

Khalid Muhammad Khalid

THE SUCCESSORS OF THE MESSENGER

Allah's blessing and peace be upon him

خلفاء الرسول
صلى الله عليه وسلم



Translated by
Muhammad Malik Al-Sharif

Khalid Muhammad Khalid

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THE SUCCESSORS OF THE MESSENGER

“It is those, whom Allah has guided, and it is those who are of sound minds.”

“I’ve never offered Islam to anyone but that he was reluctant (to accept it at first)” said The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, “except for Abu Bakr, who did not hesitate (to embrace it).”

“No doubt, Allah has made the truth manifestly shown and expressed through the heart and tongue of Umar”, said The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, “I’ve never seen such a strong man (in drawing water for the people) as him (Umar).”

“O Allah! Be please with Uthman” said The Messenger, “for I’m pleased with him.”

“If there is anyone of whom I’m a friend” said The Messenger, “then, Ali is also his friend.”

“Then, Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz was given the pledge of allegiance”, said the historians, “and he sat on the ground (to receive the people and settle their injustices).”

INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", like that of the earlier messengers of Allah, was to call people to worshipping and submitting to the One god. In practice, submission to Allah means to obey His instructions as given in the Holy Qur'an and as exemplified by sunnah (of the Prophet).

As successor to the Prophet, the Caliph was the head of the Muslim community and his primary responsibility was to continue in the path of the Prophet. Since religion was perfected and the Divine revelation was over at the death of the Prophet, the Caliph was to make all laws in accordance with the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

He was a ruler over Muslims but not their sovereign since sovereignty belongs to Allah alone. He was to be obeyed as long as he obeyed Allah. He was responsible for creating and maintaining conditions under which it would be easy for Muslims to live according to Islamic principles, and to see that justice applied to all.

Abu Bakr, at the time he accepted the caliphate, stated his position thus: "The weak among you shall be strong with me until his right has been brought back to him; and the strong among you shall be weak with me until, Allah willing, I have taken the right from him... Obey me as long as I obey Allah and His Messenger. When I disobey Him and His Messenger, then do not obey me."

The Rightly-Guided Caliphs

Those Caliphs who truly followed the Prophet's footsteps are called The Rightly-Guided Caliphs. They are the first four Caliphs: Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali. (But, Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz was traditionally added to them). All four were among the earliest and closest Companions of the Prophet "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him". They lived simple and righteous life, and strove hard in the cause of the religion of Allah.

They used to do justice to all people, and treat others kindly and compassionately. After these four successors, the later Caliphs assumed the manners of kings and emperors, and the true spirit of equality of ruler and ruled diminished so much in the political life of Muslims.

It should be clearly understood that the mission of Prophet Muhammad “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, and hence that of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, was not political, social or economic reform, although such reforms were a logical consequence of the success of this mission, nor the unity of a nation and the establishment of an empire, although the nation united and vast areas came under one administration, nor the spread of a civilization or culture, although many civilizations and cultures developed, but only to deliver the message of Allah to all the peoples of the world and to invite them to submit to Him, while being the foremost among those who submitted.

The First Caliph, Abu Bakr (632-634 A.D.)

"If I were to take a friend other than my Lord, I would take Abu Bakr as a friend." (said the Prophet)

The Prophet's closest Companion, Abu Bakr, was not present when the Prophet “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” breathed his last in the apartment of his dear wife, A’ishah, daughter of Abu Bakr. When he came to know of the Prophet's death, Abu Bakr hurried to the house of A’ishah, lifted the covering of the Messenger of Allah, and addressed him saying with sorrow:

"How blessed you have been during your life and how pure you are during your death!" He said so while kissing the cheek of the Prophet.

When Abu Bakr came out of the Prophet's house and broke the news, disbelief and dismay befell the community of Muslims in Medina. Muhammad “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” had been the leader, the guide and the carrier of Divine revelation through whom they had been taken out from idolatry and barbarism into the way of Allah.

How could he die? Even Umar, one of the bravest and strongest of the Prophet's Companions, lost his self-control and drew his sword and threatened to kill anyone who said that the Prophet died.

Abu Bakr gently pushed him aside, ascended the pulpit in the mosque and addressed the people, saying: "O people, verily whoever worshipped Muhammad, behold! Muhammad died. But whoever worships Allah, behold! Allah is alive and will never die." then he quoted a Verse from the Qur'an: "And Muhammad is but a Messenger. Many Messengers have gone before him; if then he dies or is killed, will you turn back upon your heels?"

On hearing these words, the people were consoled. Depression gave way to confidence and tranquility. This critical moment had passed. But the Muslim community was now faced with an extremely serious problem: i.e. the necessity of choosing a leader. After some discussion among the Companions of the Prophet who had assembled in the shed of Sa'idah, in order to select a leader, it became apparent that no one was better fitting for this responsibility than Abu Bakr.

Abu Bakr said in the first speech he delivered after his appointment as caliph: "O people! I've been appointed as ruler over you, though I'm not the best of you. If I did well (to you), then you should support me, and if I did evil (to you), then, you should guide me to what is right. Behold! The weak person amongst you would be considered as strong in my sight until I bring back to him his right (usurped by others). Behold! The strong person among you would be considered as weak in my sight until I take from him the right of others, which he usurped. You should obey me as long as I comply with (the orders and instructions of) Allah and His Messenger. But, if I deviated (from that), then you would (have the right) not to obey me."

Abu Bakr (Owner of Camels) was not his real name. He acquired this name later in life because of his great interest in raising camels. His real name was Abd Al-Ka'bah (Slave of Ka'bah), which Muhammad "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" later changed to Abdullah (Slave of Allah). The Prophet also gave him the title of As-Siddiq (The Truly faithful believer).

Abu Bakr was a fairly wealthy merchant, and before he embraced Islam, he was a respected citizen of Mecca. He was three years younger than Muhammad "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him". Some natural affinity drew them together from earliest childhood. He remained the closest Companion to the Prophet along his entire life.

When Muhammad first called his closest friends and kinship to Islam, Abu Bakr was among the earliest to accept it. He also persuaded Uthman to accept Islam. In the early days of the Prophet's mission, when the Muslims were subjected to relentless persecution and torture, Abu Bakr received his portion of hardship. Finally when Allah's permission came to emigrate from Mecca, he was the one chosen by the Prophet to accompany him on the dangerous journey to Medina.

In the numerous battles, which took place during the life of the Prophet, Abu Bakr was always by his side. Once, he brought all his belongings to the Prophet, who was raising money for the defense of Medina. The Prophet asked: "O Abu Bakr, what did you leave for your dependents?" he replied: "Allah and His Prophet."

Even before Islam, Abu Bakr was known to be a man of upright character and amiable and compassionate disposition. Along his life he was sensitive to human suffering and kind to the poor and helpless. Even though he was wealthy, he lived very simply and spent his money for charity, for freeing slaves and for the cause of Islam. He often spent part of the night in supplication and prayer. He shared with his family a cheerful and affectionate home life.

Abu Bakr then was the man upon whom the burden of leadership fell at the most sensitive period in the history of the Muslims.

As the news of the Prophet's death spread, a number of tribes rebelled and refused to pay Zakat (poor-due), saying that this was due only to the Prophet "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him". At the same time a number of impostors claimed that the Prophethood had passed to them after Muhammad and they raised the standard of rebellion. sides, two powerful empires, the Eastern Roman and the Persian, also threatened the newborn Islamic state at Medina.

Under these circumstances, many Companions of the Prophet, including Umar, advised Abu Bakr to make concessions to the Zakat withholders for some time.

The new Caliph disagreed. He insisted that the Divine Law couldn't be divided, that there is no distinction between the obligations of Zakat and prayer, and that any indulgence in the instructions of Allah would eventually ruin the foundations of Islam. Umar and others were fast to realize their error of judgment.

The rebellious tribes attacked Medina but the Muslims were prepared. Abu Bakr himself led the charge, forcing them to retreat. He then made a relentless war on the false claimants to Prophethood, most of whom submitted and again professed Islam.

The threat from the Roman Empire had actually arisen earlier, during the Prophet's lifetime. The Prophet had organized an army under the command of Usamah Ibn Zaid Ibn Harithah. The army had not gone far when the Prophet had fallen ill so they stopped.

After the death of the Prophet the question was raised whether the army should be sent again or should remain for the defense of Medina. Again Abu Bakr showed a firm determination. He said, "I shall send Usamah's army on its way as ordered by the Prophet, even if I am left alone." The final instructions he gave to Usama prescribed a code of conduct in war, which remains unsurpassed to this day.

Some of his instructions to the Muslim army were: "Do not be deserters, nor be guilty of disobedience. Do not kill an old man, a woman or a child. Do not injure date palms and do not cut down fruit trees.

Do not slaughter any sheep or cows or camels except for food. You will encounter persons who spend their lives in monasteries. Leave them alone and do not molest them."

