

IMAM HASAN AND CALIPHATE

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Editor's Introduction

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The life of Imam Hasan (as) was both eventful and full of lessons, and yet the significance of his role seems to have been ignored, forgotten, or eclipsed by the extent of focus on Imam Hussain (as). Why has history blackened the radiant face of that Imam in whose adoration forty thousand people unanimously raised their hands to pledge allegiance, and the outside of whose house was continually overflowing with people?

A common misconception is that he was just a peace-maker, yet nothing could be further from the truth. For Imam Hasan (as) was overwhelmingly and popularly appointed as Caliph due to his charisma, knowledge and eminent piety. Then he led the Islamic Caliphate for six months with authority and control, and he prepared his army, leading it to war against Muawiya and exhorting it to be brave and unflinching. Only when his men became weak at the knees and fell prey to bribery, did he have to resort to peace in order to achieve his objectives. And by that means, he forever made absolutely clear the difference between Caliphate and Monarchy, thus putting an end to Muawiya's schemes.

So what we see in our history and communities is that there is an imbalance of treatment between Imam Hasan (as) and Imam Hussain (as), whereas the Prophet (saw) declared them both as the leaders of the youth of Paradise. This book very nicely redresses that balance by displaying the brilliance of Imam Hasan's leadership, the farsightedness of his thinking, and his iron-like resolve in serving Allah (swt) – all characteristics so reminiscent of his father before him.

Moreover, the author demonstrates, with exacting scholarship – using authentic sources and the motherbooks of history, how there would have been no Karbala without the groundwork laid by Imam Hasan (as).

The book also has great value as a manual of instruction on how one should obey the Imam of one's time, in war and in peace – thus making it an excellent way of preparing for the emergence of the Twelfth Imam (atf).

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'Islah Ijtimai Dar Islam' (Social Reforms in Islamic Society),

'Seerat-e-Ali' (Translation to Urdu of the biography of Imam Ali (as)).

'Ghina' (Translation into Persian of a treatise on music).

He is also a founding member of the Islami Afkar Foundation in Pakistan and a senior teacher in the Al-Asr organization of London.

I hope that this book is of benefit to both scholars, who will appreciate the thoroughness of its investigations, and to lay people, who will appreciate the excitement of a narrative depicting the rise and fall of rulers and the battles fought between them. In particular, students of Islamic history from 40AH – 50AH, and those studying the causes of the shift from Islamic Government (Caliphate) to materialistic Monarchy, will find this work valuable.

Zahir Davdani (MEng) Qom - 30/9/05.

Imam Hassan (AS) and Allegiance

Although there is difference of opinion among the Muslims about the vicegerency of the Holy Prophet (saww), or in other words, about who should have been the caliph of Muslims after the death of the Holy Prophet (saww), Shi'a believe that the caliph should have been appointed by the Holy Prophet (saww) as had always been the practice in accordance with the commands of Almighty God, while Ahle Sunnat believe that the Holy Prophet (saww) had left the method of selection of the caliph to the discretion of the people. According to them, if people pay allegiance to a person, then he is a caliph, otherwise not.

If for a moment this criterion is accepted, then there will be left no choice but to accept that only Hazrat Ali (as) and the first caliph are caliphs, as the common Muslims had only paid allegiance to these two persons. As against this, the second caliph was nominated while the third caliph was selected through a committee of six persons. Therefore, it becomes clear that the allegiance by the people alone is not enough for a person to be declared Imam or caliph. On the other hand, it is known that there has always been a difference of opinion among the Muslims about the caliphate and the vicegerency of the Holy Prophet (saww). To be just and fair, after the Holy Prophet (saww), it was only Imam Hasan (as)'s eminent and undisputed personality about whom no difference of opinion was witnessed in the Islamic society regarding his caliphate. Whether the Holy Prophet (saww)'s hadith, or the nomination of the next caliph by the earlier caliph, or the people's allegiance, or the learned and eminent personality of Imam Hasan (as) is taken as the criterion for the true Islamic caliphate or Imamate, Imam Hasan (as) emerges as the most suitable

person among the Muslims of the time for the high rank of Islamic caliphate. That is why all the Muslim states of that period had acknowledged him as the caliph. The only exception was a group of insurgents who did not pay allegiance and vowed to fight against him.

The Holy Prophet (saww), as extensively quoted by the Shi'a and Sunni Hadith narrators, had stated that there would be twelve caliphs after him and emphatically said that all of these would be from among the Quraish. There is no doubt that the second name among these is that of Imam Hasan Mujtaba (as).

Apart from this, the Holy Prophet (saww) had specifically mentioned the Imamat of Imam Hasan (as) and his brother Imam Husain (as) in many of his Hadith. For example:

"These two (Imam Hasan and Imam Husain (as)) are Imam, whether they take a firm stand against an issue or observe peace."

Although the above Hadith of the Holy Prophet (saww) has a deep rooted meaning and many other points to reflect upon, here the Holy Prophet (saww) is emphasizing that the Imamat and the caliphate of these two brothers is so sound that any decision of theirs regarding peace or war would be correct and would not adversely affect their status. There is no doubt that some Muslims of the time had raised some objections against the peace treaty of Imam Hasan (as) and the revolutionary strategy of Imam Husain (as), but the Holy Prophet (saww) had already replied to these objections in advance and had instructed the Muslims to follow them in all conditions, whether in peace or war, and to treat them as their Imam.

Similarly there is the following Hadith of the Holy Prophet (saww) which has been quoted repetitively by the historians:

"This son of mine is the leader and Almighty God will arrange peace between two groups through him."

(If this hadith is true), then it is clear that Imam Hasan (as) had the eminent status due to which the two groups acknowledged him as their leader and guide, followed him and accepted the peace arranged by him. There is no doubt that caliphate is another name of such an eminent position and undisputed personality.

Similarly, if the nomination of a caliph is taken as the criterion of caliphate, then history records that Hazrat Ali (as) had assigned many responsibilities to Imam Hasan (as) on different occasions and had directed him to lead the prayers in his place just before his martyrdom. Imam Hasan (as) was his vicegerent about treating Ibne Muljim, the assassin of Imam Ali (as), and about other issues. According to Shi'a narrations, Amirul Momineen Hazrat Ali (as) had made the following will

in favour of him just before his martyrdom:

"O my son, you are the caliph after me and you are the vicegerant after me regarding my assassin."

Regarding the above will, he had taken as witness not only Imam Husain (as), Mohammad b. Hanafia, his other sons, but a number of prominent Shi'as well. Afterwards he gave his copy of the Holy Quran and his armament to him and said that these had been given to him by the Holy Prophet (saww) who had directed that he should hand over these to him, declaring him (Imam Hasan (as)) as his heir.

As against this, some historical records show that when Imam Ali (as) was asked as to whom he was nominating the caliph, he had declined to name anyone and had left it to the choice of Muslims.

We feel that such narrations are far from the truth and have been concocted by those who were bent upon declaring allegiance or consultation ('shoora') as the basis for caliphate, because the views of Hazrat Ali (as), as reflected in Nahjul Balagha and other historical books, are quite different. He considered only the Ahle Bait (as) and members of the household of the Holy Prophet (saww) as fit for caliphate and in the presence of Imam Hasan (as), he would normally have appointed him as the caliph.

Again, if the conditions prevailing at the time are taken into account, the caliphate and the government of Hazrat Ali (as) was facing a crisis situation. Nearly all historical narrations record that at the time Hazrat Ali (as) was preparing for a decisive battle against Moawiya and forty thousand soldiers had vowed to fight along with him till death. In that situation, for sure he was likely to appoint as his heir and next in command a person who would truly guide a large army and uproot the rebellious group in an appropriate manner. Not doing so would have endangered the center of Islamic caliphate!

Not only is it that no objection against the caliphate of Imam Hasan Mujtaba (as) was raised by the Muslims of the time, but rather the whole Muslim history records that Muslims up to the current period regard him as their Imam and caliph, despite so many other differences among them. 'Ahle Sunnat val Jama'at' consider him as the orthodox caliph and claim that the Islamic caliphate ended for ever after Imam Hasan (as) and the monarchical system commenced. They further quote that his grand father, the Holy Prophet (saww), had earlier prophesied the same in the following words:

"The caliphate will last thirty years after me. After that, it will be monarchy."

According to the historians, the thirty years were completed when Imam Hasan (as) agreed for peace with Moawiya and handed over the outwardly power to him.

The above hadith is not only well known but the learned and the old nobles among Ahle Sunnat treat Imam Hasan (as) as the true Islamic caliph. On this basis an objection can be raised against those scholars who, writing about caliphate and monarchy, have mentioned only four orthodox caliphs of Islam and have thus ignored Imam Hasan (as), while there is no doubt that monarchy commenced with Moawiya and there is a gap of six to eight months between the same and the martyrdom of Hazrat Ali (as), which is the period of the orthodox caliphate of Imam Hasan (as).

Though a lot can be written on the issue, let us see what details history has recorded about the allegiance to Imam Hasan (as).

It was a little before dawn on the 21st Ramadhan and the people in the city of Koofa were mourning the martyrdom of Ameerul Momineen Hazrat Ali (as). Apart from Koofa, the sorrow and shock of the martyrdom of Hazrat Ali (as) was being felt by Muslims in all other cities as well. According to the will of Hazrat Ali (as), Imam Hasan (as) had performed his burial rites along with a group of Imam Ali (as)'s followers. At the same time a large number of Muslims were awaiting him in the mosque of Koofa. These included not only the residents of Koofa and those who had come from the nearby areas, but also well known personalities among the Mohajireen and Ansar and the sincere and trusted companions of his father Hazrat Ali (as). All of them performed their morning prayers under the leadership of Imam Hasan (as), who gave a long sermon on this occasion of grief. In the sermon he paid tribute to the leader of the pious ones in a manner most appropriate to the unique and unparalleled personality of the late Imam (as). All the historians have quoted this sermon, with very little variation. After duly praising Almighty God for His beneficence and mercy and invoking God's blessings on the Holy Prophet (saww) and his progeny, he said:

"This night has gone beyond this transitory world a person whom no one had surpassed earlier and none would be his equal in future. There is no doubt that he was with the Holy Prophet (saww) in the religious wars and used to protect him even to the extent of putting his own life at risk. On any mission that he was assigned by the Holy Prophet (saww) to lead, Gabriel used to be on his right and Michael on his left, and he would not return until Almighty God had granted him success. He has been martyred in the same night in which Prophet Moses b. Imran had died, Prophet Jesus Christ was elevated to the sky and the Holy Quran was revealed. He has not left any worldly wealth except seven hundred Dirham, which were left over from his distribution as he wanted to make arrangement for a servant for his household and these too he has instructed me to return to Bait ul Maal."

After the above words, tears welled up in his eyes and seeing him in such grief about his father,

the whole gathering wept and cried.

After a while, when quietness had returned to the mosque at Koofa, Imam Hasan (as), continuing his sermon, said: "O men! apart from those who know me, those who don't, should be aware that I am Hasan, son of Ali (as); I am the son of the Holy Prophet (saww) and the son of his heir; I am the son of one who has been called the lamp resplendent; I am one of the Ahle Bait to whom Gabriel used to come and fly back from them; I am from the family of the Holy Prophet (saww) which has been kept away from every kind of uncleanness by Allah and He has purified us with a thorough purification. Our love and respect has been made obligatory by Allah on every Muslim (man and woman). In the Holy Quran Allah has commanded: 'Say (O Muhammad) "I do not ask of you any recompense for it (the toils of the prophet ship) save love of (my) relatives" and whoever earns good, We increase for him (more and more) good therein.' - Ash Shura, 23; So, earning good really is our love."

The learned scholar Sheikh Raazi Aale Yasin, explaining the above sermon, writes:

"While paying tribute to his father, Imam Mujtaba (as) adopted a unique style which is unparalleled. Neither he referred to the respectable life and great achievements of his illustrious father, nor his learning, modesty, eloquence, bravery, high status, noble genealogy was narrated, as is the normal practice. He adopted such a unique approach which cannot be traced in any other historical record. Imam Hasan (as) viewed Hazrat Ali (as) from a moral and religious angle. It is clear that really one Imam is focussing his attention on the one who is another Imam. Thus, the one leaving this transitory world was such a unique personality that his life, viewed from any angle, was unmatched even by the trusted angels, holy men or the pious persons.

He is a human being - yet such a being that neither any person earlier than him nor later could equal him. He is a human being but surrounded by Gabriel and Michael; isn't he an angel-like person?

"He leaves the earthly life on the same day that prophet Jesus Christ was elevated to the sky; he was martyred the same day that prophet Moses had died; he is lowered in the grave the same night that the Holy Quran is being revealed. "These are the levels of high status that are attained by the trusted angels, 'ulul azm' prophets (possessors of determination) and the holy books.

"He was such a person who used to fight along with the Holy Prophet (saww) and would protect him even putting his own life at risk. When he was worthy of such high rewards in the hereafter, then one can imagine what his worldly qualities and achievements would be!!"

As mentioned by the learned scholar, Imam Hasan (as) adopted a unique style while describing the life of the leader of the pious ones. Similarly, his manner of introducing himself was also

unique. He not only explained his close relationship with the household of the Holy Prophet (saww), indicating his own very close lineage, but also referred to the relevant verses of the Holy Quran which proved that he was one of the five persons who had been kept away from every kind of uncleanness by Allah and He had purified them with a thorough purification. This means that he had an ideal character and belonged to that illustrious family of piety and chastity whose love had been made obligatory on all Muslim men and women by Almighty God.

A question arises as to who can be more fit for caliphate and to be a candidate for the leadership (Imam) of the Muslims than the one who belonged to such a distinguished and pious family, whose character was an ideal one where there was no chance of error, and whose love has been made obligatory on every Muslim man and woman? That was the reason that as soon as he had finished his sermon, his uncle and the governor of Hazrat Ali (as) in Yemen, Ubaidullah b. Abbas, got up and invited the people to pay allegiance to Imam Hasan (as), and said: "O men! he is the son of the Holy Prophet (saww) and the heir to your Imam. So, pay allegiance to him." 10_/

People welcomed the offer of allegiance and soon became the followers of such a respected leader through the allegiance. They showed the love and respect that they had for the son of the Holy Prophet (saww), indicated the right that he had over them, and the fact that none had a greater right to caliphate and allegiance than him! Perhaps it was for the first time that a city like Koofoa, despite all sorts of differences, disunity and being a hot bed of intrigue, had shown such unity while taking such a major decision. The first person who came forward to offer allegiance to Imam Mujtaba (as) was Qais, the son of S'ad b. 'Abadah Ansari. Qais was a close follower of Hazrat Ali (as) and had been his representative in Azerbaijan during the caliphate of Hazrat Ali (as). While Hazrat Ali (as) was planning for a decisive war against Moawiya before his martyrdom, he was commanding a very important regiment called 'the Thursday soldiers' ('Shurtah al Khamees'), which was similar to the Elite Commandos of today.

Anyway, Qais came forward and said to the Imam (as): "Kindly extend your hand so that I may pay allegiance to you in accordance with the commands of the Holy Quran, the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (saww) and to fight against those who declare lawful what has been forbidden by Almighty Allah." The grand son of the Holy Prophet (saww) looked at S'ad with kindness and love and said: "the allegiance in accordance with the Holy Book revealed by the Gracious God and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet includes all that is right and excludes any other unnecessary condition. As prayers, fasting, zakat (the religious tax) and other obligations have been made compulsory according to the Holy Quran and Sunnah, similarly to fight against those creating disturbance, the traitors and those declaring lawful what has been forbidden by Almighty God, has been made obligatory by Him.

Imam Mujtaba (as) further stated: "I can accept your allegiance on the condition that you will fight with one with whom I fight and will observe peace with one with whom I make peace." 11_/ Some

historical records show that after hearing these words from the Imam (as), some persons started doubting his willingness to

wage war while those who were favouring peace and understanding, felt that he would fight just like his illustrious father. We will discuss these points in detail in subsequent chapters.

After the Imam (as) had expressed the above words, Qais b. S'ad paid allegiance to him and the masses in large numbers vowed to follow him and immediately started to pay allegiance to him as the true Islamic caliph. Apart from Koofa, Basra, Hijaz, Yemen, Persia and all other areas that were in the caliphate of his illustrious father also accepted him as the true Islamic caliph and came under his rule. No city, not even the holy cities of Makkah and Madina, raised any voice of dissent or opposition. Only the group of traitors, who had not accepted the caliphate of Imam Ali (as), considered this allegiance as a threat to them and started their nefarious activities.

Commenting on the above event, Dr. Husain Mohammad J'afari in his book 'Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam,' writes: "The election of Imam Hasan (as) as the caliph, without any opposition or objection from Koofa, Hijaz or any other area, is a clear evidence of his capabilities, nobility and high status. Qais b. S'ad b. 'Abadah, the sincere companion and loyal general of Hazrat Ali (as) was the first person to pay allegiance to Imam Hasan (as). The forty thousand soldiers, who had vowed with Hazrat Ali (as) to fight against Moawiya till death, congratulated him on being elected the caliph. Outwardly expressing his own feelings and those of the Iraqi army, Qais tried to include, along with following the Holy Book and Sunnah, war against 'Muhilleen', i.e. those who had considered permissible what Allah had forbidden, as one of the basis of allegiance. However, Imam Hasan (as), explaining that it was included in the first two conditions, convinced him to delete this condition. The Iraqi soldiers, who were inclined to fight against Moawiya, did not want to delete this third condition, yet they all paid allegiance to him despite the same. Later events show that perhaps Imam Hasan (as) was apprehensive that Iraqis would run away from war at an hour of trial. Therefore, he did not want to bind himself under an emotional decision which might result in the total destruction of persons. Despite all that, according to the majority narrations, all those who were present on the occasion, paid allegiance on the specific condition that they will fight one who wages war against Imam Hasan (as) and would make peace with whom the Imam (as) made peace."

He further writes that the declaration of the caliphate of Imam Hasan (as) from Iraq and its support from Hijaz, Yemen, Faras and other areas, meant a great danger to Moawiya, who had started his scheme to capture power soon after the death of Hazrat Usman. 12_/ After the allegiance, the Imam (as) got down from the pulpit and got busy in earnest in performing the responsibilities of caliphate. The appointment of the governors, other responsible office bearers of the vast territories and the solution of many other issues was taken in hand in earnest by the noble Imam (as).

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Historical Background of Koofa

In Shi'ite history, Koofa has had a central position. From the time of the caliphate of Hazrat Ali (as) to the revolutionary period of Imam Husain (as) and further till the steadfast and firm stand taken by Hazrat Mukhtar, many important incidents took place there. One of the most important of these was the peace treaty of Imam Hasan (as). It would be appropriate to give a brief description

of the historical background of Koofa before the peace treaty of Imam Hasan (as), so that the conditions through which the residents of Koofa were passing or had faced earlier, would become clear.

Koofa was founded in 17 A.H. when the Muslim army had achieved success in the Qadsiya wars and the 2nd Caliph had asked S'ad b. Abee Waqas, the commander of the Muslim army to stay on in Iraq. This way he could advance towards Persia after strengthening the Muslim army. However, the Muslims soldiers were on the look out for a site which may, apart from being a suitable place for the army, offer a good climate and have suitable living conditions. After a two year search, a location on the western side of the river Euphrates was selected as the army garrison, where Muslim soldiers could come from other cities to stay, and after getting due training, plan for an attack on the then great Persian kingdom. In the beginning Koofa had a population of 24,000, of which twelve thousand were from southern Arabia (Yemen) while eight thousand were from northern Arabia (Nazaar). Apart from these, there were four thousand Persian prisoners of war or slaves who had been arrested during Qadsiya battles and had converted to Islam.

Initially, Koofa was inhabited by those persons who had come to fight in the Qadsiya wars, but later, Muslims migrated to the city from other cities. After the decline of the great Iranian kingdom, a large number of Iranians had also settled there. These were in addition to those whom the Muslims had brought as their slaves or maids. By the time of the caliphate of Hazrat Ali (as), a new generation from the maids had grown up. Apart from the Muslims, a sizable number of Christians from Najran had also settled there. It is said that at the time of the caliphate of Hazrat Ali (as) there were forty thousand Muslim soldiers, and Koofa and its population has been estimated at about one hundred thousand inhabitants.

Whereas other cities normally had a tribal set up, Koofa, having been founded on conquest and strategic considerations, consisted of persons from different tribes and areas. Due to these conditions, S'ad b. Abee Waqas faced many problems in settling the persons of different colour and race under various tribal groups or to assimilate them in one social and cultural set up. After some time he divided them into seven groups.

It has been reported that during the period of the 2nd Caliph, some effort was made to spread Islamic culture in Koofa and to train the Muslim army on an Islamic pattern. For this purpose, Ammar Yasir was appointed the governor of Koofa. However, due to the fact that the caliph used to treat the Muslim soldiers better through the distribution of Bait ul Maal, and the number of slaves and maids had considerably increased due to extensive victories, the values had changed and wealth, authority and such other considerations had taken the place of Islamic and moral values. As a result, the wealthy persons had acquired a much higher status in Koofa. Later, during the rule of the 3rd Caliph, with the appointment of Waleed b. 'Aqaba as governor, the tribal aristocracy was revived and the Islamic values were even ridiculed. During this period, the

Umayyads had attained

domination in the politics of Koofa but the religious and the faithful persons of Koofa could not bear the ridicule of religious values and stood against the rulers. Thus Koofa had become divided into different groups. On one side was the religious group who were devoted to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Sunnah, while on the other side was the ruling clique who wanted to strengthen its rule and the capitalistic system. During the caliphate of Hazrat Ali (as), the religious group had attained an upper hand in Koofa as many Muhajireen, Ansars and the Companions of the Holy Prophet (saww) had immigrated there due to its becoming the capital. Apart from it, a large number of Shi'as had appeared in Koofa during the caliphate of Hazrat Ali (as). However, the influence of non-believers and tribal chiefs, who had been against the religious group from the beginning and had been intriguing against religion ever since, was not an insignificant one. That is why the residents of Koofa had, in the beginning, decided to remain neutral in the camel ('Jamal') war and the religious group had not succeeded in their efforts until the arrival of Imam Hasan (as), who succeeded, after long discussion, in recruiting twelve thousand soldiers for the army, though forty thousand soldiers were present there at the time.

During the caliphate of Imam Hasan (as), another group, known as 'Khawarij' had gained considerable influence in Koofa. These persons had become the enemies of Hazrat Ali (as) after the Siffin war and had particular, specific ideas. It is said that their speeches used to swiftly influence the thinking of the people who were accepting their ideas. The common people were confused, being divided into these three groups. Due to the varying views, ideas and opinions, they were unable to decide who was right and who was wrong! For further understanding the conditions prevailing at the time of the caliphate of Imam Hasan (as), three points should be well understood:

After crushing the internal rebellion of the camel ('Jamal') war, Hazrat Ali (as) decided in 36 A.H. to declare Koofa as the capital. There is no doubt that this was a major step in the history of Koofa. The historical records do not reflect any clear reason for this decision. No historian has given any indication that the Imam (as) wished, before the 'Jamal' war, to announce the shifting of the capital to Koofa. However, some researchers have written that when the Imam (as) heard the news of the death and destruction by the rebellious group in Basra, he was busy at the time in preparing for war against the insurgents of Syria. But, realizing the nature of the rebellion, he had to postpone the earlier war plans and to march towards Basra. After restoring peace in Basra, his first priority was to bring the Syrian insurgents back on the right path as directed by Almighty Allah and to fight them, as ordered by the Holy Prophet (saww). From a military point of view, Koofa was an ideal location where a large Muslim army was present and soldiers from other areas could also be gathered there. Moreover, he could also contain the internal and external conspiracies which had been hatched against the Muslims and reached a city like Koofa. One link of these conspiracies was the 'Jamal' war itself which had been planned by the Syrian rebellious

group, and was difficult to control from Madina.

The historical perspective described here makes it clear that a majority of the influentials in Koofa belonged to the group of self-seekers and those after status. They had old associations with the mutineers of Syria. Although they were with the leader of the faithful in the Siffin war, yet behind the scenes they had been intriguing against the Imam (as). These aversive intrigues at first led to the Imam (as)'s outward set back in the Siffin war, the disobedience of his orders, and finally his martyrdom.

From the above facts it can be concluded that in addition to differences due to race, colour, ideas and beliefs, Koofa was also a hot bed of malice, mistrust and intrigue. The main aim of the intrigues was to weaken the truly Islamic Alavi government. So, these extended till the time of Imam Hasan (as) and beyond. Imam Hasan (as) also faced great danger due to these intrigues, as they had reached a crisis stage during the time of his caliphate.

It is a historical fact that the residents of Koofa used to say so many things emotionally, yet at the moment of trial they would run away from the battle field and lacked patience and steadfastness.

This fact emerges more clearly at the time when Imam Husain (as) went to Koofa at the invitation of its nationals and wished them to participate in his revolution. Then the people advised him otherwise, explaining the nature of the residents of Koofa as follows:

"No doubt their hearts are with you, but their swords are with your enemy", which meant that those people were very emotional while expressing love, regard and respect for someone but would abandon him at the time of trial and tribulation. At that time they only worried about their personal interests.

