clear to them as to what they should avoid.﴾

(Qur'an 9: 115)

Among their reports are some that contradict what they said, but their misinterpretation and concept of taqiyyah led to the burying alive of these fair and moderate texts. We mention this so that the wise person may learn a lesson, the heedless person may pay attention, and the sleeper may wake up, and so as to establish proof against the stubborn from their own books and point out the contradictions in their own texts. It says in *Tafseer al-Furât* that 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (رضي الله عنه) said that he heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: "When the verse, ﴿Say [O Muhammad]: No reward do I ask of

you for this except to be kind to me for my kinship with you» (*Qur'an* 42: 23) was revealed, Jibreel said: 'O Muhammad, every religion has a root and foundation, and branches and a structure. The root and foundation of this religion is saying *Lâ ilâha illâ Allâh* (There is none worthy of worship other than Allah), and its branches and structure are loving you, loving Ahl al-Bayt, and supporting you in what is in accordance with the truth and calling others to it.'"⁶¹³

This text differs from what their other reports say; it describes tawh  d, not belief in the imamate, as the basis of religion. It regards loving Ahl al-Bayt as one of the branches, which is limited to those among them who follow the truth and call others to it.⁶¹⁴

3.4.3. Their belief that the Imams are the intermediaries between Allah (ﷻ) and His creation

The Imami Shia believe that the twelve Imams are the intermediaries between Allah and His creation. Al-Majlisi says of his Imams: "They are the doors to the Lord and the intermediaries between Him and His creation."⁶¹⁵ He wrote a chapter entitled: "The people can only be guided through them; they are the intermediaries between mankind and Allah (ﷻ), and no one will enter paradise except the one who acknowledges them." In *'Aq  'id al-Imamiyyah*, it says that the twelve Imams are doors to Allah (ﷻ) and the way to Him; they are like the ship of Nooh (  ) in that whoever embarks on it will be saved, and whoever stays away from it will drown.⁶¹⁶ Some of the issues that are to be found in their books and reference works, which emphasise these concepts, include the following:

3.4.3.a. Their belief that people have no guidance except through the Imams

Abu Abdullah, according to their claim, said: "The trouble we have with people is serious. If we call them, they do not respond to us, but if we leave them, they will not be guided by others."⁶¹⁷ Their

reports say: "Abu Ja'far said: 'By means of us, Allah is worshipped; by means of us, Allah is known; and by means of us, His Oneness is proclaimed.'"⁶¹⁸

These texts do not say that the Ummah cannot be guided, but they make the Imams the source of guidance. In fact, guidance in the sense of being enabled to know and accept the truth is something that no one has control over except the Lord of mankind, the Controller of the hearts and minds, the One who comes in between a person and his heart,⁶¹⁹ the One Who says to a thing, "Be!" and it is.

The Shia, by stating these things in general terms without any restrictions, give their Imams a role alongside Allah with regard to the issue of guidance, but Allah (ﷻ) is the only One who guides people, with no partner or associate.⁶²⁰ Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿He whom Allah guides, he is the rightly-guided; but he whom He sends astray, for him you will find no Wali [guiding friend] to lead him [to the Right Path]﴾ (*Qur'an* 18: 17). Allah (ﷻ) said to His Prophet (ﷺ): ﴿Verily, you [O Muhammad] guide not whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills.﴾ (*Qur'an* 28: 56)

With regard to guidance in the sense of telling people about the truth and showing them the way to it, this is the role of the Messengers and those who followed them in truth, and it is not limited to the twelve Imams. ﴿Say [O Muhammad]: 'This is my way; I invite unto Allah with sure knowledge, I and whosoever follows me'﴾ (*Qur'an* 12: 108). Saying that this guidance can only be achieved through the Imams is insolence towards Allah (ﷻ).⁶²¹

3.4.3.b. Their belief that supplication cannot be answered except in the names of the Imams

They said that the one whose supplication is not in the name of the Imams will not prosper and will be doomed. It says in their report from the Imams: "The one who calls upon Allah in our name will

prosper, and the one who calls upon Him in the name of anyone other than us is doomed and destroyed.”⁶²² Their audacity in that regard went so far that they said: “The supplication of the Prophets was answered by means of the names of the Imams and seeking their intercession, may the blessings of Allah be upon them all.”⁶²³

This is what the Râfiḍi Shia say and fabricate, but Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And [all] the most beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call on Him by them﴾ (*Qur'an* 7: 180). He does not say to call upon Him by the names of the Imams or the status of the Imams or their shrines. Allah (ﷻ) also says:

﴿And your Lord said: 'Invoke Me [i.e. believe in My Oneness (Islamic Monotheism) and ask Me for anything]; I will respond to your [invocation]...'﴾ (*Qur'an* 40: 60)

If the condition for supplication being accepted was mentioning the names of the Imams, Allah (ﷻ) would have said: “Invoke Me by the names of the Imams; I will respond to your (invocation).” Instead, what the Shia claim and fabricate is actually one of the causes for supplications being rejected and not accepted, because devoting worship purely to Him alone when calling upon Him in supplication is the means of having the supplication answered and accepted. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿So, call you [O Muhammad and the believers] upon [or invoke] Allah making [your] worship pure for Him [Alone] [by worshipping none but Him and by doing religious deeds sincerely for Allah's sake only and not to show off and not to set up rivals with Him in worship], however much the disbelievers [in the Oneness of Allah] may hate [it].﴾ (*Qur'an* 40: 14)

﴿And invoke Him only making your religion sincere to Him [by not joining in worship any partner with Him and with the intention that you are doing your deeds for Allah's sake only].﴾ (*Qur'an* 7: 29)

These Imams are just like other humans: ﴿Verily, those whom you call upon besides Allah are slaves like you. So call upon them and let them answer you if you are truthful.﴾ (Qur'an 7: 194)

Allah (ﷻ) has not appointed any righteous man, angel who is close to Him, or Prophet who was sent, to be a mediator between Him and His creation; all are slaves of Allah (ﷻ): ﴿The Messiah will never be proud to reject to be a slave of Allah, nor the angels who are near [to Allah].﴾ (Qur'an 4: 172)

﴿There is none in the heavens and the earth but comes unto the Most Gracious [Allah] as a slave.﴾ (Qur'an 19: 93)

As for the contention that the supplication of the Prophets was answered by beseeching in the names of the Imams, this is a false claim. The Prophets called upon Allah by His name, affirming His Oneness, may He be glorified. The prophet Ayyoob (ﷺ) beseeched Allah by His beautiful names, affirming that He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy:

﴿And [remember] Ayyoob [Job], when he cried to his Lord: 'Verily, distress has seized me, and You are the Most Merciful of all those who show mercy.' So We answered his call, and We removed the distress that was on him, and We restored his family to him [that he had lost] and the like thereof along with them as a mercy from Ourselves and a Reminder for all those who worship Us.﴾

(Qur'an 21: 83-84)

Yoonus (Dhun-Noon) (ﷺ) beseeched Allah by His Oneness. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And [remember] Dhun-Noon [Jonah], when he went off in anger, and imagined that We shall not punish him [i.e. the calamities which had befallen him]! But he cried through the darkness [saying]: *Lâ ilâhâ illâ Anta* [none has the right to be worshipped but You (O Allah)], Glorified [and Exalted] be You [above all that (evil) they

associate with You! Truly, I have been of the wrongdoers.” So We answered his call, and delivered him from the distress. And thus We do deliver the believers [who believe in the Oneness of Allah, abstain from evil and work righteousness]. ﴿﴾ (Qur'an 21: 87-88)

Allah (ﷻ) described the words spoken by Adam (ﷺ) and his wife: ﴿They said: ‘Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You forgive us not, and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be of the losers.﴾ (Qur'an 7: 23)

This idea of the Shia is known to be corrupt on the basis of Islamic teachings. The books of the Shia themselves narrate reports from the Imams that contradict this idea; they describe the Imams conversing with Allah (ﷻ) and calling upon Him. They narrated many reports, from every Imam without exception, describing how he called upon Allah (ﷻ) and conversed with Him. Most of these reports are narrated by al-Majlisi in *Bihār al-Anwār*.⁶²⁴

3.4.3.c. Their belief that pilgrimage to their shrines is greater than pilgrimage to the House of Allah (ﷻ)

Ibn Taymiyah said: “Some people that I trust told me that among them are those who believe that pilgrimage to the shrines is greater than pilgrimage to the Ancient House (the Ka‘bah), thus they think that associating others with Allah is greater than worshipping Allah alone. This is the greatest belief in falsehood.”⁶²⁵

It says in *al-Kāfi* and elsewhere: “Visiting the grave of al-Ḥusayn is equivalent to twenty hajj pilgrimages and better than twenty ‘umrahs and hajj pilgrimages.”⁶²⁶ The fabricated Shiite reports ascribe a special virtue to visiting the tomb of al-Ḥusayn on the day of ‘Arafah and say, “Whoever comes to al-Ḥusayn on a day other than Eid, recognising his status, Allah will record for him twenty hajj pilgrimages and twenty ‘umrahs, blessed and accepted.

Whoever comes to him on the day of Eid, Allah will record for him twenty hajj pilgrimages and one hundred 'umrahs. Whoever comes to him on the day of 'Arafah, recognising his status, Allah will record for him one thousand hajj pilgrimages and one thousand 'umrahs, blessed and accepted, and one thousand campaigns with a Prophet who was sent or a just ruler."⁶²⁷ For these people, visiting the grave of al-Ḥusayn is not only better than hajj; it is the best of deeds. In their report, it says that visiting the grave of al-Ḥusayn is the best possible deed.⁶²⁸ According to another report, "One of the most beloved of deeds is visiting the grave of al-Ḥusayn."⁶²⁹

Thus the laws and commandments of Islam are forgotten, and attention is paid to graves and tombs. They consider visits to these places the best of deeds, without any evidence apart from whatever their imaginations come up with or what is inspired from their satans, who have instituted for them a religion which Allah (ﷻ) has not ordained.⁶³⁰

These people regard visiting the tombs as one of the obligatory duties of their religion, for which they have invented rituals like those of the hajj pilgrimage to the Sacred House of Allah. Ibn Taymiyah said: "Their Shaykh Ibn an-Nu'mân, who is known to them as al-Mufeed, wrote a book which he called *Manâsik al-Mashâhid* (*The Rituals of the Shrines*). According to it, pilgrimage is performed at the graves of created beings as it is performed at the Ka'bah, the Sacred House that Allah has made an asylum of security and benefits (such as hajj and 'umrah) for mankind⁶³¹ and the first House (of worship) appointed for mankind;⁶³² no circumambulation is to be performed except around it, no prayers are to be offered in any direction except towards it, and no pilgrimage is enjoined except to it."⁶³³ Anyone who looks at the references of the Râfiḍi Shia that speak of the shrines will see very strange deviations from the Book of Allah and the guidance of the Messenger (ﷺ). Anyone who wishes to

know more may refer to the book *Uṣool Madh-hab ash-Shia al-Imamiyyah*.⁶³⁴

The Muslims have one Ka'bah, which they face in their prayers and supplications, to which they go on pilgrimage and around which they circumambulate (perform ṭawâf); as for the Shia, they have the shrines of the dead Imams.⁶³⁵ What they do at these shrines has been forbidden by Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger, and everything that is forbidden by Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger is blameworthy and disallowed, whether the one who does it claims to be Sunni or Shiite. It is well known in the religion of Islam that the Prophet (ﷺ) did not enjoin the actions that they speak of with regard to shrines, and he did not prescribe for his Ummah any rituals to be performed at the graves of prophets and righteous people. That is the religion of the polytheists, of whom Allah (ﷻ) says: *And they have said: 'You shall not leave your gods, nor shall you leave Wadd, nor Suwâ', nor Yaghooth, nor Ya'ooq nor Nasr' [these are the names of their idols].'* (Qur'an 71: 23)

Ibn 'Abbâs and others said about those idols: "These are the names of righteous men among the people of Nooh (ﷺ). When they died, Satan inspired their people to set up idols in the places where they used to sit and to call them by their names. They did that, but the idols were not worshipped until those people died and knowledge was lost, then they were worshipped."⁶³⁶ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) said to Abu al-Hayâj al-Asadi: "Shall I not send you on the same mission as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent me? 'Do not leave any image without erasing it or any built-up grave without levelling it.'"⁶³⁷ Some of the Shiite reports affirmed the same meaning. Al-Kulayni narrated from Abu Abdullah that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent me to Madinah and said: 'Do not leave any image without erasing it or any grave without levelling it.'"⁶³⁸ It was narrated that Abu Abdullah

said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) forbade praying on graves, sitting on them, or building structures over them."⁶³⁹ It was also narrated that Abu Abdullah said: "Do not build structures over graves... for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) disliked that."⁶⁴⁰ It was narrated from his forefathers that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) forbade plastering over graves.⁶⁴¹

Al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmili claimed that this prohibition included every grave except the graves of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Imams (عليه السلام), and that the prohibition meant only that it was disliked.⁶⁴² However, the general meaning of these reports is clear, as is the evidence for its being ḥarām. Al-ʿĀmili has no evidence for his contention except the strangeness of the real-life practice of his group and the oddness of some of their reports. This oddness itself is proof of invalidity because it is contrary to the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger and the consensus of the Ummah, including Ahl al-Bayt. A warning against this was narrated from Ahl al-Bayt, because it is a means that leads to associating others with Allah. Moreover, the reason for this prohibition does not differentiate between one grave and another; in fact, the danger is greater with regard to the graves of the Imams because the likelihood of people going to extremes with regard to them is greater. Hence the cause of polytheism is exaggerating about the righteous.⁶⁴³

3.4.4. Their belief that the Imam forbids what he wants and allows what he wants

The Shia claim in their reports that: "Allah (ﷻ) created Muhammad, 'Ali and Fâtimah, and they remained for a thousand years, then He (ﷻ) created all other things and made these three witnesses to their creation. He (ﷻ) enjoined His creation to be obedient to them and delegated the affairs of creation to them, so they permit what they want and forbid what they want."⁶⁴⁴ Their shaykh

al-Majlisi interpreted this text as follows: "He enjoined (His creation) to be obedient to them; in other words, He made it obligatory and a duty for all things to obey them, even inanimate things such as the heavens and the earth, like the splitting of the moon, trees moving towards them, pebbles glorifying Allah (ﷻ) and innumerable other things. He delegated their affairs to them with regard to what is permitted and what is forbidden, what is given and what is withheld."⁶⁴⁵ The Shia have reports that clearly state this, including those narrated by al-Mufeed in *al-Ikhtişâs*, al-Majlisi in *al-Bihâr* and others, from Abu Ja'far who said: "If we permit something gained by someone from the wrongdoers,⁶⁴⁶ it is *halâl*, because the Imams are given authority." Therefore, what they permit is permitted, and what they forbid is forbidden.⁶⁴⁷

However, it is well known from the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ) that one of the foundations of *tawhîd* is the belief that Allah (ﷻ) alone is the Lawgiver Who permits what He wills and forbids what He wills, and He has no partner or associate in that. The Messengers of Allah conveyed the laws of Allah to His slaves, and the one who claims that he has an Imam who permits what he wants and forbids what he wants is included in the words of Allah: ﴿Or have they partners with Allah [false gods] who have instituted for them a religion which Allah has not ordained?﴾ (*Qur'an* 42: 21)

The right to legislate does not belong to anyone except the Lord of mankind, and the role of the Messengers is only to convey from Allah (ﷻ); they do not forbid or permit anything except what Allah (ﷻ) enjoins upon them and reveals to them. Allah (ﷻ) says, concerning the one who follows his leaders in what they permit and forbid, as opposed to the laws and rulings of Allah: ﴿They [Jews and Christians] took their rabbis and their monks to be their lords besides Allah [by obeying them in things which they made lawful or

unlawful according to their own desires without being ordered by Allah]...» (*Qur'an* 9: 31) Allah (ﷻ) describes their following them in what they permit of ḥarām things and what they forbid of ḥalāl things [as is mentioned in the commentary on this verse] as being a kind of worship of them because the followers received instruction on what is permitted and what is forbidden on their authority, but this is something that can only be received from Allah (ﷻ).⁶⁴⁸

3.4.5. Their belief that this world and the hereafter are for the Imam to deal with as he wants

The author of *al-Kâfi* devoted a chapter to this topic entitled "The entire earth belongs to the Imam,"⁶⁴⁹ in which it is narrated from Abu Buṣayr that Abu Abdullah (ﷺ) said: "Do you not know that this world belongs to the Imam, to deal with as he wishes and to give to whom he wishes? That is allowed for him by Allah."⁶⁵⁰

This text is polytheism, associating partners with Allah in His Lordship, because Allah (ﷻ) says: «Know you not that it is Allah to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth?» (*Qur'an* 2: 107)

«And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them; and to Him is the return [of all]»
(*Qur'an* 5: 18)

«To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and all that is therein»
(*Qur'an* 5: 120)

«He to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and Who has begotten no son [children or offspring] and for Whom there is no partner in the dominion.»
(*Qur'an* 25: 2)

«But to Allah belongs the last [hereafter] and the first [the world].»
(*Qur'an* 53: 25)

«Say [O Muhammad to polytheists, pagans]: Who gives you provision from the heavens and the earth?» (Qur'an 34: 24)

«So seek your provision from Allah [Alone], and worship Him [Alone], and be grateful to Him.» (Qur'an 29: 17)

So Allah is unique in His dominion, provision and control, and He has no partner in that.⁶⁵¹

3.4.6. Their belief that natural phenomena can be attributed to the Imams

It was narrated that Samâ'ah ibn Mahrân said: "I was with Abu Abdullah, and there was thunder and lightning. Abu Abdullah said: 'Whatever happens of thunder and lightning, it is because of the command of your companion.' I said: 'Who is our companion?' He said: 'Amir al-Mu'mineen.'"⁶⁵² What he meant was that every time there is thunder and lightning, it is by the command of 'Ali (عليه السلام), not by the command of Allah (الله), the One, the Almighty. What could a fair-minded Muslim conclude from this report, when Allah (الله) says: «It is He Who shows you the lightning, as a fear [for travellers] and as a hope [for those who wait for rain]. And it is He Who brings up [or originates] the clouds, heavy [with water]» (Qur'an 13: 12)? Is this not Saba'i thought raising its ugly head in the books of the Twelvers? Is this not a claim of divinity for 'Ali (عليه السلام), or at least a claim that he has a share in divinity? How dare al-Majlisi, and al-Mufeed before him, write such myths and attribute them to Ja'far?

The implications of this report cannot be unknown to people like them, because no one believes in this or promotes it except a heretic and one who has gone astray. It is very strange that people base their religion on books which contain this garbage and venerate shaykhs who openly preach this heresy. Is there no one among this group who has reason and piety and who will denounce openly and

loudly all this widespread misguidance and blatant disbelief, clear the name of the pure Ahl al-Bayt of this lethal nonsense, and purify Shiism of this stain of disbelief and misguidance caused by the shaykhs of the Safavid state? Or is it the case that whenever a sincere voice speaks up, they either hasten to kill him, as they did with al-Kisrawi, or they interpret his words as being taqiyyah, as they did with many of their reports and words of their shaykhs? Is it now a hopeless case to call the people of this madh-hab to the light of truth?⁶⁵³

3.4.7. Their belief that part of the divine is incarnated in the Imams

The Imami Shia have some reports claiming that part of the divine light was incarnated in 'Ali.⁶⁵⁴ Abu Abdullah supposedly said: "Then he touched us with his right hand, and his light entered us,⁶⁵⁵ but Allah mixed us with His Essence."⁶⁵⁶ They claim that the Imams were given absolute power by means of this part of the divine that is in them. The one who reads about what they call 'the miracles of the Imams,' of which there are hundreds of reports, will notice that the Imams became like the Lord of the Worlds — may He be exalted and sanctified above what they say — in terms of giving life and death, creation and granting provision.⁶⁵⁷ Their reports may add a comment stating that this was from Allah (ﷻ), by way of deceit. To prove that this idea is corrupt, it is sufficient just to try to comprehend it because it is contrary to the texts, to reason and to the natural laws of the universe. It can also be proven wrong by the real lives and statements of the Imams. For one thing, the Shia claim that the Imams were wronged and persecuted during their lives. For another, the Messenger of guidance (ﷺ) said, as his Lord commanded him: ﴿Say [O Muhammad]: 'I possess no power over benefit or hurt to myself except as Allah wills.'﴾ (*Qur'an* 7: 188)

What is amazing is that the books of the Shia, even though they exaggerate about the Imams, also narrate things that are contrary, which illustrates the contradictions in what they preach, as is the norm in all lies and falsehood. In *Rijâl al-Kashshi*, it says that Ja'far ibn Muhammad said: "By Allah, we are no more than slaves of the One who created us and chose us, and we cannot cause any harm or bring any benefit. If He shows mercy towards us, it is because He is Merciful, and if He punishes us, it is because of our sins. By Allah, we have no plea before Allah, and we have no proof that Allah will let us off. We will die and be buried and be resurrected; we will be made to stand before Him, and we will be questioned. Woe to them, what is wrong with them? May Allah curse them, for they have offended Allah (ﷻ) and offended His Messenger (ﷺ) in his grave, as well as Amir al-Mu'mineen ['Ali], Fâtimah, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn, 'Ali ibn al-Ḥasan and Muhammad ibn 'Ali (may the blessings of Allah be upon them). Bear witness that I am a man descended from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), but I have no proof that Allah will let me off. If I obey Him, He will have mercy on me and if I disobey Him, He will punish me severely."⁶⁵⁸

The Shi'ite shaykhs rationalise such statements by describing them as examples of taqiyyah. They have led people astray from the straight path, and the Shi'ite madh-hab has become the madh-hab of the shaykhs (mullahs), not the madh-hab of the Imams.⁶⁵⁹

3.4.8. Their belief that the Imams know what has happened and what will happen, and that nothing is hidden from them

The author of *al-Kâfi* wrote a chapter on this topic entitled: "The Imams know what has happened and what will happen, and nothing is hidden from them,"⁶⁶⁰ in which he narrated a number of reports. He wrote another chapter entitled "If the Imams want to

know, they will know,"⁶⁶¹ in which he quoted a number of their hadiths. One of the reports concerning these matters falsely claims:⁶⁶² "Abu Abdullah said: 'I know what is in the heavens and what is on earth, I know what is in paradise and what is in hell, and I know what has happened and what will happen.'"⁶⁶³ It was narrated that Sayf at-Tammâr said: "A group of Shia were with Abu Abdullah (عليه السلام) in al-Hijr, and he said: 'Is there any spy among us?' We looked right and left and did not see anyone, so we said: 'There is no one watching us.' He said: 'By the Lord of the Ka'bah' — three times — 'if I were standing between Moosa and al-Khiḍr, I would tell them that I have more knowledge than them, and I would tell them about that of which they had no knowledge, for Moosa and al-Khiḍr (peace be upon them) were given knowledge of what had happened, but they were not given knowledge of what is to come until the Hour begins. However, we inherited a legacy from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and his family.'"⁶⁶⁴

These are some examples of the exaggeration of the Râfiḍi Shia and some of their reports. Exaggeration is the foundation and origin of their madh-hab, but Allah (ﷻ) has forbidden and warned against exaggeration because it is contrary to tawḥeed and forms the basis of polytheism, in the past and the present. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Exceed not the limits in your religion [by believing in something] other than the truth﴾ (*Qur'an* 5: 77). Ibn Katheer said, commenting on this verse: "[This means] do not overstep the mark in following the truth. Do not exaggerate in praising the one whom I instruct you to respect, to the extent that you go to extremes and elevate him from prophethood to divinity as they did with the Messiah; he was one of the Prophets, but they made him a god alongside Allah (ﷻ). That happened because of following in the footsteps of leaders and shaykhs who are leaders of misguidance, your predecessors who went astray before you. ﴿[They] went astray before and misled many, and strayed [themselves] from the Right Path﴾ (*Qur'an* 5: 77). In other

words, they drifted away from the path of righteousness and moderation and followed the way of whims and desires and misguidance.”⁶⁶⁵

Allah (ﷻ) also says: ﴿O people of the Scripture [Christians]! Do not exceed the limits in your religion, nor say of Allah aught but the truth﴾ (*Qur'an* 4: 171). In these two verses, Allah (ﷻ) forbids going to extremes and going beyond due limits by overstating praise. This is a clear refutation of the Râfîdî Shia and all those who follow this path with regard to one whom they venerate. Allah (ﷻ) instructed His Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) to explain to the people that he had no control over his affairs, that benefit and harm are in the hand of Allah (ﷻ), and that no one has knowledge of the unseen except Allah (ﷻ), Who instructed him:

﴿Say [O Muhammad]: ‘I don’t tell you that with me are the treasures of Allah, nor [that] I know the Unseen; nor do I tell you that I am an angel. I but follow what is revealed to me.’ Say: ‘Are the blind and the one who sees equal? Will you not then take thought?’﴾ (*Qur'an* 6: 50)

﴿Say [O Muhammad]: ‘I possess no power over benefit or hurt to myself except as Allah wills. If I had the knowledge of the *Ghayb* [Unseen], I should have secured for myself an abundance of wealth, and no evil should have touched me. I am but a warner and a bringer of glad tidings unto people who believe.’﴾ (*Qur'an* 7: 188)

Thus Allah (ﷻ) commanded him to delegate his affairs to Him (ﷻ) and to tell the people that he had no knowledge of the unseen, the future or anything of that nature.⁶⁶⁶ All of this deters the ways that may lead to exaggeration about him (ﷺ). It is a warning to his Ummah lest they exaggerate about him as the Jews and Christians exaggerated about their Prophets. If this is the case with regard to the leader of mankind and the greatest in status before Allah (ﷻ), it is even more appropriate with regard to others.

This highlights the falseness of the Râfiḍī claims about the Imams and especially their belief that they have knowledge of the unseen and that they know what has happened and what will happen. They make them partners with Allah in creation and giving life, and in names and attributes. How can they say that when Allah (ﷻ) says in His noble Book: «No person knows what he will earn tomorrow, and no person knows in what land he will die.» (*Qur'an* 31: 34)

«On the Day when Allah will gather the Messengers together and say to them: 'What was the response you received [from men to your teaching]?' They will say: 'We have no knowledge, verily, only You are the All-Knower of all that is hidden [or unseen]» (*Qur'an* 5: 109)

«Allah knows what every female bears, and by how much the wombs fall short [of their time or number] or exceed.» (*Qur'an* 13: 8)

«That is because Allah, He is the Truth, and it is He Who gives life to the dead.» (*Qur'an* 22: 6)

«And with Him are the keys of the *Ghayb* [all that is hidden], none knows them but He.» (*Qur'an* 6: 59)

«And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and Allah has power over all things.» (*Qur'an* 3: 189)

«Blessed be He in Whose Hand is the dominion; and He is Able to do all things.» (*Qur'an* 67: 1)

There are other similar verses confirming that He alone has knowledge of the unseen and control over the universe. Whoever attributes any of that to created beings has fallen into polytheism by setting up rivals to Allah (ﷻ) in His Lordship and Divinity. How can he claim to be a Muslim when that is the case? Allah (ﷻ) says: «Verily, Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him [in worship], but He forgives except that [anything else] to whom He wills.» (*Qur'an* 4: 48)

﴿Verily, whosoever sets up partners [in worship] with Allah, then Allah has forbidden paradise to him, and the fire will be his abode. And for the Dhâlimoon [polytheists and wrongdoers] there are no helpers.﴾ (Qur'an 5: 72)

That is because Allah (ﷻ) created mankind to worship Him and to affirm His Oneness, as He says: ﴿And I [Allah] created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me [Alone].﴾ (Qur'an 51: 56)

He (ﷻ) also sent the Messengers and revealed the Books so that He alone might be worshipped. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And verily, We have sent among every *Ummah* [community, nation] a Messenger [proclaiming]: 'Worship Allah [Alone], and avoid [or keep away from] *Tâghoot* [all false deities, i.e. do not worship *Tâghoot* besides Allah].'﴾ (Qur'an 16: 36)

So exaggeration is contrary to the true concept of worship.⁶⁶⁷ Just as Allah (ﷻ) warned against exaggeration in all forms, the Prophet (ﷺ) also warned against it so as to protect tawḥeed, or belief in the Oneness of Allah, and to block all means that lead to the undermining of tawḥeed because exaggeration leads to polytheism, and it never spreads in a nation without causing its doom. The Prophet (ﷺ) warned his Ummah against this disease: "O people, beware of exaggeration in religious matters, for those who came before you were doomed because of exaggeration in religious matters."⁶⁶⁸ It was narrated from Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) that he heard 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) say on the minbar: "I heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say: 'Do not praise me as the Christians praised the son of Maryam. I am no more than a slave, so say "the slave of Allah and His Messenger"'.⁶⁶⁹ The Prophet (ﷺ) warned his Ummah against exaggerating and overstepping the mark in praising him as the Christians did with regard to 'Eesa (عليه السلام). He (ﷺ) instructed that he should be described as a slave as Allah described him: ﴿Glorified be He [Allah] Who took

His slave [Muhammad] for a journey by night (Qur'an 17: 1). Allah (ﷻ) described him in this manner in the context of calling [the jinn] to Him: (And when the slave of Allah [Muhammad] stood up invoking Him [his Lord — Allah] in prayer they [the jinn] just made round him a dense crowd as if sticking one over the other [in order to listen to the Prophet's recitation]) (Qur'an 72: 19). He also described him this way in the context of sending down the Book to him and the descent of the Angel to him. Allah (ﷻ) says: (Blessed be He Who sent down the criterion [of right and wrong, i.e. this Qur'an] to His slave [Muhammad]) (Qur'an 25: 1). These three scenarios reflect the highest status, but his Lord (ﷻ) described him in each case as His slave. Where do the Râfiḍi Shia stand with regard to these verses and hadiths that forbid and warn against going to extremes and that call for attaining true servitude to Allah?

Those who study the words of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali and his sons (may Allah be pleased with them) will find the clearest refutation of this extremism and exaggeration and will see that they have nothing to do with the views of the Râfiḍi Shia and all those who exaggerated about them. They will also see that those reports that are attributed to them are lies and misguidance.⁶⁷⁰ Imam Muslim narrated in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* that Abu at-Tufayl 'Âmir ibn Wâthilah (رضي الله عنه) said: "I was with 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib when a man came to him and said: 'What did the Prophet (ﷺ) tell you in secret?' He got angry and said: 'The Prophet (ﷺ) did not tell me anything in secret that he hid from the people, but he told me four things.' The man said: 'What are they, O Amir al-Mu'mineen?' 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'May Allah curse the one who curses his father, may Allah curse the one who offers a sacrifice to anything other than Allah, may Allah curse the one who gives refuge to an innovator, and may Allah curse the one who changes the boundary markers.'" According to another report, the man said: "Did the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) tell you anything that was for you only?" 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) replied: "The

Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not tell us anything that was for us only.”⁶⁷¹

According to a report narrated by Imam Aḥmad, ‘Ali said: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not tell me anything in exclusion to other people.”⁶⁷² Bukhari narrated in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* that Abu Juḥayfah (رضي الله عنه) said: “I said to ‘Ali: ‘Do you have a document?’ He said: ‘No, except the Book of Allah or subtle understanding that a Muslim man may be given, or what is in this document.’ I said: ‘What is in this document?’ He said: ‘Compensation for death or injury, and ransom of captives, and that no Muslim should be killed in retaliation for a non-Muslim.’”⁶⁷³ According to another report, ‘Ali was asked: “Do you have anything of the revelation apart from the Book of Allah?” He said: “No, by the One Who split the seed and created the soul, I do not know of anything except understanding that Allah may bestow upon some.”⁶⁷⁴

Ibn Ḥajar said: “Abu Juḥayfah only asked him about that because some of the Shia were claiming that Ahl al-Bayt — and especially ‘Ali — knew some things that had been revealed that the Prophet (ﷺ) had told only to them and not to anyone else.”⁶⁷⁵ Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said, after quoting this hadith: “The documents that are attributed to ‘Ali or others of Ahl al-Bayt in reports that speak of the future are all lies, such as the document *al-Jifr wal-Biṭāqah* and others. The same applies to the claim that ‘Ali had knowledge that the Prophet (ﷺ) taught to him only, to the exclusion of the other Companions, and to the reports narrated from other Companions saying that the Prophet (ﷺ) singled him out for teaching esoteric, hidden knowledge of Islam. All of that is false.”⁶⁷⁶

What proves the falseness of these claims is the report narrated by Ibn Sa’d from ‘Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn Zayn al-‘Ābideen, who said about Sa‘eed ibn Jubayr (رضي الله عنه): “This man used to come to us, and we would ask him about the shares of inheritance and other things by

means of which Allah (ﷻ) would benefit us. We do not have what these people say we do — and he pointed towards Iraq.”⁶⁷⁷ It was also narrated that Muhammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah warned the Râfiḍī Shia about what they were attributing to him of having special knowledge that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had taught only to Ahl al-Bayt. He said: “By Allah, we did not inherit anything from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) except what is between the two covers (meaning the Qur'an).”⁶⁷⁸

It is narrated in mutawâtir reports from Ahl al-Bayt that they used to say to their supporters: “O people, love us in accordance with the teachings of Islam, because the way you love us has gone so far that it shames us.”⁶⁷⁹ Moreover, in the books of the Râfiḍī Shia themselves, there is a warning against going to extremes and a rejection of that by Ahl al-Bayt. Al-Majlisi narrated, with his chain of narration from ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (عليه السلام), that ‘Ali said: “Beware of exaggerating about us; say that we are slaves under the dominion of our Lord.”⁶⁸⁰ It was also narrated from ‘Ali (عليه السلام) that he said: “O Allah, I renounce those who exaggerate about me just as ‘Eesa ibn Maryam renounced the Christians. O Allah, humiliate them forever and do not support any of them.”⁶⁸¹

Al-Kulayni narrated, with his chain of narration from Sadeed, that he said: “Abu Buṣayr, Yahya al-Bazzâr, Dâwood ibn Katheer and I were in the gathering of Abu Abdullah when he came out to us in a state of anger. When he took his place in the gathering, he said: ‘I am astounded by people who claim that we have knowledge of the unseen. No one has knowledge of the unseen except Allah (ﷻ). I wanted to hit my slave woman, so-and-so; she ran away, and I did not know in which room of the house she was.’”⁶⁸² Al-Kashshi narrated that Abu Buṣayr said: “I said to Abu Abdullah (عليه السلام): ‘They are saying...’ He said: ‘What are they saying?’ I said: ‘They are saying that you know the raindrops, the number of the stars, the leaves on

the trees, the weight of what is in the sea and the number of particles of soil.' He raised his hand towards the sky and said: 'Glory be to Allah. No, by Allah, no one knows that except Allah.'"⁶⁸³

These are the words of the pure Imams of Ahl al-Bayt, as stated in the books of the Râfiḍi Shia themselves; they are innocent of what the Râfiḍi Shia claim, because the Râfiḍis are among the most untruthful of Allah's creation. Hypocrisy and telling lies are part of their religion. Ibn Taymiyah said that they are among the most mendacious of people with regard to transmitting reports and among the most ignorant of people with regard to reason.⁶⁸⁴

Thus the Shia are exposed by their own reports, which contradict one another. The reports in which the Imams say that they are the source of provision and rain and so on, which are narrated by the shaykhs of the Twelvers, are left over from the extreme Shias whose views the Imams themselves denounced. According to their reports: "When it was said to Abu Abdullah: 'Al-Mufaḍḍal ibn 'Umar is saying that you determine people's provision,' Abu Abdullah said: 'By Allah, no one determines our provision except Allah. I needed food for my family, and I was worried; I thought about it so much that it dominated my thoughts until I managed to earn some food for them, then I was able to relax. May Allah curse and disavow the one who says that.'"⁶⁸⁵

Nonetheless, these reports are like a white hair on a black bull. Taqiyyah may be used to interpret any report when the Shi'ite shaykhs are not happy with its meaning. For example, listen to what the commentator on *al-Kâfi* has to say about the words of Abu Abdullah quoted above, when he stated that he was astounded by people who attributed knowledge of the unseen to him, and he refuted that by saying that his slave woman disappeared and he did not even know where she was, so how could it be said of him that he had knowledge of the unseen? The commentator on *al-Kâfi* said: "The aim of

expressing his astonishment openly was so that the ignorant would not take him as a god, or to prove to some of the people who were present there and did not recognise his virtue that what was attributed to him of knowledge of the unseen was not true, so as to protect himself. However, he had knowledge of what had happened and what would happen, so how could he not know where his slave woman was? If you say that his saying this implies that he was telling a lie, I say: It is a lie if he did not intend it to be ambiguous, but he did intend it to be ambiguous, and what he meant was: I do not have any knowledge that did not come to me from Allah that she was in any particular room in the house."⁶⁸⁶

Look at this amazing long-winded effort to refute this report and to prove that the Imam knows what has happened in the past and what will happen in the future! In order to prove that, he accuses the Imam of telling lies, thus demolishing one of their basic principles, namely infallibility.⁶⁸⁷

Another of their shaykhs, ash-Sha'râni, who commented on this explanation by the author of *al-Kâfi*, did not like this long-winded way of interpreting the report, so he decided to reject it in the shortest manner by ruling that this report was a lie. They spread false rumours like these about the scholars of Ahl al-Bayt, then when members of Ahl al-Bayt rejected the fabrications of these liars and exposed their falsehood before the people, the Shi'ite scholars interpreted this rejection and denunciation as being taqiyyah. This became a trick used by the extreme Shia to keep Shiism within the circle of extremism, reject the truth and undermine Ahl al-Bayt.⁶⁸⁸ Zurârah ibn A'yun claimed that Ja'far ibn Muhammad knew the people of paradise and the people of hell; when Ja'far heard that, he denied it and denounced the one who said it as a disbeliever. Someone told Zurârah about Ja'far's attitude, and he said: "He used taqiyyah with you!"⁶⁸⁹

3.4.9. Their exaggeration in believing that Allah (ﷻ) has a physical shape

The misguided belief that Allah (ﷻ) has a physical shape was well known among the Jews, but the first to introduce it among the Muslims were the Râfiḍi Shia. Ar-Râzi said: "Most of the Jews liken Allah to His creation in physical terms. This belief among Muslims first began with the Râfiḍis such as Hishâm ibn al-Ḥakam, Hishâm ibn Sâlim al-Jawâleeqi, Yoonus ibn 'Abd ur-Raḥmân al-Qummi and Abu Ja'far al-Aḥwal."⁶⁹⁰

All of these men are regarded by the Twelvers as being pioneers among their shaykhs and trustworthy in transmitting their madh-hab.⁶⁹¹ Ibn Taymiyah identified the first one who fabricated this idea, saying: "The first one in Islam who is known to have said that Allah has a physical shape was Hishâm ibn al-Ḥakam."⁶⁹² Those who study different sects narrated from him and his followers extreme statements, which would make the believers' skin crawl if they were to hear them. 'Abdul-Qâhir al-Baghdâdi said: "Hishâm ibn al-Ḥakam claimed that his god was a physical being with limits to his physical being, that he was tall and wide and deep, and that he was as tall as he was wide."⁶⁹³ There are very many reports narrated from Hishâm ibn al-Ḥakam and his followers about extreme views on the belief that Allah has a physical shape; these are narrated in the books on sects and elsewhere.⁶⁹⁴

Likening Allah, the Exalted, the Almighty, to His creation is a belief that existed among the Jews and leaked into Shiism. The first one to propagate this idea was Hishâm ibn al-Ḥakam, and he influenced others who are known in the books on sects as misguided, extreme madh-habs belonging to the Twelvers.⁶⁹⁵ The shaykhs of the Twelvers defended these people despite abundant reports of their misguided notions. Their evil became widespread, and they went to extremes to find an acceptable way to interpret every notorious

statement attributed to them, or they said it was a fabrication.⁶⁹⁶

It is mentioned in a number of their reports that Hisham ibn al-Ḥakam and Hishâm ibn Sâlim al-Jawâleeqi played a role in spreading the idea among the Shia that Allah has a physical shape,⁶⁹⁷ but the Imams rejected them and their statements. When one of the Shia came to their Imam and told him that he followed the view of Hishâm, their Imam Abu al-Ḥasan 'Ali ibn Muhammad said: "What do you have to do with the view of Hishâm? The one who claims that Allah has a physical shape is not one of us, and we have nothing to do with him in this world and in the hereafter."⁶⁹⁸

Some of their reports mention what they say about Allah (ﷻ). In one, someone⁶⁹⁹ told Abu Abdullah what one group of Shia believed about Allah having a physical shape. "He said: 'Some of our companions claim that Allah has an image like that of man.' Another one said that He 'has the image of a beardless man with very curly hair.' Abu Abdullah fell down in prostration, then he raised his head and said: 'Glory be to the One like Whom there is nothing. No vision can grasp Him, and no knowledge can encompass Him.'"⁷⁰⁰

Their senior scholars went to extremes in understanding the attributes of Allah (ﷻ) literally, to the extent that they likened Him to His creation. This constitutes disbelief in Allah (ﷻ) because it is a rejection of the verse in which He (ﷻ) says, ﴿There is nothing like Him﴾ (*Qur'an* 42: 11). They rejected the attributes that are befitting to Him and ascribed to Him attributes other than those He ascribed to Himself. They have many reports of this nature.⁷⁰¹

This trend towards extremism in understanding the divine attributes literally (by interpreting them as being like the attributes of man) is different from affirming the attributes of Allah (ﷻ) and understanding them in an appropriate way, which is the way of the scholars of Ahl al-Bayt. The Shiite madh-hab split into two

competing groups: a group led by Hishâm, which believed that Allah has a physical shape, and a group that believed that Allah is above being similar to His creation. The latter is the view of Ahl al-Bayt, as indicated by the reports of the Shia themselves, as is proven and widely documented in the books of the scholars.⁷⁰²

3.4.10. Their denial of the divine attributes

After this going to extremes in interpreting the divine attributes in a literal sense (likening Allah to His creation), the madhhab began to change at the end of the third century AH, when it was influenced by Mutazilite ideas denying some attributes of the Creator (ﷻ) that are affirmed in the Qur’an and Sunnah.

The trend towards this denial became stronger in the fourth century AH, when al-Mufeed and his followers like al-Moosawi (who is known as ash-Shareef ar-Raḍiy and Abu Ja‘far aṭ-Ṭoosi) began to write books based on the books of the Mutazilites.⁷⁰³ Much of what they wrote was copied line by line from the commentary of the Mutazilites, such as what they said when interpreting verses of the Qur’an that speak of the divine attributes, the divine will and decree and so on.⁷⁰⁴ The one who reads the books of the later Shia can hardly see any difference between these books and the books of the Mutazilites on the topic of the divine names and attributes because they claim that reason is their foundation with regard to what they believe concerning these issues. The beliefs of the Mutazilites in this regard were adopted by the later Shiite shaykhs, including the issue of the Qur’an being created, the idea that the believers will not see their Lord in the hereafter, and denial of the divine attributes. Moreover, the specious arguments that the Mutazilites developed are the same as those offered by the later Shiite shaykhs.

What is different in the Shia books is that the reports denying the divine attributes are attributed to the Imams. They came up with

numerous reports about the Imams to support this view. They fabricated false reports, which they attributed to Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) and some of the scholars of Ahl al-Bayt such as Muhammad al-Bâqir and Ja'far aṣ-Ṣâdiq, claiming that they denied the divine attributes. Some of their contemporary shaykhs regard this as their basis for denying the divine attributes; one of them wrote under the title *Tareeqat Ma'rifat aṣ-Ṣifât* (How to know the divine attributes): "Is there any room for further discussion of the divine attributes? Is there any way other than to submit to the word of Amir al-Mu'mineen: 'The highest level of sincerity is to deny that He has any attributes'?"⁷⁰⁵

In fact, what is proven from Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) and the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt is that they affirmed the divine attributes, and the reports concerning that are numerous and well proven in the books of the scholars.⁷⁰⁶ This is also admitted in some reports that exist among the huge accumulation of reports that speak of denying the divine attributes. A number of their own reports describe the Lord of the Worlds in negative terms, denying that these are attributes of Allah (ﷻ). This is nothing new, because this is the way of those who are misguided and have drifted away from the path of the Messengers, such as the philosophers, the Mutazilites and others.