Khalid Ibn Al-Walid had been chosen by the Prophet "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" on several occasions to lead Muslim armies. A man of supreme courage and a born leader, his military genius came to flourish during the Caliphate of Abu Bakr. Throughout Abu Bakr's reign Khalid led his troops from one victory to another against the attacking Romans.

Another contribution of Abu Bakr to the cause of Islam was the collection and compilation of the verses of the Qur'an.

Abu Bakr died on 21 Jumada the Last, 13 A.H. (23 August 634 A.C.), at the age of sixty-three, and was buried by the side of the Prophet "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him". His caliphate lasted twenty-seven months. During this short period, Abu Bakr had managed, by the Grace of Allah, to strengthen and consolidate his community and the state, and to secure the Muslims against the perils, which had threatened their existence.

The Second Caliph, Umar Ibn Al-Khattab (634-644 A.D.)

"Allah has made the truth manifest through Umar's tongue and heart."
(said the Prophet)"

During his last illness, Abu Bakr had conferred with his people, particularly the more eminent among them. After this meeting they chose Umar as his successor.

Umar was born into a respected Quraish family thirteen years after the birth of Muhammad "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him". Umar's family was known for its extensive knowledge of genealogy. When he

grew up, Umar was proficient in this branch of knowledge as well as in swordsmanship, wrestling and the art of speaking.

He also learned to read and write while still a child, a very rare thing in Mecca at that time. Umar earned his living as a merchant. His trade took him to many foreign lands and he met all kinds of people. This experience gave him an insight into the affairs and problems of men.

Umar's personality was dynamic, self-assertive, frank and straightforward. He always spoke whatever was in his mind even if it displeased others.

Umar was twenty-seven years old when the Prophet "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" proclaimed his mission. The ideas Muhammad was preaching enraged him as much as they did with the other notables of Mecca. He was hostile to anyone accepting Islam as others were from among Quraish. When his slave-girl accepted Islam he beat her until he himself was exhausted and told her, "I have stopped because I am tired, not out of pity for you."

The story of his embracing Islam is an interesting one. One day, full of anger against the Prophet, he drew his sword and set out to kill him. A friend met him on the way. When Umar told him what he planned to do, his friend informed him that Umar's own sister, Fatimah, and her husband had also accepted Islam. Umar went straight to his sister's house where he found her reading from pages of the Qur'an. He fell upon her and beat her violently.

Bruised and bleeding, she told her brother: "O Umar, you can do what you like, but you cannot turn our hearts away from Islam." These words had a great effect upon Umar. What was this faith that made even weak women so strong of heart?

He asked his sister to show him what she had been reading; he was at once moved to the core by the words of the Qur'an and immediately grasped their truth. He went straight to the house where the Prophet was staying and swore fealty to him.

Umar made no secret of his acceptance of Islam. He gathered the Muslims and offered prayers at the Ka'bah. This boldness and devotion of an influential citizen of Mecca raised the morale of the small community of Muslims.

Nonetheless, Umar was also subjected to hardship, and when permission for emigration to Medina came, he also left Mecca. But, he did not emigrate secretly or as hidden as others, implying the Messenger himself. He emigrated in the sight and hearing of all people of Mecca.

When he intended to migrate, he drew his sword and went on to the Ka'bah, and then cried loudly challenging the strongest and most tyrants of Quraish: "Whoever wanted that his mother would be bereaved of him, or his wife would be widow after his death, let him follow me to prevent me from going on."

Of course, none dared to do, while the young men of Mecca who were present there, were so much astonished by this strong challenging man, to whom none from among their fathers and powerful men, filled with arrogance and haughtiness, dared to do nothing.

The soundness of Umar's judgment, his devotion to the Prophet "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", his outspokenness and uprightness won for him a trust and confidence from the Prophet which was second only to that given to Abu Bakr. The Prophet gave him the title Faruq that means the distinguisher of what is True from what is False. During the Caliphate of Abu Bakr, Umar was his closest assistant and adviser. When Abu Bakr died, all the people of Medina swore fealty to Umar, and on 23 Jumada the Last, 13 A.H., he was proclaimed Caliph.

After taking charge of his office, Umar spoke to the Muslims of Medina: "O people, you have some rights on me which you can always claim. One of your rights is that if anyone of you comes to me with a claim, he should leave satisfied. Another of your rights is that you can demand that I take nothing unjustly from the revenues of the State. You can also demand that I fortify your frontiers and do not put you into danger. It is also your right that if you go to battle I should look after your families as a father would do while you are away. O people, remain conscious of Allah, forgive me my faults and help me in my task. Assist me in enforcing what is good and forbidding what is evil. Advise me regarding the obligations that have been imposed upon me by Allah."

The most notable feature of Umar's caliphate was the vast expansion of Islam. Apart from Arabia, Egypt, Iraq, Palestine and Iran also came under the protection of the Islamic government. But the great Umar himself lies in the quality of his rule. He gave a practical meaning to the Qur'anic principle:

"O you who believe, stand out firmly for justice as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it concerns rich or poor, for Allah can best protect both."

Once a woman brought a claim against the Caliph Umar. When Umar appeared on trial before the judge, the judge stood up as a sign of respect toward him.

Umar reprimanded him, saying, "This is the first act of injustice you did to this woman!" He insisted that his appointed governors live simple lives, keep no guard at their doors and be accessible to the people at all times, and he himself set the example for them.

Many times foreign envoys and messengers sent to him by his generals found him resting under a palm tree or praying in the mosque among the people, and it was difficult for them to distinguish which man was the Caliph. He spent many a watchful night going about the streets of Medina to see whether anyone needed help or assistance.

The general social and moral tone of the Muslim society at that time is well illustrated by the words of an Egyptian who was sent to spy on the Muslims during their Egyptian campaign. He reported: "I have seen a people, every one of whom loves death more than he loves life. They cultivate humility rather than pride. None is given to material ambitions.

Their mode of living is simple. Their commander is their equal. They make no distinction between superior and inferior, between master and slave. When the time of prayer approaches, none remains behind."

During the time of his ruling, departments of treasury, army and public revenues were established. Regular salaries were set up for soldiers. A population census was held. Elaborate land surveys were conducted to assess equitable taxes. New cities were founded. The areas, which came under his rule, were divided into provinces and governors were appointed. New roads were laid, canals were dug and hospitality houses were built. Provision was made for the support of the poor and the needy from public funds.

He defined, by precept and by example, the rights and privileges of non-Muslims, an example of which is the following contract with the Christians of Jerusalem:

"This is the protection which the servant of Allah, Umar, the Commander of the Believers has granted to the people of Jerusalem. The

protection is for their lives and properties, their churches and crosses, their sick and healthy and for all their coreligionists. Their churches shall not be used for habitation, nor shall they be demolished, nor shall any injury be done to them or to their compounds, or to their crosses, nor shall their properties be injured in any way.

There shall be no compulsion for these people in the matter of religion, nor shall any of them suffer any injury on account of religion. Whatever is written herein is under the covenant of Allah and the responsibility of His Messenger, of the Caliphs and of the believers, and shall hold firm as long as they pay tribute (tax for protecting them)."

Those non-Muslims who took part in defense together with the Muslims were exempted from paying tribute, and when the Muslims had to retreat from a city whose non-Muslim citizens had paid this tax for their defense, the tax was returned to the non-Muslims. The old, the poor and the disabled of Muslims and non-Muslims alike were provided for from the public treasury and from the Zakat funds.

Umar's Death In 23 A.H., when Umar returned to Medina from Hajj, he raised his hands and prayed, "O Allah! I am advanced in years, my bones are weary, my powers are declining, and the people for whom I am responsible have been spread far and wide. So, would You please Summon me back to Yourself, O my lord!"

Some time later, when Umar went to the mosque to lead a prayer, a Magian named Abu Lu'lu'ah Fairuz, who had a grudge against Umar on a personal matter, attacked him with a dagger and stabbed him several times. Umar fell to the ground.

When he learned that the assassin was a Magian, he said, "Praise be to Allah that he is not a Muslim." Umar died in the first week of Muharram, 24 A.H., and was buried by the side of the Prophet "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him".

The Third Caliph, Uthman Ibn Affan (644-656 A.D.)

"Every Prophet has an assistant, and my assistant will be Uthman."
(said the Prophet)

When Umar fell under the assassin's dagger, before he died the people asked him to nominate his successor. Umar appointed a committee consisting of six of the ten companions of the Prophet "Allah's blessing

and peace be upon him” about whom the Prophet had said: “They are the people of Paradise.”

They were Ali, Uthman, Abd Ar-Rahman, Sa’d Ibn Abu Waqqas, Az-Zubair and Talhah. He asked them to select the next Caliph from among themselves. He also outlined the procedure to be followed if there were any differences of opinion.