There is no doubt that in the Siffin war these people were responsible for the leader of the faithful suffering a set back from a victorious position; they did not follow the command of Imam Hasan (as) for war and left him alone at Madain, due to which the carpet was pulled under his feet and he was severely injured in a dagger attack. Subsequently, when Hajar b. Adi, the Companion of the Holy Prophet (saww), started a movement against the representative of Moawiya, the residents of Koofa withdrew their support for him at a difficult hour. Hazrat Muslim b. Aqeel faced the same fate and Imam Husain (as) had to face untold problems and tribulations, even though it were the residents of Koofa themselves who had invited Imam Husain (as) to come to Iraq.

We have to regretfully state the fact that when the historians discuss the peace treaty of Imam Hasan (as), they ignore these hard realities, as if the residents of Koofa had, against their very nature, become fully prepared for war and that Imam Hasan (as) had ordered them to accept peace to avoid bloodshed! There is no doubt that a large number of Shi'a and the devotees of the

household of the Holy Prophet (saww) ('Ahle Bait') were present in Koofa, who had faith in Imam Hasan (as) and accepted him as their caliph and Imam, but only till such time as their own interests were not endangered and Imam Hasan (as) had not instructed them to face any major responsibility. There were very few Shi'a who were determined to remain faithful to the Imam (as) till death.

The time of the accession to caliphate of Imam Hasan (as) was such a sensitive and difficult one that the people of Iraq had by then become extremely disheartened due to prolonged internal wars. The wars had resulted in huge destruction and their social and political conditions had become miserable.

The people of Iraq were facing a very cunning and formidable enemy. Under the leadership of Hazrat Ali (as), they had tried, in the Siffin war, to finish off the rival who was based in Syria, but the war did not result in success due to some moneyed persons and self-seeking officers. A number of wars continued later till the people got tired of the same, so much so that they started disobeying the orders of the leader of faithful himself. The unending wars, beginning with the camel ('Jamal') war, and continuing with the Siffin war, the Nahrwan war against the 'Khawarij', the skirmishes with the detachments of the Syrian army sent by Moawiya, and the use of the army to quell revolts in certain areas all had resulted in a situation where the people of Koofa had started to betray the leader of the faithful. They had openly started to disobey Hazrat Ali (as) due to which the Imam (as) had condemned them. In the sermons of the Imam (as), quoted in 'Nahjul Balagha', his views are clearly reflected. He states that while the people had become tired and sad, they had also disappointed him. Among the consequences of these wars, two points need serious attention:

(a) A large number of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (saww) and sincere and religious personalities had lost their lives in these wars and the group devoted to religious values which could present the Islamic ideals, had become weak. For that reason, the common people had lost the sense of deeper values of life and the hereafter. They were after only the worldly benefits.

(b) In the bitter Siffin war a large number of the soldiers from Iraq and Koofa had lost their lives and those who had survived were remembering their loved ones in grief. Later, when their near ones fought the Nahrwan war as the 'Khawarij', remaining rebellious despite the advice of the leader of the faithful, and were eliminated, it had a very bad effect on the residents of Koofa - who became revengeful. The selfish Iraqi leaders, taking advantage of the prevailing conditions, disobeyed the orders of Hazrat Ali (as) after the Nahrwan war, to go to fight against the rebellious group of Syria, which the Imam (as) had planned. These leaders, pretending excuses, forced the Imam (as) to postpone the war.

The situation in Koofa at the time was such that the soldiers had a mixed feeling of grief and

revenge. It was not an ordinary situation, as they had lost many of their relatives. Thus they could not be expected to fight a formidable enemy very soon. The rest of the people, who included the wealthy group, preferred peace and understanding. In those distressed conditions they had also lost their Imam and caliph and were facing the aggressive rulers of Syria who had been their rivals. However, they were very hopeful that Imam Hasan Mujtaba (as) would find some political solution to the existing hatred between Syria and Iraq, so that peace and tranquility would prevail in Koofa.

In his sermons, Imam Hasan (as) has himself described the pathetic conditions prevailing in Koofa at the time, which we would discuss in subsequent chapters. Apart from these, another consideration for Imam Hasan (as) was that he had to take into confidence those persons from Koofa and other cities who had gathered for a final battle with Moawiya and who had taken a vow with his illustrious father to fight till death. They were pressing the Imam (as) to march against Moawiya immediately.

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Imam Mujtaba (AS)and Caliphate

A study of the historical record shows that the historians have ignored the period between the accession to caliphate by Imam Hasan (as) and the commencement of the war. Although this ambiguity is reflected in describing the whole life of Imam (as), yet it is more visible for this period. The fact that no major conflicts or clashes took place in the disturbed political and economic conditions of Koofa during the brief caliphate period of Imam Hasan (as), shows a great success of his brief caliphate period and reflects his great qualities of cool political planning and statesman-like policies. As a true caliph, it was the statesmanship of the Imam (as) which kept Koofa in peace under his centralized effective control, despite all its differences and mistrust.

The sound political planning of Imam Mujtaba (as) was visible from the very day when the people wanted to pay allegiance to him. He had permitted them the allegiance on the specific condition that they would make peace with the one with whom he would do so and would fight one who would fight against him. Due to this stand of the Imam (as), Koofa remained united and peaceful, and he maintained a neutral position between those wanting to fight and the seekers of peace.

Declaring the Holy Book and the Sunnah as the basis of allegiance, he demonstrated a practical proof for being the grand son of the Holy Prophet (saww) as well as his true caliph. There is no doubt that the Holy Prophet (saww) commanded the people to follow the Holy Book and Sunnah and used to make it clear to them that the solution of all their problems lay in following the same. It cannot be denied that the Holy Book and the Sunnah contain the commands for war as well as peace and it is for the Imam and the caliph of the Holy Prophet (saww) to decide as to when to fight and when to make peace. The people must follow the Imam in either case.

After assuming the office of caliph, the first step that Imam Hasan (as) took was that he raised the salary of the soldiers by 100 Dirham each. Before him, the leader of the faithful had done the same at the time of the Camel war, while he did it at the time of becoming the caliph. Subsequently all the caliphs followed him in this respect.

Though the raise in the salary of soldiers has always been considered as strengthening the fighting spirit of the soldiers, particularly at the critical moment of war, yet the grandson of the Holy Prophet (saww), by doing so, did not intend to wage war immediately. Rather, he wanted to revive the morale of the Iraqi army which had been adversely affected during the earlier years due to internal conflicts. He might have taken other steps as well to restore the military strength of the victorious forces, but that is not known to us. However, the fact that he directed his urgent attention at these issues while facing a dangerous enemy, reflects his full command over the prevailing conditions.

On Imam Hasan's (as) emerging as the true Islamic caliph, whose allegiance was taken by all the governed areas, Moawiya had felt aggrieved. He had strongly reacted against the caliphate of the Imam (as) as it was beyond his imagination that the Muslims who had always been voicing differences on the issue of caliphate, would collectively accept Imam Hasan (as) as the caliph, especially in a city like Koofa where he had considerable influence. It was also a bad omen for him as he had become a candidate for caliphate after the death of Hazrat Usman and was constantly trying to grab the same. The main motive of all the intrigues against Hazrat Ali (as), which resulted in his martyrdom, was none other than the caliphate itself. Therefore, he also refused to accept Imam Hasan (as) as the caliph, just like he had done in the case of Hazrat Ali (as), and planned rebellion against him.

After the assumption of the caliphate by Imam Hasan (as), Moawiya wrote to Ziyad b. Abih, the

Imam (as)'s governor in Persia, to join him, while threatening him if he acted otherwise. A year earlier than the martyrdom of Hazrat Ali (as), disorderly conditions had developed in Persia, so his confidants had advised the Imam (as) to appoint Ziad b. Abih as the governor to control the situation, which he had accepted.

When Moawiya's letter reached Ziad, he addressed the masses standing, wherein he said: "I am surprised at the son of the liver-eater, the central intriguer, the chief of the rebellious group, that he threatens me while between him and me is the regard of two grand sons of the Holy Prophet (saww) (Imam Hasan (as) and Imam Husain (as)), with whom are seventy thousand soldiers ready to fight, with open sword. By God, if he tries to attack me, he will find me a tough soldier and a strong swordsman."

In the speech, Ziad had exaggerated the army strength to frighten Moawiya; he had not put down his arms till Imam Hasan (as)'s peace with Moawiya, and had been loyal to the Imam (as) all along.

Apart from the above plans, Moawiya had sent a large number of spies to Iraq. The learned scholar Baqar Qarshi writes in this regard:

"Moawiya invited his close associates, informed them about Imam Hasan (as)'s accession to caliphate and drew their attention to the fact that if they did not manage to control the situation, they would never be able to establish their kingdom. After long deliberations it was decided to take two key steps:

(a) "Spies should be sent to those areas that had paid allegiance to Imam Hasan (as), particularly to Koofa and Basra to assess the social and cultural atmosphere there, to determine their plans and to find out the extent of their love for the 'Ahle Bait' (as). Apart from that, they should be made to feel the terror of Moawiya, his power and strength.

(b) "Correspondence should be started with the dignitaries and tribal leaders, they should be bribed and provided large sums of money so that they may obey Moawiya."

It cannot be denied that the spies of Moawiya were active in Yemen, Hijaz, Persia and Iraq since the time of the caliphate of Hazrat Ali (as). During the period of Imam Hasan (as), the spy network was extended. The historians mention in particular the arrest of two spies, one of whom was arrested in Koofa and the other in Basra. Imam Hasan (as) sentenced them to death, thereby suppressing the spy movement and perfidy through Islamic penal law. Later the Imam (as) wrote the following letter to Moawiya:

"There is no doubt that you have sent many spies towards us which implies that you are planning war against us. I have no doubt about the same. If Almighty God so wills, you should wait for the

same. I have also learnt that you have expressed your rejoicing at the sad incident, which no sane person would do."

In this letter Imam Mujtaba (as) had warned Moawiya against his destructive inclinations. On the one hand, he informed Moawiya that he was aware of his intention to wage a war, while on the other, he stated that he was determined and fully prepared to face him in the battle field. In addition, he castigated him at rejoicing at the martyrdom of Hazrat Ali (as).

The brief peaceful period of the caliphate of the Imam (as) lasted for four to five months. Hafiz Zahbi writes in the book 'Al'Abar' that Imam Hasan (as) had marched for war in Rabi II, 41 A.H. Accordingly, this period would be six months. So, if the duration of war is taken as one and a half months and the period of the caliphate of the Imam (as) is taken as six months and few days, still a duration of four to five months remains, though according to some other narrations the peaceful period of the caliphate of the Imam (as) would be more than that. During this period, the religious group which was loyal to his illustrious father, started pressing him for war against Moawiya. Ibne Abbas, his father's cousin and his governor in Basra, wrote a letter to him, which reflects the religious feelings and has historical significance:

"To the bondsman of God and the leader of the faithful; from Abdullah b. Abbas, the bondsman of God. After salutation. The Muslims have handed over the reign to you. They have objected to your not launching war against Moawiya and not claiming your rights. So, you should finalize the plans for war and start the same early; you should treat your close associates kindly; you should win the hearts of the nobles and dignitaries through giving them important posts and high status. Moreover, you should follow reforms just like the earlier just and fair rulers, so that they be attracted towards you. Know that war is a sort of deception and there is scope for you in it till any Muslims's rights do not suffer. You certainly know that people had left your father and joined Moawiya as your father was maintaining justice and fair play in the distribution of prize money and the Baitul Maal funds, which was not liked by those persons.

"You are also aware that you are at war against those persons who were fighting the Holy Prophet (saww) himself till the Islamic victory (the conquest of Makkah). These persons outwardly embraced Islam only after all men had embraced it, the symbols of polytheism and idol worship had been removed and the voices praising the Unity of God were heard all around. They would recite the Holy Quran, yet make fun of its verses as well; they would stand in prayers half-heartedly; they would observe the duties as commanded by Allah, yet in their heart of hearts they disliked these. Later, when they realized that only the apostles of God, good-natured persons and pious ulama were entitled to respect and dignified status, they also pretended to be abstinent and pious. Outwardly, they obtained what their ancestors cherished but their long life proved that they were misled and a trap for the Muslims! "Therefore, O respected Imam, may God's blessings be upon you, you should start the war against them and should not accept surrender at any cost.

Your father Hazrat Ali (as) had also not accepted arbitration until it was forced on him.

And when that happened, he had agreed to it on the condition that the arbitrators would follow justice and fair play. But, when they announced their decision based on selfish aims and personal interest, then he reverted to his earlier policy (of waging war). Till his martyrdom, he was determined to fight them. May God's blessings be upon him. Therefore, O highly respected Imam! do not surrender this right of yours which you deserve more than any one else, even though the undeserving ones may argue with you against it. With regards, and may the blessings of Glorified God be with you."

In this letter, Ibne Abbas, expressing the feelings of the supporters of the Imam, has emphasized the need for war. He analyses the reasons for the outward set back of his illustrious father and throws considerable light on the Umayyads' true feelings with regard to Islam. There is no doubt that the religious elite who were sincere and who had proved their loyalty towards his father, were pressing the Imam (as) for war. They were aggrieved that the people of Koofa had disappointed his father as they could not arrange the army which could attack the rebellious group and finish them off. To remove that feeling they were pressing the Imam (as) to start the war. The letter of Ibne Abbas was supportive of the same. But it was premature for the Imam (as) to take such a big step. He had not yet had the chance to reform the areas under his control and to effectively reorganize his army. Moreover, the majority, which was under the influence of the leaders and self-seekers, was against war and they could leave the Imam (as) at any crucial moment, thus declaring him responsible for all the bloodshed. In the circumstances, it was essential that he should settle the issue peacefully before starting the war, so that, in case of war, they should have no ground to run away from the war and thus betray him.

Historians record that just after receipt of the letter of Ibne Abbas, the Imam (as) called the letter-writer and dictated the following detailed letter to Moawiya:

"From the bondsman of God and the leader of the faithful Hasan, to Moawiya b. Sakhar: There is no doubt that the Glorified God sent the Holy Prophet (saww) as a divine blessing for the universe. Through him, the right achieved mastery, falsehood was defeated and the Quraish got a high status. Then He commanded the chief of His creation thus:

"For sure this is an occasion of warning, learning a lesson, for you and your nation."

When the Holy Prophet (saww) breathed his last, there was a dispute among the Arabs about his successor. The Ansar (Madenite companions of the Holy Prophet) demanded that 'one should be from us and one from you'. On this, the Quraish replied that 'we are from his family and the clan. So, it is not appropriate that you should disagree with us on the issue of the succession'. So, the Arabs gave the right to Quraish but when we demanded our right on the basis of kinship, i.e.

belonging to the family of the Holy Prophet (saww), the Quraish declined and did not do justice to us, which, we thought, was very strange. Though these persons had some priority in embracing Islam and respect, yet I am very surprised today when a person like you, who has no credible performance for the religious cause, nor has he served it in any significant manner, and who is the son of the worst enemy of the Holy Prophet (saww) from the Quraish clan, has claimed the candidacy of caliphate. So, Almighty God will hold you accountable!

"Moreover, I must tell you that after the martyrdom of the leader of the faithful, the Muslims have given the rein of their affairs to me and I pray the Gracious God that He may mercifully keep me away from taking such a thing in the world, which may cause a lesser reward for me in the hereafter.

"O Moawiya! Desist from falsehood and further revolt and pay allegiance to me like the masses have done, as you are well aware that I am entitled to caliphate much more than you in the eyes of Almighty God, his angels and those having a rational mind. So, you should fear God and abandoning revolt, do not shed the blood of Muslims. But, if you continue the policy of waywardness and rebellion, then I will attack you along with the Muslims and try to finish you off till Almighty God may send His command and there is no doubt that He is the One whose commands are the best."

The learned scholar Sheikh Raazi Ale Yasin, analyzing the above historical letter of Imam Mujtaba (as), writes: "Imam Hasan (as) advised Moawiya to give up waywardness and rebellion and to join the masses by giving allegiance to the Imam (as). It was the thoughtful political approach of the time which was meant to weaken the enemy and thereby to weaken his policy of opposition. But the Imam (as) addressed Moawiya with these words after he had advanced solid arguments in his own favour. He invited him, like a leader and guide, towards the right path; like one in authority, threatened him and ultimately gave him a clear ultimatum for war. Thus, he followed the approach of his illustrious father, as if the period of Hazrat Ali (as) was still there; no doubt he was his true successor. If war was inevitable during the caliphate of his father, then its significance during his own period could not be overlooked. His own caliphate was based on such authority and firmness which left no scope for mischief mongers in the religion of God. For that reason he admonished Moawiya in strong words and frightened him with the consequential punishment in the hereafter."

The scholar Hashim M'arroof al-Hasani writes that Imam Mujtaba (as) knew very well that Moawiya would never accept the offer of the Imam (as), especially when, after the martyrdom of Hazrat Ali (as), he was considering himself to be in a relatively more sound position. However, the Imam (as) wanted in this way to make it abundantly clear to the whole Muslim world the extent to which Moawiya and his household were hiding their malice and enmity towards Islam, the Holy Prophet (saww) and the members of his household. This enmity they had inherited from

Moawiya's liver-eating mother and his father.

Imam Hasan (as) handed over this letter to Handab b. Abdullah Azdi and Haris b. Suwaid Tameemi, two of his companions. They took it to Moawiya so that they may formally ask him to submit and to give allegiance to the Imam (as). On receipt of Imam Hasan (as)'s above letter, Moawiya replied thus:

"I have fully understood the contents of your letter and when you mention that the Holy Prophet (saww) was better than all human beings, I have no doubt that he embodied all excellence; after that you have mentioned the difference among Muslims and have particularly given the names of Abu Bakr Siddiq, Umer Farooq, Abu Ubaidah, Ameen, Talha, Zubair and good natured Muhajirs (the refugees in Madina) and Ansars. O Abu Mohammad! I do not like this for you for the reason that, when the dispute among the Ummah arose on the issue of succession after the death of the Holy Prophet (saww), they saw that the Quraish had a special status in the eyes of the Holy Prophet (saww) due to their lineage as well, and thus they were more entitled to it. Then the respectable and religious Muslims among the Quraish and Ansar agreed that the rank should be given to one who may be better in learning and piety and who may have been ahead in embracing Islam. So, they chose Abu Bakr. And if they had considered someone more respectable than Abu Bakr, who had also embraced Islam earlier than him and would have been able to safeguard Islam better than him, then they would not have ignored him. Your and my situation is similar. If I realized that you are more experienced in ruling over the populace, have greater right over the Ummah, are more capable in political issues and deceiving the enemy and such other matters, then I would hand over the rule to you. I realize that you are demanding it as your father's successor though he fought a war against me which resulted in the selection of one person by him and one by me so that these two arbitrators may give a decision in the interest of the Ummah which may establish brotherhood among them. We took a vow and agreement from them on the issue. After that, they unanimously decided to dethrone your father from caliphate. So, how can you demand something as a claim on behalf of your father, when he was deprived of the same?

"So, on account of my being more experienced than you and being elder than you, you should submit to me. After me, the caliphate will belong to your household. Whatever you want, you can take from the Baitul Maal of Iraq. Further, you can take the tax of any area of Iraq for your personal expenses. So, O the father of Mohammad! think over carefully about yourself and your religion. My compliments to you."

The scholar Hashim M'arouf al-Hasani expresses his views about the above letter of Moawiya thus:

"The first letter of Moawiya is based on fallacy, deceit and fraud, of which he was a master. On the one hand, he personates himself as one of the respectables who cannot deny the dignified

status of the dignitaries even if they are their worst enemies, while on the other, he tries to find fault with Hazrat Ali (as), the leader of the faithful, by writing that the Ummah had to select one who was ahead of others in learning, piety and embracing Islam earlier than others, so they selected Abu Bakr. Moawiya further wrote that 'you and I are like your father and Abu Bakr; if I realized that in the interest of the populace you are better than me and that you are an expert and more experienced than me in protecting the rights of the Ummah, politics, collecting taxes and in deceiving the enemy, then I would have positively responded to your invitation'."

Hashim M'arouf writes: " this meant that the qualities which Moawiya had, were not in Imam Hasan (as), just like these qualities were not supposed to be in his illustrious father when people gave allegiance to Abu Bakr! Therefore, it was expedient from an Islamic point of view that the caliphate should be given to him (Moawiya) just like it was expedient to hand over the caliphate to Abu Bakr after the passing away of the Holy Prophet (saww)."

Hashim M'arouf further writes: "This style of deception and fraud he could not apply to the illustrious father of the Imam (as). But it seems now all the favourable conditions had become available to him; the majority of the leaders in Koofa had promised their support to him; further, that through monetary temptation he had tried his best to turn the masses' opinion against the Imam (as)."¹⁰/

The scholar Sheikh Raazi Ale Yasin gives a comprehensive reply to these fallacies of Moawiya in his book 'Sulh-ul-Hasan (as)', (the peace of Hasan (as)). He writes:

"The letters of Moawiya contained material the main objective of which was to widen the differences among the Muslims and to incite them for mischief and rioting; he wanted to raise the dead issues and to destroy the unity of Muslims which was the foundation of their religion. When he failed to present his father and himself as challengers, he took the names of others and started to mention their differences with the members of the household of the Holy Prophet (saww) ('Ahle Bait'). In these letters, let alone any argument, he could not mention even the false ground of 'the revenge of the blood of Usman', as historians claim that Imam Hasan (as) had been the supporter of Hazrat Usman and had tried till the last moment to save him; and if that was true, then what argument did Moawiya have? The only argument that he had was: 'that I have been a ruler longer than you and, being elder than you, I have more experience'. If he had any other argument he would have advanced the same rather than mentioning the differences!

It is not understood what the father of Yazeed meant by his experiences. Was he referring to the day when the Syrians had lodged a complaint against him to Hazrat Umar and the caliph had asked him to appear in court along with his messenger, and he was trembling like an ordinary slave from fear of the lashes of the caliph? Or, was it the day when he had declined to support Hazrat Usman and had later confessed that he himself was one of the reasons for Hazrat Usman's

failure and defeat?!! Or, was it the day when, as a rebel, he had fought a war, along with his large army, against the Imam of the time, without confessing his sin or error?!!! Can these experiences of his entitle him to become a caliph? If that is so, then where is the justification to caliphate?

Moreover, can such a rule, which is based on falsehood, slander and bloodshed, form a basis for a high religious status? As far as the question of age is concerned, we find no logic in religious philosophy wherein caliphate may be handed over to someone due to his old age, as it is possible that such a person may be more clever in buying the favour of the people through money or in spreading malice, but that does not mean that he should be selected as the successor to the Holy Prophet (saww).

It is also possible that a person may have more patience and humility, but the leadership cannot be given to him, as the humility which is observed in an Imam may also be noticed in the leaders of hypocrites.

The scholar Ale Yasin concludes that: "these cannot form the basis of caliphate as the views of a caliph are based on the commandments of the Holy Quran; his whole reliance is on the traditions and he considers himself answerable to Almighty God."11_/_

Doctor Mohammad Husain J'aferi has also given a very fine analysis of the above letter of Moawiya. He writes: "This letter of Moawiya is very significant in the sense that it presents a clear picture of his political thinking regarding rulership - the government which he had been continuously striving to get. In his view, the interest of the kingdom and those qualities should form the basis of caliphate which had nothing to do with religion or moral values. According to the arguments advanced by Moawiya, the following qualities form the essential conditions for caliphate:

The individual's authority and ability, his political and organizational skill, and his ability to extend the boundaries of the state, protect the Muslims and defend them. This way, whatever was ambiguous, has been made clear by Moawiya - i.e. separation between politics and religious principles." 12_/_

Later, Moawiya sent another letter to Imam Hasan (as) in which he wrote: "There is no doubt that Almighty God treats His bondsmen the way He wishes. No one can change His command or decision and He is going to take account very soon. So, do not have reliance on the common people; do not think that you will find any weakness in me; if you give up the caliphate and give allegiance to me, I will fulfill all my promises and will abide by the agreement with you. Moreover, after me, the caliphate will belong to you as you deserve it most among the people. My compliments to you." 13_/_

This letter of Moawiya shows that having lost on arguments, he had resorted to demonstrating his power and wanted to frighten Imam Mujtaba (as) so that he may surrender in his (Moawiya's) favour, which resignation he would have used as the justification and religious ground for his caliphate. But the grandson of the Holy Prophet (saww) understood his motives very well. He ignored his threat and gave a very logical reply, saying: "I have received your letter in which you have mentioned many points, but avoiding to use indecent words, I cannot reply to you in the same manner and seek protection of God. You should follow what is right and know that I am the one on the right path and it will be a sin if I make a wrong statement." 14_/

Although Imam Mujtaba (as) avoided coming down to the level of Moawiya while writing to him, yet he stuck to his stand that he was on the right path and if Moawiya did not want to be counted among the followers of falsehood, then he should pay allegiance to the Imam (as) and give up his opposition. That is why when the messengers of the Imam took his letter to Moawiya, he asked them to go back saying that now the sword (meaning war) will decide between them. Thus, the chances of political settlement of the dispute disappeared for the time being and war was threatened. 15_/

The exchange of letters between Imam Mujtaba (as) and Moawiya makes for interesting reading. Through these letters the revered Imam (as) wanted to make it clear to the Muslims as to who was right and who was wrong in the struggle for caliphate. In this way he put political pressure on Moawiya through public opinion so that he may give up opposition to the Imam (as) and hostility towards him and pay allegiance, thus joining the learned companions and other Muslims. With this peaceful negotiated approach, which is today considered much better than war, neither any religious principle was being sacrificed, nor was the Islamic government coming under any criticism. Rather, if war became inevitable, the opponents of the war could not find any excuse not to support the Imam (as). This way, the Imam (as) also got an opportunity to attend to reforms in his caliphate for a short time. His next step towards the aggressive policy of Moawiya was now awaited.