Allah (ﷻ) sent His Messengers to affirm His attributes in detail and to deny certain things in general terms. The divine attributes are affirmed in detail in the Book of Allah, and other things are denied in general terms.⁷⁰⁷ Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿There is nothing like Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer﴾ (*Qur'an* 42: 11). The denial comes in general terms: "There is nothing like Him." This is the usual way of the Qur'an in denying. Allah says: ﴿Do you know of any who is similar to Him?﴾ (*Qur'an* 19: 65) This means: do you know of any who is like Him, who deserves a name like His? It was also

said that it means: Do you know any competitor who could compete with Him?⁷⁰⁸ This is the meaning of the report narrated from Ibn 'Abbâs: "Do you know of any who is like or similar to Him?"⁷⁰⁹ Allah (ﷻ) also says: ﴿And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him.﴾ (Qur'an 112: 4) With regard to the affirmation of the divine attributes, this appears in detail: ﴿and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.﴾ (Qur'an 42: 11)

At the end of Soorat al-Hashr, Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿He is Allah, beside Whom *Lâ ilâha illâ Huwa* [none has the right to be worshipped but He] the All-Knower of the unseen and the seen. He is the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. He is Allah, beside Whom *Lâ ilâha illâ Huwa* [none has the right to be worshipped but He], the King, the Holy, the One Free from all defects, the Giver of security, the Watcher over His creatures, the All-Mighty, the Compeller, the Supreme. Glory be to Allah! [High is He] above all that they associate as partners with Him. He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor of all things, the Bestower of forms. To Him belong the Best Names. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify Him. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.﴾ (Qur'an 59: 22-24)

There are many other similar verses as well.⁷¹⁰

The Shia narrate from their Imams that the Creator cannot be described except in the way He described Himself.⁷¹¹ However, the Shia turned away from that just as they turned away from the Book of Allah and from the dictates of reason and common sense, preferring instead the route of mere imitation and picking up the garbage of extinct philosophies. How can any rational person dare to rely — with regard to a matter of the unseen, which there is no way to know in detail except by means of divine texts — on limited rational discussions and flawed ideas, and to refer concerning these issues to the contradictory imagination of human beings and their conflicting concepts?⁷¹²

3.4.10.a. The issue of the Qur'an being created

The Qur'an is the word of Allah that was revealed, not created. This is what is indicated by the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the consensus of the early generation,⁷¹³ but the Twelvers followed in the footsteps of the Mutazilites with regard to the idea that the Qur'an is created. Al-Majlisi, the Shaykh of the Shia, wrote a chapter in *Biḥār al-Anwār* entitled: "The Qur'an is created."⁷¹⁴ In this chapter, he narrated eleven reports; most of them are contrary to what he said, but the shaykhs have their own way of interpreting them, which we will discuss shortly. The Shiite scholar Muḥsin al-Ameen said: "The Shia and the Mutazilites said: 'The Qur'an is created.'"⁷¹⁵ This is based on their denial of the divine attribute of speech and their claim that Allah (ﷻ) created speech in some of His creation, such as the bush when He spoke to Moosa, and Jibreel when He sent down the Qur'an.⁷¹⁶ We have quoted above some of what their shaykhs said about this matter.⁷¹⁷

If you refer to the reports that they narrated from Ahl al-Bayt, you will find that most of them differ from the view of the Shia on this issue. For example, in *Tafseer al-'Ayyâshi*, it is narrated from ar-Riḍa that he was asked about the Qur'an, and he said: "It is the word of Allah and is not created."⁷¹⁸ In *at-Tawḥeed* by Ibn Bâbawayh al-Qummi, it is recorded that it was said to Abu al-Ḥasan Moosa (ﷺ): "O son of the Messenger of Allah, what do you say about Qur'an? Those who came before differed concerning it; some people say that it is created, and some say that it is not created." He (ﷺ) said: "As for me, I do not say what they say; instead I say that it is the word of Allah (ﷻ)."⁷¹⁹

They have many similar reports,⁷²⁰ but it may be noted that the Shaykh of the Shia during his lifetime, Ibn Bâbawayh al-Qummi, went in the opposite direction in interpreting these texts. He affirmed that the view of the Imams was: "Saying that the Qur'an is not

created means that it is not a lie (or not made-up), but it does not mean that it is not created (or not brought into being).”⁷²¹ He also said: “The reason why we refrain from using the word ‘created’ (*makhlooq*) is that it could mean false, as in the phrase *kalâm makhlooq makdhoob* (false, made-up words).”⁷²²

However, the scholars of the pious predecessors, the earliest generations of the righteous followers of Islam, refuted them, saying: “When we say that it is not created, we do not mean thereby that it is not fabricated; suggesting that it is fabricated is blatant disbelief, as any Muslim knows. In fact, the issue here is that they said that it is created in a true sense, and the pious predecessors refuted this view. This is mentioned in many reports narrated from them, and they wrote many books about that.”⁷²³

In *Tafseer as-Sirât al-Mustaqeem*, by the Shiite scholar al-Burojoordi, a text is quoted from Ibn Bâbawayh in which he interpreted the reports stating that the Qur’an is not created as being taqiyyah. He said: “The reason for the Imam not describing the Qur’an as created is either because of taqiyyah and going along with the people, or it is because saying it is created may be thought to indicate another meaning which was used by the disbelievers when they said: ‘This is nothing but an invention!’ (Qur’an 38: 7)”⁷²⁴ These shaykhs could not find any other explanation to turn to except suggesting that it was taqiyyah and the like.

This method proves that they have no foundation for anything they say. The possibility of taqiyyah in every text has led to great confusion and caused the essence of their madh-hab to be lost, so their religion has become a religion based on the views of al-Majlisi, al-Kulayni or Ibn Bâbawayh al-Qummi, not on the reports of the Imams.⁷²⁵ Thus knowledge and truth were lost because of this crafty method, and the Ummah will remain in a state of division and dispute because of these methods, which are inspired by Satan with his plots.

If any of their shaykhs wants to do a favour to the Shia and guide them, he should lead them to the way of the main body of Muslims. He should take from their reports what is in accordance with the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ), and the way of the noble Companions and scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah, and he should get rid of the devious ideas of al-Qummi, al-Kulayni and al-Majlisi. The Imams themselves complained about many people fabricating lies about them, to the extent that they said: "The people are fond of telling lies about us."⁷²⁶

If you want to apply this method of finding the reports of Ahl as-Sunnah that are in harmony with reports of the Shia from Ahl al-Bayt concerning this issue, you will find that the books of the Shia include (as we have seen above) reports from Ahl al-Bayt stating that the Word of Allah was revealed, not created, and the books of Ahl as-Sunnah say the same thing. It was narrated by Bukhari in *Kitâb Af'âl al-'Ibâd*,⁷²⁷ Ibn Abi Hâtim,⁷²⁸ Abu Sa'eed ad-Dârimi, al-Âjurri in *Ash-Sharee'ah*,⁷²⁹ al-Bayhaqi in *Al-I'tiqâd*⁷³⁰ and in *Al-Asma' waṣ-Ṣifât*,⁷³¹ al-Lâlkâ'i in *Sharḥ Uṣool I'tiqâd Ahl as-Sunnah*⁷³² and Abu Dâwood in *Masâ'il al-Imam Ahmad*⁷³³ that Ja'far aṣ-Ṣâdiq said, when he was asked about the Qur'an: "It is neither a creator nor created." Ibn Taymiyah said: "There are abundant reports to that effect from Ja'far."⁷³⁴

So why not adopt the reports that are common to both Sunnis and Shia, forsaking the falsehood that has nothing to support it except the views of shaykhs who want to cause division and disputes in the Ummah? These shaykhs strive to be odd and to isolate their groups so that they will have the opportunity to accumulate huge amounts of money in the name of the one-fifth, to attain social status, and to be regarded as 'holy men' on the basis of being the deputies of the hidden Imam. For these reasons, they persisted in confirming the view that "Whatever is different from the masses is a sign of guidance",⁷³⁵ referring thereby to Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah.

The reports narrated in the books of the Shia that state that the Qur'an was revealed, not created, represent the views of the earliest Shia⁷³⁶ because the idea that the Qur'an is created is the innovation of the later Shia.⁷³⁷ The belief that the Qur'an is revealed, not created, is what is proven from Ahl al-Bayt. No one among the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt, such as 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn, Abu Ja'far al-Bâqir and his son Ja'far ibn Muhammad, suggested that the Qur'an was created, but the Imami Shia went against Ahl al-Bayt in this as in the majority of their fundamental beliefs.⁷³⁸ Is it not sufficient, to highlight the corruption of their madh-hab, to note that it is contrary to what Ahl al-Bayt believed and contrary to their reports that are agreement with reports of Ahl as-Sunnah, and that all their reports are contradictory?⁷³⁹

The belief of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah with regard to this issue is that the Qur'an is the word of Allah (ﷻ) and that it came from Him, without discussing how, in the form of words. It came down to His Messenger as revelation, and the believers believed in it and were certain that it was the word of Allah (ﷻ) in a true sense, not something created like the words of people. Whoever hears it and claims that it is the word of a human being has committed an act of disbelief and is condemned by Allah and promised hell. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿I will cast him into hellfire﴾ (*Qur'an* 74: 26). Allah has promised hell to those who say: ﴿This is nothing but the word of a human being!﴾ (*Qur'an* 74: 25) Therefore we know for certain that it is the word of the Creator of mankind and is not like human speech.⁷⁴⁰

3.4.10.b. The issue of seeing Allah (ﷻ)

The Imami Shia, because of their agreement with the Mutazilites, say that Allah (ﷻ) will not be seen. They narrated numerous reports, which were mentioned by Ibn Bâbawayh in his book *At-Tawḥeed* and most of which were also compiled by the author of *Biḥâr al-Anwâr*, denying what is mentioned in the texts about the believers seeing their Lord in the hereafter.

For example, they fabricated a report saying that Abu Abdullah Ja'far aṣ-Ṣâdiq was asked about Allah (ﷻ): "Will He be seen in the hereafter?" and he replied: "Glorified and exalted be He far above that; vision can only grasp that which has colour and shape, and Allah is the Creator of colours and shapes."⁷⁴¹ Their shaykh and 'Ayatollah' Ja'far an-Najafi, the author of *Kashf al-Ghaṭa'*, said: "If someone ascribes some attributes to Allah, such as saying that He could be seen, he is to be regarded as an apostate."⁷⁴² Al-Ḥurr al-Âmili regarded denying that the believers will see Allah as one of the fundamentals of the Imams; he wrote a chapter entitled "No eye can see Allah, and no vision can encompass Him in this world or in the hereafter."⁷⁴³

Their denial that the believers will see their Lord in the hereafter is contrary to what is stated in the Sharia text and is also contrary to the madh-hab of Ahl al-Bayt, as some of their reports admit. Ibn Bâbawayh al-Qummi narrated from Abu Buṣayr that he said to Abu Abdullah: "Tell me about Allah, may He be glorified and exalted: will the believers see Him on the Day of Resurrection?" He said: "Yes, seeing [Allah] is the right of the people of paradise, who will see Him without encompassing Him and without knowing how, as it says in the Book of our Lord, such as the verses in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Some faces that Day shall be Nâdirah [shining and radiant]. Looking at their Lord [Allah]﴾ (*Qur'an* 75: 22-23) and ﴿There they will have all that they desire — and We have more [for them, i.e. a glance at the All-Mighty, All-Majestic]﴾ (*Qur'an* 50: 35). Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) said: "This means looking upon the countenance of Allah (ﷻ)."⁷⁴⁴

Allah (ﷻ) also says: ﴿For those who have done good is the best reward and even more [i.e. having the honour of glancing at the countenance of Allah]﴾ (*Qur'an* 10: 26). The 'best reward' is paradise, and 'even more' is gazing upon His noble countenance. It was

explained in this way by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and the Companions after him. Muslim narrated in his *Ṣaḥeeḥ* that Ṣuhayb said that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) recited the verse, ﴿For those who have done good is the best reward and even more [i.e. having the honour of glancing at the countenance of Allah]﴾ (*Qur'an* 10: 26), then he said: "When the people of paradise have entered paradise, Allah (ﷻ) will say: 'Do you want anything more?' They will say: 'Have You not brightened our faces and admitted us to paradise and saved us from the fire?' Then He will remove the veil, and they will not be given anything that is dearer to them than gazing upon their Lord (ﷻ)." ⁷⁴⁵

And Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Nay! Surely, they [evil doers] will be veiled from seeing their Lord that Day.﴾ (*Qur'an* 83: 15)

Ash-Shâfa'î and other scholars use this verse as evidence that the people of paradise will see their Lord. Aṭ-Ṭabari and others narrated from al-Muzani from ash-Shâfa'î, and al-Ḥâkim said: Al-Aṣamm told us that ar-Rabee' ibn Sulaymân said: "I was with Muhammad ibn Idrees ash-Shâfa'î, who had received a letter from Upper Egypt that said: 'What do you think about the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Nay! Surely, they [evil doers] will be veiled from seeing their Lord that Day?﴾' (*Qur'an* 83: 15)' Ash-Shâfa'î (may Allah have mercy on him) said: 'Since they will be screened away because of [Allah's] wrath, that indicates that His close friends will see Him because He is pleased with them.'" ⁷⁴⁶

With regard to the hadiths from the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions indicating that the believers will see Him, they are mutawâtir reports which were narrated by the authors of the sound collections of hadiths. ⁷⁴⁷ The Companions, the Tâbi'oon, the well known, prominent scholars of Islam, and all the philosophical groups that claim to belong to Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah confirmed that the believers will see their Lord. ⁷⁴⁸

3.4.11. Their giving the Imams precedence over the Prophets and Messengers

The Messengers are the best of mankind and the most deserving of being bearers of the message. Allah prepared them to reach the highest level of servitude, conveying the message, calling people and striving in jihad. ﴿Allah knows best with whom to place His Message﴾ (*Qur'an* 6: 124). They are distinguished by the fact that they, out of all mankind, attained the position of Messenger,⁷⁴⁹ and Allah enjoined mankind to follow them: ﴿We sent no Messenger, but to be obeyed by Allah's leave,﴾ (*Qur'an* 4: 64). No one among mankind is to be given precedence over them.

Aṭ-Ṭaḥḥâwî said, explaining the beliefs of Ahl as-Sunnah: "We do not give precedence to any one of the close friends of Allah over any one of the Prophets (ﷺ). We say: One Prophet is better than all the close friends of Allah."⁷⁵⁰ Giving precedence to the Imams over the Prophets is the way of the extreme Râfiḍîs, as was pointed out by 'Abdul-Qâhir al-Baghdadi,⁷⁵¹ al-Qâḍî 'Iyâḍ⁷⁵² and Ibn Taymiyah.⁷⁵³ This particular view became one of the fundamentals of the Twelvers. The author of *al-Wasâ'il* stated that giving precedence to the Imams over the Prophets is one of the fundamentals of the Shiite madh-hab, which they attribute to the Imams. He also said that the reports that they have concerning this are innumerable.⁷⁵⁴

In *Bihâr al-Anwâr*, al-Majlisi wrote a chapter entitled "Giving them (ﷺ) precedence over the Prophets and all of mankind" in which it says that Allah took a covenant from the Prophets and from the angels and all of creation, and that the Messengers of strong will only attained that status because of their love for the Imams.⁷⁵⁵ This view on which the Twelver madh-hab finally settled went through changes and alterations that took it in the direction of extremism. With regard to the issue of giving the Prophets precedence over the

Imams, the Shia were divided into three groups, as al-Ash'ari said:

- (i) The first group believed that the Prophets are better than the Imams, and some of them said that it is possible for the Imams to be better than the angels.
- (ii) The second group claimed that the Imams are better than the Prophets and the angels.
- (iii) The third group adopted the Mutazilite madh-hab but believed in imamate; they said that the angels and Prophets are better than the Imams.⁷⁵⁶

In *Awâ'il al-Maqâlât*, al-Mufeed added a fourth group who believe in the superiority of the Imams over all of the Prophets except for the five Messengers of strong will.⁷⁵⁷ He does not state which of these views he regards as most correct; he simply says the matter needs further examination.⁷⁵⁸ It seems that all of these groups were weakened as a result of the efforts of the shaykhs of the Safavid state and those who followed them, and the madh-hab settled on extreme views with regard to the Imams, to the extent that al-Majlisi said in the chapter in *Biḥâr al-Anwâr* that he wrote for this purpose: "The Messengers of strong will only became Messengers of strong will because of their love for the Imams, blessings of Allah be upon them."⁷⁵⁹

However, the one who refers to the Book of Allah (ﷻ) will find that there is no mention of their twelve Imams, let alone any suggestion that they are given precedence over the Prophets and Messengers of Allah. He will also notice that the Prophets, because of their higher status, are given precedence over others of the righteous slaves of Allah who are mentioned. Allah (ﷻ) says: "They will be in the company of those on whom Allah has bestowed His Grace, of the Prophets, the *Ṣiddeeqoon* [those followers of the Prophets who were first and foremost to believe in them, like Abu

Bakr aş-Şiddeeq], the martyrs, and the righteous (Qur'an 4: 69). Allah (ﷻ) listed His blessed slaves in four categories.⁷⁶⁰ The Book of Allah, in all its verses, indicates that the Prophets are chosen above all others.⁷⁶¹ The people of the best three generations were unanimously agreed on the superiority of the Prophets over all others, and their consensus is binding proof. Ibn Taymiyah said: "The early generations (pious predecessors) of the Ummah, its leading scholars and the close friends of Allah (ﷻ) were unanimously agreed that the Prophets are superior to the close friends of Allah (ﷻ) who are not Prophets."⁷⁶²

Reason also clearly indicates that a Prophet is in a position whereby he must be obeyed; his commands, prohibitions and rulings must be heeded, with no restrictions. The fact that the Imam is a deputy and a follower cannot make sense unless he is of lower status than the Prophet. This is applicable to every Prophet and is not applicable to any of the Imams, so there is no Imam at all who is better than a Prophet; that is impossible.⁷⁶³

Moreover, there is reported in the books of the Shia themselves a report which is in accordance with the texts, scholarly consensus and common sense, and which contradicts this odd view. This report, narrated by al-Kulayni from Hishâm al-Aḥwal from Zayd ibn 'Ali, says that the Prophets are superior to the Imams and that anyone who says otherwise is misguided.⁷⁶⁴ Ibn Bâbawayh narrated from aş-Şâdiq that the Prophets are more beloved to Allah (ﷻ) than is 'Ali (عليه السلام).⁷⁶⁵

3.5. The attitude of the Imami Shia towards the Noble Qur'an

The Imami Shiite belief and the attempt to defend it had a great impact in motivating some of the Shia to adopt dangerous ideas about

the Qur’an, Sunnah and Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). They doubted the Qur’an, rejected many of the proven hadiths, and impugned and condemned the Companions, claiming that they deliberately lied and distorted the Book of Allah.

3.5.1. The belief among some of them that the Book of Allah was distorted, and refutation of their claim

Some of the Râfiḍī Shia claimed that the noble Qur’an was distorted and that the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) omitted some soorahs and many verses that were revealed. These were supposedly about the virtues of Ahl al-Bayt; they say that they enjoined following them, forbade going against them, enjoined love of them, listed the names of their enemies and impugned and cursed those enemies. The Shia accuse the Companions of omitting from the Qur’an, among other things, the phrase “and We have made ‘Ali your son-in-law” from Soorat ash-Sharḥ; this would suggest that ‘Ali is the only son-in-law of the Messenger (ﷺ), to the exclusion of ‘Uthmân. They were ignorant of the fact that this soorah was revealed in Makkah, so ‘Ali was not the son-in-law of the Messenger (ﷺ) at the time it was revealed; the fact is that Ali married Fâtimah in Madinah, after the battle of Badr, as we have seen above. The Shia also think that among the material omitted from the Qur’an is what they call ‘the chapter of imamate’, which they claim is a lengthy soorah in which the virtues of Ahl al-Bayt are mentioned.⁷⁶⁶

Thus most of the claims of this group of Shia about the Qur’an are based on these ideas. They do not deny any of its rulings or principles, but their view focuses on the alleged omission of some verses that speak of the imamate of ‘Ali and the Imams after him. These fabrications against the noble Qur’an were repeated by a number of Imami Shiite scholars, foremost among whom was their

famous 'Hujjah' Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qoob al-Kulayni (d. 329 AH). He was the author of *al-Kâfi*, which is regarded by the Shia as being as authentic to the same degree that the book of Bukhari is regarded by Ahl as-Sunnah as authentic. The Shiite author of *Tafseer as-Şâfi* says: "It seems that 'the trustworthy of Islam' Muhammad ibn Ya'qoob al-Kulayni (may Allâh have mercy on him) also believed that the Qur'an had been distorted and some things omitted from it, because he narrated several reports to that effect in his book *al-Kâfi*, and he did not comment by suggesting that they were flawed or criticising them; on the contrary, he said at the beginning of his book that he trusted everything he narrated in it."⁷⁶⁷

This book of al-Kulayni's is full of these deviant claims, which are basically aimed at affirming the imamate of 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) and the Imams who came after him. For example, al-Kulayni narrated from Abu Buşayr from Abu Abdullah concerning the verse ﴿And whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger﴾ (*Qur'an* 33: 71) that with regard to the imamate of 'Ali and the Imams after him, ﴿he has indeed achieved a great achievement﴾ (*Qur'an* 33: 71). He claimed that the phrase 'with regard to the imamate of 'Ali and the Imams after him' was part of the original revelation.⁷⁶⁸

He also narrated from Jâbir that Abu Ja'far (عليه السلام) said: "Why is 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib called Amir al-Mu'mineen?" He said: "Allah called him that, and this is how it was revealed in His Book: 'And (remember) when your Lord brought forth from the children of Adam, from their loins, their seed (or from Adam's loin his offspring) and made them testify as to themselves (saying): Am I not your Lord, and is not Muhammad My Messenger, and is not 'Ali Amir al-Mu'mineen?'"⁷⁶⁹

Al-Kulayni also narrated that Aḥmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Naşr said: "Abu al-Ḥasan was given a muşḥaf, and he said: 'Do not look in it.' So I opened it and read, ﴿Those who disbelieve from

among the people of the Scripture [Jews and Christians] and *Al-Mushrikoon* were not going to leave [their disbelief] until there came to them clear evidence» (*Qur'an* 98: 1), and I found written in the soorah seventy men of Quraysh, mentioned by their names and the names of their fathers. He sent the muṣḥaf to me.”⁷⁷⁰

Al-Kulayni claimed that no one compiled the Qur'an in totality except the Imams, who know it in its entirety; no one preserved it or memorised it as it was revealed except 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) and the Imams after him. This lie, which connected the compilation of the Qur'an to 'Ali (عليه السلام), was repeated elsewhere. The author of *al-Ihtijâj* suggested that when the Messenger (ﷺ) died: “'Ali (عليه السلام) collected the Qur'an and brought it to the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr and showed it to them, because the Prophet (ﷺ) had instructed him to do that. When Abu Bakr opened it, on the first page he opened there appeared the evil deeds of the people. 'Umar jumped up and said: 'O 'Ali, take it away, we have no need of it.' So 'Ali took it and went away. Then they brought Zayd ibn Thâbit, who knew the Qur'an well, and 'Umar said to him: “'Ali brought the Qur'an, and in it were the evil deeds of the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr. We thought that we should compile the Qur'an and omit from it what it contained of evil deeds and exposure of the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr.’ Zayd agreed to that, then he said: ‘If I complete my task of compiling the Qur'an as you asked, and 'Ali tells the people about the Qur'an that he has compiled, won't all your efforts be in vain?’ 'Umar said: ‘What should we do then?’ Zayd said: ‘You know best what to do.’ 'Umar said: ‘There is no option but to kill him and get rid of him.’ They tried to kill him at the hand of Khâlid ibn al-Waleed, but were not able to do that.”⁷⁷¹

Undoubtedly, reports like this are the fabrication of sick and corrupt minds that want to accuse the Companions of distorting the Qur'an and conspiring to deprive 'Ali of the position of Imam of the

Muslims. When the fabricator of this report tries to praise him, he actually undermines him, because he describes him as keeping quiet when the Companions refused to accept his Qur'an. How can this be in accordance with the heroic attitude of 'Ali (عليه السلام) in defending Islam? The words of 'Ali (عليه السلام) himself refute all this nonsense: "The greatest in reward with regard to the muṣḥaf is Abu Bakr (عليه السلام). May Allah have mercy on Abu Bakr; he was the first one to compile what is between the two covers (meaning the Qur'an)." ⁷⁷²

Al-Kulayni did not stop there, though. He went on to attribute these fabrications and false claims about the distortion of the Qur'an to Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq, claiming that he said: "The Qur'an that was brought down by revelation to Muhammad was seven thousand verses, and the verses that we recite are only 6,263; the rest are kept with Ahl al-Bayt." ⁷⁷³ Al-Kulayni claims that aṣ-Ṣādiq said, concerning the Qur'an that was collected by 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib, "It was said to be three times greater than this Qur'an of yours, and by Allah, there is not even one letter of your Qur'an in it." ⁷⁷⁴

They also say that "Fāṭimah (عليها السلام) lived for seventy-five days after the Prophet (ﷺ) died, suffering grief such as only Allah (ﷻ) knows. Allah (ﷻ) sent Jibreel to her to console her and comfort her, and to tell her about her father and what would happen to her children. 'Ali (عليه السلام) listened to what he said until he wrote down a muṣḥaf three times the size of the Qur'an, in which there was nothing about ḥalāl and ḥarām, but it did contain knowledge of what is to happen." ⁷⁷⁵

Another Shiite scholar, 'Ali ibn Ibrāheem, reiterated the same claims that were mentioned by al-Kulayni. Muhammad Muḥsin, who is known as al-Fayḍ al-Kashshi, narrated from him in his commentary on the Qur'an and said: "What we may learn from the reports narrated via Ahl al-Bayt is that the Qur'an that is extant among us is not complete as it was revealed to Muhammad. Some of

it is different from what Allah (ﷻ) revealed, some of it has been distorted and changed, and many things have been omitted from it, such as the name of 'Ali in many places, the phrase 'the family of Muhammad' more than once, the names of the hypocrites in several places, and other things. It is not in the order that is pleasing to Allah and His Messenger." The same view was also held by 'Ali ibn Ibrâheem, who is known as al-Qummi, who wrote a commentary that is filled with these claims and exaggerations, and he started to write nonsense and claimed that there are verses concerning the appointment of 'Ali to the imamate that have been erased.⁷⁷⁶

The author of *Başâ'ir ad-Darajât*, aş-Şafâr, said, claiming that his chain of narration went back to Abu Ja'far: "No one can claim to have collected the entire Qur'an, physically and with the proper understanding, except for the Imams."⁷⁷⁷ It was also narrated that he said: "Anyone who says that he compiled the entire Qur'an as Allah (ﷻ) revealed it is a liar. No one compiled it or memorised it as it was revealed except 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib and the Imams after him."⁷⁷⁸ In *Tafseer al-'Ayâshi* it is narrated from Abu Abdullah: "If the Qur'an were recited as it was revealed, you would find us named in it."⁷⁷⁹ In the same book, it is also narrated from Abu Ja'far: "Were it not for the fact that things have been added to and taken away from the Book of Allah, our rights would not be hidden from anyone who has any sense."⁷⁸⁰

There are many reports in the books of the Râfiḍi Shia which clearly state that the Qur'an is distorted, and their senior scholars spoke of the great number of such reports, reaching the level of being mutawâtir. Al-Mufeed said: "There are abundant reports from the Imams of guidance, who are of the family of Muhammad (ﷺ), that speak of the distortion of the Qur'an and what some of the wrongdoers did in terms of omitting and taking away."⁷⁸¹

Hâshim al-Bahrâni,⁷⁸² one of their senior interpreters of Qur'an, says: "It should be noted that the fact which no one can ignore, on the basis of the mutawâtir reports we have and others, is that this Qur'an that we have was subjected to a great many changes after the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died. Those who compiled it after he was gone omitted many words and verses."⁷⁸³ He also says: "This issue (the distortion of the Qur'an) is so clear to me, after examining the reports, that we could rule that this view is one of the fundamentals of Shiism and one of the greatest supports for the belief in imamate."⁷⁸⁴

Ni'matullah al-Jazâ'iri⁷⁸⁵ said: "The reports that point to this (distortion of the Qur'an) are more than two thousand hadith, and several scholars claimed that they (these reports) are abundant in number, such as al-Mufeed, al-Muḥaqqiq ad-Dâmâd and al-'Allâmah al-Majlisi."⁷⁸⁶

It is the view of their senior scholars that the reports in their books which claim that the Qur'an has been distorted and altered are abundant, to the level of being mutawâtir, and that the number of these reports reaches into the thousands. For this reason, some of the scholars stated with certainty that this belief is one of the fundamentals of their madh-hab and the greatest support for the belief in imamate. In addition to the thousands of reports in their books which claimed that the Qur'an has been distorted, this corrupt belief is confirmed in the views of their scholars, their ideologues and those individuals who are considered qualified to exercise ijtihâd. We do not have enough room here to quote all of them, but I shall refer to those who stated that there was consensus on this matter among their senior scholars.

Al-Mufeed says: "They (the Imami Shia) are agreed that the leaders of misguidance tampered with a great deal of the Qur'an, and they changed it from the way it was revealed and the Sunnah of the

Prophet (ﷺ). The Mutazilites, Kharijites, Murja'is and Sunnis all agreed on a view different from that of the Imami Shia in all that we have mentioned."⁷⁸⁷

An-Noori aṭ-Ṭubrusi (d. 1320 AH), one of their senior scholars in later times, wrote a huge volume called *Faṣl al-Khiṭâb fi Ithbât Tahreef Kitâb Rabb al-Arbâb* (The Ultimate Proof of the Distortion of the Book of the Lord of Lords) to prove the Râfiḍi Shiite claims about the Qur'an.⁷⁸⁸ He began with three introductions, followed by two chapters entitled: "On the evidence for the distortion of the Qur'an" and "Refutation of those among the Ummah who say that the Qur'an is sound."

In his book, aṭ-Ṭubrusi quoted thousands of reports to show that the Qur'an has been distorted as they claim. The first chapter is composed of twelve sections; in the last two sections alone, he quotes 1602 reports. This is in addition to what he quoted in the other sections of this chapter, in the three introductions and in the second chapter. Apologising for the small number of reports that he had collected, he said: "We are quoting reports to support the idea even though we do not know about all the reports."⁷⁸⁹ To prove the authenticity of these reports, he wrote: "It should be noted that these reports are transmitted from the reliable books that our scholars refer to in order to decide about Sharia rulings and the Prophet's Sunnah."⁷⁹⁰ After including a long list of names of their scholars who believe that the Qur'an has been distorted, a list that took up to five pages of his book, he said: "On the basis of the names that I have listed, even though I cannot claim that I included everyone, we can claim that this view is the prominent view among the earlier scholars, and those who differed with them are limited to a few individuals whom we shall mention below."⁷⁹¹ Then he said that those who held a different view were: aṣ-Ṣadooq, al-Murtaḍa and Shaykh aṭ-Ṭâifah aṭ-Ṭoosi. He said: "No one among the earlier scholars is known to have agreed with them."⁷⁹²

He said that at-Ṭubrusi, the author of *Majma' al-Bayân*, followed the view of these earlier scholars and that up until his time, no different view was known except from these four shaykhs.⁷⁹³ Then he tried to find an excuse to explain why these scholars did not affirm that the Qur'an has been distorted; he claimed that it was a matter of taqiyyah and 'appeasing the other group' (meaning the Sunnis). He said, excusing at-Ṭoosi for what he narrated in his book *at-Tibyân* about the Qur'an not having been distorted: "It is no secret to the one who examines the book *at-Tibyân* that the author's approach is clearly trying his utmost to appease the other group (the Sunnis). This would be very strange were it not the case that he is trying to appease them."⁷⁹⁴

An-Noori at-Ṭubrusi was preceded in trying to find excuses for the scholars by Ni'matullah al-Jazâ'iri who said, after narrating that there was consensus among the Imami scholars that the Qur'an had been distorted: "Yes, al-Murtaḍa, aṣ-Ṣadooq and Shaykh at-Ṭubrusi held a different view and stated that what is between the two covers of this muṣḥaf is the Qur'an and nothing else, and that no distortion or alteration has affected it. It seems that they said this for a number of reasons such as: to leave no excuse for anyone to undermine the Qur'an by saying that if it is possible for that to happen to the Qur'an, then how is it permissible to follow its teachings and rulings when it is possible that it has been distorted? How could these prominent scholars narrate in their books many reports saying that these things happened to the Qur'an and that such-and-such a verse was revealed and then changed?"⁷⁹⁵

Thus it seems that the belief that the Qur'an has been distorted, altered and changed is one on which all Râfiḍi Shi'ite scholars agree. That is what at-Ṭubrusi established in *Faṣl al-Khitâb*, and it is indicated by the previous statements of their senior scholars. None of their scholars disagreed about this belief until the time when *Faṣl al-*

Khiṭâb was written, apart from four of them, and the reason for that is given as taqiyyah and seeking to appease the Sunnis, according to what was stated by at-Ṭubrusi and al-Jazâ'iri before him. This has been proven by contemporary research that examined this issue and supported this view by quoting from the Shiite reports a great deal of evidence that illustrates their belief that the Qur'an was distorted and that is mentioned in the books of these four shaykhs.⁷⁹⁶ This proves that these four also believed in this idea and agreed with what all other Râfiḍi Shiite scholars believe about the Qur'an having been distorted, even though they stated otherwise for the purpose of taqiyyah, hypocrisy and deceiving Ahl as-Sunnah.⁷⁹⁷

The proof for what I am saying is the fact that none of those who claimed that the Qur'an was distorted were subject to any criticism from the Shia. For example, al-Kulayni is still respected, trusted and honoured, and he is the primary religious authority for all Shia today. Even though the contemporary Shia say that they deny the idea of the Qur'an having been distorted or of anything having been added or subtracted, we do not find any of them refuting al-Kulayni in a clear manner, or expressing distrust in him or rejecting his view on this issue. In fact, some have tried in a twisted manner to defend him and find excuses for him.⁷⁹⁸

If these people are sincere, then they have to disavow anyone who says that the noble Qur'an has been distorted, and they should not hesitate to regard as a disbeliever anyone who denies a single word of the Qur'an. They should realise that denying some of it is like denying all of it, because that is clearly undermining what is proven from the Prophet (ﷺ) and what is the foundation of Islam, according to all Muslims.

The noble Qur'an is the divine Book that has not been subjected to any alteration or change because Allah (ﷻ) promised and guaranteed to preserve it, unlike the Torah and Gospel. Allah

(ﷺ) did not guarantee to preserve them; He made it the responsibility of the people, but they neglected their duty. Ash-Shâṭibi narrated from Abu 'Umar ad-Dâni that Abu al-Ḥasan al-Muntâb said: "I was with al-Qâḍi Abu Ishâq Ismâ'eel ibn Ishâq one day, and it was said to him: 'Why was it possible for the people of the Torah to alter it and not possible for the people of the Qur'an?' Al-Qâḍi said: 'Allah (ﷻ) says concerning the people of the Torah: ﴿For to them was entrusted the protection of Allah's Book﴾ (*Qur'an* 5: 44), so He delegated the preservation of it to them; hence alteration was possible in their case. And Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Verily We: it is We Who have sent down the *Dhikr* [i.e. the Qur'an] and surely, We will guard it [from corruption]﴾ (*Qur'an* 15: 9). So it is not possible for anyone to alter it.' 'Ali (ﷺ) said: 'I went to Abu Abdullah al-Muḥâmilî and told him what I had heard, and he said: "I have never heard anything better than this."'"⁷⁹⁹

The Ummah throughout the ages has agreed that the noble Qur'an that Allah (ﷻ) revealed to His Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is the Qur'an that is now extant among the Muslims; nothing has been added or taken away, and nothing has been changed or altered. It is not possible for anything of that nature to happen to it because of the promise from Allah (ﷻ) to preserve and protect it. No one disagrees with this except the Râfiḍi Shia who claimed that the noble Qur'an has been subjected to distortion, changes and alterations and that the Companions are the ones who distorted the Qur'an for their own worldly interests. This belief of theirs is false, and there is evidence from the noble Qur'an, the words of the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt and common sense. We will discuss this in detail:

3.5.1.a. Evidence from the Noble Qur'an

The verses which clearly state that Allah (ﷻ) has guaranteed to preserve the Qur'an and that it cannot be subjected to any distortion or alteration are numerous and include the following:

«Verily, We, it is We Who have sent down the *Dhikr* [i.e. the Qur'an] and surely, We will guard it [from corruption].» (*Qur'an* 15: 9)

«And recite what has been revealed to you [O Muhammad] of the Book [the Qur'an] of your Lord [i.e. recite it, understand and follow its teachings and act on its orders and preach it to men]. None can change His Words, and none will you find as a refuge other than Him.» (*Qur'an* 18: 27)

«Falsehood cannot come to it from before it or behind it, [it is] sent down by the All-Wise, Worthy of all praise.» (*Qur'an* 41: 42)

«*Alif-Lâm-Meem*. [These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur'an and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings.] This is the Book [the Qur'an], whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who are Al-Muttaqoon [the pious].» (*Qur'an* 2: 1-2)

«*Alif-Lâm-Râ* [These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur'an and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings]. [This is] a Book, the Verses whereof are perfected [in every sphere of knowledge], and then explained in detail from One [Allah], Who is All-Wise Well-Acquainted [with all things].» (*Qur'an* 11: 1)

«Never did We send a Messenger or a Prophet before you but when he did recite the Revelation or narrated or spoke, Satan threw [some falsehood] in it. But Allah abolishes that which Satan throws in. Then Allah establishes His Revelations. And Allah is All-Knower, All-Wise.» (*Qur'an* 22: 52)

«Move not your tongue concerning [the Qur'an, O Muhammad] to make haste therewith. It is for Us to collect it and to give you [O Muhammad] the ability to recite it [the Qur'an].» (*Qur'an* 75: 16-17)

These verses clearly indicate that Allah (ﷻ) is preserving His Book and confirming its verses, that no falsehood can come to it from

before it or behind it, and that ﴿Allah's Promise is the Truth; and whose words can be truer than those of Allah?﴾ (*Qur'an* 4: 122).

These verses, which state that Allah (ﷻ) will preserve His Book and protect it from distortion or alteration, are so clear that there is no need for further explanation or clarification. Similarly, Allah (ﷻ) praises the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) in the noble Qur'an, which confirms that what the Râfiḍī Shia claim about their having distorted the Qur'an is a lie.⁸⁰⁰ Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And the foremost to embrace Islam of the Muhâjirûn and the Anṣâr and also those who followed them exactly [in Faith]. Allah is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow [paradise], to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success.﴾ (*Qur'an* 9: 100)

﴿Indeed, Allah was pleased with the believers when they gave the Bay'ah [pledge] to you [O Muhammad] under the tree, He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down As-Sakeenah [calmness and tranquillity] upon them, and He rewarded them with a near victory.﴾ (*Qur'an* 48: 18)

There are other verses as well that praise the Companions; we will discuss and explain them in more detail below.

After quoting these two types of verses (those that speak of the Qur'an being protected from distortion and those that contain praise for the Companions), we say to the Râfiḍī Shia: Your view that the Qur'an has been distorted is contradicted by these verses in which Allah (ﷻ) confirms that this Qur'an has not been distorted and will never be distorted because He is the One who has guaranteed to preserve it and protect it from distortion and alteration. He also praised in the highest terms the Companions of His Prophet (ﷺ), whom you have accused of distorting the Qur'an; He described them as having been sincere and having believed in Allah and His

Messenger. So you have one of two options with regard to these verses:

- 1) You admit and acknowledge that these verses came from Allah (ﷻ), in which case you have no choice but to accept and believe what these verses indicate, namely the soundness of the noble Qur'an and its being free of any distortion or alteration; or
- 2) You deny that it is from Allah (ﷻ), which is disbelief in Allah because the one who denies a single verse of the Qur'an and believes that it cannot be soundly attributed to Allah is a disbeliever, according to the consensus of all Muslims.⁸⁰¹

3.5.1.b. Evidence from the words of their Imams

There are many reports from their Imams, whom they regard as infallible, in which they urge the Shia to adhere to the Book of Allah and to refer everything to the Qur'an and Sunnah.

One of these reports says that Moosa ibn Ja'far was asked: "Do you find everything you need in the Qur'an and Sunnah, or do you have your own opinions?" He replied: "No, everything is in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ)." ⁸⁰²

It was narrated that Abdullah said: "Whoever goes against the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is a disbeliever." ⁸⁰³ It was narrated from Abu Ja'far that he said: "Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, has not omitted anything the Ummah needs but He has revealed it in His Book and explained it to His Messenger (ﷺ). He has set a limit for all things and sent proof to indicate it." ⁸⁰⁴ It was narrated that Abu Abdullah said: "There is nothing but there is something in the Qur'an or Sunnah about it." ⁸⁰⁵

The one who studies these reports will learn two important things:

- ❖ The Imams of Ahl al-Bayt, like others of the early generations of this Ummah, believed in the soundness of the noble Qur'an; otherwise they would not have asked their followers to adhere to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ) and rejected everything else. Moreover, they told them that there is nothing that is not addressed in the Book of Allah or the Sunnah, and they said that they did not have anything that was not in these two sources.
- ❖ There are reports attributed to the Imams that say that the Qur'an was distorted, but they did not actually say that. They are innocent of it and have nothing to do with those who fabricated these reports.⁸⁰⁶

3.5.1.c. Rational evidence

Just as the reports of the Qur'an and Sunnah show that the claims of the Râfiḍis about the distortion of the noble Qur'an are false, reason also indicates that these claims are false. That is because of the serious implications of saying that the Qur'an has been distorted; it implies slander against Allah (ﷻ) and against the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions (رضي الله عنهم), as well as the pure Imams of Ahl al-Bayt. It is a slander against Allah (ﷻ) because it implies that He did not keep his promise to protect the Qur'an — exalted be Allah far above that. It is a slander against the Prophet (ﷺ) because it implies that he did not convey the noble Qur'an completely, that he told many verses to 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) only and not to anyone else. It is a slander against the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), whom the Râfiḍi Shia accuse of distorting the Qur'an for their own interests. It is a slander against 'Ali and the Imams who came after him because it implies that they did not convey to the people the Qur'an that they had, and they did not call the people to it. That constitutes concealing the Book of Allah, and Allah (ﷻ) warned

against that: ﴿Verily, those who conceal the clear proofs, evidences and the guidance, which We have sent down, after We have made it clear for the people in the Book, they are the ones cursed by Allah and cursed by the cursers.﴾ (Qur'an 2: 159)

If the Râfiḍi Shia accepted only rational evidence, then the negative implications resulting from this foul belief would have been the greatest deterrent. It would have compelled them to give up this belief and repent to Allah (ﷻ) from everything that they have fabricated against Him, His Prophet (ﷺ), the noble Companions of His Prophet and the pure Ahl al-Bayt.⁸⁰⁷

3.5.2. Their belief that the Qur'an is not binding proof (meaning that it is invalid) unless the one who is in charge of it is present

Al-Kulayni, the author of *Uṣool al-Kâfi*, which for the Shia is like *Sahih Bukhari* is for Ahl as-Sunnah,⁸⁰⁸ narrated: "The Qur'an is not binding proof unless the one who is in charge of it is present. 'Ali (ﷺ) was in charge of the Qur'an, and obedience to him was obligatory, and he was the proof against the people after the Messenger of Allah."⁸⁰⁹ This view is to be found in a number of their main books, such as *Rijâl al-Kashshi*,⁸¹⁰ *Ilal ash-Sharâ'i*,⁸¹¹ *al-Maḥâsin*,⁸¹² *Wasâ'il ash-Shi'ah*⁸¹³ and others. How can such a thing be said of the Book of Allah (ﷻ), which He revealed as guidance to mankind, saying: ﴿Verily, this Qur'an guides to that which is most just and right﴾ (Qur'an 17: 9)?

The Rightly Guided Caliph 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "The Book of Allah contains stories of what came before you, news of what is to come after you and rulings to judge between you; it is serious and not in jest. Any tyrant who abandons it, Allah will destroy him; whoever seeks guidance in anything other than it, Allah will send him astray. It is the strong rope, the wise reminder and the straight path. It is that

which cannot be affected by whims and desires. Tongues will not stumble over it, its wonders will never end and the people of knowledge will never tire of it. The one who quotes from it will be speaking the truth, the one who acts upon it will be rewarded, the one who judges in accordance with it will be just, and the one who calls others to it will guide them to a straight path.”⁸¹⁴

Ibn ‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) said: “Allah makes a guarantee to the one who reads the Qur’an and acts upon it that he will not go astray in this world and will not be doomed in the hereafter.” Then he recited this verse: ﴿He [Allah] said: ‘Get you down [from the paradise to the earth], both of you, together, some of you are an enemy to some others. Then if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My Guidance he shall neither go astray, nor shall be distressed.﴾ (Qur’an 20: 123)

In the Shias’ own books, in their most reliable sources, there are reports narrated from Ahl al-Bayt that contradict this view of theirs. For example: “When you become confused by turmoils like pieces of black night, then refer to the Qur’an, for it will be an intercessor whose intercession will be accepted; whoever follows it, it will lead him to paradise, but whoever puts it behind his back, it will drive him to hell. And it is the guide to the best way.”⁸¹⁵ In *Nahj al-Balâghah*, which is attributed to ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) and considered one of their most trustworthy references, it says: “The Qur’an commands and rebukes, is silent yet speaks, and it is the proof of Allah (ﷻ) against His creation.”⁸¹⁶

There are other texts that support these reports and highlight the extent of the contradiction and confusion found in the sources of these people. Since their reports — as you can see — contradict one another, they came up with a dangerous methodology, which is to adopt the view that is contrary to what the Muslim masses (meaning Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ‘ah) believe. Anyone who studies this view,

which is narrated in the books of the Shia, will realise that it was introduced by an enemy who was filled with resentment and hatred and who wanted to turn the Shia away from the Book of Allah (ﷻ) and lead them astray from His guidance.

