

# History- Grade 10

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# ISLAMIC HISTORY - CLASS 10

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## ISLAMIC HISTORY SECTION

### Occurrences in the Lives of Masoomeen (A)

#### Terminology & Vocabulary

<b>Bay'at:</b>	Oath of Allegiance
<b>Civil War:</b>	War amidst citizens of the same Country; War for Power
<b>Defiance:</b>	Disobedience; Breaking the Rules
<b>Delirious:</b>	Confused; Unstable mind
<b>Eloquence:</b>	Speaking fluently; Expressive
<b>Excerpt:</b>	Extract; Quotation; Portion
<b>Intrusion:</b>	Interference; Interruption
<b>Kinship:</b>	Relationship; Affiliation
<b>Piety:</b>	God-Fearing; Devoutness
<b>Qualms:</b>	Doubts; Fears
<b>Rami'i Jamarat:</b>	Stoning the Pillars during Hajj
<b>Taqseer:</b>	Shaving of hair or cutting nails during Hajj
<b>Unrest:</b>	Conflict; Disorder

## **The Event of Mubahila – Part I**

In the early days of Islam, Najran was a large centre consisting of people who had converted from idol worshipping to Christianity. The Prophet (S) had sent letters to the heads of different countries inviting them to Islam.

He emphasized the belief in One God, which was also preached by the previous Prophets Ibrahim, Ishaq and Yaqub. The Prophet (S) included the following verse of the Holy Qur'an in the letter:

**Say, (O Muhammad):**

**O people of the Book (Bible), come to an agreement between us and you; that we shall worship none but Allah, and that we shall claim no partner to Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords besides Allah.'**

*Aali Imraan (3): 64*

When this message was delivered to Abu Haris, who was leader of the Church, he read it and appointed a committee to decide on the matter. One of them, who was an experienced and wise person, advised that a group representing the people of Najran should go to Madina to study the claim of Prophethood as made by the Prophet (S).

60 people from Najran, who were considered to be the most wise and knowledgeable, were elected. The group arrived at Madina and entered the mosque wearing silken clothes, golden rings and crosses around their necks. On seeing them dressed in this fashion, the Prophet (S) was disturbed. They realized that something was wrong but were unsure on what to do.

On the advice of Imam Ali (A) the delegation of Najran changed their style of dress to simple clothes and removed their ornaments. They returned to the Prophet (S) who then received them with a warm welcome.

Before they entered into a discussion, they requested for permission to say their prayers and this was granted. They were taken to some part of the mosque where they could pray with ease and comfort. Then the following conversation took place:

**The Prophet (S):**

I invite you towards the belief of Tawheed and the worship of One God and submission to His Will.

**Christian Fathers:**

If Islam means faith in the One God of the Universe, we already believe in Him and follow His Commands.

**The Prophet (S):**

Islam has its principals, which according to your actions, show that you have not accepted true Islam. How do you claim worship of One God when you worship the cross, and do not abstain from eating pork, and believe that God has a son?

**Christian Fathers:**

Certainly Jesus was the son of God because his mother Mary [Maryam] had given birth to him without marrying anyone in this world. Therefore obviously his father is the God of this Universe. We also believe in Jesus as God because he used to bring the dead back to life, cure the sick, create birds from clay and make them fly. All these point to the fact that he is God.

**The Prophet (S):**

No, he was the servant and creature of God, and placed in the womb of his mother Maryam. All his power and strength was granted to him by God.

At this juncture, the archangel Jibrail revealed the following verse of the Holy Qur'an from Allah (SWT):

**Surely the example of Isa to Allah is like that of Adam;  
He created him from dust, and then said to him, "Be!" and he was.**

*Aali Imraan (3): 59*

This meant that if Isa was regarded as the son of God because of the fact he was born without a father, then Adam deserved this title more, because he was born without a father or mother. The Christian Fathers could not reply to this argument but they continued to argue out of obstinacy.

Then the following verse of the Holy Qur'an was revealed:

**And whoever argues with you in this matter  
after what has come to you of knowledge,  
then say, 'Come, let us call our sons and your sons,  
and our women and your women,  
and ourselves and yourselves,  
then let us pray (to our Lord) and invoke the curse of Allah upon the liars.'**

*Aali Imraan (3): 61*

The Prophet (S) produced this verse to the Christians and declared the challenge of "Mubahila", which referred to the invocation of the curse of Allah (SWT) upon one another. The Christians consulted each other and announced their acceptance of the challenge. And with this, they returned to their camp.

## **The Event of Mubahila – Part II**

When the Christians of Najran returned to their tents after accepting the challenge of Mubahila, their leader advised them in these words:

**"Tomorrow if Muhammad comes out of his house with the members of his family, then you should never agree to the Mubahila. But if he brings his companions, then you need not fear at all and you should certainly go for the Mubahila."**

He knew that the Mubahila was a question of life and death for both sides. If the Prophet (S) had the slightest doubt in the truth of the message of Islam, he would not have given the challenge of Mubahila to the Christians.

Furthermore, if he had the slightest fear of the curse affecting him, and the close members of his family, he would not consider bringing his family to face the Christians.

It was agreed between the two parties that the contest would take place the next day in the open desert outside the city of Madina.

→ On the 24<sup>th</sup> of Dhul Hijjah 9 A.H. the Holy Prophet (S) came for the Mubahila.

He held Imam Hasan (A) by his hand and carried Imam Husayn (A) in his arms. Lady Fatimah (A) walked behind him, and behind her was Imam Ali (A).

In obedience to the verse of Mubahila sent by Allah (SWT), the Prophet (S) had brought Imam Hasan (A) and Imam Husayn (A) as his **sons**, Lady Fatima (A) as his **women** and Imam Ali (A) as his **self**.

The Christian Fathers, on seeing the beautiful and shining faces in front of them became spellbound. Their hearts trembled and they began to shake on seeing the power radiating from the Ahl ul Bayt (A).

Their could hold his patience no longer and he cried out,

**“By God, I am seeing such illuminating faces, that if they were to pray to God to move the mountain, God Almighty would move the mountain for them.**

**Oh you people of Najran, if you contest with Muhammad in this prayer of invoking curses upon the liars, then I warn you, that all of you will be destroyed and not a single soul will remain on this earth. I feel that it would be better to surrender to them and obey them.”**

When the Prophet (S) heard these words he remarked,

**“By God, had the Christians of Najran contested with us, they would have been transformed into monkeys and swines. Fire would have rained over them.”**

When the Christian Fathers backed away from Mubahila, the Prophet (S) gave them two choices: either to accept Islam or agree to certain terms and conditions.

The Christians would not agree to accept Islam and therefore a treaty was signed based on the following terms:

1. Every year, the Christians of Najran would give the Islamic Government 2000 pieces of clothing, the cost of which would be 40 Dirhams each.
2. They would also provide 30 horses, 30 camels, 30 battle armours and 30 spears, temporarily to the Muslim army, if the Prophet (S) needed these in case of any war.

The treaty was dictated by the Prophet (S), written by Imam Ali (A) and had the signatures of 4 companions of the Prophet (S) as witnesses.

One of the important conditions agreed during this treaty was that the people of Najran would not deal in usury, otherwise the Prophet (S) would not remain bound by the treaty made with them.

After the Christian returned home, a few respectable persons from Najran came to Madina and willingly accepted Islam and became Muslims.

The event of Mubahila is an extremely important part of history because it shows how close the Ahl ul Bayt were to the Prophet (S) and Allah (SWT). Imam Ali (A) used to be called the *Soul of the Prophet*, after this event, because the Prophet (S) took him to the field of Mubahila as his soul.