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War Preparations

Many letters had been exchanged between Imam Hasan (as) and Moawiya - who thought that through his cunning and threats he would be able to force the grandson of the Holy Prophet (saww) to resign, but he was very surprised when the Imam (as) did not take any notice of his tactics. Rather, he in turn put political pressure on Moawiya to give up the rebellious approach and pay allegiance to him. After being defeated politically, Moawiya decided to take up arms and planned for a large scale attack on Iraq. He sent the following letter to his agents in Egypt, Jordan and various areas in Syria:

"Almighty God in His grace gave the chance to one of His bondsmen to assassinate Ali b. Abee Talib. So, he assassinated him. After him, his followers are suffering from disturbed conditions and division. We have received letters from their respectable personalities wherein they have sought protection from us for themselves and their tribes. As soon as you receive this letter of mine, you should come to me with your total army and armament. For sure, you have taken revenge of your blood, have got your wishes fulfilled and Almighty God has killed the rebellious and our enemies. My compliments and may God's blessings be on you."

On Moawiya's orders, the armed forces started gathering from different areas, and when all, said to have numbered sixty thousand, had assembled, he marched towards Iraq.

Doctor Husain Mohammad J'afari writes that he had two main objectives in this attack:

- (1) Through the demonstration of armament and his army's strength, he wanted to force Imam Hasan (as) to abdicate the caliphate;
- (2) On the failure of his above plan, he wanted to attack the Iraqi army before it could get well prepared for war.

Imam Mujtaba (as) was regularly receiving messages regarding the planned attack and the people of Koofa had realized that Moawiya was coming with a large army to attack them. Though it had been the family tradition of the Hashmi tribe that they would not be the first to attack, Imam Mujtaba (as) had a different motive for not trying to fight Moawiya, which was due to the attitude

of the residents of Koofa itself. In the circumstances, the Imam (as) did not want to initiate the war, but now the situation was quite different - Moawiya had given him the ultimatum for war and was marching towards his territory. Therefore, he had to save the Islamic government and the caliphate. The leader of the faithful Hazrat Ali (as) had advised him to follow this principle i.e. "Do not start a war, but if someone wages war against you, then face the challenge. This is because the initiator of war is a rebel and the punishment for a rebel is death."

If his father was 'the lion of God', then he was the lion of the lion of God. That is why he urgently ordered all his governors to prepare for war. He ordered Hajar b. Adi, the Companion of the Holy Prophet (saww) to instruct all the governors to get ready for war and for him to prepare the war plan. The people were asked to assemble in the 'Jame' (main congregation) mosque. After they had gathered and the mosque was full, he gave a very remarkable sermon. He said: "For sure, the Glorified God has made 'jihad' (holy war) obligatory for His bondsmen and has called it an act not liked by them. Afterwards Almighty God, the Most Sacred, directed the faithful to 'be patient and steadfast as Almighty God is with those who are patient.' So, O men! you cannot achieve your desired aim except by being patient about what you do not like. May God be merciful to you; you all should join the army which is gathering at Nakhaila so that we and you should collectively think and plan what we can do next."

Imam Mujtaba (as) was well aware that the people of Koofa, as always, would not welcome this decision of his. He was also aware of the intriguers who were constantly spreading false rumours and were thus fulfilling the aims of the enemy. So, he further said: "We are that party of Almighty God which is always successful. We represent the most prominent personalities of the household of the Holy Prophet (saww) and are his pure and chaste 'Ahle Bait'. We are one of the two most valuable things which the Holy Prophet (saww) left after him; we are the peers of the Holy Book of God which contains the explanation of everything, and in which falsehood cannot enter any way (from the front or back). So, in the exegesis of the Holy Quran, reliance has to be on us, as we have not suffered from doubt or conjecture in its exegesis; rather we have full faith in its truth."

"Therefore, (O people!) submit to me, as submission to us is near the submission to God and the Holy Prophet (saww). Almighty God has commanded thus: "O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the messenger and those vested with authority (from) among you; and then if you quarrel concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the messenger if you believe in Allah and the last day ..." An Nisa, Almighty God further commands: "...and if they had referred it (the issue in dispute) to the messenger, and (to) those vested in authority amongst them, then they, who could discover the truth, would have known it..." An Nisa, 83.

Imam Mujtaba (as) further said: "I warn you against listening to the Satan as he is your sworn enemy. But if you do so, then you would be considered as his friend to whom he had said: 'today no one can overcome you and I am your shelter.' However, when two groups came face to face,

then he ran away, saying that he was disgusted with them and his view was different from theirs. Thus, you will be the target of the spear and sword of the enemy and would be in the range of their arrows. In such a situation, the faith of one would not help him unless he had entered the fold of religion earlier or had done any virtuous deed according to his faith."

Soon after Imam Mujtaba (as) had finished his speech, awesome stillness prevailed, as if the people had become dumb. Their faces became pale and they were perspiring. The reason for all that was that they had got tired of war and had bitter experience at the hands of the rebellious Syrian group. Soon after, Adi b. Hatim, a respected Shia leader of the Imam (as) broke the silence. The brave son of Hatim Tae, who was the leader of 'Tae' tribe and had a thousand soldiers under his command, shook the conscience of the people. He said: "I am the son of Hatim. God be glorified. How shameful it is; why don't you come forward and put yourself at the service of your Imam, the grand son of the Holy Prophet (saww)? Where are those orators of Egypt who talk so fluently, but when the situation of trial comes they run away like a fox? Are you not afraid of the wrath of God; are you not ashamed of this condition and are you not realizing its harmful effects?" Turning towards the Imam, Adi b. Hatim said:

"May Almighty God keep you as the guide for a long time; protect you from mischief and may grant you success in the act which may have a good beginning and a happy ending. For sure, we listened to you; we will whole heartedly carry out your command and will support your directions; I am immediately going to join the camp as directed by you and anyone who wants to come with me, may do so."

Saying this, Adi b. Hatim came out of the mosque and riding his horse, moved towards Nakhaila so that he could join the camp of the Imam (as) there. He ordered his servant to take his luggage to the camp.

After Adi b. Hatim, the well known personalities like Qais b. S'ad b. Abadah, M'oqil b. Qais Riyahi and Zaid b. S'as'ah Tamimee delivered strong speeches wherein they encouraged them to fight and admonished them for showing weakness towards war.

On this occasion, the grandson of the Holy Prophet (saww) prayed for God's blessings for them in the same manner as sought by the Holy Prophet (saww) for Miqdad and S'ad b. M'az for their speeches on the occasion of the Badr war. History records the following words of gratitude of Imam Mujtaba (as):

"You have proved to be just; May God's mercy be upon you; I have always observed you acting with obedience, love, advice and sincerity. May the Gracious God grant you the best reward for the same."

With great effort by this sincere and religious group, the residents of Koofa felt ashamed and they became ready for a defensive war against Moawiya. Imam Mujtaba (as) appointed Warqa b. Noful as his representative in Koofa and strongly advised him to keep encouraging the people to get ready for war, to collect them and move them towards his camp in Nakhaila. The same day, soon after attending to other important matters, he went, along with a small army of men from Koofa, to Nakhaila, located at a short distance from the city towards Syria. We are not sure how many men were with Imam Hasan (as) at the time of his departure from Koofa. The recorded versions present a very disappointing situation. Anyway, the historians have no doubt that the people of Koofa did not welcome the decision of Imam Hasan (as) for war. After great effort and persuasion, a small army moved with the Imam (as). Although we intend to discuss the number and the condition of the army of the Imam (as) in later chapters, yet it may be mentioned that Imam Mujtaba (as) was facing a shortage of soldiers, though the researchers estimate that at least forty thousand soldiers were present in Koofa at the time.

An objection and its reply

After analysing the above facts, the objection raised by some historians that when the messengers of the esteemed Imam (as) went to Moawiya with his letter and saw the war preparations in Syria, they advised him to attack Moawiya before he could attack the Imam (as) but he did not give much importance to this advice, does not hold good. When this was the situation about the defensive war, if he had declared on his own to attack, it is quite likely that they might have opened a front against him. There was no shortage of such intriguers and supporters of Moawiya in Koofa. That is why the Imam (as) had warned the people in his sermon to beware of the intriguers and to ignore the rumours which he considered as 'the voice of Satan'.

The second objection

In the disturbed conditions of Koofa where the Ummayyads and the Khawarij were active and the agents of Moawiya and his spies were also busy, why did Imam Mujtaba (as) observe kindness and a policy of tolerance when a ruler uses full force to suppress his adversaries?

Imam Mujtaba (as) was very carefully watching the conditions in Koofa, and like an alert and well informed guide he understood the problems of the people better than them. He was not unaware of the activities of the intriguers, but he also realized that the hearts of the soldiers of his army were for worldly benefit. He had noticed these tendencies from close quarters since the time of Hazrat Ali (as). So, he tried to solve these problems through kindness and love. If we go back to his sermons, we would realize that he tried to revive their conscience and religious sense of honour. He made them realize the adverse consequences if they would not follow the leader completely and would listen to rumours. On the other hand, if they would remain completely loyal to the grandson of the Holy Prophet (saww) and would not shirk in his obedience, they would get

associated with the 'party of God' which is always successful and which could never be defeated. Moreover, by indicating his very close relationship with the household of the Holy Prophet (saww), he wanted to make it clear to the people that according to the Holy Quran and Sunnah it was obligatory on the people to submit to him and not to show the slightest disagreement with his decision either to fight or not to wage a war.

At this critical hour, if the Imam (as) had adopted an aggressive policy, his capital would have become the centre of intrigue and rebellion; a front would have opened against him in Koofa itself. The danger of the rebellion and intrigue was not less than that from Moawiya. In fact, Moawiya himself wanted to get him involved in these problems. Imam Mujtaba (as) camped at Nakhaila for ten days. During this period, he waited for more men to join his army. His sincere commanders arrayed his army there for battle. During the allegiance time, there was so much activity and the people were showing so much love, affection and spirit for the Imam (as) as if they would never abandon him. However, when the time of trial came, the situation changed completely. So much so, that a majority of the soldiers of the brigade which Hazrat Ali (S) had prepared before his martyrdom for attack on Moawiya, and which was said to consist of forty thousand soldiers, had also left him. All the remaining ones also did not obey the command of the Imam (as) for war as if they had lost the spirit and enthusiasm for war. It was not for the first time that their attitude of disobedience and indifference to the Imam (as) had been noticed, as they had adopted the same approach earlier towards Hazrat Ali (as) and, as history records, continued the same later. There is an adage: 'the people of Koofa do not honour their word'. Any way, Imam Mujtaba (as) started the march from Nakhaila with the small army and went up to the area of 'Dair Abdul Rahman'. There some more soldiers, whose number is not known, joined him. The Imam (as) camped there for three days. It is certain that he would not have been unaware of the movement of Moawiya's army and he must have been getting the latest information about the same. So, he decided to send a vanguard unit of twelve thousand soldiers under the command of Ubaidullah b. Abbas towards the northern borders of Iraq so that it may halt the advancement of the army of Moawiya at the Iraqi border. Before their departure, he gave a war command to Ubaidullah, his father's cousin, i.e. his uncle, a part of which has been recorded by the historians:

"O my uncle! I am giving twelve thousand Egyptian reciters of the Holy Quran and brave Arab warriors under your command. One soldier among them is equal to a battalion. Along with them, you should keep marching along the Euphrates river till you reach Maskin after crossing over Euphrates. Continue to march further till you come face to face with Moawiya. You should treat these soldiers with humility, listen to them cheerfully, treat them well and do not allow them under any circumstances to keep away from you as these are the trusted ones of the leader of the faithful, Hazrat Ali (as). If you face Moawiya, hold his advance till I reach you. I am following you soon. You should keep me informed daily. Continue to consult the two i.e. Qais b. S'ad and S'aed b. Qais and do not take any action without their consent. When you face Moawiya, do not be the first to attack, but if he starts the battle then you should also fight. If something happens to you,

then Qais b. S'ad will be in command and if he is also disabled in any way, then S'ad b. Qais (will be in command)." 10_/_

With this war command he ordered Ubaidullah b. Abbas to march on. This way, the army of the Imam (as) had become divided into two from 'Dair Abdul Rahman' area. The vanguard unit continued to move under the command of Ubaidullah and reached 'Falo oha' and thence to 'Maskin'. The other unit, under the command of the Imam (as) marched from 'Dair Abdul Rahman' to Madain, which was established as the garrison headquarter. Before writing about the subsequent events, it is advisable that the significance of the military and geographic location of these areas is briefly mentioned for the benefit of the readers:

Maskin: Near Samra, it is the city surrounded by fertile, lush green area. During the caliphate of Imam Mujtaba (as) it was considered as the northern end of the Iraqi border. From an agricultural point of view, it was the most rich, lush green area. The armies of the Imam (as) and those of Moawiya had fought in this very area.

Madain: Imam Mujtaba (as) had decided to make Madain as his garrison headquarter. From a geographic and military point of view, Madain had a very important location. It is located 30 km. from the southern end of Baghdad on the bank of Tigris river. The strategic location of Madain became more important as it was linked with the routes from Persia, Basra and Koofa. 11_/_
Imam Mujtaba (as) was facing two main problems at that moment:

(1) The advancing army of Moawiya which could enter the Iraqi cities and occupy them, which would further demoralize the Imam's army, which was already fearful of the Syrian army;(2) He was facing a shortage of army personnel to face the fully armed sixty thousand soldiers of the Syrian army. The Imam (as) had stopped the advance of the army of Moawiya by sending the vanguard unit under the command of Ubaidullah b. Abbas, which encamped at the border town 'Maskin'. Secondly, he made Madain as his garrison headquarter and was awaiting reinforcements from Koofa, Basra and Persia, the three important areas of his government. He directed Hajar b. Ade'e to contact his governors in various areas to prepare for war. In addition, he instructed Varqa b. Noful, his representative in Koofa, to induce the people and to propagate for war on a massive scale. In his vast state of Persia, Ziyad b. Ubaid was his governor, who was still loyal to him, and the Imam (as) was hopeful of reinforcement from there. Therefore, the Imam (as) decided to stay at Madain personally for some time and intended to join his vanguard unit at Maskin, which was not more than 120 km. away from him, as soon as the army had gained sufficient strength. That is why he had assured Ubaidullah that he would join him very soon with the rest of the army.

Thus, the heir to the leader of the faithful had planned his defensive strategy very intelligently and proved to the world that he was an expert in war tactics, and was in no way less than Moawiya in war planning. However, his was a defensive war strategy. If only the war-command of the Imam

(as) is deeply analysed and presented to any successful and capable general, he would have to acknowledge that the Imam (as) was a successful and experienced commander-in-chief. Imam Mujtaba (as), in his war-command to Ubaidullah, had given particular attention towards his companions or Shi'a. He praised them, appreciated their bravery and steadfastness and thus provided moral support to them, encouraged them, enhanced their spirit and zeal for war. Then, in four sentences which have deep meaning, he instructed their commander that he should treat them with kindness and humility and should not alienate them. Through these guidelines, he wished to maintain trust between the soldiers and their leadership. In those days, when the army personnel were not given today's extensive military discipline and training, this mutual trust was an important aspect of the army's strength.¹² /

Now, if outwardly he did not succeed in the battle field, it was not his fault but that of the elements which constituted his army. Muslims remember well their defeat in Ohad when they lost the war, which had been won, by disobeying one of the instructions of the Holy Prophet (saww). A similar condition was prevailing here. A particular group respected the Imam (as) and completely followed him, but they constituted a small number and could not face the Syrian army alone. This was the group about whom the Imam (as) had informed Ubaidullah that one soldier among them was equal to a battalion, and they were the trusted men of the leader of the faithful, Hazrat Ali (as). Therefore, the commander should treat them with love, affection and should not alienate them.

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Note: Sheikh Raazi has written that this sermon has been narrated by Hisham bin Hassan according to whom the Imam (as) had given this sermon at the time of the allegiance. However, from the words of the Imam (as) it is clear that he gave the sermon before the war. God knows better. - Moreover, this sermon has also been mentioned in 'Biharul Anwaar'.

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The Constituents of The Army and Its Quality

In the reliable historical records no detail is available through which we could ascertain the composition of various groups that constituted the army of Imam Mujtaba (as) and their quality. Occasionally it has been mentioned that Imam Mujtaba (as) had taken the regiments to fight Moawiya who were the toughest and very firm, or that the Arab leaders had completely submitted themselves to the grand son of the Holy Prophet (saww) so that he had full liberty to fight anyone or make peace.

We feel that these accounts are based on exaggeration as reliable historical records show so many facts which contradict these feelings. Basically, the army of Imam Hasan (as) was composed of the Iraqi army and their political, social and uncertain nature is reflected in the sermons of Hazrat Ali (as) as quoted in 'Nahjul Balagha' wherein he had indicated their weak and wavering nature. Between the period of Hazrat Ali (as) and the peace of Imam Hasan (as), there is a maximum intervening period of ten months. During this period there was very little scope of any major changes in their nature.

In this background we have some words spoken by Imam Mujtaba (as) as well which serve as a shining guide for us. Imam Mujtaba (as) has described the qualities of his army and has comprehensively compared the wars fought during the time of Hazrat Ali (as) and his own. He says:

"You were going towards Siffin when you were devoted to religion and the worldly benefits were insignificant for you, while today you are preferring worldly comforts over religion.

Be warned that you can be divided into two groups of the dead - one the martyrs of Siffin over whom you are shedding tears or the dead of Nahrwan whose revenge you are keen to take. The others have run away from war. But those who are crying for the dead, they seem to be determined to fight."

Imam Mujtaba (as) has, in a very fine manner, compared the Siffin war and the one fought during his time. In both these wars, on the one side was the rebellious Syrian group while on the other was the Iraqi army under the command of Islamic caliph. The difference was that earlier the Iraqi army was fighting with such valour and determination that Moawiya had almost lost his senses, while now they had become victims of the enemy's intrigue and were doubtful, rather afraid of the consequences of the war. Imam Mujtaba (as), explaining the different situation said that their success in the Siffin war was due to their religious leaning, sincerity and devotion, while the loss and their defeat in the war during his time was due to the absence of these very qualities. In other words, now they wanted personal and worldly benefits. Now they were not fighting with the religious zeal and true spirit, but rather for their own worldly gain. Later, the grand son of the Holy

Prophet (saww) referred to the two wars which had a profound effect on their destiny, i.e. the Siffin war, and the Nahrwan war.

So many other wars had also been fought but in these two wars they had suffered very heavy losses which could not be recompensed. They had not been able to overcome the negative effects of these wars, and particularly those of the Nahrwan war, as they were full of rage due to the feeling of enmity and the spirit of revenge. Therefore, Imam Mujtaba (as) considers them belonging to two different groups: one who was shedding tears on the loved ones who lost their life in the long and bloody Siffin war. This group was relatively better and, therefore, was ready to fight a defensive war along with Imam Mujtaba (as). The other 59 group either belonged to the very 'Khawarij' group or had sympathy with it. Though they were involved in the conspiracy to assassinate Hazrat Ali (as), yet they wanted to take revenge from the worthy son of the leader of faithful Imam Ali (as) as well. About the rest, the Imam (as) said that they had kept away from war.

Sheikh Mufid is the first historian who, taking advantage of the above quoted words of Imam Mujtaba (as), has clearly divided his army into different groups. The later historians have also written about this grouping. Briefly, the following five groups constituted the army of the noble Imam:

(1) Shi'a

A particular class of people, devoted to Imam Hasan (as) and his illustrious father, having a special identity based on faith, thought, intellect and mystic knowledge. These people consider caliphate as the right of the household of the Holy Prophet (saww) ('Ahle Bait') from the very beginning, and obedience to them as obligatory. There was no doubt about their asceticism, piety, faith, sincerity, honesty and devotion to 'Ahle Bait' (as); among these were well known and prominent personalities, and the Companions of the Holy Prophet (saww) as well. No doubt, in asceticism, piety and faith, these persons presented an ideal and the Muslims used to seek religious knowledge and learning from them only. But they were small in numbers as a large number from this group had been martyred in the unending wars during the caliphate of Hazrat Ali (as). However, the remaining prominent personalities among them were still performing their duties honourably in the army of Imam Mujtaba (as) to the best of their ability. They tried their best in inducing people to join the army, but it seems they could not change the thinking of the majority of the people of Koofa, and could not win their support. They remained faithful to the members of the household of the Holy Prophet (saww) even after the martyrdom of Imam Hasan (as) and some of them joined the revolution brought about by Imam Husain (as) and attained martyrdom along with him.

(2) The supporters of Feudalism

The Arab society was based on tribalism. The war was also fought in accordance with the same system. The tribal chief would decide whether to fight or not to fight and the other members of the tribe had to follow him. One tribe, along with its chief would form a unit or a battalion. Islam was against this system of blind faith but it required a long time for the people to be educated, to acquire deep knowledge and to attain faith in the light of Islamic teachings. It cannot be denied that during the time of Hazrat Ali (as) itself, many prominent tribal members had changed their loyalties. According to the historian Mas'oodi, a majority of the wealthy persons of Iraq had negotiated with Moawiya, but their survival depended on outwardly supporting Hazrat Ali (as) in the war between him and Moawiya, while remaining neutral. On many occasions, they openly opposed the leader of the faithful, thereby adversely affecting the war. During the time of Imam Mujtaba (as) these persons had started to support Moawiya more openly and their number had also increased.

Most of the army of Imam Hasan (as) was composed of such persons who would only accept the order of their tribal or party leader. In such circumstances, there was always a possibility that such leaders could force the majority of the army of Imam Husain (as) to leave him at the slightest hint by Moawiya.

(3) The group of Self-seekers

While discussing the history of Koofa, it was mentioned that many nationalities from different areas, belonging to different families, colours, breeds, religions and tribes had settled in Koofa. Due to its garrison status, a large number of persons had settled there who wanted to gain worldly benefits through war. For them military ranks and booty were the main attraction and they were not concerned whether the war was being fought for a just cause or for falsehood. Although, apart from them, the whole army was inclined towards self-seeking and worldly benefits, yet a group of self-seekers existed in the army of Imam Mujtaba (as) who had no love for religion or moral values.

(4) 'Khawarij'

Outwardly these people were pious and very respectable but the level of their intellect could be judged from the fact that, God forbid, they had slandered the leader of the faithful, Hazrat Ali (as) as being a polytheist, and had fought the war called 'Nahrwan' against him. Their number after their defeat in Nahrwan war could not be considered as large but their group constituted a great danger for Imam Hasan (as). Outwardly, they were faithful to the Imam (as), but they were waiting for an opportune moment to attain their base objective. To kill Moawiya was also one of their aims. Imam Mujtaba (as) had been watching them and was quite alert.

(5) The doubters

These people did not belong to any particular group or party. They did not have the ability to differentiate between the truth and falsehood and thereby to feel their responsibility to be on the right path. Moreover the extensive propaganda by the Khawarij and the Umayyad group had put them in doubt about the true path followed by the Ahle Bait (as) and about the prophethood. In the normal conditions, they were with the army, but in an uncertain situation they could abandon the Imam (as), as they had an infirm faith.

Imam Mujtaba (as)'s army was composed of these groups with varying tendencies. A majority of these people could become a source of danger for the Imam (as). Due to their wavering and depressed attitude, the revered Imam (as) had not decided to attack Moawiya. During his caliphate he was busy in reform in these disturbed conditions, but Moawiya, by starting the imposed war, had not given the opportunity for the same to the Imam (as). He had to face Moawiya in war, who would have otherwise entered Iraq as victorious, would have at least imprisoned the Imam (as), and the fate of Muslims would have been at his mercy. The war was not only to protect the Islamic caliphate and rule but the survival of Iraq as an independent country was also at stake. Therefore, he decided to fight a defensive war taking all the different groups in his army. Criticism has been levied on Imam Mujtaba (as) regarding the composition of the army and the selection of the soldiers as well. But those indulging in criticism ignore the prevailing atmosphere, the society and the political conditions at the time. So, the objections are wrong. There is no doubt that Imam Mujtaba (as) was passing through a very trying period of Islamic history and not much reliance could be put on the army. However, like a capable general, who had proved his capabilities in war during the period of his illustrious father, he took the decision to fight Moawiya with whatever army he had.