The Shiite view connects the validity of the Qur'an to the presence of the one who is supposed to be in charge of it, which is one of the twelve Imams, since the Qur'an was explained to 'Ali, and he transmitted the knowledge of the Qur'an to the rest of the twelve Imams. Each Imam passed on this knowledge to the one who came after him until it ended with the twelfth Imam. According to the Twelvers, he is absent and has been lost for more than eleven centuries, but some Shiite and other groups believe that he does not exist. As long as the validity of the Qur'an is linked to this absent or missing Imam, the logical conclusion is that the validity of the Qur'an is suspended now because of the absence or non-existence of the one who is supposed to be in charge of it. Under these circumstances, the Book cannot be referred to or quoted as evidence because what counts as evidence is the word of the Imam only, and the Imam is absent. Therefore the Shiite view is that the Qur'an cannot be used as evidence. That is sufficient misguidance, and it diverts people away from the Book of Allah, but that is not the end of the conspiracy against the Book of Allah and the Shia. It is just one link in the chain, one in a series of conspiracies aimed at turning the Shia away from the Book of Allah (ﷻ).⁸¹⁷

It is a well-established fact in Islam that knowledge of the noble Qur'an was not a secret to be transmitted through a certain line, and 'Ali (ﷻ) did not receive any special treatment in that regard to the exclusion of the other Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). The Companions (ﷺ) were the pioneers who had the honour of receiving this Qur'an from the Messenger of mankind Muhammad (ﷺ) and transmitting it to all generations. The Shia, however, went

against this principle. They believe that Allah (ﷻ) singled out their twelve Imams for knowledge of the entire Qur'an, that the Imams are the only ones who can interpret it, and that whoever seeks knowledge of the Qur'an from anyone else has gone astray.⁸¹⁸ Some Sunni sources state that the origin and roots of this view go back to Ibn Saba', who said: "The Qur'an is one of nine parts, and its knowledge is with 'Ali."⁸¹⁹ This view is mentioned frequently in the books of the Twelver Shia, in various kinds of reports, as we shall see below.

In a lengthy report in *Uṣool al-Kâfi*, it is narrated that Abu Abdullah said: "The Qur'an would be sufficient for the people if they could find someone to interpret it. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) explained it to one man, and he explained it to the Imams; that man is 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib."⁸²⁰ In a number of Shi'ite sources, which they consider reliable, it is narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Allah sent the Qur'an down to me. Whoever goes against it will go astray, and whoever seeks knowledge of it with anyone other than 'Ali is doomed."⁸²¹ The books of the Shia also claim that Abu Ja'far said: "O Qatâdah, are you the jurist of the people of Basra?" He replied: "That is what they say." Abu Ja'far (ﷺ) said: "I have heard that you interpret the Qur'an?" Qatâdah said to him: "Yes."... He said: "Woe to you, O Qatâdah, the Qur'an can only be known by the one to whom it is addressed."⁸²²

They have very many reports of this nature, which could fill an entire volume. They all emphasise the same concept: that "only the twelve Imams have knowledge of the Qur'an, and it is kept with them, and through it they know all things."⁸²³ The response to that is what Allah (ﷻ) said to those who sought a sign to prove the truthfulness of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): ﴿Is it not sufficient for them that We have sent down to you the Book [the Qur'an] which is recited to them?﴾ (*Qur'an* 29: 51) The noble Qur'an is the witness, the evidence and the proof. Whoever seeks knowledge of the Qur'an

from the Qur'an or from the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) or from the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), including 'Ali, will be guided.

This notion — that the one seeking knowledge of the Qur'an from anyone other than 'Ali is doomed — is not part of Islam, and it is known to be false beyond any doubt. The Prophet (ﷺ) did not single out any one of his Companions for knowledge of Sharia to the exclusion of others. Allah (ﷻ) says: *And We have also sent down unto you [O Muhammad] the Dhikr [reminder and the advice (i.e. the Qur'an)], that you may explain clearly to men what is sent down to them* (Qur'an 16: 44). This verse proves that explanation of the Qur'an is for all people, not just one individual or group, even if they are members of his household. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (ﷺ) stated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not single him out for specific knowledge to the exclusion of other people.⁸²⁴ The Prophet (ﷺ) addressed his Companions and those who came after them and encouraged them to convey his Sunnah, and he did not single out one of them in that regard. He said: "May Allah make his face radiant, the one who hears the hadith from us and memorises it so that he can convey it to others, because it may be that a person who has some knowledge but does not fully understand it may convey it to someone who has better understanding than him."⁸²⁵ This hadith was also narrated in the major reference books of the Twelver Shias,⁸²⁶ and it will count as evidence against them.

Let us consider the claims that the noble Qur'an was not addressed to anyone but the twelve Imams, that no one knows the Qur'an except them and that the Qur'an is only understood by those to whom it is addressed.⁸²⁷ According to this sick understanding, the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), the Tâbi'oon and the leading scholars of Islam throughout the ages would be regarded as being doomed and as causing the doom of others because they

interpret the Qur'an properly, or because they believe that there are things in the Book of Allah that no one has any excuse for not knowing. Some of this is known by the Arabs because of their language, some of it cannot be interpreted fully by anyone except the scholars, and there is some that no one knows the interpretation of except Allah (ﷻ).⁸²⁸

The Shia maintain that no one understands the Qur'an except the Imams, and that they know the entire Qur'an. This is a claim that requires evidence, and it is refuted on the basis of both reason and reports. It should be noted that the Prophet (ﷺ) explained to his Companions the meaning of the Qur'an as well as its words. The verse ﴿And We have also sent down unto you [O Muhammad] the *Dhikr* [reminder and the advice (i.e. the Qur'an)], that you may explain clearly to men what is sent down to them,﴾ (Qur'an 16: 44) refers to both the meanings and the words.

Abu 'Abdur-Rahmân as-Sulami said: "Those who taught us the Qur'an — such as 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân, Abdullah ibn Mas'ood and others — told us that when they learned ten verses from the Prophet (ﷺ), they would not move on until they had learned what they contained of knowledge and righteous deeds. They said: 'So we learned the Qur'an and knowledge and righteous deeds all together.'"⁸²⁹ Hence they used to spend some time memorising each soorah, because Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿[This is] a Book [the Qur'an] which We have sent down to you, full of blessings, that they may ponder over its Verses, and that men of understanding may remember.﴾ (Qur'an 38: 29)

﴿Do they not then consider the Qur'an carefully?﴾ (Qur'an 4: 82)

﴿Have they not pondered over the Word [of Allah, i.e. what is sent down to the Prophet]...?﴾ (Qur'an 23: 68)

Pondering over the Qur'an without understanding its meanings is not possible. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Verily, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an in order that you may understand﴾ (*Qur'an* 12: 2). Understanding the Qur'an means comprehending it, and it is well known that the point of any statement is that its meaning should be understood. A statement is not mere words, and this is even more important in the case of the Qur'an.

For these reasons, one group of Shia no longer accepted or believed in this view. They said that the apparent meanings of the Qur'an are not something that is known exclusively to the Twelvers, and that others could understand them too, but as for the hidden meanings of the verses, that is something that is known to the Imams alone. Thus there was a major debate between the two groups as to whether the apparent meanings of the Qur'an are binding. The former group believe that no one knows the meaning of the entire Qur'an, both apparent and hidden, except the Imams; the latter group believes that the apparent meanings of the Qur'an are binding because of the general meaning of the call to ponder and understand the Qur'an.⁸³⁰

The claim that the Qur'an was interpreted for 'Ali (ﷺ) alone is contrary to the words of Allah (ﷻ): ﴿With clear signs and Books [We sent the Messengers]. And We have also sent down unto you [O Muhammad] the *Dhikr* [reminder and the advice (i.e. the Qur'an)], that you may explain clearly to men what is sent down to them, and that they may give thought﴾ (*Qur'an* 16: 44). The clear signs are for all people, not for 'Ali (ﷺ) alone, as we have stated above. A person who denies that is left with one of two options: either to say that the Messenger did not convey what was revealed to him, or to reject what the Qur'an says, which is contrary to reason and the well established principles of Islam.

The claim that knowledge of the Qur'an was given exclusively to the Imams is contrary to the fact that a large number of the

Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) were well known for interpreting the Qur'an, including the first four Caliphs, Ibn Mas'ood, Ibn 'Abbâs, Zayd ibn Thâbit and others. 'Ali (ﷺ) praised the interpretation of Ibn 'Abbâs (ﷺ).⁸³¹ Ibn Taymiyah said: "A great deal of commentary on the Qur'an was transmitted from Ibn 'Abbâs with proven chains of narration, and there is little mention of 'Ali in these reports. Ibn 'Abbâs narrated from more than one of the Companions; he narrated from 'Umar, Abu Hurayrah, 'Abdur-Rahmân ibn 'Awf, Zayd ibn Thâbit, Ubayy ibn Ka'b, Usâmah ibn Zayd and others among the Muhâjireen and Anşâr, but the reports he narrated from 'Ali are very few. The authors of the sound collections of hadiths did not narrate any of the hadiths of Ibn 'Abbâs about Qur'an interpretation from 'Ali, although they narrated his hadiths from 'Umar, Abdur-Rahmân ibn 'Awf, Abu Hurayrah and others. There is no book of Qur'an interpretation known to the Muslims that is proven to be from 'Ali. These books of hadiths and commentary on the Qur'an are filled with reports from the Companions and Tâbi'een, but what is narrated from 'Ali is very little, and what is narrated of Qur'an interpretation from Ja'far aş-Şâdiq is falsely attributed to Ja'far."⁸³²

Ja'far spoke about how people were keen to attribute fabricated statements to him and said that their idea that knowledge of the Qur'an was given exclusively to 'Ali leads to undermining the fact that the Qur'an was transmitted from the Companions to subsequent generations in mutawâtir reports, because it was not transmitted — according to their claim — from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) except by one person, namely 'Ali (ﷺ). This view is a conspiracy aimed at keeping people away from the Book of Allah and making them turn away from pondering it, seeking its guidance, thinking about the lessons it contains, and studying its meanings. According to the Shiite religion, there is no way to understand the meanings of the Qur'an except through the twelve Imams; everyone else is deprived of benefiting from it. This is an attempt or a trick with

a clear aim, because the Qur'an was revealed by Allah (ﷻ) in a plain Arabic tongue and is addressed to all people: ﴿Verily, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an in order that you may understand.﴾ (Qur'an 12: 2)

﴿This [the Qur'an] is a plain statement for mankind, a guidance and instruction to those who are Al-Muttaqoon [the pious].﴾

(Qur'an 3: 138)

Allah (ﷻ) has commanded His slaves to ponder it, learn its lessons and heed its prohibitions. It does not make sense to say to someone who does not understand what is said to him: "Ponder that of which you have no understanding or knowledge."⁸³³ This is an attempt to turn people away from that great store of knowledge of the interpretation of the Qur'an that was transmitted to us by the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), the early generations of the Ummah and the scholars. This great treasure has no value or worth, according to the Shiite religion, because it was not narrated from the twelve Imams. Some of their contemporary shaykhs have stated this clearly, saying: "All the commentary on the Qur'an that was narrated from anyone except Ahl al-Bayt is of no value and is not to be taken into consideration."⁸³⁴

Their main books of Qur'an interpretation, such as those of al-Qummi, al-'Iyâshi, aş-Şâfi and al-Burhân, and their main books of hadith, such as *al-Kâfi* and *Biḥâr al-Anwâr*, have tried to give interpretations of the Book of Allah which are attributed to Ahl al-Bayt. In most cases, though, their interpretations demonstrate blatant ignorance of the Book of Allah and a deviant interpretation of its verses. Their explanations are very twisted and cannot be soundly attributed to the scholars among Ahl al-Bayt, because they have no connection to the meaning of the words; they are not indicated by the words or by the Qur'anic context, as we shall see below. According to this belief, this is supposed to represent the best knowledge of the

scholars of Ahl al-Bayt; in fact, it undermines them and attributes a great deal of ignorance to them by people who claim to love and support them.⁸³⁵

3.5.3. Their belief that the Qur'an has hidden meanings that are different from its apparent meanings

The Shia are of the view that the Qur'an has apparent and hidden meanings, and that the people only know the apparent meanings; as for the hidden meanings, no one knows them except the Imams and those who learn from them. With such ideas, they opened the door to heretics, followers of whims and desires and destructive sects to tamper with the Qur'an. They all tried to plot against it and wanted to extinguish the light of Islam with their fabrications, but Allah (ﷻ) will complete His light even if the polytheists hate it. The Shia exploited this idea of apparent and hidden meanings to try to interpret the Qur'an to be in accordance with their beliefs and to serve their ideas about imamate. They also took the Qur'an as a means to attack and condemn the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), while at the same time praising Ahl al-Bayt and attributing to them things that they themselves would deny. In this regard, the Râfiḍi Shia came up with views that contradict everything that was narrated about the interpretation of the Qur'an, views for which there is no support on the basis of reports, reason, Arabic language or logic.⁸³⁶

The roots of the esoteric interpretation go back to the Saba'i groups. Ibn Saba' tried to find support in the Book of Allah, by means of esoteric misinterpretations, for his idea that the Prophet (ﷺ) would come back to life. He said: "It is strange that those who claim that 'Eesa will come back to life do not believe that Muhammad will come back to life when Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Verily, He Who has given

you [O Muhammad] the Qur'an will surely, bring you back to *Ma'âd* [the place of return.]» (*Qur'an* 28: 85).⁸³⁷

Some of the books of Ahl as-Sunnah have narrated examples of the Shi'ite misinterpretations of the Book of Allah, but what we have discovered today is something that poses a great danger to people's belief, thought and culture. Imam al-Ash'ari,⁸³⁸ al-Baghdadi,⁸³⁹ ash-Shahraṣṭānī⁸⁴⁰ and others narrated from al-Mugheerah ibn Sa'eed, who was one of the extremists according to the consensus of both Sunnis and Shi'ites, and after whom the Mugheeri sect is named, that he explained that what was meant by the word 'Satan' in the verse ﴿...like Satan, when he says to man: 'Disbelieve in Allah'﴾ (*Qur'an* 59: 16) was 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه).

This exact interpretation was picked up by the Twelvers, who wrote it down in their main reference books; it appears in the books of Qur'an interpretation of al-Ayyāshi,⁸⁴¹ aṣ-Ṣāfi⁸⁴² and al-Qummi,⁸⁴³ and in *al-Burhān*⁸⁴⁴ and *Biḥār al-Anwār*.⁸⁴⁵ It was narrated from Abu Ja'far concerning the verse: ﴿And Satan will say when the matter has been decided...﴾ (*Qur'an* 14: 22): "That refers to the second one ['Umar]; there is no place in the Qur'an where it says 'and Satan said...' but it refers to the second one." The books of the Twelvers go further than al-Mugheerah did in setting down a rule for this deviant interpretation of the Book of Allah.⁸⁴⁶

These reports, which the books of the Twelver Shia attribute to Ja'far al-Bāqir, are actually some of the lies of al-Mugheerah ibn Sa'eed and his ilk. Adh-Dhahabi quoted Katheer an-Nuwa'⁸⁴⁷ as saying that Abu Ja'far said: "Allah and His Messenger have nothing to do with al-Mugheerah ibn Sa'eed and Bayān ibn Sam'ān, for they attributed fabrications to us, Ahl al-Bayt."⁸⁴⁸ Al-Kashshi narrated in *Rijāl al-Kashshi* that Abu Abdullah said: "May Allah curse al-Mugheerah ibn Sa'eed; he used to tell lies about us."⁸⁴⁹ Al-Kashshi

also narrated many other reports of this type.⁸⁵⁰ It may be noted that al-Ash'ari, al-Baghdadi, Ibn Ḥazm and Nishwân al-Ḥimyari were all agreed that Jâbir al-Ja'fi, who wrote the first Shia book of Qur'an interpretation using that esoteric methodology, was the successor of al-Mugheerah ibn Sa'eed,⁸⁵¹ who said that what was meant by the Satan in the Qur'an was Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Umar. These people were dangerous elements who were learning from one another, and that led to the corruption of Shiism.⁸⁵²

The Shaykh of the Shia of his era — and this is who they refer to when they use the title 'al-'Allâmah' — whose name was Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥilli, quoted evidence for 'Ali's entitlement to the imamate (caliphate) by saying: "The thirtieth piece of evidence is the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿He has let loose the two seas [the salt and fresh water] meeting together. Between them is a barrier which none of them can transgress.﴾ (*Qur'an* 55: 19-20)." He said that this refers to 'Ali and Fâtimah; that ﴿Between them is a barrier which none of them can transgress﴾ refers to the Prophet (ﷺ); and that ﴿Out of them both come out pearl and coral﴾ (*Qur'an* 55: 22) refers to al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn.

When Ibn al-Muṭahhar quoted that as evidence, Ibn Taymiyah said: "This man and his ilk say things that they do not understand, and it is more like delirium than interpretation of the Qur'an. It is akin to the interpretation of the heretics and *Qarâmiṭah* of the Qur'an. Indeed it is worse than much of that; it is the way in which the heretics seek to undermine the Qur'an. Interpreting the Qur'an in this way is one of the greatest ways of maligning it."⁸⁵³

The following are some examples of the ways in which the Râfiḍi Shia distorted the verses of the noble Qur'an because they opened the door wide to esoteric interpretations:

3.5.3.a. *Their distortion of the meaning of tawḥeed, which is the foundation of the religion, to mean entitlement to the imamate*

It was narrated from Abu Ja'far that he said: "Allah never sent any Prophet except with loyalty to our imamate and disavowal of our enemies."⁸⁵⁴ That is what Allah referred to when He said in His Book: ﴿And verily, We have sent among every Ummah [community, nation] a Messenger [proclaiming]: 'Worship Allah [Alone], and avoid [or keep away from] *Tâghoot* [all false deities, i.e. do not worship *Tâghoot* besides Allah].'﴾ (*Qur'an* 16: 36)"

3.5.3.b. *Their distortion of the concept of divinity to mean imamate*

With regard to the verse, ﴿And Allah said [O mankind!]: "Take not *ilâhain* [two gods in worship]. Verily, He [Allah] is [the] only One *Ilâh* [God]..."﴾ (*Qur'an* 16: 51), Abu Abdullah said: "What is meant by that is: Do not take two Imams; he is only one Imam."⁸⁵⁵

3.5.3.c. *Their distortion of the meaning of the word 'Lord' in the Qur'an to mean the Imam*

With regard to the interpretation of the verse ﴿And the disbeliever is ever a helper [of Satan] against his Lord﴾ (*Qur'an* 25: 55), al-Qummi said in his commentary: "The 'disbeliever' is the second one (meaning 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb); he was a helper against Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام)."⁸⁵⁶

Al-Kâshâni said in *al-Baṣâ'ir* that al-Bâqir was asked about the interpretation of this verse, and he said: "This verse has a hidden meaning, and the words 'his Lord' refer to 'Ali, since 'Ali is his lord in the context of imamate."⁸⁵⁷

3.5.3.d. Their distortion of the meanings of the word 'Word' to mean the Imams

They said with regard to the interpretation of the verse: ﴿And had it not been for a decisive Word [gone forth already], the matter would have been judged between them﴾ (*Qur'an* 42: 21), "The Word is the Imam."⁸⁵⁸

With regard to the verse: ﴿No change can there be in the Words of Allah﴾ (*Qur'an* 10: 64), they said, "There can be no change in the imamate."⁸⁵⁹

3.5.3.e. Their distortion of the meanings of the words 'mosque', 'Ka'bah' and 'qiblah' to mean the Imams

With regard to the verse: ﴿You should face Him only in each and every place of worship [*masjid*﴾ (*Qur'an* 7: 29), they interpreted the word *masjid* (which is literally a place of prostration, but normally means a mosque) as meaning the Imams.⁸⁶⁰ With regard to the verse: ﴿Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer [*masjid*﴾ (*Qur'an* 7: 31), they said, "It [*masjid*] means the Imams."⁸⁶¹ With regard to the verse, ﴿And the mosques are for Allah [Alone], so invoke not anyone along with Allah﴾ (*Qur'an* 72: 18), they interpreted it as: "The Imam is from the family of Muhammad, so do not take anyone else as an Imam."⁸⁶²

Aṣ-Ṣādiq said, narrating from them: "We [Imams] are the holy land (Makkah), we are the Ka'bah of Allah and we are the qiblah of Allah."⁸⁶³ They equate 'prostration' in the Qur'an with loving and supporting the Imams, so they interpret the verse: ﴿They used to be called to prostrate themselves [offer prayers], while they were healthy and good [in the life of the world, but they did not]﴾ (*Qur'an* 68: 43), as meaning: "They were called to support the imamate of 'Ali in this world."⁸⁶⁴

3.5.3.f. Their distorting the meaning of repentance in the Qur'an to mean recanting love and support of Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmân, and loving and supporting 'Ali only

With regard to the verse: ﴿So forgive those who repent and follow Your way﴾ (*Qur'an* 40: 7), the interpretation according to them came in three reports:

- 1) 'So forgive those who repent' means those who repent from having supported and loved Abu Bakr, 'Umar and the Umayyads.
- 2) 'So forgive those who repent' means those who have repented from supporting and loving the three evil idols (meaning Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmân) and the Umayyads, while 'and follow Your way' refers to the love and support of 'Ali.
- 3) 'So forgive those who repent' means those who repent from supporting and loving these three and the Umayyads, while 'and follow Your way', refers to Amir al-Mu'mineen ('Ali).⁸⁶⁵

All three reports are attributed to Abu Ja'far Muhammad al-Bâqir, but his knowledge and religious commitment prove that this cannot be true.⁸⁶⁶

These are just a few of their many false interpretations. Their sources for Qur'an interpretation are mostly based on this esoteric methodology of interpretation, which they adopted from Abu al-Khaṭṭâb, Jâbir al-Ja'fi, al-Mugheerah ibn Sa'eed and other extremists. It may be noted that in the fifth century AH, their experts in Qur'an interpretation tried to correct that extreme approach of esoteric interpretation. Their prominent shaykh, Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan aṭ-Ṭoosi (d. 460 AH) wrote a book of Qur'an interpretation in which he tried to eliminate or reduce the obvious exaggeration found in the commentary of al-Qummi and al-

'Ayyâshi and in *Uṣool al-Kâfi* and other books. Even though he defended the fundamentals of his sect and affirmed their innovated principles, he did not sink to the level to which al-Qummi and those who were influenced by him sank. Similar to aṭ-Ṭoosi in this methodology was al-Faḍl ibn al-Ḥasan aṭ-Ṭubrusi, in *Majma' al-Bayân*. Ibn Taymiyah referred to that when he said: "Aṭ-Ṭoosi, and those who are like him in their Quran interpretation, drew upon the commentaries of Ahl as-Sunnah; there is no useful knowledge in their commentary that was not taken from the commentaries of Ahl as-Sunnah."⁸⁶⁷

3.6. The attitude of the Imami Shia towards the noble Companions

The attitude of the Râfiḍi Shia towards the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) is one of enmity, hatred, resentment and grudges. That is clear from the extensive criticism of the Companions that fills their books, both classical and contemporary. For example, they believe that all but a few of the Companions became disbelievers and apostates; this is mentioned clearly in reports included in what they consider to be the soundest and most trustworthy of their books. Al-Kulayni narrated from Abu Ja'far that he said: "The people all became apostates after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ) except three." The narrator said: "Who are those three?" He said: "Al-Miqdâd ibn al-Aswad, Abu Dharr al-Ghifârî and Salmân al-Fârisî (may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon them)." Then he mentioned a few other people and said: "These are the ones who were tested and refused to swear allegiance until 'Ali was brought and swore allegiance reluctantly to Abu Bakr."⁸⁶⁸

Ni'matullah al-Jazâ'iri said: "The Imamis believe in a clear and unambiguous instruction from the Prophet (ﷺ) that 'Ali was to be his successor, and they regard the Companions as disbelievers and

impugn them. According to them, the imamate went to Ja'far aṣ-Ṣâdiq and after him, to his children the infallible ones, upon whom be peace. The author of this book is one of this group, and it (that group) is the one that will be saved inshallah."⁸⁶⁹

The Râfiḍi Shias' accusations against the Companions do not end with this belief that they became disbelievers and apostates. They believe that they are the worst of Allah's creation and that belief in Allah and His Messenger cannot be sound except by disavowing them, especially the three caliphs Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmân, and some of the Mothers of the Believers.⁸⁷⁰

Muhammad Bâqir al-Majlisi said: "Our belief concerning disavowal is that we disavow the four idols: Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân and Mu'âwiyah; and the four women: 'Â'ishah, Ḥafṣah, Hind and Umm al-Ḥakam; and all their supporters and followers. They are the worst of Allah's creation on the face of the earth, and belief in Allah and His Messenger and the Imams cannot be complete except by disavowal of their enemies."⁸⁷¹

Their hatred towards the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) has gone so far that they regard it as permissible to curse them; in fact, they seek to draw close to Allah by means of that in ways that cannot be described. Mullah Kadhîm narrated from Abu Ḥamzah ath-Thamâli — in a fabrication attributed to Zayn al-'Âbideen (may Allah have mercy on him) — that he said: "Whoever curses al-Jibt waṭ-ṭaghoot [meaning Abu Bakr and 'Umar] once, Allah (ﷻ) will record for him seventy million good deeds, erase from him seventy million bad deeds and raise him in status by seventy million degrees. Whoever curses them once in the evening will have the same recorded for him. Our master 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn passed away, so I entered upon our master Abu Ja'far Muhammad al-Bâqir, and said: 'O our master, a hadith that I heard from your father.' He said: 'Tell me, O Thamâli.' I repeated the hadith to him, and he said: 'Yes, O

Thamâli, do you want me to give you more?' I said: 'Of course, O my master.' He said: 'Whoever curses them once every morning will not have any sin recorded for him during that day until evening comes, and whoever curses them once in the evening will not have any sin recorded for him during that night until morning comes.'"⁸⁷²

One of their famous supplications is one called 'the supplication of the two idols of Quraysh' (meaning Abu Bakr and 'Umar), which is narrated in the books of remembrances. They attribute this supplication wrongly and falsely to 'Ali (عليه السلام), and it is more than a page and a half long. In it are the words: "O Allah, send blessings upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, and curse the two idols of Quraysh and their two Jibts and their two Tâghoots and their two lies and their two daughters, who went against Your command, denied Your revelation, denied Your blessings, disobeyed Your Messenger, altered Your religion and distorted Your book..." and at the end: "O Allah, curse them in secret and openly, an eternal, everlasting, unceasing and never-ending curse, a curse that has a beginning but does not have an end, for them and their helpers and supporters, those who love them and take them as friends, those who submit to them and are inclined towards them, those who defend them, accept their words and believe what they say. (Say four times:) O Allah, punish them with a punishment that the people of hell pray not be punished in that way. Âmeen, O Lord of the Worlds.""⁸⁷³

This supplication is encouraged among them to the extent that they narrated reports concerning its virtue that they attribute to Ibn 'Abbâs. They claim that he said: "'Ali (عليه السلام) used to recite this supplication in his prayers, and he said: 'The one who recites it is like one who shot an arrow with the Prophet (ﷺ) at Badr, Uhud and Hunayn, one million arrows.'"⁸⁷⁴ Hence their scholars paid a great deal of attention to this supplication, to the extent that Agha Barzak at-Tahrâni stated that ten books were written commenting on it.⁸⁷⁵

This is what is mentioned in their ancient books and on the lips of their earlier scholars. With regard to their contemporary scholars, they believe the same as their predecessors and adhere to it. Their venerated imam and 'Grand Ayatollah' Khomeini writes the following in his book *Kashf al-Asrâr*:

- "We have nothing to do with these two shaykhs [Abu Bakr and 'Umar] and what they did of actions contrary to the Qur'an, toying with the rulings of Allah and what they deemed to be ḥalâl or ḥarâm on the basis of their own views, and what they did of injustice against Fâtimah, the daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ) and against her children. But we should point out their ignorance of the rulings of Allah and of Islam."⁸⁷⁶
- Concerning the two shaykhs [Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them)]: "Here we find ourselves forced to quote examples of their clearly going against the Qur'an to prove that they were against it."⁸⁷⁷
- Accusing them of distorting the Qur'an: "Allah mentioned eight categories of people who are entitled to a share of zakâh, but Abu Bakr omitted one of these groups on the basis of advice from 'Umar, and the Muslims did not say anything."⁸⁷⁸
- "In fact, they did not give proper respect to the Messenger, who had striven hard and borne calamities in order to guide them, and when he closed his eyes (died), the words of the son of al-Khaṭṭâb, which were based on fabrication and which stemmed from deeds of disbelief and heresy, were ringing in his ears."⁸⁷⁹

There are contemporary voices, such as al-Khunayzi, Aḥmad Mughniyah, ar-Rifâ'i and Muhammad Jawâd Mughniyah, who call for rapprochement between the Shia and Ahl as-Sunnah and who claim to respect the Companions. They should state their view openly by praising the Companions in the midst of the Shia, they should

strive to cleanse the Shiite legacy of everything that is contrary to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger, and they should stand up to the contemporary Shiite shaykhs who are still jabbering about these misguided notions. They should not ignore what is mentioned in their books, both classical and contemporary, and what is taking place in real life among their common folk and shaykhs alike. They should be sincere and not contradict themselves, and only then we might accept what they say.⁸⁸⁰

The belief of the Râfiḍi Shia about the Companions is to be found in the reference books on which their madh-hab is based. There is slander, impugning, reviling and foul talk that people with dignity and religious commitment would refrain from uttering towards the worst disbelievers. Yet we see that the Râfiḍi Shia are happy with these words that they speak against the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and his successors (caliphs), advisors and in-laws, and they regard this as a religious duty for which they hope for the greatest reward from Allah. In fact, if the Muslim ponders how misguided these people are, he will realise two things:

- (a) He will realise the greatness of Allah's blessing, kindness and generosity due to the fact that He has saved him from this misguidance; this is something that requires gratitude to Allah.
- (b) He will learn a lesson about the extent of these people's deviation and misguidance that anyone with the slightest amount of reason would realise, such as their seeking to draw close to Allah by cursing Abu Bakr and 'Umar morning and evening, and their claims that the one who curses them once will not have any sin recorded for him during that day. All the rational people of this Ummah, and indeed those of religions of divine origin, would realise clearly, on the basis of what they know of the religion of Allah (ﷻ), that Allah (ﷻ) never asked any nation to draw close to Him by means of cursing any of the disbelievers,

even if they were the worst of disbelievers. Moreover, He does not ask them to draw close to Him by cursing Iblees, the accursed who was cast out from His mercy, morning and evening, in a specific wording to draw close to Allah as the Râfîdî Shia seek to draw close to Him by cursing Abu Bakr and 'Umar.

Rather, I⁸⁸¹ do not know, after reading and examining the books of the Râfîdîs themselves, that they contain any supplication, specific or otherwise, which curses Abu Jahl, Umayyah ibn Khalaf or al-Waleed ibn al-Mugheerah, who were the worst disbelievers among the people and the most vehement in their rejection of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), or even any curses directed against Iblees, while at the same time their books are filled with reports cursing Abu Bakr and 'Umar, as in the 'supplication of the two idols of Quraysh' and others. This is a clear sign to any rational person of the extent of misguidance a person can reach if he turns away from the path of Allah (ﷻ) and follows whims and desires and innovations. His evil deeds will be made attractive to him until he no longer recognises what is good and what is bad and cannot distinguish between truth and falsehood; instead he sinks in darkness and lives intoxicated by the impact of whims and desires. This is what Allah (ﷻ) told us in His Book when He described these type of people, saying: «Is he, then, to whom the evil of his deeds is made fair-seeming, so that he considers it as good [equal to one who is rightly guided]? Verily, Allah sends astray whom He wills, and guides whom He wills.» (*Qur'an* 35: 8)

«Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life while they thought that they were acquiring good by their deeds.» (*Qur'an* 18: 104)

«Say [O Muhammad] whoever is in error, the Most Gracious

[Allah] will extend [the rope] to him, until, when they see that which they were promised, either the torment or the Hour, they will come to know who is worst in position, and who is weaker in forces.﴾ (Qur'an 19: 75)

3.6.1. Examples of the unpredictable way in which the Râfiḍi Shia interpret these verses to attempt to prove the alleged apostasy of the Companions, and a refutation of their falsehood

3.6.1.a. The verse in Âl 'Imrân

﴿You did indeed wish for death [Ash-Shahâdah — martyrdom] before you met it. Now you have seen it openly with your own eyes. Muhammad is no more than a Messenger, and indeed [many] Messengers have passed away before him. If he dies or is killed, will you then turn back on your heels [as disbelievers]? And he who turns back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allah; and Allah will give reward to those who are grateful.﴾ (Qur'an 3: 143-144)

The Râfiḍi Shia quote this passage from Allah's noble Book, claiming that it clearly refers to the Companions' turning back on their heels after the death of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ); they say that this includes the vast majority of the Companions and that very few of them remained steadfast. The small group whom the Râfiḍi Shia believe remained steadfast are 'those who are grateful', and they cannot be more than a few because Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿But few of My slaves are grateful﴾ (Qur'an 34: 13). Their conclusion is that these verses, which speak of the Companions who turned on their heels, clearly refer to the Companions who lived with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in Madinah and also refer to the Companions turning on their heels straight after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), without any time elapsing.⁸⁸² They twisted the meaning of these verses and

applied them to what happened with bay'at as-Saqeefah, when the noble Companions elected Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq (رضي الله عنه) as caliph. The response to these serious lies is as follows:

Aṭ-Ṭabari narrated in his hadith, with his chain of narration from ad-Daḥḥāk, that the latter said concerning the verse ﴿Muhammad is no more than a Messenger, and indeed [many] Messengers have passed away before him﴾ (*Qur'an* 3: 144): "People whose faith was shaky and the hypocrites said, on the day when the people fled and deserted the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) (at Uḥud), when he was wounded above his eyebrow and his tooth was broken: 'Muhammad has been killed; go back to your former religion.' That is why Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿If he dies or is killed, will you then turn back on your heels [as disbelievers]?﴾ (*Qur'an* 3: 144)." ⁸⁸³

It is also narrated that Ibn Jurayj said: "People with doubts, shaky faith and hypocrisy in their hearts said, when the people fled and deserted the Prophet (ﷺ): 'Muhammad has been killed; go back to your former religion.' Then this verse was revealed." ⁸⁸⁴ What is meant by 'turning back on (one's) heels' in this verse is what the hypocrites said when the rumour spread among the people that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had been killed; they said: "Go back to your former religion."

This verse is not speaking about those who apostatised after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), even though it is proof against them. If it was about them, this would provide further proof that the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) had nothing to do with the apostates, because they are the ones who fought them. Allah (ﷻ) caused His religion to prevail at their hands, and He caused the apostates to be defeated by means of the Companions' fighting them; some of them came back to Islam, and some died in a state of apostasy, and the virtue of Abu Bakr was demonstrated by his fighting them. ⁸⁸⁵ Because of this, 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) used to say that the words of Allah (ﷻ),

﴿And Allah will give reward to those who are grateful﴾ (*Qur'an* 3: 144), referred to those who remained steadfast in their religion: Abu Bakr and his companions.⁸⁸⁶ He also used to say that Abu Bakr was foremost among those who were grateful and those who were beloved by Allah (ﷺ).⁸⁸⁷

The battle of Uḥud is a special case, hence the verses of Soorat Âl 'Imrân came within the context of the unique circumstances of this battle. To use this verse to analyze events such as the oath of allegiance in Saqeefah or the Battle of the Camel is very strange and inconsistent, and it has nothing to do with academic methodology. This verse is regarded as one of the greatest signs of the deep faith and wisdom of Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) and of his relentless efforts in defending the religion of Allah (ﷻ). The best testimony to that is his steadfast attitude on the day the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died, the day when he stood firm and addressed the people despite the grief and weakness that he felt at the loss of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

He said: "Allah (ﷻ) says ﴿Verily, you [O Muhammad] will die, and verily, they [too] will die﴾ (*Qur'an* 39: 30) and ﴿Muhammad is no more than a Messenger, and indeed [many] Messengers have passed away before him. If he dies or is killed, will you then turn back on your heels [as disbelievers]? And he who turns back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allah; and Allah will give reward to those who are grateful﴾ (*Qur'an* 3: 144). Whoever used to worship Allah (ﷻ), verily Allah is Ever-Living and will never die; whoever used to worship Muhammad, verily Muhammad has died."⁸⁸⁸

His strict stance against those who turned on their heels, replacing faith with disbelief by following false prophets like Musaylimah, Sajjâh, Tulayḥah ibn Khuwaylid, al-Aswad al-'Ansi and their ilk, and those who said, "We will not pray and we will not pay zakâh," and dismissed the obligations of Islam on the basis of

their whims and desires, is the most brilliant example of the greatness of Abu Bakr and the Companions and their devotion to Islam.⁸⁸⁹ 'Ali (عليه السلام) stood beside the Rightly Guided Caliph Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq (عليه السلام) in the jihad against the apostates and those who withheld zakāh. As for at-Teejāni, Sharaf ad-Deen al-Musawi and other leading scholars of the Twelver Shia, they are still waffling over the issue of those who withheld zakāh, trying to justify their stance and accusing Abu Bakr and the Companions of falsehood and apostasy. What extreme misguidance these people are uttering when they impugn the Companions of the Messenger of Allah and regard those who strove for the sake of Allah in support of this religion as symbols of disbelief, apostasy and hypocrisy.

It is not surprising to learn the extent of the respect that Imam Ja'far ibn 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Tālib had for Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq. Al-Irbili narrated in *Kashf al-Ghummah fi Ma'rifat al-A'immah* from 'Urwah ibn Abdullah that he said: "I asked Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn 'Ali about adorning swords, and he said: 'There is nothing wrong with it; Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq (عليه السلام) adorned his sword.' I said: 'Do you say "aṣ-Ṣiddeeq"?' He jumped up, turned to face towards the qiblah and said: 'Yes, aṣ-Ṣiddeeq. Whoever does not call him aṣ-Ṣiddeeq, may Allah never accept from him anything he says in this world or in the hereafter as true.'"⁸⁹⁰ May Allah have mercy on Imam Abu Ja'far, and may Allah bless his words that were kept away in the books of the past and never recognised by those people today.⁸⁹¹

3.6.1.b. The verse in Soorat al-Mâ'idah

Some of these fanatics who insist that the Companions became apostates and turned on their heels quote as evidence the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿O you who believe! Whoever from among you turns back from his religion [Islam], Allah will bring a people whom He will love and they will love Him; humble towards the

believers, stern towards the disbelievers, fighting in the way of Allah, and never afraid of the blame of the blamers. That is the Grace of Allah which He bestows on whom He wills. And Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knower. ﴿Qur'an 5: 54﴾

This verse, which is quoted as evidence by the Twelver Shiite scholars to indicate that the Companions apostatised and turned on their heels,⁸⁹² is the best evidence of the greatness of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) and their striving to defend Islam; it is not evidence of their apostasy and turning on their heels. Aṭ-Ṭabari narrated, with his chain of narration from 'Ali (عليه السلام), that he said concerning the verse ﴿Allah will bring a people whom He will love and they will love Him﴾ (Qur'an 5: 54) that the people referred to are Abu Bakr and his companions. It was narrated that al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri said: "This, by Allah, refers to Abu Bakr and his companions." It was narrated that aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk said: "It is Abu Bakr and his companions, until he brought them back to Islam." This was also the view of Qatāḍah, Ibn Jurayj and other leading scholars of Qur'an interpretation.⁸⁹³

This verse speaks of the qualities of the generation and the people of great faith by means of whom victory will be attained; they will attain honour and glory while the apostates will be humiliated, and their plots will backfire on them. This meaning is obvious to everyone who reads authentic books of history and sees the greatness of the Companions, foremost among whom is the Rightly Guided Caliph Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq, in contrast to the humiliation and failure of the leaders of apostasy, such as Musaylimah, al-'Ansi and Sajjāh.⁸⁹⁴

The qualities mentioned in this verse are applicable most of all to Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq (عليه السلام) and his armies from among the Companions who fought the apostates. Allah (ﷻ) praised them in the best and most sublime way. He stated that He loves them and they

love Him, and that they are humble towards the believers but stern towards the disbelievers, fighting in the way of Allah (ﷻ) and never fearing the blame of the blamers. I have discussed these qualities in my book *al-Inshirâḥ wa Raf‘ ad-Deeq fi Seerat Abi Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq*;⁸⁹⁵ whoever would like to know more may refer to it.

3.6.1.c. The verse in Soorat at-Tawbah

﴿O you who believe! What is the matter with you, that when you are asked to march forth in the Cause of Allah [i.e. Jihâd] you cling heavily to the earth? Are you pleased with the life of this world rather than the hereafter? But little is the enjoyment of the life of this world as compared to the hereafter. If you march not forth, He will punish you with a painful torment and will replace you by another people; and you cannot harm Him at all, and Allah is Able to do all things.﴾

(*Qur'an* 9: 38-39)

Some of the Râfiḍi Shiite scholars said: “This verse clearly shows that the Companions were reluctant to engage in jihad and were pleased with the life of this world despite their knowledge that its enjoyment was little, to the extent that they deserved this rebuke from Allah (ﷻ) and His threat of a painful punishment for them and their being replaced with other, sincere believers. This warning of being replaced by others is repeated in many verses, which clearly indicates that the Companions were reluctant to engage in jihad on many occasions.”

In the verse: ﴿And if you turn away [from Islam and the obedience to Allah], He will exchange you for some other people and they will not be the likes of you﴾ (*Qur'an* 47: 38), according to the author of *Thumma Ahtadaytu*: “It is well established and known that the Companions divided after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), and that they differed with one another and lit the fire of turmoil until the matter reached the level of fighting and bloody war, which caused the

decline and backwardness of the Muslims and raised the hopes of their enemies against them.”⁸⁹⁶

The response to this Râfiḍi Shiite view is as follows: There is nothing in these two verses that undermines the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ); in these verses, Allah (ﷻ) is urging the Companions to engage in jihad. This was when the Prophet (ﷺ) commanded his Companions to go out on the campaign of Tabook to fight the Byzantines, which involved a very long and hot journey and came at a time of hardship and poverty for the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ). Some of them felt that it was difficult, so these verses were revealed to encourage them to go out on jihad for the sake of Allah (ﷻ) and to warn them against being reluctant and slow to obey the command. The Companions of the Prophet (may Allah be pleased with them) responded to the command of their Lord.