## **The Farewell Hajj**

Since the time when Prophet Ibrahim had built the Holy Kaaba, it had become a place of worship. Over the years, this worship had deteriorated into strange and undesirable practices.

People used to dance naked around the Holy Kaaba, and they had installed idols inside it. Even after the conquest of Makkah by the Muslims, when these idols were broken, the people did not know how to perform the rituals of Hajj.

For this reason, Allah (SWT) commanded the Prophet (S) to personally participate in the Hajj in 10 A.H., so that the people would have no doubt on how it should be performed.

He could also use the opportunity to practically demonstrate the obligatory actions (Wajibaat), and discard the old and undesirable practices. He could also instruct the people about the boundaries of Mina and Arafat and teach them about the times of departure from these places.

With these purposes in mind, the Prophet (S) made arrangements to undertake the journey. In the month of Dhul Qadah, he announced that he was going to perform the Hajj that year. This news caused great interest amongst the Muslims and thousands gathered outside Madina awaiting his departure.

The Prophet (S) proceeded toward Makkah on 28<sup>th</sup> of Dhul Qadah 10 A.H.

He took with him 60 animals for sacrifice. At the mosque of Shajarah, he put on his Ihram and recited the Talbiyah.

He continued this until he reached Makkah, where he proceeded straight to the Holy Mosque, Masjidul Haraam and entered it through the gate of Bani Shaybah.

During Tawaaf, he began by first standing across the Black Stone, and then went round the Holy Kaaba 7 times. Thereafter he stood behind Maqaam Ibrahim and offered 2 rakah prayers of Tawaaf. After that he proceeded for the Sa'ee.

The Prophet (S) then turned to the pilgrims and told those who had not brought animals for sacrifice to come out of the state of Ihram and perform Taqseer.

On the other hand, the Prophet (S) and some other companions who had brought animals for sacrifice remained in the condition of Ihram until they slaughtered the animals in Mina.

During this time Imam Ali (A) joined the Prophet (S) from Yemen. He entered Makkah with his soldiers and brought with him the pieces of cloth which were paid by the people of Najran. He had also brought some animals for sacrifice and thus remained in Ihram.



After the Umra was over the Prophet (S) awaited the time of Hajj. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of Dhul Hijjah Prophet (S) proceeded to Arafat via Mina and stayed at Mina till sunrise on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Dhul Hijjah.

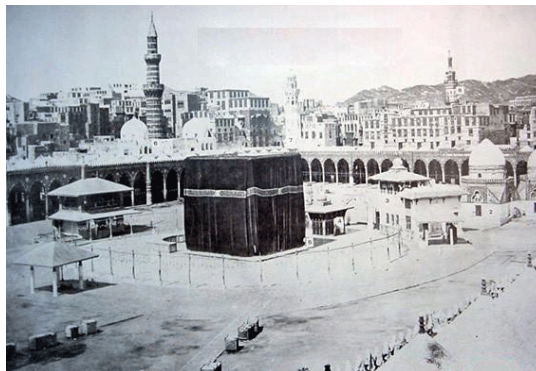
Then he mounted his camel and came to Arafat. While he was still mounted on his camel, he stopped at a place called Numrah and delivered his famous and historical speech to the thousands of people who had gathered.

The Prophet (S) addressed the people and provided a summary of his teachings to them. He repeated all the major and minor elements of Islamic principles so that there could be no doubt left in their minds. When he finished he offered his noon and with 100,000 men.

The Prophet (S) stayed in Arafat on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Dhul Hijjah until sunset, and before darkness spread, he left for Muzdalifah, and spent a part of the night there. He then spent the time between dawn and sunrise in Mash'ar.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of Dhul Hijjah he proceeded to Mina and performed the ceremonies of Rami'i Jamarat, sacrificing of animals, and Taqseer. Thereafter he proceeded to Makkah to perform the final Tawaaf and instructed the people about the concluding rituals of the Hajj.

→ This Hajj is known as **Hijjatul Wida** (*The Farewell Hajj*) because it was the last Hajj that the Prophet (S) performed in his life.



During this Hajj he practically demonstrated and explained every feature of the ceremony, so that there could be no confusion later.

The Prophet (S) was preparing the ground for his departure as he knew that very little time was left for him on earth and that soon he would be called by Allah (SWT) to eternal world.

## The Event of Ghadeer

When the ceremonies of the Hajj were over, the Prophet (S) departed from Makkah for Madina on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Dhul Hijjah. When he reached Rabigh, a place 3 miles from Ju'fah, the angel Jibrail revealed the following verse to him:

**O Messenger! Convey what has been revealed to you from your Lord,  
and if you do not,  
it would be as though you have not conveyed His message (at all).  
Allah will protect you from the people.**

*Al Maidah (5): 67*

In obedience to this very important command, the Prophet (S) stopped immediately. He gave instructions for an area to be cleared and a pulpit to be made from the saddles of camels. He asked Bilal to call back the people who had gone further and to attract the attention of those who were behind.

The people all gathered at the place which was known as Ghadeer Khumm (The Pond of Khumm). It was noon time and very hot. The Prophet (S) led the congregational prayers and then stood on the pulpit so that all the people could see him. He then gave a sermon, of which the following is an excerpt:

**All praise is due to Allah Who is the Creator and Lord of the entire Universe. It is the duty of everyone to offer Him thanks in comfort as well as in difficult times. I bear witness that I am His servant and creature while He is my Master and Lord. I convey to the people all that He reveals to me for their guidance.**

**I have been commanded by Allah to tell you that I will soon be taken away from your midst.**

**O People! I am leaving behind two valuable legacies, the Book of Allah and my progeny, the Ahl ul Bayt. Never shall they separate from one another until they reach me in Heaven at the fountain of Kawthar. As long as you will stay with both my legacies, you will never be led astray after me.**

**Do not lag too far behind them and do not walk ahead of them, for in either event you will go astray.**

Then the Prophet (S) bent down and lifted up Imam Ali (A) with his hands. Showing him to the crowds on all sides of the pulpit he proclaimed,

*Of whomsoever I am the Master (Mawla), Ali is also his Master (Mawla).*

The Prophet (S) then raised his hands towards the heavens and prayed,

*O Allah, love those who will love Ali,  
despise those who will not support him,  
and reject those who will reject him.*

Announcing this thrice, the Prophet (S) got down from the raised platform. Jibrail descended with the following verse:

**This day I have perfected your religion for you  
and completed My favours to you,  
and have chosen for you the religion of Islam.**

*Al Maidah (5): 3*

The Prophet (S) thanked Allah (SWT) for His Favour and then asked Imam Ali (A) to sit in a tent so that the people could shake hands with him and congratulate him.

Amongst the first people to congratulate Imam Ali (A) on his appointment were Abu Bakr and Umar. Strangely, they were also the first to deny his rights after the death of Prophet (S).

After the formalities regarding the successorship of Imam Ali (A) were completed, the people began to leave for their homes. At Ju'fah, those who had come from Syria and Egypt split from the main caravan, as did the people from Yemen and Hadhramut.

However, 10,000 Muslims accompanied the Prophet (S) to Madina, where they arrived just before the commencement of the year 11 A.H.

The detailed events of this day are recorded in most books of history, by both Shia and non-Shia historians. Although there can be no doubt that Imam Ali (A) was chosen to be the next leader of all the Muslims on this important day, many Muslims ignored this command after the death of the Prophet (S).