He formed a vanguard brigade of twelve thousand soldiers to stop Moawiya's advance. It was composed of very capable persons who included those devoted to him as well as the 'Shurta al Khamees' (the Thursday Soldiers' group) who had defeated Moawiya in the Siffin war. He had very carefully selected the leadership of the vanguard brigade and was with them, with a limited number of soldiers, till the march to Madain. There he stayed back, waiting for reinforcements from Koofa, Basra and Persia.

The success of Imam Mujtaba (as) depended on the performance of the vanguard brigade. It cannot be denied that in the vanguard brigade also there were paid agents of the enemy, but if its leadership had acted very tactfully according to his commands, it had the force and capability to inflict heavy physical and material loss to the Syrian army, thus blocking the advance by Moawiya, which would have forced him to change his policy. Later, with reinforcements, the Imam (as) would reach Maskin and take control of the army himself, and the chances of his success would have been enhanced. Thus, at least Moawiya could have been confined to Syria. In such a

situation, even enemies would have become friends. But if the leadership of the vanguard brigade could not utilize the select army to the best of its ability and face crisis, then the enemy could penetrate and consequently the whole brigade would lose. Due to its defeat, the whole plan would be upset, the agents of Moawiya and the spies would get the chance that they were awaiting, the majority of the army would lose heart and leave the Imam (as) or cause a crisis for the central leadership. In such a situation, the malicious enemy like the Khawarij could get a chance to play some dirty trick.

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The Strength of The Army

History has recorded the evidence for a very long time that victory or defeat of an army does not depend on the number of its soldiers. When the soldiers are brave and determined to even sacrifice their lives for a great cause, then even small battalions can defeat a mighty army. The Holy Quran has clearly indicated this truth in the words of the sincere and devoted soldiers of Hazrat Talut:

"... How often, by Allah's permission, has a small army vanquished a mighty host. ..." 2:249.

The reason for the same is that there are so many factors which determine the success of an

army, and its strength is one of these. Therefore, it is not possible to deny the importance of the strength of an army. However, it does not mean that success is sure just because the army is large.

As far as the question of the strength of the army of Imam Mujtaba (as) is concerned, some historians have recorded that Imam Mujtaba (as) had marched from Koofa with an army of forty thousand to meet the sixty thousand strong army of Moawiya. Some accounts have even mentioned the strength of the army of the Imam (as) as seventy or ninety thousand. It is, therefore, necessary that a realistic and critical analysis of the historical facts be undertaken to determine the truth or otherwise of the claim. Is it possible that such a large army existed in Koofa? Moreover, did Imam Mujtaba (as) prefer peace over war despite having such a large army?

No doubt has been expressed about the strength of Moawiya's army. The historians agree that during the caliphate of Imam Hasan (as) he had come to attack Iraq with a large army of sixty thousand soldiers. But there is a big difference of opinion and doubt about the strength of the army of Imam Hasan (as) in historical records. A number of historians have kept quiet about the total strength of his army. Moreover, those raising objections against it, contain so many obscure elements. What could be quoted with authenticity was only the strength of the vanguard brigade of the Imam (as) as nearly repetitive historical records show it to be twelve thousand. The history and the historians mentioning the same are:

'Tareekh-e-Y'aaqoobi;

'Tareekh al-Khamees' (Dayar Bakari);

'Al Bidiyah val Nihaya' (Ibne Kaseer)

'Maqatil al Talibeen' (Abul Faraj)

'Ansaab al Ashraaf' (Balazari)

'Tareekh al-Islam' (Hafiz Zahbi)

'Tajarib al Umam' (Abu Maskooya)

'Tareekh-e-Ibne Khaldoon'

'Tareekh-e-Ibne Asakir'

'Al Asaba fee Tamayyaz al Sahaba' (Ibne Hajar 'Asqalani)

'Tareekh-e-Tabari (narration by Moosa b. Abdel Rahman Masrooqi).

Only Zahri's version in 'Tareekh-e-Tabari' presents a different picture of the vanguard battalion, in which the following words need serious attention:

"After deceiving Ubaidullah and (Imam) Hasan (as), Moawiya got busy in employing a ruse against a person who was more important in his view, having forty thousand soldiers under his command."

If this version of Zahri is accepted, then the total strength of the vanguard battalion comes to about fifty thousand, as earlier than Qais bin S'ad, Ubaidullah had escaped with eight thousand soldiers under his command. He is alone in mentioning this figure of the vanguard brigade, yet it is doubtful whether it had that much strength. So, his account cannot be trusted. Not only in this case, but all his accounts relating to Ahle Bait (as) as well are considered doubtful by the researchers, the reason being that he used to write only what could meet with approval in the Umayyad court. We intend to throw more light about his accounts in subsequent chapters. The well known account of the strength of the forces of Imam Mujtaba (as) is that these numbered forty thousand. Other accounts have also been recorded but researchers consider the number of more than forty thousand as an exaggeration. The following historical records support the well known version:

'Al-Kamil Fee-al-Tareekh':

"When the leader of the faithful, Hazrat Ali (as), received certain information about Syrian intentions, forty thousand soldiers in his army had vowed to fight under his command till death. He was martyred while preparing to march on. When Almighty Allah takes a decision to act, no one can evade it. When after his death, the people had taken the allegiance to Imam Hasan (as), he learnt about Moawiya's planned attack and advanced with the army that had taken the vow with Hazrat Ali (as)."

'Al-Futooh le-Ibne A'sam':

"Moawiya marched towards Iraq with an army of sixty thousand soldiers. Hasan b. Ali (as) sent letters to his governors instructing them to take defensive measures. General mobilisation was ordered. Imam Hasan (as) advanced with a little less than forty thousand soldiers, appointing Mughira b. Noful as his representative in Koofa. He continued till the area called 'Dair Abdel Rahman'. Then he called Qais b. S'ad and giving him one thousand soldiers from his own army, set up the vanguard battalion with which Qais moved towards Syria."

'Tareekh al Khamees':

"Abu 'Umroo says that when Hazrat Ali b. Abee Talib (as) was martyred, forty thousand persons took allegiance to Imam Hasan (as). Earlier, all these persons had vowed to fight till death along with his father, Hazrat Ali (as). They liked Imam Hasan (as) more than his father and obeyed him more."

The same narration has been recorded in 'Zakhair-al-'Oqobi' by Muhib al Tabari.

In this regard, nearly all historical records contain the same account, i.e. that before his

martyrdom, Hazrat Ali (as) had organized an army of forty thousand soldiers for a decisive attack on Moawiya. After his martyrdom, people paid allegiance to Imam Hasan (as). These accounts maintain that as the people loved Imam Hasan (as) more than his illustrious father Hazrat Ali (as), and obeyed him more, therefore, the number of men in his army was also forty thousand. However, they are cautious in this expression! Objections (1) The number of forty thousand soldiers in Koofa has a historical significance, as during that period the maximum number of soldiers has been mentioned as forty thousand. However, if it is true that forty thousand soldiers had vowed to fight till death under the command of Hazrat Ali (as), and after his martyrdom had paid allegiance to his heir and elder son Imam Hasan (as), yet it cannot be assumed that all those persons had participated in the war along with Imam Hasan (as). At a critical time in the history of Koofa when there was a new crisis every hour and every home was in mourning, how can it be said that all those who had paid allegiance had participated in the war when there is a time lag of five to six months between the allegiance and the start of war!

(2) After the declaration of war, Imam Mujtaba (as) gave a sermon in the central mosque of Koofa. Historians write that the grandson of the Holy Prophet (saww) was watchful about the defeatist mentality of the people and their will to retreat. After the sermon, no one supported him till Adi b. Hatim, the leader of Tai tribe condemned the people for not rising to support the war. From subsequent events like the 'movement of Hajar b. Adi' and the revolution of Imam Husain (as), it becomes clear that the people were not at all willing for war in those conditions. Though they respected and loved Imam Mujtaba (as) due to his eminent personality and being a close member of the household of the Holy Prophet (saww), but to love is one thing and to sacrifice all at the Imam's command is quite another. Therefore, in the circumstances, it is not possible for forty thousand soldiers to assemble for war.

(3) History should clearly indicate as to what was the strength of the army of Imam Hasan (as) at the time of departure from Koofa; what was the condition from 'Nakhaila' till the area of 'Dair Abdel Rahman' and what extra reinforcements reached the Imam at Madain. Not only is it that no clear details are available, but rather the reports are contradictory. For that reason, so many historians have avoided to mention the correct figure. Ibne Abee al Hadeed writes that the Imam (as) marched with a large army from Koofa. The question arises: how large? An army of twenty to twenty five thousand may also be considered as very large!

(4) If Imam Mujtaba (as) had an army of forty thousand, he would not limit the number of soldiers of the vanguard battalion to only twelve thousand, to fight Moawiya. For sure, he would have increased the number of soldiers in the vanguard unit. We feel that these doubts and objections are enough to show that the statement of forty thousand soldiers is weak. Among the reliable historical versions, only Ibne A'sam has clearly mentioned that Imam Mujtaba (as) had marched with an army less than forty thousand strong. Although his book 'Al Futooh' is one of the oldest reference books in this context, yet his statement in this respect is not acceptable. In the same

version, he writes that the vanguard unit of the Imam (as) had one thousand soldiers. We are of the view that no historian or researcher would agree with his above version.

The objection by Musayyab b. Najih Fazari

Musayyab b. Najih (or Najaih) rose and said: "May my life be sacrificed for you. I wonder how you gave allegiance to Moawiya when you had forty thousand soldiers under your command?"

From the above objection, it has been concluded that forty thousand soldiers were fighting along with the Imam (as). But it is not certain that the same conclusion may be drawn from the above statement, as it is quite possible that Musayyab, due to his religious zeal and spirit, might have been trying to remind the Imam (as) how he had given allegiance when forty thousand soldiers in Koofa were accepting him as the real caliph and had paid allegiance to him. From the versions relating to the observation of Musayyab b. Najih, it seems that he was stressing on the Imam (as) the desirability of restarting the war and was thinking that perhaps all the people could be readied again for war!

Ibne Qutaiba's narration

Ibne Qutaiba Dinavari records that Sulaiman b. Sarad, who was a leader of Koofa and was not present in Koofa at the time, raising an objection against Imam Hasan (as), said: "I am very much surprised how you agreed to Moawiya's allegiance when you had one hundred thousand paid soldiers under your control."

The learned scholar Sheikh Raazi Ale Yasin, analysing the above observation by Ibne Qutaiba, writes that the above account has been mentioned in 'Tanziatul Anbia', 'Manaqib Ibne Shahr Aashob' and 'Biharul Anwar' in which the said number has been mentioned as forty thousand instead of one hundred thousand. Ibne Qutaiba is alone in mentioning the figure of one hundred thousand just like he mentioned the word 'allegiance' instead of 'peace', which no one else had used.

The speech by Ziyad b. Abeeh

During the caliphate of Imam Hasan (as), Ziyad b. Abeeh was his governor in Persia. When Moawiya wrote threatening letters to him, he made the following speech in reply: "The son of the liver-eater, the centre of malice, and the leader of opposition groups is threatening me through letters when there is the respect of two grandsons of the Holy Prophet (saww) between me and him. There are seventy thousand (or according to one version, ninety thousand) soldiers with him (the Imam (as)), who are fully ready for battle. By God if he makes the mistake of attacking me, he will find me a very tough and brave fighter."

The learned scholar Sheikh Razi Ale Yasin, giving a convincing reply to the false figure quoted in the above two accounts, writes: "The important point to note is that both these leaders were not present in Koofa during the period of the caliphate of Imam Hasan (as), i.e. beginning with the allegiance to the Imam (as) till the peace. They had departed from Koofa two years earlier. Therefore, their statements lose much value due to the fact that they were not present on the spot to study the conditions prevailing in Koofa. It is possible that they may have guessed the figure of the army on the basis of earlier conditions prevailing in Koofa.

"Any way, the statements by the two are more emotional than based on reality. Ziyad b. Abeeh (Ubaid) was trying to frighten Moawiya by exaggerating the number of soldiers in the army while Sulaiman b. Sarad was unhappy about the peace by Imam Hasan (as).

"We are also aware that Sulaiman b. Sarad had very close association with Musayyab b. Najih. Therefore, it is not possible that the two had such widely varying views about matters relating to the Ahle Bait (as), i.e. one mentions the figure of forty thousand while the other says it was one hundred thousand. The main reason for their different assessment is that one of them relied on Ibne Qutaiba who had recorded so many accounts which could not be validated on the basis of research and critical analysis.

"Almighty God willed that these two leaders may get a practical answer to their objection to the Imam (as) and the negative view about the peace he made. In the movement of taking revenge for the martyrdom of Imam Husain (as), in 65 A.H., eighteen thousand residents of Koofa had paid allegiance to them, but at the critical time of the actual fight only three thousand one hundred persons were left with them. After facing the defeatist tendency of the people by themselves, they might have truly realized the difficult situation that the Ahle Bait (as) had faced. While leading the 'Tavvaboon' struggle, they were both martyred." 10_/

After analysing all the versions and their weaknesses, regarding the strength of the army of Imam Hasan (as), we can conclude that history does not record the actual number of soldiers in the army of the Imam (as). Moreover, whatever historical records have been quoted, are unreliable. Therefore, we cannot clearly state what the strength of the army might have been. However, through circumstantial evidence, the researchers estimate that it was not more than twenty thousand - as the vanguard brigade had twelve thousand soldiers, while four thousand soldiers were with the Imam (as) himself, and another four thousand joined him in Madain. Thus, the total strength of the army comes to twenty thousand. 11_/

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Selections of The Leader

The researchers complain that a factual, analytical and critical study of the struggle between

Imam Hasan (as) and Moawiya, as presented by history, has not yet been undertaken. Thus, a chapter on the early Islamic period remains dark, vague and unclear. A similar view has been expressed by the well known German orientalist J. Wellhavesen. While analysing the period of Imam Mujtaba (as), he writes:

Events are recorded with confusion and fragmentation and that it is, therefore, difficult to place certain details of the episode in precise chronological order."

The researchers are justified in their comment, as those trying to analyse the events during the period of Imam Hasan (as) come across many such different, confused statements about the events and contradictory narrations. Similar variation is also observed about the leadership of the vanguard brigade. From the occurrences after reaching Maskin, it seems that the difference is quite significant.

Some historians have written that the command of the vanguard brigade that Imam Hasan (as) had ordered to go to Maskin in the northern Iraqi area to check the advance by Moawiya, was given to Qais b. S'ad b. Abadah Ansari. The following historians have recorded it as such:

Ibne A'sam - 'Al-Futooh',
Hafiz Zahbi - 'Tareekh al-Islam-o-al-'abar,
Dayar Bakari - 'Tareekh al-Khamees',
Ibne Hajar 'Asqalani - 'Alasabah fee Tamayyaz al Sahaba'
Ibne Khaldoon - 'Tareekh ibne Khaldoon'
Abu Ali Maskooya - 'Tajarib al Umam'

Two versions have been given in 'Tareekh-e-Tabari'. According to Zahri's narration, Ubaidullah b. Abbas, the cousin of Imam Mujtaba's father (i.e. his uncle) was in command of the vanguard brigade, while according to Moosa b. Abdel Rahman's narration, the command was given to Qais b. S'ad.

The historian Ibne 'Asakir too, in his well known book 'Tareekhe Madinate Damishq' mentions two different versions. According to him, only Abul Safar has mentioned the name of Qais b. S'ad as the commander of the vanguard unit, while others have mentioned Ubaidullah b. Abbas as the commander.

On the other hand, we also come across the historical records wherein it has been mentioned that though the leadership was given by Imam Mujtaba (as) to Ubaidullah b. Abbas, Qais b. S'ad was appointed as his assistant and adviser. The following historians support this version:

Yaqoobi - 'Tareekh-e-Yaqubi'

Ibne Kaseer - 'Al bidayah val Nihayah' Balazari - 'Ansaab al Ashraaf'
Abul Faraj - 'Maqatil al Talibeen'
Sheikh Mufeed - 'Kitab al Irshad'
Ibne Abee al Hadeed - 'Sharhe Nahjul Balagha'
Ibne Aseer - 'Al Kamil fittareekh'

From the historical evidence available, it is not difficult to decide that initially the commander of the vanguard unit was Ubaidullah b. Abbas, but later the command was officially as signed to Qais b. S'ad. We will quote only two sources here:

(1) The war command of Imam Mujtaba (as) in which he ordered Ubaidullah to take the command of the vanguard brigade and appointed Qais b. S'ad and S'eed b. Qais as his advisers.

(2) The letter from Ubaidullah b. Abbas or Qais b. S'ad to Imam Hasan (as), after taking over the command of the vanguard brigade, in which they have mentioned the crisis faced by the leadership.

From a historical point of view, the authenticity of the two documents and their accuracy is proved. However, the misunderstanding by some that Qais was the commander of the vanguard brigade, was due to the main role played by Qais b. S'ad. For sure, during the caliphate of Hazrat Ali (as) he had been the commander-in-chief of a very important brigade - 'the Shurta al Khamees' (the Thursday Soldiers). Imam Mujtaba (as) had also not appointed Ubaidullah b. Abbas as the sole commander, but he had appointed Qais as his assistant and next in command. Due to later events, when Qais got the command, he was at the centre of all the events, which caused the historians to consider him as the commander of the vanguard brigade.

Some historians have raised objection that Imam Mujtaba (as) appointed Ubaidullah as the commander. In this respect, the following extract from 'Tareekh-e-Tabari' etc., needs attention:

"When Hazrat Ali (as) was martyred and the Iraqi people paid allegiance to Imam Hasan (as) as the caliph, it became evident that Imam Hasan (as) was not in favour of war. But he wanted to make a bargain for himself with Moawiya before making any agreement. Imam Hasan (as) knew that Qais b. S'ad would not agree with this view of the Imam (as). Therefore, he dismissed him and appointed Ubaidullah b. Abbas as the commander of the army."

Two conclusions can be drawn from the above historical extract: 1) Imam Hasan (as) did not want a war; (2) Before taking any decision about the consequences of peace, he wanted to extract something from Moawiya.

As far as the stand taken by Imam Mujtaba (as) about the war is concerned, we have already

explained it in earlier chapters and no doubt remains about the same. Yet, we would like to make a brief comment.

Imam Mujtaba (as), just like his father, considered it his prime duty to fight the rebellious group and he considered himself to be the rightful claimant and heir to the caliphate, but due to a number of problems, which have earlier been mentioned, he did not want to start the war himself in the given disturbed conditions. But that did not mean that he did not want to fight even a defensive war! That is why, as soon as he got the information about Moawiya's advance, he made the declaration of war and started large scale propagation for the same. His sermon in the Koofa mosque about readiness for war and his taking the limited army to the camp in 'Nakhaila' outside the city, the same day, is a clear proof that he was taking appropriate steps for war. Reliable historical records show that it was not Imam Mujtaba (as) but the people who were reluctant to fight and disappointed their Imam. If Imam Mujtaba (as) was really inclined towards peace from the beginning, he would neither have threatened Moawiya with the consequences nor would have stuck to his firm stand till the end. Rather, he could have easily replied to Moawiya's offer of peace at some appropriate moment and would have presented him with his own conditions!

Moreover, the above extract was from Zahri's narration and it reflected his own ideas. Researchers complain that he was partial. We will discuss this aspect in detail in subsequent chapters. Similarly, we will reply to the second conclusion referred to above, while discussing the 'peace treaty'.

Rebuttal of another Misunderstanding

Some historians, prominent among them being Ibne Kaseer, have written that Imam Mujtaba (as) was against the war but the views of the supporters of war and the Iraqi people prevailed over his own view; they gathered a large number of people after which the grand son of the Holy Prophet (saww) had to decide in favour of war. 10_/_

There is no doubt that the religious devotees and the supporters of war had tried to pressurise the Imam (as) right from the beginning for war and had wanted the allegiance to him to be paid on the condition that he would consider the war against the rebels as the main goal of his caliphate. But the true Islamic caliph had turned it down and allowed them to pay allegiance only on following the Holy Book and the Sunnah. The historians have no doubt that ultimately the extremist group as well had agreed to the Imam (as)'s firm and rightful stand and gave allegiance on that basis. As they could not prevail over the Imam (as) at that critical moment, it was impossible for them to prevail over the Imam (as) after he had duly taken over as the caliph.

The reliable historical records show that the decision for defensive war was taken by Imam Mujtaba (as). The religious group had supported him in this regard which was appreciated by the

Imam (as) and he had prayed to the Gracious God to bestow His blessings on them. This shows that on this issue there was no difference of opinion between him and the religious group. The basic question that remains, and the answer to which would put an end to all objections and misunderstandings, is: on what considerations did Imam Hasan (as) appoint Ubaidullah as the commander of the vanguard brigade when persons like Qais b. S'ad b. Abadah Ansari were present in the army, whose military experience, sincerity towards the Ahle Bait (as), and honesty had already been tried?

The learned scholar Raazi Aale Yasin (RA), through a comprehensive analysis, gives four answers to this question:

Scholar Raazi Aale Yasin's analysis about the leader's selection

First answer

The scholar Raazi Aale Yasin writes that when Imam Hasan (as) wanted to select Ubaidullah for the leadership, he had bound him down to consult Qais b. S'ad and S'eed b. Qais. This is clearly stated in his war command or the agreement. This way he did not allow the leadership to be confined to one person, which would not be prudent, but appointed a supreme committee of three persons who were the most capable persons in the army. If he had given preference to Qais b. S'ad over the other two, or over other companions, and had confined the leadership to one person, it was likely that other persons like him who had similar status, were sincere and had a shining record in the religious war ('jihad') and otherwise, would feel jealous. Among those were Hazrat Aboo Ayub Ansari, Hajar b. Adi Kandi, Adi b. Hatim Tai and some others. In such a situation, it was the best policy for Imam Hasan (as) to prefer the cousin of his father, who was also the cousin of the Holy Prophet (saww), and to bind him to consult Qais b. S'ad and S'eed b. Qais. In this approach there was no danger of any rivalry or disagreement.

Second answer

The scholar Sheikh Raazi, giving the second reply, writes that in the circumstances it was necessary for Imam Hasan (as) that the selected leader be from the Hashemi family. The point may be explained thus: after the declaration of war in Koofa, the people had shown reluctance and half-heartedness which was the beginning of a bad omen for Imam Hasan (as). So, it was essential for him to adopt such a policy which would provide a good answer to any current or future criticism or objection. It was easy for the people to blame Imam Hasan (as) if they would see any weakness in his army or would notice any lack of fighting spirit in the soldiers. It is also possible that if the vanguard brigade had suffered defeat at the hands of Moawiya, they would have argued that if the commander was from the family of the Imam (as) he would have faced the adverse situation in a more determined, cool and calculated manner, and the result would not

have been the same.

Therefore, taking all these factors into consideration, the selection of the Hashemi leader was an important and sane decision.

Third answer

No none in the army of Imam Hasan (as), neither Qais b. S'ad, nor S'eed b. Qais nor anyone else was more keen and determined to fight Moawiya, than Ubaidullah, as he was full of anger against Moawiya - in fact he was burning with rage to take revenge from Moawiya, as two innocent children of his had fallen victim to the murder and plunder by the army which Moawiya had sent to Yemen under the command of Basar b. Abee Artat. This incident is one of the darkest in history and is very well known. So it was appropriate that the command of the vanguard brigade should be given to an aggrieved one who would be very determined to fight the murderer of his children.

Fourth answer

The major part of the vanguard brigade which Imam Hasan (as) had formed to fight Moawiya, consisted of the remaining soldiers who had been organized by the leader of the faithful Hazrat Ali (as) to fight Moawiya. Hazrat Ali (as) had appointed Qais b. S'ad the commander of that army and Qais had been its leader all the time. It would be a realistic assessment that such relation between the leader and his soldiers is significant and it is easy for a leader who has extraordinary influence over the soldiers to take independent decisions at any time by distancing the army under his command from the central command of the Imam (as). This was such a delicate issue which required caution. Though we respect Qais, we cannot deny his personal inclination to take independent decisions. We cannot forget the day when he got the leadership and standing among the soldiers he gave them the choice to decide between two alternatives:

- (1) The peace of Imam (as) which included allegiance to Moawiya;
- (2) To continue the war without the specific order of the Imam (as).

There could be no better strategy than to not give the command to such a personality but to still keep him as a political and military adviser, thus benefiting from his ability and intelligence. So, in the given conditions, Imam Hasan (as) made the best decision. However, the appointment of Qais b. S'ad as the deputy commander by the Imam (as), does not contradict his political policy, as firstly, he would have to maintain the decisions taken by the earlier command, thus he would not be able to make quick changes to the war scene. Secondly, it was likely that the Imam (as) would himself reach Maskin by that time and would take full control himself, as he had informed the commander that he intended to reach there very soon. After that, what was the problem in appointing Qais as the deputy commander?! 11_/_

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From Maskin To Madain

Ubaidullah b. Abbas was quickly advancing towards Maskin with twelve thousand soldiers in the vanguard brigade. While passing through a place called "Shami" near Qadisiya, he continued his advance till he reached Maskin after crossing over the Euphrates. There he faced the Syrian army which had already arrived.