At-Ṭabari said, in his commentary on the verse: ﴿O you who believe! What is the matter with you, that when you are asked to march forth in the Cause of Allah [i.e. Jihād] you cling heavily to the earth?﴾ (Qur'an 9: 38): “This verse contains encouragement from Allah (ﷻ) to those who believed in Him, the Companions of His Messenger, to join the campaign against the Byzantines. That was during the campaign of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to Tabook.”⁸⁹⁷ Undoubtedly these two verses contain an element of rebuke from Allah (ﷻ) to some of those who felt it too burdensome to go out for jihad, but that is definitely not applicable to the majority of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), who responded to the call of Allah and His Messenger by hastening to go out in jihad for the sake of Allah.⁸⁹⁸ Ibn Katheer said: “This is a rebuke to those who stayed behind and did not go out with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) on the campaign to Tabook.”⁸⁹⁹

It is well known that the only Companions who stayed behind and failed to go out with the Prophet (ﷺ) on the campaign to Tabook

were those who had legitimate excuses, except for three people, as is indicated by the well-known hadith of Ka'b ibn Mâlik that appears in Bukhari and Muslim.⁹⁰⁰ Those three people were Ka'b ibn Mâlik, Hilâl ibn Umayyah and Marârah ibn ar-Rabee'. Yet it is proven in the Book of Allah, to which falsehood cannot come from before it or behind it,⁹⁰¹ that Allah (ﷻ) accepted the repentance of all of them, and He revealed these verses concerning His forgiveness of all of the Companions:

«Allah has forgiven the Prophet, the Muhâjiroon [Muslim emigrants who left their homes and came to Madinah] and the Anṣâr who followed him [Muhammad] in the time of distress [Tabook expedition], after the hearts of a party of them had nearly deviated [from the Right Path], but He accepted their repentance. Certainly, He is unto them full of kindness, Most Merciful. And [He did forgive also] the three who did not join the [Tabook expedition and whose case was deferred (by the Prophet) for Allah's Decision] till for them the earth, vast as it is, was straitened and their ownelves were straitened to them, and they perceived that there is no fleeing from Allah, and no refuge but with Him. Then, He forgave them [accepted their repentance], that they might beg for His Pardon [repent (unto Him)]. Verily, Allah is the One Who forgives and accepts repentance, Most Merciful.»
(*Qur'an* 9: 117-118)

In these verses, Allah (ﷻ) states that He accepted the repentance of the Muhâjiroon and Anṣâr who followed the Messenger (ﷺ) during the campaign to Tabook, which was called the campaign of hardship, and did not stay behind despite what befell them of hardship, difficulty and poverty. Some reports describe how a group of them would share one date between them: one would suck on it and then drink some water, then another one would suck on it and then drink some water, and so on until it came to the last of them.⁹⁰² The reports also state that Allah (ﷻ) accepted the

repentance of the three who had stayed behind and did not join the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) during that campaign, after the Prophet (ﷺ) shunned them and they regretted it deeply ﴿till for them the earth, vast as it is, was straitened and their own selves were straitened to them﴾. After that, there was no excuse for anyone to impugn the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) or criticise them for anything they might do, after Allah (ﷻ) forgave them, accepted their repentance, and praised them greatly in His Book; the Messenger (ﷺ) also praised them in his Sunnah.⁹⁰³

As for the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) fighting one another, that happened during the reign of 'Ali (رضي الله عنه), and we have already looked at the causes of the differences among the Companions during the turmoil, examined the point of view of each group and established that they are innocent of all the accusations that were made against them. Their actions were based on what they thought was correct on the basis of their understanding the Qur'an and Sunnah, and no one has the right to criticise them for any of their actions or opinions.⁹⁰⁴ We should refrain from delving too deeply into the disagreements among them and pray for mercy for them; this is the best way. May Allah be pleased with them all.⁹⁰⁵

3.6.1.d. The hadith about people being prevented from reaching the reservoir

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "While I was standing at the reservoir, I saw a group of my followers that were brought close to me, and I recognised them. A man (an angel) came out from between me and them and said to them: 'Come along.' I said: 'Where to?' He said: 'To hell.' I said: 'What is wrong with them?' He said: 'They turned back on their heels.' And I did not see any of them escaping except a few."⁹⁰⁶

He (ﷺ) also said: "I will be ahead of you at the reservoir, and whoever comes to me will drink, and whoever drinks will never be

thirsty again. Some people will come to me whom I recognise and they recognise me, but a barrier will be placed between me and them. I will say: ‘My companions!’ It will be said: ‘You do not know what they introduced after you were gone.’ And I shall say: ‘Away with them, away with those who changed after I was gone.’”⁹⁰⁷

Some of the Shia say: “The one who examines these numerous hadiths, which the scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah narrate in their collections of sound hadiths, will never have any doubt that most of the Companions changed. They apostatised after the Prophet (ﷺ) died, except for a few, and it is not possible under any circumstances to interpret these hadiths as referring to the third group, namely the hypocrites, because the text states: ‘I will say, “My companions!”’ and because the hypocrites did not change after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ); otherwise the hypocrites would have become believers after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ).”⁹⁰⁸

The answer to this specious argument is as follows: There is no dispute as to the good character of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), and there is no doubt about their sincere faith and dignity after Allah the All-Knowing confirmed their good character in His Book and His Messenger praised them in his Sunnah. The praise of Allah and His Messenger for them is the most eloquent of praise and attributes to them the best qualities, as is well known in mutawâtir reports from the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ). We will discuss this below inshallah.

The Sunni commentators on hadith are agreed that the Companions are not the ones who are meant in these hadiths, and they do not imply any undermining of them. Ibn Qutaybah said, refuting the Râfiḍi Shia in their use of this hadith as evidence for the apostasy of the Companions: “How is it possible that Allah (ﷻ) would be pleased with people and praise them and mention them as an example in the Torah and Gospel, when He knew that they would

turn on their heels after the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) died? If they say that He did not know, this is an even worse type of disbelief.”⁹⁰⁹ Al-Khaṭṭābī said: “None of the Companions apostatised; rather it was the hard-hearted Arabs who apostatised, those who did not lend any support to Islam. That does not undermine the status of the well-known Companions. The word that appears in the original Arabic, a diminutive form of ‘my companions’, is indicative of their small number.”⁹¹⁰

An-Nawawī said, commenting on the words “Do you know what they introduced after you were gone?” in some reports of this ḥadīth: “The scholars differed as to what is meant here; there are several views:

- (a) That what is meant is the hypocrites and apostates. It is possible that they will be gathered with those who will have bright faces and limbs (the believers), and the Prophet (ﷺ) will call them because of the sign he sees on them, but it will be said: ‘These are not the ones concerning whom you were given the promise; these are the ones who changed after you were gone’ — in other words, they did not die in a state of Islam as they appeared to be.
- (b) That what is meant is those who lived at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), then apostatised after he was gone. The Prophet (ﷺ) will call them because of what he knew during his lifetime, which is that they were Muslims, and it will be said: ‘They apostatised after you were gone.’
- (c) That what is meant is those who committed acts of disobedience and major sins but who died believing in tawḥīd, and followers of innovations that did not take them beyond the pale of Islam. Based on this view, it is not

certain that those who are prevented from reaching the reservoir will end up in hell. It is possible that they will be prevented from reaching the reservoir as a punishment, then Allah (ﷻ) will have mercy on them and admit them to paradise with no further punishment.”⁹¹¹

These or similar views were narrated by al-Qurṭubī and Ibn Ḥajar (may Allah have mercy on them).⁹¹²

It is possible that those who are prevented from reaching the reservoir will belong to all the groups mentioned above, since the reports may be interpreted in all three ways. In some reports, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “I will say ‘My companions (in the diminutive form)’;” in other reports, he (ﷺ) said: “People will be taken before they reach me, and I will say: ‘O my Lord, they belong to me and my Ummah;’” and in yet other reports he (ﷺ) said: “Some people will come to me whom I recognise, and they will recognise me.”⁹¹³ The apparent meaning is that the ones who are prevented are not one group, and this is reasonable, because in Islam punishments are according to sins, so one punishment may be applied to all those who deserve it of those who committed that particular sin.⁹¹⁴

Even though the Prophet (ﷺ) explained that the reason for being kept away from the reservoir is apostasy, as in the words ‘they apostatised,’ or introducing innovations into Islam, as in the words, “you do not know what they introduced after you were gone,”⁹¹⁵ what this implies is that everyone who apostatised from Islam, whether he was one of the Bedouin who apostatised after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ) or those who came after that, would be prevented from reaching the reservoir, and included with them will be those who introduced new things into the religion, namely the innovators. This is the view of some scholars. Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “Everyone who introduces innovation into the religion will be among those who are kept away from the reservoir,

such as the Kharijites, Râfiḍis and all followers of whims and desires. The same applies to those evildoers who go to extremes in injustice and denying people's rights, and those who commit major sins openly. For all of these people, there is the fear that they may be among those who are meant in this report. And Allah (ﷻ) knows best."⁹¹⁶

Al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in *at-Tadhkirah*: "Our scholars (may Allah have mercy on them all) say that everyone who apostatises from the religion of Allah, or introduces into it something with which He is not pleased and which He has not ordained,⁹¹⁷ will be among those who are kept far away from the reservoir, and those who are kept farthest away will be those who went against the main body of the Muslims and split from their way, such as the Kharijites and Râfiḍis of various groups and the Mutazilites of different types. All of these people changed their religion."⁹¹⁸

Once this is established, the innocence of all the Companions of all that the Shia accused them of becomes apparent. Being prevented from reaching the reservoir is because of apostasy and introducing innovations into Islam, and the Companions are the most unlikely of all people to have done anything of that nature; on the contrary, they were the enemies of the apostates and fought them in the most difficult and critical circumstances after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ). According to the report narrated by aṭ-Ṭabari in his book of history, with his chain of narration from 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr from his father: "Arabs from every tribe apostatised, whether it was the entire tribe or some individuals of the tribe. Hypocrisy became apparent, the hopes of the Jews and Christians were raised, and the Muslims were like sheep on a rainy winter night because of the loss of their Prophet (ﷺ) and because of their small number and the great number of their enemies."⁹¹⁹

Despite all that, the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) confronted these apostates, fought them strongly and stood up to them until Allah (ﷻ) caused them to prevail over them. Some of these apostates came back to Islam, and some were killed, and the glory, strength and respect of Islam were restored at the hands of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them). Moreover, the Companions were those who most strongly denounced the people of innovation; this is why innovations did not become strong until after their era came to an end. When some innovations began to appear during their era, they condemned them and disavowed the innovations and those who introduced them. It was narrated that Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) said to the one who told him what the Qadaris were saying: "If you meet these people, tell them that Ibn 'Umar has nothing to do with them, and they have nothing to do with him" — three times.⁹²⁰ Al-Baghawi said, noting that there was consensus among the Companions and all the early generations (the pious predecessors) on opposing those who introduced innovations, that this was the way of the Companions, Ṭâbi'oon and their followers, and the Sunni scholars; they were all agreed on opposing and shunning the people of innovation.⁹²¹

This noble attitude of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) towards the apostates and those who introduced innovation is among the greatest and clearest testimony of the sincerity of their religious commitment, the strength of their faith, the degree of their efforts for the sake of Islam and their struggle against its enemies after the death of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Allah (ﷻ) supported the Sunnah through them and suppressed innovations, a fact which highlights the lies of the Râfiḍis who accused them of apostasy and introducing innovations into the religion and suggested that that they will be kept away from the reservoir of the Prophet (ﷺ). In reality, the Companions will be the most deserving of all people to come to the reservoir of their Prophet (ﷺ) because of their good

companionship towards him during his lifetime and their continued support of Islam after his death.

This does not contradict the words of the Prophet (ﷺ): "Some of those who accompanied me will come to me at the reservoir, and when I see them and they come close to me, they will be taken away before they reach me."⁹²² These are people who were Muslim at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ); many of the Arab tribes apostatised after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), but as far he (ﷺ) knew, they accompanied him, because when he died they were still following his religion. Hence it will be said to him: "You do not know what they introduced after you were gone." According to other reports, it will be said: "You have no knowledge of what they introduced after you were gone; they apostatised and turned on their heels."⁹²³

It seems that this applies to those who apostatised after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ). What do the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) — who supported Islam in the best manner after their Prophet was gone, fought the apostates, strove in jihad against the disbelievers and hypocrites, then conquered many lands until the religion of Allah spread to many regions — have to do with these traitors? According to Ahl as-Sunnah, these apostates are not considered Companions at all because a Companion, as defined by the scholars, is one who met the Prophet (ﷺ), believing in him, and died as a Muslim.⁹²⁴

With regard to the words of the Prophet (ﷺ), "I do not think any of them will be saved from it (hell) except a few,"⁹²⁵ and the Râfiḍī Shia's quoting them as evidence for regarding all of the Companions as disbelievers except for a few of them, the evidence is in fact against them, because the pronoun in the Arabic word for 'of them' refers to those people who will approach the reservoir then be turned away from it, meaning that only a few from them will be saved. This is clear from the context of the hadith because it says:

"While I was standing at the reservoir, I saw a group of my followers that were brought close to me, and I recognised them. A man (an angel) came out from between me and them and said to them: 'Come along.' I said: 'Where to?' He said: 'To hell.' I said: 'What is wrong with them?' He said: 'They turned back on their heels.' And I did not see any of them escaping except a few."⁹²⁶

There is no mention of the Companions in this hadith; it simply mentions a group of people who will be prevented from reaching the reservoir, and none of them will reach it except a few.⁹²⁷ Ibn Hajar said, commenting on the words, "I did not see any of them escaping except a few" in this hadith: "This refers to those who will approach the reservoir and almost reach it, then will be turned away, which means that none of them will reach it except a few. Thus it becomes clear that the Shia's argument on the basis of this hadith is flawed, and the Companions are innocent of what they are accused of."⁹²⁸

3.6.2. The dignity and good character of the Companions (رضي الله عنهم)

The definition of good character boils down to one idea, which is a quality in a person that makes him pious and dignified. This can only be attained by doing what is enjoined, refraining from what is forbidden and keeping away from anything that undermines dignity. To achieve this, a person must be Muslim, adult, of sound mind and free of evildoing. This standard was never reached by anyone as it was reached by the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). All of them (may Allah be pleased with them) met the description of dignity and good character.⁹²⁹

What this means in the context of their narration of hadiths from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) is that they refrained from telling deliberate lies or distorting what was narrated. Al-'Allâmah ad-

Dahlawi said: "We have examined the biographies of all the Companions, and we found that they all believed that telling a lie about the Prophet (ﷺ) was the worst of sins. They refrained from it, taking all precautions to avoid it, as is clear to anyone who studies their biographies."⁹³⁰

There is abundant evidence in the Book of Allah (ﷻ) and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ) of the good character of the noble Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), and there is no room for any doubts about their dignity and good character. Every hadith with an intact chain of narration extending from the one who narrated it to the Prophet (ﷺ) cannot be binding unless the good character of the narrators is proven. All the narrators must be examined, with the exception of the Companion who narrated it from the Prophet (ﷺ), because the sound character of the Companions is well established. Allah (ﷻ) confirmed their good character and told us about their purity and the fact that He chose them, as is clearly stated in the noble Qur'an, about which Allah says: *Falsehood cannot come to it from before it or behind it.* (Qur'an 41: 42)⁹³¹

(a) Allah (ﷻ) says: *Thus We have made you [true Muslims — real believers of Islamic Monotheism, true followers of Prophet Muhammad and his Sunnah (legal ways)], a just [and the best] nation, that you be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger [Muhammad] be a witness over you.* (Qur'an 2: 143)

This verse proves the good character and dignity of the Companions (رضي الله عنهم). The word that is translated here as 'just' and 'best' refers to people of dignity and good character, because they are the ones who are addressed directly in this verse.⁹³²

(b) Allah (ﷻ) says: *You [true believers in Islamic Monotheism, and real followers of Prophet Muhammad and his Sunnah] are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind; you enjoin Al-Ma'roof [i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam has ordained] and forbid Al-*

Munkar [polytheism, disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden], and you believe in Allah.﴾ (*Qur'an* 3: 110)

The evidence in this verse for the good character of the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) is that they established the fact that this Ummah is better than all nations that came before it, and those who most deserve to be included in this description are those who were addressed directly where and when these words were revealed, namely the noble Companions (رضي الله عنهم). This implies that they are people of good character and dignity in all situations; in all their affairs, they adhere to the teachings of Islam and do not go against them. It is very unlikely that Allah (ﷻ) would describe them as the best nation if they were not people of good character and righteousness. Is there anyone but them who could be described as the best?⁹³³

(c) Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And the foremost to embrace Islam of the Muhâjiroon and the Anshâr and also those who followed them exactly [in faith]. Allah is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow [paradise], to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success.﴾ (*Qur'an* 9: 100)

The evidence in this verse for their good character is that Allah (ﷻ) states that He is pleased with them. Allah (ﷻ) does not affirm that He is pleased with anyone except those who deserve it, and no one deserves it except one who is upright and of good character in all his affairs and religious commitment. How could one whom Allah (ﷻ) praises in this manner not be of good character? When sound character can be established by the testimony of two people, how can the good character of the best of people not be confirmed by this praise when it comes from the Lord of the Worlds?⁹³⁴

(d) Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. And those who are with him are severe against disbelievers, and merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and falling down prostrate

[in prayer], seeking Bounty from Allah and [His] Good Pleasure. The mark of them [i.e. of their Faith] is on their faces [foreheads] from the traces of prostration [during prayers]. This is their description in the Tawrât [Torah]. But their description in the Injeel [Gospel] is like a [sown] seed which sends forth its shoot, then makes it strong, and becomes thick and it stands straight on its stem, delighting the sowers, that He may enrage the disbelievers with them. Allah has promised those among them who believe [i.e. all those who follow Islamic Monotheism, the religion of Prophet Muhammad till the Day of Resurrection] and do righteous good deeds, forgiveness and a mighty reward [i.e. paradise]. ﴿Qur'an 48: 29﴾

This description that Allah (ﷻ) gives them in His Book and this praise that He bestows upon them leaves no room for any doubt about the sound character of the Companions. Al-Qurtûbi said, commenting on this verse: "All of the Companions are of good character, close friends and chosen ones of Allah (ﷻ) and the best of His creation after His Prophets and Messengers. A small group of insignificant people were of the view that the Companions were like other people, so it was essential to research them in order to establish their dignity and good character. Some of these people differentiated between the Companions' situation at the beginning of Islam and later on, saying: 'They were all of good character at that time (at the beginning), then they changed later on, and there appeared among them war and bloodshed; so it is essential to research and examine.' This idea is to be rejected, because the best and most virtuous of the Companions, such as 'Ali, Talh, az-Zubayr and others (may Allah be pleased with them), are among those whom Allah praised and was pleased with, and they were pleased with Him. He promised them paradise in the words: ﴿Allah has promised those among them who believe [i.e. all those who follow Islamic Monotheism, the religion of Prophet Muhammad till the Day of Resurrection] and do righteous good deeds, forgiveness and a mighty reward [i.e. paradise]﴾ (Qur'an

48: 29), especially the ten who will definitely enter paradise according to the statements of the Messenger (ﷺ). Even though these Companions had prior knowledge of a great deal of turmoil and events that would take place among them after the death of their Prophet, because he told them about it, that does not affect their status and virtue because their involvement in these events was based on their own *ijtihād* and what they thought was right.”⁹³⁵

(e) Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿[And there is also a share in this booty] for the poor emigrants, who were expelled from their homes and their property, seeking Bounties from Allah and to please Him, and helping Allah [i.e. helping His religion] and His Messenger [Muhammad]. Such are indeed the truthful [to what they say]; And those who, before them, had homes [in Madinah] and had adopted the Faith, love those who emigrate to them, and have no jealousy in their breasts for that which they have been given [from the booty of Banu an-Naḍeer], and give them [emigrants] preference over themselves, even though they were in need of that. And whosoever is saved from his own covetousness, such are they who will be the successful.﴾ (*Qur'an* 59: 8-9)

The truthful are the Muhājīroon, and the successful are the Anṣār. This is how Abu Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddeeq interpreted these two words from these verses, as he said in his speech on the day of bay'at as-Saqeefah, addressing the Anṣār: “Allah has called us the truthful, and He has called you the successful, and He has enjoined you to be where we are, as He says: ﴿O you who believe! Fear Allah, and be with those who are true [in words and deeds].﴾ (*Qur'an* 9: 119)

These praiseworthy attributes that are mentioned in these two verses were all achieved by the Muhājīreen and Anṣār among the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). They had these characteristics, hence the Muhājīreen were described as the truthful, and those who supported and helped them, giving them precedence

over themselves, were described as the successful. These verses clearly point to the good character of the Companions, so their good character is established and proven on the basis of the text of the noble Qur'an.⁹³⁶

With regard to evidence from the Sunnah for the good character of the Companions, there are numerous hadiths in which the Prophet (ﷺ) praised them for their good character. For example:

(a) It was narrated by Bukhari and Muslim in sound hadiths from Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Let the one who is present convey to the one who is absent."⁹³⁷ The evidence for their good character in this hadith is that these words were uttered by the Prophet (ﷺ) to the greatest gathering of the Companions during the Farewell Pilgrimage. This is one of the greatest affirmations of their good character because he asked them, without exception, to convey what they heard from him to those who were not present at that gathering.⁹³⁸ Concerning the words "Let the one who is present convey to the one who is absent," Ibn Hibbân said: "This is the greatest evidence that the Companions were all of good character, and there is no one among them who is of questionable character or is to be regarded as a weak narrator, because if there had been anyone among them who was not of good character, the Prophet (ﷺ) would have excluded him and said, 'Let so-and-so convey to those who are absent.' The fact that he included all of them in this injunction to convey to those who came after them proves that they were all of good character, and that is sufficient honour for those whom the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) regarded as such."⁹³⁹

(b) Bukhari narrated, with his chain of narration going back to Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him), that the latter said: "The Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'Do not revile my Companions, for if you were to give the equivalent of Uhud in gold, it would not amount to a *mudd* (about what one's two hands can scoop up) of one of them,

or half of that.”⁹⁴⁰ The evidence for the good character of the Companions in this hadith is that describing them as not being of good character is disparaging them, especially since he (ﷺ) forbade some of those who met him and accompanied him to hurt those who were senior to them because of their efforts in supporting Islam. This applies even more to those who come after the Companions with regard to all the Companions.⁹⁴¹ We know that all the Companions are of good character because Allah has described them as such and praised them, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) also praised them. There is no need for confirmation of their good character by anyone else.⁹⁴²

Even if their good character was not mentioned in the Book of Allah or the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ), people of sound mind and good hearts would confirm their good character on the basis of the mutawâtir reports from them that tell of their great deeds and efforts to support the religion of Allah (ﷻ). They did whatever they could to support the truth, raise its banner, lay its foundations and propagate its rulings throughout the land (may Allah be pleased with them all).

What is meant by good character here is not avoidance of falling into sin, because that is only for one who is infallible.⁹⁴³ Ibn al-Anbârî said: “Saying that they were of good character does not mean affirming that they were infallible or that it was impossible for them to sin; rather what is meant is that their reports may be accepted without needing to establish or prove their being of good character, unless there is proof of something to undermine their good character or dignity, but nothing of the sort was ever proven, praise be to Allah (ﷻ). So we shall continue to believe that they remained as they were at the time of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), unless the opposite is proven.”⁹⁴⁴

Consensus on their good character: Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah are unanimously agreed that all the Companions were of

good character without exception, whether they were involved in turmoil (fitnah) or not; Ahl as-Sunnah do not differentiate between them. All of them are of good character, and we think positively of them because of the honour that Allah bestowed upon them of accompanying His Prophet (ﷺ), their great efforts in supporting the Messenger (ﷺ) by migrating to join him and striving alongside him in jihad, and their adhering to the commands of Islam and heeding its limits. Therefore their testimony and reports are accepted without needing to establish their good character, according to the consensus of those whose view is credible. Consensus on their good character was narrated by a great number of scholars; here are some examples:

(a) Al-Khateeb al-Baghdadi (may Allah have mercy on him) said, after mentioning evidence from the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger that points to the good character of all the Companions: "This is the view of all the scholars and those jurists whose views are credible."⁹⁴⁵

(b) Abu 'Umar ibn 'Abdul-Barr (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Even though we need not examine the character of the Companions, because all the followers of truth among the Muslims — Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah — are agreed that they are of good character, we still have to find out about their names and who they are."⁹⁴⁶

(c) Imam al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwayni (may Allah have mercy on him) narrated that there was consensus on their good character, and he explained the reason for that consensus as follows: "Perhaps the reason for it is that they are the ones who transmitted Islam (to the next generation), and if we had to be sceptical about their reports, then Islam would have been limited to the time of the Messenger (ﷺ) and would not have continued to other eras."⁹⁴⁷

(d) Ibn aş-Şalâḥ stated that the consensus on the good character of the Companions was a unique quality that distinguished them from

others. He said: "All of the Companions have a special quality, which is that the good character of any one of them is not to be questioned; it is to be taken for granted because they were all of good character according to the texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah and the consensus of those whose views are credible." He also said: "The Ummah is unanimously agreed on the good character of all the Companions, including those who got involved in fitnah. This is the consensus of the scholars whose view is credible; they think positively of them because they are the ones who transmitted Islam and Sharia."⁹⁴⁸ And Allah (ﷻ) knows best.

(e) Imam an-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said, after mentioning that the wars that occurred among them and the stances they adopted were based on what they thought was right, and that all of them are excused for what happened among them: "Hence the people of the straight path and those who are credible agreed that their testimony and reports are to be accepted and that they are of good character, may Allah be pleased with them."⁹⁴⁹ He said in *at-Taqreeb*: "All the Companions are of good character and credible, including those who were involved in the fitnah and those who were not, according to the consensus of those whose views are credible."⁹⁵⁰

(f) Al-Hâfidh Ibn Katheer said: "All of the Companions are of good character according to Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah, because of the praise bestowed upon them by Allah in His holy Book and because of what the Sunnah says in praise of them in all their attitudes, deeds, sacrifice of wealth and lives, striving alongside the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and seeking great reward with Allah (ﷻ)."⁹⁵¹

(g) Al-'Iraqi said, commenting on *al-Alfiyyah*, after quoting some Qur'anic verses and hadiths which prove the good character of the Companions: "The entire Ummah is agreed on the credibility and good character of those who did not get involved in turmoil. With

regard to those who did get involved in the turmoil at the time of 'Uthmân, those scholars whose views are credible are also unanimously agreed on their good character, thinking positively of them and assuming that it was based on what they thought was right."⁹⁵²

(h) Al-Hâfîdh Ibn Hajar stated that Ahl as-Sunnah are unanimously agreed on the good character of the Companions. He said: "Ahl as-Sunnah are agreed that all of them were of good character, and no one disagreed concerning that except weird or odd innovators."⁹⁵³

All of these blessed reports, which state that there was consensus among the leading scholars, are a clear indication and definitive proof that the good character of the Companions is something firmly established that may be taken for granted and regarded as a given. This leaves no room for anyone to doubt it, after the confirmation of their good character by Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ) and the consensus of the Ummah on that.⁹⁵⁴

3.6.3. Obligation to love them, pray for them and ask for forgiveness for them

The belief of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah is that it is obligatory to love the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and to respect and honour them, regard their consensus on an issue as binding and follow their example. It is forbidden to bear grudges against any one of them, because of the honour that Allah (ﷻ) bestowed upon them of accompanying His Messenger (ﷺ), engaging in jihad alongside him to support the religion of Islam, bearing patiently the persecution of the polytheists and hypocrites, migrating from their homes and leaving behind their wealth, and giving precedence to love of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) over all of that.

Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿And those who came after them say: 'Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in Faith, and

put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed full of kindness, Most Merciful'» (*Qur'an* 59: 10). This verse indicates that it is obligatory to love the Companions, because Allah (ﷻ) has given a share of the fay' to those who come after the Companions, as long as they persist in loving them, supporting them and praying for forgiveness for them; it indicates that the one who insults any of them or believes anything bad about them has no right to the fay'. That was narrated from Imam Mâlik and others. Mâlik said: "Whoever shows hatred towards any one of the Companions of Muhammad (ﷺ) or bears any resentment towards them in his heart has no right to the fay' of the Muslims." Then he recited the verse: «And those who came after.» (*Qur'an* 59: 10)

In both earlier and later times, Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah understood that what was meant in the verse quoted above is a command to the later generations to offer supplication and ask for forgiveness for the earlier generation, namely the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Muslim narrated, with his chain of narration from Hishâm ibn 'Urwah, that his father said: "'Â'ishah said to me: 'O son of my sister, they were instructed to pray for forgiveness for the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), but they reviled them instead.'"⁹⁵⁵

Ibn Baţţah and others narrated that Abu Badr said: "Abdullah ibn Zayd narrated from Tâlah ibn Muţarraf from Muş'ab ibn Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqaş, who said: 'People are of three categories, two of which have passed and one of which remains, so the best you can do is to be among the category that remains.' Then he recited: «And [it is also for] those who, before them, had homes [in Madinah] and had adopted the Faith, love those who emigrate to them, and have no jealousy in their breasts for that which they have been given [from the booty of Banu an-Nadeer], and give them [emigrants] preference over themselves even though they were in need of that. And

whosoever is saved from his own covetousness, such are they who will be the successful» (*Qur'an* 59: 9). He said: 'These are the Muhâjiroon, and they are a category that has passed.'

"Then he recited: «And [it is also for] those who, before them, had homes [in Madinah] and had adopted the Faith, love those who emigrate to them, and have no jealousy in their breasts for that which they have been given [from the booty of Banu an-Nadeer], and give them [emigrants] preference over themselves even though they were in need of that. And whosoever is saved from his own covetousness, such are they who will be the successful.» (*Qur'an* 59: 9) He said: 'These are the Anṣâr, and they are the second category that has passed.'

"Then he recited: «And those who came after them say: "Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed full of kindness, Most Merciful"»» (*Qur'an* 59: 10). Two have passed, and this group remains: those who pray for forgiveness for them."⁹⁵⁶

No one with the slightest knowledge would doubt that the Râfiḍi Shia are excluded from this category since they do not pray for mercy for the Companions or ask for forgiveness for them. Instead they disparage them and bear grudges against them, so they are deprived of this category and status, which the Muslim is required to attain and should never go beyond, under any circumstances, until he meets his Lord.⁹⁵⁷

Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "These verses include praise for the Muhâjireen and the Anṣâr and for those who come after them who pray for forgiveness for them and ask Allah (ﷻ) not to put in their hearts any resentment towards them. This indicates that these groups are the ones who are entitled to the fay', and there is no doubt that these Râfiḍis are excluded from these

three categories because they do not pray for forgiveness for those who came before, and their hearts harbour resentment against them. In these verses, there is praise for the Companions and for Ahl as-Sunnah who love and support them, and exclusion for the Râfiḍis from that. This proves that the Râfiḍi madh-hab is flawed.”⁹⁵⁸

3.6.4. Prohibition in the Qur'an and Sunnah from reviling the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them)

3.6.4.a.

﴿Verily, those who annoy Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), Allah has cursed them in this world and in the hereafter, and has prepared for them a humiliating torment.﴾ (Qur'an 33: 57)

This verse is a warning, a threat of being cast away from the mercy of Allah (ﷻ) and a humiliating torment, for the one who offends Allah (ﷻ) by going against His commands, doing what He forbids and persisting in that, and annoying and offending His Messenger.⁹⁵⁹ This includes both verbal and physical offences, such as reviling, insulting or undermining him or his religion, or anything else that may cause offence to him.⁹⁶⁰ Among the things that cause offence to him (ﷻ) is insulting his Companions; he has told us that offending them is offending him, and that the one who offends him has offended Allah (ﷻ).⁹⁶¹ What offence to the Companions could be worse than reviling them? This verse contains the strongest and clearest evidence that it is ḥarâm to revile them (may Allah be pleased with them).

3.6.4.b.

﴿And those who annoy believing men and women undeservedly, they bear [on themselves] the crime of slander and plain sin.﴾ (Qur'an 33: 58)

This verse includes a warning against offending the believing men and women by attributing things to them that they have nothing to do with and have never done. It is the greatest lie to tell or narrate about the believing men and women things that they did not do, for the purpose of undermining and condemning them.⁹⁶² The reason this verse proves that it is *ḥarâm* to insult the Companions is that they are the foremost among the believers, and they were the ones who were addressed in every verse that begins with the words, «O you who believe!» (*Qur’an* 2: 104) or «Verily, those who believe [in the Oneness of Allah — Islamic Monotheism] and do righteous deeds» (*Qur’an* 18: 107), throughout the *Qur’an*. This verse is indicative of the prohibition on reviling the Companions because the word ‘believers’ was first applied to them, and they were the foremost among the believers. Insulting them and undermining them are among the greatest offences. Whoever undermines them in that way has condemned the best of the believers for something that they did not do. If a person regards disparaging and undermining them as part of his religious practice, the warning mentioned in this verse applies to him.⁹⁶³

Ibn Katheer said, commenting on this verse: “Foremost among those who are included in this warning are those who disbelieve in Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger, then the Râfîdis who undermined the Companions, criticised them for things of which Allah (ﷻ) has declared them innocent, and described them in terms contrary to what Allah (ﷻ) has said about them. Allah (ﷻ) said that He is pleased with the Muhâjireen and Anṣâr, and He praised them. Those ignorant and stupid people disparage them and undermine them; they attribute to them characteristics that they never had and deeds that they never did. In fact, they (the Râfîdis) have a distorted view of things; they criticise those who are praised and praise those who are condemned.”⁹⁶⁴

3.6.4.c.

﴿Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. And those who are with him are severe against disbelievers, and merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and falling down prostrate [in prayer], seeking Bounty from Allah and [His] Good Pleasure. The mark of them [i.e. of their Faith] is on their faces [foreheads] from the traces of prostration [during prayers]. This is their description in the Tawrât [Torah]. But their description in the Injeel [Gospel] is like a [sown] seed which sends forth its shoot, then makes it strong, and becomes thick and it stands straight on its stem, delighting the sowers, that He may enrage the disbelievers with them. Allah has promised those among them who believe [i.e. all those who follow Islamic Monotheism, the religion of Prophet Muhammad till the Day of Resurrection] and do righteous good deeds, forgiveness and a mighty reward [i.e. paradise].﴾
(*Qur'an* 48: 29)

The way in which this verse proves that it is ḥarâm to revile the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) is that no one reviles them except one who is enraged in his heart against them. In this verse, Allah (ﷻ) explains that it is the disbelievers who were enraged because of them, so this indicates that it is ḥarâm to condemn them or criticise them for what happened among them in such a way as to put them down.

3.6.4.d.

It was narrated that Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه) said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Do not revile my companions. By the One in Whose hand is my soul, if one of you were to spend the equivalent of Uḥud in gold, it would not amount to a mudd of one of them, or half of that.'"⁹⁶⁵

This hadith clearly states that it is ḥarâm to insult the Companions (رضي الله عنهم); it includes both a prohibition and a warning.⁹⁶⁶ There are many similar hadiths as well.

Prohibition of the early generation from reviling the Companions

There are numerous texts narrated from the early generations of the Ummah, its leading scholars among the Companions, and those who came after them who followed them in truth, which defend the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) and state that it is *ḥarâm* to revile them. They include the following:

- (a) Ahmad ibn Hanbal said: "If you see a man mentioning one of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in a bad way, then doubt his Islam."⁹⁶⁷
- (b) Abu Zar'ah ar-Râzi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "If you see a man undermining any of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), then know that he is a heretic, because the Messenger (ﷺ) in our view is true, and the Qur'an is true; the people who conveyed this Qur'an and Sunnah were the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). They seek to undermine our witnesses (meaning those who conveyed the Qur'an and Sunnah) so as to invalidate the Qur'an and Sunnah; it is more appropriate to criticise and doubt them (those who impugn the Companions), and they are heretics."⁹⁶⁸
- (c) Imam ash-Shawkâni (may Allah have mercy on him) narrated that there was consensus among Ahl al-Bayt that it is *ḥarâm* to revile the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all), and this was narrated in twelve reports.⁹⁶⁹ Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn 'Abdul-Wâhid al-Maqdisi narrated, with his chain of narration going back to Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali, that he said to Jâbir al-Ja'fi: "O Jâbir, I heard that some people in Iraq are claiming that they love us, and they impugn Abu Bakr and 'Umar and claim that I am telling them to do so. Tell them from me that I disavow them before Allah (ﷻ). By the One in Whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, if I were to

be appointed to a position of authority, I would seek to draw close to Allah (ﷻ) by executing them. May I never attain the intercession of Muhammad (ﷺ) if I do not seek forgiveness for them (Abu Bakr and 'Umar) and pray for mercy for them. The enemies of Allah (ﷻ) are not aware of their virtue. So tell them that I disavow them and anyone else who shuns Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them).”⁹⁷⁰

He also narrated, with his chain of narration going back to Abdullah ibn al-Hasan ibn 'Ali, that he said: “I do not think that any man who reviles Abu Bakr and 'Umar will ever be guided to repent.”⁹⁷¹

3.6.5. Love of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali and his sons for the Companions (رضي الله عنهم)

The true picture will remain, bright and clear, and all else will fade away. This picture is clarified in the most important book of the Twelver Shia, namely *Nahj al-Balâghah*. These texts are sufficient to undermine their beliefs, which are based on cursing and reviling the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and saying that they apostatised and turned on their heels after the Prophet (ﷺ) died. Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali himself described the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as he saw them. He said: “I saw the Companions of Muhammad, and I have never seen anyone like them. They would wake up unkempt and dusty, having spent all night in prostration and prayer, alternating between resting their foreheads and their feet on the ground, feeling alarm due to thinking of the hereafter. It was as if there were marks between their eyes like the knees of a goat because of lengthy prostration. When Allah was remembered, their eyes would fill with tears until their garments became wet. They would sway like trees on a stormy day for fear of punishment and in hope of reward.”⁹⁷²

'Ali (عليه السلام) felt sad for having parted from them, and he eulogised them after their death like one who loves someone and parts from the one whom he loves. He said: "Where are the people who were called to Islam and accepted it, who read the Qur'an and applied it, who unsheathed their swords and marched in ranks to all corners of the earth with sore eyes because of weeping and empty stomachs because of fasting, with dry lips because of supplication and wan faces because of staying up at night, on whose faces was the mark of the humble? Those are my brothers who have passed away, so we have the right to yearn for them and to bite our fingers in sorrow at their loss."⁹⁷³ O you who love Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام), think about how he regarded the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)!

Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn Zayn al-'Âbideen (may Allah have mercy on him) used to mention the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and pray for mercy and forgiveness for them in his prayer because of the support they gave to the master of mankind in spreading the call of tawhîd and conveying the message of Allah (ﷻ) to His creation. He said: "O Allah, grant them Your pleasure and forgiveness, O Allah, in particular the Companions, who were good companions and strove hard to support him; they stood with him and hastened to offer refuge and protect him. They were the first to accept his call and respond to him when he presented the proof for his message. They left their wives and children to support his word; they fought their fathers and sons in support of his prophethood; they abandoned their tribes to join him, and their relatives abandoned them when they decided to be with him. O Allah, whatever they gave up was for Your sake, so be pleased with them and reward them abundantly, since they strove hard to support the truth for Your sake.

"Reward them for abandoning their homes for Your sake, for leaving a life of ease for a life of hardship, and for leaving a life of

abundance to a life of little, all in support of Your religion. O Allah, reward with the best reward those who followed them in truth and said, 'O our Lord, forgive our brothers in faith who came before us,' those who followed their example and emulated them; they never had any doubt about their deep insight and never hesitated to follow in their footsteps and follow their guidance, loving and supporting them, following their way, uniting behind them and never questioning them with regard to what they passed on to them."⁹⁷⁴

This is the attitude of the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt (may Allah be pleased with them) towards the Companions. It is the opposite of what is claimed by those Râfiḍi plotters and conspirators who tried to conceal themselves under the cover of support for Ahl al-Bayt and Shiism, but who were enemies of the noble Qur'an, the Sunnah and the pure Imams of Ahl al-Bayt.

3.7. Attitude of the Shia towards the Sunnah

The meaning of the word 'Sunnah' in Islamic terminology is that which was narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ) of words, deeds or approval.⁹⁷⁵ The scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah paid a great deal of attention to writing down the sound reports and made every effort to protect the Sunnah from fabrications and fabricators. They did their utmost and used the best academic methods of checking and examining texts, to the extent that we can be certain that our scholars (may Allah have mercy on them) were the first ones among all the nations of the earth to lay down rules of precise academic examination of reports. Their effort in that field is something for Muslims to be proud of and to boast about before all nations. This is the bounty of Allah, which He grants to whom He wills, and Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knowing.⁹⁷⁶

The Sunni scholars took the following steps to examine and check reports. They were able to save and protect the Sunnah from

the plots and conspiracies that were drawn up against it, and to cleanse it from all the dirt that contaminated it.⁹⁷⁷

3.7.1. The chain of narrators of reports

The Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not doubt one another after he died, and the Tâbi'oon never hesitated to accept any hadith that was narrated by a Companion from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), but this changed when fitnah arose and the wretched Abdullah ibn Saba' started preaching his evil ideas, which were based on an extreme form of Shiism that claimed that 'Ali (عليه السلام) was divine. He began to fabricate reports and insert them into the Sunnah, and the number of fabricated reports accumulated with the passage of time. At this point, the scholars among the Companions and the Tâbi'oon became very careful about the transmission of hadith, and they would not accept any report unless they knew its chain of narration and narrators and were satisfied with their trustworthiness and good character.

Ibn Sireen said, as was narrated by Imam Muslim in the introduction to his collection of sound hadiths: "They used not to ask about chains of narration, but when the fitnah occurred, they said: 'Name for us your men (in the chain of narration).'" They would find out who were followers of the Sunnah and accept their hadiths, and they would find out about who were followers of innovation and reject their hadiths. This checking began at the time of the younger Companions who were still alive at the time of fitnah.

Muslim narrated, in the introduction to his collection of sound hadiths, that Mujâhid said: "Basheer al-'Adawi came to Ibn 'Abbâs and started narrating to him, saying: 'The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said.' Ibn 'Abbâs did not listen to his reports and did not even look at him. He said: 'O Ibn 'Abbâs, why is it that I do not see you listening to what I tell you? I am narrating to

you from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and you are not listening.’ Ibn ‘Abbâs said: ‘At one time, if we heard a man say, “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,” we would all turn to look at him and listen to him. But when the people started to narrate a great deal, we did not accept from the people anything but that which we were familiar with.’ Then when lying became widespread, the Ṭâbi‘oon began to ask for chains of narration. Abu al-‘Âliyah said: ‘We used to hear hadiths from the Companions, but we would not be content until we went to them and heard it from them.’ Ibn al-Mubâarak said: ‘The chain of narration is part of the religion. Were it not for the chain of narration, anyone could say what they wanted.’ Ibn al-Mubâarak also said: ‘Between us and the people are the lists’ — meaning chains of narration.”⁹⁷⁸

3.7.2. Verifying hadiths

This was done by referring to the Companions, Ṭâbi‘oon and prominent scholars in this field. It is a sign of Allah’s preserving the Sunnah of His Prophet that He made the lives of some prominent Companions and scholars among them long, so that they could serve as a reference point and people could be guided through them. When the fabrication of hadiths began, the people turned to these Companions first, asking them what they knew of hadiths and seeking their advice concerning the hadiths and reports they heard. Many trips were made by the Ṭâbi‘oon, and even some of the Companions, from one country to another for that purpose, so that they could hear proven hadiths from trustworthy narrators. Hence Jâbir ibn Abdullah travelled to Syria, and Abu Ayyoob travelled to Egypt to hear hadiths.

3.7.3. Critical examination of narrators, highlighting how truthful they were

This is a very important field, through which the scholars were able to distinguish sound from fabricated hadiths, strong from weak.

They did very well in this regard, tracing narrators and studying their lives, history and biography, what was hidden about them and what was known, never fearing the blame of the blamers.⁹⁷⁹

They set out guidelines and rules and applied them in order to determine whose reports were to be accepted and whose were to be rejected, whose reports were to be written down and whose reports were not to be written down. Among the most important categories of rejected reporters, whose hadiths are not to be accepted, are:

3.7.3.a. Those who tell lies about the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)

The scholars unanimously agreed that the hadith of one who tells lies about the Prophet (ﷺ) is not to be accepted. They also unanimously agreed that this is the gravest of major sins, but they differed as to whether such a person is a disbeliever or not. Some said that he is a disbeliever, and some said that he is to be executed, and they differed as to whether his repentance is acceptable or not.

3.7.3.b. Those who tell lies in their general talk, even if they do not tell lies about the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)

The scholars unanimously agree that if a person is known to have told a lie, even once, his hadith is to be rejected.

3.7.3.c. Followers of innovation and whims and desires

The scholars also agreed that no hadith can be accepted from a follower of innovation if his innovation constitutes disbelief. If his innovation does not constitute disbelief, but he regards lying as permissible, his hadiths are not accepted either. What if he follows an innovation that does not constitute disbelief and he does not regard lying as permissible — can his reports be accepted or not? Is there a differentiation between one who promotes innovation and calls others to it, and one who does not? Ibn Katheer said: “Concerning this issue, there has been a dispute from early times until more

recently. The view of the majority is that there should be differentiation between one who promotes innovation and one who does not."⁹⁸⁰ What appears to me to be correct is that the scholars reject a narrator who follows innovation if he narrates something that supports his innovation, or if his group is known to regard lying as permissible and to fabricate hadiths in support of their whims and desires. Hence they rejected the reports of the Râfiḍis, but they would accept the report of an innovator if he and his group did not regard lying as permissible, such as 'Imrân ibn Ḥaṭṭân.⁹⁸¹

3.7.3.d. Rejecting the reports of heretics and others

The scholars are agreed that the reports of the following people are to be rejected: heretics, evildoers, heedless people who do not understand what they are narrating, and anyone who does not meet the conditions of precision, good character and understanding.

The scholars of hadith established guidelines for determining what is sound, reliable and weak in categorizing hadith. They also set out guidelines for determining what is fabricated, and they mentioned the signs by which this might be known, such as poor language, unsound meanings, being contrary to the clear meaning of the Qur'an, contradicting the known facts of history at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) and others.⁹⁸²

By means of these successful efforts, the Islamic religion was preserved. The foundation of the Sunnah, which is the second source of legislation, was established, and the Muslims felt reassured with regard to the hadiths of their Prophet (ﷺ). Everything alien was removed, and the distinctions between what was sound, reliable and weak were established. Allah (ﷻ) protected His religion from tampering by those who sought to corrupt it and those who were trying to insert fabricated reports, and from the plots of the heretics and the shu'oobiyyah. The Muslims reaped the harvest of this blessed and mighty effort, among the most prominent features of which were

the writing down of the Sunnah, the science of hadith, the science of examining reporters and other sciences of hadith.⁹⁸³

The attitude of the Shia towards the Sunnah, due to the Shia regarding the Companions as disbelievers

The Shiite opinion on imamate led them to regard the overwhelming majority of the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) as disbelievers. As a result of this abhorrent view, the Shia rejected almost all of the hadiths that were narrated through the Companions; they only accepted hadiths that were narrated through the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt or those whom they claimed were Shia, like Salmân al-Fârisi, 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir, Abu Dharr and al-Miqdâd ibn al-Aswad. They launched a relentless attack on narrators of hadith such as Abu Hurayrah, Samurah ibn Jundub, 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, 'Amr ibn al-Âs, al-Mugheerah ibn Shu'bah and others; they accuse them of fabricating, forging and lying.⁹⁸⁴ Imam 'Abdul-Qâhir al-Baghdadi regarded the Shia as being among those who rejected the Sunnah because they refused to accept the reports of the Companions of the Messenger of guidance (ﷺ).⁹⁸⁵

The Shia waged war against the Sunnah, hence Ahl as-Sunnah (the Sunnis) were known exclusively by this name because they followed the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ).⁹⁸⁶ This is what was mentioned in some of the sources of Ahl as-Sunnah, but the Shia narrate from their Imams that everything is to be referred to the Qur'an and Sunnah, and that every hadith that is not in accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah is invalid.⁹⁸⁷ They also have other reports like this.⁹⁸⁸ This means that the Shia do not deny the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ); they do refer to it and regard it as parallel to the Book of Allah as the criterion and final word. However, the one who studies their texts and reports will reach the conclusion that most of their reports and views head in a direction

away from the Sunnah that is known to the Muslims, in terms of interpretation and application as well as chains of narration and texts.