Abd Ar-Rahman withdrew. He was then authorized by the committee to nominate the Caliph. After two days of discussion among the candidates and after the opinions of the Muslims in Medina had been ascertained, the choice was finally limited to Uthman and Ali. Abd Ar-Rahman came to the mosque together with other Muslims, and after a brief speech and asking the two men what they would do in case one of them became caliph, he selected Uthman. All those present did the same, and Uthman became the third Caliph of Islam in the month of Muharram, 24 A.H.

However, Uthman Ibn Affan was born seven years after the Prophet “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”. He belonged to the Umayyad branch of the Quraish tribe. He learned to read and write at an early age, and as a young man became a successful merchant.

Even before Islam Uthman had been noted for his truthfulness and integrity. He and Abu Bakr were close friends, and it was Abu Bakr who brought him to Islam when he was thirty-four years of age. Some years later he married the Prophet's second daughter, Ruqayyah. In spite of his wealth and position, his relatives subjected him to torture because he had embraced Islam, and he was forced to emigrate to Abyssinia.

Some time later he returned to Mecca but soon migrated to Medina with the other Muslims. In Medina his business again began to flourish and he regained his former prosperity.

Uthman's generosity was limitless. On various occasions he spent a great portion of his wealth for the welfare of the Muslims, for charity and for preparing the equipment of the Muslim armies. That is why he came to be known as Generous.

Uthman's wife, Ruqayyah was seriously ill just before the Battle of Badr and he was excused by the Prophet “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” from participating in the battle.

The illness of Ruqayyah proved to be fatal, leaving Uthman deeply grieved. The Prophet was moved and offered Uthman the hand of another of his daughters, Umm Kulthum.

Because he had the high privilege of having two daughters of the Prophet as wives, Uthman was known as The one of the Two Lights. ' Uthman participated in the Battles of Uhud and the Trench. After the holy battle of the Trench, the Prophet "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" determined to perform Umrah, and sent Uthman as his envoy to the Quraish in Mecca, who detained him. The episode ended in a treaty with the Meccans known as the Treaty of Al-Hudaibiyah.

Uthman was a modest, honest, mild, generous and very kindly man, noted especially for his modesty and his piety. He often spent part of the night in prayer, observed fasts most of the days, performed hajj every year, and looked after the needy from among the community.

In spite of his wealth, he lived very simply and slept on bare sand in the courtyard of the Prophet's mosque. Uthman knew the Qur'an from memory and had an intimate knowledge of the context and circumstances relating to each verse.

During Uthman's rule, the characteristics of Abu Bakr's and Umar's caliphate, i.e. comprehensive justice for all, mild and humane policies, striving in the Cause of Allah, and the expansion of Islam continued. Uthman's ruling extended in the west to Morocco, in the east to Afghanistan, and in the north to Armenia and Azerbaijan. During his caliphate a navy was organized, administrative divisions of the state were revised, and many public projects were expanded and completed.

Uthman sent prominent Companions of the Prophet "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" as his personal deputies to various provinces to scrutinize the conduct of officials and the condition of the people.

Uthman's most notable contribution to the religion of Allah was the compilation of a complete and authoritative text of the Qur'an. A large number of copies of this text were made and distributed all over the Muslim world.

Uthman ruled for twelve years. The first six years were marked by internal peace and tranquility, but during the second half of his caliphate a rebellion arose. The Jews and the Magians, taking advantage of dissatisfaction among the people, began conspiring against Uthman, and

by publicly airing their complaints and grievances, gained so much sympathy that it became difficult to distinguish friend from foe.

It may seem surprising that a ruler of such vast territories, whose armies were matchless, was unable to deal with these rebels. If Uthman had wished, the rebellion could have been crushed at the very moment it began. But he was reluctant to be the first to shed the blood of Muslims, whatever rebellious they might be. He preferred to reason with them, to persuade them with kindness and generosity. He well remembered that he heard the Prophet "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" having said: "Once the sword is unsheathed among my followers, it will not be sheathed until the Last Day."

The rebels demanded that he abdicate and some of the Companions advised him to do so. He would gladly have followed this course of action, but again he was bound by a solemn pledge he had given to the Prophet: "Perhaps Allah will clothe you with a shirt, O Uthman and if the people want you to take it off, do not take it off for them."

Uthman said to a well wisher on a day when his house was surrounded by the rebels: "Allah's Messenger made a covenant with me and I shall show endurance in adhering to it." After a long siege, the rebels broke into Uthman's house and murdered him. When the first assassin's sword struck Uthman, he was reciting the verse, "Verily, Allah sufficeth thee; He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing." Uthman breathed his last on the afternoon of Friday, 17 Dhul-Hijjah, 35 A.H. (June, 656 A.C.). He was over eighty years old.

The power of the rebels was so great that Uthman's body lay unburied until Saturday night when he was buried in his blood-stained clothes, the shroud which befits all martyrs in the cause of Allah.

The Fourth Caliph, Ali Ibn Abu Talib (656-661 A.D.)

"You (Ali) are my brother in this world as well as in the hereafter."
(said the Prophet)

After Uthman's martyrdom, the office of the caliphate remained empty for two or three days. Many people insisted that Ali should take up the office, but he was embarrassed by the fact that the people who pressed him hardest were the rebels, and he therefore declined at first. When the notable Companions of the Prophet "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" urged him, however, he finally agreed.

Ali Ibn Abu Talib was the first cousin of the Prophet "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him". More than that, he had grown up in the Prophet's own household, later married his youngest daughter, Fatimah, and remained in closest association with him for nearly thirty years.

Ali was ten years old when the Divine revelation came to Muhammad "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him". One night he saw the Prophet and his wife Khadijah bowing and prostrating.

He asked the Prophet about the meaning of their actions. The Prophet told him that they were praying to Allah Most High and that Ali too should accept Islam.

Ali said that he would first like to ask his father about it. He spent a sleepless night, and in the morning he went to the Prophet and said, "When Allah created me He did not consult my father, so why should I consult my father in order to serve Allah?" and he accepted the truth of Muhammad's message.

When the Divine command came, "And warn thy nearest kinship", Muhammad "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" invited his relatives for a meal. After it was finished, he addressed them and asked, "Who will join me in the cause of Allah?" There was utter silence for a while, and then Ali stood up and said: "I am the youngest of all present here. My eyes trouble me because they are sore and my legs are thin and weak, but I shall join you and help you as possible as it could be."

The assembly broke up in derisive laughter. But during the difficult wars in Mecca, Ali held fast to these words and faced all the hardships to which the Muslims were subjected. He slept in the bed of the Prophet when the Quraish planned to murder Muhammad. It was he to whom the Prophet entrusted, when he left Mecca, the valuables which had been given to him for safekeeping, to be returned to their owners.

Apart from the expedition of Tabuk, Ali fought in all the early battles of Islam with great distinction, particularly in the expedition of Khaibar. It is said that in the Battle of Uhud he received more than sixteen wounds.

The Prophet "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" loved Ali dearly and called him by many fond names. Once the Prophet found him sleeping in the dust, he wiped off Ali's clothes and said: "Wake up, O Abu Turab (Father of Dust)!" The Prophet also gave him the title of Lion of Allah.

Ali's humility, austerity, piety, deep knowledge of the Qur'an and his sagacity gave him great distinction among the Prophet's Companions. Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman consulted him frequently during their caliphate. Many times Umar had made him his vice-regent at Medina when he was away. Ali was also a great scholar of Arabic literature and pioneered in the field of grammar and eloquence. His sermons and letters served for generations afterward as models of literary expression. Many of his wise and epigrammatic sayings have been preserved. Ali thus had a rich and multitalented personality.

In spite of these merits, he remained a modest and humble man. Once during his caliphate when he was going about the marketplace, a man stood up in respect and followed him. "Do not do it," said Ali. "Such manners are a temptation for a ruler and a disgrace for the ruled."

Ali and his household lived extremely simple and austere life. Sometimes they even went hungry themselves because of Ali's great generosity, and none who asked for help was ever turned away from his door. His plain, austere style of living did not change even when he was ruler over a vast domain.

As we mentioned earlier, Ali accepted the caliphate very reluctantly. Uthman's murder and the events surrounding it were a symptom, and also became a cause, of civil strife on a large scale. Ali felt that the tragic situation was mainly due to incompetent governors. He therefore dismissed all the governors who had been appointed by Uthman and appointed new ones. All the governors except for Mu'awiyah, the governor of Syria, submitted to his orders. Mu'awiyah declined to obey until Uthman's blood was avenged. The Prophet's widow A'ishah also was of the opinion that Ali should first bring the murderers to trial.

In view of the chaotic conditions during the last days of Uthman, it was very difficult to establish the identity of the murderers, and Ali refused to punish anyone whose guilt was not lawfully proved. Thus a battle between the army of Ali and the supporters of A'ishah implying both Talhah and Az-Zubair broke up. A'ishah later knew her error of judgment for which she never forgave herself.