The next day the Syrian ruler Moawiya ordered a number of armed units under the command of Basar b. Abee Artat to attack the vanguard brigade of the Imam (as). Ubaidullah and his men fought them off bravely and defeating them before sunset, forced them to retreat to the Syrian camp. At that moment Moawiya realized that Imam Mujtaba (as) was very serious about an armed struggle against him. So, by the night fall, he started planning his cunning tactics.

Moawiya sent his special envoy Abdel Rahman b. Samrah, b. Habib b. Abde Shams to the vanguard brigade, with the following message:

"A number of representatives of Hasan (as) have come to me with his letters in which he has offered peace to me. I have come towards Iraq with the same intention and I have ordered my soldiers not to engage you. You should also not harm them till the issues are settled between me and Hasan (as)."

Ubaidullah and his colleagues refused to believe the message, considering it to be based on falsehood and deception, and abusing Abdel Rahman b. Samrah, sent him back.

After that Moawiya tried to bribe Qais b. S'ad, the deputy commander. Moawiya sent him one hundred thousand Dirham and suggested that he should either support him or leave the army of Imam (as). Qais returned the Moawiya, saying: "Does Moawiya want to deceive me in my religion?"

On being disappointed from Qais, Moawiya sent his special envoy Abdel Rahman b. Samrah to Ubaidullah. He requested special meeting with him and swearing, tried to convince him that Imam Mujta ba (as) had offered peace to Moawiya. Simultaneously, he offered Ubaidullah one hundred thousand Dirham. The historian Abul Faraj Isphahani quotes the following text of the message that was sent to Ubaidullah:

"No doubt Hasan (as) has written to me about peace and he is going to hand over the rule to me very soon. So, if you obey me now, you will be treated like an officer, otherwise you will be treated like an ordinary soldier. If you accept my offer now, you will be given one hundred thousand Dirham, half of which I am sending in haste as cash, while the balance will be given to you on reaching Koofa."

The historians write that Ubaidullah b. Abbas fell a victim to this conspiracy and deserting the army and leaving the command, he joined Moawiya the same night. According to Y'qubi and Balazari he was not alone in deserting the army but the majority of the vanguard brigade which is said to have numbered eight thousand, also deserted with him.

Some versions mention that after Ubaidullah's desertion, the majority of the leaders and well

known personalities of Iraq, coming under similar influence, had joined the army of Moawiya. It cannot be denied that a majority in the vanguard brigade (nearly two thirds) had earlier or later joined the forces of Moawiya.

The circumstantial evidence shows that apart from Ubaidullah b. Abbas and Qais b. S'ad, Moawiya had tried to bribe other leaders in the Iraqi army as well. But the main reason of his success was that all of them, including Ubaidullah, had become frightened. They knew Moawiya very well and their national and religious status and interests would not at all allow them to bow to 87 Moawiya. Moawiya had offered cash only to Ubaidullah while others had been given only verbal promises. Without getting any cash, why did they trust the verbal promise?

If their attitude is analysed, lack of leadership and the fear of Moawiya and his army was the main reason for the same. There is no doubt that against a well organized and armed force of sixty thousand, a disorganized force of twelve thousand, all of whose soldiers could not even be trusted, was no match. Moreover, they were facing not an ordinary person but one like Moawiya. The leader of the faithful Hazrat Ali (as) had warned his Persian governor in the following words to beware of Moawiya:

"Undoubtedly sometimes Moawiya attacks a person from the front, sometimes from back, while on other occasions from right or left. So, you should remain very alert to his moves."

However, it cannot be denied as well that the soldiers in the vanguard brigade were the best soldiers in the army of Imam Hasan (as). These included a large number of the Shi'a of his father and his own who included a number of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (saww). They included the devotees of "Shurta al Khamees" who had vowed to fight till death and, according to historians, Moawiya was fearful of them. The tried and experienced Generals like Qais b. S'ad, S'aeed b. Qais, S'as'ah b. Saohan and Adi b. Hatim as well were in the army of the Imam (as) from whom Moawiya was afraid. About these very people Imam Mujtaba (as) had stated that every one of them was equal to an army and that they were from amongst the most trusted ones of the leader of the faithful. In addition, Imam Mujtaba (as) had more than once advised the commander to treat them with courtesy and kindness. The other persons, though they were not as firm in faith and bravery, yet if the leadership had trusted them and had, following the instructions of the Imam (as), not allowed them to go astray and would have maintained their trust, then there was no chance for Moawiya to sow seeds of discord among them or for them to fall prey to his cunning moves. But when they saw the leadership itself getting involved, then they lost hope from the army of the Imam (as) and started to offer faithfulness to Moawiya. They did not fully trust Moawiya but this way they hoped that their lives and those of their tribe would remain safe. The main person responsible for this "lack of trust" was Ubaidullah b. Abbas. It was the moral responsibility of the commander to take Qais b. S'ad and S'aeed b. Qais into confidence, to consult them according to the instructions of Imam Hasan (as), and to solve the problems taking into

account their honesty and ability. Though some historians have defended him, writing that he deserted the army after finding out the policy of Imam Hasan (as), history provides no evidence that Ubaidullah verified what Moawiya had said. It is possible that up to the last moment he considered Moawiya's words as false but due to his poor and limited thinking he found himself in the midst of honour and disgrace. He might have worried that his subordinates were likely to leave him and by accepting the offer of Moawiya, he could protect his future. Otherwise, if he fell into the hands of the commanders of Moawiya, they would disgrace him. With this thought, his faith was shaken, he got frightened and fell pray to the very first move of conspiracy.

Early morning when the soldiers assembled for morning prayers as usual and learnt that their commander along with two thirds of the army had joined the army of Moawiya, they were amazed and at first they not believe it. In accordance with the earlier instructions of the Imam (as), Qais b. S'ad took over the command of the army. After leading the prayers, he gave a remarkable sermon in which he cursed Ubaidullah and called him 'coward' and 'traitor'. This way he succeeded in restoring the morale of the remaining soldiers. His speech had such a profound effect on the soldiers that they thanked God on a coward like Ubaidullah leaving the army and vowed to fight till death under the command of Qais b. S'ad. Their number has been mentioned as four thousand.

This would show that only these persons in the vanguard brigade were the true devotees of the Imam (as). It was their true faith and sincerity that they withstood such a big shock and were thus considered as honest and devoted soldiers of the Imam(as)'s vanguard unit.

After the breach of trust by Ubaidullah, Moawiya did not doubt the success of his negative policies. He started a dual campaign of propaganda and rumour in the two parts of the army of Imam Mujtaba (as), i.e. in the vanguard unit and in the army at Madain. Ubaidullah was not only the commander of the vanguard brigade and the cousin of the Imam's father, but he was also considered to be very close to Imam Hasan (as). When a person like him could do what he did, then what complaint can there be about others!

So, after him, breach of trust, treachery, betrayal of religion, deserting the army and rebellion became a daily routine. He is directly responsible for all that. He was the first person who, performing the role of 'Mir J'afar', brought down the Hashemi caliphate and created the atmosphere which enabled the army of the Imam (as) to fall prey to the conspiracy of the enemy. History will never forgive him for such a crime!!

The agents of Moawiya on the one hand spread rumour in the army at Madain that Qais b. S'ad had made peace with Moawiya and had joined him, while on the other hand, in the army at Maskin they said: "Imam Hasan (as) is planning peace with Moawiya."

Moawiya thought that after Ubaidullah and other officers, the vanguard unit would now be having a defeatist tendency and would not have the guts to fight. So he sent some units under the command of Basar b. Artat to finish off the remaining soldiers. Qais b. S'ad, with four thousand forces, bravely fought out the onslaught by Basar and again forced him to run. The next day he again attacked with a large army of twenty thousand who were fully armed. This time also, after a bitter fight, he was defeated. Many soldiers had died on both sides in this encounter but Basar had not been successful. During the war, he shouted at the Iraqi army, saying: "Your leader Hasan (as) has made peace. So, why are you bent upon committing suicide?"

The soldiers of the vanguard unit had become used to such rumours. So, they ignored Basar and continued to fight with courage and determination, giving hard blows to the Syrian army. Intervening, Moawiya also tried a number of times to stop the fight but was unsuccessful. He sent a number of messages to Qais b. S'ad, frightened, threatened him and once he even called him a Jew, son of Jew. Qais b. S'ad was a very steadfast person. He ignored the threats of Moawiya and had only one answer to all his offers and proposals:

"By God you will not meet me except facing me on the battle front."

Qais b. S'ad continued the war, thus following the policy of the Imam (as). He also gave detailed replies to the communications from Moawiya. In one reply he wrote: "O Moawiya you and your ancestors are known as the idolaters of Makkah. You embraced Islam willy nilly. Neither your faith is old nor is your malice new. We are the scions of religion while you have gone out of it and are its enemy."

Moawiya wanted to send another threatening message to Qais b. S'ad but Umroo b. 'As advised him not to do so, saying that Qais b. S'ad might give a stronger reply.

After the study of reliable historical records there remains no doubt that Moawiya, despite all his cunning and political blackmail, did not succeed in defeating the damaged vanguard unit, which was now under the command of Qais b. S'ad. Qais, through his intelligence and with the support of his devoted, faithful and steadfast soldiers, was keeping the army of Moawiya engaged. He had not only kept the fully armed Syrian army involved in war but had, to some extent, gained an upper hand over it. However, that does not mean that he had no problems. Though he had successfully countered all the conspiracies of Moawiya, yet the main cause of his worries was the fact that he was not aware of what was happening to the army of Imam (as) at Madain and its central leadership there. He was worried about the welfare of Imam Hasan (as) and was not aware of the problems that the Imam (as) was facing, while all sorts of rumours had been spread in the army. During these uncertain conditions, a news was received that:

"Imam Hasan (as) was attacked with a dagger on his thigh and he is seriously ill while the soldiers,

deserting him, have run away."

One can imagine what effect the news might have had on the companions of the (as) Imam during the crisis situation. Qais b. S'ad was aggrieved on hearing the news. He was a very experienced and mature general and, as always, did not allow his army men to be adversely affected by the news. Planning the attack on the army of Moawiya, he did not give a chance to his soldiers to think about the news. Consequently, he nullified the enemy's conspiracy. He successfully attacked the army of Moawiya a number of times and inflicted heavy physical and material losses on it. In these attacks some of his soldiers also lost their lives. Before night fall both the armies separated and Moawiya sent the following message to Qais b. S'ad:

"O man! on what basis are you fighting me and are bent on losing your life? We have reliably learnt that your supporters have dethroned your Imam (as). He has been attacked on his thigh so severely that he was close to death. In the circumstances, till learning the truth you should refrain from attacking us."

After this communication from Moawiya, Qais stopped the attacks on the army of Moawiya and awaited an authentic report from Madain. 10_/_

What happened in Madain?

It has been made clear in the earlier chapters that the success of the army of Imam Hasan (as) and its morale directly depended on the performance of the vanguard brigade. So, when the reserve forces in Madain learnt about the betrayal by Ubai dullah and others, it was a big shock for them, and losing hope for victory in war like some of the officers of the vanguard brigade, they also started thinking in terms of contacting Moawiya. Therefore, the spies of Moawiya had no difficulty in spreading rumours or in making cunning moves as directed by him.

During that time Moawiya sent a three man delegation, consisting of Moghira b. Sh'aba, Abdullah b. Aamir b. Karez, and Abdel Rahman b. Samra, ostensibly to negotiate peace with Imam Hasan (as). Before reaching the camp of the Imam (as), Abdullah b. Aamir, loudly addressing the Iraqi army, said:

"O people of Iraq! I am from the vanguard unit of Moawiya. I do not consider war to be justified. Moawiya has reached Maskin with his army. You give my regards to Abu Mohammad (Imam) Hasan (as) and tell him that for God sake he should have mercy on his own life as well as those of his men."

After the utterance of these words by Abdullah b. Aamir, people lost heart and started disliking war. This shows that they believed that Abdullah b. Aamir had spoken the truth. It is a proof of

their stupidity that they believed that Moawiya did not want war! On entering the camp of Imam Hasan (as), the delegation of Moawiya told him:

"For the sake of the transitory life of this world and forgiveness, the bloodshed of the followers of the Holy Prophet (saww) should be avoided by you. We do not deny that Moawiya is stubborn on the issue, but for God sake you should not do so, otherwise so many lives will be lost due to conflict between you two. Moawiya has also expressed his intention to hand over the office to you after his death. Moreover, in return for your retiring he will offer you much more."

We are sorry to acknowledge that, like other occasions, history does not reflect the stand taken by Imam Hasan (as) on this occasion and it is not clear what the Imam (as) said in reply!

Anyway, while coming out of the camp, these persons tried to give a false impression to the army of the Imam (as), which was perhaps the main purpose of their mission. They said: "For sure, the Gracious God has saved the lives of the people through the grand son of the Holy Prophet (saww); disorder and trouble has been avoided and he has agreed to peace." 11_/_

Historians have written that after this, the people did not doubt their statement. People were in the midst of uncertainty when an uproar was heard that: "Qais b. S'ad has been assassinated. So, run" 12_/_

After Ubaidullah b. Abbas, if the Iraqis had reassurance from any one, it was Qais the son of S'ad b. Abadah. He was considered a perfect symbol of faith, bravery and steadfastness and an ideal person. The Iraqis knew that after defeating the vanguard brigade, Moawiya would attack Madain. But they felt that it was not easy to defeat a commander like Qais. Thus they did not face an immediate danger from Moawiya. However, as soon as they heard the rumour of the assassination of Qais, they almost lost all hope. So, giving up everything, they started to run. Very soon, the whole army panicked, confusion and disorder prevailed and the Khawarij got an opportunity for revenge. Taking advantage of the situation, they attacked the camp of Imam (as). They robbed all that was in the camp of the noble grand son of the Holy Prophet (saww); they even pulled the carpet from under his feet and the robe from his shoulder.

Imam Hasan (as), saying "verily there is no power and strength but by Allah", immediately got up, drew his sword and trying to save himself from the unexpected attack, rode on the horse. He called his supporters from "Rabi'a and Hamadan" tribes for help and marched with them towards the governor house of Madain via "Muzlim Sabat" area. Though these tribes performed the duty of protecting the Imam (as), yet in the prevailing confusion and disorder, it had become very difficult for them to distinguish between friend and foe. While the Imam (as) was passing through Muzlim Sabat, a Khawarij, Jarah b. Sanan Asadi, who was lying in ambush, attacked the Imam (as) with a dagger as soon as he passed by him. The injury was so severe that the dagger had reached

the thigh bone. Imam (as) caught him by his beard, twisted him and threw him on the ground with such force that his neck was broken. Immediately, Abdullah b. Zabian and Abdullah b. Khatal attacked and killed him. Due to heavy loss of blood, the Imam (as) had become seriously bruised. After that, his devoted Shi'a, taking him under heavy protection, took him to the governor's house at Madain where S'ad b. Mas'ood Saqafi was his governor.

In this respect, the services of Ameer Mukhtar (RA) were appreciable. From what has been recorded in history that he talked to his uncle S'ad b. Mas'ood, saying that the Imam (as) may be handed over to Moawiya, was in fact his wish to find out his uncle's intention and plans about the Imam (as). S'ad b. Mas'ood called the best physicians for his treatment which continued for many days. 13_/_

Though Imam Mujtaba (as) had faced very severe incidents in his noble life, yet this was a unique first and last incident of its type. At least in Islamic history, no incident of this nature had occurred earlier. In reliable historical records there is much difference of opinion about the cause of the incident. We will discuss it in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

The Imam (as) had neither become helpless against the conspiracies and propaganda of Moawiya nor did he abandon the efforts to face him, yet history does not record the details of the same. The fact is that Imam Mujtaba (as) was passing through a very difficult and complicated Islamic period. Many factors are likely to have caused the outward defeat of his army, yet the main cause of it was that the Iraqi army was not completely obedient to him. So it had not been able to carry out his commands effectively. The leader of the faithful Hazrat Ali (as) had also mentioned about their disobedience and rebellious activities, and had mentioned a basic principle: "Whoever is not obeyed, has no opinion." 14_/_

Hazrat Ali (as) wanted to make it clear to the army at Koofa that the main cause of their defeat was their disobedience. According to the leader of the faithful, the armies that lack discipline never succeed even if they have a great commander like Hazrat Ali b. Abee Talib himself!

In the earlier chapters we have tried to analyse the political and social conditions prevailing at Koofa so that the rebellious and antagonistic attitude of Iraqis could be explained. However, it cannot be denied that it needs a separate and thorough study. The fact remains that at that particular period the Iraqis were in no position to face the Syrian army. They had lost their senses, enthusiasm, spirit and the zeal to fight. During the internal wars starting with Basrah, they had lost all spirit. In his sermons Imam Mujtaba (as) had warned them to beware of rumours and propaganda by Moawiya, but history has provided proof that as soon as any rumour was spread, they would fall prey to it. In this regard the following words of the Imam (as), as reproduced by the historian Mas'oodi, are very significant: "I warn you from listening to Satan. Verily he is your enemy. If you would listen to him you would be among those of his friends to whom he had said: "

for sure .. 15_/ This way you would be in the range of the enemy's swords and arrows and would be badly injured and defeated. In such a situation, the faith of no one would benefit him unless he had either been faithful earlier or had earned virtue."16_/

In such a situation a question arises whether such an army that would try to assassinate its own leader and may not have the ability to protect its own Imam and commander-in-chief, could be trusted to fight a bloody war with the Syrian army?

The crisis beginning with the breach of trust by Ubaidullah had swept the Iraqi army like a flood and had reached the peaceful areas of Syria, but the conspiracies had not yet become exposed. From the time of the murderous attack on the Imam (as), his shifting to the governor house at Madain, till his recovery, hardly any Iraqi officer was left who had not made a deal with Moawiya. The prominent Iraqi leaders had either joined the army of Moawiya, or had agreed to support him while still remaining in the army of Imam Hasan (as). They had also advised Moawiya to advance towards Madain and had assured him that if he would march towards Madain, they would either hand over Imam Hasan (as) to him or would themselves assassinate the Imam (as). These intentions of theirs were not unknown to the Imam (as). 17_/

The incident at Madain had a very adverse effect on the vanguard unit which was involved in skirmishes with the Syrian army in a determined manner and was performing its duty appreciably. Against all cunning and trickery of Moawiya, Qais b. S'ad and his fellow soldiers had proved to be a strong wall of defence and had not allowed the army of Moawiya to advance even an inch. However, as soon as they heard about the sad incident, it became difficult for them to continue the war. It was the respected personality of Imam Mujtaba (as) which was the main motivating force for the soldiers of the vanguard unit who were determined to sacrifice their all for him. When the very life of the Imam (as) was endangered and he was murderously attacked, then what was left for them to fight for? For that very reason Qais b. S'ad was forced to stop the war and he got busy in investigating the incident.

Meeting with the army officers

Imam Mujtaba (as) had recuperated. He had thorough knowledge of the changes that had occurred and had complete control over the latest condition of the army. He knew about the secret plans of the officers of his army and their negative intentions. On the other hand, he had received the letter from Qais b. S'ad in which he had complained about the desertion by the army commanders. Anyhow, he ordered the prominent personalities in his army, officers and leaders to assemble at the governor house at Madain and addressed them, saying: "O men of Iraq! what action remains that you have not taken against me! This is the letter from Qais b. S'ad. He writes that your noble and respected men, by going to Moawiya, are giving allegiance to him. By God you have not done this today for the first time, but on a day in Siffin also you had forced my father to

accept 'arbitration' and when he acceded to your demands, then you got divided among yourselves. Later, he ordered you to start war against Syria afresh, but you adopted an easygoing attitude till he breathed his last. Subsequently you paid allegiance to me without any pressure on the condition that you will fight whom I will fight and will make peace with whom I will make peace. That is how I had marched for war with you all. Almighty God is well aware of my intentions and my motive. But after that see what you did to me!!

O people of Iraq! what I have seen and endured from you is enough. Now do not deceive me any more in my religion as I intend handing over the rule to Moawiya."18_/_

"O men of Iraq! even if other issues are ignored for the time being, yet three of your actions are such which are sufficient for you to be set aside: The assassination of my father, the murderous attack on me; robbing my goods and belongings. 19_/_

The address of Imam Mujtaba (as) to the special group of the army is very significant. If they had even the slightest disagreement with their behaviour as analysed by the Imam (as), they would have protested against the same. It was the limit of patience and humility of the grandson of the Holy Prophet (saww) that even after witnessing so much disobedience and breach of trust and bearing so much oppression, he addressed them in such a manner. He made it clear to them that they had been disobeying their caliph or Imam since the period of Hazrat Ali (as). So, if now Imam Mujtaba (as) wanted to end the war by handing over the outward rule to Moawiya, it were they who were responsible for the same.

After addressing the army officers and selected personalities, Imam Hasan (as) went and addressed the army personnel at large as well. Before accepting the peace offer, this sermon is very significant and there are so many aspects in it for those who are interested in a deeper study of the problem.

Imam (as)'s sermon before peace

We quote the sermon from authentic historical sources:

"By God, neither had we any doubt about fighting the Syrians nor did we have any remorse, because it was we who had fought the Syrians with confidence and humility. But enmity took the place of confidence and uncertainty replaced patience. Earlier, when you were marching towards Siffin, your religion dominated your worldly feelings, but today the worldly benefits are upper most in your mind, over and above religion. Beware that you have become divided between two types of slain persons - one who were killed in Siffin and whom you are mourning, and the other ones who were killed in Nahrwan, whose revenge you want to take. The others have run away from war. However, the mourners of those killed intend to fight on.

Beware, Moawiya has made us such an offer which is neither respectful nor is it based on justice! So, if you decide to fight till death then we will again attack Moawiya and force him, with the might of the sword, to turn to the right path as commanded by Almighty God. But if you choose worldly life, then we will accept his offer and get protection for you."

Hearing this, the cry of 'life, life' was heard from all directions. 20_ /

So when the Imam (as) saw the low spirits of his companions and found them unwilling to such an extent to fight, he sent Abdullah b. Haris b. Noful b. Haras, the nephew of Moawiya, to him, and accepted the peace offer. Though the above historical sermon of the Imam (as) was most significant as he had also analysed their moral and political conditions, yet what is much more important is that the sermon had clearly vindicated the stand taken by Imam Mujtaba (as) about peace and war. History provides contradictory situations about peace and war but if someone wants to study the true ideas of the Imam (as) about peace and war, then he should concentrate on the above sermon. Imam (as) had shown his firm determination to fight on despite the disobedience, differences, treachery, many incidents, including the attack on his camp and the murderous attack on himself, provided the soldiers were willing to fight according to his command. This means that whatever has been publicised about Imam Hasan (as) himself wanting peace, is not correct!

The conclusion is that the true Islamic caliph, the grandson of the Holy Prophet (saww), being the Imam, did not deviate from the basic divine law which directs to fight the rebellious group till they return to the right path as commanded by Almighty Allah. In accordance with this very firm Islamic law, his father had fought with Moawiya and the Imam (as) also followed the same divine law step by step till the end.

Thus he was not satisfied with peace with Moawiya and had made it clear to the people that there was neither respect nor justice in it. However, when they wanted to accept it despite this explanation, the Imam (as) could not force them to fight on. So, he took the bitter pill of the offer of peace by Moawiya.

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Some Historical Extracts

There is no doubt that the writers of various schools of thought, and those having different ideas, have expressed varied opinions about the peace treaty of Imam Hasan (as). Contradictory views and controversies raised by them, which reflect a biased opinion, have made the reality obscure. As a result, the treaty has become historically and politically vague. Therefore, it is necessary that the old and reliable Islamic record should be presented to the intelligentsia, so that they may refer to it before reaching a true conclusion and any doubt or misgiving may not remain. This way the historians' views about Imam Hasan (as)'s peace treaty would also be clear. We reproduce below some relevant extracts for consideration:

(1) Abu Hanifa Dinavari - 'Al-Ekhbar al-Tawaal'

"When he (Imam Hasan (as)) reached the area of Sabaat, he noticed a sort of helplessness and dejection in his army about war. So he stayed there. In a sermon to his army he said: 'O men, in my heart I do not see any evil whatsoever from any Muslim. I will protect your rights just like those of my own. I have an opinion about you which you should not oppose. It is that the unity and agreement which you do not like is better than the dissension and disagreement which you like, specially when I notice that the majority among you are avoiding to fight and trying to keep away from it. I have made up my mind not to force you to do something which you do not like...'. And when Imam Hasan (as) saw unwillingness and weakness among his forces, he sent a message to Abdullah bin 'Amir that he was ready for a conditional treaty."

(2) Yaqubi - 'Tareekh-e-Yaqubi'.