The word of the Imam is like the word of Allah and His Messenger

For the Shia, the Sunnah is everything that was narrated from the ‘infallible one’, whether word, deed or approval.⁹⁸⁹ The one who does not understand the nature of their madh-hab will not realise the extent to which they have drifted away from the Sunnah in this statement. The ‘infallible one’ refers not only to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) but also to any of those whose word they regard as equal to the word of Allah and the words of His Messenger, namely the twelve Imams. They do not differentiate in this regard between these twelve Imams and the one who does not speak of his own desire, whose speech is only a Revelation revealed⁹⁹⁰ — the Prophet (ﷺ).⁹⁹¹ These Imams are not treated like others who narrated from the Prophet, whose words become binding on the basis that they are trustworthy in narration. They believe that these ‘infallible ones’ were appointed by Allah (ﷻ), as mentioned by Prophet, to convey the divine rulings, and that they do not speak of anything except that which comes from Allah (ﷻ).⁹⁹²

There is also no differentiation between what these twelve Imams said at the age of childhood and what they said at the age of maturity, because in the view of the Shia, they cannot err — either deliberately or accidentally or as a result of forgetfulness — at any time throughout their lives, as we have seen above in the discussion of the issue of infallibility. Hence one of their contemporary shaykhs said: “Belief in the infallibility of the Imams makes whatever they utter sound, without stipulating a condition that it should have a chain of narration going back to the Prophet (ﷺ), as is the case with Ahl as-Sunnah.”⁹⁹³ For them, the Sunnah is not only the Sunnah of the

Prophet; rather it is the Sunnah of the Imams, and the words of these Imams are like the words of Allah and His Messenger. They admit that this is what the Shia added to the Sunnah, saying: "The Imami Shia added everything that was said or done by the twelve Imams of words, deeds or approval, to the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ)." ⁹⁹⁴

Their view stems from two serious matters and two principles, which for them are basic to this issue. One of their contemporary shaykhs pointed out these two things when he explained that whatever the Imams said is at the same level as the words of the Prophet (ﷺ) in that it is binding and must be followed, and that whatever ruling they pass is the ruling ordained by Allah. He explained that this knowledge could be attained for them in two ways: "through inspiration like the Prophet, i.e., through revelation, or through learning it from the infallible one who came before him." ⁹⁹⁵

They claim that the Imams are the guardians of the knowledge and revelation of Allah (ﷻ). The author of *al-Kâfi* wrote a chapter with the title: "The Imams (عليهم السلام) are in charge of executing the commands of Allah (ﷻ) and are the guardians of His Knowledge." ⁹⁹⁶ In this chapter, there are six reports to that effect. He wrote another chapter entitled: "The Imams inherited the knowledge of the Prophet and all the Prophets and the appointed heirs who came before them," ⁹⁹⁷ in which there are seven such reports. In a third chapter, entitled "The Imams know all branches of knowledge that are known to the Angels, Prophets and Messengers (ﷺ)," ⁹⁹⁸ there are four reports. ⁹⁹⁹ The Râfiḍi Shia went to extremes with this issue. What we have quoted from these imaginary sources claimed by the Shia is enough; simply reading it and imagining its implications is sufficient to show how corrupt it is.

As a result of that concept of the Imams, the Râfiḍi Shia did not pay attention to the soundness of the chain of narration or study

and evaluate the narrators, as the scholars of hadith did. At the same time that they reject the collections of sound hadiths of Bukhari and Muslim and the books of the Sunnah that are authenticated and sound, they rely for their hadiths on what was narrated by al-Kulayni, whose comments on many of their beliefs we have quoted above. They regard him as one whose view is binding and sound beyond any doubt, and his book *al-Kâfi*¹⁰⁰⁰ is one of the oldest hadith books of the Shia and one of the most authentic in their view.

One of the Shia described the status of this book among them when he said: “The Imamis and the majority of Shia are agreed on the superiority of this book and on following it, trusting its reports and being content with its rulings. They unanimously agreed that it is of a supreme status and high level, and it is the main basis for all the narrations of the trustworthy reporters who are known for their precision and knowledge until today.”¹⁰⁰¹ For them, it is better than all the other books of hadith, knowing that most of what is in *al-Kâfi* — as Abu Zahrah says — are reports that ended with the Imams. We cannot say that there is any hadith with a chain of narrators that goes back all the way to the Prophet (ﷺ) or claims that these are the words of the Prophet (ﷺ), except on the basis that the words of their Imams are the same as the words of the Prophet (ﷺ) and are part of the religion of Allah (ﷻ). Most of what is narrated in *al-Kâfi* stops at aṣ-Ṣâdiq, and very little of it goes back to his father al-Bâqir. Even less goes back to Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام), and that which goes back to the Prophet (ﷺ) is very rare.

There is also a book called *Man la yahduruhu al-Faqeeh*, which was compiled by Abu Ja‘far Muhammad ibn ‘Ali ibn Bâbawayh, whom they call ash-Shaykh aṣ-Ṣadooq, one of their greatest scholars in Khorasan (d. 381 AH). Other main references of the Shia include *Tahdheeb al-Aḥkâm* and *al-Istibṣâr fima ukhtulifa min al-Akhbâr*, by Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan aṭ-Ṭoosi. These Shiite

books are filled with tens of thousands of reports and hadiths which cannot be proven sound; indeed most of them are fabricated and made up,¹⁰⁰² such as the reports that we have referred to previously, on which they rely to defend the idea that 'Ali (عليه السلام) was more entitled to the caliphate. From the above, we know the views and beliefs of the Shia. The Shia themselves — or at least some of them — admit that in their books there are some fabricated reports, and they themselves criticise some of their narrators.

Since this is the case, the Shia should follow the advice of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) when he said: "Adhere to your religion and follow the guidance and Sunnah of your Prophet. Measure what you do not understand against the Qur'an; whatever the Qur'an approves of, adhere to it, and whatever it disapproves of, reject it."¹⁰⁰³ He (عليه السلام) also said: "Follow the guidance of your Prophet (ﷺ), for it is the best of guidance, and follow his Sunnah, for it is the best of ways."¹⁰⁰⁴

They should adhere to the path of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) in understanding the rulings of the noble Qur'an and the meanings of its verses. They should adhere to the apparent meaning of the noble Qur'an, understanding the verses that are general in meaning in the light of the verses that are specific and detailed. They should pay attention to what abrogates and what is abrogated, study the language of the Arabs, understand some texts in the light of others, ask about any verses that are unclear, understand the reasons for revelation and learn from Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) how to respect the status of prophethood and deal with the Sunnah of the Messenger (ﷺ) in accordance with his guidance, which I have discussed in this book. Then they should examine the reports in their books on the basis of two just and precise measures: the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger. Whatever is in accordance with the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger

(ﷺ), they should accept it; whatever is contrary to them, they should reject it and warn their followers against it, especially those reports that undermine their Imams themselves, let alone Islam.

The religion of Allah is complete and perfect. Allah says: ﴿This day, I have perfected your religion for you﴾ (*Qur'an* 5: 3). And the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) conveyed all that was revealed to him and he followed the command of his Lord, Who said: ﴿O Messenger [Muhammad]! Proclaim [the Message] which has been sent down to you from your Lord. And if you do not, then you have not conveyed His Message﴾ (*Qur'an* 5: 67).

The Prophet (ﷺ) conveyed the message clearly and eloquently, and he established proof so that there would be no excuse left for anyone. He proclaimed it openly among the Muslims, without singling out anyone to tell him alone any part of Sharia and asking him to keep it secret. Allah says: ﴿Verily, those who conceal the clear proofs, evidences and the guidance, which We have sent down, after We have made it clear for the people in the Book, they are the ones cursed by Allah and cursed by the cursers. Except those who repent and do righteous deeds, and openly declare [the truth which they concealed]﴾ (*Qur'an* 2: 159-160).

﴿And We have not sent down the Book [the Qur'an] to you [O Muhammad], except that you may explain clearly unto them those things in which they differ.﴾ (*Qur'an* 16: 64)

So the religion is complete and perfect, with nothing added or taken away or altered,¹⁰⁰⁵ not by any so-called Imam or any fictional absent one.¹⁰⁰⁶ The Prophet (ﷺ) bade farewell to this world after conveying the religion in full and explaining all of it as commanded by his Lord. He (ﷺ) said: "You have been left with something so clear that its night is like its day. No one goes astray from it after I am gone but he will be doomed."¹⁰⁰⁷ Abu Dharr (رضي الله عنه) said:

"Muhammad (ﷺ) left us, and no bird moved its wing in the sky but he told us something about it."¹⁰⁰⁸

3.8. Shia view of Taqiyyah

3.8.1. Shia definition of Taqiyyah

Their shaykh al-Mufeed said: "Taqiyyah is concealing the truth and one's belief in it, not speaking about one's beliefs to those who are different, and not supporting them in any matter that may cause harm in one's religious or worldly affairs."¹⁰⁰⁹ Yoosuf al-Baḥrānī, one of their senior scholars in the twelfth century AH, said: "What is meant by taqiyyah is to show agreement with those who differ from us in what they believe, out of fear."¹⁰¹⁰ Khomeini said: "The meaning of taqiyyah is for a man to say something different than the truth or to do something contrary to the teachings of Islam, in order to protect his life, honour or wealth."¹⁰¹¹ These three definitions of taqiyyah, by three of the senior scholars of the Râfiḍī Shia who came at different intervals, are based on their four main principles of taqiyyah, which are:

- ❖ The meaning of taqiyyah is for a person to show to another something other than what he believes in his heart.
- ❖ Taqiyyah is to be used with those who differ, and it is very clear that all of the Muslims come under this heading.
- ❖ Taqiyyah is used with regard to what those who differ believe or follow in matters of religion.
- ❖ Taqiyyah is only to be used in the case of fear for one's religion, life or wealth.

These four guidelines form the basis of their belief in taqiyyah.¹⁰¹²

3.8.2. Status of taqiyyah among the Râfiḍi Shia

Taqiyyah is held in high esteem among them, as is indicated by numerous reports in their main reference books. Al-Kulayni and others narrated from Ja‘far aṣ-Ṣâdiq that he said: “Taqiyyah is part of my religion and the religion of my forefathers, and the one who has no taqiyyah has no faith.”¹⁰¹³

It was narrated from Abu Abdullah that he said: “Nine-tenths of religion is in taqiyyah; the one who has no taqiyyah has no faith. Taqiyyah may be applied to everything except *nabeedh* (a type of drink) and wiping over the two khuffs (leather slippers).”¹⁰¹⁴

In *Al-Maḥâsin*, it is narrated from Ḥabeeb ibn Basheer from Abu Abdullah that he said: “No, by Allah, nothing on earth is dearer to me than taqiyyah. O Ḥabeeb, the one who has taqiyyah will be raised in status by Allah; O Ḥabeeb, the one who has no taqiyyah will be humiliated by Allah.”¹⁰¹⁵ In aṭ-Toosi’s *Al-Amâli*, it is narrated from Ja‘far aṣ-Ṣâdiq that he said: “He is not one of us who does not adhere to taqiyyah and preserve our dignity before the base people.”¹⁰¹⁶ In *Al-Uṣool al-Aṣliyyah* it is narrated from ‘Ali ibn Muhammad that Dâwood aṣ-Ṣarmi said: “He said to me: ‘O Dâwood, if I told you that the one who forsakes taqiyyah is like the one who forsakes prayer, it would be true.’”¹⁰¹⁷

It was narrated from Bâqir that he was asked: “Who is the most perfect of people?” He said: “The one who adheres most to taqiyyah and takes care of his brothers the most.”¹⁰¹⁸ It was also narrated that he said: “The noblest characteristic of the virtuous Imams of our sect is the use of taqiyyah.”¹⁰¹⁹

These reports illustrate the high status of taqiyyah in their view and its importance in their religion. For the Râfiḍi Shia, taqiyyah is one of the most important fundamentals of religion; the one who has no taqiyyah has no faith, and the one who forsakes taqiyyah is like

the one who forsakes prayer. In fact, taqiyyah in their view is better than all the pillars of Islam. Taqiyyah represents nine-tenths of their religion, and all the pillars and obligatory duties of Islam represent the remaining one-tenth.¹⁰²⁰ The author of *al-Kâfi* narrated reports under the headings: 'Chapter on taqiyyah',¹⁰²¹ 'Chapter on concealment',¹⁰²² and 'Chapter on speaking openly'.¹⁰²³ Al-Majlisi quoted one hundred and nine of their reports in *Biḥâr al-Anwâr* in a chapter called 'Taqiyyah' and being kind for fear of hostility.¹⁰²⁴

3.8.3. Causes of this exaggeration with regard to taqiyyah

This exaggeration with regard to taqiyyah is due to a number of things, such as:

3.8.3.a. Their view that the rulership of the first three caliphs was invalid

The Râfiḍi Shia regarded the rulership of the first three caliphs as invalid. They and those who swore allegiance to them are regarded as disbelievers, even though 'Ali (عليه السلام) swore allegiance to them, prayed behind them, fought in jīḥād alongside them, gave his daughter Umm Kulthoom in marriage to 'Umar (عليه السلام) and had a concubine whom he received from his jīḥād with Abu Bakr (عليه السلام). When he was appointed caliph, he followed in their footsteps and did not change anything that Abu Bakr and 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) did, as the books of the Shia themselves admit.

This proves that the Shiite madh-hab is invalid from its foundations. They tried to escape these overwhelming contradictions by using the principle of taqiyyah¹⁰²⁵ to explain the events of their history. They suggested that 'Ali's keeping quiet about Abu Bakr (عليه السلام) was taqiyyah, and al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali's yielding the caliphate to Mu'âwiyah was taqiyyah, and the disappearance and concealment of

their Imams was taqiyyah. Thus it is possible to explain all events that contradict their beliefs by means of taqiyyah.¹⁰²⁶

3.8.3.b. Their claim that the Imams were infallible

They claimed that the Imams were infallible; they were not heedless, and they did not err or forget. However, this claim is contrary to what is known of their lives. Even the reports of the Shia themselves, which are attributed to the Imams, differ and contradict one another to the extent that there is no report without another one that contradicts it, as was acknowledged by their shaykh at-Ṭoosi.¹⁰²⁷ It is obvious that this cancels out the very foundation of the principle of infallibility, so they came up with the idea of taqiyyah to explain these contradictions and differences and to cover up their lies about the Imams.

The author of *al-Kâfi* narrated that Manṣoor ibn Ḥâzim said: 'I said to Abu Abdullah (ﷺ): 'Why is it that sometimes I ask you about an issue and you give me an answer, then someone else comes to you and you give him a different answer?' He said: 'We answer people on the basis of giving more or less.'"¹⁰²⁸ The commentator on *al-Kâfi* said that this means that they: "are more strict when using taqiyyah, and less so when there is no taqiyyah. That is not because of forgetfulness or ignorance; it is because they know that differences among the Shia are better for them and more conducive to their survival, because if they were united in their views, they would be known for being Shia, and that could be a reason for killing them and killing the Imams."¹⁰²⁹

3.8.3.c. Making the mission of those who fabricate lies about the Imams easy

Another factor is the aim of making the mission of those who fabricate lies about the Imams easy and trying to conceal the real madh-hab of Ahl al-Bayt. They tried to give the impression to their

followers that what they (those who lay down the principle of taqiyyah) transmitted from the Imams was their true madh-hab, whereas the well known sayings and actions of the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt in front of the Muslims did not represent their true madh-hab because they did that on the basis of taqiyyah. Using this ploy, it became easy for them to fabricate words and attribute them to the Imams, even as they rejected what was narrated from them of truth. So, for example, you will find them rejecting the words of Imam Muhammad al-Bâqir or Ja'far aş-Şâdiq that were said in front of people or that were narrated by Muslims of good character, on the grounds that some Sunnis were present, so he 'used taqiyyah in his words'. On the other hand, they accept what is narrated by fabricators such as Jâbir al-Ja'fi alone, on the grounds that there was no one present when he spoke whose presence would necessitate the use of taqiyyah.

It is sufficient for you to know that Imam Zayd ibn 'Ali, who is one of Ahl al-Bayt, narrated from 'Ali (ﷺ) — as is reported in the books of the Twelver Shia themselves — that he washed his feet when doing wuḍoo', but the one they call Shaykh aṭ-Ṭâ'ifah does not accept this hadith and cannot find any reason for rejecting it except taqiyyah. He rejected the hadith, which was narrated in *al-Istibṣâr* from Zayd ibn 'Ali from his grandfather 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib, who said: "I was sitting and doing wuḍoo', and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came when I started doing wuḍoo'... and I washed my feet, and he said to me: 'O 'Ali, let water go between the toes, lest the fire go between them.'"¹⁰³⁰ So you can see that 'Ali used to wash his feet during wuḍoo', and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) confirmed that he should let the water go between his toes. However, the Shia went against the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and the practice of 'Ali (ﷺ) with regard to that and paid no attention to such reports, even when they were narrated in their own books from the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt. The Shi'ite shaykhs themselves never bothered to think

about these reports or examine them; they always have this ready-made excuse of taqiyyah.¹⁰³¹

Hence aṭ-Ṭoosi said: “This report is in accordance with the masses — meaning Ahl as-Sunnah — but it is to be interpreted as being taqiyyah because of what is known without any doubt of the view of our Imams (عليه السلام), namely that the feet should be wiped.” Then he said: “The narrators of this report are all of the masses (Sunnis) or men of the Zaydi sect; if they narrate a report supporting some of their ideas or practices,¹⁰³² we do not accept it.”

With regard to marriage, they have reports that mention the prohibition on temporary, fixed-term marriage. In their books, it is narrated from Zayd ibn ‘Ali from his forefathers from ‘Ali (عليه السلام) that he said: “On the day of Khaybar, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) forbade the flesh of domesticated donkeys and temporary marriage.”¹⁰³³ Their Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-‘Âmili said: “I say: The Shaykh¹⁰³⁴ and others interpreted it as being taqiyyah (in the report), because the permissibility of temporary marriage is one of the fundamentals of the Imami madh-hab.”¹⁰³⁵

With regard to the division of inheritance, a woman cannot inherit anything of property, houses or land.¹⁰³⁶ There is a report from the Imams contradicting that — namely the hadith of Abu Ya‘qoob from Abu Abdullah, who said: “I asked him about the man: does he inherit anything of the house or the land of his wife, or is he in the same position as the woman, so he should not inherit anything from her? He said: ‘He inherits from her, and she inherits from him, everything that he or she leaves behind.’”¹⁰³⁷ Aṭ-Ṭoosi said: “We interpret this as being taqiyyah, because everyone who disagrees with us disagrees with us on this issue, and none of the masses (the Sunnis) agree with us on this issue. In such cases, we may interpret it as being taqiyyah.”¹⁰³⁸

3.8.3.d. The principle of taqiyyah was established in order to isolate the Shia from the Muslims

Their Imam Abu Abdullah said: "Whatever you hear from me that resembles the view of the people (meaning Ahl as-Sunnah) is taqiyyah, and whatever you hear from me that does not resemble the view of the people is not taqiyyah."¹⁰³⁹ The result of this belief in taqiyyah was that the views of the Imams were lost to the Shia; even their shaykhs do not know, with regard to the views of the Imams narrated in the reports, what is taqiyyah and what is true.¹⁰⁴⁰ They set up a method of judging what is true, and it brought the entire madh-hab into extremism; what they decided is that whatever is contrary to the masses (meaning Ahl as-Sunnah) is guidance.¹⁰⁴¹

The author of *al-Hadâ'iq* admitted that because of taqiyyah, only a few of the rulings of their religion are known for certain. He said: "Therefore none of the rulings of Islam were known on the basis of certainty except a few, because the reports narrated (from the Imams) are mixed with other reports that are interpreted as being taqiyyah." This was also admitted by 'the trustworthy one of Islam' Muhammad ibn Ya'qoob al-Kulayni in his book *al-Kâfi*. He got so confused that when there were conflicting reports, he no longer paid attention to what was thought most likely to be correct, and he resorted to merely submitting to and accepting whatever was narrated from the Imams.¹⁰⁴²

With regard to how they apply taqiyyah among the Shia, there are reports showing that their taqiyyah is not connected to cases of necessity. Yoosuf al-Bahrâni admitted that the Imams may give contradictory rulings even if none of those people (Sunnis) were present, so we see them giving several different answers concerning one issue, even if none of them are similar to the Sunni view.¹⁰⁴³

3.8.4. Concept of taqiyyah among Ahl as-Sunnah

The concept of taqiyyah in Islam is, in most cases, to be used with the disbelievers. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿...except if you indeed fear a danger from them﴾ (*Qur'an* 3: 28). Ibn Jareer at-Ṭabari said: "The taqiyyah mentioned by Allah in this verse is taqiyyah used with the disbelievers and no one else."¹⁰⁴⁴ For this reason, some members of the early generation thought that there should be no taqiyyah after Allah (ﷻ) caused Islam to prevail. Mu'âdh ibn Jabal and Mujâhid said: "Taqiyyah was to be used at the beginning of Islam, before the Muslims prevailed, but today Allah (ﷻ) has caused the Muslims to prevail, and there is no danger to be feared."¹⁰⁴⁵

On the contrary, the Shias use taqiyyah with the Muslims, especially the Sunnis, to the extent that they think that the era of the best generations was an era of taqiyyah. This was stated by their shaykh al-Mufeed, and it may be noticed in the texts that are attributed to their Imams. They regard Ahl as-Sunnah as being worse in disbelief than the Jews and Christians because in their view, the one who denies the imamate of the twelve Imams is worse than the one who denies prophethood.¹⁰⁴⁶

The correct view is that taqiyyah is a concession in cases of necessity. Hence Allah (ﷻ) made an exception to the principle that it is forbidden to become close friends with the disbelievers when He said: ﴿Let not the believers take the disbelievers as *Awliyâ'* [supporters, helpers] instead of the believers, and whoever does that, will never be helped by Allah in any way, except if you indeed fear a danger from them. And Allah warns you against Himself [His punishment], and to Allah is the final return﴾ (*Qur'an* 3: 28). He issued a statement warning against that in the words 'and whoever does that'. In other words, whoever does what Allah (ﷻ) has forbidden has nothing to do with Allah (ﷻ). Then He said: 'except if you indeed fear a danger from them,' meaning that whoever fears

their evil in certain places and at certain times may dissemble or conceal his religion outwardly but not inwardly; his intention must stay true.¹⁰⁴⁷

The scholars unanimously agree that taqiyyah is a concession allowed in cases of necessity. Ibn al-Mundhir said: "They were unanimously agreed that the one who is forced to disbelieve, to the extent that he fears he may be killed, and speaks words of disbelief although his heart is at rest with faith¹⁰⁴⁸ is not to be deemed a disbeliever,¹⁰⁴⁹ but the one who chooses resolve in such a situation is better." Ibn Baṭṭāl said: "They agreed that the one who is forced to disbelieve and chooses to be killed will have a greater reward with Allah (ﷻ)." ¹⁰⁵⁰ Taqiyyah according to the Shiite view is something quite different, though. For them it is not a concession; it is one of the pillars of their religion.¹⁰⁵¹

Islam is the religion of jihad and calling others to the faith, so taqiyyah cannot be a basic principle and something that is entrenched in the behaviour of the Muslim or a characteristic of the Muslim society. On the contrary, in most cases it is something temporary that is used in individual cases of necessity, and it is related to being unable to migrate; when the situation of compulsion ends, it is no longer to be used. According to the Shiite madh-hab, however, it is regarded as something natural and an essential part of the madh-hab. It is an ongoing and permanent part of social behaviour.¹⁰⁵² The scholars have stated, based on their knowledge of the situation of the Shia, that their taqiyyah is nothing but lies and hypocrisy.

Ibn Taymiyah differentiated between the taqiyyah of hypocrisy and the taqiyyah that is allowed in Islam. He said that the taqiyyah allowed in Islam "does not mean telling lies and speaking with my tongue something different from what is in my heart, for that is hypocrisy. Instead, I do what I am able to. If the believer is among disbelievers and evildoers, he does not have to strive in physical jihad

against them when he is not able to do so, but if he is able to do that verbally, then he should do that. Otherwise he should do that in his heart, but still he should not lie and say with his tongue something that is not in his heart; he should practice his religion either openly or concealing it. Nevertheless, he should still not show agreement with everything in their religion; rather the most that his taqiyyah may involve is for him to be like the believer in the household of Pharaoh; he did not show agreement with them with regard to all of their religion, but at the same time he did not lie or say anything. Outwardly pretending to follow the false religion is something else altogether; Allah (ﷻ) did not allow that at all except in the case of one who is forced and compelled to such a degree that he has to speak words of disbelief. Allah (ﷻ) may excuse him for that, but the hypocrite and liar will not be excused at all. Moreover, the believer who lives among the disbelievers and has no other choice and is concealing his faith should treat them in accordance with the faith in his heart, on the basis of sincerity, wishing them well even if he does not agree with their religion, as Yoosuf aş-Şiddeeq did with the people of Egypt, who were disbelievers. This is unlike the Râfiđi who does not leave any harmful action that he is able to do without doing it to those who differ from him.”¹⁰⁵³

Shaykh Salmân al-‘Awdah summed up the differences in the way taqiyyah is understood by Ahl as-Sunnah and the Râfiđis, saying: “Taqiyyah, for Ahl as-Sunnah, is a temporary exception that is different from the norm, but for the Shia it is something that is obligatory and enjoined until the return of the hidden Imam of Ahl al-Bayt. Acting on the basis of taqiyyah, for Ahl as-Sunnah, ends as soon as the reason for it ends, but for the Shia, it is an ongoing obligation for all that will not end until the appearance of their Mahdi, who will never emerge. The taqiyyah of Ahl as-Sunnah is to be used with the disbelievers in most cases, although it may be used with evildoers and oppressors, but the taqiyyah of the Shia is, in

principle, to be used with Muslims who differ from them, namely Ahl as-Sunnah. For Ahl as-Sunnah, taqiyyah is something that is done reluctantly, and the Muslim resorts to it without feeling happy or at ease with it, but for the Shia, it is a characteristic that is regarded as praiseworthy and good, and there are many texts from their Imams that praise it."¹⁰⁵⁴

3.9. The awaited Mahdi between Shiites and Sunnis

3.9.1. Shiite belief in the awaited Mahdi

One of the most prominent beliefs of the Râfiḍi Shia, with which their books are filled, is belief in the awaited Mahdi. What the Imami Râfiḍis mean by the awaited Mahdi is Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-‘Askari, who is their twelfth Imam and whom they call ‘the proof’ and ‘the one who stands for the truth’.¹⁰⁵⁵ They claim that he was born in 255 AH and that he hid in the tunnel of Samarra¹⁰⁵⁶ in 265 AH; they are waiting for his appearance at the end of time, when he will avenge them against their enemies and support them.¹⁰⁵⁷ The Râfiḍi Shia still visit the tunnel of Samarra¹⁰⁵⁸ and call upon him to emerge.¹⁰⁵⁹

In fact, this Mahdi who is claimed by the Râfiḍis is non-existent. Al-Ḥasan al-‘Askari, whom they name as his father, died without leaving any child behind; his estate was divided between his mother and his brother Ja‘far. This Shiite belief in the awaited Mahdi is accompanied by many myths and fables that no rational person could believe. They believe that the Mahdi is one of the descendants of al-Ḥusayn,¹⁰⁶⁰ and they narrate strange stories about him.¹⁰⁶¹

They say that when he emerges, the Râfiḍi Shia will come from all over to rally around him.¹⁰⁶² He will bring the Companions

out of their graves and punish them;¹⁰⁶³ he will kill the Arabs and Quraysh;¹⁰⁶⁴ he will destroy the Ka‘bah, the Prophet’s Mosque and all other mosques;¹⁰⁶⁵ he will call people to a new religion, a new book and new laws;¹⁰⁶⁶ and he will conquer cities with the Ark of the Covenant of the Jews.¹⁰⁶⁷ Two springs, of water and milk, will flow for him, and one Shi‘ite Râfi‘i man will gain the strength of forty men; he will give them strength and power in their hearing and vision, and he will rule according to the law of the family of Dâwood.¹⁰⁶⁸

The beliefs of the Râfi‘i Shia concerning their awaited Mahdi are false. This fact is indicated by a number of things:

3.9.1.a. It is proven that this Mahdi was not born

By the wisdom of Allah (ﷻ), it was decreed that al-Ḥasan al-‘Askari, the eleventh Imam of the Râfi‘is, should die childless. This was a great scandal and a major setback for the Râfi‘i Shia: how could the Imam die without having any sons who could succeed him as Imam? Their belief is that the one who succeeds the Imam after his death must be his son, and it is not permissible for the imamate to be passed to a brother after al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn.¹⁰⁶⁹ The fact that this Mahdi was not born is proven in the books of the Shia themselves.¹⁰⁷⁰

3.9.1.b. It makes no sense for the Mahdi to disappear

If we accept for argument’s sake that this Mahdi was born, it makes no sense for him to disappear for this long time in the tunnel. When the Râfi‘i Shia are asked about the wisdom behind his disappearance in the tunnel and his not coming out to the people, they explain that he feared for his life.¹⁰⁷¹ This is a weak excuse, and many things show this to be false. It is narrated in their books that he will be supported by Allah (ﷻ) and will gain control of the entire earth, east and west. He will fill the earth with justice as it was filled

with injustice, and he will live until the time when 'Eesa ibn Maryam [Jesus the son of Mary (ﷺ)] descends.¹⁰⁷²

What they say means that the Mahdi will never emerge until the states of injustice and oppression and evil go away, so that he can feel that his life is safe — but at that time there will be no need for him to emerge. These states are able to protect him if he emerges, so why does he not emerge? The one who cannot protect himself from being killed will not be able to protect others either, because the one who does not have a thing cannot give it. How can they be waiting for someone like that to avenge them against their enemies and cause them to prevail? Thus their claims are proven invalid, because the reason why the Mahdi has not emerged is that he fears for his life. Based on that, the claim that the Mahdi existed at all is rendered invalid, because nothing is preventing him from coming out of hiding except fear for his life, as was clearly stated by Shaykh at-Ṭâ'ifah at-Ṭoosi.¹⁰⁷³ So the claims about the existence of the Mahdi are proven false by the testimony of their own scholars, and this is by the grace of Allah (ﷻ).

3.9.1.c. No benefit has been achieved by this Mahdi

Another indication of the falseness of the Râfiḍi Shiite belief in the awaited Mahdi is that this Mahdi, who the Râfiḍis claim will emerge, has not achieved any interest, religious or worldly, and the Muslims have not benefited from him at all, either the Râfiḍis or any others. Ibn Taymiyah said: "This infallible one, whom they claim was born at some time more than four hundred and fifty years ago,¹⁰⁷⁴ entered the tunnel, according to them, in 260 AH, when he was five years old according to some of them, or younger than that according to others. He did not do anything that the infallible Imam does. What benefits can there be in the existence of such a one, even if he did exist? So how about if he never existed at all? What blessing

or benefit did those who believed in this infallible one attain by means of him in their religious or worldly interests?...This figure in whom the Râfidis believe must be either absent, according to them, or non-existent, according to people of reason. Whatever the case, there is no benefit to anyone in either religious or worldly terms.”¹⁰⁷⁵ The Twelver Shia nowadays have gone against this belief in practical terms through their belief in the theory of ‘guardianship of the jurist’, which allows ruling and governing by an ordinary Muslim who is not infallible and for whom there is no instruction or text from Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ), provided that he has knowledge and is of good character.

3.9.2. The belief of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ’ah in the Mahdi

The sound hadiths state that at the end of time, Allah (ﷻ) will bring forth a man from Ahl al-Bayt through whom Allah (ﷻ) will cause Islam to prevail. He will rule for seven years, filling the earth with justice and peace as it had been filled with injustice and oppression. During his rule, the Ummah will enjoy blessings that it never enjoyed before; the earth will bring forth its vegetation, the sky will send down rain, and he will give wealth without measure. The following are some of these hadiths:

3.9.2.a.

It was narrated from Abu Sa’eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “At the end of my Ummah, the Mahdi will appear. Allah will send a great deal of rain for him, the earth will bring forth its vegetation, and he will distribute wealth equally among the people. The numbers of livestock will increase, and the Ummah will become great. He will live for seven or eight”¹⁰⁷⁶ years.¹⁰⁷⁷

3.9.2.b.

It was also narrated from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "The Hour will not begin until the earth is filled with oppression and enmity. Then a man from my family will emerge, and he will fill it with fairness and justice as it was filled with oppression and enmity."¹⁰⁷⁸

3.9.2.c.

It was narrated that Thawbân (رضي الله عنه) said: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'Three will fight one another for your treasure, each one of them the son of a caliph, but none of them will gain it. Then the black banners will come from the east, and they will kill you in an unprecedented manner.' He mentioned something that I do not remember, then he said: 'When you see him, pledge your allegiance to him even if you have to crawl over the snow, for that is the caliph of Allah, the Mahdi.'"¹⁰⁷⁹

Ibn Katheer said: "What is meant by the treasure mentioned in this report is the treasure of the Ka'bah; three sons of caliphs will be killed fighting for it until, at the end of time, the Mahdi will appear. His appearance will be from a land in the east, not from the tunnel of Samarra in which the ignorant Râfiqîs claim he has been until now, where they are waiting for him to emerge at the end of time. This is a kind of madness and a great deal of misguidance from Satan, because there is no proof or evidence for that, either from the Qur'an or the Sunnah, or any rational evidence.... He will be supported by people from the east, who will establish his rule. Their banners will be black, which is the colour of dignity, because the banner of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was black and was called *al-'Iqâb*... What is meant is that the promised, praiseworthy Mahdi who will appear at the end of time will originate and appear and emerge from the east, and allegiance will be sworn to him at the Ka'bah, as is indicated by some hadiths."¹⁰⁸⁰

3.9.2.d.

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said that he heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: "How will you be when the son of Maryam descends and your leader is one of you?"¹⁰⁸¹

3.9.2.e.

It was narrated that Jâbir ibn Abdullah (رضي الله عنه) said that he heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: "A group among my Ummah will continue to fight for the truth and will prevail until the Day of Resurrection. 'Eesa ibn Maryam will descend, and their leader will say: 'Come and lead us in prayer,' but he will say: 'No, you are leaders of one another,' as an honour from Allah to this Ummah."¹⁰⁸²

The hadiths, which are narrated in Bukhari and Muslim, indicate two things:

- (i) That when 'Eesa ibn Maryam (عليه السلام) descends from heaven, the one in charge of the Muslims will be one of them.
- (ii) That their ruler will be there to lead the Muslims in prayer, and the fact that he will ask 'Eesa (ﷺ) to lead them in prayer when he descends indicates that this ruler will be righteous and guided.

There are other hadiths in the *Sunans* and *Musnads* and elsewhere that explain these hadiths that appear in Bukhari and Muslim; they indicate that the name of that righteous man will be Muhammad ibn Abdullah and he will be called the Mahdi. The reports of the Sunnah support and explain each another.

3.9.2.f.

It was narrated that Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه) said that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "He is one of us behind whom 'Eesa ibn Maryam will pray."¹⁰⁸³

3.9.2.g.

It was narrated^f that Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه) said that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "The Mahdi is of me. He has a high forehead and a prominent nose. He will fill the world with fairness and justice as it was filled with wrongdoing and injustice, and he will rule for seven years."¹⁰⁸⁴

There is no connection at all between the Mahdi of the Sunnah and the Mahdi of the Râfiḍi Shia. There are many differences between them, such as:

- ❖ According to Ahl as-Sunnah, the Mahdi's name is Muhammad ibn Abdullah; his name is the same as the Prophet (ﷺ), and his father's name is the same as the Prophet's father. As for the Mahdi of the Râfiḍi Shia, his name is Muhammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-'Askari.
- ❖ According to Ahl as-Sunnah, the Mahdi is one of the descendants of al-Ḥasan (رضي الله عنه). The Mahdi of the Râfiḍi Shia is one of the descendants of al-Ḥusayn (رضي الله عنه).
- ❖ According to Ahl as-Sunnah, the Mahdi will be born naturally, and his lifespan will be natural. There is nothing in the hadiths to indicate that he is at all different from other people in that regard. As for the Mahdi of the Râfiḍi Shia, his conception and birth happened in one night, and he entered the tunnel when he was nine years old; now he has been in the tunnel for more than 1150 years.
- ❖ The Mahdi, according to Ahl as-Sunnah, will emerge to support Islam and the Muslims, and he will not differentiate between one nation and another. As for the Mahdi of the Râfiḍi Shia, he will emerge to support only the Râfiḍi Shia and to wreak vengeance on their enemies. He will hate the Arabs and Quraysh and will give them

nothing but the sword; there will be no Arabs among his followers, according to their reports.

- ❖ The Mahdi of Ahl as-Sunnah will love the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) (may Allah be pleased with them); he will ask Allah (ﷻ) to be pleased with them and will adhere to their way. He will also love the Mothers of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with them) and will not mention them except in the best terms. As for the Mahdi of the Râfiḍi Shia, they claim that he will hate the Companions of the Prophet and will bring them out of their graves in order to punish them and then burn them. He will also hate the Mothers of the Believers and will despise the dearest of the Prophet's wives to him, aṣ-Ṣiddeeqah bint aṣ-Ṣiddeeq ‘Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) — or so they claim.
- ❖ The Mahdi of Ahl as-Sunnah will act according to the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ); he will not leave any Sunnah without establishing it or any innovation without suppressing it. As for the Mahdi of the Râfiḍi Shia, he will call people to a new religion and a new book.
- ❖ The Mahdi of Ahl as-Sunnah will build and frequent mosques. As for the Mahdi of the Râfiḍi Shia, he will destroy mosques; he will destroy al-Masjid al-Ḥarâm and the Ka'bah, and the Prophet's Mosque, and will not leave a single mosque on the face of the earth — as is clearly stated in their reports.
- ❖ The Mahdi of Ahl as-Sunnah will rule in accordance with the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ). As for the Mahdi of the Râfiḍi Shia, he will rule according to the law of the family of Dâwood.
- ❖ The Mahdi of Ahl as-Sunnah will emerge from the east. As

for the Mahdi of the Râfiḍi Shia, he will emerge from the tunnel of Samarra.

- ❖ The Mahdi of Ahl as-Sunnah is true and proven, as indicated by the hadiths of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the words of the scholars of the past and of the present. As for the Mahdi of the Râfiḍi Shia, he is a figment of their imagination who has not appeared and will never appear.¹⁰⁸⁵

3.10. Râfiḍi Shiite belief that some people will be brought back from the dead

Raj'ah (belief that some people will be brought back from the dead) is one of the basic tenets of the Shiite madh-hab. One of their reports says: "He is not one of us who does not believe in our Imams coming back."¹⁰⁸⁶ Ibn Bâbawayh said in *al-I'tiqâdât*: "Our belief concerning raj'ah is that it is true."¹⁰⁸⁷ Al-Mufeed said: "The Imamīs are agreed that the return of many people from the dead (raj'ah) is inevitable."¹⁰⁸⁸ Aṭ-Ṭubrusī, al-Ḥurr al-ʿÂmilī and other Shiite shaykhs said: "This is something upon which all the Imami Shia agree."¹⁰⁸⁹ It is one of the fundamentals of their madh-hab; they are enjoined to believe in raj'ah and affirm their belief in supplications and visits to shrines on Fridays and at all times, just as they affirm their belief in tawḥeed, prophethood, imamate and resurrection.¹⁰⁹⁰ What is meant by raj'ah is return to this world after death.¹⁰⁹¹

Many Shiite groups are of the view that their Imams will return to this life. Some say that they died and will return, and others deny that they died; they say that they are in occultation and will return. The first one to speak of raj'ah was Ibn Saba', who did not believe that 'Ali (ﷺ) died; he said that he had gone into occultation and will return. The belief in raj'ah only applied to the Imam, according to the Saba'is, Kaysânīs and others, but according to the Twelvers, it

applies to the Imam and many others. Al-Aloosi indicates that the Shiite belief in the return of the Imam only changed to take on that more general meaning in the third century AH.¹⁰⁹²

As for the general concept of *raj‘ah* among the Twelvers, it includes three types:

- (i) The twelve Imams: the Mahdi will emerge from his hiding place and return from his absence, and the rest of the Imams will come back to life and return to this world after dying.
- (ii) Those who usurped the caliphate — in their view — from its legitimate rulers (the twelve Imams), namely the caliphs of the Muslims, foremost among whom are Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmân, will be resurrected from their graves and will return to this world so that vengeance might be wrought upon them for taking the caliphate from those who were entitled to it. They will be subjected to torture, killing and crucifixion.
- (iii) Ordinary people will also be resurrected, in particular those with pure faith, namely the Shia in general, because they are the only ones who are regarded as having faith. This is the consensus of their reports and the sayings of their shaykhs. Those who have nothing but disbelief will also be resurrected; that refers to all people apart from the weak and oppressed.¹⁰⁹³

Hence they say, defining *raj‘ah*, that it refers to bringing back many of the dead to this world before the Day of Resurrection¹⁰⁹⁴ and their returning to this life after death¹⁰⁹⁵ in their original forms.¹⁰⁹⁶

The shaykhs of the Shia looked for evidence in the Book of Allah to prove this belief in *raj‘ah*, which they alone, among all of the Muslims, accept. When they could not find what they were looking

for, they resorted as usual to esoteric interpretations and twisted the meanings a great deal. They imposed their own distorted, far-fetched interpretation in this manner so that the evidence that they produced became evidence against them and proof of their false beliefs. Below are some examples of their interpretation of the verses.

Their foremost interpreter of Qur'an thinks that one of the greatest proofs of raj'ah is to be found in the verse: ﴿And a ban is laid on every town [population] which We have destroyed that they shall not return [to this world again, nor repent to Us].﴾ (*Qur'an* 21: 95). He says: "This verse is one of the greatest proofs for raj'ah, because no Muslim denies that all people will be brought back on the Day of Resurrection, whether he was among those who were destroyed (as mentioned in the verse) or not."¹⁰⁹⁷ However, this verse is actually proof against them, since it indicates that there is no raj'ah or coming back from the dead in this world. What it means, as was clearly stated by Ibn 'Abbâs, Abu Ja'far al-Bâqir, Qatâdah and others, is that it is forbidden for the people of any town that was destroyed because of their sins to come back to this world before the Day of Resurrection.¹⁰⁹⁸

This is like the verses in which Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Do they not see how many of the generations We have destroyed before them? Verily, they will not return to them﴾ (*Qur'an* 36: 31) and ﴿Then they will not be able to make bequest, nor they will return to their family﴾ (*Qur'an* 36: 50). The addition of 'not' (in the phrase 'they shall not return') in the verse from Soorat al-Anbiya' above is additional confirmation of the negative implied by the phrase 'And a ban is laid'. This is an example of the brilliant and precise Qur'anic style. The reason for telling them that they will not return, even though it is clear that they will not return, is to tell them something that will disturb and upset them because they have lost their greatest joy, which is their life in this world.¹⁰⁹⁹

However, if what is meant in the verse is a confirmation of raj'ah in the sense of people coming back to life on the Day of Resurrection (and there is no doubt about that),¹¹⁰⁰ then the meaning is that it is not possible for them to avoid returning to Allah (ﷻ) for recompense.¹¹⁰¹

The Shiite idea of raj'ah, or coming back to this world after death, is contrary to the clear text of the noble Qur'an and is invalid based on the evidence of numerous texts of the Book of Allah. Allah (ﷻ) says: «Until, when death comes to one of them [those who join partners with Allah], he says: 'My Lord! Send me back, so that I may do good in that which I have left behind!' No! It is but a word that he speaks; and behind them is Barzakh [a barrier] until the Day when they will be resurrected.» (*Qur'an* 23: 99-100)

The words "and behind them is Barzakh (a barrier) until the Day when they will be resurrected" clearly indicate that is no coming back (raj'ah) at all.¹¹⁰²

At the time of death, when they stand before the Almighty and they see hell, the people referred to in these verses all ask to come back to this world. But the answer, in accordance with the prior decree of Allah (ﷻ), is that they will never return to this world. Hence the scholars regarded the idea of returning to this world after death (raj'ah) as one of the most extreme degrees of the innovation of Shiism.¹¹⁰³ In *Musnad Ahmad*, it is narrated that 'Âṣim ibn Ḍamurah, who was one of the companions of 'Ali (ﷻ), said to al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali: "The Shia are claiming that 'Ali will come back." Al-Ḥasan said: "Those liars are lying. If we knew that, his wives would not have remarried and his estate would not have been divided."¹¹⁰⁴

The idea of raj'ah, or return to this world after death so that the evildoers may be punished and those who did good may be rewarded, is contrary to the nature of this world, which is not the place of

requital. ﴿Everyone shall taste death. And only on the Day of Resurrection shall you be paid your wages in full. And whoever is removed away from the fire and admitted to paradise, he indeed is successful. The life of this world is only the enjoyment of deception [a deceiving thing].﴾ (Qur'an 3: 185)

The Jew Ibn Saba' played a role in laying the foundations of the principle of raj'ah, except that he said that it only applied to 'Ali (عليه السلام); moreover, he denied that death ever befell him in the first place, just as the Twelvers said about the Mahdi who they claim existed. The Imami Shia belief in raj'ah is contrary to what is well established in Islam: that there will be no resurrection before the Day of Resurrection and that when Allah (ﷻ) warns a disbeliever or wrongdoer, He is only warning them about the Day of Resurrection. It is also contrary to the verses and mutawâtir hadiths which clearly state that there is no returning to this world before the Day of Resurrection.