While Imam Ali (A) was busy arranging for the funeral of the Holy Prophet (S), they chose their own leaders who had neither right nor qualifications to lead them.

→ The day of Ghadeer is one of the most significant events in our history and throughout the world, the Shia joyfully celebrate the day of **18<sup>th</sup> Dhul Hijjah**, as Eid al Ghadeer.

## **The Last Hours of the Holy Prophet (S)**

The Prophet (S) returned from the Farewell Hajj at the end of Dhul Hijjah 10 A.H. After the month of Muharram, he fell ill at the beginning of Safar 11 A.H.

At that time, news was received that the Romans at the Northwest of Arabia were preparing to attack the Muslim capital of Madina. The Prophet (S) reacted to this dangerous situation by ordering the mobilization of a huge Muslim army under the command of Usama ibn Zayd.

He specifically ordered all the Muhajir who had migrated with him to Madina to participate in the battle, except for Imam Ali (A).

To arouse the morale of the Muslims the Prophet (S) tied the banner for Usama ibn Zayd with his own hands.

Usama ibn Zayd fixed his camp at Jurf, three miles outside Madina, so that the Muslim soldiers could gather there for the expedition. Usama was a young man of 20 years and he was the son of Zayd, a freed slave.

The people of Madina protested that they did not want to follow such a young commander. When the Prophet (S) heard of the reluctance of the Muslims, he warned them that whoever kept back from Usama ibn Zayd's army in spite of his clear orders, would earn the Curse of Allah (SWT).

Even then, the companions of the Prophet (S) did not proceed, using his illness as an excuse to remain in Madina. As time passed, the condition of the Prophet (S) grew worse and ultimately the expedition of Usama ibn Zayd never materialized.

The expedition to Syria, under Usama ibn Zayd, shows that the Prophet (S) had two things in mind.

- ❖ Firstly, he wanted to teach the people that age was not important in the distribution of responsibility and power.
- ❖ Secondly, the criteria for leadership were personality and ability.

These valuable lessons were ignored in the following months by Abu Bakr and Umar, who denied the rights of Imam Ali (A), on the grounds that he was too young to lead the people.

They also disobeyed to join Usama ibn Zayd's army since they wanted to make certain that they were in Madina at the time of death of the Holy Prophet (S) so that they could plot to steal the Caliphate from Imam Ali (A).

History shows that Abu Bakr, Umar and others managed to do exactly as they planned.

The Prophet (S) was well aware of the plan by the people to deny the right of Imam Ali (A). When his fever took a turn for the worse, he knew that he did not have much time left. He requested the companions around him to bring some paper and a pen so that he could dictate a will for the guidance of the people.

Umar, who at once realized that his plans would not succeed if the Prophet (S) left a written document, protested by saying that the Prophet (S) was delirious due to the fever and did not know what he was saying. This episode is referred to as the *Calamity of Thursday*.

He stated that the Holy Qur'an was enough for them and that there was no need for a will. Other companions disagreed and there was a loud commotion as they argued. As the voices grew louder, the Prophet (S) felt disturbed and indicated that all of them should leave.

It is important for us to realize that this action of Umar caused an eternal division between the Muslims, and he is responsible for the thousands of deaths that have resulted from conflicts between the Shia and the Sunni over the centuries.

As the life of the Prophet (S) slipped away, his dear family was around him all the time. Lady Fatima (A) could not bear the thought of the loss of her beloved father and tears fell continuously from her eyes. The Prophet (S) gently asked her not to weep and then whispered something in her ear that made her stop crying and smile.

When she was asked about this later, Lady Fatima (A) said that her father had told her not to worry because she would be the first after him to leave the world and join him.

The Prophet (S) bade farewell to his companions and kept on reminding them to follow the Holy Qur'an, and not to abandon the Ahl ul Bayt, who would guide them onto the right path of virtue and truth.

He then called his grandsons and hugged them warmly. With tears in his eyes, he kissed Imam Hasan (A) on the mouth and Imam Husayn (A) on the neck. When asked about this, he said that one of his grandsons would be poisoned while the other would be slain.

As the condition of the Prophet (S) worsened, the whole of Madina was immersed in grief; sorrowful at the thought of losing the beloved Prophet of Allah (SWT), who had taught them everything about the true path to salvation.

## **The Death and Burial of the Holy Prophet (S)**

During the last moments of his life, the Prophet (S) opened his eyes and asked for his brother to be called. Abu Bakr was brought, but when the Prophet (S) saw him he placed his head back on his pillow and repeated that his brother should be called for. Umar was called, but the same thing happened.

When Imam Ali (A) arrived, the Prophet (S) raised his cloak and took him under its cover. He then placed his head on the chest of Imam Ali (A) and talked to him for a long time.

During the last moments of his life a knock was heard on the door. Lady Fatima (A) told the person to come later, because her father was very ill. However, the caller was insistent and kept on knocking. Lady Fatima (A) told him to come later.

When the third knock came, tears welled up in Lady Fatima's (A) eyes, but her father said to her,

**O Fatima, let him in. For it is none other than the Angel of Death. It is only due to the respect of your presence that he is asking for permission to enter, otherwise he waits for nobody when he comes to take away the soul.**

→ Soon afterwards the signs of death began to appear on his face. The Prophet (S) passed away on 28<sup>th</sup> Safar 11 A.H. He was 63 years old.

As the sound of mourning rose from the house of the Prophet (S) the people outside knew that he had breathed his last. Soon afterwards the news of his death spread throughout Madina, plunging everyone into sorrow.

Imam Ali (A) bathed the sacred body of the Prophet (S) and shrouded him. The Prophet (S) had directed that his body should be bathed by one who was nearest to him, and such a person could be none else than Imam Ali (A).

The first person to offer the funeral prayers for the Prophet (S) was Imam Ali (A). Thereafter the companions came in groups and offered prayers, and this practice continued until the next day.

It was then decided to bury the Prophet (S) in the same house where he had passed away.

It was the most tragic event in Islam. The great personality, who had changed the future of humanity with his struggles and sacrifice, was no more.

The Prophet (S) had made a great contribution to the welfare of humanity at large.

- He had spread the message of Allah (SWT), practicing the religion himself and then asking others to follow him.
- He had established the rights of people when everywhere their rights were being violated.
- He had spread justice when tyranny was the norm.
- He introduced equality at a time when discrimination was so common.
- He gave freedom to the people when they were suppressed by injustice.

Indeed he had faithfully carried out the great mission entrusted to him by Allah. In appreciation of the character of the Prophet (S), the Holy Qur'an testifies:

**(O Our Prophet) Verily for you there is a great unending reward.  
And most certainly you have outstanding Akhlaq.**

*Al Qalam (68): 3 - 4*

May Allah (SWT) send His blessings on our beloved Holy Prophet (S) and his Holy Progeny (A).



## The Events of Saqifa

Saqifa is a small shelter – triangular in shape; a piece of cloth held up by three poles. People used them as meeting places at those times.

While Imam Ali (A) and few close companions of the Prophet (S) were busy with the funeral, the Muhajireen of Makkah and the Ansar of Madina gathered at a place called Saqifa bani Sa'da, and each group was putting forward its merits and claiming the Caliphate.

One can only wonder at their actions, because only two months earlier the Holy Prophet (S) had openly declared that Imam Ali (A) would be his successor. In their greed, these so-called Muslims even forgot that their beloved Holy Prophet (S) had not even been buried.