"Moawiya, through his spies in the army of (Imam) Hasan, would on the one hand spread the rumour that Qais bin S'ad had made a peace treaty with Moawiya and was with him (Moawiya), while in the army of Qais bin S'ad he would spread the rumour that Imam Hasan (as) had made

peace with Moawiya and that he had given a positive response to this offer of Moawiya. (Apart from this), Moawiya sent Moghira b. Sh'oba, Abdullah b. Aamir b. Kerez and Abdel Rahman b. Umme Hakam towards the army of (Imam) Hasan (as). They met him (Imam Hasan (as)) in Madain while he was in his tent. While coming out, these persons started announcing that all praise be to Glorified God who has saved the lives of Muslims through the Holy Prophet(saww)'s son; the fire of mischief has been extinguished; and he has accepted the offer of peace. On hearing this, there was commotion in the army; no one doubted the truth about what they were saying. Therefore, they plundered the tent of Imam Hasan (as) and robbed all that was in it. Seeing this, Imam Hasan (as) rode on his horse ... When (Imam) Hasan (as) saw that his army had become infirm, his companions had left him and were not willing to fight for him, he made peace with Moawiya."

(3-a) Ibne Jareer Tabari - 'Tareekh-e-Tabari' Zahri's version

"Zahri says that the people of Iraq paid allegiance to Hasan bin Ali (as) as the caliph. Hasan (as) started imposing a condition on them that they will remain obedient to him, make peace with one with whom he would make peace and would go to war with one with whom he would go to war. On such conditions being imposed on them, the Iraqis started doubting about his caliphate. They said that neither he was their caliph nor did he intend to go to war. Not long after, they attacked Hasan (as) with a dagger and severely injured him. Due to this Hasan (as) started doubting their intentions towards him. He was fearful of them and started correspondence with Moawiya. Zahri narrates that Hasan (as) did not intend to wage war. However, before reaching any conclusion, he wanted to have the best of terms with Moawiya. When Obaidullah became aware of his intentions, he wrote to Moawiya and sought protection from him. ... Having no worries from Obaidullah bin Abbas and Hasan (as), Moawiya got busy in deceiving a person whom he considered to be very important as he (Qais bin S'ad) had forty thousand soldiers as well under his command."

(3-b) 'Awana bin Hakam's narration

"The public accepted Hasan bin Ali (as) as the caliph and paid allegiance to him. He marched (for war) and continued forward up to Madain. Simultaneously, he sent the vanguard unit of twelve thousand soldiers towards the enemy. While Hasan (as) was in Madain, someone announced that 'Qais bin S'ad has been killed; so rise and run'. Hearing this, the soldiers started running away and started to plunder the tent of Hasan (as)... When Hasan (as) realized that the soldiers had betrayed him, he sent his representative to Moawiya to seek peace."

(4) Ibne Aseer - 'Al-Kamil fit-Tareekh'

The historian Ibne Aseer quotes the narrations of Tabari. Apart from that, he also refers to the historical sermon of Imam Hasan Mujtaba (as) in which while addressing his army, the Imam (as)

had warned them of the dangers of peace and had given them the choice between war against Moawiya and peace. When they had chosen peace, then the Imam (as) decided in its favour. The text of the sermon has been reproduced in an earlier chapter.

(5) Ibne A'sam Koofi - 'Al-futooh'

"The tribesmen of Iraq, one after another, started to go towards Moawiya till very few remained in the vanguard unit (of the Imam). Assessing the situation, Qais bin S'ad wrote to Hasan bin Ali (as), informing him of the current situation. After reading his letter, Hasan (as) invited the nobles in his army and addressed them thus: 'O men of Iraq! what has your group done to me. This is Qais bin S'ad's letter in which he says that your nobles too have gone towards Moawiya. Remember this step of yours is undeniable as on the day of war in Siffin you had forced my father to arbitration. ... Later you gave an unconditional allegiance to me and agreed to follow me. I accepted the same and moved forward (for war). Almighty God knew my intention in this regard. But after that you know what has happened! O men of Iraq! enough is enough. Do not cheat me any more in my religion as I intend to hand over the authority (the reign) to Moawiya.'"

(6) Ibne 'Asakir - 'Tareekh-e-Madinate Damishq'

" 'Awana bin Hakam narrates that Hasan (as) was in Madain when someone announced that Qais bin S'ad had been killed. On hearing this, the soldiers looted the tent of Hasan (as) and went as far as snatching the sheet under his feet. A Kharijite of Bani Asad stabbed him with a dagger and injured him. ... And Hasan (as) wrote to Moawiya about the peace treaty."

(7) Ibne Abee al-Hadeed M'otazilli - 'Sharhe Nahjul Balagha'

"Abul Faraj narrates ...

Hasan (as) camped at Sabaat. At morning time he asked his men to gather together. When they assembled, he climbed on the pulpit and said: 'All praise be to Glorious God. ... (the words of this sermon are more or less the same as narrated by Dinavari). When the soldiers listened to him, they started to stare at one another and said: "he wants to make peace with Moawiya." So they attacked the camp of Hasan (as)."

(8) Husain Dayar Bakari - 'Tareekh al-Khamees'

"In 'Hayate Haiwaan (Dameeri)' it is recorded that after the death of his (Imam Hasan (as)'s) father, allegiance to him for caliphate was given. After that he marched towards Madain and camped there. While he was still there, someone shouted: ' Qais bin S'ad has been killed. So run for your life.' Hasan (as) had made Qais the commander of his vanguard troops. While Hasan (as)

was going out of his army, Jarrah bin Asad joined him. Suddenly he attacked him with a dagger on the thigh, intending to martyr him. At that moment Hasan (as) remarked: 'Earlier you had martyred my father and today you are after my blood so that you may show your disinclination towards those who are just and fair and inclination towards the traitors. By God, you will learn the truth about this after some time.' After that he wrote a letter to Moawiya indicating that he may take over the reigns."

(9) Ibne Khaldun - 'Tareekh-e-Ibne Khaldun'

"While Hasan (as) was camping at Madain, it was rumoured in his army that Qais bin S'ad had been killed. Hearing this his army took to flight in panic and they dispersed. At the same time they attacked the camps of Moawiya. ... He (Imam Hasan (as)) was taken to the city of Madain lying in bed. He was on the verge of being killed. So, through a letter to Moawiya, he offered to resign. ... He also addressed the Iraqis. And when he heard the voices of 'life, life' coming from all directions, he accepted the offer of peace." 10_/_

(10) Ibne Kaseer - 'Al-Bidayah wal-Nihayah'

"There is no doubt that the main reason for the defeat of the Iraqis was their difference of opinion and disagreements with the ruler. If they had political consciousness they would have been grateful to God for his bounties granted to them in the shape of allegiance to a person among the Companions of the Holy Prophet, who was very learned, the grandson of the Holy Prophet (saww), a leader of Muslims, humble, visionary and undoubtedly an ideal planner. In support of his being one of the true Islamic caliph ('Rashideen Caliph') is the tradition of the Holy Prophet (saww) which I have quoted under 'the arguments for prophethood' from the Holy Prophet's slave Safina. The Holy Prophet (saww) said:

'The caliphate will last only 30 years after me. After that it will be monarchy.' Without any doubt, these 30 years end after the caliphate of Hasan bin Ali (as) when he gave up the caliphate and handed over the rule (monarchy) to Moawiya.11_/_

(11) Hafiz Zahbi - 'Al-'Abar'

"In Rabi-II (41 A.H.) the leader of the faithful Hasan bin Ali (as) marched with his army in pursuit of Moawiya. On the other side, Moawiya entered Iraq with his army. The two armies met in Maskin in the Abnaar area. Hasan (as) noticed that there were different opinions about him in his army. In such a situation, there was not much hope from such an army. Moreover, his army was suffering from extreme indiscipline and disorder. It reached such a level of plunder that it pulled even the sheet under the feet of Hasan (as). One person among the Khawarij attacked him. In the circumstances, he realized that it was better to seek peace and proved the tradition of his grand

father, (the Holy Prophet (saww)), to be true. So, he wrote to Moawiya and imposed many conditions on him." 12_/_

(12) Ibnul Sabbagh al Maliki - 'Al-Fusool al-Muhimmah'

"Hasan (as) had got busy in the treatment of his wounds. During this period various tribal leaders had secretly written to Moawiya, assuring him of their acceptance of his leadership. They had advised him to march towards them quickly and had stated that either they will hand over Hasan (as) to him or would kill him (Hasan (as)). All this news had reached Hasan (as) and it was abundantly clear to him that the majority of his followers had rebellious intentions and were not prepared to support him.

Only a selected few, who were the Shia of his father, were left with him. These persons had neither the ability nor the strength to fight the Syrian army. Therefore, he wrote to Moawiya about peace and understanding." 13_/_

(13) Hakim Naishapuri - 'Al-Mustadrak Alassaheehain':

"Abu Makhnaf has narrated that when the allegiance to Hasan Bin Ali (as) was given, he made very extensive efforts to mobilize his forces, to march towards Moawiya and to challenge him. He sent an army of ten thousand for the purpose under the command of Abdullah bin J'afer. Following him, he sent Qais bin S'ad. 14_/_

(14) Ibne Abdul Barr - 'al-Istee'ab'

There are no two opinions among the Ulama that Hasan (as) had offered the kingdom to Moawiya till the end of his life only. After the death of Moawiya, the caliphate had to return to him and both had agreed to it. Hasan (as) considered it better than shedding blood for the sake of caliphate although he considered himself more deserving for the said caliphate. 15_/_

Though the historical extracts of different writers about the conditions prevailing in Iraq during the reign of Imam Mujtaba (as) and the terms of agreement of the 'Peace Treaty of Imam Hasan (as)', given above, are very significant, yet we wish to discuss only two aspects in the following chapters, i.e.

(1) The stand taken by Imam Mujtaba (as) regarding peace or war;

(2) The reasons and the factors responsible for the incident at Madain.

The stand taken by Imam Mujtaba (as) regarding peace:

The most important question that arises in the mind about the peace treaty of Imam Hasan (as) is whether Imam Mujtaba (as) had any other choice at the time of the appeal to cease fighting and to accept the offer of peace by Moawiya; and whether he extended his hand for peace willingly and happily or is it that the cowardice and criminal breach of trust of his army had brought about a situation where the peace had been imposed on him and it had become unavoidable. Additionally, would he have totally refused the offer of peace if his army had acted in accordance with his command?

Without doubt, history gives a clear answer to the above question. If the extracts given above are studied carefully, it becomes abundantly clear that Imam Hasan (as) was very serious and determined to wage a war against Moawiya. He ordered the best of his soldiers to march towards Maskin to check the forward movement of the army of Moawiya and set up his own war camp at Madain. He was not afraid of the breach of trust and betrayal of the leaders in his army till a stage was reached when he was attacked and injured and his tent was plundered. When only a few loyal soldiers remained with him, then only he reluctantly talked about accepting peace. In this respect the historical sermon which he gave at Madain needs to be studied carefully. In the sermon which was delivered after the incident of Madain, when his wounds had healed and he was feeling better, he declared:

"beware, Moawiya has made us an offer wherein there is neither respect nor justice." 16 _/

These remarkable words, which have been quoted by so many historians, reflect his true feelings about peace. These words clearly indicate that Imam Mujtaba (as) was not only aware of the dangers and adverse effects of the offer of peace, but he also considered it necessary to inform his soldiers accordingly. The grandson of the Holy Prophet (saww) gave them the choice that if they wished, they could save their lives through peace but they should not expect any justice or honour from Moawiya. Alternatively, they could have continued the war but they would have to be prepared to sacrifice their lives for the same. When the voices for peace and agreement rose from all sides, he agreed for peace with so many conditions.

At this difficult moment in the history of Koofa, the true follower of the Holy Prophet (saww), and rightful caliph, did not consider it appropriate to sacrifice the interests, choice and the freedom of the people, and to impose his personal opinion on them. This implies that Islam does not usurp the freedom and the right of the people, but a true leader shows the right path and provides them the atmosphere and opportunity to follow that path. However, if the greater majority abandon the path of righteousness and true guidance, then the Imam keeps aloof from them. In a later chapter we will discuss the point in greater detail. A very important point in the historical extracts discussed earlier, which needs great attention, is that Imam Mujtaba (as) was not the one who wanted to avoid war but it was the Iraqi nobles and the tribal leaders who were really against the

war. There might have been many reasons for the set back in the war, but history cannot ignore the treacherous character of the rich and the aristocrats of Koofa and their betrayal which provided all the means of success for Moawiya. Among so many historical extracts given here, we find a very different view about the issues relating to Imam Hasan (as), adopted only in Zahri's narrations quoted in 'Tareekh-e-Tabari' etc.

Analysis of Zahri's narration

However, the point is whether Zahri's narrations are so reliable that, leaving all other authentic sources, only those should be relied upon? It cannot be denied that Zahri's narrations have been referred in some historical books. Yet, whatever incidents Zahri has quoted have neither been confirmed from other sources nor do the later historians rely on those. Zahri is not only biased but has gone beyond all standards of integrity in mentioning what is not even possible. For example, while discussing the role of Ubaidullah, he tries to hide the treacherous role of Ubaidullah and says that when Ubaidullah learnt the stand taken by Imam Hasan (as), then only he wrote letter to Moawiya and sought refuge from him. On the other hand, all other historical records show that Moawiya had initiated the offer to Ubaidullah to join him. During that time he had neither the time to find out the truth nor had Imam Hasan (as) written to him about it!

Similarly, on other issues Zahri's narrations are full of errors and create many problems in research and investigation. For that reason the researchers discard his version. The learned scholar Razi Ale Yasin commenting on Zahri's narrations writes:

Zahri's narrations about the events relating to Ahle Bait (as) of the Holy Prophet (saww) are the weakest in which the topic is more entwined. The author of 'Darasaat fee al Islam' has termed him as the court slave of Bani Umayyah." 17_/_

Dr. Husain Mohammad J'afari makes the following comments on Zahri's narrations: "The historian Tabari, while referring to the events (relating to Imam Hasan (as)), has chosen two different sources i.e. Zahri and 'Awana. In these versions it is abundantly clear that Zahri is opposing Imam Hasan (as) and is favouring Moawiya. It is not difficult to understand the reason for the same as Zahri was associated with the court of Bani Umayyah and was giving shape to these versions under the influence of Moawiya's subordinates. As against him, the versions of 'Awana refer to the particular circumstances in which Imam Hasan (as) agreed to peace and seem to be relatively more balanced. As against Zahri, the version of 'Awana is more authentic from a historical point of view as well, and other sources like those of Yaqubi and Dinavari have supported Awana's version."

Similarly, the reason for attack on Imam Hasan (as), which Zahri mentions, cannot be accepted by any scholar. Dr. Husain Mohammad J'afari levels the following objection on Zahri's version:

"As against other historical sources, Zahri neither indicates the location nor the time when Imam Hasan (as) was attacked." After a thorough analysis of all the versions of Zahri regarding Imam Hasan (as), Dr. J'afari reaches the following conclusion: "Zahri's versions, instead of answering the questions about (Imam) 'Hasan's Peace Treaty', raise more questions. It is natural that living in the Umvi atmosphere prevailing in Damascus at the time, he had to choose the narration which would be more popular and acceptable in that situation. However, the events that formed the basis of Imam Hasan (as)'s peace treaty are not so simple as stated by Zahri. 18_/"

After what has been stated above, it is clear that if Zahri presents a different version of the peace of Imam Hasan (as), that does not affect all the other historical sources and versions which are based on truth and reliability.

(2) The incident at Madain - cause and the responsible factors

As stated earlier, Imam Mujtaba (as) had sent a vanguard unit of twelve thousand soldiers towards Maskin so that they could restrict the movement of the enemy, while the Imam (as) himself had marched to Madain with the rest of the army and camped there. During that period, as Moawiya had reached Maskin and skirmishes between the vanguard unit and the Syrian soldiers were continuing, Imam Hasan (as)'s tent was attacked and whatever was in it, was looted. While the Imam (as) was passing through the area of Sabaat and moving towards the city, a Kharijite attacked him with a dagger injuring him in the thigh.

The incident at Madain is a tragic one in the Islamic history as the grand son of the Holy Prophet (saww) was attacked by his own men.

Though the history does not record any doubt about the incident itself, yet there is considerable difference of opinion about the cause and the factors responsible for the same. Some prominent historians like Abul Faraj Isphahani and Ibne A'sam Koofi write that Imam Hasan (as) gathered his army soon after reaching Madain and suddenly decided to address them. In the address he declared that unity and agreement among the Muslims was better than disunity and dissension, and knowing that his army was against peace, he emphasized the need for peace with Moawiya and advised them not to oppose his decision for it. At this the Khawarij and others who were strongly in favour of war got enraged. So, they accused Imam Mujtaba (as) of (God forbid) being a non-believer and attacked his tent which resulted in his being injured with the dagger.

The historian Dinavari writes that Imam Mujtaba (as) was marching towards the northern areas of Iraq when at Madain he noticed that his army was showing signs of weakness and was wavering, which implied that they had lost the zeal to fight. Therefore, at Madain, he decided to stop the march and to address them. The incident occurred as a result of that address.

Shaikh Mufid writes that Imam Mujtaba (as) wanted to test his soldiers and to differentiate between friend and foe before the war with the Syrians, as he was not sure how far his army men would obey him. The analysis by these historians is vague. In this regard the basic question which has been raised by some researchers is why did Imam Hasan (as) make such war preparations, commanded the people to be ready for it and covered the long distance from Koofa to Madain, and then suddenly decided in favour of peace? 20_/_

The other historians, among whom Tabari, Ibne Aseer, Ibne 'Asakir, Ibne Kaseer, Ibne Khuldoon, Husain Dayar Bakari and other later historians can prominently be mentioned, analyze the incident differently. While describing in detail the causes of the incident, they write that the agents of Moawiya in the army of Imam Hasan (as) had spread such rumour that the Iraqi soldiers had lost the will to fight and started deserting the army. With indiscipline and disorder all around and desertion in the army, the enemies of Imam Mujtaba (as) got a chance to attack his tent and to rob all that was in it. While the loot was still on and the Imam (as), riding a horse, had gone towards Madain with his trusted followers, a Kharjite attacked him on the way. As an example, these historians write that the rumour of Qais bin S'ad having been killed was spread in the army.

It cannot be denied that in the difficult circumstances, such rumours proved very effective in making the Iraqis fearful and upset and it is not unlikely that hearing the news of the death of such a well known person as S'ad they ran away, realizing that after Qais bin S'ad there was none else who could successfully challenge Moawiya. They very likely felt that now Moawiya with his army, would attack Madain and would either make them prisoners or kill them.

The historian Y'aqoobi has elaborately preserved the details of the propaganda. He writes that Moawiya sent a three man delegation for negotiations with Imam Hasan (as). The delegates, while leaving the camp of Imam Hasan (as) after negotiations, spread the false news in the army of Imam Hasan (as) that he had agreed to their offer of peace, which caused the said incident.

The writer Dinavari also supports the fact of such news being spread and mentions how Abdullah bin A'mir, a well known leader of the Syrian army, on the one hand spread fear in the minds of the Iraqi army, while on the other tried to convince them that Moawiya did not want war. 21_/_

There is no shortage of evidence to prove that the real reason for the incident of Madain was not the sermon of the Imam (as), as mentioned by Abul Faraj and others, but it was to the defeatist tendency of the Iraqis, their weakness and the false propaganda of the Syrians. A majority of the original sources of history show that even after the incident of Madain, Imam Hasan (as) agreed to peace only after he was convinced that his army was no more prepared to fight for him. In this regard those reliable sources should also be referred to wherein the historical sermon of Imam Mujtaba (as) has been quoted, which was given after the incident of Madain when he was

recuperating. In that sermon he had explained his attitude towards peace with Moawiya and had left the choice of peace or war with the soldiers, and only when the soldiers raised slogans in favour of peace, had he agreed for the same.

On the basis of these arguments we do not accept the conclusion drawn by Abul Faraj and Ibne A'sam etc. and do not consider the explanations given by Dinavari and Sheikh Mufeed sufficient, as it was not the first occasion when the Imam (as) had seen the Iraqi army's performance in war. Imam Mujtaba (as) had been watching the behaviour of this army since the days of his father and he could very well distinguish between friend and foe. Moreover, the Iraqi army had not only shown signs of weakness and surrender in Madain as stated by Dinavari, but it had started to give a defeatist impression right from the time of the Imam's (as) declaration of war in the central ('Jame') Mosque at Koofa.

As far as the question of camping at Madain is concerned, we have indicated in earlier chapters the reason for it being declared as the army garrison. Briefly, the Imam (as) was facing a shortage of personnel in the army and he expected support and more supplies from Madain. Moreover, Madain could prove to be a very important strategic location from a defensive point of view. Earlier, S'ad bin Abee Waqaas had fought the Qadisiyah battles declaring Madain as the central strategic location.

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The Terms of The Peace Treaty

Before starting a discussion on the peace treaty, it is considered necessary to state that the historians have very boldly tried to keep the world in the dark about the clauses and the relevant details of the peace treaty. Was the treaty between Imam Hasane Mujtaba (as) and Moawiya bin Abee Sufyan, signed in 41A.H., so unimportant that its details may be ignored? The researchers agree that not only are there surprising disagreements on the issue but there are so many ambiguities and misunderstandings as well.

The historians themselves mention that the grandson of the Holy Prophet (saww) had himself advanced many conditions, had taken so many commitments and assurances and had only then agreed to peace. These terms, which had been proposed by Imam Hasan (as), were in the interest of Muslim Ummah in general and the treaty was signed with the witnesses of prominent personalities of Iraq and Syria. Before going into the details of the treaty, it is essential to briefly review the historical sources.

The historians Mas'oodi and Y'aqoobi do not mention the terms at all. Similarly, Ibne Hajar 'Asqalani and Hakim Naishapuri do admit that (Imam) Hasan (as) had made peace only after so many terms had been agreed and commitments and assurances given, but do not mention the details of what those conditions were. A similar attitude can be noticed in the narration of 'Saheeh-e-Bokhari' in which the details beginning with the coming of the delegations till the signing of the agreement have been given, but when the point of the terms and conditions is reached then the issue is evaded by writing 'etc. etc.' but it is accepted that the Syrian delegation had accepted all the terms and conditions of Imam Hasan (as). Abul Faraj Isphahani also does not take keen interest in the issue. After mentioning three conditions he says that other terms and conditions had also been suggested by Imam Hasan (as) which the delegation sent by Moawiya

had accepted. The historian Tabari records the treaty (like other issues relating to Imam Hasan (as)) giving two different narrations by Zahri and 'Awana bin Hakam. Zahri, instead of describing the details, tries to create some misunderstanding. As against him, Tabari records three conditions directly from 'Awana bin Hakam and the fourth indirectly. The historian Dinavari has mentioned four conditions but his sources are quite different from others. Ibne Abee-al-Hadeed takes three conditions from Madaini and the fourth one is incidentally considered as a separate issue which is taken from Madaini himself. A more or less similar attitude has been adopted by the rest of the historians who have considered it sufficient to record one, two or at best three terms, but none of them considers it essential to describe the text of the treaty or the details of the resolutions which had been agreed to after so many exchanges and meetings between the two delegations. Among the old historical records only 'Al-Futooh' of Ibne A'sam Koofi and 'Ansabul Ashraaf' by Balazari contain the text of the treaty and five terms and conditions are mentioned in it. Outwardly, one may conclude that these were the only terms agreed upon. However, a thorough search of other records reveals that the picture is quite different as there were other conditions too! In such a situation, neither any one historical source can be totally relied upon nor the general conditions mentioned here and there can be taken as true. Only after great effort and deep research about the available sources and the circumstances prevailing at that time, can the correct terms and conditions of the treaty can be determined.

The blank paper

The historian Balazari writes in 'Ansaabul Ashraaf' that Moawiya sent Abdullah b. Amir b. Kerez and 'Abdel Rahman b. Samarah to (Imam) Hasan (as) and the two informed Imam Mujtaba (as) about the damages through war and the consequences of continued bloodshed among Muslims, and indicated the willingness of Moawiya to hand over the rule to Imam Hasan (as) after his death. In addition, they said that Moawiya would offer much more to Imam Hasan (as) in lieu of peace. Imam Mujtaba (as) agreed with their ideas and sent 'Umroo bin Salma Hamdani, Arhabi and Mohammad bin Ash'as Kandi along with them so that they could record the terms offered by Moawiya and may express the agreement (on behalf of Imam Hasan (as)). So, Moawiya sent the following letter to Imam Hasan (as):

"This letter is from Moawiya bin Abee Sufyan for Hasan bin Ali (as). I make peace with you on the condition that after me the government will be handed over to you and I vouch for you before God, feeling obliged to God and the Holy Prophet (saww), remembering the firm pledge taken by the Glorified God from any of His bondsmen, that I will neither indulge in any intrigue against you nor would conduct any armed struggle against you; further that each year I will pay you ten lakh (one million) Dirham from Baitul Maal and the revenue of Mansa and Darb Jard (Darabgard) will be reserved for you. 'Abdullah b. Amir, 'Umroo b. Salma Hamdani, 'Abdel Rahman b. Samarah and Mohammad bin Ash'as Kandi are witness to it and it has been written in Rabi II 41 A.H."

When Imam Mujtaba (as) read the above letter of Moawiya, he gave a brief reply in one sentence: "He is trying to tempt me about something which I would not hand over to him if I had an inclination towards it."