3.11. Their belief in bada' (change in the divine decree)

Another of the basic beliefs of the Twelvers is bada', or change in the divine decree. They exaggerated about this idea and said that Allah (ﷻ) is never worshipped with anything better than belief in bada';¹¹⁰⁵ Allah (ﷻ) is never glorified with anything like bada';¹¹⁰⁶ if the people knew what reward there is in believing in bada', they would never stop talking about it;¹¹⁰⁷ and every Prophet sent by Allah (ﷻ) forbade alcohol and affirmed belief in bada'.¹¹⁰⁸ It seems that the one who established this belief among the Twelvers is the one whom they call 'the trustworthy of Islam', their shaykh al-Kulayni (d. 328 or 329 AH). He placed this in the section on basic beliefs in *al-Kâfi*, where he included it in the book of Tawhîd, and he devoted to it a chapter entitled 'Chapter on change in the divine

decree', in which he listed sixteen hadiths that are attributed to the Imams.¹¹⁰⁹

If we examine the linguistic meaning of the word *bada'*, we find that the dictionary says that the root meaning of this word is 'appear'.¹¹¹⁰ The word has two meanings in Arabic:

- (i) Appearing after having been hidden, so one might say, "The walls of the city appeared."
- (ii) Development of a new opinion, as in, "He developed an opinion concerning the matter."¹¹¹¹

Both of these meanings appear in the Qur'an. The first meaning is translated in this verse as 'disclose': ﴿And whether you disclose what is in your own selves or conceal it, Allah will call you to account for it﴾ (*Qur'an* 2: 284). The second meaning is translated in this verse as 'occurred': ﴿Then it occurred to them, after they had seen the proofs [of his innocence], to imprison him for a time﴾ (*Qur'an* 12: 35). It is clear in both senses that *bada'* signifies that ignorance or not knowing came first, and knowing came later; both are impossible in the case of Allah (ﷻ), and attributing them to Allah (ﷻ) is one of the worst kinds of disbelief. How can the Twelver Shia regard this as one of the greatest acts of worship and claim that Allah was never glorified with anything like *bada'*? ﴿Glory be to You [O Allah]! This is a great lie.﴾ (*Qur'an* 24: 16)¹¹¹²

This evil notion appears in the books of the Jews. In the Torah, which the Jews have distorted according to their whims and desires, there are texts that clearly attribute this notion to Allah (ﷻ).¹¹¹³ It seems that the Jew Ibn Saba' took this idea from his Torah and spread it in the Muslim society that he was attempting to influence in the name of Shiism, under the guise of calling for support for the imamate of 'Ali (ﷺ). All the sects of the Saba'is believed in *bada'* and believed that Allah always changes His decree.¹¹¹⁴ The idea was

then transferred to the Kaysâni or Mukhtâri group, who were followers of al-Mukhtâr ibn Abi 'Ubayd ath-Thaqafi. This group was famous for belief in bada'; they paid a great deal of attention to it and adhered to it as an article of faith.¹¹¹⁵

The Shiite shaykhs used to raise the morale of their followers by affirming that authority would return to them and they would be in control. They even gave a time scale of seventy years, according to a report attributed to Abu Ja'far. When those seventy years had passed and the promise was not fulfilled, the followers complained, so the founder of the madh-hab tried to find a solution to this dilemma by suggesting that something had occurred (bada') to Allah (ﷻ), which dictated that He should change this promise.¹¹¹⁶

The noble Qur'an affirms the divine attribute of knowledge and thus the falsehood of the Râfiqî Shia's belief in bada' or changes in the divine decree, which implies attribution of ignorance to Him (ﷻ). The verses which affirm the divine attribute of knowledge are many, such as the following: ﴿And with Him are the keys of the Ghayb [all that is hidden], none knows them but He. And He knows whatever there is in the land and in the sea; not a leaf falls, but He knows it. There is not a grain in the darkness of the earth nor anything fresh or dry, but is written in a Clear Record. It is He Who takes your souls by night [when you are asleep], and has knowledge of all that you have done by day.﴾ (*Qur'an* 6: 59-60)

﴿Should not He Who has created know? And He is the Most Kind and Courteous [to His slaves], All-Aware [of everything].﴾

(*Qur'an* 67: 14)

Ibn Taymiyah said: This verse clearly indicates that He must have knowledge of all things, on the basis of the following rational evidence:

- (i) He is the Creator of all things, and creation means bringing things into existence according to their due measurements. That implies prior knowledge of them and their due measurements before they can be brought into existence.
- (ii) That means that there must be divine will, and will implies that there is a prior idea of what is wanted.
- (iii) These things come from Him, and He is the only complete cause of their existence. Knowledge of the cause of these things before they come into existence implies knowledge of the thing that is brought into existence, so His knowledge of Himself implies that He has knowledge of everything that comes from Him.
- (iv) He Himself is acquainted with all things, and this is what is implied by His having knowledge of all things and having no need of them, as He is self-sufficient in all His attributes.¹¹¹⁷

These verses also indicate that Allah had knowledge and a preconceived plan of this universe before He created it, based on His prior knowledge of this universe before He brought it into existence. Allah (ﷻ) says: «He has created everything, and has measured it exactly according to its due measurements.» (*Qur'an* 25: 2)

«Who has created [everything], and then proportioned it. And Who has measured [preordainments for everything even to be blessed or wretched]; and then guided [i.e. showed mankind the right as well as the wrong paths, and guided the animals to pasture].» (*Qur'an* 87: 2-3)

These verses contain the greatest refutation of the beliefs of the Râfiḍi Shia, who claimed that Allah (ﷻ) had no knowledge of events until after they happened, and that He might decree something and then change His decree on the basis of new developments. Before He

created this universe, Allah (ﷻ) planned and decreed it according to its due measurements. Nothing happens in this universe that goes beyond His planning and due measurements, beyond His control or beyond what He had written in the Preserved Tablet in Heaven before anything came into existence, but it is the signs of Allah that the polytheists and wrongdoers deny.¹¹¹⁸

The Sunnah affirms the divine attribute of knowledge. Bukhari narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “The keys of the unseen are five, and no one knows them except Allah. No one knows what will happen tomorrow except Allah; no one knows by how much the wombs fall short (of their time or number) or exceed except Allah; no one knows when rain will come except Allah; no one knows in which land he will die; and no one knows when the Hour will begin except Allah.”¹¹¹⁹ The matters mentioned in this hadith are all future events, and the hadith indicates that Allah (ﷻ) has knowledge of them before they happen. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Allah decided the decrees of creation fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and the earth. And His throne was above the water.”¹¹²⁰

In the books of the Shia, however, there is a vast accumulation of false reports concerning this, and there are some reports which could be soundly attributed to the scholars of Ahl al-Bayt. They express the correct view on this matter, which is what befits that elite, or they could be traces of the moderate Shia. It was narrated that Manṣoor ibn Ḥāzim said: “I asked Abu Abdullah (ﷺ) whether it is possible that something happened today that Allah (ﷻ) did not know yesterday was going to happen. He said: ‘May Allah humiliate the one who says that.’ I said: ‘Do you not think that Allah knows what has happened and what will happen until the Day of Resurrection?’ He said: ‘Of course, (He knew it) before He created creation.’”¹¹²¹

3.12. The attitude of Ahl al-Bayt towards the Râfiḍi Shia

The Imams of Ahl al-Bayt are like the rest of Ahl as-Sunnah in their attitude towards the Râfiḍis and their beliefs. They believe that they are misguided and have gone astray from the Sunnah and deviated from the truth, and they are among those who hate and condemn them the most, because they attribute those corrupt beliefs to them (Ahl al-Bayt) and tell a lot of lies about them. There are numerous statements of various kinds made by Ahl al-Bayt in condemnation of the Râfiḍis and disavowing their beliefs. Among the reports that speak of their disavowing the beliefs of the Râfiḍi Shia and affirming the beliefs of Ahl as-Sunnah are the following:¹¹²²

3.12.1. Mutawâtîr report from 'Ali (عليه السلام)

The mutawâtîr report from 'Ali (عليه السلام), according to which he said, when he was on the minbar of Kufah: "The best of this Ummah after its Prophet is Abu Bakr, then 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both."¹¹²³ It was also narrated that he said: "No one gives precedence to me over the two shaykhs but I will punish him with the punishment of the fabricator."¹¹²⁴ In Bukhari and Muslim, it is narrated that he said of 'Umar when they were carrying him to the graveyard: "You have not left behind anyone with the like of whose deeds I would like to meet Allah more than you. By Allah, I think that Allah will unite you with your two Companions, because I often heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say, 'Abu Bakr, 'Umar and I came; Abu Bakr, 'Umar and I went in; Abu Bakr, 'Umar and I went out.'"¹¹²⁵

These proven reports from Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) contradict the belief of the Shia about the two shaykhs (Abu Bakr and 'Umar), as we have seen above. They indicate that 'Ali (عليه السلام) disavowed the Râfiḍi Shia and their beliefs, and he loved and

supported the two shaykhs and all the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ). He loved them, as we have seen above, and affirmed that the two shaykhs were superior to him; he punished those who gave him precedence over them, and he wished that he would meet Allah (ﷻ) with deeds like those of ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه). May Allah be pleased with him and with all the good and pure Companions of the Prophet who are innocent of what these innovators, the Râfiḍi Shia and renegade Kharijites, attributed to them. Then after ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه) came the words of his sons, disavowing the Râfiḍis and their beliefs and their criticism of the beliefs of Ahl as-Sunnah.¹¹²⁶

3.12.2. The words of al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه)

It was narrated that ‘Amr ibn al-Aṣamm said: “I said to al-Ḥasan: ‘The Shia claim that ‘Ali will be resurrected before the Day of Resurrection.’ He said: ‘They are lying, by Allah; they are not the true Shia. If we knew that he would be resurrected, we would not have let his wives remarry and we would not have divided his wealth.’”¹¹²⁷

Abu Nu‘aym narrated: “It was said to al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه): ‘The people are saying that you want to become caliph.’ He said: ‘The Arabs were under my control; they would fight whomever I declared war on and would be peaceful towards whomever I made peace with, but I gave it up, seeking the countenance of Allah and so as to spare the blood of the Ummah of Muhammad (ﷺ).’”¹¹²⁸

3.12.3. The words of al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه)

Al-Ḥusayn used to say concerning the Shia of Iraq, who wrote to him promising him support, then scattered and handed him over to his enemies: “O Allah, the people of Iraq deceived me and betrayed me, and they did to my brother what they did. O Allah, bring doom to them and do not let any one of them escape Your punishment.”¹¹²⁹ The outcome of their treachery and abandonment of him was his

martyrdom, may Allah be pleased with him, along with most of those with him who were of Ahl al-Bayt, after those traitors scattered and left him. His killing (ﷺ) was a great shame and a serious calamity that would break the heart of every Muslim.¹¹³⁰

3.12.4. The words of 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn (may Allah have mercy on him)

It is proven that 'Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn said: "O people of Iraq, love us as Muslims. Do not love us as idols, for the way you love us has become so bad that it is something we are ashamed of."¹¹³¹ It is narrated that a group from Iraq came to him and spoke badly of Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmân (may Allah be pleased with them). When they had finished speaking, he said to them: "Can you tell me, are you ﴿the poor emigrants, who were expelled from their homes and their property, seeking Bounties from Allah and to please Him, and helping Allah [i.e. helping His religion — Islamic Monotheism] and His Messenger [Muhammad]. Such are indeed the truthful [to what they say]﴾ (*Qur'an* 59: 8)?" They said: "No."

He said: "Are you ﴿those who, before them, had homes [in Madinah] and had adopted the Faith, love those who emigrate to them, and have no jealousy in their hearts for that which they have been given, and give them [emigrants] preference over themselves even though they were in need of that. And whosoever is saved from his own covetousness, such are they who will be the successful﴾ (*Qur'an* 59: 9)?" They said: "No."

He said: "I bear witness that you are not among those of whom Allah (ﷻ) said: ﴿And those who came after them say: 'Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in Faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed full of kindness, Most Merciful.'﴾ (*Qur'an* 59: 10) Get out, may Allah (ﷻ) sort you out!"¹¹³²

3.12.5. The words of Muhammad ibn ‘Ali (al-Bâqir)

It was narrated from Muhammad ibn ‘Ali (may Allah have mercy on him) that he said: “Banu Fâṭimah (the sons of Fâṭimah) are unanimously agreed on saying the best words concerning Abu Bakr and ‘Umar.”¹¹³³ It was also narrated that he said to Jâbir al-Ja‘fī: “O Jâbir, I heard that some people in Iraq are claiming that they love us, and they impugn Abu Bakr and ‘Umar and claim that I am telling them to do so. Tell them from me that I disavow them before Allah (ﷻ). By the One in Whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, if I were to be appointed to a position of authority, I would seek to draw close to Allah (ﷻ) by executing them. May I never attain the intercession of Muhammad (ﷺ) if I do not seek forgiveness for them (Abu Bakr and ‘Umar) and pray for mercy for them. The enemies of Allah (ﷻ) are not aware of their virtue. So tell them that I disavow them and anyone else who shuns Abu Bakr and ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with them).”¹¹³⁴

It was narrated that Bassâm aṣ-Ṣayrafi asked Abu Ja‘far about Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, and he said: “By Allah, I love them and pray for forgiveness for them; I never met anyone of Ahl al-Bayt who did not love them.”¹¹³⁵

3.12.6. The words of Zayd ibn ‘Ali (may Allah have mercy on him)

It was narrated that Zayd ibn ‘Ali said: “Abu Bakr was the leader of those who are grateful.” Then he recited the verse: ﴿And Allah will give reward to those who are grateful.﴾ (*Qur’an* 3: 144) Then he said: “Disavowing Abu Bakr is disavowing ‘Ali¹¹³⁶ (may Allah be pleased with them both). So if you wish, go ahead, and if you wish, refrain.”¹¹³⁷

3.12.7. The words of Ja‘far ibn Muhammad (aṣ-Ṣâdiq)

It was narrated from ‘Abdul-Jabbâr ibn ‘Abbâs al-Hamadâni that Ja‘far ibn Muhammad came to them when they wanted to leave Madinah and said: “If Allah wills, you are among the righteous of your city. Convey the message from me that whoever claims that I am an infallible Imam to whom obedience is obligatory, I disavow him.”¹¹³⁸ Whoever claims that I disavow Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, I disavow him.” It was narrated from Sâlim ibn Abdullah ibn ‘Umar that Ja‘far said to him: “O Sâlim, love them and disavow those who hate them, for they were leaders of guidance.” Then Ja‘far said: “Would a man impugn his grandfather? Abu Bakr is my grandfather. May I never attain the intercession of Muhammad (ﷺ) on the Day of Resurrection if I do not love them both and disavow those who hate them.”¹¹³⁹ It was also narrated from Ja‘far ibn Muhammad that he used to say: “Every time I hope for ‘Ali’s intercession for me, I also hope for the intercession of Abu Bakr, for he fathered me twice [because the lineage of both of his parents went back to Abu Bakr].”¹¹⁴⁰

It was narrated that he (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, and he said: “You are asking me about two men who ate of the fruits of paradise.”¹¹⁴¹ It was also narrated from him that he said: “May Allah disavow anyone who disavows Abu Bakr and ‘Umar.”¹¹⁴² Adh-Dhahabi said, commenting on this report: “I say: These words are narrated in mutawâtîr reports from Ja‘far aṣ-Ṣâdiq; I swear by Allah that he was sincere in what he said and not hypocritical to anyone, may Allah (ﷻ) doom the Râfiḍis.”¹¹⁴³

These are the views of the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt, the good and pure ones, whom the Râfiḍi Shia claim as their Imams and claim to love and support, and to whom they attribute their beliefs. This

illustrates and clarifies their stance against the Râfiḍī Shia and their religion, and their disavowal of them and their corrupt deeds and beliefs, including their slandering the best of the Companions and the Mothers of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with them all). These statements of Ahl al-Bayt prove that they had the same beliefs as Ahl as-Sunnah, both outwardly and inwardly, concerning both major and minor issues. These were the beliefs that they followed, on the basis of which they regarded some as friends and some as enemies. The one who attributes anything other than that to them is lying about them and transgressing against them. May Allah (ﷻ) bestow His abundant mercy upon them and may Allah (ﷻ) humiliate those who attribute lies to them.¹¹⁴⁴

3.13. Stance concerning the idea of rapprochement between Ahl as-Sunnah and the Shia

From the discussion above, we can clearly see the extent to which the Râfiḍī Shia have been misguided, have introduced innovations and have gone astray from the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger and the way of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. We can understand the full extent of the danger and harm contained in their main reference books in the fields of Qur'an interpretation, tawḥeed, hadiths and others. We can also see the harm done to the Muslims from merely accepting and recognising these books that are full of misinformation reaching a level that even the plots of the Orientalists and missionaries did not reach in attempting to change the religion of Allah (ﷻ) and its laws in the name of Islam. In fact, the Orientalists and missionaries relied on these books, and on the specious arguments and myths they contain, to conspire against Islam and the Muslims. This is why there is a strong resemblance, if not total uniformity, between the specious arguments of the orientalist and missionaries and the views of the Râfiḍī Shia.

This is nothing new, and this relationship deserves to be studied on its own in dedicated academic research. A long time ago, our enemies relied on the opinions of the Râfiḍi Shia and used them as a platform from which to fight Islam and its people. The Râfiḍi Shiite troops were the best weapon at the enemy's disposal, and Râfiḍi Shiism became a refuge for everyone who wanted to destroy Islam, including the heretics, the resentful and those who sought vengeance. History is filled with their conspiracies, betrayal and support for the enemy. One of the main reasons for this is that the Râfiḍi Shia do not believe in the legitimacy of any Muslim government except the government of the awaited mahdi, who has been absent for more than eleven centuries; hence the enemy was able to find its way into their hearts through this route.¹¹⁴⁵

Ibn Taymiyah said: "Many of them had a greater inclination towards the disbelievers than towards the Muslims. Hence when the disbelieving Turks came out of the East and killed the Muslims, shedding their blood in Khorasan, Iraq, Syria, Mesopotamia and elsewhere, the Râfiḍis helped them against the Muslims. Similarly, in Damascus, Aleppo and elsewhere, some of the Râfiḍis were among those who offered the greatest help to them in fighting the Muslims. Then when the Christians (the Crusaders) fought the Muslims in Syria, the Râfiḍis were the greatest help to them. They always befriend the disbelievers, polytheists and Christians, helping them fight the Muslims and transgress against them."¹¹⁴⁶ Historical evidence is sufficient to confirm that, such as the following:

3.13.1. The conspiracy of the Râfiḍi Ibn al-‘Alqami to bring about the fall of Baghdad in 656 AH¹¹⁴⁷

In brief, Ibn al-‘Alqami was the adviser of the Abbasid caliph al-Musta‘sim. The caliph followed the madh-hab of Ahl as-Sunnah, as his father and grandfather had, but he was too lenient and not alert.

This Râfiḍī adviser was planning to destroy the caliph's state, annihilate the Sunnis, and then establish a state on the basis of the Râfiḍī Shiite madh-hab. He took advantage of his position and the heedlessness of the caliph to carry out his conspiracy against the caliphate. The conspiracy consisted of three stages:

- (a) Weakening the army and putting pressure on the people by trying to stop the salaries of the Muslim troops. Ibn Katheer said: "The vizier Ibn al-'Alqami tried to dismiss the troops and erase their names from the records. The number of troops at the end of al-Mustansir's reign was nearly one hundred thousand, but Ibn al-'Alqami kept trying to reduce their number until there were only ten thousand left."¹¹⁴⁸
- (b) Corresponding with the Tatars. Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Then he wrote to the Tatars and encouraged them to attack the country, telling them that it would be easy and informing them of the real situation of the state and its weakness."¹¹⁴⁹
- (c) Forbidding the people from fighting and deceiving the caliph. He prohibited the common folk from fighting the Tatars,¹¹⁵⁰ and he gave the caliph and his court the impression that the king of the Tatars wanted to make a peace deal with them. He suggested to the caliph that he should go out and stand before the king so that a peace deal could be signed on the basis that half of the produce of Iraq would be theirs, and the other half would be for the caliph. The caliph went out to meet him with seven hundred riders from among the judges, jurists, commanders and prominent people. This trick resulted in the killing of the caliph and the leaders and elite of the Ummah who accompanied him, without requiring any effort on the part of the Tatars.

Those Râfiḍī Shia — or rather, hypocrites — suggested to Hulagu that he should not make a peace deal with the caliph. The

vizier Ibn al-‘Alqami said to him: “If you sign a peace deal on the basis that you will have half of the produce, it will only last for one or two years, then things will go back to the way they were.” He encouraged him to kill the caliph, although it was said that the suggestion to kill the caliph came from both the vizier Ibn al-‘Alqami and Naṣeer aṭ-Ṭoosi.¹¹⁵¹ The Tatars attacked the city and killed everyone they could — men, women, old people, middle aged people and young people. No one was spared except the dhimmis — the Jews and Christians — and those who sought refuge with them or in the house of the vizier, the Râfiḍi Ibn al-‘Alqami. It was said that they killed more than ten million Muslims, more or less¹¹⁵²; Islam had never seen a massacre like this one that was carried out by the disbeliever Turkic armies, who were called the Tatars. They killed the Hâshimis and captured the women, Abbasids and others. Could he be a lover of Ahl al-Bayt, the one who sent the disbelievers to kill them and capture their women and to do the same to all the Muslims?¹¹⁵³

Hulagu and his fighters killed the imams who led the prayers, those who gave the sermons and those who had memorised the Qur’ān. The mosques ceased to function, and there were no congregational prayers in Baghdad for several months.¹¹⁵⁴

Ibn al-‘Alqami’s aims were to eradicate the Sunnah altogether so that the Râfiḍi innovation could prevail, and to build a huge school for the Râfiḍis, where they could spread their madh-hab. However, Allah (ﷻ) did not enable him to do that; He withdrew His blessings from him and caused him to die a few months after that incident, and He caused his son to follow him in death.¹¹⁵⁵

3.13.2. The Safavid state

In the Safavid state, which was founded by Shah Ismâ‘eel aṣ-Ṣafawî, the Râfiḍi madh-hab was imposed on the Persians by force and was made the official madh-hab. Ismâ‘eel was hard-hearted and

bloodthirsty to a degree than can hardly be imagined.¹¹⁵⁶ He propagated the idea that he was infallible, with no distance between him and the Mahdi, and he said that he did not do anything that he was not instructed to do by the twelve Imams.¹¹⁵⁷ He carried his sword and wielded it against Ahl as-Sunnah, and he used the reviling of the three (Rightly Guided) caliphs as a means of testing the Persians. This Shah issued orders that they (the caliphs) be reviled openly, in the streets and marketplaces and on the minbars, and he warned that those who refused would be beheaded. When he conquered a city, he would impose Râfiḍism on its inhabitants by force of arms.¹¹⁵⁸

The Râfiḍi shaykhs supported the Safavid rulers in taking Shiism to further stages of extremism. They imposed that on the Muslims of Persia by force of iron and fire. One of the most prominent of these shaykhs was their shaykh 'Alī al-Karkī,¹¹⁵⁹ whom the Shia call al-Muḥaqqiq ath-Thâni. Shah Ṭahmâsib, the son of Shah Ismâ'eel, kept him close to him and gave him power and authority in the state. Similarly, al-Majlisi was one of the shaykhs of the Safavid state who played a role alongside the political authorities in influencing the Muslims in Persia, to such an extent that it was said that his book *Ḥaqq al-Yaqeen* was a reason for seventy thousand Persian Sunnis becoming Shiites.¹¹⁶⁰ It is likely that this is an exaggeration on the part of the Shia, because Râfiḍi ideas had not been able to find any place in Persia except through force and terror, not through thought and conviction.¹¹⁶¹

We should not forget the other impacts of the Safavid state, which were its wars against the state of the Ottoman Islamic caliphate, its cooperation with the Portuguese and English enemies against the Muslims, and its encouraging them to build churches and bring in missionaries and priests, while fighting the Sunnah and its followers.¹¹⁶²

These are some of the actions of their state and their individuals in this field. Among the immortal words and important comments of Ibn Taymiyah in this regard, which will be recognised as being true if you apply them in reality and try to study events of history in the light of his words, are: "Let every wise man look at what is happening in his own time, and in the era that is close to his time, of turmoil, evil and corruption among the Muslims; he will find that most of that is caused by the Râfiḍis. You will find them to be among the most evil of people; they never give up doing what they can to cause turmoil and evil and to spread corruption among this Ummah.¹¹⁶³ We have learned by direct experience and through confirmed mutawâtir reports that the greatest turmoil and evil, without parallel, comes only from them."¹¹⁶⁴

With whom should we unite, O Ahl as-Sunnah? With those who undermine our Qur'an, interpret it in a way other than what it means, and distort its meanings? With those who regard as disbelievers Abu Bakr and 'Umar, as well as the Mother of the Believers, the dearest of the Prophet's wives to him, 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها), and also Ṭalḥah, az-Zubayr and others among the most prominent Companions (رضي الله عنهم)? With those who try to deceive the Muslims in the name of taqiyyah?¹¹⁶⁵

3.13.3. Contemporary experiences with regard to rapprochement

3.13.3.a. The experience of Muṣṭafa as-Sibâ'i

Dr. Muṣṭafa as-Sibâ'i, along with some of the Shiite scholars, put a great deal of effort into addressing the issue of rapprochement. He tried to hold an Islamic conference to study the best way of laying down foundations for harmony, love and rapprochement between the two groups. He thought that one of the greatest factors in coming together would be for the scholars of the two groups to visit one

another and publish books calling for rapprochement, and he thought that no one should publish books that might provoke the other side. Dr. as-Sibâ'i visited one of the senior religious authorities of the Shia, their shaykh 'Abdul-Ḥusayn Sharaf ad-Deen al-Moosawi, whom they regard as one of the greatest proponents of Islamic unity and rapprochement between sects. He found him to be enthusiastic about this idea and a great believer in it, and they agreed to hold an Islamic conference between Sunni and Shiite scholars for this purpose.

As-Sibâ'i (may Allah have mercy on him) also visited prominent Shiites, such as politicians, businessmen and literary experts, for the same purpose, and he came away very pleased with the results of these contacts. He never realised what aims these people were hiding and what plans they were seeking to achieve on the basis of the call for rapprochement. Then suddenly — as as-Sibâ'i described it — shortly after that, this same al-Moosawi, who had been very enthusiastic about rapprochement, published a book about Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) which was full of slanders and insults; in fact, it concluded that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) was a hypocrite and a disbeliever, and that the Messenger (ﷺ) told him that he was one of the people of Hell.¹¹⁶⁶

As-Sibâ'i said: "I was astounded by the attitude of 'Abdul-Ḥusayn in both his words and his book, this attitude that does not indicate any sincere desire for rapprochement and forgetting the past."¹¹⁶⁷ As-Sibâ'i stated that the only thing the Shiite shaykhs offered to contribute to the idea of rapprochement was some flattery and smooth talk in conferences and gatherings, while many of them continued to revile the Companions, think badly of them and believe all such reports that were narrated in the books of their predecessors.¹¹⁶⁸ He stated that while they were propagating the idea of coming together, this had no impact on the Shiite scholars in Iraq and Iran. These people were still insisting on what their books

contain of serious criticism and distorted interpretations of the differences that arose among the Companions, as if the aim behind this call for rapprochement was for Ahl as-Sunnah to draw close to the Shiite madh-hab.¹¹⁶⁹

As-Sibâ'i states that with regard to any academic research about the history of the Sunnis, or other Muslim sects that do not agree with the Shiite point of view, some of their scholars denounced the one who did that research, on the basis of the call for rapprochement. They accused the author of this research of being a fanatic who was putting obstacles in the way of those who seek to bring about rapprochement. However, when it comes to a book like that of 'Abdul-Ḥusayn Sharaf ad-Deen, which slanders one of the greatest Companions, whose reports of hadith are regarded as most authentic by Ahl as-Sunnah, these critics and angry people do not regard that as an action that hinders the efforts of those who are striving for rapprochement.

He says: "I am not saying that this book about Abu Hurayrah is the only book. There are books being printed in Iraq and Iran which contain condemnation of the majority of the Companions, which no human being with any conscience or dignity could bear to hear, and which fan the flames of division anew."¹¹⁷⁰ This was the experience of Shaykh as-Sibâ'i; his attempt failed in the face of the fanaticism of the Shiite shaykhs and their insistence on enmity against the best generation, who lived during the best era.¹¹⁷¹

To the Râfiḍi Shia, rapprochement means giving them the opportunity to spread their beliefs in Sunni countries and continue to slander the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), while the Sunnis keep quiet and refrain from stating the truth. If the Râfiḍis hear the truth being propagated, they get angry and start ranting that unity is in danger.¹¹⁷²

3.13.2.b. The experience of Shaykh Moosa Jârullah

This noble scholar, whose full name was Moosa ibn Jârullah at-Turkistâni al-Qâzâni ar-Roosi, was the senior shaykh of Russia at the end of the Czarist period and the beginning of the Soviet period. He had ultimate authority over the affairs of Russian Muslims, who numbered more than thirty million. Then came the storm of communism, and he ended up far away from his country and his people. He wrote a number of essays and books, and he travelled in India, the Hijaz, Egypt and Iraq. He said of himself: "I could have attained the position of being the foremost Russian writer and one of the pioneers and leaders, if I had given up my faith, but I preferred to sell this world for the hereafter."¹¹⁷³

This noble shaykh put a great deal of effort into trying to unite the Ummah and to bring Sunni and Shiite together. He started by studying the books of the Shia, studying them with great interest, as he said. He studied *Uṣool al-Kâfi wa Furoo'uhu*, *Man la yahduruhu al-Faqeeh*, *al-Wâfi*, *Mar'ât al-'Uqool*, *Biḥâr al-Anwâr*, *Ghâyat al-Marâm* and many other books.¹¹⁷⁴ Then he visited Shiite lands and lived among the Shia for more than seven months, visiting their places of worship, shrines and schools, and attending their gatherings and special occasions, both feasts and gatherings for mourning the dead. He attended circles of knowledge in houses, in mosques and their courtyards, and in schools. He stayed in Najaf during Muḥarram and saw everything that the Shia do during the days of mourning and on the day of 'Ashoora (the tenth day of the month of Muḥarram, when the Shia commemorate the martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn in 61 AH). The academic conclusion that this scholar reached, based on his deep insight and abundant knowledge, was that refuting the beliefs and practices of the Shia was the first step towards bringing the Ummah together, and that it could not happen without that.

His first step towards rapprochement was to meet the Shaykh of the Shia, Muḥsin al-Ameen, in Tehran. They spoke for a while, then Shaykh Moosa gave him a small piece of paper, dated 16 August 1934; he sent one copy of it to the scholars of Najaf and another copy to the scholars of al-Kadhimiyah. What was written on the paper was: “I present these issues to the scholars of noble Najaf with all respect, in the hope of achieving some benefits with a sincere heart, aiming to bring together the two worlds of Islam, ‘the Imami group that is in the right’¹¹⁷⁵ (according to their claim) and Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ‘ah, hoping that the scholars will respond, altogether or one by one, each with a full explanation and his signature, confirmed with his seal.”

In the letter, he then mentioned a number of reprehensible matters that appear in the books of the Shia, quoting page numbers for everything he mentioned. He listed a number of serious issues in the books of the Râfiḍi Shia which were preventing the Ummah from uniting, such as:

- ❖ Regarding the Companions as disbelievers.
- ❖ Cursing the first generation of Muslims.
- ❖ Believing that the noble Qur’an has been tampered with.
- ❖ Regarding all the governments of Islamic states throughout the ages, and their judges and scholars, as evil oppressors.
- ❖ Regarding all Islamic groups except the Shia as disbelievers who are cursed and will abide forever in Hell.
- ❖ Holding the views that jihad alongside anyone but the Imam (ruler) whom it is obligatory to obey is as ḥarâm as eating dead meat or pork, and that there is no martyr except in the case of the Shia. (The Shiite is a martyr even if he dies in his own bed, but anyone other than the Shia

who fights for the sake of Allah is hastening towards Hellfire.)

After quoting the evidence for these issues from the major reference books of the Shia, Shaykh Moosa said, addressing the Shiite shaykhs: "These are six issues in which the Shia believe strongly. Is there any hope left for uniting the Muslims when this is the belief of the Shia? After listing all these issues and beliefs, will the word of unity have any impact on the hearts of those who believe that? Is it possible for Islam to prevail in Muslim nations who hold such beliefs?"

He went on to list other blameworthy matters, such as:

- ❖ The Shia's rejection of the hadiths and reports of the Ummah, and their claim that everything that goes against the way of the Ummah is guidance. He thought that this principle in itself would lead to the destruction of the Shiite religion before it destroyed Islam.
- ❖ In the books of the Shia, there are references to verses and soorahs that were revealed concerning the Imams and the Shia, and verses and soorahs that were revealed concerning the disbelief of Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and of those who follow them.
- ❖ The Shia's going to extremes with regard to taqiyyah.

Then he mentioned other reprehensible falsehoods in the books of the Shia, such as:

- The idea that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) divorced 'Â'ishah and she ceased to be one of the Mothers of the Believers.
- The idea that when the Mahdi emerges, he will carry out the ḥadd punishment on 'Â'ishah, avenging his mother Fâtimah (رضي الله عنها), the daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ).

- The idea that when the Mahdi appears, he will destroy the mosques of Islam.

Then he stated that the spirit of the Shiite religion is a spirit of enmity, and that the books of the Shia contain stories of enmity between Abu Bakr and 'Umar; he asserted that all of that is fabricated.

He mentioned that the books of the Shia quote one of the Imams as saying: "Even if the Ummah is at a high level of sincerity, honesty and decency, it cannot be regarded as believing because it denies imamate." Even though the Shia do not have anything of religion, they are not to be blamed because they believe in the imamate of a fair and just Imam.

He mentioned some other issues, then he said: "O respected scholars, come and tell me what you think should be done so that Islam and the Muslims can be united around the Book of Allah."

What was the answer of the Shia to the matters that he quoted from their main reference books, hoping for clarification and in accordance with the command of Allah (ﷻ) in His Book: ﴿So ask of those who know the Scripture [learned men], if you know not﴾ (*Qur'an* 16: 43); (*Qur'an* 21: 7)? Shaykh Moosa said: "Then I waited for more than a year, and I did not hear any answer from anyone except the senior Shia person qualified to exercise ijtihâd in Basra. He carried out his duty and was kind enough to answer all questions in a letter of more than ninety pages, using words of slander with regard to the first generation that were worse than the words in the books of the Shia."

After he did not receive any other response from the Shiite shaykhs, Shaykh Moosa wrote his book *al-Washee'ah fi Naqd 'Aqâ'id ash-Shia*. He said: "I am defending the honour and sanctity of Islam and fulfilling my duties towards the first generation that are due to them from me and from the entire Ummah."¹¹⁷⁶

While Shaykh Moosa Jârullah thought that the effort he put into writing and publishing his book *al-Washee'ah* and advising the Shiite shaykhs would be the first step towards rapprochement and bringing Muslims together, the Shiite shaykhs thought that what Shaykh Moosa revealed must be hidden, and this exposure angered them a great deal. The reason for their becoming angry at the exposure of the falsehoods contained in their books is that this was also an exposure of their ulterior motives and personal aims. It uncovered their exploitation of the ordinary Shiite folk, in religious matters by claiming to be the deputies of the awaited infallible one, and in financial matters in the name of the one-fifth that is due to the awaited Mahdi.¹¹⁷⁷

3.13.4. The proper method for rapprochement and unity

The proper way to bring about rapprochement and unity is for the Sunni scholars to put a great deal of effort into:

- ❖ spreading their sound beliefs, which are based on the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ);
- ❖ explaining the soundness of these views and how they are distinct from the madh-habs of the followers of innovation;
- ❖ exposing the conspiracies and lies of the Râfiḍi Shia and quoting evidence for that from the books of Ahl as-Sunnah; and
- ❖ refuting, on the basis of knowledge, justice and proof, the specious arguments that are aimed at Ahl as-Sunnah.

It is essential that this be accompanied by an explanation of the deviant ways of the Râfiḍi Shia and an exposure of their misguidance and corrupt basic beliefs. Even though the Sunni scholars have

already done some of that, they have to redouble their efforts. Those efforts should be planned, and they should work collectively.

The proper way to achieve unity is to explain the truth and expose the falsehood, in order to bring the Shia close to the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah and a correct understanding of Islam. This is best accomplished through the words of the scholars of Ahl as-Sunnah, foremost among whom are the jurists and scholars of Ahl al-Bayt, such as Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali and his sons and grandsons. We have to stand up to this wave of Râfiḍi propaganda of which the pure Ahl al-Bayt would be ashamed and which is very active today in the Muslim world and in Europe and America, so that the Muslims can unite on a word that is just and can hold fast, all together, to the rope of Allah (the Qur'an) and not be divided among themselves.¹¹⁷⁸

With some of the Shiite scholars, it may seem pointless to present evidence from the Qur'an, Sunnah and scholarly consensus, and to demonstrate to them the flaws in their fundamentals that are contrary to the views of Ahl as-Sunnah. However, that does not mean that we should stop explaining the view of Ahl as-Sunnah and its soundness, and comparing it with the misguidance and invalidity of the Shiite madh-hab with regard to these fundamentals. That will put a limit on the spread of Râfiḍi beliefs among Ahl as-Sunnah, by Allah's leave.

We have to discuss that which exposes their falsehood from their own books. This methodology was not followed by earlier scholars who were keen to refute the Râfiḍis, expose the flaws of their arguments and refute their claims. Perhaps the reason for that is that the books of these people were not widely available because they were only circulated among themselves, or it may be that some of their main reference books were fabricated by later scholars and attributed to their earlier scholars, or that material was added to these

books in later times (particularly during the era of the Safavid state). Whatever the reason, the books of the Râfiḍīs today are widely circulated. Many of the Râfiḍī Shia believe in their sanctity and soundness, so they do not believe or accept anything except what is in them; as a result, they reject not only the sound Sunnah but even the clear texts of the Qur'an. Some of them even believe the myths that undermine the Book of Allah and claim that the Imams received revelation and had knowledge of the unseen. Therefore we should try to correct and reform the Shia on the basis of their own books, exposing their misguidance through their own reports. The starting point for rapprochement may be their own books.¹¹⁷⁹

Some efforts have already been made in this field, and some books have appeared, such as: *al-Imâmah wan-Naşş* by Fayṣal Noor, *Thumma Abṣartul-Ḥaqeeqah* by Muḥammad ibn 'Ali al-Qifâri, and *Dirâsah 'an al-Firaq wa Tareekh al-Muslimeen* by Dr. Aḥmad Jillī. This method must be developed in a very careful manner, though, because the reader of the Shiite books may find some white threads in the midst of a huge accumulation of misguidance, and it will then be possible to weave from these threads the sound belief of the Imams, which is in accordance with the Qur'an and sound Sunnah; that could save them from the loss and misguidance in which they are living. Just as these threads have to do with fundamental matters, they also have to do with minor issues. It is on this basis that rapprochement is possible.¹¹⁸⁰

It is also important to point out and encourage sincere Shiite voices who are calling for reform, and to respect them and stand with them in advising their people, as has been done by as-Sayyid Ḥusayn al-Moosawi (may Allah have mercy on him) in his book *Lillâhi thumma lit-Tareekh: Kashf al-Asrâr fi Tabri'at al-A'imma al-Aṭḥâr*, and by al-Sayyid Aḥmad Kâtib in his book *Tatawwur al-Fikr as-Siyâsi ash-Shiite min ash-Shoora ila Wilâyat al-Faqeeh*. We have to

stand with everyone who sincerely loves Ahl al-Bayt, following the guidance in the reports that are soundly attributed to them and their beautiful teaching in guiding people to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ).

We should treat these people with all due respect and lead them to the safe shore; we should explain the noble Qur'an to them according to the rules of the Arabic language, without twisting or distorting anything; and we should refer understanding of the Sunnah to trustworthy scholars.¹¹⁸¹ The view of any person except the infallible Prophet (ﷺ) may be accepted or rejected. Whatever is narrated from the early generations that is accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah, we accept it; otherwise, the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger are more deserving of being followed. We do not criticise or undermine anyone with regard to the issues in which they differed and disputed; they have all passed away, and it is for Allah (ﷻ) to judge them.¹¹⁸²

Every innovation that has been introduced into the religion of Islam for which there is no basis, and which people adopt on the basis of their whims and desires — whether it is something that has been added or taken away — is misguidance; it must be opposed¹¹⁸³ and stopped using the best means that do not lead to something worse. Loving and respecting the righteous, and praising them for what is known of their good deeds, is something by means of which one may draw close to Allah (ﷻ). The close friends of Allah (ﷻ) are those who are mentioned in this verse: ﴿Those who believed, and used to fear Allah much [by abstaining from evil deeds and sins and by doing righteous deeds]﴾ (*Qur'an* 10: 63). Due respect for them is confirmed on the basis of the Sharia conditions, but they did not possess any power to bring benefit or harm to themselves, either while they were alive or after their death, let alone to anyone else.¹¹⁸⁴

Visiting graves of any type is something that is prescribed in Islam, as long as it is done in the manner mentioned in the reports. However, seeking help from those who are buried or asking to have one's needs met by them, whether one is close to the grave or not, making vows to them, building structures over or screens around their graves, touching them for blessing, swearing by someone other than Allah (ﷻ), and other similar innovations, are major sins that must be opposed so as to block the way that may lead to polytheism; we should not justify these actions.¹¹⁸⁵

The fact that a wrong action is customary does not affect its rulings according to Sharia; it is essential to properly understand these Sharia rulings and adhere to them. We should beware of being deceived by names; we must look at the objects themselves, whether in religious or worldly affairs. What matters is the objects, not the names.¹¹⁸⁶ Islam frees the mind and encourages us to ponder the universe, raise the status of knowledge and of scholars, and welcome anything that is good and beneficial. Wisdom is the lost property of the believer wherever he finds it, and he is the most entitled of all people to it.¹¹⁸⁷ We do not regard as a disbeliever — because of any opinion or sin — any Muslim who affirms the twin declarations of faith, acts in accordance with their meanings and does the obligatory duties, unless he does one of the following: speaks words of disbelief, rejects something that is well established and known in Islam, rejects a clear text of the Qur'an, interprets the Qur'an in a way that cannot be understood on the basis of the Arabic language at all, or does something that cannot be interpreted in any way except as disbelief.¹¹⁸⁸

These principles and concepts help people in general to understand Islam as it is embodied in the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ) and the way of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah, the foundations of which were laid down by the Messenger of Allah

(ﷺ), the Rightly Guided Caliphs and those scholars and jurists who followed their way.

The followers of truth who adhere to the way of Ahl as-Sunnah have no innovations, praise be to Allah (ﷻ). Their reference points are the Qur’an and the sound Sunnah, and they cannot give up anything of that because they cannot compromise on issues of religion. As for the Râfiḍī Shia, they take part in a great deal of innovation. Nothing prevents them from giving it up except blind fanaticism, following whims and desires, and the materialistic interests of some of their shaykhs who deviated from the guidance of Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali and the scholars of Ahl al-Bayt (may Allah be pleased with them all).

The scholars stated that Ahl as-Sunnah should denounce the innovation of the innovators, even if the person is doing it as an act of worship, believing it to be correct. Nevertheless, we should limit our denunciation of these innovations by evaluating the pros and cons. It may be better to put up with some lesser evil caused by innovation in order to ward off a greater evil, or to miss out on some lesser benefit in order to attain a greater benefit, and this is a sound principle according to the jurists. Following this principle might cause us to refrain from denouncing the innovation of the Râfiḍī Shia at certain times or in certain places, so as to prevent bad consequences, as when condemnation would stir up trouble and lead to bloodshed and fighting among the people of a country where Shiites and Sunnis are equal in number. In normal situations, though, where no bad consequences are expected from this denunciation, it is appropriate and may be obligatory.¹¹⁸⁹

The Sunni scholars have to adhere to a calm, academic style when discussing innovations, and they should be gentle towards the innovators. Part of being gentle may include visiting them and cooperating with them in matters concerning which there is no

dispute, or helping them at times of calamities and difficulties, or supporting them when there is a conflict with a disbeliever or oppressor, in accordance with Sharia guidelines and after weighing the pros and cons. The idea of cooperating, maintaining good relations and discussing calmly cannot be applied across the board to include those Râfiḍī Shia who have extreme views, where keeping quiet about them may provoke the thugs and troublemakers. Instead, we must denounce those who hold extreme and odd views at all times.