❖ The Muhajireen claimed that they had a greater right to the Caliphate because they:

- a) Had been Muslims for longer
- b) Had supported the Holy Prophet (S) in Makkah when he had very few friends.
- c) They also claimed to be his kin.
- d) Had migrated from their homes in Makkah in very difficult circumstances, leaving behind all their wealth and property.

And hence because of all their sacrifices they thought they deserved the power.

❖ The Ansar insisted that they had a greater right to the Caliphate because they:

- a) Had given the Holy Prophet (S) shelter in Madina when he could no longer live in Makkah.
- b) Had also protected him during his time of need.
- c) Had fought along his side in battles against powerful enemies.

The Ansar recalled that for 13 years the Prophet (S) had preached amongst the Makkans and only a handful had become Muslims. They argued that it was the Ansar who had given Islam strength and consolidation.

When Umar ibn Khattab and Abu Bakr ibn Abi Qahafa heard of this meeting, they were in the mosque. As soon as the word reached them, they quickly slipped out of the mosque and reached Saqifa.



## → How Abu Bakr Got The Power

By the time they reached Saqifa the arguments had almost been settled in favour of the Ansar, who had chosen Sa'd ibn Ubadah to lead the Muslims.

Umar urged Abu Bakr to make a speech and turn the situation. Abu Bakr rose and said that the Arabs would not accept any Caliph who was not from the tribe of Quraysh, which was the tribe of the Holy Prophet (S).

The Ansar were not fooled by the words of Abu Bakr and while there was some silence, Abu Bakr received help from an unexpected quarter.

The two main tribes of the Ansar were the Aws and Khazraj. The old enmity between them had been settled long ago by the Holy Prophet (S), but now it came out into the open.

Sa'd ibn Ubadah was the chief of the Khazraj, and the Aws were not happy with this.

Umar took advantage of this went forward and gave his allegiance to Abu Bakr. The people of Aws followed him because they preferred to have Abu Bakr then a Khalifah from their enemy. Suddenly, the tables had turned, and now the Muhajireen had the upper hand.

Despite protests from the tribe of Khazraj, and a few followers of Imam Ali (A), Abu Bakr was elected as the 1<sup>st</sup> Caliph. How strange was their behaviour! While Abu Bakr and Umar sold their religion for their greed, the people of Aws sold their religion for fear that the Khazraj might come to power. The rest of the people followed like sheep, too weak or uncaring to protest.

The few who did raise their voices to defend the unrecognized rights of Imam Ali (A) were ignored and outnumbered.

The members of Bani Hashim and some loyal Muslims were occupied with the passing away of the Holy Prophet (S) to give any thought to worldly affairs. By the time they learnt of the happenings at Saqifa, it was too late to do anything.

When Imam Ali (A) claimed his right to the Caliphate as per the orders of the Holy Prophet (S) at Ghadeer Khumm, his claim was rejected and he was forced to return to his house.

Later, Abu Bakr sent Umar to the house of Lady Fatimah (A). Umar had instructions to bring Imam Ali (A) to Abu Bakr to pay the oath of allegiance to him. When Imam Ali (A) refused to do this, Umar threatened to burn down the house.

Umar was bent on humiliating Imam Ali (A). So he insisted that Imam Ali (A) be led to the mosque tied with a rope so that he could not escape.

The Muslims now witnessed an amazing sight. The Lion of Allah, the man who was the champion of Badr, Khandaq and Khaybar, was being led by the cowardly Umar, who had run away from the battle of Uhud when the Holy Prophet (S) was injured.

It was a measure of the patience of Imam Ali (A) that he did not use force in the interests of Islam. He knew that nothing could be gained by fighting, and a civil war would destroy the Muslims.

When Imam Ali (A) was brought in front of Abu Bakr, Umar insisted that if he did not give the oath of allegiance, he should be killed. Imam Ali (A) replied:

**Will you kill a man who is a servant of the Lord,  
and a brother of the Apostle of the Lord?**

Umar then turned to Abu Bakr who had remained silent till then, asking him to decide Imam Ali's (A) fate. However, Abu Bakr said that as long as Lady Fatimah (A) was alive, he would not force her husband to give allegiance to him.

After this, Imam Ali (A) was released and he proceeded to the grave of the Holy Prophet (S) where he stood, reflecting on how the attitude of the people had changed now that his brother had left this world.

### **Lessons we Learn:**

- ◆ Where will we be during the reappearance of the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam (A)? Will we be among his sincere followers, or shall we, like those at Saqifa, be engrossed on our worldly affairs?
- ◆ The patience of our Imam during severe times of hardship must be inculcated in our day-to-day life as well.

### **Think**

**How would we react if any injustice was being carried out against us?**

**Would we be patient, for the sake of Islam?**

## **Abu Bakr ibn Abi Qahafa – The 1<sup>st</sup> Caliph**

During the time of his election, Abu Bakr was 60 years. He was the son of Abu Qahafa. His original names were **Abd al-Ka`ba** and **Atiq**. He was one of the earliest converts to Islam, and when he became a Muslim at the *age of 38*, he was renamed Abdallah.

On the day after the people had given him their allegiance at Saqifa, Abu Bakr came to the mosque of the Holy Prophet (S) and sat on the pulpit and gave his first address to the people, during which he said,

**I have been placed in this authority, although I do not like it. By Allah, I would have been pleased if any of you had taken it in my place.**

**If you expect me to act like the Apostle of God, then I can not do it. He was honoured and preserved from error by the Lord, while I am an ordinary man, no better than any of you.**

**When you see me steadfast then obey me, and when you see that I turn aside from the right path then set me aright.**

***I have a devil that seizes me sometimes, and when you see me enraged then avoid me because at that time I will not listen to anything.***

What an incredible speech by the new leader of the Muslims! At one go he admitted that he was not the right man for the task and warned that he would probably make mistakes. He knew fully well that his knowledge in religious matters was only average, so he covered any future problems by mentioning his *devil*.

You must remember though that the members of Bani Hashim and certain pious Muslims like Zubayr, Miqdaad, Salman al-Farsi, Abu Dhar, Ammar Yasir, and others, refused to acknowledge him, believing that the position belonged to Imam Ali (A).

Imam Ali (A) was naturally grieved at the course of events, but he patiently endured this injustice for the sake of Islam. He turned his attention to collecting the Holy Qur'an and compiling it in order of its revelation.

### **→ The Caliphate of Abu Bakr**

There are many incidents during the rule of Abu Bakr that are interesting to note. Some of these are:

### ***1. Taking a Personal Allowance***

Abu Bakr was a cloth trader. After his election, Umar convinced him to take a personal salary from Bait al-Maal (Public Treasury), and together they decided upon a yearly allowance of 6000 Dirhams for his personal household expenses.

### ***2. The Issue of Fadak***

One of the first things Abu Bakr did as a Caliph was to contest Lady Fatimah's (A) ownership to the land of Fadak. Even when she presented witnesses claiming that the land was a gift to her from the Holy Prophet (S), he refused to accept them.

Umar then took the title deed and tore it up in front of her. This was an action that she never forgave him for. According to her will, Abu Bakr and Umar were not allowed to attend her funeral.

### ***3. Rebellion of Tribes***

Since Abu Bakr was not recognized as a legitimate heir to the Holy Prophet (S), the various tribes around Arabia stopped paying their taxes to the Muslim State. Abu Bakr sent armies to these tribes to scare them, and force them into accepting him as their Caliph.

The man who commanded the largest army was Khalid ibn Walid. He was the same man who had caused the defeat of the Muslims at Uhad. Despite his later conversion to Islam, he was known to be a cruel soldier, and had no faith at all.