The situation in Hijaz became so much difficult that Ali moved his capital to Iraq. Mu'awiyah openly rebelled against Ali and a fierce battle was fought between their armies. This battle was inconclusive, and Ali had to accept the de facto government of Mu'awiyah in Syria.

However, even though the era of Ali's caliphate was stained by civil strife, he nevertheless introduced a number of reforms, particularly in the rates and the way of collecting and distributing taxes.

It was in the fortieth year of Hegira when a fanatical group called Kharijites, consisting of people who had broken away from Ali due to his compromise with Mu'awiyah, claimed that neither Ali, the Caliph, nor Mu'awiyah, the governor of Syria, nor Amr Ibn Al-As, the governor of Egypt, were worthy of rule. In fact, they went so far as to say that the true caliphate came to an end with Umar and that Muslims should live without any ruler over them except Allah.

They vowed to kill all three rulers, and assassins were dispatched in three directions. The assassins who were deputed to kill Mu'awiyah and Amr did not succeed and were captured and executed, but Ibn Maljam, the assassin who was deputed to kill Ali, succeeded.

One morning, when Ali was involved in the prayer in the mosque of Kufah, Ibn Maljam stabbed him with a poisoned sword. On the 20th of Ramadan, 40 A.H. there died the last of the Rightly Guided Caliphs of Islam, "Allah be pleased with them and grant them eternal reward".

With the death of Ali, the first and most notable phase in the history of Muslims came to an end, during which, all adhered to the Book of Allah and His Messenger's Sunnah which guided the leaders, set the standards of their moral conduct and inspired their actions. It was the time when the ruler and the ruled, the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak, were uniformly subject to the Divine Law. It was an epoch of freedom and equality, of Allah-consciousness and humility, of social justice, which recognized no privileges, and of an impartial law, which accepted no pressure groups or vested interests.

After Ali, Mu'awiyah assumed the caliphate and thereafter the caliphate became hereditary, passing from one king to another.

The fifth caliph, Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz (715-717 A.D.)

"Then, Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz was given the pledge of allegiance", said the historians, "and he sat on the ground (to receive the people and settle their injustices)."

Mu'awiyah's caliphate was as long as twenty years, at the end of which, he took the pledge of allegiance to his son Yazid by force.

Then, Yazid took power in 681 A.D., and continued as ruler for four years, during which Al-Husain Ibn Ali, the beloved grandson of the Messenger of Allah was martyred at the hands of Ubaidullah Ibn Ziyad, a leader of Yazid.

When Yazid died, Mu'awiyah the Second, his son, refused to be the caliph, and the pledge of allegiance was given to Abdullah Ibn Az-Zubair. Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam was on his way to Medina to give the pledge of allegiance to Ibn Az-Zubair, when he was met by some of the Umayyads, who instigated him to seize power, and become himself the caliph; and he accepted immediately.

Ten months later, he died, and left the office of caliphate to his son Abd Al-Malik. Before his death, he recommended that the caliphate should move after Abd Al-Malik to his brother Abd Al-Aziz, then to the most suited to it from among the sons of Abd Al-Malik, then to the most suited to it from among the sons of Abd Al-Aziz.

But Abd Al-Malik, like the others from among the Umayyads, tried to oust his brother in favour of his son Al-Walid. He sent to him, asking him to concede, but Abd Al-Aziz rejected. He made many attempts and used all available ways to do so, but, Allah Almighty doomed Abd Al-Aziz to die, nearly two years before the death of Abd Al-Malik.

In order to expiate for his faults he committed against his brother, Abd Al-Malik made his nephew Umar much closer to him, and gave him his daughter Fatimah in marriage.

Although Umar had the right to be the caliph after Al-Walid, in the meeting held for proclaiming the apparent heirs of Abd Al-Malik, following the death of Abd Al-Aziz, he announced loudly that he did not want to be caliph. The result that the apparent heirs of Abd Al-Malik were his sons Al-Walid and Sulaiman.

During the period of the ruling of Al-Walid, the relation between him and Umar was not good at most, even during the time Umar was appointed by him as governor of Medina, and then of Hijaz. Al-Walid was not god-fearing, pious, nor even did he act upon Allah's Book and sunnah in so many affairs. He was more ready to be subject to Al-Hajjaj Ibn Yusuf. He also tried, prompted by Al-Hajjaj to oust his brother Sulaiman, but he failed, and died before succeeding to do so.

Umar was a close advisor to Sulaiman during the time of his rule, which was as short as three years. It was he, who made Umar his

successor, with the help of the advice of Raja Ibn Haiwah, who succeeded in passing the movement of the rule to Umar against the will of the Umayyads.

Umar's time of rule was very short. It lasted no more than twenty-nine months, during which he was able to bring back peace, justice, piety, safety, luxury, comfort, and pleasure to all of his subjects, Muslims or non-Muslims they might be.

All people during his time were able to get their rights, withheld from them during the long period of the Umayyad ruling beginning from Mu'awiyah. He distributed the public wealth equally among the people, took from the Umayyad chiefs what they had usurped illegally, and exempted the disabled and incapable of paying the taxes from offering the tribute.

He also issued his commands of stopping all military actions and wars, and made treaties of peace with all surrounding countries, whose rulers, in turn, regarded him the justest and the best ruler of Muslims.

The result was that there were no such poor needy persons as existed during the previous times. The treasury of Muslims was so much abundant of money and wealth, that the one would set out with his objects of charity, but find no poor persons to give them.

He ordered then that this abundance of money should be spent on fulfilling the debts of those who were indebted. When this was accomplished, he ordered that money should be spent upon affording the expenses of the marriage of those, who were incapable of marrying. Then, he ordered that everyone having the desire for performing Hajj, and financially unable to do so, would perform it on the expense of the Muslim treasury.

It seemed that the Umayyads could not keep patient on his behaviours, which caused harm to them, though benefited all of the people other than them. So, they instigated one of his servants, who poisoned his food, which led to his death as a martyr in 717 A.D.

Introduction

This volume contains five of my compositions:

- 1- Abu Bakr Has Come, (first published 1962)
- 2- Before Umar (first published 1961)
- 3- Farewell Uthman (first published 1967)
- 4- By The Sides Of Ali (first published 1966)
- 5- The Miracle Of Islam: Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz (first published 1969)

In this special publication, all of those five compositions are presented in one volume, as one subject, dealing with biography and analysis of the four successors of the messenger: Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali, in addition to the outstanding man, i.e. Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz, who was really worthy of carrying the name “The fifth Successor (of the messenger)” or “The fifth of the Rightly-Guided caliphs”.

When I started composing those books and presenting them to the readers separately, I gave no care to the historical order of the appearance of our great heroes. For instance, the appearance of the book “Before Umar” was sometime earlier than the appearance of the book “Abu Bakr Has Come”. This also applied to the book “Within The Ali’s Wide Spaces (Of Greatness)”, which was earlier than “Farewell Uthman”. But, since those five books are implied in one volume, it becomes much more appropriate to place them according to the historical order: Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali, and Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz, Allah be pleased with, and might He satisfy all of them. Might He accept those following pages in their commemoration.

KHALID MUHAMMAD KHALID

BOOK ONE

ABU BAKR HAS COME

DEDICATION

O Abu Bakr, the (first) successor of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”! If you allowed me to write about you the following statements, then, O second of two persons (in the cave), accept their dedication to you!

Khalid Muhammad Khalid

INTRODUCTION

Which role did Allah choose for Abu Bakr to play? Of which sort of rulers were Abu Bakr and Umar? However, this book was supposed to be named as “Before Abu Bakr”, particularly, after Allah had granted me success in writing those previous statements, which appeared in my book “Before Umar”. But, I had no sooner got myself prepared for writing several pages than the scenes in whose brightness and light I was living changed. Only a uniquely glorious scene filled the horizon before me, the result of which was that I let aside the papers (in which I was writing), and started (a process of) consideration and meditation of the scene.

The scene started as such: Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, intended, at a time of interval of Messengers, to send down a Prophet, in order to restore the religion to its true nature and reality, and to take out the human life from darkness to light, and from error to the right guidance.

Allah Almighty chose His Messenger, Muhammad Ibn Abdullah, “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, upon whom the Divine revelation was sent down, and with whom the journey of Qur’an began its blessed course. This is then the glorious procession, which was confided to undertake the mission of changing the humanity (to the best), and renewing its conscience, i.e. Muhammad, and the Divine revelation of Qur’an.

But, it seemed to me as if the procession was standing, expecting (for somebody). It was waiting a man, whose place in such a procession was empty. This procession was not to set out before the arrival of that man. Although that man was not a Prophet, it is he who would complete the role started by The Prophet. Suddenly, the birds started singing, the glad tidings (of the arrival of that man) appeared, for the expected man has appeared, i.e. Abu Bakr has come.

There has come this man, who would keep saying to The Prophet, with neither falter nor hesitation: “You’ve told the truth. You’ve told the truth.” There has come this man who would accompany The Prophet in his journey of migration (from Mecca to Medina), though he was well-aware that the people of Quraish would mobilize, in pursuit of the Emigrant Prophet (and anyone with him) their force, machinations of cunning, and hatred.