After quoting the above sentence of Imam Mujtaba (as), Balazari writes that Imam Mujtaba (as) called 'Abdullah bin Haras b. Noful, the nephew of Moawiya, and told him that he should go to his uncle (Moawiya) and tell him that if Moawiya was agreeable to guarantee the life and honour of the general public, then he would agree to hand over the reign to him. 'Abdullah b. Haras went to Moawiya and explained the condition to him. In return Moawiya gave him a blank paper at the end of which was the seal of Moawiya, and sent the message to Imam Hasan (as) that he may write on it (the white paper) whatever he thought fit. Imam Hasan (as) wrote the required terms and conditions on it, and after taking the signatures of the high powered Syrian delegation as witness, sent it back to Moawiya so that he (Moawiya) may affirm his agreement to all those terms and both these persons may be a witness to the agreement.

Ibne A'sam Koofi has also written about the blank paper with some variation. He writes:

"On learning of the betrayal by Iraqi nobles and after addressing them, (Imam) Hasan (as) sent 'Abdullah b. Haras to Moawiya and stated that if Moawiya is ready to protect the life, property and honour of all men, then he would give allegiance to him, otherwise he would not do so. When 'Abdullah b. Haras reached Moawiya, he (Moawiya) wanted to know the terms of peace. He added a few conditions (the same which, according to Balazari, had been suggested by Moawiya). At this Moawiya asked for a blank paper and putting his seal on it with his own finger, said:

'Take this page to Hasan (as) and tell him to write in it whatever he wishes. All his (Moawiya's) companions are a witness that he has willingly put the seal by himself.'"

After studying these two historical sources also, the issue is not clear as to why the need for sending the blank paper arose when Moawiya had agreed to all the terms and conditions conveyed by the representative of Imam Hasan (as)? However, after studying other historical documents, the problem is solved. These documents clearly indicate that Imam Hasan (as) had demanded some terms and conditions from Moawiya before agreeing to peace. These included the issue of the next caliph and general peace and order to be included in the peace treaty, as Imam Hasan (as) had demanded that the caliphate must be returned to him after the death of Moawiya and that the people of Iraq, Hijaz and Madina would not be arrested for having fought Moawiya in the days of his (Imam's) father. Moawiya was ready to accept all the terms and conditions of Imam Hasan (as), except that he could not guarantee the safety of ten persons who included prominent persons like Qais b. S'ad against whom Moawiya had vouched to cut his tongue and hands whenever arrested. Imam Hasan (as) conveyed to Moawiya that in such a situation, he was not prepared for peace with him.

Learning this, Moawiya put his seal on the blank paper and handed it over to the representative of the Imam (as) so that he may write what he thought appropriate and that he was willing to accept all the terms of the Imam (as) regarding peace. Imam Hasan (as) wrote all the terms and conditions demanded by him and sent it back to Moawiya. When Moawiya agreed to those terms and a promise for the same was taken from him in the presence of responsible persons, only then the agreement was reached between the two sides according to which Imam Hasan (as) agreed to hand over the government to Moawiya for a given time (i.e. till the time Moawiya was alive).

The narration about the blank paper and related facts can also be traced from other historical sources which show that the delegation of Moawiya had accepted all the demands of Imam Hasan (as) and both sides had arrived at total agreement before the treaty. For that reason, a team of researchers supports the narration about the blank paper being sent and agreement between both sides being reached on the terms written down by Imam Hasan (as). For the same reason, the year of the treaty is known as "A'am al-Jama'at" (the year of understanding).

Zahri also does not deny the existence of "sahifa-e-baiza", i.e. the white paper, but he mentions its dispatch at a time which does not seem to be logical. Zahri claims that when the conditions in Iraq deteriorated, then Imam Hasan (as) wrote to Moawiya about peace and put forward his conditions. At the same time Moawiya had sent a delegation with a blank paper which had the seal of Moawiya. When the blank paper was presented to the Imam (as), he added more terms for peace and kept it with him. On his side, Moawiya agreed to the terms of peace as indicated in the letter of Imam Hasan (as), but refused to agree to additional terms. When the two sides met, there was disagreement between them about peace. Imam Hasan (as) stated that the terms and conditions written in the blank paper are reliable while Moawiya said that he agreed to the original terms but did not agree to the conditions added later. Due to this disagreement, Moawiya did not fulfill any of the conditions of Imam Hasan (as).

Later historians, who include Ibne Aseer, Abu Mustakuya and Dr. Taha Husain, were also misled by the above misunderstanding created by Zahri.

These persons do not totally rely on Zahri's narration, yet they have faced some difficulty in this regard. We have discussed Zahri's narrations about Imam Hasan (as) in previous chapters and have proved that Zahri is so much biased against Imam Hasan (as) that he defends Moawiya even at the cost of Imam Hasan (as). By the assumed misunderstanding he wants to give the impression that if Moawiya did not fulfill the terms of Imam Hasan (as), its reason was not breach of the agreement but mutual differences, in which in a way both were right. However, no other historical reference is available to show that all the issues had not been settled between the two sides before the agreement, as claimed by Zahri. On the other hand, all historians agree that both sides had agreed on the terms of the treaty before its being signed, but Moawiya did not honour it

after the treaty had been signed and announced. Another reason for Zahri's version being unreliable is that he neither narrates the conditions of the agreement proposed earlier, nor the details of those added later, nor is he able to give any logical timing of the blank paper being sent!

The learned scholar Sheikh Razi Aale Yasin gives his opinion about the blank page sent by Moawiya in the following words:

"The historians and biographers have changed the detailed terms and conditions of the peace treaty into an abridgment for the reason that 'on the basis of write whatever conditions you wish, as you have the right for the same', they feel that, as the blank paper had the seal of Moawiya, Imam Hasan (as) might have put as many conditions in it which he considered appropriate or which suited his aims and objectives, whether those related to his own self or his Ahle Bait (as) or his Shia. No other doubt exists on the said issue"!

He further writes: "if today the situation is that we cannot clearly distinguish all the terms of the agreement, so what? We know this much that all the terms were in favour of Imam Hasan (as) and could lead to his success. So, all those terms and conditions which would be to the advantage of Imam Hasan (as) and to the disadvantage of Moawiya, would be correct (would be part of the agreement). This is due to the fact that Imam Hasan (as) was absolutely free to write in the agreement whatever he thought fit." 10_/_

The Terms and Conditions of the Peace Treaty

The peace treaty between (Imam) Hasan bin Ali (as) and Moawiya bin Abee Sufyan was signed on the following terms and conditions:

1. Hasan (as) would hand over the rule, or government, to Moawiya provided he acts according to the Holy Book of God, the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (saww) and the character of pious and virtuous caliphs;
2. Moawiya does not have a right to nominate anyone after him. The rule would be handed back to Hasan (as) after him, or according to some narrations, it would be left to a consultative body ('shoora') of Muslims;
3. The life, property and honour of the general public, whether black or white, belonging to Syria, Iraq, Tihama, Hijaz or which ever area, would be safeguarded;
4. The life, property, and honour of Shias of (Imam) Ali (as) and their family members, will be protected and Moawiya bin Abee Sufyan is bound by the covenant of Almighty God in this respect and he will honour his covenant with Almighty God in this regard;

5. Moawiya will not take any open or secret action against (Imam) Hasan bin Ali (as) or against Ahle Bait (as) of the Holy Prophet (saww) and he will not try to terrorize them anywhere on earth;

6. (Imam) Ali (as) will be remembered with honour and dignity and he will not be reviled; according to some narrations, in the life time of (Imam) Hasan (as) no abusive language against Hazrat Ali (as) will be used;

7. Moawiya will hand over the Bait-ul-Maal of Koofa and the revenue of Darab Jard (Darabgard) to him (Imam Hasan (as)) so that he may meet his expenses from the same and may repay the debt and other dues;

Analysis of the Terms and Conditions

1- Following the Book and Sunnah

"Hasan (as) would hand over the rule, or government, to Moawiya provided he acts according to the Holy Book of God, the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (saww) and the character of pious and virtuous caliphs;" 11_/_

In the above first condition, many points have to be thoroughly studied: The Imam (as), by demanding Moawiya to follow the Book and Sunnah as the first condition of the Treaty, proved that acting according to the Book and Sunnah was the ideal goal of the Imam (as), and if he was handing over the reign temporarily to Moawiya, then only his steps in accordance with the Shariah would be considered legal. Accordingly, if Moawiya went against the said condition and Imam Hasan (as) were able to rule again, then he would have the legal right to claim it back from Moawiya. In fact, the Imam (as) had restricted the actions of Moawiya to be within law and constitution. Incidentally, by adding the virtuous character of pious caliphs as a condition, he had by implication also proved that his father was a pious and virtuous caliph and the feelings and ideas of Moawiya about him were wrong. If earlier his father had not accepted the condition (of following the previous caliphs) in the 'Shoora' of Hazrat Umar, it was due to the fact that he did not consider their style in accordance with religious standard and he himself had better grasp and understanding than them of the issues relating to the Holy Quran and Sunnah.

Monarchy or Caliphate

Another important point for consideration in the above condition is whether Imam Mujtaba (as) had handed over the rule over Muslims and the government to Moawiya through peace treaty, or he had given allegiance to Moawiya as a caliph and had accepted the caliphate of Moawiya formally.

It should be clearly understood that often such language has been used in historical versions which implies that either Imam Hasan (as) had shown his willingness to give allegiance to Moawiya, or had assured him of following him completely, or handed over the caliphate to him, or, in the words of historian Ibne Qutaiba, had handed over the Imamate to him! We are not concerned about the words used. Ahle Sunnat in this regard differentiate between caliphate and 'Khilafate Rashida' (truly religious caliphate). Without going into this argument, we have to find an answer to the question whether Imam Hasan (as) had handed over the caliphate to Moawiya and accepted him formally as a caliph and had given allegiance to him (i.e. the way the allegiance was given by the Muslims wherein the commitment of complete obedience to the caliph was made). Alternatively, whether Imam Hasan (as) had made a peace treaty with Moawiya like an agreement between two parties in any other dispute, rather than giving allegiance and, through the agreement, he had temporarily handed over the government to Moawiya on specified conditions and not the high religious authority which is called 'caliphate'?

Imam Mujtaba (as) was a duly elected and formal caliph of Muslims. His caliphate had all the legal and constitutional validity which was in accordance with the practice among the Muslims at the time. Not only the leading personalities and the residents of Haramain Sharifain had paid allegiance to him but he also had the support of all the states and the opposition by Syria and Egypt could not affect the constitutional position, specially as a period of six months had elapsed since his taking over as the caliph. If Imam Hasan (as) had given allegiance to Moawiya or had agreed to hand over the caliphate to him, granting him the legitimacy of caliphate, then Moawiya would have been included among the true Islamic caliphs ('Rashideen Caliph') and no political opponent of his would have been able to challenge that status as Hazrat Abu Bakr had also nominated Hazrat Umar as caliph.

However, the fact remains that after fourteen hundred years, even the supporters of Moawiya cannot dare claim that Moawiya was a truly Islamic caliph ('Rashid Caliph'). Moawiya understood the point very well and when he fully realized the political plan of Imam Hasan (as), even before the formal announcement of the peace treaty, he publicized that Imam Hasan (as) had accepted him as a caliph. Perhaps he thought that through a large army, military strength and repenting his earlier deed against Imam Hasan (as), he would be successful in getting recognition as a caliph. However, despite the political and military pressure, the grandson of the Holy Prophet (saww) not only refused to accept Moawiya as a caliph, but accused him as being power hungry and declared his government as oppressive and illegal. We will discuss the details of this aspect in subsequent chapters.

For that reason, though some historians have shown anxiety, a majority of them have expressed words like 'tasleem-ul-amr' (acceptance of the order) or 'nuzool-ul-hukm' (receipt of a directive), which clearly indicate that the Imam (as) had only relinquished power, or handed over

government, to Moawiya. A team of current researchers supports this view. A few leading ones among these are: -

-Justice Ameer Ali,

-Dr. Abdel Salam Turmanini,

-Dr.. Syed Mohammad Vakil,

-The scholar Razi Aale Yaseen. 12_/

It was Imam Mujtaba (as)'s maturity of thought, example of excellence, courage, and the success of his political foresight which resulted in Moawiya being considered as a monarch or king by all sections of the society at that time, and he had to accept that status. A clear example of the same is that after Imam Mujtaba (as), S'ad bin Abee Waqas, the well known Companion of the Holy Prophet (saww), addressed Moawiya as 'monarch'. 13_/ However, there is no historical significance of allegiance to Moawiya after peace. Rather some researcher or historian, while discussing the peace, might only guess that Imam Hasan (as) might have given allegiance.

The scholar Raazi Aale Yaseen, while discussing the issue of monarchy or caliphate, writes:

We know for sure that referring to Ahle Bait (as), Moawiya told his son Yazeed 'certainly it is their right!' It is also in our knowledge that while offering peace, Moawiya wrote to Imam Hasan (as): 'the affairs will not be decided without your order nor shall your views be opposed on any issue.' "!!

We are also aware that after taking over the reigns, Moawiya while addressing from the pulpit at Koofa, said: "I did not wage war against you that you may say the prayers and observe fast .., I only fought against you that I may rule over you." !!!

We have also learnt that Imam Hasan bin Ali (as) had refused to accept Moawiya as caliph, on which Moawiya kept quiet and could not refute him.

The scholar Aale Yaseen, analyzing these arguments, draws the conclusion that: "Now we can say with certainty that when Moawiya took over the rule, he did not assume caliphate. And when he himself said that 'I did not wage war against you that you may say the prayers and observe fast...', then he himself proved that he was not a religious guide or caliph but an ordinary ruler having worldly consideration, who was not interested in prayers or fasting. All that he wanted was to rule over the people.

Similarly, Moawiya's words 'decisions will be taken with your (Imam's) consent' or 'the right belongs to them', clearly indicate that he conceded that Imam Mujtaba (as) had such a high religious standing which Moawiya could not challenge. Certainly, caliphate is nothing other than that high status! For that reason, when Imam Hasan (as) declined to accept his caliphate and said

that he was claiming caliphate without any justification, Moawiya had no choice except to keep quiet. 14_/_

2 - The future of Caliphate

"Moawiya does not have the right to nominate anyone after him. After him the authority shall return to (Imam) Hasan (as). According to some narrations, 'after Moawiya, it will be left to 'Shoorah' of Muslims as they deem fit'."

Imam Hasan Mujtaba (as) knew the intentions of Moawiya very well. He knew that Moawiya will change the Islamic system of government to the kingdom of Qaiser and Kisra and it will become his family hierarchy. Therefore, the Imam had, by agreement, taken away the right of nomination of heir apparent from him. What is narrated by some that the grandson of the Holy Prophet (saww) had advanced the condition that Moawiya will not nominate anyone after him but rather the election of the caliph will be left to the 'Shoorah' of Muslims, is not correct. 15_/_ 'Allama Ibne 'Abdul Barr writes:

"There is no difference of opinion among ulama that Imam Hasan (as) had offered the rule to Moawiya till his life time only. Therefore, it had to return to Imam Hasan (as) after him and this was one of the conditions of the agreement between the two. Imam Hasan (as) considered it advisable not to shed the blood of Muslims for the sake of caliphate and made the agreement, though he considered himself much more entitled to caliphate." 'Allama Ibne 'Abdul Barr quotes many narrations in which the condition of the government being returned to Imam Hasan (as) is very clearly mentioned. 16_/_

Hafiz Zahbi also writes about this condition very strongly in his various publications. He also quotes 'Umroo bin Deenar according to whom Moawiya had made the agreement with (Imam) Hasan (as) that if he meets with any accident, the rule will be returned to (Imam) Hasan (as). 17_/_

All the historians and researchers who have mentioned this condition are: Ibne S'ad (according to Ibne Hajar 'Asqalani), Ibne Hajar Asqalani (Al-asabah fee Tamayyaz al-Sahaba) Ibne Asakir (Tareekh-e-Ibne Asakir), Muhib al-Tabari (Zakhair al-Uqbi), Ibne Qutaiba Dinavari (al-Imamah val-Siyasa), Husain Dayar Bakari (Tareekh al-Khamees), Suyuti (Tareekh al-Khulafa), Ibne Abdul Barr (al-Istee'ab) Hafiz Zahbi (Tareekh al-Islam-o-al-'abar) Dr. Abdul Salam Tarmanini (Ahdas al-Tareekh al-Islami) 18_/_

All these writers have clearly written that, according to the agreement, the rule had to return to Imam Hasan (as) after Moawiya. Apart from this, there are other sources of evidence after which no element of doubt remains in accepting this condition. In this regard, attention is drawn to those letters of Moawiya, written before peace, wherein he had offered the future government to

Imam Hasan (as) and had confessed that he (Imam Hasan (as)) was the rightful claimant of the same. In addition to these letters, another argument is available from Ibne Qutaiba Dinavari and other sources. They write that when Moawiya tried to appoint Yazid as his heir apparent and invited delegations from different areas, all the others agreed but when the Iraqi delegation was asked about it, its leader Akhnaf bin Qais said:

"(O Moawiya) you have already made an agreement with Imam Hasan (as) in the name of God (and religion), of which you are well aware, that after you, the government will be his." 19_/ Only the historians Ibne Aasam Koofi, Balazari and Ibne Abee al-Hadeed Mo'tazilli disagree with this condition and state that Imam Hasan (as) had said that the choice of future incumbent of caliphate should be left to 'Shoora'. 20_/

The other writers do not write anything about the appointment of the future caliph.

Firstly, this disagreement does not have much force in that if the Muslims were consulted, whether in the life of Moawiya, or after him, they would not elect anyone except Imam Hasan (as) as they loved him more than even his father. However, it seems that by adding the condition of 'shoora' an impression has been given that Imam Hasan (as) had abdicated and had handed over the rule to Moawiya. Therefore, after Moawiya he needed a fresh mandate for caliphate, which would be available through 'shoora'. But these writers ignore the fact that Imam Hasan (as) had put in all the terms and conditions in the blank paper which he thought fit; he had completed six months of caliphate and had handed over the rule to Moawiya for a given period. Therefore, the authority to rule over Muslims should have been returned to him according to law and ethics and it does not make sense that he himself would raise the issue of 'shoora'. Ibne Aasam Koofi and Balazari also write that Moawiya had offered the future rule to Imam Hasan (as) but they claim that the Imam (as) had shown no inclination towards it. We feel that these writers have mixed up two issues: one, concerning the destiny of Muslims, and the other, regarding worldly rank and wealth. Imam Hasan (as) had not shown disinclination towards the guidance of Muslims, or caliphate. He had rather shown no interest towards worldly status and the collection of wealth through it. We have discussed the issue in the earlier chapter on 'the philosophy of peace'. In support of the argument is the narration of Balazari himself wherein he has mentioned that when Moawiya offered his future rule and huge sums of money to Imam Hasan (as), he had replied: "he is tempting me towards something which, if I had any inclination towards the same, I would not offer it to him." 21_/

Dr. Taha Husain has also arrived at the same truth. He adds another point in this connection that, in the opinion of Imam Hasan (as), Moawiya did not have any right to nominate anyone as his heir apparent. In his book 'Fitnatul Kubra' he writes:

"Moawiya had made three offers to Imam Hasan (as): (1) he would nominate him as his crown

prince; (2) he would pay him ten lakh (one million) Dirham every year from Baitul Maal; and (3) he would pay the tax revenue of two Persian states to him. Imam Hasan (as) did not accept the offer as, according to him, Moawiya did not have the right to one of these, i.e. the issue of appointing the crown prince." 22_/_

It can be clearly concluded that Imam Hasan (as) had not totally rejected the offer of Moawiya but rather that Moawiya did not have the right to offer the same. In the language of 'al-Futooh' the historical record by Ibne A'sam, there is a contradiction, or may be, some confusion, when on the one hand, it is stated that these conditions were proposed by the delegation of Imam Hasan (as), while, on the other, it is mentioned as an offer by Moawiya. After the above arguments, we are firmly of the opinion that this is not a correct statement.

In some narrations not only by Shias but others as well, it is stated that Imam Hasan (as) had put the condition that after him the caliphate would be handed over to Imam Husain (as) and he would be his heir apparent. Justice Ameer Ali, the author of 'Roohe Islam' (the soul of Islam), also supports this view. 23_/_

It is not improbable that due to the danger to his life, he might have had the foresight and selected, among all, Imam Husain (as). Behind this decision of the Imam were not the family traditions or the fear but rather the religious principles and the political philosophy of his grandfather, the Holy Prophet (saww), who had very well introduced the abilities of these two brothers and had clearly shown the Muslims their leadership qualities through so many of his traditions. However, it may be said that the fact of Imam Husain (as)'s nomination is not so well recorded in history.

3 - The restoration of Peace and Order

"The life and property of all persons, whether black, red (Persian slave) or of whatever colour, and living in Syria, Iraq, Tihama, Hijaz or anywhere else, will be protected and they will not be harmed." 24_/_

This condition reflects that one of the top priorities of Imam Hasan (as) was to provide protection of life, property and honour to all men. With the conquest of vast territories, many Persians, named as 'Humaraa', had also been enslaved along with the blacks and had become part of the Muslim Ummah. Due to the tribal and the feudal system of the Arabs, they had not yet been granted full citizenship rights. Rather, they were oppressed. Rising above the consideration of

Muslim or non-Muslim, master or slave, the Imam (as) had made peace with Moawiya on the condition that he will protect the life, property and honour of all persons. This way the Imam (as) proved that he was above the distinction based on colour, religion or race, was very serious about restoring peace, and that it was his goal to protect the life, property and honour of every person living in the Muslim society.

4 -The Shias of Ali ibne Abee Talib

"The life, property, and honour of Shias of (Imam) Ali (as) and his family members, will be protected and Moawiya bin Abee Sufyan will honour his covenant with Almighty God in this regard"; 25_/_

In the previous chapters we have indicated that wars between Syria and Iraq had been going on for a long time, beginning with the 'Siffeen' war during the period of Imam Ali (as) in which the supporters of the Imam and the lovers of Islam had participated in large numbers, and Moawiya's army had not only suffered huge life and property losses but had also suffered defeat in the battlefield. The faithful to the Imam (as) were known as the Shias of (Imam) Ali as they considered the members of the house hold of the Holy Prophet (as) as rightful claimants to the caliphate. They included many Companions of the Holy Prophet (saww) from Badr as well. Although many of these faithful followers of Imam Ali (as) had been martyred, yet those that remained were wanted by Moawiya and his military commanders. Qais bin Saad, the well known leader, who was the 2nd in command of the vanguard unit, and who with a small force of four thousand soldiers, had harassed the sixty thousand strong army of Moawiya and had put up a tough fight, was one of those wanted by them. That is why, when 'Abdullah bin Haras, the delegate of Imam Hasan (as) put it to Moawiya that if he was prepared to agree to protect the life, property and honour of the residents of Iraq, Hijaz and Madina, and to ignore their actions of the days of the Imam's illustrious father, it being a major condition, then the Imam would be agreeable for peace. However, when Moawiya refused to grant amnesty to ten followers of Imam Ali (as) and said that whenever he would get hold of Qais, he would sever his hands and feet, Imam Mujtaba (as) and his representative refused to agree to a conditional peace. 26_/_ This shows how much love and consideration for the life, property and honour of his, and his noble father's, sincere supporters and their families the Imam (as) had, as he was not prepared to make any compromise whatsoever in this regard. It was because of the firm stand taken by the Imam (as) that Moawiya sent a blank paper and had to agree to all the conditions written on it by Imam Mujtaba (as).

It was a great political success of Imam Mujtaba (as) that he got the agreement of Moawiya for complete protection of his sincere followers. It is the duty of a true leader to protect the life and honour of his supporters and followers or to sacrifice them for a noble cause. In reply to the objections raised by some of his Shias, the Imam (as) had stressed this very fact that his steps were a guarantee for their survival with honour, and if he had not done so, there would have been

a massacre of them. If the current religious and political leaders learn this guiding principle from Imam Hasan (as), then bloodshed and tensions among the Muslims can be considerably reduced.

5 - Conspiracy against Ahle Bait of the Holy Prophet

"Moawiya will not take any open or secret action against (Imam) Hasan bin Ali (as) or against Ahle Bait of the Holy Prophet (saww) and he will not try to terrorize them anywhere." 27_/_

If this condition was violated or anyone else would harm the progeny of the Holy Prophet (saww), then the blame would come to Moawiya as it was his rule. Due to the high status and the popularity of the progeny of the Holy Prophet (saww) among the Muslims, any such conspiracy was not in the interest of Moawiya.

Through this condition, in a way, it had become the responsibility of Moawiya to protect the life and honour of the progeny of the Holy Prophet (saww) and the Holy Ahle Bait (as).

6 .The undesirable schism of reviling Hazrat Ali (as):

"Hazrat Ali (as) will be remembered with dignity and honour and no abusive language will be used against him; or, according to some narrations, it will not be practiced in the life of Imam Hasan (as)."