Khalid attacked innocent tribes and at one point killed a Chief even after his people had submitted. He then married the Chief's widow on the very same night. Even his own men were shocked with his behaviour and complained to Abu Bakr about this. The Khalifa, however, forgave him and continued to allow him to enjoy a high status.

The Caliphate of Abu Bakr is filled with incidents where he proved himself to be weak, a poor judge and inadequate in matters of religion.

### **→ The Death of Abu Bakr**

When Abu Bakr fell very sick and realized that his death was near, those around him insisted that he make a will. And so he did, instructing that Umar should succeed him, and no one else.

❖ He died in 13 A.H. after ruling for 2 years and 3 months.

## **Umar al-Khattab – The 2<sup>nd</sup> Caliph**

Umar al-Khattab was selected by Abu Bakr to succeed him and he took over the Caliphate on the day of the death of Abu Bakr. In his first address to the people he said,

**O God! Verily I am rough in temper, therefore soften me;  
And verily I am weak, therefore strengthen me;  
and verily I am miserly, therefore make me generous.**

With these poorly chosen words, Umar began his rule which was to last for 10 ½ years. Only a year after he came to power, Umar made new religious laws.

1. He introduced a special prayer called **Tarawih**, during the month of Ramadhan. This prayer, which requires recitations of large portions of the Holy Qur'an, is still recited by Sunni Muslims today.
2. He also stated that the minor Hajj (Umra Tamattu) and the temporary marriage (Mut'a) were Haraam from that time onwards.
3. He reduced the number of Takbir in Salat ul Mayyit from 5 to 4.

Umar had no authority to make these changes because the Holy Prophet (S) had said that the things which he had taught as Halaal and Haraam shall remain unchanged to the Day of Judgment.

### **→ The Wicked Governors of Umar**

During the reign of Umar, the boundaries of the Muslim territories were expanded greatly and many foreign lands were conquered. These included Syria, Jordan, Jerusalem, Egypt and Persia.

Umar placed ill-chosen governors in many of these new lands. In particular, he was responsible for the growth of power of Muawiya ibn Abu Sufyan in Syria.

By placing Muawiya in power, Umar was the originator of the massacre in Karbala which took place at the orders of Yazid, the son of Muawiya ibn Abu Sufyan.

### **→ Umar's Embarrassing Behaviour**

Umar's knowledge of the Holy Qur'an was weak. He used to make rounds in the streets of Madina at night with a whip in his hand.

Once he passed a house where he heard someone singing. He jumped over the back wall and found a man and woman drinking wine.

He shouted in anger,

**O enemies of God, did you think your sin would pass unnoticed?**

The man replied,

**O Umar, if I am guilty of *one* sin, then you are guilty of *three*!**

Umar could not believe his ears and challenged the man to prove his words. The man quoted these verses of the Holy Qur'an:

1. **O you who believe, avoid much suspicion and *do not spy*. [49:12]**
2. **It is not good that you should enter your houses from behind. The righteous one is he who guards himself against evil and *enters the houses by the doors*. [2:189]**
3. **O you who believe, do not enter houses other than your own houses until you have *asked for permission and greeted those within*. [24:27]**

On hearing this Umar was ashamed of his ignorance of the Holy Qur'an and he asked for forgiveness for the intrusion. .

Many such incidents occurred and Umar was embarrassed time and time again by his poor command of the verses of the Holy Qur'an. It is a wonder that he still thought himself fit to rule the Muslims!

### → Imam Ali (A) Saves Umar

Numerous incidents have been noted in history where Umar made hasty and incorrect decisions which were changed by the presence and intervention of Imam Ali (A).

Once Umar ordered that a mad woman who had been found guilty of adultery should be whipped as per the prescribed punishment. As the poor woman was being dragged along on the way to be flogged, Imam Ali (A) passed by and asked what was going on. When he was informed of the situation he said,

**Do you not know that the Holy Prophet (S) has said that any punishment should be withheld from a mad person until they recover, since they are not in control of their actions?**

Umar then ordered the woman to be released. Such incidents happened so many times that Umar used to say,

**If it was not for Ali, Umar would have been destroyed.**

### → The Death of Umar

Umar had a rule that non-Arabs were not allowed to enter Madina.

However, he relaxed the rule for one man only, at the request of his friend Mughira ibn Sho'iba, the Governor of Kufa.

The man in question was called Abu Lulu. He was not an Arab, but he was a good carpenter, blacksmith and engraver.

Abu Lulu was heavily taxed for the privilege of residing in Madina and asked Umar to increase his allowance but Umar rudely refused.

Eventually, it was Abu Lulu who killed Umar, the man who was responsible for hurting the feelings of Lady Fatima (A), especially when he tore her deed of ownership of Fadak.

## Uthman ibn Affan – The 3<sup>rd</sup> Caliph

Just before he died, Umar nominated 6 companions of the Holy Prophet (S), to choose from amongst themselves his successor. These 6 were referred to as the Consultative Council (*Shura*).

The six were:

1. Abdur Rahman ibn Awf
2. Ali ibn Abu Talib (A)
3. Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqaas
4. Talha ibn Ubaidullah
5. Uthman ibn Affan
6. Zubayr ibn Awam

This was a very clever move by Umar because he had chosen people who would not readily favour Imam Ali (A). Furthermore, he had instructed that if any of these 6 challenged the appointment of the person who was finally declared Caliph, he should be killed.

After his death the nominees met but could not reach any conclusion. At last, Abdur Rahman said that he would give up his claim for the Caliphate if they allowed him to elect the Caliph.

Uthman agreed to this but Imam Ali (A) said that he would only agree if Abdur Rahman promised not to give consideration to family but judge only on merit. He said this because Uthman was the brother-in-law of Abdur Rahman and the two were friends. Abdur Rahman accepted the condition and then talked to each of the candidates privately.

The next day the mosque was crowded because everyone wanted to know who their new Caliph would be. Abdur Rahman had discussed the situation with Amr al-Aas, who was a shrewd politician with no religious morals.

Acting on Amr's advice, Abdur Rahman asked Imam Ali (A) to become Caliph as long as he would agree to rule according to:

- The Holy Qur'an
- The teachings of the Holy Prophet (S), and
- The practices of Abu Bakr and Umar.

As expected, Imam Ali (A) agreed to the first two conditions but flatly refused to follow the practices of Abu Bakr and Umar. When Uthman was given the same conditions, he agreed at once and was thus declared the 3<sup>rd</sup> Caliph.



## → The Caliphate of Uthman

The choice of Uthman was a terrible one, and in later years this man almost destroyed the faith and dignity of the Muslims. From the first day of his rule, Uthman systematically began replacing the governors of the major provinces with his own relatives from the Bani Umayyah.

In Kufa he appointed his drunkard brother Waleed to replace Sa'd ibn Waqqaas.

In Egypt he replaced Amr al-Aas with his foster brother Abdallah ibn Abi Sarh, who has been cursed in the Holy Qur'an [6:93] for inventing lies and saying that he had received revelations from Allah (SWT).

Uthman brought back to Madina Hakam ibn Aas, who had been exiled for life by the Holy Prophet (S). Hakam was Uthman's uncle, and Uthman made Hakam's evil son Marwan his Secretary, and gave him huge gifts from the property of the Muslims. He also gave Marwan the property of Fadak and made him his son-in-law.