There has come that man, who would bring back the Muslims, all the Muslims to their right way, when they would be informed of the death of their Messenger. There has come the man, whose situation on the day of the Shed (of Banu Sa'idah) would form a new life, which would be recorded for Islam and the unity of all the Muslims. There has come the man, but for whom during the days of the apostasy, Islam would definitely face the distress of its annihilation and disappearance.

In one statement, there has come the man who had to come to be in the company of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", the means selected by Allah to use in changing the world, purifying and setting right the human life; and this is the role played by Abu Bakr, as shown to me, and the following pages represent a simple attempt to illustrate this unique and glorious role.

However, the master of humans in the art of faith, would show us, through his life and steadfastness, all of what is greatly astonishing, and extraordinarily wonderful in the art of faith.

Coming to the point: Of which sort of rulers were Abu Bakr and Umar? In this introduction, I would like to answer a persistent question raised before me after publishing my book "Before Umar". Some readers sent to me asking: How do you adapt your firm belief in democracy to your constant belief in such a ruler as Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, with whom, in spite of his absolute justice, we could, by no means, be satisfied as a democratic ruler?

Since this question could be raised about Umar, it could also be raised about Abu Bakr, for both of them were rulers of the same sort. However, answering this question, and refuting this suspicion are too intuitively obvious to need any kind of wordiness or expatiation.

In my opinion, those who see both of Abu Bakr and Umar as just dictators, surely deviate from the right, firstly because both of Abu Bakr and Umar were never dictators even for a moment by day or at night, and secondly because across the time, there has been nothing known as a just dictator. Even, if all the contraries and opposites of life happen to be brought about in agreement, there would remain both justice and dictatorship as (the only) contraries which should, by no means, agree with one another, and the (only) opposites which should, by no means, be brought together (in one man).

Furthermore, anyone of the two would certainly disappear once the other came to life, because the simplest aspect of justice, if not (its necessary) requirement, is that everyone who has a right should, by all means, take it.

Since the people have a priori the right to take part in choosing (the sort of) their lives, as well as in deciding their destinies, this caters for, at the same moment, and for the same reason, the disappearance of dictatorship, a fact of which, both of Abu Bakr and Umar were conscious.

Although both of them, as well as all the (Muslim) nation were absolutely submissive to the commands of Islamic law as prescribed by Allah, they gave the Muslims all opportunities of discussion and option, to the extent that we could find even an ordinary man having caught hold of the garment of Umar who was at the peak of power and authority, saying to him: "Fear Allah O Umar!"

He was the same caliph, who once gathered the Muslims and addressed them saying: "O people! What would you say if I turned my head (and deviated) like this?" one of them replied: "Then, we would do with the sword like this." The Commander of the Believers asked him: "Do you mean me by your statement?" the man said: "I mean you by my statement." Umar said: "Allah's mercy be upon you! Praise be to Allah, for He has made one from amongst you, who might straighten my crookedness."

Is this a ruler, who might be described as a just dictator? What is the source of such suspicion and confusion as shown by the readers who asked me how I could bring into agreement my belief in democracy and my belief in Umar?

No doubt, I do not deny that this kind of suspicion could be logically justified. But this logical justification might be formulated in the absence of the most parts as well as far from the light of the fact. It might seem to us (at first glance) that both of Abu Bakr and Umar were not democratic rulers in view of the fact that there never existed with them such modern democratic institutions as the parliament, the constitution, and organized opposition and the free press.

However,, understanding the case as such could lead to a great mistake. But, our understanding would be true if we were able to put a correct answer to this question: Was the absence of those democratic

institutions (mentioned above) from the Muslim society because of the fact that those great caliphs (Abu Bakr and Umar) did not believe (in the importance of the existence of) those institutions themselves?

Indeed, the correct answer as shown from the nature and conduct of their ways of ruling should be in the negative. The absence of those (democratic) institutions meant nothing but to reflect the spirit of the age, environment, and the ways of living in the Arab peninsula more than one thousand and four hundred years ago.

I see no difference between the one who might ask, for instance, why there was no free press during the time of Abu Bakr and Umar, and the one who might ask why both of Abu Bakr and Umar had no embassy in London. It is the historical stage of that time which might unthinkingly answer these questions.

It is true that neither (the limits of) time nor the nature of space during the time of their ruling permitted them to establish those systematic forms of democracy. But, they achieved, to a great extent, the vital essence of democracy through the forms and organizations which were available according to their development by this ancient time.

Although the development of their society during this time did not pave the way for establishing a highly impressive entity of opposition, the opposition itself existed and was practiced more effectively.

Despite the fact that the nature of the development of their society by that time did not cater for establishing a parliament in order to observe the performance of the government and stipulate the laws, the consultation by that time was one of the ceremonies prescribed by Allah, as a sacred right for all Muslims.

If the development of their society during this time did not spare the appropriate atmosphere of establishing a free press, the good sincere brave word was uttered by every (true) tongue, to which the caliph paid his attention, and for which he gave reward.

Had both of Abu Bakr and Umar been rulers at this time of ours, no doubt, they would have showed all respect to those rightly-guided forms of democratic organization of the human experience, and would have benefited from them to the greatest extent, and they would also have taken from the modern forms of democracy the most achieving of its reality, and the most expressive of its characteristics.

I do not to be unjust by saying that all of this would have be done absolutely. Nay! All of this would have been achieved within the framework of their belief in the religion, which they embraced, and according to the way by which this belief was formed. But even with such a restriction (as I mentioned), this should not go against the fact that both of them were democratic rulers.

That is because any democratic ruler should work within the limits of the constitution predominant in his own country (in a specific point of time); and Abu Bakr and Umar worked within those limits of the constitution of their society.

The Holy Qur'an had, in their society, the same power given to any constitution of any nation belonging to any country. Therefore, they (the Muslims) were more loyal to the Holy Qur'an than any nation was (and still is) to its own constitution.

In fact, the Holy Qur'an implied two of the greatest characteristics of democracy: Firstly, it made the consultation (i.e. taking and considering the advices of others in the worldly matters) obligatory even for The Prophet who was being Divinely revealed, when He Almighty said: "Then when thou hast taken a decision, put thy trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust (in him)." He Almighty joined it to the establishment of the prayers when He described the faithful believers as "Those who hearken to their Lord, and establish regular prayer; who (conduct) their affairs by mutual Consultation."

Secondly, according to it (the Holy Qur'an) it is not obligatory to abide by its commands and comply with its principles, but for the one who embraces it, chooses it (as his constitution) and firmly believes in it,, i.e. in our modern language, the one who casts a ballot for accepting it. But as for those who do not believe in it, they have the right to live according to their conventions, their traditions, and their chosen way of living.

It is true that it was not a constitution set by the people themselves, but it was, at the same time, the constitution which they accepted, with which they were satisfied, in which they believed, and for the sake of which they fell as martyrs (in their attempt to spread it).

The Muslims who believed in The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", and set out with him (on the journey of faith) believed also in the fact that this Divine revelation was sent down

from Allah, whom they had to obey; and after (the death of) The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, Abu Bakr undertook the responsibility of leadership in the (Muslim) society according to (the principles of) such a belief. Then, Umar came to undertake the burden of this responsibility after (the death of) Abu Bakr, according to (the rules of) that belief too.

In this way, the correct standard by which their ruling should be evaluated is the extent to which they abided by the (principles of) this Book, in which the people believed, and which they accepted as a canon for their life.

In our modern ages, the life would not be right unless the nations have constitutions, in order to govern their (ways of) life, i.e. constitutions formulated by those nations according to their beliefs, traditions and needs, by which they could keep up with the procession of human ceaseless, never-ending progress.

Every nation could have its constitution imply all goodness and integrity Allah Almighty has intended for the favour of people, as well as all righteousness and kindness for which the religion has called.

In my opinion, had both of Abu Bakr and Umar governed the people during this time according to a certain constitution set by the people themselves for themselves, their loyalty to such a constitution would not been lesser even as (little as) an atom’s weight than theirs to (the principles of) the Holy Qur’an, upon whose right guidance they depended in governing the people. That is because both of them belong to such a high class of people, in which, the belief in the (humanity and value of) the man himself occupies a certain place besides the belief in Allah.

CHAPTER ONE

THE DIVINE DECREE WOULD INEVITABLY BE ACCOMPLISHED AND REACH ITS DESTINATION

Here is Mecca, the sacred town on the earth, amidst which lies the Ka'bah, the homeland of all holy things since Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations (of the House). The life in it passed as hot as its atmosphere, as firm as its mountains, and as dreamy as its sky.

Its inhabitants (from Quraish) followed many tenets and traditions of their own, which sometimes rose as high (as virtues and good favours) until they reached the peak (of glory), and at other times they were as foolish (as vices and bad practices) to the point of becoming a target of lamentation and mockery.