This condition, with some variation, has been recorded by the majority of the historians, some of the more prominent ones being: Abul Faraj Isphahani, Ibne Abee-al-Hadeed Mo'tazilli Ibne Khaldoon Ibne Asakir ,Ibne Kaseer Sheikh Mufeed The historian Tabari Ibne Aseer Ibne S'ad Ibne Sabbagh Maliki The scholar Raazi aale Yaseen The scholar Baqar Qarshi. 28_/_

This condition reflects that Imam Hasan Mujtaba (as) was very much concerned about the high status and respect for his illustrious father. He and his group were determined to face all conspiracies meant to hurt the honour of Hazrat Ali (as) and would not show any leniency in this respect.

7 - The Bait-ul-Maal of Koofa

"Moawiya would hand over the Bait-ul-Maal of Koofa and the revenue of Darab Jerd (Darab Gard, a state in Iran) to Imam Hasan (as) so that he could meet his expenses and pay back his debt and other dues." 29_/_

Before deciding whether this condition is true or false, it is necessary to study the relevant details.

The historian Tabari, and later Ibne Aseer, writes that Imam Hasan (as) wanted that Moawiya should hand over to him the money available in the Bait-ul-Maal of Koofa. Moawiya agreed to this condition. At that time there were fifty lakh (five million) Dirham in that Bait-ul-Maal which (Imam) Hasan bin Ali (as) took to Madina. 30_/_

Dr. Husain Mohammad J'fari, challenging this narration of the historian Tabari, writes :

"For two reasons, there seems to be no logical reason for this condition:"

"1. Till the time of the peace agreement, Imam Hasan (as) was the undisputed caliph of Koofa. Therefore, the Bait-ul-Maal was under his custody;"

"2. Our sources confirm that it was the practice of Hazrat Ali (as) that at the end of every week he used to distribute all that was in the Bait-ul-Maal. Therefore, it is difficult to believe that within the few months of the caliphate of Imam Hasan (as), despite heavy war expenses and the disorder due to the martyrdom of Hazrat Ali (as), fifty lakh (five million) Dirham would still be available in the Bait-ul-Maal." 31_/_

In a few narrations it is mentioned that Imam Mujtaba (as) had demanded that Moawiya should allow him to take as much money from Bait-ul-Maal as he wished so that he could repay the debt and other dues, while some others say that Imam Hasan (as) wanted that Moawiya should hand over the Bait-ul-Maal of Koofa to him. At that time there were said to be seventy lakh (seven million) Dirham in the Bait-ul-Maal of Koofa which Imam Hasan (as) is alleged to have taken with him to Madina. Moawiya had promised to give him an additional sum of ten lakh (one million) Dirham per annum. In "Mukhtasar-al-Jame' " it is even alleged that Imam Hasan (as) had sold the caliphate to Moawiya for fifty lakh (five million) Dirham and had taken the commitment that he would pay a similar amount annually to the Imam (as). 32_/_ According to the historian Dinavari, Imam Hasan (as) had demanded that, apart from Bait-ul-Maal, the revenue of an Iranian state Darab Jard would be reserved for him; a sum of twenty lakh Dirham (two million) would be given to his younger brother Imam Husain (as); and Bani Hashim would be given preference over Bani Abde Shams. Also, that these conditions had been included in the Peace Agreement. The condition about Darab Jard's revenue has also been mentioned by other historians. 33_/_

All these narrations have so many inaccurate statements that the researchers doubt whether such a large amount could have been demanded from Moawiya and consider these narrations as weak. Those mentioning such narrations have used the Arabic words "qeel or yaqal" which is a clear indication that these are weak narrations. That is why a large number of historians do not even mention these conditions. Apart from the above, many objections can be raised against these narrations:

(1). Imam Mujtaba (as) was the caliph of Islam. Is it possible that he was so indebted that he needed such a large amount for its repayment while the Bait-ul-Maal of Muslims was under his own control?

(2). In the Bait-ul-Maal, along with booty, there is also the amount of propitiatory offerings and Zakat. Is it possible that Imam Hasan (as), being one of the Ahle Bait on whom propitiatory offerings are forbidden, had considered it lawful to use the money from Bait-ul-Maal for his personal expenses? Had he done so, would the other members of the household of the Holy Prophet (saww) not have objected?

(3). It is a hard historical fact that huge sums had been offered to the Imam (as) by Moawiya so that he may abdicate caliphate in favour of Moawiya, but he declined Moawiya's politics of bribery and faced him boldly. He clearly indicated that if he had the love of wealth and coveted worldly power and authority, Moawiya would never have been able to snatch the same from him. In the light of these hard facts, there is no doubt that the weak narrations, particularly those that he sold the caliphate in exchange for a certain amount and put the condition that Bani Hashim be given a higher status than Bani Umayyah, are unreliable. The fact is that in the dignified and pious life of the grandson of the Holy Prophet (saww) there is no chance of such behaviour. In authentic narrations about him it has been stated that twice he had distributed all that he had among the needy. Similarly, in his character and manners there is no indication that he might have aired family status and ignored the principle of equality in the distribution of money from Bait-ul-Maal.

(4). From the Shia sources the narrations regarding the Imam (as) having asked for the money and revenue are not confirmed. The only demand that is confirmed is that Moawiya would pay compensation to those who were killed or injured in Siffin and other wars and the revenue from Darab Jerd would be reserved for the purpose. This appears to be a reasonable condition as Moawiya was responsible for these wars and it was his duty to compensate for the same. The scholar Baqar Qarshi writes in this regard:

"(Imam) Hasan (as) did not like that he should take any sum from the Bait-ul-Maal for himself or his Shias. As far as he was concerned, the propitiatory offerings are forbidden for him as well as for all Ahle Bait (as). As far as his Shia are concerned, it cannot be denied that the propitiatory offerings are undesirable as these may include ill gotten money (after the payment of which the rest of the amount becomes 'paak'). Therefore, the Imam (as) did not consider it suitable for his Shias as well, and fixed the revenue from Darab Jerd (for compensation to them) which was booty, and there was no element of doubt in its use for them." 34_ /

The scholar Hashim M'arroof al Hasani also doubts the weak narrations and he expresses his views thus:

"These narrations lack authenticity from the point of view of continuity of source and are weak. Apart from this, it is also likely that the governments of Bani Umayya and Bani Abbas concocted such narrations just like dozens of others that they had concocted about Imam Hasan (as), so that they may influence human minds that Imam Hasan (as) had bargained for money in exchange for caliphate and had opted for a life of pleasure, giving up the most important religious issues. These ideas were spread by an Abbaside caliph who wanted to harm the cause of Husaini followers who were active against the oppressive rulers. 35_/_

We cannot claim that the above research is a hundred percent correct but it cannot be denied that Moawiya had offered large sums to Imam Hasan (as) which he had rejected outright as he considered it "blackmail" and bribe. In his opinion, Moawiya or any other caliph did not have the right to give the money belonging to Muslims to anyone - even to Imam Hasan (as). This fact has been mentioned by A'sam Koofi in his history.36_/_ Researchers like Dr. Taha Husain also do not disagree with these conclusions. 37_/_

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The Formal Announcement of Peace

After a long struggle, the understanding between Imam Hasan (as) and Ameer Moawiya had been reached on various issues. The Imam (as) had, after the acceptance of the conditions demanded by him, agreed to hand over power to Moawiya for a specified period. During this period, high powered delegations had been exchanged and signatures from the leaders on both sides on the terms of the agreement had been obtained. Particularly, from the Ameer of Syria, a number of firm commitments had been taken, and he had vouched, affirming Almighty God as witness, that he would fully abide by the terms and conditions of the Peace Treaty. Although all the formalities of the treaty had been completed, yet the formal announcement of the treaty was awaited.

After the treaty, Imam Mujtaba (as) instructed Qais bin Sa'd, through a letter, that he should return to Koofa and he himself decided to go back to Koofa along with the rest of the army at Madain. According to the historians, Qais addressed his army after receiving the Imam (as)'s letter. After analyzing the existing situation, he told the soldiers that they had to decide whether they wanted to continue the fight without the Imam (as) or they would accept the allegiance of a misguided person. Just after his speech, all the soldiers in one voice agreed to a ceasefire, after which he had no hesitation in leaving the northern parts of Iraq, where he had laid a siege against the Syrian army.

If this is correct, then it is not difficult to conclude that Qais was personally strictly against giving allegiance to Moawiya. He considered war as the only solution of the problem. However, it seems that he could not fully appreciate the very poor conditions in Iraq and the prevailing dangerous situation, and was carried away by emotions. Despite his intelligence, bravery, military skills and honesty, he had an element of disagreement with the Central command. Perhaps that was the reason why he was not given the exclusive command of the vanguard unit, which was given to a three member consultative council, under which Ubaidullah bin Abbas was the senior one and Qais was assigned the number two position.

The armies of Syria and Iraq had gathered in strength at Nakhaila, a suburb of Koofa city. After attaining an armed upper hand, it was very likely that the Ameer of Syria would put pressure on the grandson of the Holy Prophet (saww) to give up the caliphate and to accept him as the religious caliph, just like Hazrat Abu Bakr had nominated Hazrat Umar for caliphate. This was the only way in which his government and its acts would attain legal and constitutional status. The Ameer of Syria did not stop there but demanded that Imam Mujtaba (as) should seek forgiveness from Moawiya for waging war against Syria. He spread rumour among the political circles in Koofa that Imam Hasan (as) had handed over the caliphate to Moawiya and was himself retiring.

The residents of Koofa were already depressed from defeat and they were likely to be adversely affected by such rumours. Although they did not accept these rumours as true, yet they were gripped with anxiety and doubt. However, they had very closely seen the attractive personality of the grandson of the Holy Prophet (saww), his refined manners, his impeccable character,

knowledge, piety and political farsightedness. Apart from these, his valuable services to the cause of Islam were very well known and appreciated by all. Perhaps due to these qualities of the Imam (as) they had earlier chosen him collectively as their caliph despite so many disagreements in Koofa. Under a difficult situation, they were anxiously waiting for the grandson of the Holy Prophet (saww) to appear personally and to address them publicly to explain his version of the peace, to remove the doubts created in their minds. They did not have to wait long and the Imam (as), after duly praising Almighty God, addressed them from the pulpit thus:

"O men! Doubtless Almighty God guided you through the first of us (the Holy Prophet (saww)) and through the last of us, (i.e. Imam Hasan (as) himself), He has saved you from mass killings. Undoubtedly, the power is for a temporary period and such worldly ranks keep changing. The Merciful God has commanded His prophet that He is not sure whether he would take it as a trial or a source of pleasure for a short while."

"O men! for sure a pious person is very intelligent and the transgressor and sinful person is quite foolish. You may go anywhere in the East or West, yet you will find no one except me and my brother Husain whose grandfather is the Holy Prophet (saww). You are well aware that the Merciful God guided you to the righteous path through our grandfather Hazrat Mohammad (saww) and saved you from going astray by showing you the way of light from darkness and ignorance. Moreover, He gave you respect from disgrace and increased your small numbers into a large one. Undoubtedly, Moawiya has tried hard to snatch my right from me. In such a situation, I have kept the welfare of Muslim Ummah in view. (On the other side), you had paid allegiance to me, vowing that you will make peace with whom I make peace and you will wage war against whom I wage war. Now, I have made peace with Moawiya. My action is for your benefit and it would safeguard you." .

To explain the stand taken by Imam Hasan (as) about peace, his sermon is very significant and that is why the historians and biographers have repeatedly quoted it, and there is a chain of narrators which leaves no doubt about its authenticity. Though there are so many points in this important sermon which need attention and elaboration, yet it seems appropriate to draw attention to some of the conjectures by a few historians in this regard.

In the history by Tabari and some others, it is mentioned that this sermon was delivered at the instance of 'Umroo bin 'Aas. This way 'Umroo bin 'Aas wanted to convey to the people that Imam Hasan (as) was unable to give an appropriate talk to the people on the issue. However, after the Imam (as)'s sermon, he felt ashamed. A group of researchers accepts this guess as correct and S.H.M. J'afery is one of them. But Dr. Taha Husain totally disagreeing, writes:

"Hasan (as) had delivered sermons to the people on a number of occasions during the life time of his illustrious father as well as after him. Stammering or any other weakness was not noticed in

any of his sermons earlier. Earlier as well as later, the Imam (as) was regarded as a member of the illustrious family, anyone of whose members was never known to hesitate or falter in conversation or address. Rather this highly revered family was known for its unmatched qualities of eloquence, command over the language and ability to clearly distinguish between the truth and falsehood. No one could match them in this field. So, Imam Hasan (as) addressed the people and nothing better could be said than what he said and no better expression of truthful ideas could be expressed than what he did."

Apart from Dr. Taha Husain, the analysis by Dr. Abdul Aziz Salim in this respect is also very interesting. He writes:

"In both conditions, (whether Hasan (as) himself initiated peace or he considered the war against the Syrians as unhelpful), the decision by Hasan (as) reflects deep reflection and realistic assessment of the given state of affairs. Hasan (as) has compared his action with those of his grandfather because he saved the Arabs from bloodshed while his illustrious grandfather had provided them guidance towards truth from misguidance and infidelity."

There is no doubt that every word of this historical sermon of Imam Mujtaba (as) has very deep meaning and significance. We consider it appropriate to refer to a few points for reflection by the readers:

(1) Imam Mujtaba (as) reminded the people that under no circumstances they should ignore the quality of chastity and purity of thought and action of the household of the Holy Prophet (saww) and the great services that they had rendered. The people had been suffering from polytheism and infidelity and had gone astray when the Merciful God showed them the light of truth through the first of the household (the Holy Prophet (saww)). Likewise, now the lives of the people were in danger and it was quite likely that there would have been mass killings without any aim or purpose and the bloodshed would have been in vain. But Almighty God in His grace saved them through another member of the household of the Holy Prophet (saww), i.e. Imam Hasan (as). This style of eloquence, which is reflected in the speeches of Imam Hasan (as), is unique.

(2) Imam Mujtaba (as) knew that earlier the people had considered Moawiya more clever and cunning than Hazrat Ali (as) and likewise they thought that Moawiya was more clever than Imam Hasan (as). The people had thus become convinced that the persons who acquired wealth and power, whether by hook or crook, were intelligent, while those who acted within the bounds commanded by Almighty God were simple and ignorant. Imam Mujtaba (as) negated this approach by the people and indicated that wise and intelligent persons were only those who were virtuous and pious bondsmen of Almighty God. It is so because the pious ones do not get involved in sin and disobedience of God for the pleasure of a few days. Thus, they do not get the displeasure of the Creator of the universe who has complete authority over their lives and death.

Therefore, they live with respect in this world and would get ever lasting reward in the hereafter. On the other hand, those who oppress the people, misuse the funds of Baitul Maal, collect wealth through embezzlement or bribery or acquire worldly power by such means, are not clever but really foolish. They have earned everlasting punishment in exchange for a few days' pleasure and have deprived themselves of the blessings of the Creator of the universe, thus causing great loss to themselves. If they possessed true intelligence and knowledge, they would not commit such foolishness.

(3) Imam Hasan (as), reflecting the bravery and courage, which he had inherited from his household, made a public declaration that caliphate had been his right and the efforts of the Ameer of Syria to snatch it from him amounted to depriving him of his right. However, for the welfare of the Muslim Ummah and to protect the life of Muslims, he had temporarily given up the effort to achieve this right through armed struggle. This decision of Imam Hasan (as) reflected the Alawi politics. His illustrious father had also postponed his struggle for caliphate to an appropriate time in the interest of the glory of Islam and for the sake of the unity of Muslims. Imam Mujtaba (as) made it clear that the welfare of Muslims was upper most in his mind rather than personal considerations.

On reflecting the words of Imam Mujtaba (as), it would be clear that he did not say that he had handed over the caliphate to Moawiya after his political maneuvering, nor that they should give allegiance to Moawiya, which impression has wrongly been created in some histories. Rather he had stated that he had postponed for some time the steps to recover his right and that he had given the right to rule to Moawiya till his lifetime only. This point is clear in the initial lines of his sermon where he has stated that the struggle for power continues almost all the time. Therefore, the allegiance to him, which the people had paid at the time of his caliphate, was not affected by the peace treaty. The people were reminded that under the allegiance they had pledged that they would wage war against whom he waged war and would be bound by peace with whom he made peace. This clearly shows that he had not absolved them of their allegiance to him. Rather he asked his followers not to wage war against Moawiya for a limited period.

If some among the Muslim intelligentsia still insist that Moawiya had become a caliph, then they would have to decide whether caliphate is a religious status or a chair for kingdom or rule which can be had by anyone with the force of power. After analysing the state of affairs in Iraq from 40 A.H. till the time of peace treaty, it appears that though Moawiya had acquired the power to rule, yet

he could not acquire any legal justification for his government which his predecessor caliphs had. The stand of Imam Mujtaba (as) on caliphate and monarchy became very clear when Moawiya retorted during the sermon: "O Hasan! you wanted to become a caliph, but could not become one."

The guardian of caliphate gave such a comprehensive but brief reply to Moawiya which reflected a distinct difference between caliphate and monarchy and this distinction is likely to remain till this world lasts. If the Imam (as) had not shown the courage on that occasion, the Muslims would not have been able to distinguish between caliphate and monarchy till doomsday. No knowledgeable person can deny that a better definition of caliphate had not been given till that time in the whole Muslim world.

The Imam (as) said: "caliph is one who abides by the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (saww) and makes obedience to Allah his way of life. But one who forms oppression as the basis of his government, suspends the rule of God and chooses the pleasures of this world as be all and end all, then he is not a caliph but a monarch. He has acquired a kingdom. He would benefit from it for a short while but later he would be the loser. So its pleasures will be lost but the harm will be lasting. It will be, as Almighty God has said: 'I am not sure whether it is a test for you or you have been given a short respite in this world'."

This sermon had a deep effect on the people. The religious groups, being affected by Imam Mujtaba (as), refused to call Moawiya a caliph. Instead they called him a "monarch" or king, although they knew that Moawiya did not like it. In this regard, history records the reaction of S'ad bin Abee Waqas, Abu Huraira and other venerable Companions of the Holy Prophet (saww). The rulers after Ameer Moawiya were neither considered the rightful religious caliphs ('Khalifa-e-Rashid') nor were they elected through a consultative council ('shoora), allegiance or other forms of election in practice at the time. Rather those who wielded power used to occupy the chair of monarchy, i.e. might was right.

The fact is that historians learnt to distinguish between caliphate and monarchy from Imam Hasan (as).

Only through making this rise and fall in Islamic history as the base, could Maulana Maudoodi explain in detail the distinction between caliphate and monarchy. His services in this regard are highly commendable. However, it is surprising that he ignored a great person like Imam Hasan (as), who, fearlessly and through his great courage had drawn the line between caliphate and monarchy, and through whom an intellectual like him was able to perform the said service!

Apart from the public, Moawiya was also affected by the sermons of Imam Hasan (as). He expressed his strong reaction to the sermon, which has been recorded by the biographers. The historians Abul Faraj Isphahani, Ibne Abee al Hadeed M'otazilli and others quote Aboo Ishaque with reference to Sh'obi that on that day they heard Moawiya as saying:

"Remember whatever treaty I had made with Hasan bin Ali (as), is trampled under my feet. I will

never fulfill it." 10_/_

According to the analysis by researchers, while attacking Iraq, the main aim of Moawiya was not just to occupy it but to defeat the Iraqi army and to force Imam Hasan (as) to surrender in his favour. 11_/_ Now that he had not succeeded in his real aim, he was carried away by his passion and uttered the words that were in his heart. He further said:

"By God, I did not wage war against you so that you may say your prayers, keep fast, perform Hajj or give 'zakah'. All this you were already performing. My only aim in waging war against you was that I may rule over you. Almighty God in His grace has given me that opportunity which you do not like." 12_/_

The historians and biographers write that through these words Moawiya made his real aim clear, which was vague till then. He exposed himself by mentioning the real aim of his waging the war. Till then, he had been making the people believe that he was fighting to take revenge for the death of Usman. During the Jamal and Siffin wars he had been successful in his earlier camouflage. Though Hazrat Ali (as) had replied to the slander through logic and supportive arguments but many simple persons had been carried away under the false slogan of revenge. However, Koofa was witness today that Imam Hasan (as), through his wise policy, planning and great patience, exposed Moawiya's true aim.

As far as the question of one party declining to abide by the peace treaty at the time of the formal announcement of the same, is concerned, it was a clear breach of the firm commitment, which was a bad omen for the residents of Koofa. They were already afraid of Moawiya. Now they realized that Moawiya had no respect for any Islamic moral standard. However, as far as the question of breaching the terms of the treaty is concerned, it was premature to say that Moawiya had that power, as only the conditions in future would determine the same.

Imam Mujtaba (as) did not stay for long in Koofa after the formal announcement of the peace treaty. Even some of his devotees objected to peace and he was even called the one who caused 'disgrace to the believers'. Yet, can it be concluded that his peace agreement was a political defeat?

Intelligent persons should keep in view the fact that in every movement there are emotional and non serious persons who are unable to visualize the future due to their limited knowledge and short cited view. Is it not a fact that such objections had been raised against the Holy Prophet (saww) himself when he was busy in negotiations with the Quraish at Hudaibiya? The Muslims were quite unhappy about not being able to perform Hajj, and about the peace agreement made by the Holy Prophet (saww). That is why the Companions of the Holy Prophet (saww) were somewhat reluctant in carrying out some of his commands. Some had even started doubting the

very prophethood of the Holy Prophet (saww). History proves that though some Muslims had considered the Peace Treaty at Hudaibiya as a defeat, yet Almighty God declared it as a great victory ('fathe mobin').¹³ / Later they realized that often what cannot be achieved through war, can be had through peace and understanding. Before Hudaibiya, till 7 A.H., the total number of Muslims was two thousand while within one year they had reached the figure of ten thousand. While the grandfather of Imam Hasan (as) had spread his message to the tribes in the Arabian peninsula through words and deed by making peace at Hudaibiya, and had rendered the propaganda by Quraish ineffective, Imam Hasan (as) had, through his statesmanlike policies, saved his supporters, the Muslims in general, and the pious Companions, from bloodshed. He made the politics and propaganda of Moawiya totally unsuccessful and deprived him of the chance to become a rightful religious caliph. Moreover, he managed to make Moawiya confess that revenge for the blood of Usman was just an excuse for acquiring power, which had caused the bloodshed of thousands of Muslims.

After the transfer of power, people got a chance to have a close look at Moawiya and the persons near him. We are sure if people understand the philosophy behind the peace at Hudaibiya, they would also learn the philosophy behind the peace of Imam Hasan (as). If Imam Mujtaba (as) had not made this decision at the right time, the blood of thousands of Muslims would have been shed without any gain from the same. Ameer Moawiya would have assumed the title of 'rightly guided caliph' and after that, all his steps and acts would have been considered as legal and according to Islamic law. He could have easily gained the favour of general public by declaring Imam Hasan (as) and his party as war hungry and himself as the seeker of peace. After that, his policy of changing the Islamic caliphate into the kingdom of Qaiser and Kisra would have been successful without any resistance. We regret to say that among Muslims, whether Sunnis or Shi'a, intellectuals or ulama, the great achievement of the grandson of the Holy Prophet (saww) has not been fully appreciated. Though these circles regularly observe the sad incident of Karbala each year and remember the great sacrifice of Imam Husain (as), yet they forget that had there been no peace treaty by Imam Hasan (as), Imam Husain (as) would not have been able to accomplish what he did at Karbala. By inculcating a new spirit in the Islamic movement, Imam Hasan (as) had set the stage for Karbala. This way he is the first architect of Karbala. We will discuss this point in greater detail in the next chapter.

Imam Hasan (as) was returning to Madina, the city of his grandfather, along with the members of his household and brother Imam Husain (as). A large number of his devotees and Shi'as had assembled to say goodbye to him. They were wailing and requesting their Imam or caliph to stay at Koofa. They were assuring him that this time the whole of Koofa would be with him and they would not show any weakness towards him. But the Imam (as) turned down their request and asked them to abide by the peace treaty. Reminding them of his piety and nobility, he instructed them to follow his commands as a religious duty and to consider following him obligatory. After a few more instructions, he continued his journey to Madina. This was a very sad hour for the

people of Koofa when the grandson of the Holy Prophet (saww) was departing from them, as they were realising that due to their own mistakes they could not defend his caliphate and they themselves were responsible for the defeat. While the Imam (as) had just reached Qadisiah, he got a message from Moawiya requesting him to fight against a group of 'Kharjis'. In reply the Imam wrote:

"If I wanted to fight any Muslim, I would prefer to wage war against you. For sure, in the interest of reforming the Muslim Ummah and to protect their life, I have given it up." 14_/ . This reply of the Imam (as) shows that he had not just rejected the caliphate of Moawiya verbally, but in practice as well he would not follow him. He was not hesitant in saying that he had made the decision in favour of peace only for the welfare of the Muslims. Otherwise, in his view, the war would have been fought against Moawiya rather than against the 'Khawarij'. The Imam (as) had inherited this brave and courageous stand against his rival from his illustrious family.

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