## → Mistreatment of Prominent Companions (*Ashab*)

As Uthman began to squander public money on his relatives openly, resentment against him grew from all quarters. Ammar Yasir, an aged and respected companion of the Holy Prophet (S) challenged Uthman's conduct and was severely beaten for his words. This action against a man like Ammar outraged the people.

In Syria, another great companion of the Holy Prophet (S), Abu Dhar Ghaffari, was warning the governor Muawiya and the people against their evil ways. Muawiya sent Abu Dhar to Madina where Uthman insulted and humiliated him. He then cruelly banished the aged companion to Rabzha, in the desert of Najd, where he died two years later.

## → The People Rise Against Uthman

Uthman's high-handed behaviour, his cruelty, and excesses of his worthless governors caused unrest throughout the empire. Riots broke out everywhere. In Madina itself there were calls to remove Uthman.

The Caliph was beset from all sides and turned to Imam Ali (A) to appeal on his behalf. Imam Ali (A) agreed, provided Uthman publicly apologized for his mistakes.

In despair, Uthman mounted the pulpit and with a voice broken by sobs and tears he begged the forgiveness of Allah (SWT) and assured the public that he was

repentant. Because of his sorry state and the intervention of Imam Ali (A) the people were calmed down.

### → **Uthman Breaks his Promise**

The Egyptians insisted that their cruel governor Abdallah ibn Sarh be replaced by Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr. He was a pious man who had been raised by Imam Ali (A).

Uthman agreed to this demand, but secretly sent a letter to his brother in Egypt warning him of the situation and advised him to kill Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr on his arrival.

Unfortunately for Uthman, this messenger was intercepted on the way to Egypt by Muhammad himself. The Egyptians were outraged by the Caliph's treachery and returned to Madina in a furious mood.

The news of his actions spread and finally Uthman had to take refuge in his palace which was then surrounded by people calling out for his blood.

### → **The Death of Uthman**

After a siege of 40 days, the palace was broken into and Uthman was killed by repeated stab wounds.

❖ His body was buried in the graveyard of the Jews. He was 82 years old and had ruled for 11 years.

### Activity

- ❖ **Compare the methods through which each of the 3 so-called caliphs came into power. Reflect upon how these methods differ.**
- ❖ **How these methods applicable in today's world when choosing a leader?**
- ❖ **How can we use these discrepancies to attest that the right of Caliphate belonged to Imam Ali (A), the divinely appointed successor of the Holy Prophet (S)?**

## **The Caliphate of Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (A)**

After the murder of Uthman, there was great unrest in the city of Madina due to the absence of any government. The main citizens of the city called for the immediate election of a Caliph to end the danger of a civil war.

Two men had ambitions to become Caliph. They were Talha and Zubayr, both brothers-in-law of Ayesha, the widow of the Holy Prophet (S). However, to the great disadvantage of these two candidates, she was in Makkah for pilgrimage at the time.

The people of Madina, however, wanted Imam Ali (A) to be their Caliph. He was a man admired by his friends and enemies alike for his courage, piety, eloquence, wisdom and kinship to the Holy Prophet (S). After having been ruled by weak men, the people now turned to the man who had been nominated to lead them in the first place.

However, Imam Ali (A) refused their offer and said that he would rather remain as an advisor to any Caliph they elected. The people of Madina insisted that they would follow none but him and at last he reluctantly agreed. Imam Ali (A) asked that his nomination be made in public so that if anyone had anything to say, they would have an opportunity to do so.

Next day in the mosque of Madina, most of the Muslims were present to pay allegiance to Imam Ali (A), including Talha and Zubayr. Imam Ali (A) thus took over as the 4<sup>th</sup> Caliph of the Muslims.

### **→ The Beginning of Trouble**

After a few days, Talha and Zubayr with a few other people came to Imam Ali (A) asking that the murder of Uthman be avenged. Imam Ali (A) knew fully well that some of these same people had been responsible for the riots that led to Uthman's death, and now they just wanted to stir up trouble.

However, he told them that he had called Uthman's wife Naila and his Secretary Marwan and asked them if they could identify the culprits, since they had been with Uthman at the time of his death.

Marwan never showed up and Naila said that Uthman was killed by two men who she did not recognize. Under the circumstances Imam Ali (A) could do nothing more unless further evidence came to light.

Meanwhile, the members of Bani Umayyah, most of whom had not paid allegiance to Imam Ali (A), began to leave Madina. Imam Ali (A) knew that they were planning some mischief and that he would have to deal with them soon.

The first matter that Imam Ali (A) attended to was replacing the worthless governors of Uthman. Most of the governors took over their new posts but the newly-appointed governor for Kufa was stopped from entering that city, while the new-appointed governor for Syria was also stopped by the army of Muawiya, and both had to return to Madina.

### → **Muawiya Create Problems**

The Bani Umayyah, with the help of their leader Muawiya, began to stir up trouble for Imam Ali (A) and his Government. In the mosque of Damascus, Muawiya displayed the blood-stained shirt of Uthman and the chopped-off fingers of his wife Naila, to incite the anger of the people.

They swore that they would take revenge for Uthman's death and Muawiya began to blame Imam Ali (A) for doing nothing to bring the murderers to justice.

When his governors returned from Kufa and Syria, Imam Ali (A) wrote letters to Abu Musa Ash'ari in Kufa, and Muawiya in Syria, demanding that they give way to the new governors.

Abu Musa wrote back from Kufa, stating that the Kufans were at the service of the new Caliph, but Muawiya did not send a reply for 3 months.

Finally, his messenger arrived with a letter. When Imam Ali (A) opened the letter it contained no words at all and was a gesture of outright defiance.

Furthermore, the messenger informed Imam Ali (A) that Muawiya had gathered 60,000 men ready to avenge the murder of Uthman on Imam Ali (A). This news astonished Imam Ali (A) and he said,

**I call God to witness that I am not guilty, and that it is a false charge.**

The cunning Muawiya had managed to rouse the hatred of the people of Syria against Imam Ali (A) by using Uthman's murder as an excuse.

However, Imam Ali (A) declared that only a battle would decide matters between Muawiya and himself and he gave orders for an army to be gathered to march to Syria.

Meanwhile, Talha and Zubayr had plans of their own and proceeded to Makkah on the excuse of performing Umra. On the way they joined Ayesha, who was also using the unavenged death of Uthman, to create trouble for Imam Ali (A), whom she had always hated.

❖ Thus, Imam Ali (A) was faced with a double threat to the security of his Government - from Ayesha in Makkah, and from Muawiya in Syria.

## **The Battle of Jamal**

Ayesha, the widow of the Holy Prophet (S), was in Makkah for pilgrimage when Uthman was killed. She had always expected either Talha or Zubayr to succeed him and when she heard of Imam Ali's (A) appointment as Caliph, she was very upset.

Ayesha was a jealous and cunning woman, one who had caused the Holy Prophet (S) a lot of annoyance. Now she declared herself as the avenger of the murder of Uthman, and prepared to wage war against Imam Ali (A), whom she had always hated.

She managed to recruit the support of the powerful clan of Bani Umayyah, to whom Uthman had belonged. The ex-governors of Uthman, who had been replaced by Imam Ali (A), also joined her, and the ex-governor of Yemen provided her with the means of financing her war by giving her the treasure he had stolen from Yemen when he was overthrown.

Talha and Zubayr also joined her, in spite of their oath of allegiance to Imam Ali (A).

A large number of aimless drifters were also paid to enlist in the army. The preparations of war having been completed, Ayesha's army proceeded to Basra.

Before leaving, she had asked Umm Salma, a faithful widow of the Holy Prophet (S), to accompany her.