The line that is drawn between the first category, to whom we should speak kindly, and the second category, to whom we should speak harshly, depends on whether the one who holds a particular view is relying on a Sharia text that may be causing him some confusion or is relying on an interpretation that some people may favour. In the case of those who base their arguments on reports narrated by unknown narrators or narrators of later generations, and those who do not even base their view on the misinterpretation of some reports, denunciation is more appropriate, and speaking harshly to them may be obligatory.¹¹⁹⁰

In sectarian societies, the decision-makers among the Sunnis are the ones who are able to evaluate the political situation and party alliances with other sects and analyse the pros and cons, according to the guidelines of Islamic teachings. This does not mean that the scholars and the callers to Islam should not teach the Muslims the basics of the way of Ahl as-Sunnah or warn against the deviant beliefs that are infiltrating Muslim societies. This is necessary so that they will not be influenced by those corrupt ideas, whose proponents are striving tirelessly to spread them night and day, secretly and openly. When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) migrated to Madinah, he made peace deals with the Jews that guaranteed them a life of dignity under the Islamic state, yet at the same time the noble Qur'an was

discussing the beliefs, history and morals of the Jews so that the Muslims might know their real character and not be deceived by them.

4. The last days of the life of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) and his martyrdom

4.1. The aftermath of Nahrawân

The fact that Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) fought this rebellious group offers strong evidence and clear proof that he was in the right when he fought the people of Syria and that he was closer to the truth than Mu'âwiyah. It was narrated from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that he said: "A group will secede from my Ummah at a time of division among the Muslims, and they will be killed by the group that is closer to the truth."¹¹⁹¹ The reader might expect the army to have strong resolve in fighting the people of Syria after this and the other proofs mentioned above, such as the killing of 'Ammâr ibn Yâsir (عليه السلام), became clear to them. However, the opposite happened.

The plan that was drawn up by Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) was to go to Syria after the end of fighting against the Kharijites, because bringing Syria under the control of the caliphate and uniting the Ummah was a necessary goal that had to be pursued. As he mentioned in his speech, fighting the Kharijites was only aimed at securing the interior front lest they attack the women and children left behind in Iraq during his absence. But as they say, the winds blow in a way other than what the sailors want, and 'Ali (عليه السلام) was unable to attack Syria before he was martyred.¹¹⁹²

The rebellion of the Kharijites had the effect of weakening the army of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام). The battles of the Camel, Şiffeen and Nahrawân also led the people of Iraq to grow tired of war. They grew reluctant and started hating war, especially after the battle with the Syrians at Şiffeen, because their conflict with them was not like fighting with anyone else. The battle of Şiffeen was fierce and never left their memory; many children were orphaned, and many women were widowed, without achieving the goal. Were it not for the peace deal or arbitration, which was welcomed by Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali and many of his companions, disaster would have struck the Muslim world with unimaginably bad consequences. Thus they were very reluctant to march with 'Ali (عليه السلام) to Syria, even though they knew that he was in the right.¹¹⁹³

One of the dilemmas that destabilized the camp of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) was the emergence of a group that went to extremes in venerating him and elevated him to the level of divinity, to the extent that some thought that this was a reaction to the Kharijites who had disavowed 'Ali (عليه السلام) and accused him of disbelief.¹¹⁹⁴ In reality, the ulterior motive of this group was to introduce corrupt beliefs to the Muslims in order to destroy their religion and weaken the Muslims in general, not just the army.¹¹⁹⁵ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) stood up to them, as we have seen above. Undoubtedly the splitting away of the Kharijites and his subsequent fighting against them weakened his side a great deal, and then problems came one after another.

Al-Khirreet ibn Râshid (it was also said that his name was al-Hârith ibn Râshid), who had been one of 'Ali's governors in al-Ahwâz, revolted and led his people Banu Nâjiyah in rebellion. When he called for 'Ali (عليه السلام) to be deposed, many people responded and he gained control over many cities, even collecting taxes from the people. 'Ali (عليه السلام) sent an army led by Ma'qil ibn Qays ar-Rayyâhi,

who defeated and killed the rebel leader.¹¹⁹⁶ Those people who were paying land tax hoped to stop paying it in the lands under 'Ali's rule, and the people of al-Ahwâz rebelled; 'Ali (عليه السلام) was inevitably confronted with military and financial difficulties because of that. Ash-Shu'bi said: "When 'Ali defeated the people of Nahrawân, many people went against him, and people in many regions began to turn against him. Banu Nâjiyah rebelled against him. Ibn al-Ḥaḍrami came to Basra, and the people of al-Ahwâz rebelled. Those who were paying the land tax wanted to stop, and they expelled Sahl ibn Ḥaneef, 'Ali's governor in Persia."¹¹⁹⁷

At the same time, Mu'âwiyah (عليه السلام) was trying by all possible means, both secretly and openly, to weaken the camp of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام), and he took advantage of the division and troubles that had arisen in 'Ali's army. He sent an army, led by 'Amr ibn al-Âṣ (عليه السلام), to take control of Egypt and bring it under his authority. He was helped by a number of factors, such as:

- ❖ Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) was preoccupied with the Kharijites.
- ❖ 'Ali's governor in Egypt, Muḥammad ibn Abi Bakr, was not as clever as his predecessor Qays ibn Sa'd ibn 'Ubâdah as-Sâ'idi al-Ansâri had been. He got involved in fighting with those who were demanding vengeance for the murder of 'Uthmân (عليه السلام), and he did not try to use diplomacy with them as the previous governor had done, so they defeated him.
- ❖ Mu'âwiyah agreed with those who were seeking vengeance for the murder of 'Uthmân in Egypt, which helped him to gain control of it.¹¹⁹⁸
- ❖ Egypt was far away from the headquarters of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) and was close to Syria.

- ❖ The geographical location of Egypt, which was attached to Syria through the Sinai, meant that it was like a natural extension of Syria. Egypt gave Mu'âwiyah (رضي الله عنه) a great deal of additional economic strength and human resources. Mu'âwiyah also sent his troops to Arabia, Makkah, Madinah and Yemen, but these troops were soon forced to turn back after Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) sent some of his soldiers to block their way.¹¹⁹⁹

Mu'âwiyah (رضي الله عنه) also tried to win over some prominent tribes and governors from 'Ali (رضي الله عنه). He tried to convince Qays ibn Sa'd (رضي الله عنه), who was 'Ali's governor in Egypt, to join him but was not able to. However, he did manage to stir up doubts about him in 'Ali's inner circle and among his advisers, so 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) dismissed him,¹²⁰⁰ and this dismissal of Sa'd ibn Qays was a huge gain for Mu'âwiyah. He also tried to win over Ziyâd ibn Abeehi, 'Ali's governor in Persia, but failed to do so.¹²⁰¹ However, Mu'âwiyah (رضي الله عنه) managed to influence some prominent people and governors because of what he promised to give them and because they realised that Mu'âwiyah was gaining the upper hand and 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was growing weaker.

'Ali (رضي الله عنه) said in one of his speeches: "Bisr has just come to me from Mu'âwiyah, and I think these people will prevail over you because of their unity and support for their falsehood and your division and lack of support for your truth; because of their obedience to their leader and your disobedience to your leader; because they are sincere, and you are treacherous. I appointed so-and-so, but he betrayed me and took the wealth to Mu'âwiyah; I appointed someone else, and he betrayed me and took the wealth to Mu'âwiyah. Even if I entrusted one of you with a wooden vessel, I would fear that he would betray me concerning it. O Allah, I hate them, and they hate me. Relieve them of me, and relieve me of them."¹²⁰²

4.2. 'Ali's attempts to motivate his army, then the truce with Mu'âwiyah

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) did not give up when faced with these calamities, this reluctance on the part of his followers and their letting him down. He did his utmost to motivate his troops with all that he possessed of knowledge, proof and eloquence. His fiery speeches, for which he was famous and which are regarded as the best literary legacy, were not the product of an idle mind or mere imagination; they were based on bitter experience and the painful reality that he was living. When some border land under his control was raided, he said: "Jihad is one of the gates of paradise, which Allah opens to the closest of His friends. It is the garment of piety, the shield of Allah and the greatest protection. Whoever abandons it because of lack of interest, Allah will give him a garment of humiliation to wear; calamities will befall him, he will be brought low and a seal will be placed on his heart. He will be led away from truth because of neglecting jihad; he will be humiliated and deprived of justice.

"Verily, I called you by night and by day, secretly and openly to fight these people. I told you to attack them before they attacked you, for by Allah, no people are attacked in their land but they are humiliated. But you were negligent and reluctant, so attacks were launched against you and land was taken from you. Here is a man from Ghâmid whose troops reached al-Anbâr; he killed Hassân al-Bakri, chased your cavalry from their posts and defeated them. I have heard that one of them would enter upon a Muslim woman and a dhimmi woman and take her jewellery, and she could offer no resistance except weeping and asking for mercy. Then they left without any harm having befallen them; no man among them was ever wounded, and none of his blood was shed. If a Muslim man were to die after that of sorrow for what happened, he would not be to blame; rather in my eyes that would be appropriate.

"How strange it is, by Allah, that these people are united in their falsehood, and you are disunited and do not support your truth. This is what breaks the heart and brings grief and sorrow. May you perish, for you have become a target to be shot; you are raided and do not raid others, you are attacked and do not attack others. Allah is being disobeyed, and you are pleased with that. If I command you to march towards them on a hot day, you will say that it is too hot and we should wait until it cools down. If I command you to march towards them in winter, you will say that it is too cold and we should wait until it warms up. All of that in order to avoid heat and cold. If you are trying to avoid heat and cold, then by Allah you will try harder to flee from the sword, O you men who are not men. You have the minds of children and are as irrational as women.

"Would that I had never seen you or met you, for knowing you, by Allah, has caused me great grief and sorrow. May Allah kill you, for you have filled my heart with pus and anger, and you have caused me a great deal of distress. You have spoiled all my plans with your disobedience and reluctance, to the point that Quraysh have begun to say that the son of Abu Tālib is a courageous man, but he has no experience of war. What a strange thing they are saying! Is there anyone among them with more experience of war than me? Or who has attained a higher position in it than me? For I got involved in it when I had not yet reached the age of twenty, and here I am having passed the age of sixty. But if a man is not obeyed, his wisdom is to no avail."¹²⁰³

This was a fiery speech delivered by Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام), in which he heaped criticism on the heads of those people who had prevented him from reaping the fruits of his jihad and achieving the victory he strove for. He composed this speech in a sublime literary style, with phrases that should have stirred people's hearts and unleashed their potential. It is free of any ambiguity or

mysteriousness, and it is also free of artificial, far-fetched rhymed prose.¹²⁰⁴

The speeches that are proven to be from Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) and were delivered during his caliphate not only give a picture of the historical reality; they also highlight the feelings of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) about the problems he faced with his army becoming reluctant and slowing down after the Battle of Nahrawân. However, most of the speeches that are attributed to him (عليه السلام) are not sound, and many scholars say that the speeches of 'Ali (عليه السلام) that are quoted in *Nahj al-Balâghah* are made up and fabricated by 'ash-Shareef ar-Raḍiy'.¹²⁰⁵ It is essential to employ a precise, critical method when dealing with them as a historical source.

At the same time, 'Ali (عليه السلام) began to remind his companions of his virtues and his high standing in Islam. A number of eyewitnesses narrated that 'Ali (عليه السلام) implored the people at ar-Rahbah: "Who heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say at Ghadeer Khumm: 'Don't you know that I am closer to the believers than their own selves?' and they said yes, then he said: 'If I am a person's mawla, 'Ali is also his mawla. O Allah, love those who love him, and take as an enemy those who take him as an enemy?'" Twelve men — or sixteen men, according to another report — stood up and testified to that.¹²⁰⁶ This reminds us of 'Uthmân's (عليه السلام) calling on the Companions to testify to his virtues when the rebels besieged him. It is as if he was saying: If a person's actions and service to Islam are like that, should his reward be like this?

Despite all his tremendous attempts and efforts, 'Ali (عليه السلام) could not achieve what he wanted. He could not manage to lead a campaign to Syria because of the division, friction and disunity that occurred within his army, and because of the emergence of people who were controlled by whims and desires. As a result, in 40 AH, Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) was forced to come to an agreement

with Mu'âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân (رضي الله عنه), that Iraq would be for 'Ali and Syria would be for Mu'âwiyah, and that neither would interfere in the other's sphere of influence by means of any raid or military campaign.¹²⁰⁷ Aṭ-Ṭabari said in his book of history: "In 40 AH, there was a truce between 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah, following a correspondence between them, which is too lengthy to be quoted here, about agreeing to put an end to war between them. 'Ali would have Iraq, and Mu'âwiyah would have Syria, and neither would interfere in the other's sphere of influence by means of any raid or military campaign."¹²⁰⁸

4.3. The supplication of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) asking that his martyrdom be hastened

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) made a truce with Mu'âwiyah, but it seems that this truce did not last. Mu'âwiyah sent Bishr ibn Abi Arṭa'ah to the Hijaz in the year in which 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was martyred.¹²⁰⁹ When 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) was not able to prepare an army as he wanted, and he saw how they had let him down, he began to hate life and wish for death. He would turn to Allah (ﷻ) in supplication and ask Him (ﷻ) to hasten his death. One of the reports from him says that he delivered a speech one day in which he said: "O Allah, I am tired of them, and they are tired of me. Relieve me of them, and relieve them of me. What is keeping the most wretched of you from contaminating it with blood?" And he put his hand on his beard.¹²¹⁰

'Ali (رضي الله عنه) persisted in supplications throughout his final days. It was narrated that Jundub said: "They crowded around 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) so much that they stepped on his feet, and he said: 'I am tired of them, and they are tired of me; I hate them, and they hate me. Relieve me of them, and relieve them of me.'"¹²¹¹ According to another report, Abu Ṣâlih said: "I saw 'Ali place the muṣḥaf on his head until the paper crackled, and he said: 'O Allah, I asked them to grant me what

is mentioned in it (the Qur'an), but they refused. O Allah, I am tired of them, and they are tired of me; I hate them, and they hate me. They have forced me to do things out of character. Give them someone worse than me, and give me someone better than them. Cause their hearts to dissolve like salt in water.”¹²¹² According to another report, it was only three days or so before he was killed, may Allah have mercy on him.¹²¹³

Al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali said that 'Ali (عليه السلام) told him: “I dreamt that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came to me last night, and I said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, do you see how much trouble and pain I have from your Ummah?’ He said: ‘Pray against them.’ I said: ‘O Allah, replace them for me with someone better than them, and replace me for them with someone worse to them than me.’” Al-Ḥasan (عليه السلام) said: “Then he went out, and the man struck him.”¹²¹⁴

4.4. 'Ali's awareness that he would be martyred

Some hadiths of the Prophet (ﷺ), which are regarded as signs of his prophethood, narrate that he told 'Ali (عليه السلام) that he would be one of the martyrs. In *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*, it is narrated from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was on Mount Uhud, and it shook. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Be still, Uhud, for there is no one on you but a Prophet, a Ṣiddeeq and a martyr.” On it were the Prophet (ﷺ), Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân, 'Ali, Talhah, az-Zubayr and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâs (may Allah be pleased with them all).¹²¹⁵

There are other hadiths that are more specific than this; they said that 'Ali would be martyred in the land of Iraq and spoke of how he would be assassinated, too. All of this is a demonstration of the truth of the prophethood of Muḥammad (ﷺ), and the fact that he said that which Allah (ﷻ) told him by means of revelation and did not

speak from his own desire.¹²¹⁶ The Prophet (ﷺ) told 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) what was going to happen to him, and 'Ali believed that with certainty and used to tell them about it. One of these reports narrated what 'Ali said when he was heading towards Iraq. Abu al-Aswad ad-Du'ali narrated that he heard 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) say: "Abdullah ibn Salâm came to me when I had put my foot in the stirrup and said to me: 'Where are you going?' I said: 'Iraq.' He said: 'Verily, if you go there, the edge of the sword will strike you there.' I said: 'By Allah, I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say that before.'" Abu al-Aswad said: "I was amazed at that and said: 'A fighter telling such a thing about himself!'"¹²¹⁷

'Ali (رضي الله عنه) also spoke of this hadith in Yanbu' before he was appointed to the caliphate, to Abu Fuḍâlah al-Ansâri al-Badri (رضي الله عنه), who visited him when he was sick. He said: "I am not going to die of this sickness (or this pain), for the Prophet (ﷺ) promised me that I would not die until this (meaning his beard) was contaminated from this (his head, because of bleeding from his head)."¹²¹⁸ He told this hadith to the Kharijites and to his companions. Al-Bayhaqi compiled these hadiths and others in *Dalâ'il an-Nubuwwah*,¹²¹⁹ and al-Hâfidh Ibn Katheer compiled them in *al-Bidâyah wan-Nihâyah*.¹²²⁰ It was narrated that Abdullah ibn Sab' said: "I heard 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) say on the minbar: 'We are only waiting for a wretched man. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) promised me that this (his beard) would be contaminated with the blood of this (his head).' They said: 'Tell us who your killer is, so that we may go and annihilate his family.' He said: 'I urge you by Allah not to kill anyone for my killing except the one who kills me.'¹²²¹ Then he recited some lines of poetry and said:

*Gird your loins in preparation for death, for death is imminent;
Do not be scared of killing when it arrives in your valley.*"¹²²²

Some reports go further than that and say that 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) knew who this wretched person was who would kill him. 'Ubaydah as-Salmâni narrated with a sound chain of narration that whenever 'Ali

saw Ibn Maljam, he would say: “I want him to live, and he wants me to die.”¹²²³

According to another report, ‘Ali (عليه السلام) said concerning ‘Abdur-Rahmân ibn Maljam: “Verily, this one is my killer.” It was said: “What is keeping you from dealing with him?” He said: “He has not killed me yet.”¹²²⁴ The people asked him to appoint a successor when he told them that he would be killed, but he refused to do that. It was narrated that Abdullah ibn Wâsi‘ said: “I heard ‘Ali say: ‘This (his beard) will be contaminated from this (from blood flowing from a wound to the head). What is this wretch waiting for?’ They said: ‘O Amir al-Mu’mineen, tell us who he is so that we can annihilate his family.’ He said: ‘By Allaḥ, then you would be killing because of me people who are not involved in my killing.’ They said: ‘Appoint a successor for us.’ He said: ‘No, but I will leave you as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) left you.’ They said: ‘What will you say to your Lord when you meet Him?’ He said: ‘I will say: O Allah, You left me with them as long as You wanted, then You took me to Yourself. You are still with them; if You will, You can guide them, and if You will, You can let them go astray.’”¹²²⁵ It was also narrated from ‘Ali (عليه السلام) that he said: “I heard aṣ-Ṣâdiq al-Maṣḍooq (عليه السلام) say: ‘You will be struck here’ — and he pointed to his temples — ‘and the blood will flow until it contaminates your beard, and the one who does that will be the most wretched among them, just as the one who hamstringed the she-camel was the most wretched of Thamood.’”¹²²⁶

4.5. The martyrdom of Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) and the lessons to be learned from it

The battle of Nahrawân left a deep wound in the souls of the Kharijites, which the passage of time only made more painful and sorrowful, so a group of them decided to murder ‘Ali (عليه السلام) in vengeance for their brethren who had been slain at Nahrawân.

Biographers and historians all mention a famous report,¹²²⁷ which is not free of flaws because it contains some contradictions, and we do not think it unlikely that this important event was, like others, subjected to embellishment in later times. Based on the sources and studies, there seems to be a consensus that the killing of 'Ali (عليه السلام) took place at the hands of Kharijite elements in revenge for those who had been killed at Nahrawân. It is difficult to accept and believe the rest of the stories that are connected to this slaying, such as the love story between Ibn Maljam and Qutâm, the alleged role of al-Ash'ath al-Kindî — whose innocence we shall prove below — and so on. The following are the details of the murder of 'Ali (عليه السلام):

4.5.1. The meeting of the conspirators

The story of Ibn Maljam and his companions says that Ibn Maljam, al-Buruk ibn Abdullah and 'Amr ibn Bakr at-Taymi got together and talked about the people's situation. They criticised their rulers, then they mentioned the people who had been killed at Nahrawân and prayed for mercy for them, and they said: "What is life worth after they are gone, our brethren who called the people to worship their Lord and never feared the blame of the blamers for the sake of Allah? Why don't we sell ourselves for the sake of Allah, and go to the leaders of misguidance and try to kill them, so that the land will be relieved of them and we may avenge our brethren thereby?" Ibn Maljam, who was from Egypt, said: "I will take care of 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib for you." Al-Buruk ibn Abdullah said: "I will take care of Mu'âwiyah for you." 'Amr ibn Abi Bakr said: "I will take care of 'Amr ibn al-Âṣ for you." So they made a solemn pledge and swore by Allah that none of them would give up or leave his target alone until he killed him or died in the attempt. Then they took their swords and put poison on them, and agreed that on the seventeenth of Ramadan, each one of them would attack his target. Then each of them went to the city where his target was.¹²²⁸

4.5.2. Ibn Maljam’s departure and his meeting with Quṭâm, the daughter of ash-Shajnah

Ibn Maljam al-Murâdi belonged to the tribe of Kindah. He set out and met his companions in Kufah, but he concealed his secret from them for fear that they might disclose his plans. One day he saw some people from the tribe of Taym ar-Rabâb, ten of whom ‘Ali (عليه السلام) had killed on the day of Nahrawân, and they talked about their slain ones.

On the same day, he met a woman of Taym ar-Rabâb named Quṭâm bint ash-Shajnah, whose father and brother had been killed in the battle. She was a very beautiful woman. After he saw her, he could not get her out of his mind, and he forgot the purpose for which he had come. He proposed to her, and she said: “I shall not marry you unless you do what I tell you.” He said: “What is that?” She said: “Three thousand, a slave man and woman, and the killing of ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib.” He said: “This will be your mahr. As for the killing of ‘Ali (عليه السلام), I do not think that you are serious about marrying me if you want me to kill ‘Ali.” She said: “Seek him out and try to kill him. If you succeed, then you and I will both be happy, and you can live happily with me. If you are killed, then that which is with Allah is better than this world and its adornments.” He said: “By Allah, I have only come to the city to kill ‘Ali, so you will have what you asked for.” She said: “I will find someone to help you and assist you in achieving what you want.”

She sent for a man of her people, Taym ar-Rabâb, whose name was Wardân. She spoke to him, and he responded. Ibn Maljam went to a man from Ashja‘, whose name was Shabeeb ibn Bajrah, and said to him: “Will you be interested in something that will bring you honour in this world and the hereafter?” He said: “What is it?” Ibn Maljam said: “Killing ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib.” Shabeeb said: “May your mother be bereft of you! This is something terrible. How can you kill

'Ali?" Ibn Maljam said: "I will lie in wait for him in the mosque, then when he comes to pray the dawn prayer, we will attack him and kill him. If we survive, then we will be happy and will have gotten revenge; if we are killed, then that which is with Allah is better than this world and everything in it." Shabeeb said: "Woe to you, if it was someone other than 'Ali, it would be more bearable to me. You know the sacrifices he made for Islam and that he was one of the first to stand with the Prophet (ﷺ). I do not feel comfortable with the idea of killing him." Ibn Maljam said: "Do you not know that he killed the people of Nahrawân, the righteous slaves of Allah?" Shabeeb said: "Yes." Ibn Maljam said: "Then we should kill him in revenge for those of our brethren whom he slew." Then Shabeeb agreed.

Then they went to Qutâm, who was observing i'tikâf in the Great Mosque, and said to her: "We have agreed to kill 'Ali." She said: "If you want, you may come to me." Ibn Maljam went back to her on the night before Friday, the night before the morning on which 'Ali was killed in 40 AH. He said: "This is the night on which I agreed with my two companions that each of us would kill his target." She brought silk bands and tied them around their chests, then they took their swords and sat opposite the door from which 'Ali would come out. When he came out, Shabeeb struck him with his sword, but his sword hit the jamb of the door or a small window. Ibn Maljam struck him on the head with his sword. Wardân ran away and entered his house, and a man of his father's tribe entered upon him as he was taking the silk band from his chest. He asked: "What is this silk and sword?" They told him what had happened, and he left, then he came back with his sword, pounced on Wardân and killed him.

Shabeeb went out towards the gates of Kindah before dawn. A man from Haḍramawt, whose name was 'Uwaymir, caught up with him, and Shabeeb still had his sword in his hand. Shabeeb grabbed the Haḍrami man and threw him to the ground. When he saw the

people coming after him and he still had his sword in his hand, he feared for his life, so he dropped the sword and managed to escape by mingling with the crowd of people. They also chased Ibn Maljam and caught up with him, then a man from Hamadân, whose kunyah was Abu Adma', took his sword and struck him in the leg, bringing him to the ground.

'Ali (ﷺ) was late for the prayer, so Ja'dah ibn Hubayrah ibn Abi Wahb took his place and led the people in the dawn prayer. 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "Bring the man to me." He was brought, and 'Ali said: "O enemy of Allah, did I not treat you well?" He said: "Yes." He said: "What made you do this?" He said: "I sharpened it for forty days and I asked Allah to cause the worst of His creation to be killed by it." 'Ali (ﷺ) said: "I don't think but that you will be killed by it; I think you are the worst of His creation."¹²²⁹

4.5.3. Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah narrated the story of the slaying of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali

Ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah said: "By Allah, on that night on which 'Ali was struck, I was praying in the Great Mosque with a large number of the people of the city. They were praying near the door, standing, bowing and prostrating, and they never got tired from the beginning of the night until the end. When 'Ali came out for the dawn prayer, he started calling out: 'O people, the prayer, the prayer.' I do not know whether he came out of the door and said these words or not, but I saw the flash of the sword and I heard (the words): 'Ruling is for Allah, O 'Ali, not for you and not for your companions.' I saw a sword and then a second sword. Then I heard 'Ali saying: 'Don't let the man escape.' The people ran after him from all sides, and soon Ibn Maljam was caught and brought to 'Ali. I was among those of the people who entered, and I heard 'Ali (ﷺ) saying: 'A life for a life. If I die, then kill him as he killed me, and if I live, I shall decide about him.'"¹²³⁰

He said that the people went to al-Ḥasan, and they were upset by what had happened to 'Ali (عليه السلام). While they were with him and Ibn Maljam was tied up before him, Umm Kulthoom bint 'Ali called out to him, weeping: "O enemy of Allah, my father will be fine, but Allah is going to humiliate you." He said: "For whom are you weeping? By Allah, I bought it (the sword) for one thousand, and I put enough poison on it for one thousand. If this blow had struck all the people of the city, none of them would have survived."¹²³¹

4.5.4. The doctor's advice to 'Ali (عليه السلام) and his inclination towards the process of consultation

It was narrated that Abdullah ibn Mâlik said: "The doctors gathered around 'Ali (عليه السلام) on the day he was wounded, and the most knowledgeable of them in medicine was Atheer ibn 'Amr as-Sukooni, who had been the personal physician of Chosroes. Atheer got the fresh lung of a sheep, took a vein from it and inserted it into 'Ali's wound; then he inflated the vein and pulled it out, and there was some white brain matter on it, so he knew that the blow had reached his brain. He said: 'O Amir al-Mu'mineen, give your final instructions, for you are going to die.'"¹²³²

It was said that Jundub ibn Abdullah entered upon 'Ali (عليه السلام) and asked him something. He said: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen, if we lose you — may we never lose you — should we swear allegiance to al-Ḥasan?" He said: "I will not command you or forbid you; you decide."¹²³³

4.5.5. Final advice of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali to his sons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (may Allah be pleased with them all)

Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) called for al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn and said: "I urge you to fear Allah and not to seek worldly

luxury, even if it becomes available to you. Do not weep for anything that you have lost (of worldly gains). Speak the truth, show compassion to orphans, help the destitute, and strive for the hereafter. Be an opponent of the wrongdoers and support the one who is wronged. Act upon what is in the Book and never fear the blame of the blamers (when striving) for the sake of Allah." Then he looked at Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah and said: "Have you heard the advice I gave to your two brothers?"¹²³⁴ He said: "Yes." He said: "I advise you likewise. I advise you to respect your two brothers because of their great rights over you. Follow them, and do not decide about anything without consulting them." Then he said: "I advise you both to take care of him, for he is the son of your father, and you know that your father loved him." He said to al-Ḥasan: "I advise you, O my son, to fear Allah, establish regular prayer on time, and pay zakâh to those who are entitled to it. Do wuḍoo' well, for there is no prayer without purification, and no prayer is accepted from one who withholds zakâh. I advise you to forgive others, suppress your anger, uphold ties of kinship, be forbearing with the ignorant, keep seeking knowledge of Islam, verify the facts before making any decision, always read the Qur'an, be a good neighbour, enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, and avoid immoral actions."¹²³⁵

When death was imminent, he gave the following advice:

"In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. This is the advice given by 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib, affirming that he bears witness that there is no God except Allah alone, with no partner or associate, and that Muḥammad is His slave and His Messenger. He sent His Messenger [Muḥammad (ﷺ)] with guidance and the religion of truth (Islam), to make it superior over all religions even though the polytheists, pagans, idolaters and disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah hate it.¹²³⁶ Verily, my prayer, my sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of the 'Ālameen

(mankind, jinn and all that exists). He has no partner. This I have been commanded, and I am of the Muslims.¹²³⁷

“I advise you, O Ḥasan and all my children and family, to fear Allah your Lord, and never die except in a state of Islam,¹²³⁸ and hold fast, all of you together, to the rope of Allah (this Qur’an), and be not divided among yourselves.¹²³⁹ I heard Abu al-Qâsim say: ‘Reconciling between people is better than supererogatory prayers and fasts.’ Check on your relatives and uphold ties with them, then your reckoning with Allah will be easier. I urge you by Allah to be kind to orphans, and do not silence them or ignore them when they are with you. I urge you by Allah to be kind to your neighbours, for your Prophet (ﷺ) enjoined that, and he continued to enjoin that until we thought that he would make the neighbour an heir. I urge you by Allah to take care of the Qur’an, and do not let others be better at putting it into practice than you. I urge you by Allah to take care of the prayer, for it is the foundation of your religion. I urge you by Allah to take care of the House of your Lord; do not forsake it as long as you live. I urge you by Allah to engage in jihad for the sake of Allah with your wealth and your lives. I urge you by Allah to take care of zakâh, for it extinguishes the wrath of the Lord. I urge you by Allah to take care of those whom your right hands possess (female slaves).

“Prayer, prayer; never fear the blame of the blamers for the sake of Allah. Allah will suffice you against anyone who wants to harm or transgress against you. Speak kindly to people as Allah has commanded you, and do not give up enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, lest the worst of you attain positions of authority, then you will call upon Allah but receive no response. I enjoin you to keep in touch with one another and help one another; beware of turning away from one another, cutting off ties with one another and becoming divided. Cooperate in righteousness and piety;

do not cooperate in sin and transgression. Fear Allah, for Allah is severe in punishment. May Allah take care of you, my household. May the teachings of the Prophet (ﷺ) continue to guide you. I bid you farewell, peace be upon you and the mercy of Allah."

Then he did not say anything except *Lâ ilâha illâ Allâh* (There is none worthy of worship other than Allah) until he died, may Allah (ﷻ) be pleased with him, in the month of Ramadan 40 AH.¹²⁴⁰

According to another report, he was killed on the morning of 21 Ramadan.¹²⁴¹ This report may be understood as referring to the day on which he left this world, because he remained alive for three days after he was struck by this wretched man.¹²⁴²

4.5.6. 'Ali's prohibition of mutilation or torture of his killer

'Ali (ﷻ) said: "Detain this man. Then if I die, kill him, and if I live, wounds equal for equal."¹²⁴³ According to another report, he said: "Feed him and give him water and treat him well. If I recover, then I am in charge of the matter and I will forgive him if I want, or if I want, I will settle the score."¹²⁴⁴ There is some additional material in another report, according to which he said: "If I die, then kill him as he killed me but do not overstep the mark, for Allah likes not the transgressors."¹²⁴⁵ 'Ali forbade al-Ḥasan to mutilate him and said: "O Banu 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib, I do not want you to indulge in shedding the blood of the Muslims, saying he killed Amir al-Mu'mineen, he killed Amir al-Mu'mineen. No one should be killed in retaliation for my killing except the one who killed me. Listen, O Ḥasan. If I die from this blow of his, then give him blow for blow, but do not mutilate the man, for I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) saying: 'Beware of mutilation, even of a ferocious dog.'"¹²⁴⁶

There are many reports about the final words of ‘Ali (عليه السلام) concerning the one who killed him; some of these reports are sound and some of them are weak. The report which says that ‘Ali (عليه السلام) gave instructions to burn his body after killing him has a weak chain of narration. Other reports all say the same, that ‘Ali issued instructions that the man be killed if he died as a result of his strike, and forbade them to do anything other than that. These reports support one another and reach such a level that they become binding evidence.

Moreover, Amir al-Mu’mineen did not regard him as an apostate and order that he be killed; rather he forbade that when some of the Muslims wanted to kill him, and he said: “Do not kill the man. If I recover, then wounds equal for equal,¹²⁴⁷ and if I die, then execute him.”¹²⁴⁸

The famous historical report says: “When ‘Ali (عليه السلام) died, al-Ḥasan sent for Ibn Maǧjam, who said to al-Ḥasan: ‘How about a deal? By Allah, I never made a pledge to Allah but I fulfilled it. I made a pledge to Allah, between the Black Stone and Maqâm Ibrâheem, that I would kill ‘Ali and Mu‘âwiyah or die in the attempt. If you wish, you may let me go and try to kill Mu‘âwiyah, and I promise you by Allah that if I do not kill him, or if I kill him and survive, I will come to you and put my hand in yours.’ Al-Ḥasan said to him: ‘By Allah, not until you see hellfire,’ and he went and killed him.”¹²⁴⁹ Then the people took him and burned him with fire.” This report has an interrupted chain of narration, though.¹²⁵⁰

The sound reports, which are more befitting to al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and Ahl al-Bayt, say that they adhered to the final instructions of Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali in dealing with ‘Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Maǧjam.

There is a report — which is not sound — that says: “When ‘Ali was buried, they brought Ibn Maǧjam, and the people gathered,

bringing naphtha and wood. Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah, al-Ḥusayn and Abdullah ibn Ja'far ibn Ja'far ibn Abi Tâlib said: 'Let us enjoy our revenge on him.' Abdullah cut off his hands and feet, and he did not speak or show any fear. Then his eyes were put out, but he did not panic; he said: 'You are applying kohl to your uncle's eyes,' and recited the soorah ﴿Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created [all that exists]...﴾ (*Qur'an* 96: 1) to the end, with his eye sockets bleeding. Then orders were given to catch hold of his tongue in order to cut it out, at which point he panicked. It was said to him: 'Why are you panicking?' He said: 'This is not panic, but I hate to be in this life, conscious, without remembering Allah.' They cut out his tongue, then they burned him. He was dark skinned with a handsome face, gaps between his teeth and hair down to his earlobes, and on his forehead was the mark of prostration."¹²⁵¹ Again, this report is not sound.

Adh-Dhahabi said concerning 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Maljam: "He was the killer of 'Ali (عليه السلام), a Kharijite and evildoer... He took part in the conquest of Egypt alongside prominent people. He was one of those who had knowledge of the Qur'an and studied Islam. He was one of Banu Tadool and was a prominent hero in Egypt. He learned the Qur'an from Mu'âdh ibn Jabal and was a devoted worshipper. It was said that he was the one who sent Subaygha al-Tameemi to 'Umar (عليه السلام) to ask him about what was not clear to him of the text of the Qur'an. Then his destiny overtook him, and he did what he did.

"According to the Kharijites, he is one of the best of the Ummah. Concerning Ibn Maljam, 'Imrân ibn Ḥaṭṭân al-Khâriji said: 'What a beautiful blow from a righteous man, who was seeking thereby nothing except the pleasure of the One of the mighty Throne. Sometimes I remember him and think of him as the best of people before Allah.'

"According to the Râfîdis, Ibn Majlam will be the most wretched of creation in the hereafter. According to us, Ahl as-Sunnah, he is one of those who we hope will be in hell, but we believe that it is possible that Allah may forgive him. He is not as either the Kharijites or the Râfîdis think of him. He comes under the same ruling as the killers of 'Uthmân, az-Zubayr, Talḥah, Sa'eed ibn Jubayr, 'Ammâr, Khârijah and al-Ḥusayn. All of these killers we disavow and hate them for the sake of Allah, but we leave their case to Allah (ﷻ) to decide as He will."¹²⁵²

As for al-Buruk ibn Abdullah, on the night on which 'Ali was struck, he lay in wait for Mu'âwiyah. When Mu'âwiyah came out to pray the dawn prayer, he attacked him with his sword, and his sword fell on Mu'âwiyah's backside, then he was captured. Al-Buruk said: "I have some news that may please you tonight; will it benefit me with you if I tell it to you?" Mu'âwiyah said: "Yes." Al-Buruk said: "A brother of mine has killed 'Ali this night." Mu'âwiyah said: "Perhaps he could not manage to do that." Al-Buruk said: "No, 'Ali comes out with no one to guard him." Mu'âwiyah ordered that he be killed, then he sent for as-Sâ'idi, who was a physician. The doctor said: "Choose one of two ways of treatment: I will either heat a piece of iron and put it where the sword fell, or I will give you medicine to drink, but you will never be able to have children after that, although you will recover. The sword that struck you was poisoned." Mu'âwiyah said: "As for fire, I cannot bear it. As for not having any more children, I have Yazeed and Abdullah, who are enough joy for me." So the doctor gave him that medicine and he recovered, but he had no more children after that. Because of this incident, Mu'âwiyah ordered that booths be set up and night guards appointed, and he appointed police to stand by his head when he prostrated.

As for 'Amr ibn Bakr, he lay in wait for 'Amr ibn al-Âṣ that night, but he did not come out because he had a stomachache. 'Amr

ibn al-‘Âṣ told Khârijah ibn Hudhâfah, who was his chief of police and was of (the tribe) Banu ‘Âmir ibn Lu’ayy, to go out and lead the prayer. ‘Amr ibn Bakr attacked and killed him, thinking that he was ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ. The people caught him and took him to ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ, greeting him as the governor. The killer said: “Who is this?” They said: “ ‘Amr (ibn al-‘Âṣ).” He said: “Who did I kill?” They said: “Khârijah ibn Hudhâfah.” He said to ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ: “Woe to you, O evildoer. By Allah, I did not think that he was anyone but you.” ‘Amr said: “You wanted me, but Allah wanted Khârijah.” Then ‘Amr ordered that he be executed.¹²⁵³

4.5.7. The length of ‘Ali’s caliphate, the location of his grave and the age at which he was killed

According to Khaleefah ibn Khayyât, ‘Ali’s caliphate lasted four years, nine months and six days — or, it was said, three days or fourteen days.¹²⁵⁴ But it seems that it was four years, nine months and three days, because allegiance was sworn to him as caliph on 18 Dhul-Ḥijjah 35 AH, and he died as a martyr on 21 Ramadan 40 AH.¹²⁵⁵

The body of Amir al-Mu’mineen ‘Ali (عليه السلام) was washed by al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and Abdullah ibn Ja’far (may Allah be pleased with them) and was shrouded in three pieces of cloth, among which was no chemise.¹²⁵⁶ Al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Ali (عليه السلام) offered the funeral prayer for him, saying takbeer four times.¹²⁵⁷ According to one report with no chain of narration, he said nine takbeers over him.¹²⁵⁸

As for the location of his grave, the reports differ concerning it. Ibn al-Jawzi narrated a number of reports concerning that, then he said: “Allah knows best which is most correct.”¹²⁵⁹ Among the reports concerning this matter are the following:

- ❖ That al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali (عليه السلام) buried him by the mosque in ar-Raḥbah, which is near the gates of Kindah, before the people finished praying the dawn prayer.¹²⁶⁰
- ❖ That he was buried at night in Kufah near the governor's palace beside the Jâmi' mosque, and the location of his grave was unmarked.¹²⁶¹
- ❖ That his son al-Ḥasan (عليه السلام) took him to Madinah.¹²⁶²
- ❖ That the grave which is just outside Kufah, the shrine in Najaf, is the grave of 'Ali (عليه السلام), but this was rejected by some scholars such as Shurayk ibn Abdullah an-Nakha'i, the qâḍi of Kufah (d. 178 AH) and Muḥammad ibn Sulaymân al-Ḥaḍrami (d. 297).¹²⁶³

In fact, the innovation of the so-called shrine of 'Ali (عليه السلام) in Najaf was introduced during the days of Banu Buwayh, who were Râfiḍi Shia, during the Abbasid era. The Shia fabricated this idea, as is their wont, during the fourth century AH, but the scholars unanimously agree that this is not the grave of 'Ali (عليه السلام); it was said that it is the grave of al-Mugheerah ibn Shu'bah. Ibn Taymiyah said: "As for the shrine in Najaf, people of knowledge are unanimously agreed that it is not the grave of 'Ali; it was said that it is the grave of al-Mugheerah ibn Shu'bah instead. No one said that this was the grave of 'Ali, and no one went there for the purpose of visiting 'Ali's grave, for more than three hundred years, despite the fact that so many of Ahl al-Bayt, the Shia and others, ruled in Kufah. It was only taken as a shrine during the reign of Banu Buwayh — the Persians — more than three hundred years after the death of 'Ali."¹²⁶⁴

There is also a difference of opinion concerning 'Ali's age when he was killed. Some said that he was fifty-nine years old when he was killed; others say that he was sixty-five or sixty-three years old. This last view is the most correct.¹²⁶⁵

4.5.8. The speech of al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali (ؑ) after the slaying of his father

It was narrated that 'Amr ibn Ḥubnashi said that al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali addressed them after the killing of 'Ali (ؑ) and said: "A man left you yesterday who was never preceded by the early ones in knowledge and will never be caught up with by the later ones. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to send him on expeditions and give him the banner, and he would not give up fighting until victory was granted to him."¹²⁶⁶ He did not leave behind any gold or silver, except for seven hundred dirhams from his stipend, which he was keeping for the servant of his family."¹²⁶⁷

4.5.9. Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâs (ؑ) praises 'Ali (ؑ)

It was narrated from Rabee'ah al-Jarshi that mention was made of 'Ali in the presence of a man, and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâs was also present. Sa'd said to him: "Do you remember 'Ali? Verily, he had four qualities which, if I had one of them, would be dearer to me than such and such." And he mentioned the red camels. These four qualities were: the Prophet's saying "I shall give the banner..."; his saying, "You are to me like Haroon was to Moosa"; and his saying, "If I am a person's mawla, 'Ali is also his mawla."¹²⁶⁸ (The narrator forgot the last one.)