There were placed many idols, surrounding the Ka'bah. They were put, at a moment of forgetfulness, around this Holy Sanctuary, which remained, across the centuries, as Allah's raised banner on the earth, calling upon the people of true nature and monotheism (to come and revive their true religion).

It remained as such for a long time until those idols were brought to it one day, and then they filled the area surrounding it across the days, and became (an object of) liking for the people of Quraish, as well as for those of the neighbouring towns. The people used to worship them, fear them, and flatter them, so that they might (be an access to) draw them much nearer to their god.

there were placed (the idols of) Lati, Uzza, and Manat, and there existed Na'ilah, Isaf and Hubal, in addition to tens of idols like them; and the processions of worshippers used to go, by day and at night, to (circumambulate round) those brought sculpted idols, which could neither hear, nor could they see, which could neither be (a source of) benefit (to anyone), nor could they be (a source of) harm (to anyone).

Every tribe had its own god and idol, and whenever a child was born and then attained (the age of) crawling, he would be led to his god, so as to recognize it, and then he would be able to go to it by himself, and talk to it privately about his complaints and special needs.

However, the minds of people were lost amidst the crowd of (the several costumes and conventions related to) this legend. What amazing thing it was! Look, for instance, at those men of right and sound minds, who established the alliance of Fudul (Virtues), in order to stand in one front by the side of the oppressed one against the oppressor.

It was those, who stipulated for peace a unique method, and an outstanding tradition, when they set a system consisting of four prohibited months, during which the swords would remain in their sheathes, since there would be neither grudges nor retaliation claimants, in such a way that even if one met the murderer of his father or brother, and was able to kill him, he would not throw him with the smallest pebble, or even do the least harm to him.

It was those who stipulated a highly elaborated system for the social sovereignty, according to which, no one would be able to become a chief of his people unless he excelled them in the following six characteristics: generosity, (readiness of) helping (others), bravery, patience, modesty, and (the excellence of) rhetorical expression.

In this context, the people used to say: “The death of one thousand persons from the elite is better than the elevation of even a single person from amongst the lowly (to a higher social class).”

They had a market (known as the market of) Ukaz, to which they used to turn their faces (and come) from everywhere, in order to display the sweetest fruits of the human inspirations, such as the poetry of their excellent poets, and the sermons of their distinguished orators.

Those persons who belonged to the highest social class had also their minds reigned in this amazing ignorance, which caused them to fall in prostration to this idols, which they sculpted from stones, or made from clay. It is true that those practices were, by all means, confusing paradoxes, but, they (the ancient Arabs) were not alone (in this form of worship of idols).

Look at Athens during its most flourishing age, the age of philosophy and philosophers, the age of Socrates. The people of Athens worshipped the gods of the Olympus, which were idols as those of Mecca. But the Meccans showed more respect and admiration to their idols than did those of Athens, who attributed the worst characteristics to some of their gods, which they worshipped.

But, there were some other sorts of worship along with that of idols, which was so much prevalent in Mecca. There existed those who worshipped the sun, to the extent that led The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” to forbid (the Muslims) to offer the prayer at the time of sunrise, and at the time of sunset, lest that would become an imitation, though unintentional, to those who worshipped the sun, to which they used to fall in prostration at the time of its rising and at the time of its setting.

There existed also some who worshipped the angels, whom Allah Almighty meant when He said: “One Day He will gather them all together, and say to the angels, Was it you that these men used to worship?”

There were also some people (from amongst the Meccans), who worshipped the jinns, whom Allah Almighty described in His statement: “They will say, Glory to Thee our (tie) is with Thee as Protector not with them. Nay, but they worshipped Jinns: most of them believed in them.”

There were also some star worshippers, whom Allah Almighty reproached when He said: “That He is the Lord of Sirius (the Mighty Star).”

There were also those of the time, whose opinion in this regard was shown by Allah Almighty when He said (on their tongue): “And they say: What is there but our life in this world? We shall die and we live, and nothing but Time can destroy us. But of that they have no knowledge: they merely conjecture.”

(In this way, there were four things which acted as objects of worship): The angels, the jinns, the stars, and the idols. Where did then the true nature set by (The Prophet) Abraham go in such a crowd (of worshipped elements)?

During the early centuries, a pious righteous person (i.e. The Prophet Abraham) left for Mecca, this safe prohibited quiet town, departing from his Kildani people in Babylonia, carrying the word of Allah (i.e. monotheism). In Mecca, he halted, raised his banner, and called for monotheism, uttering his famous ever-lasting statement: “I turned my face (and surrendered) to Him, Who created the heavens and the earth, following the true religion (of Islam), and I’m not to be from amongst the polytheists.”

He put it so much powerfully in such a way as to be ceaselessly uttered by his offspring after him, as loud and ringing in the horizon of the Arab peninsula. What then had afflicted the people (who deviated from this true religion of Abraham)? Had this true religion of monotheism been lost in the crowd of this extrinsic paganism and the proceeding polytheism? Had this safe town become void of him, who would revive for its people the early true religion, and raise his voice, in order to remind them of the fact which had been obliterated (by virtue of such a paganism)?

Nay! Across the centuries, there appeared many guides from time to time, calling with the call of (The Prophet) Abraham "Peace be upon him", raising their voices in order to abrogate polytheism and deviation (from the truth and straight path). They were more and more, some of whom we recognize, and some others whom we do not recognize. Some of them came many hundred years earlier than The Prophet, and others appeared a short time before him, as a commencement of the dawn of his (Prophethood).

From amongst the earlier ones, a mention might be made here of Suwaid Ibn Amir Al-Mustaliqi, who proclaimed his faith in Resurrection and in the Day of punishment and reward (of the people for what they had committed in the world, i.e. the Day of Judgement), and of Amir Ibn Az-Zar Al-Udwani, who was reported to have said to his people: "I've neither seen anything being created by itself (for everything must have been created by a Creator), nor have I seen any object being made by itself (for everything must have been made by a Maker). I've never seen anyone who has come (to life) but that he must pass away. Had the ailment been the only thing which causes the people to die, then the treatment would have been also the only thing which brings them to life."

There appeared also Al-Mutalammis Ibn Umayyah Al-Kinani, who used to sit in the middle of his people beside the Ka'bah, expounding: "Obey me, so that you should be guided (to the right). You've taken different gods (to worship), though Allah (Alone) is your Lord, as well as the Lord of whatever you worship."

Zuhair Ibn Abu Sulma (the great poet, who composed one of the seven famous poems which had been hung in the Ka'bah for a long time) used to take hold of the leaves of the dry and motionless bushes, which had been trembling as green and fresh, saying: "Were it not for the fact that the Arabs would abuse me, I would have said that He, Who brought

you to life is the same Who would bring to life those bones (of the people) after being decomposed (by death).”

It is he who said also (in a poetic verse from his great poem referred to above): “Do not conceal whatever is lurking in yourselves from Allah in order to hide it, for Allah definitely knows whatever you (try to) conceal.”

There appeared those (whom we mentioned) and many others like them (whom we did not mention). But, what they all had was no more than this tendency to the truth, accompanied by an intuitive looking forward towards a certain finality, which they were not able to attain. None of them was endowed with an entire method (of religion and way of living) to which he could call the people. They appeared one after another across long years.

As for those who appeared a short time before the mission of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, although they, like the earlier ones, had no entirely detailed obvious method, their vision of the spiritual fact with which they were concerned, was more evident and much clearer.

From amongst them, a mention might be made here of Abu Qais Ibn Anas, who kept himself far from Quraish, and took a place of worship in his house, which neither filthy nor impure person approached. He said: “I worship the Lord of Abraham.” He lived until The Prophet was sent down (as a Messenger), and then he embraced Islam.

Furthermore, there existed three men, who represented the most powerful commencement of the new coming religion: Qass Ibn Sa’idah Al-Iyadi, Zaid Ibn Amr Ibn Nufail, and Waraqah Ibn Nawfal. All of them adopted the true religion of Abraham, and there flowed from their imploring hearts, the statements of monotheism as (sweet and cold as) the spring’s breezes in the midst of the flaming heat of paganism. They chanted, announcing the glad news of the coming of The Prophet, giving the happy tidings of the dawn (of the new religion) which was about to appear, and proclaiming the approach of the new religion, which was about to restore the banner of Allah to its original place, and destroy the idols from the surface of the earth.

However, Abu Bakr sat for long times in the company of those (three men), and gave his ears to their sweet fresh statements. He was satisfied to his fill with their sweet chanting, and kept step with their singing (of

the coming Prophet). On the light of their reliable wisdom and their firm guidance, his pure spirit saw the coming procession of Prophethood, for which he sat expecting and getting himself ready to receive the days of right guidance and certainty. Let's then start the biography of this great man from this time.