### **→ Warning from Umm Salma**

Umm Salma had indignantly refused, reminding Ayesha that the Holy Prophet (S) had said that Imam Ali (A) was his successor and whoever disobeyed him, disobeyed the Holy Prophet (S) himself.

She also reminded her of the time when he had addressed all his wives saying that the dogs of Hawab would bark at one of his wives, who would be part of a rebellious mob.

She then warned Ayesha not to be fooled by the words of Talha and Zubayr who would only entangle her in wrong deeds. This advice had a sobering effect on Ayesha, who almost gave up her plan. However, her adopted son, Abdallah ibn Zubayr, convinced her to go ahead.

### → The Dogs of Hawab

Ayesha mounted on the camel, and marched from Makkah with 1000 men. On her right was Talha and on her left, Zubayr. On their way, many more joined them, swelling their numbers to 30,000.

On the way to Basra, the rebel army received news that Imam Ali (A) had come out of Madina in their pursuit. They decided to leave the main road and proceed to Basra through a different route. When they passed through the valley of Hawab the dogs of the village surrounded Ayesha's camel, barking loudly.

She was immediately worried and asked for the name of the place. When she was told it was Hawab, she was shocked and she despairingly cried,

**Alas! Alas! I am the wretched woman of Hawab.  
The Prophet of Allah had already warned me against this.**

She got off her camel and refused to go any further. Talha and Zubayr attempted to convince her that the place was not Hawab and even brought 50 witnesses to testify to this lie, but in vain.

Finally, they raised a false cry that Imam Ali (A) was approaching, and Ayesha, struck with terror, quickly remounted and the march was resumed.

### → Basra is Taken

The army reached Basra and camped in the suburbs. Ayesha, Talha and Zubayr began talks with the leading citizens of Basra, trying to get their support for their cause. In this mission, they failed, and were subjected to ridicule.

Finally, some of them entered the city and during the congregational prayers, they treacherously captured Imam Ali's (A) Governor, Uthman ibn Huneif, after killing 40 of his guards.

Fighting broke out in the city and many of Imam Ali's (A) supporters were killed before Ayesha gained control of Basra.

The Governor, Uthman ibn Huneif, suffered the indignity and torture of having his eyebrows, moustache and beard plucked out, hair by hair, before being turned out of the city.

### → Imam Ali (A) Sets Out

Meanwhile, Imam Ali (A) received information about Ayesha's plans from Umm Salma, and news of the disturbances in Makkah and Basra also came through.

Imam Ali (A) made immediate plans to march towards Basra but could only raise 900 men with difficulty. This was because the people were reluctant to fight Ayesha, who was considered to be the *Mother of the Faithful* by virtue of being the widow of the Holy Prophet (S).

Also, Muawiya had succeeded in making people think that Imam Ali (A) was somehow involved in the murder of Uthman.

In Kufa, Imam Hasan (A) raised 9000 men, and other units arrived as well, all joining Imam Ali (A) at his camp at Dhi Q'ar. Meanwhile, Uthman ibn Huneif arrived with fresh news from Basra. Imam Ali (A) smiled and said to him that he had left them as an old man but had returned as a beardless youth.

Imam Ali (A) wrote letters to Ayesha, Talha and Zubayr, warning them against the unwise steps they had taken, but his words were ignored. Finally he marched to Basra with 20,000 men.

Ayesha's forces numbered 30,000 but they were mostly raw recruits, while Imam Ali's army was full of battle veterans.

In Basra, the sight of Imam Ali's (A) men in battle formation filled Ayesha and her comrades with terror. Imam Ali (A) talked at length with Talha and Zubayr, negotiating for peace. He reminded them of the words of the Holy Prophet (S) regarding his authority, which they both admitted they had heard.

Zubayr was ashamed of his deeds and left the scene but Talha remained doubtful. Ayesha was furious at the conduct of the two and ordered a raid during night-time to end the chance of peace.

The next morning Ayesha mounted her camel, al-Askar, and urged her troops to prepare for battle.

❖ Thus began the unfortunate Battle of Jamal (Camel), where Muslims fought each other for the first time.

### → The Victory of Imam

Although outnumbered, Imam Ali (A) and his soldiers were too skilled to be defeated. Soon victory began to incline towards Imam Ali (A). Talha was wounded and later died.

Ayesha's camel was brought down and Imam Ali (A) ordered his adopted son Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr to take care of Ayesha, who was his half-sister.

After that, the battle was soon over, and Imam Ali (A) declared a general amnesty for all the rebels.

Ayesha's plans had come to nothing and 10,000 men lay dead as a result of her jealousy.

In this battle Imam Ali (A) restrained his men from taking any war booty and all property found on the battle ground was gathered in the mosque of Basra, from where the owners could claim their possessions.



## **The Battle of Siffin**

After the battle of Jamal was over, Imam Ali (A) returned from Basra to Kufa in Rajab of 36 A.H.

He decided to set up the capital of his government in Kufa because it was more centrally placed in the Muslim Empire, and he could halt Muawiya's progress into Iraq.

Before marching towards Muawiya, Imam Ali (A) tried to settle matters peacefully by sending Jarir, the governor of Hamdan, to Syria as an envoy. However, Jarir became so engrossed in the entertainment that Muawiya put his way, that he wasted his time in Syria.

He finally returned 3 months later with the useless message that peace could only be negotiated if the murderers of Uthman were brought to justice.

Imam Ali (A) marched without delay to Riqqa at the banks of the Euphrates. After crossing the river by constructing a bridge, they came across the Syrian outposts at Sur al-Rum.

There were a few skirmishes between the armies, but the Syrians gave way, and in the month of Dhul Hijjah 36 A.H. the army of Imam Ali (A) came into sight of Muawiya's main forces, which had already camped at Siffin.

### **→ Arrival at Siffin and Control of Water**

At Siffin, Muawiya had stationed his general, Abul Awr, with 10,000 men on the river to stop the access to water for Imam Ali's (A) army.

Imam Ali (A) sent a message to Muawiya that this action was not necessary because, after all, the people whom he was refusing water were also Muslims. He further assured Muawiya that if the situation had been reversed, the river would have been open to both armies.

However, Muawiya sent back a message that the murderers of Uthman had not allowed him any water when they had laid siege to his palace, and Muawiya was avenging that action.

Imam Ali (A) knew that this situation would be intolerable and he launched an attack under Malike Ashtar. The brave commander secured the river and Abul Awr was dislodged from the riverbanks.

Having control of the river, Imam Ali (A) kept to his word, and allowed unlimited access to Muawiya's side.

Imam Ali (A) divided his army of 90,000 men into 7 units, each one commanded by brave warriors. Muawiya similarly divided his army of 120,000 men into 7 columns. Everyday one column from each army would engage one another in combat.

### → The Battle

The battles were mostly restricted to single combats or small groups fighting because Imam Ali (A) was trying to avoid the serious loss of Muslim lives that would have resulted from a full scale battle.

The month of Dhul Hijjah ended in this manner and the month of Muharram, in which fighting is forbidden, set in. During this month, Imam Ali (A) tried hard to resolve the crisis by negotiation, but to no avail.

He pointed out that he was ready to punish the murderers of Uthman if Muawiya would point them out. However, Muawiya did not wish the matter to end so easily, because it was the issue of Uthman's unavenged death that had enabled him to gather such a large army.

In the month of Safar fighting was resumed. For a week, fierce battles raged all day. Everyday the conflict got more severe and bitter. In the second week Imam Ali (A) came to the battlefield for the first time. After a series of single combats, in which he overcame every opponent with his awesome skill, no body would come to fight him.