4.5.10. Abdullah ibn 'Umar praises 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ؑ)

It was narrated that Sa'd ibn 'Ubaydah said: "A man came to Ibn 'Umar and asked him about 'Uthmân (ؑ). He mentioned his good deeds and said: 'Perhaps that bothers you?' He said: 'Yes.' He said: 'May Allah cause your nose to be rubbed in the dust!' Then he asked him about 'Ali (ؑ), and he mentioned his good deeds and said: 'It is all true, and that is his house in the midst of the houses of

the Prophet (ﷺ).’ Then he said: ‘Perhaps that annoys you?’ He said: ‘Indeed it does.’ He said: ‘May Allah cause your nose to be rubbed in the dust! Go away and do whatever you can against me.’”¹²⁶⁹

4.5.11. How Mu‘âwiyah responded to the news of ‘Ali’s slaying

When the news of ‘Ali’s slaying reached Mu‘âwiyah, he began to weep. His wife said to him: “Are you weeping for him when you fought him?” He said: “Woe to you, you do not know what the people have lost of virtue, understanding and knowledge.”¹²⁷⁰ Mu‘âwiyah used to write to ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ) and ask him about the new issues he faced. When Mu‘âwiyah heard that ‘Ali (ﷺ) had been killed, he said: “Knowledge and understanding have been lost with the death of ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib.” His brother ‘Utbah said to him: “Do not let the people of Syria hear you saying that.” He told him: “Leave me alone.”¹²⁷¹

During his caliphate, Mu‘âwiyah asked Dirâr aṣ-Ṣadâ’i to describe ‘Ali (ﷺ) to him. He said: “Excuse me from that, O Amir al-Mu’mineen.” He said: “No, I insist.” He said: “If I must describe him, then by Allah he was far-sighted and strong in supporting Islam; he spoke the truth¹²⁷² and ruled with justice; knowledge flowed from him, and his wisdom manifested itself in all that he did; he felt alienated from this world and its adornments, and felt at ease with the night and its loneliness; he shed tears frequently and thought deeply; he liked garments that were short and food that was coarse; he was like one of us and would answer us if we asked him, and tell us if we questioned him. By Allah, despite his bringing us close to him, we could hardly speak to him, out of respect. He showed great respect to people of piety and religious commitment and brought the poor close; the strong man could not have any hope (of being let off by ‘Ali) if he was in the wrong, and the weak man could never despair of

his justice. I bear witness that I saw him standing in the middle of the night, when the stars appeared deeper in the sky, holding on to his beard and groaning like one in pain, weeping like one who is grieving, saying: 'O worldly delights, tempt someone else; are you trying to tempt me or do you have hope that I could be tempted? No way, no way. I have divorced you thrice, an irrevocable divorce. Your time is short, and you are insignificant. I complain of little provision, a long journey and loneliness on the road.'" Then Mu'âwiyah wept and said: "May Allah have mercy on Abu al-Ḥasan. By Allah, he was like that. How great is your grief for him, O Ḍirâr?" He said: "Like the grief of a woman whose child was slaughtered in her lap."¹²⁷³

It was narrated that 'Umar ibn 'Abdul-'Azeez said: "I saw the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in a dream, and Abu Bakr and 'Umar were sitting with him. I greeted him with salâm and sat down, and while I was sitting, 'Ali and Mu'âwiyah came in and were led into a room, then the door was closed while I was looking on. Soon 'Ali came out, saying 'Judgement has been passed in my favour, by the Lord of the Ka'bah.' Soon after that, Mu'âwiyah came out saying, 'I have been forgiven, by the Lord of the Ka'bah.'"¹²⁷⁴

Ibn 'Asâkir narrated that a man said to Abu Zur'ah ar-Râzi: "I hate Mu'âwiyah." He said to him: "Why?" He said: "Because he fought 'Ali." Abu Zur'ah said to him: "Woe to you; Mu'âwiyah's Lord is Most Merciful and Mu'âwiyah's opponent was noble and generous. What has the matter between them got to do with you? May Allah be pleased with them both."¹²⁷⁵

4.5.12. What al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri (may Allah have mercy on him) said

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri was asked about 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ), and he said: "By Allah, 'Ali was a straight arrow that Allah sent

against His enemy, the prominent jurist of this Ummah, whose service to Islam cannot be denied, one of the most senior figures in Islam, a relative of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). He was never heedless of the command of Allah and never feared the blame of the blamers, he never showed any interest in worldly gains, he adhered to the Qur'an in the most perfect manner, and thus he attained the pleasure of Allah. This was 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (may Allah be pleased with him)."¹²⁷⁶

4.5.13. What Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said concerning the caliphate of 'Ali (ﷺ)

Abdullah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said: "I was sitting before my father one day when a group of people from Karkh came and talked a great deal about the caliphate of Abu Bakr, the caliphate of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb and the caliphate of 'Uthmân, and they talked even more about the caliphate of 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib. My father raised his head to look at them and said: 'O people, you have talked too much about 'Ali and the caliphate, and the caliphate and 'Ali. Do you think that the caliphate adorned 'Ali? On the contrary, 'Ali adorned it.'"¹²⁷⁷

4.5.14. Al-Ash'ath ibn Qays is innocent of the murder of 'Ali (ﷺ)

Some reports accuse al-Ash'ath ibn Qays of being involved in the murder of 'Ali. Al-Ya'qoobi said: "'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Maljam stayed with al-Ash'ath ibn Qays for a month, sharpening his sword."¹²⁷⁸ Ibn Sa'd stated in *aṭ-Ṭabaqât*: "'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Maljam spent that night, preceding the morning on which he had decided to kill 'Ali, with al-Ash'ath ibn Qays in the place where he used to pray. Then when dawn was about to break, al-Ash'ath said: 'Dawn has broken.' 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Maljam and Shabeeb ibn Bajrah stood up and picked up their swords, then went and sat

opposite the door from which 'Ali would come out."¹²⁷⁹ This report is weak, though.¹²⁸⁰

There is no evidence for accusing al-Ash'ath because when we examine the role he played in 'Ali's caliphate, we find that he was sincere and loyal to 'Ali (ﷺ). He was the first one to fight the people of Syria in the battle for the water, and he showed enmity towards the Kharijites from the time they first appeared. He is the one who told 'Ali that the Kharijites were saying that 'Ali had repented from his sin and recanted the arbitration, and he fought them at Nahrawân. He was also keen to strengthen his ties with Ahl al-Bayt, and he gave his daughter in marriage to al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali (ﷺ). When al-Ḥasan wanted to go to his bride, the tribe of Kindah spread their cloaks from his door to the door of al-Ash'ath.¹²⁸¹ Al-Ash'ath died forty days after the murder of 'Ali, and al-Ḥasan ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib offered the funeral prayer for him.¹²⁸² Al-Ḥasan was the husband of his daughter.¹²⁸³ There is no narration from the family of 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (ﷺ) to suggest that they levelled this accusation against al-Ash'ath or that they discussed it with any member of al-Ash'ath's family. The murder of 'Ali was carried out only by the Kharijites, and was mostly within the context of avenging the slain of Nahrawân.¹²⁸⁴

4.5.15. The danger posed by the misguided and deviant groups to the Muslims

When misguided sects and deviant groups spread in Muslim lands, they pose a danger to the Muslims, threatening security and stability, making the people doubt their beliefs and spreading corruption and ruin. That was the case with the Kharijite renegades who rebelled against 'Ali (ﷺ) and regarded him as a disbeliever, a group of whom caught him unawares and killed him, as we have seen above. They claimed that they were selling their souls for the sake of Allah by doing this deed, but they had no proof or evidence for that;

rather they were following whims and desires and obeying Satan. When we understand from the previous information that the Kharijites were the cause of 'Ali's slaying, and we recognise the corruptness of their way of thinking, then we will realise that the Muslim Ummah must beware of them, warn against them and oppose them. The scholars and callers to Islam have to do their part so that security and safety may be established; then the lights of the Sunnah will shine forth, and the fires of innovation will be extinguished. This can be achieved in the best manner by supporting the belief of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jamâ'ah and standing up to innovation and innovators. These are means of reviving societies, and this is the best way to bring Muslims together and unite them. Whoever ponders the lengthy history of Islam will realise that the states which were based on and adhered to the Sunnah are the ones that united the Muslims, adopted the ideology of jihad, and enjoined what is good and forbade what is evil; by means of these states, Islam prevailed in the past and in modern history. This is unlike those states that were established on a foundation of innovation and created chaos, division and innovation, leading to disunity; those states soon died out and became extinct.¹²⁸⁵

4.5.16. The deeply entrenched grudges against the sincere believers that filled the hearts of the Kharijites

The deeply entrenched grudges against the sincere believers that filled the hearts of the Kharijites are indicated by the words of 'Abdur-Rahmân ibn Maljam, who said concerning his sword: "I bought it (the sword) for one thousand, and I put enough poison on it for one thousand. If this blow had struck all the people of the city, none of them would have survived."¹²⁸⁶

These words of his highlight the blatant enmity harboured by these Kharijites, not only against the ordinary believers but also against prominent leaders such as ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib (عليه السلام), whose character combined the greatest and noblest characteristics. Look, may Allah bless you, at how corrupt ideas and deviant thoughts, and those who promote them, can lead people to such a wretched level that they assassinate believers and leave idolaters alone.¹²⁸⁷

4.5.17. Impact of a bad environment on the people who live in it

A bad environment has an impact on the people who live in it, even if some of them love justice and strive for it. Ibn Maljam went to a man from Ashja‘, whose name was Shabeeb ibn Bajrah, and said to him: “Will you be interested in something that will bring you honour in this world and the hereafter?” Shabeen said: “What is it?” Ibn Maljam said: “Killing ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib.” Shabeeb said: “May your mother be bereft of you! This is something terrible. How can you kill ‘Ali?” Ibn Maljam said: “I will lie in wait for him in the mosque, then when he comes to pray the dawn prayer, we will attack him and kill him. If we survive, then we will be happy and will have gotten revenge; if we are killed, then that which is with Allah is better than this world and everything in it.” Shabeeb said: “Woe to you, if it was someone other than ‘Ali, it would be more bearable to me. You know the sacrifices he made for Islam and that he was one of the first to stand with the Prophet (ﷺ). I do not feel comfortable with the idea of killing him.” Ibn Maljam said: “Do you not know that he killed the people of Nahrawân, the righteous slaves of Allah?” Shabeeb said: “Yes.” Ibn Maljam said: “Then we should kill him in revenge for those of our brethren whom he slew.” The report of at-Ṭabari says that he was persuaded by these words.¹²⁸⁸

Look, may Allah bless you, at how people with misguided ideas can influence the people that they mix with and sit with. Even though Shabeeb was not happy with the idea of killing 'Ali because of what he knew of his great efforts in support of Islam and his seniority with regard to being with the Prophet (ﷺ), he responded to Ibn Maljam when he persuaded him with his specious arguments, reminding him that 'Ali (ؓ) had killed his fellow Kharijite renegades. Thus he stirred up his emotions and convinced him, even though these brethren had been killed lawfully, not unlawfully. He responded to his request and agreed with him, and the outcome was corrupted thinking, a ruined reputation and obvious loss.

This reminds every Muslim to beware of keeping company with anyone who has corrupt beliefs and deviant ideas, and to hasten to sit with devoted scholars who know the truth and act upon it and guide people to that which serves their best interests in this world and the hereafter. If he does not accept that straight path and mixes with these deviants and is influenced by their beliefs, he will end up biting his fingers in regret at a time when regret is to no avail,¹²⁸⁹ as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And [remember] the Day when the dhâlim [wrongdoer, oppressor, polytheist] will bite at his hands, he will say: 'Oh! Would that I had taken a path with the Messenger [Muḥammad].' 'Ah! Woe to me! Would that I had never taken so-and-so as an intimate friend! He indeed led me astray from the Reminder [this Qur'an] after it had come to me. And Satan is to man ever a deserter in the hour of need.'﴾
(*Qur'an* 25: 27-29)

These are some of the lessons to be learned from the slaying of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ؓ), the devoted scholar who spent his entire life submitting to Allah (ﷻ), turning to Him always. He showed us a blessed way to follow and set a blessed example for us to emulate.

4.6. Eulogies for Amir al-Mu‘mineen ‘Ali

4.6.1. Abu al-Aswad ad-Du‘ali

Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr said: “Most narrators attribute these lines of verse to Umm al-Haytham bint al-‘Aryân an-Nakha‘iyyah:

*O eye, why do you not help us,
why don't you weep for Amir al-Mu'mineen?
Umm Kulthoom weeps for him.
Tell the Kharijites, wherever they are,
May Allah never comfort those who rejoice in his death.
Is it in the month of Ramadan that you made us grieve
for the loss of the best of all people?*

...
*He acquired all beautiful qualities, but above all he attained
the love of the Messenger of the Lord of the Worlds.
Quraysh know very well that you are the best among them
in lineage and religious commitment.
If you see the face of Abu Husayn [meaning Ali],
you will see the full moon above those who look at it.
Before his death we were in a good state and
we could see the mawla of the Messenger of Allah with us,
Striving to establish the truth and never doubting it,
being fair to enemies and relatives alike,
Never withholding any knowledge he had,
and he was never one of the tyrants.
When the people lost ‘Ali, it was as if
they were cattle lost for years.”¹²⁹⁰*

4.6.2. Ismâ‘eel ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥimyari

*Ask Quraysh, if you are not aware, who was the most
steadfast and strongest in devotion to the faith?*

*Who was the earliest in Islam, greatest in knowledge
 and had the best wife and children,
 The one who declared the oneness of Allah
 when Quraysh disbelieved the Prophet,
 calling upon idols and rivals alongside Allah?
 Who was the most just, most knowledgeable,
 the most sincere in fulfilling promises?
 If they tell you the truth, they will only mention Abu Ḥasan
 ['Ali], unless you ask someone who envies the righteous.¹²⁹¹*

4.6.3. Bakr ibn Ḥammâd at-Tâharti¹²⁹² and his refutation of the Kharijite poet 'Imrân ibn Ḥaṭṭân¹²⁹³

The Kharijite poet 'Imrân ibn Ḥaṭṭân said:

*What a beautiful blow from a righteous man,
 who was seeking thereby nothing except
 the pleasure of the One of the mighty Throne.
 Sometimes I remember him and think of him
 as the best of people before Allah.*

Bakr ibn Ḥammâd at-Tâharti said in response to that:

*Say to Ibn Maljam when the decree of Allah
 inevitably comes to pass: 'Woe to you,
 you have destroyed a pillar of Islam;
 You have killed the best of those who walk the earth,
 the first of people in Islam and faith;
 The most knowledgeable of the Qur'an among people,
 and the most knowledgeable of the Sunnah of the Messenger.*

...

*Rather the blow came to him from a misguided person
 and that blow will land him in hell;
 he will meet Allah when He is angry with him,*

*As if he intended nothing by this blow
except to go to hell for eternity.*¹²⁹⁴

* * *

Thus Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib departed this world after striving mightily in jihad, and with his death, one of the brightest and purest chapters of history came to an end. History knows him as a brilliant man of a unique calibre. His ultimate aim was to seek the pleasure of Allah (ﷻ); his main concern was that Islam should prevail; his greatest wish was that the rulings of Allah (ﷻ) should govern the world of mankind, and his highest aspiration was that justice should be achieved among his subjects.

Studying the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs will strengthen the resolve of the new generation of Muslims and guide them. It will bring to life the beauty and splendour of the early days of Islam, teach them that the affairs of the last of this Ummah will never be sound except through that by which the affairs of the early generation became sound, and help the callers to Islam, scholars and seekers of knowledge to follow the example of that era. The Muslims should study its characteristics and features, the attributes of its leaders and community, its system of ruling and the way in which it governed people's affairs. That will help the young people of this Ummah to restore the Ummah to its role of leading humanity.

I completed this book at 12.55 p.m. on Saturday, 7 Rabee' al-Âkhir 1424 AH/7 June 2003 CE, by the grace of Allah (ﷻ). Praise be to Allah first and foremost. I ask Him to accept this work, to open people's hearts in order for them to benefit from it, and to bless it from His bounty. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Whatever of mercy [i.e. of good], Allah may grant to mankind, none can withhold it; and whatever He may withhold, none can grant it thereafter. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.﴾ (Qur'an 35: 2)

Upon the completion of this book, I cannot but stand before Him with humility, turning to Him and acknowledging His blessings and grace, recognising that I have no power and no strength of my own. Allah (ﷻ) is the Bestower of blessings, He is the Giver of honour, He is the Helper, and He is the guide. To Him be praise for that with which He has blessed me from beginning to end. I ask Him, may He be glorified, by His beautiful names and sublime attributes, to make this work of mine sincerely for His sake alone and beneficial to His slaves, and to reward me for every letter I have written and add it to my record of good deeds. May He also reward my brothers who helped me with all that they could to complete this humble effort. We hope that every Muslim who reads this book will not forget in his supplications the author, the slave of Allah who is in need of his Lord's forgiveness, mercy and good pleasure, for a supplication offered for one's brother in his absence will be answered, if Allah (ﷻ) wills. I end this book with the words of Allah (ﷻ): *«My Lord! Grant me the power and ability that I may be grateful for Your Favours which You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may do righteous good deeds that will please You, and admit me by Your Mercy among Your righteous slaves.»* (Qur'an 27: 19)

Glory and praise be to You, O Allah. I bear witness that there is no god but You; I seek Your forgiveness and repent to You. And the end of our supplication is: Praise be to Allah the Lord of the Worlds.

A servant who is in need of his Lord's pardon,
forgiveness, mercy and good pleasure

Ali Muḥammad Muḥammad aṣ-Ṣallābi

7 Rabee' al-Âkhir 1424 AH

Conclusion

This is what Allah (ﷻ) has enabled me to compile in the chapters of this book, which I have called in Arabic *Seerat Ameer al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib: Shakhṣiyatuhu wa 'Aṣruhu* (*Biography of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib — his Life and Times*). Whatever is correct herein is purely by the grace of Allah (ﷻ), to Whom be praise. Whatever errors are contained herein, I ask Allah to forgive me, and I repent to Him; Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ) have nothing to do with them. However, I was keen to avoid making mistakes so that I would not be deprived of reward. I ask Allah (ﷻ) to make this book of benefit to my Muslim brothers and sisters, and I ask those who read it to remember me in their prayers, for the supplication for one's brother in his absence will be answered, if Allah wills. I end this book with the words of Allah (ﷻ): ﴿Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed full of kindness, Most Merciful.﴾ (*Qur'an* 59: 10)

Glory and praise be to You, O Allah. I bear witness that there is no God but You; I seek Your forgiveness and repent to You.

Weak and fabricated hadiths about Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (ﷺ)

1. "Allah revealed three things to me concerning 'Ali on the night on which I was taken on the night journey: that he was the leader of the believers, the imam of the pious and the commander of those with bright faces and limbs (from doing wuḍoo')." Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 353.
2. "Three people are ahead of everyone else: the one who reached Moosa first, Joshua; the one who reached 'Eesa first, the man mentioned in *Ya-Seen*; and the one who reached Muhammad first, 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib." Very fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 358; *Ḍa'eef al-Jâmi'*, no. 3334.
3. "'Ali is the leader of the righteous: the one who supports him will prosper, and the one who lets him down is doomed." Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 357; *Ḍa'eef al-Jâmi'*, no. 37799.
4. "The duel of 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib against 'Amr ibn 'Abd Wudd is better than the deeds of my Ummah until the Day of Resurrection." A lie. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 400.
5. "O Allah, verily Your slave 'Ali has devoted himself to Your Prophet, so cause the sun to rise again for him." According to another report: "O Allah, he was preoccupied with obeying You and Your Messenger, so cause the sun to rise again for him."

Asma' said: "I saw it setting, then I saw it rising after it had set." Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 971.

6. "Allah enjoined me to love four and told me that He loves them." It was said: "O Messenger of Allah, who are they?" (According to another report: "Tell us their names.") He said: "'Ali is one of them," and he repeated this three times, "and Abu Dharr, Salmân and al-Muqḍâd. He enjoined me to love them and told me that He loves them." Weak. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 1549, no. 3128; *Ḍa'eef al-Jâmi'*, no. 1566; *Ḍa'eef Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, no. 771; *Ḍa'eef Sunan Ibn Mâjah*, no. 28; *Al-Mishkât*, no. 6249.
7. "I am the city of knowledge, and 'Ali is its gate. Whoever wants knowledge, let him come to its gate." Weak. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 2955.
8. "I am the slave of Allah, the brother of the Messenger of Allah; I am the senior *ṣiddêeq*, and no one claims that after me but a liar. I prayed seven years before the people." False. *Ḍa'eef Sunan Ibn Mâjah*, no. 23.
9. "May Allah have mercy on 'Ali. O Allah, cause truth to be on his side wherever he is." Very weak. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 2094; *Ḍa'eef al-Jâmi'*, no. 3095; *Ḍa'eef Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, 767; *al-Mishkât*, no. 6125.
10. "'Ali is with the Qur'an, and the Qur'an is with 'Ali; they will never be parted until they both come to the reservoir." Weak. *Ḍa'eef al-Jâmi'*, no. 3802.
11. "'Ali is the king of the believers, and wealth is the king of the hypocrites." Weak. *Ḍa'eef al-Jâmi'*, no. 3805.
12. "On the night on which I was taken on the Night Journey, I came to my Lord, may He be glorified and exalted, and He revealed to

me three things concerning 'Ali: he is the leader of the Muslims, the guardian of the pious and the commander of those with bright faces and limbs." Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 4889.

13. "O Anas, go and call the leader of the Arabs" — meaning 'Ali. 'Â'ishah said: "Are you not the leader of the Arabs?" He [the Prophet (ﷺ)] said: "I am the leader of the sons of Adam, and 'Ali is the leader of the Arabs. O Anṣâr, shall I not tell you something which, if you adhere to it, you will never go astray after that?" They said: Yes, O Messenger of Allah. He said: "This is 'Ali: Love him because you love me, and honour him because you honour me, for Jibreel enjoined upon me from Allah the same as I have enjoined upon you." Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 4890.
14. "You will explain to my Ummah what they differ about after I am gone." Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 4891.
15. "I am the warner, and 'Ali is the guide. Through you, O 'Ali, those who are guided will be guided after I am gone." Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 4899.
16. "When I was taken on the Night Journey (*al-Isrâ'*), I saw written on the leg of the Throne: There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. He is My chosen one among My creation, and I have supported him with 'Ali." Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 4902.
17. "Whoever would like to look at the deeds of Adam, the understanding of Nooh, the patience of Ibrâheem, the asceticism of Yaḥya and the strength of Moosa, let him look at 'Ali." Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 4903.

18. "You will fight those who recant and are unjust and rebellious, in the roads and on the banks of rivers and streams." Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 907.
19. "This verse — ﴿O Messenger [Muhammad]! Proclaim [the Message] which has been sent down to you from your Lord﴾ (*Qur'an* 5: 67) was revealed on the day of Ghadeer Khumm concerning 'Ali." Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 4922.
20. "When the Messenger of Allah appointed 'Ali at Ghadeer Khumm and instructed that 'Ali should be in charge after him, this verse was revealed: ﴿This day, I have perfected your religion for you [and] completed My Favour upon you.﴾ (*Qur'an* 5: 3)" Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 4923.
21. "This is my brother, my appointed heir and my successor (caliph) among you, so listen to him and obey" — referring to 'Ali. Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 4932.
22. "I adjure you by Allah, is there anyone among you whom the Messenger of Allah took as a brother when he established ties of brotherhood among the Muslims — apart from me?" They said: No, by Allah. Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḍ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 4949.
23. "There is no sword except Dhul-Fiḡâr and no hero except 'Ali." False, falsely attributed to 'Ali. *Minhâj as-Sunnah*, 5/70.
24. "Love for 'Ali is a good deed that cannot be undermined by doing bad deeds alongside it, and hating him is a bad deed alongside which no good deed is to any avail." False, falsely attributed to 'Ali. *Minhâj as-Sunnah*, 5/73.
25. "The two weighty things are the Book of Allah, one side of which is in the hand of Allah and the other side of which is in

your hands; adhere to it and do not go astray. The other (weighty thing) is my family. The All Knowing [Allah] has told me that they (these two weighty things) will never be separated until they both come to me at the reservoir. I asked my Lord for that. So do not go ahead of them lest you be doomed, and do not fall behind lest you be doomed, and do not teach them because they know better than you.” Weak. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah ad-Ḍa‘eefah*, no. 4914.

26. “Knowing the family of Muhammad is salvation, loving the family of Muhammad is help to cross the path leading to paradise (that passes over hellfire, and which is found by disbelievers and sinners to be extremely sharp and narrow), supporting the family of Muhammad is protection against punishment.” Fabricated. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah ad-Ḍa‘eefah*, no. 4917.
27. “This is my brother, my appointed heir and successor (caliph) after I am gone, so listen to him and obey.” This hadith is false in both text and chain of narration. As for the chain of narration, it includes ‘Abdul-Ghaffâr ibn al-Qâsim, of whom aḍ-Ḍahabî said: Abu Maryam al-Anṣârî was a Râfîdî and not trustworthy. ‘Ali ibn al-Madeenî said: He used to fabricate hadith. *Mizân al-Itidâl*, 2/640.
28. “My appointed heir and confidant is ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib. The best of those I am leaving behind, who will fulfil my covenant and pay off my debts, is ‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib.” Narrated by al-Haythamî in *Majma‘ az-Zawâ'id*, 9/14. He attributed it to aṭ-Ṭabarânî and said: Its chain of narration includes an-Nâṣih ibn ‘Abdullah, who is rejected.
29. “I am the house of Wisdom, and ‘Ali is its door.” Narrated by at-Tirmidhî and Abu Na‘eem, who did not comment on at-

Tirmidhi’s words: This is a strange munkar hadith... we do not know this hadith from any trustworthy narrator from Shurayk. No. 3723. Ibn al-Jawzi said: This is a fabricated hadith. *Mishkât al-Maṣâbeeh*, 3/1777. Ibn al-Jawzi deemed it to be a lie - *Al-Mawḍoo‘ât*, 1/349.

30. “You, O ‘Ali, and your party, ﴿they are the best of creatures﴾ (*Qur’an* 98: 7).” Its chain of narration includes Abu al-Jarood, Ziyâd ibn al-Mundhir al-Kufî, whom al-Ḥâfidh ibn Ḥajar called: a Râfidi whom Yaḥya ibn Ma‘een deemed to be a liar. *At-Taqrîb*, no. 2101.
31. “Allah revealed to me three things concerning ‘Ali: he is the leader of the believers, the leader of the pious and the leader of those with bright faces and limbs.” Al-Ḥâkim said in *al-Manâqib*: Its chain of narration is sound. I say: Rather it is very weak and also interrupted. *Ithâf al-Maharah*, 1/344. He said that ‘Umar ibn al-Ḥuṣayn al-‘Aqeeli and his shaykh Yaḥya ibn al-‘Ala’ ar-Râzi are both rejected. In fact, he stated clearly that this hadith is fabricated.
32. “What great news, O ‘Ali. You have become our mawla and the mawla of every believing man and woman.” Its chain of narration includes ‘Ali ibn Zayd ibn Jad‘an, of whom al-Jawzjâni said: His hadith is weak. *Ash-Shajarah fî Ahwâl ar-Rijâl*, p. 194. Ibn al-Jawzi said in *al-‘Ilal al-Mutanâhiyah fil-Aḥâdeeth al-Wâhiyah* (1/226): It is not permissible to quote this hadith as evidence. From that man back to Abu Hurayrah, all its narrators are weak. Al-Bazzâr said: A number of scholars spoke about it. *Kashf al-Astâr*, 490. Ad-Dâraqutni said: It is not strong. *Sunan ad-Dâraqutni*, 1/103.
33. “May Allah have mercy on ‘Ali. O Allah, cause truth to be with him wherever he goes.” Narrated by al-Ḥâkim, who said: It is

sound according to the conditions of the two Shaykhs [Bukhari and Muslim]. *Al-Mustadrak*, 3/125. Its chain of narration includes Nâfi' at-Tameemi. Aḏ-Dhahabi said, commenting on al-Ḥâkim: Al-Mukhtâr is worthless. Al-Ḥâfidh said: Al-Mukhtâr is weak. *At-Taḡreeb*, p. 6522.

34. "'Ali is my brother in this world and the hereafter.'" Weak. Al-Albâni: *Ḍa'eef al-Jâmi'*, no. 3801.
35. "'Ali is the gate of humility. Whoever enters it will be safe.'" Fabricated. Its chain of narration includes Ḥusayn al-Ashqar. Bukhari said: There is some doubt concerning it. *At-Tareekh al-Kabeer*, 2/2862. He said: He narrated strange things. *At-Tareekh as-Sagheer*, 2/319. Al-Albâni: *As-Silsilah aḏ-Ḍa'eefah*, no. 3913.
36. "'Ali is the best of mankind. Whoever does not accept that has disbelieved.'" Fabricated. Al-Ḥâfidh ibn Ḥajar said: It was narrated by Ibn 'Adiy via several chains of narration, all of which are weak. *Tasdeed al-Qaws*, 3/89. Adh-Dhahabi said: This is a munkar hadith. Adh-Dhahabi also described this hadith as clearly false. *Mizân al-I'tidâl*, 1/521; Ibn al-Jawzi in *al-Mawḍoo'ât*, 1/348.
37. 'Â'ishah said: "I know that 'Ali is dearer to you than my father, two or three times." Weak. Al-Albâni: *Ḍa'eef Abi Dâwood*, p. 491.
38. "The likeness of my family is that of the ship of Nooh; whoever embarks on it will be safe, and whoever stays behind will drown." Narrated by aṭ-Ṭabarâni in *al-Kabeer*, 3/37; al-Haythami, 6/168. Its chain of narration includes 'Abdullah ibn Dâhir and al-Hasan ibn Abi Ja'far, who are both rejected. This was stated by al-Haythami.

39. “Whoever would like to live like me, die like me and dwell in the garden of eternity that my Lord, may He be glorified and exalted, has promised me, with trees that He planted with His hand, let him love ‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib.” Classed as sound by al-Ḥâkim, 3/128. Aḍ-Dhahabi commented: Its chain of narration includes al-Qâsim, who is rejected, and his shaykh, namely Yaḥya ibn al-‘Ali al-Aslami, is weak. Al-Ḥâfidh said in *At-Taqrīb* (7677): He is Shia and weak. But he made a mistake in the name of al-Aslami, calling him al-Muḥâribi, and ‘Abdul-Ḥusayn exploited that in the worse manner in *al-Murâji‘ât*.
40. “Allah never put anything in my heart but I put it in ‘Ali’s heart.” Fabricated. *Al-Mawḍoo‘ât*, 1/131; *Asas at-Tâlib*, no. 1262.
41. “The one who loves you loves me, and the one who loves me loves Allah. The one who hates you hates me, and the one who hates me hates Allah.” Al-Ḥâfidh said: This was narrated by Ibn ‘Adiy, but it is false. *Lisân al-Mizân*, 2/109.
42. “O ‘Ali, be of good cheer, for you and your companions and your party will be in paradise. O ‘Ali, did you pray the afternoon prayer?” He said no. He said: “O Allah, You know that he was busy serving You and Your Messenger, so put the sun back for him.” So Allah (ﷻ) brought it back for him, and ‘Ali prayed, then the sun set.

* * *

Glossary of Islamic terms*

<i>abu (or abi)</i>	أبو، أبي	father (of)
<i>Ahl al-Bayt</i>	أهل البيت	the people of the Prophet's household or family
<i>ahl as-Sunnah wal-jamâ'ah</i>	أهل السنة والجماعة	'people of the Sunnah and the community'
<i>alḥamdulillâh</i>	الحمد لله	all praise is for Allah
<i>Allâhu akbar</i>	الله أكبر	Allah is the Greatest
<i>âmeen</i>	آمين	O Allah, accept our invocation; amen
<i>Amir al-Mu'mineen</i>	أمير المؤمنين	the leader of the Muslims; <i>lit.</i> 'the commander of the faithful'
<i>Anṣâr</i>	أنصار	'helpers': the Muslim citizens of Madinah who gave refuge to the Prophet (ﷺ) and the other Muslim emigrants from Makkah
<i>'aqeedah</i> (<i>pl. 'aqâ'id</i>)	عقيدة	belief system that is based upon a firm conviction in all the fundamentals of faith and of the oneness of Allah; firm creed that one's heart is fixed upon without any wavering or doubt, and that excludes any supposition, doubt or suspicion

* The Arabic words are transliterated according to the conventions of the Transliteration Chart found in this book. If a word has become part of the English language (i.e. is found in a dictionary of Standard English), that spelling is used in this book and appears first in this Glossary, with the transliterated form in brackets after it.

<i>as-salâmu</i> ' <i>alaykum</i>	السلام عليكم	a greeting, which means 'peace'
' <i>awrah</i>	عورة	the part of a person's body that must be screened from public view; for males it is the area between the navel and the knees, and for females it is everything except the hands and the face
<i>banu</i> (or <i>bani</i>)	بنو، بني	<i>lit.</i> 'children (of)'; <i>usu.</i> referring to a tribe that claims a common ancestor
<i>Baqee'</i> Cemetery	البيع	the cemetery located next to the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah, in which many of the Prophet's companions and family members are buried
<i>bay'at</i> <i>as-Saqeefah</i>	بيعة السقيفة	The oath of allegiance given to Abu Bakr as the new leader of the Muslims; this took place at a meeting in Saqeefah after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ)
<i>da'wah</i>	دعوة	disseminating the teachings of Islam and calling people to accept and embrace Islam
<i>dhimmi</i>	ذمي	protected or covenanted people; non-Muslims who must pay the <i>jizyah</i> in lieu of <i>zakât</i>
<i>dirham</i>	درهم	a silver coin; a unit of currency
<i>Eid</i> (' <i>eed</i>)	عيد	<i>lit.</i> festival; the two celebrations: one at the end of Ramadan and the other at the culmination of the Hajj
<i>fatwa</i> (<i>fatwah</i>)	فتوة	religious decision or decree

<i>fay'</i>	فيء	what Muslims acquire of the wealth of disbelievers without fighting or jihad
<i>fiqh</i>	فقه	Islamic jurisprudence; understanding or interpreting Islamic law
<i>fitnah</i>	فتنة	<i>lit.</i> trial, temptation; (attempting to sow) discord between Muslims
<i>ghaneemah</i>	غنيمة	what Muslims acquire of the wealth of those who fight them and what they capture in battle of horses and mounts; war booty
<i>ghareeb</i>	غريب	<i>lit.</i> 'strange' or 'unusual': a category of hadith in which at some points in its chain there is only one narrator
<i>ghusl</i>	غسل	ritual shower necessary after a major impurity, e.g., after sexual intercourse or at the end of the menstrual period
<i>ḥadd</i>	حدّ	type of punishment prescribed by Allah
<i>Hadith</i> (<i>ḥadeeth</i>)	حديث	the collected statements and actions of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that with the Qur'an form the basis of Islamic law
<i>hadith</i> (<i>ḥadeeth</i>)	حديث	a statement or action of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that was remembered and recorded by his Companions and followers
<i>Al-Ḥâfidh</i>	الحافظ	'the one who has memorized (the Qur'an)': an honorific title
<i>hajj</i> (<i>hajj</i>)	حج	the major pilgrimage to the Sacred Mosque, site of the Ka'bah at Makkah, to be undertaken by every able Muslim once in his/her lifetime

<i>halal</i> (<i>ḥalâl</i>)	حلال	permitted according to Islamic law
<i>ḥarâm</i>	حرام	forbidden according to Islamic law
<i>Hijâz</i>	حجاز	the Western region of the Arabian Peninsula that includes Makkah and Madinah
<i>Hijrah</i>	هجرة	migration: <i>esp.</i> the migration from Makkah to Madinah by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companions that marks the start of the Islamic calendar
<i>ḥoor 'een</i>	حور العين	plural of (gazelle-like) + 'ayn (eye); houris, the 'firm-breasted' women with beautiful eyes, promised to male believers in paradise
<i>Iblees</i>	إبليس	another name for Satan in Arabic
<i>'iddah</i>	عدة	the waiting period after a woman is widowed or divorced, in which she is not allowed to remarry, in order to ascertain whether or not she is pregnant with the child of her late or ex-husband
<i>ijtihâd</i>	إجتihad	to use one's knowledge of the Qur'an and the Sunnah to derive rulings on matters not specifically mentioned in either source of Islamic law
<i>innâ lillâhi</i> <i>wa innâ ilayhi</i> <i>râji'oon</i>	إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ	'to Allah we belong and to Him is our return'; a phrase uttered during times of difficulty [from Soorat al-Baqarah (2: 156)]
<i>inshallah</i>	أَنْ شَاءَ اللّٰهُ	God willing

<i>i'tikâf</i>	إعتكاف	seclusion in the mosque solely for the purpose of worship
<i>jâhiliyyah</i>	جاهلية	<i>lit.</i> 'ignorance'; the age of spiritual darkness before Islam
<i>Jibreel</i>	جبريل	the Arabic name for Gabriel (جبرائيل), the archangel who transmitted the verses of the Qur'an and other communication from Allah to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)
<i>jiḥad</i> (<i>jihâd</i>)	جهاد	struggle or striving (in Allah's cause)
<i>jinn</i> (<i>plural of jinni</i>)	جن	non-human, rational beings created by Allah from fire, often referred to as 'demons' or 'devils'; They have free will like humans: some are Muslims, others disbelievers; some are obedient to Allah, others disobedient. Satan is a jinni. Some people try to 'foretell' the future by contacting a jinni. Some disobedient jinn mislead people into thinking that they can tell them what will happen in the future, near or far, or that the jinn can provide people with riches or some sort of power.
<i>Kaaba</i> (<i>Ka'bah</i>)	الكعبة	the House of Allah in Makkah, originally built by Prophets Ibrâheem and Ismâ'eel, and which Muslims face wherever they pray
<i>khaleel</i>	خليل	a very close friend
<i>khazeerah</i>	خزيرة	a dish prepared by cutting meat into small pieces and covering it with water. When the meat is almost done, some

		flour is sprinkled on to it (and cooked for a while).
<i>khuff</i>	خف	a type of footwear worn for travelling, usually made of leather. In some cases, it is permissible to wipe over them when making ablutions for prayer, instead of taking them off and washing the feet
<i>kunyah</i>	كنية	an honorary name usually composed of Abu (father of) or Umm (mother of) and the name of the first son or first child
<i>lâ ilâha illâ Allâh</i>	لا إله إلا الله	there is none worthy of worship other than Allah
<i>madh-hab</i>	مذهب	school of juristic thought
<i>Maghreb</i>	مغرب	The Maghreb literally means the place of sunset, or the west. It is also used to refer to the countries of North Africa (excluding Egypt), or specifically to Morocco
<i>mahr</i>	مهر	obligatory marriage gift presented by the groom to the bride, and a necessary stipulation of the marriage contract
<i>maḥram</i>	محرم	a degree of consanguinity precluding marriage; a man whom a woman may never marry due to the close blood or marriage relationship. e.g., father, brother, son, uncle, and father-in-law
<i>maqâm Ibrâheem</i>	مقام إبراهيم	the Station of Abraham (Ibrâheem) next to the Ka'bah

<i>al-Masjid al-Ḥarâm</i>	المسجد الحرام	the Sacred Mosque in Makkah where the Kaaba is situated
<i>mawla</i>	مولى	master, protector, helper or friend
<i>mawṣool</i>	موصول	<i>lit.</i> 'connected': a term used by Hadith scholars to describe a narration with an uninterrupted chain of narrators
<i>minbar</i>	منبر	raised pulpit in a mosque from which sermons are presented; The pulpit in a mosque is different from that in a church. The pulpit in a mosque is basically a raised platform at the top of a set of steps, and it usually has a railing for the imam or speaker to lean on. This is why one can speak of 'sitting on the pulpit', and 'ascending the pulpit'
<i>mubâhalah</i>	مباہلة	a method of resolving religious disputes in which both parties come together to pray and invoke the curse of Allah on the side that is lying
<i>mudd</i>	مدّ	a measure of volume: approx. what one's two hands can scoop up
<i>Muhâjiroon (or Muhâjireen)</i>	مهاجرون	<i>lit.</i> emigrants (of any kind); in Islamic discourse this term is used to refer to people who emigrate to safeguard their religion, and specifically, the Muslims who migrated with Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) from Makkah to Madinah
<i>mujâhid (pl. mujâhideen)</i>	مجاهد	one who strives in the way of Allah; a fighter in jihad

<i>munkar</i>	منكر	a category of hadith which is related by only one narrator, who is neither upright nor precise; technically, it is a weak hadith that contradicts an authentic hadith
<i>mursal</i>	مرسل	a category of hadith: a narration that a tâbi'ee ascribes to the Prophet (ﷺ) without mentioning the Companion that he took it from
<i>muṣḥaf</i>	مصحف	copy of the Arabic text of the Qur'an that is neither accompanied by commentary nor translated
<i>musnad</i>	مسند	a compilation (made by his student) of the hadiths related by an Imam
<i>mutawâtir</i>	متواتر	a category of hadith describing narrations that are related by a group of upright and trustworthy narrators who also related from a group of upright and trustworthy narrators, and so on, until the narration ends at the Prophet (ﷺ)
<i>prophethood</i>		The term 'prophethood' is not in the English dictionary, but is an invented term, formed along the pattern of 'childhood' and 'motherhood', as a noun reflecting a particular state of being. It is meant to translate the meaning of the Arabic word nubuwwah, which has no one-word equivalent in English, but which could be translated as meaning 'the state of being a prophet', and is also used to

refer to 'all things that have to do with being a prophet'. The term 'prophethood' has since become common in English-language Islamic discourse

<i>qibla</i> (<i>qiblah</i>)	القبلة	the bearing from the Kaaba to any point on Earth; the direction that all Muslims must face in prayer
<i>qiyâm al-layl</i>	قيام الليل	<i>lit.</i> 'standing the night'; getting up to pray supererogatory prayers during the late night and early morning before fajr
<i>raj'ah</i>	رجعة	the Shiite belief that some people will be brought back to this life from the dead, in their original forms, before the Day of Resurrection
<i>raka'ah</i> (<i>pl. raka'ât</i>)	ركعة	a unit of the formal prayer (<i>ṣalât</i>)
<i>Ramadan</i> (<i>Ramaḍân</i>)	رمضان	the ninth month in the Islamic calendar; the month of obligatory fasting; the month in which the first verses of the Qur'an were revealed
<i>ar-rijs</i>	رجس	dirt or filth; also used to refer to evil deeds and sins, prohibited food and drink, polytheism and other prohibited acts
<i>rukoo'</i>	ركوع	the act of bowing (in prayer)
<i>ṣâ'</i>	صاع	a measurement roughly equivalent to 3 kg, or four times the volume of a <i>mudd</i>
<i>Ṣafâ</i>	الصفى	one of the two hills between which pilgrims must hurry back and forth

		during the rites of the Hajj and the 'umrah
<i>ṣaḥēḥ</i>	صحيح	a grade of hadith: sound or authentic
<i>salâm</i>	السلام	peace; the greeting of peace
<i>ṣalât or ṣalâh</i>	صلاة	formal prayer: a combination of physical postures, recitation and supplication
<i>shaykh</i>	شيخ	teacher, mentor; scholar
<i>shirk</i>	الشرك	associating partners with Allah
<i>shu'oobiyyah</i>	شعوبية	Derived from the Arabic word <i>sha'b</i> meaning people, nation, or race: the Shu'oobiyyah movement advocated equality of Arabs and non-Arabs. The term is often used by Arabs in a more specific context that refers to the resentment of Arabs by Persians that occurred in the 9th and 10th centuries CE
<i>soorah or soorat</i>	سورة	chapter of the Qur'an
<i>Sunnah</i>	سنة	the practice and collected sayings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that together with the Qur'an forms the basis of Islamic law
<i>tâbi'oon</i> (<i>sg. tâbi'ee</i>)	التابعون	those who knew or met any of the Companions and transmitted hadiths from them
<i>tafseer</i>	تفسير	exegesis: commentary, or explanation of the meanings (<i>usu.</i> of Qur'anic verses)

<i>ṭāghoot</i>	طاغوت	idols; everything evil that is worshipped
<i>takbeer</i>	تكبير	the act of saying <i>Allāhu akbar</i>
<i>taqiyyah</i>	تقية	Dissimulation of or deception about one's religious beliefs, especially in times of danger or persecution
<i>taqwâ</i>	التقوى	fearful awareness of Allah; being mindful of Allah; pious dedication; being careful not to transgress the bounds set by Allah
<i>ṭawâf</i>	طواف	circumambulation of the Ka'bah
<i>tawḥeed</i>	التوحيد	the Oneness of Allah: that He alone deserves to be worshipped and that He has no partners
<i>thareed</i>	ثريد	a dish made from pieces of flat bread soaked in a meat stew
<i>Ummah</i>	أمة	community or nation: <i>usu.</i> used to refer to the entire global community of Muslims
<i>'umrah</i>	عمرة	a minor, non-obligatory pilgrimage to Makkah
<i>unseen</i>		a term used to denote phenomena or aspects that cannot be known using ordinary human faculties
<i>wali</i>	ولي	friend and helper (of Allah)
<i>wasimah</i>	وسمة	a plant or tree found in Yemen, the leaves of which are used for dyeing hair
<i>witr</i>	وتر	<i>lit.</i> an odd number: a single unit of supererogatory prayer, to be prayed any time after the evening (' <i>ishâ'</i>)

		prayer and before the call for the dawn prayer
<i>wuḍoo'</i>	وضوء	ablution required before prayer or touching the Qur'an
<i>zakât</i> (<i>zakâh</i> or <i>zakât</i>)	زكاة	obligatory charity: an 'alms tax' on wealth payable by Muslims and to be distributed to other Muslims who qualify as recipients

new workers could learn and gain experience from those who came before them. This principle was also spoken of by Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام): "The best people you can consult are people of reason and knowledge and people of experience and resolve."³⁴⁹ The best people you can consult are people of experience."³⁵⁰ He also said, with regard to keeping company with people of knowledge and experience: "The best people you can accompany are people of knowledge and forbearance."³⁵¹ These statements contain principles that are aimed at preparing the Muslim to be successful in his life, then building a society characterised by its continual advancement.³⁵²

2.4.11. A compassionate, paternalistic approach

The governor is a father figure before he is a man of authority; he treats his employees like he treats his own children. Just as the father takes on the responsibility of raising his children, so the governor takes on the responsibility of preparing senior employees of the state. This is the principle that was adopted by the Japanese, and it is the principle that we find confirmed in the words of Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali (عليه السلام) when he advised Mâlik ibn al-Ashtar to be kind to his employees and check on their affairs as parents check on their child.³⁵³ The leader must treat his employees as a father treats his son, taking care of him, overlooking his mistakes, and punishing him only for the purpose of discipline.

These are some of the administrative principles that were followed by Amir al-Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام).

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