This man, who occupied a preeminent position in his people, of which he was worthy in view of his good qualities and ancestry, had an enlightening doubt, which grew within his mind day by day until it prompted him to keep himself far from the paganism and deviation of his people of Quraish. The more he passed by the people, while being in circles around their idols, before which they were kneeling down, the more his face would be covered by a cloud of bitter grief and sadness, wondering:

“Might this (worship) be true as leading to the right guidance? How could those people who have the faculties of seeing, hearing and thinking fall in prostration before (idols made of) placed stones, which could neither see, nor hear, nor think?” then, he would repeat the (poetic) statement of Zaid Ibn Amr Ibn Nufail: “(Is it better for me) to believe in one god or in one thousand gods in regard to the different affairs (of the universe)?”

He kept wondering as such for a long time, during which, he became worried. This suffering from the long expectation befell this repenting penitent man, who had a great tendency towards the knowledge of the truth, flaring up with the desire for changing (this life into a better one), and a great longing for the Word of Allah, which would come to make decisive that about which the people were different (among themselves).

His longing and desire (for knowledge) led him to go to those who had better knowledge of the Scriptures, who lived under the (remaining) shadows of the almost vanished faith, with which the bosom friend of Allah, (The Prophet) Abraham chanted here (in Mecca) one day, in the ancient past, who were occupied by the destiny of man, which prompted them to raise their voices so much loudly, affirming the faith in the (necessity of) resurrection (after death), where there would be either punishment or reward, and who entirely purified their hearts from any loyalty to the idols, in favour of their belief in the Lord of Abraham.

It was those, who used to turn their faces in the sky, from whose mouths the statements (of monotheism) would come out as (good and

hopeful as) happy dreams. Which talk could astonish Abu Bakr and draw his attention better than theirs? That is for whenever his hearing received their statements, they would ring out as truthful, which he would follow in the same way as a thirsty bird would follow the spots of rainfall and precipitation.

Thus, whenever he had a spare time, he used to comfort himself by sitting in the company of those good men, i.e. Qass Ibn Sa'idah, Zaid Ibn Amr and Waraqah Ibn Nawfal, whom the people of Quraish had not yet regarded as their enemies to start persecuting them. That is, in the first place, because they were secluded to themselves, carrying neither a systematic call, nor a new religion, by which they could threaten the practices and conventions of Quraish. On the other hand, they were in their old ages, i.e. they approached the end of their lives.

But, to be sure, the admiration of such a man as Abu Bakr, merely his admiration for those men as well as for their thoughts, could make him vulnerable to Quraish's disapproval. He was at the middle of his age, a chief among his people, who entrusted to him one of the most important jobs, i.e. the responsibility for settling the disputes of the blood-wets.

No doubt, Abu Bakr considered this matter so much. He thought what would happen to him if he deviated from the traditional lines (of Quraish), and the people learnt his appreciation of those ideas of Qass, Waraqah and Zaid. Qass, Waraqah and Zaid set themselves free from any relationship with the people (of Quraish, which might have some negative effect on their thoughts). In this way, they feared no harm (which might be caused to them from the people of Quraish).

But, at the same time Quraish did not regard them as its enemies, its people did their best to keep their movement under control. The more Zaid Ibn Amr raised his voice (with such ideas), and he had the strongest (desire to raise his) voice from among the three, they (the people of Quraish) would seduce his relative Al-Khattab Ibn Nufail, who would detain him in his house, preventing him from communicating people.

Such being the case, how could Abu Bakr do, since he had an increasingly strong relationship with the group (of Quraish), and was so much famous and well-known among his people? Would the people of Quraish permit him even to have his new dreams and silent vision (of the new religion) kept within himself? But, before a long hesitation, the brains of Abu Bakr shone, showing him the best pattern and the most

wonderful example, Muhammad Ibn Abdullah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him".

He was at the middle of his age, of great ancestry. He was among his people as (elegant as) the most glittering pearl in a crown. He was of quiet disposition. He isolated himself far from (worshipping) the idols. He used to spend his day far from people's entertainments and habits. He almost never met anyone or let anyone (occupy him lest he might) waste even the least portion of his time, so as not to divert him from his dreams and tranquility. He used to worship (his Lord) by the way of meditation all the day, until a clear evidence of the truth would come to him.

In this way, Abu Bakr got reassured that he could follow the same way as that of Muhammad, avoiding Quraish's opposition and anger with him. It is true that he still did not abuse their idols, but he also did not compliment them. He neither worshipped them as their worshippers used to do, nor did he fall in prostration before them as the others used to do. He also neither approached them, nor did he feel they existed at all.

He made of himself a whole nation, and went in search for the truth; and this was the greatest objective, with which a man's life would be crowned. The hail of certainty then ran in the veins of his spirit. Although both of Abu Bakr and Muhammad were not of exactly the same age, he (Abu Bakr) saw in him (Muhammad) a good pattern and a reliable example, which should be followed.

However, he (Abu Bakr) was keen on his (Muhammad's) companionship, eager to be his intimate friend to the extent that he was, as described by Umm Salamah "Allah be pleased with her", the most close and sincere confidant of Muhammad.

Abu Bakr thought of the case of his best friend and confidant Muhammad, which caused his fears of Quraish to pass away. Thus, he decided to respond to his longing and follow his desires in search for truth and knowledge. But, of course, his method would be different from that of his best and close friend, Muhammad "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", as well as the result which both reached would be different. At the time Abu Bakr was searching for the fact, Muhammad would find it (as being Divinely revealed to him).

The method of Muhammad was a form of meditation, through which he used to pay his attention to the whispers coming from within the Fact itself, and the method of Abu Bakr was a way of thinking, and hearing to

the wisdom of the wise men, and the logic of the sagacious worshippers (of the Lord of Abraham).

Along his lifetime, he (Abu Bakr) was fond of keeping the best products of the Arab culture from poetry and prose; and from those rich compositions, which he kept in his memory, he took an inexhaustible source of thinking.

At the time Muhammad "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" was devoted to his meditations, seeking for the fact with the help of his inspiration, (spiritual) experience and visions, Abu Bakr gave both his heart and mind to this wisdom embodied in the statements of those (three) good men, who had a long relevant experience (in their attempt to reach the true religion of Abraham), i.e. Qass, Waraqah and Zaid.

He left no opportunity, which might enable him to receive from their wisdom and listen to their statements, but that he got it. He constantly kept in his memory their utterances, and lived under their influence, prompted by his true nature, which was eager to know and reach the truth, no matter costly this might be. It was his true nature, which saw in those (three good men), in view of their old age, experience and pure lives, a straight guide to the expected Fact.

One day, after Muhammad "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" had received the Message of his Lord (in the form of the Divine revelation), and many persons including Abu Bakr had embraced Islam, he (The Prophet) was sitting with his companions, recalling the remembrance of some days of his youth, saying: "I never forget Qass Ibn Sa'idah, (whom I saw) riding a scabby camel in the market of Ukaz, speaking some statements, which I think I could not memorize."

Abu Bakr said: "I keep his speech in my mind, O Messenger of Allah. On that day, I was present in the market of Ukaz, while Qass was on his scabby camel, saying:

"O people! Listen to me and understand (what I'll say to you); and if you understood (what I said to you) try to benefit from it: Whoever lived (in this world) should (inevitably) die, and whoever died should pass away; and everything (which is predestined) to come should (necessarily) come. No doubt, in the heaven, there is the news (of what would happen), and on the earth, there are lessons (for the people to be warned).

(The universe as created by Allah consists of) a placed ground, raised ceiling, heaving stars, bottomless oceans, very dark night, very bright and

rising morning, and sky of constellations. Qass is swearing (by Allah) that Allah has a religion, which is much dearer to Him than yours.

What is the matter with the people whom I see going (by death) and not returning? Have they been satisfied with their abodes (in the new life) where they stayed, or have they been left and then they slept there?"

then, Abu Bakr recited some poetic verses composed by Qass Ibn Sa'idah: "In those ancient people who had passed away, we should have lessons (to be taken as examples by which we might be warned): when I saw (the people) going to death with no return (to life once again), for which I saw my people seeking, the younger as well as the elder ones, I became sure that inevitably I would go to the same (destiny of death) to which the people have gone."

In this way, Abu Bakr used to memorize, and receive (as possible as he could from the speech and poetry of) those good pious men. In this way too, his spirit was devoted to their wisdom. He used to become so much pleased and happy whenever he saw Zaid Ibn Amr Ibn Nufail, in his old age, reclining his back against (the wall of) Ka'bah, calling the people: "O community of Quraish! By Him, in Whose Hand is my life! none from among you has become on the religion of Abraham except for me. No doubt, I followed the true religion of Abraham and then Ishmael after him. Now, I'm expecting for a Prophet from the offspring of Ishmael, though I think I would not catch his time." Then, he caught a glimpse of Amir Ibn Rabie'ah, to whom he said: "O Amir Ibn Rabie'ah! if you survived until his (The Prophet's) time, greet him on my behalf."