He was forced to disguise himself to get anybody to challenge him. On one such occasion, a warrior from Muawiya's side attacked Imam Ali (A). The man was struck with a single sweep of Dhul Fiqar with such force that the upper half of his body was severed from the lower half.

Those who watched thought that the blow had missed, and it was only when the horse moved and the two halves fell to the ground, that people realized what had happened.

Day after day the loss of lives increased, especially in the ranks of Muawiya. However, Imam Ali (A) also lost several distinguished Companions of the Holy Prophet (S) from his side.

Amongst them were Hashim ibn Utba and Ammar Yasir. Ammar, who was 93 years old, had been informed by the Holy Prophet (S) that he would die fighting rebels and enemies of Islam.

This was well known by all, and when he died there was some commotion in Muawiya's army.

He managed to quieten them down by saying that, since Ammar had been brought to fight by Imam Ali (A), it was he who was the cause of his death. He said that Imam Ali (A) was the rebel that the Prophet (S) talked about, and not Muawiya.

This extremely ridiculous argument was accepted by his men and war continued until the 13<sup>th</sup> night.

### → The Final Trick

The Commander-in-Chief of Imam Ali's (A) army, Malike Ashtar, attacked the enemy ferociously. His shout of *Allahu Akbar*, every time he killed a man, was heard no less than 400 times.

The hero of the battle began to bring on victory when Amr al-Aas on Muawiya's side said,

*Call the enemy to the Word of God.*

Muawiya eagerly accepted these words and his men raised 500 copies of the Holy Qur'an on their spears, saying that the Holy Book would decide their differences.

This trick had a strange effect on some people in the army of Imam Ali (A), who dropped their weapons and agreed that the Holy Qur'an should decide the matter.

Imam Ali (A) stepped into the battlefield urging his men to continue fighting and ignore the tricks of Muawiya, but they disobeyed. The war thus came to an unsatisfactory end, and it was decided that one representative from each side should meet to reach a final decision.

### → The Representatives and their Decision

Imam Ali (A) wanted Abdullah ibn Abbas or Malike Ashtar to represent him, but his men insisted that Abu Musa Ash'ari be chosen instead.

Muawiya appointed Amr al-Aas to represent him. Abu Musa had neither wit nor tact, and was no match for the cunning Amr al-Aas.

In the meeting that took place some months later, Abu Musa was duped by Amr into giving up the rights of Imam Ali (A).

Muawiya thus managed to escape certain defeat at Siffin. The damage done at the battle was great. Muawiya lost 45,000 men while 25,000 men were killed from the army of Imam Ali (A).

## The Battle of Nahrawan

After the unsatisfactory conclusion to the Battle of Siffin, Imam Ali (A) returned with his army back to Kufa on 13<sup>th</sup> Safar 37 A.H.

During the march, a group of 12,000 men kept themselves at a distance from the main part of the army.

The group was furious at the way things had ended at Siffin. These were the **Khawarij** (Pl. of *Kharjite*, which means one who rebels against religion). They were the same people who had put down their weapons on the battlefield.

Now they said that Imam Ali (A) had betrayed Islam by agreeing to the truce and should have referred judgment to the Holy Qur'an alone or continued to fight.

They demanded that Imam Ali (A) repent for this great sin.

When the army neared Kufa, the Khawarij camped at a village named Harura. They started saying that all Muslims were equal and nobody could rule over the other. In this way, they denounced both Imam Ali (A) and Muawiya and said that their belief was in

### **La Hukma illa Lillah**

*No Rulership except by Allah alone*

Imam Ali (A) went to their camp and tried to explain to them that they were misunderstanding the words **La Hukma illa Lillah**, and that in accepting the arbitration (peace talks) at Siffin, he had not gone against the teachings of the Holy Qur'an.

He pointed out that they *themselves* were at fault, because they should never have laid down their arms and forced him to call back Malike Ashtar, who was at the point of securing victory.

He reminded them that they had pressed for the arbitration and had forced him to appoint Abu Musa Ash'ari as their representative. He told them that he found their present behaviour very strange, considering their involvement in Siffin.

To this they admitted that they had sinned but now they had repented for it, and that he should do the same.

Imam Ali (A) replied that he was a true believer and did not have to repent because he had not committed any sin.

### → After the Peace Talks

The Khawarij refused to accept the words of Imam Ali (A) and awaited the decision of Amr al-Aas and Abu Musa Ash'ari.

When they learnt of the decision, they decided to revolt, and they set up their headquarters at Nahrawan, a few miles from Baghdad. Some people came from Basra to join the rebels.

Meanwhile, Imam Ali (A) received news that trouble was brewing in Nahrawan. He was involved in raising another army to march against Muawiya and wrote to the Khawarij that it was high time they joined his army.

However, the Khawarij insultingly wrote back that they would think about it when he repented for his mistake at Siffin.

Imam Ali (A) had already started towards Muawiya when he received the news that the Khawarij had raided the town of Mada'in but had been repelled back to their camp. They were now committing horrible crimes around Nahrawan and killing all those who did not accept their viewpoint.

There was a danger that the Khawarij might attack Kufa while Imam Ali (A) and his men were marching towards Muawiya, so Imam Ali (A) decided to stop them. He changed his course eastward, crossed the river Tigris and approached Nahrawan.

Imam Ali (A) sent a messenger to the Khawarij demanding that those people who had murdered innocent Muslims around their camp should be surrendered. The Khawarij replied that they were all equally responsible for killing these sinners.

### → Imam Faces the Kharijite Army

There was some reluctance in the army of Imam Ali (A) to fight the Khawarij, because they had been their companions against Muawiya at Siffin.

Imam Ali (A) himself did not desire the bloodshed of these misguided fanatics, so he placed his battle standard outside their camp and announced that all those who gathered around it or returned to their homes would be safe.

This announcement had the desired effect and most of the Khawarij began to leave.

In the end, only a core of 1800 rebels remained under the command of Abdallah ibn Wahab. These Khawarij swore that they would fight Imam Ali (A) at any cost.

### → The Battle

The Khawarij attacked Imam Ali's (A) army with desperate courage. However, they did not stand a chance against the superior army that faced them and they were all killed except 9 men.

These 9 managed to flee to Basra and elsewhere, where they spread the fire of their hatred and recruited more followers.

Three years later, in 40 A.H., it was the Khawarij who sent out three assassins to kill Imam Ali (A), Muawiya and Amr al-Aas.

The latter two survived, but Imam Ali (A) was martyred following Ibn Muljim's cowardly attack in the mosque of Kufa.

### → The Army Disappoint Imam Ali (A)

Having disposed of the Khawarij at Nahrawan, Imam Ali (A) resumed his march to Syria.

However, the Commanders of his armies urged him to stop at Kufa to let the men rest before the long journey and to enable the army to repair their weapons and armours.

Imam Ali (A) agreed to this request and camped at Nukhayla outside Kufa. The soldiers were allowed to leave the camp for a day.

On the next day, hardly any men returned, and after a lengthy wait, Imam Ali (A) entered Kufa and gave a stern sermon to the people.

However, nobody came forward and finally, Imam Ali (A) turned away from them in disappointment.

The Syrian expedition was abandoned, never to be resumed.

### Activity

◆ What lessons do we derive from these battles?

◆ In what ways can these battles be related to:

a) The Event of Karbala (61 A.H.)

b) The 21<sup>st</sup> Century