On the other hand, Abu Bakr got much more reassured and certain (of the truth) whenever he saw Zaid Ibn Amr coming through the lines of people, who were sitting in circles around the Ka'bah, raising his voice with no fear: "Here I'm in response really to Your call, worshipping You, and submitting to You. I seek refuge with Him, with Whom (The Prophet) Abraham had sought earlier. I surrendered my face to Him, to Whom all of the earth surrendered, with its heavy rocks. It is He, who has flattened it (the earth) and when He saw it as straight on the (surface of the) water, He made the mountains firm on it. I surrendered my face to Him, to Whom the clouds have surrendered, with their sweet water."

Abu Bakr talked to himself: "This is, by the Lord of Abraham, the truth. But, when and how would we be certain of it?" day by day, he

became more pious and righteous, prompted by his increasingly longing for the true religion of Abraham. But, where would the way to it be?

Furthermore, those who made this feeling grow within his spirit and mind were themselves unaware of such a way. It is true that they were sure that Quraish in its religion had not been on the right, since it deviated from the true religion of Abraham. But, what was the new method, through which the religion of Abraham in its reality could be brought to life? In fact, they knew nothing about it. All of the (three) companions knew nothing about that.

As for Waraqah, he devoted himself to reciting and studying the Scriptures, so that they might guide him to the true religion of Abraham. As for Zaid, he was roaming with his great longing (for knowledge and truth), (going here and there) once in the valleys of Mecca, and once taking refuge to the Ka'bah, permanently speaking his Lord privately: "O Allah! If I know which way (of worship) is the dearest to You, I would certainly worship you according to it."

Thus, he knew nothing (about it). It is true that he announced publicly that he had abandoned the religion of Quraish, and kept himself far from (worshipping) idols, and (the habit of) burying the girls alive. Moreover, when he was asked about his Lord (Whom he worshipped), he said: "I worship the Lord of Abraham."

However, Abu Bakr's longing and desire (for the knowledge of the true religion) became more sweeping and much stronger. That's because, according to his nature, the compromises were not to quench his thirst. The features of the crisis, from which the human conscience of his people suffered became more evident to him; and now, he wanted a comprehensive solution.

He had a desire for a complete salvation (from such a crisis). Yes. Such a crisis was the deviation from the true religion of Abraham to a misleading and false paganism. "The right way to exit (this problem) was (to bring to life) the true religion of Abraham." (Abu Bakr said). "Who then would guide us to it?"

There were a lot of heaps of myths and remnants (of stories), which interred the reality of this true religion. The clearest proof of this was that those, who worshipped the idols in Mecca pretended that they were the sons of Abraham.

On the other hand, both the Jews and the Christians of Sham, whom he (Abu Bakr) saw during his trade journeys, alleged too that they, in spite of their religious differences and disputes, were Abraham's sons and real heirs.

“Who then would bring the clear truth to us?” (said Abu Bakr) “Who then would return (the true religion of) Abraham to us, as well as return us to it? Who would guide us to the right law and method, by which we might worship our true Lord, and our life would become straight?”

such good thoughts came upon the mind of Abu Bakr one after another, and he went on repeating the statement of Umayyah Ibn Abu As-Salt (in a form of poetic verses):

“Isn't there a Prophet from amongst us to tell us what would happen to us after our death? I seek refuge with Him, for Whom the pilgrims performed their Hajj, as well as the people raised the corners and principles of Allah's religion.”

However, the differences among the people about their religion distracted Abu Bakr's mind. He felt very sorry for the absence of the fact at the same time the people were very lacking of it, and had much longing for knowing it. He looked around, scrutinizing his people and saying: “Isn't there anyone from amongst us, who could gather us (and cause us to be unanimous) on the truth, after guiding us to it?”

Suddenly, a brilliant scene, which he saw five years earlier, flashed in his mind. It was when the people of Quraish finished the reconstruction of the Ka'bah, and intended to return the Black Stone to its original place. Then, a great dispute broke up among them, and was about to lead them to (fighting and) sinking in their blood. It was so much fierce that a war like that of Fijar was about to break up.

The whole scene occupied Abu Bakr's thoughts, when he remembered the tribes and clans of Quraish turning into parties, lying in wait for (fighting), everyone of which took an oath that it would have, to the exclusion of the others, the honour of returning the Sacred Stone to its original place.

While the dispute was flaring up, in its peak, Umayyah Ibn Al-Mughirah, the eldest one from among the people of Quraish by this time, suggested that they should make a judge the first person to come to them, with whose command, they would be satisfied. They waited for a long

time. They were in great silence, during which nothing was heard except for the voice of the blood running in their veins.

Abu Bakr went on with his memories. All of them, i.e. the chiefs of Quraish and all of the tribes were sitting (near the Ka'bah), with their eyes fixed upon the direction, from which this new comer, i.e. the first one would come to them, whose coming would put an end to their disputes, and save their blood (from shedding).

Suddenly, they heard footsteps, which seemed as if they were the call of relief. Their breaths flared while the new comer was approaching them, while the rescuer was coming much closer to them. Behold! He was Muhammad, the Honest "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him"! as soon as they had seen him, they shouted: "This is Muhammad, the Honest! This is Muhammad, the Honest! What a good judge he is!"

Abu Bakr mumbled, while being taken by such memories: "Yes, he was the best judge and the best recourse." As soon as he (Muhammad "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him") had learnt the reason of their dispute, he said to them: "Bring me a garment." They brought him a garment, at the middle of which he put the stone, and then said: "Let (the chief of) every tribe catch hold of one of the garment's corners, and then let all of you lift it."

All of them responded to him (and lifted the stone in the garment) until the stone became near to its original place. Then Muhammad "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" took hold of it and placed it. This was the happiest end of such an affliction, which was about to result in a dangerous evil.

Abu Bakr asked himself once again: "He is such a man, who brought back the people of Quraish to the right, when he put an end to the dispute, and made clear the truth about which the people were different; such a man, who made the people of Quraish return to their minds, with the result that they became much healthier and more well-guided with the help of him; such a man who gave them from peace and certainty (of mind) what he "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" had given them on the day when their dispute about the Black Stone was about to destroy them in a mad battle.

However, this happy memory motivated within himself all the calls and predictions which he had heard from Qass Ibn Sa'idah, Zaid Ibn Amr and Waraqah Ibn Nawfal, and those he had kept in mind from such

earlier men as Umayyah Ibn Abu As-Salt, Amir Ibn Zar and Al-Mutalammis Ibn Umayyah.

But, at least a unique scene started expanding and growing more and more in size until it filled the whole screen (of his mind), i.e. the scene of Qass Ibn Sa'idah, as standing among the people, pointing with his hand, which he was stretching in the horizon as a flag, saying: "Qass swears by his Lord that the Divine Decree would inevitably be accomplished and then reach its destination."

Abu Bakr bade farewell to the procession of his memories, while muttering certainly: "Ibn Sa'idah has told the truth. The Divine Decree would inevitably be accomplished and then reach its destination."

CHAPTER TWO

IF HE REALLY SAID SO, HE then HAS TOLD THE TRUTH

Many days passed, folding up the longings and desires of those who hoped, or at least felt they had an appointment with the unseen. As for Abu Bakr, he showed patience until Allah would fulfill His Decree. He went on his affairs of life, and practicing his trade.

When the time of a new trade journey to Sham came, he set out with some of his companions from amongst the traders. Their caravan took its direction towards this far region, seeking for the lawful sustenance and profits.

In Sham, Abu Bakr found a spiritual atmosphere, similar to that of his people (in Mecca). There were different religion, and a lot of wandering people. But, there were a few believing ones, who were turning their faces in the sky, hoping for certainty (of religious knowledge), moving here and there in the different parts of the earth, with the intention to learn from which side (of the earth) the expected warner would appear.

Abu Bakr did in Sham the same he used to do in Mecca. As soon as he had finished his work of trade with his companions of the same vocation, he went fast to some rabbis and monks, whom he recognized during his many journeys to Sham. He observed their separation from such falsehood and illusion as the people followed (in religion). Moreover, he was satisfied with their search for the truth and the (fulfillment of) the coming glad tidings announced by Allah (in their Scriptures of this Prophet whose time became so much near).

From those (rabbis and monks) in Sham, he heard the same sweet song announcing the glad tidings of the coming of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", as he had heard earlier in Mecca from Waraqah Ibn Nawfal and his (two) companions.

But in this journey, he went to the monks of Sham so many times, more than he used to do during the previous journeys. Perhaps, that is because he might have had more increasingly longing for the new dawn (of such a Prophet).

Abu Bakr was waiting for the new Prophet so much eagerly, not only because through him he alone would be guided to the truth, but because through him, all of the people would be guided (to the right path) from their perversity, as well as they would recover from their inadvertence and carelessness. That is because Abu Bakr, the repentant, the lovely person, had a wish that every human being should live a good life.

Moreover, he had an overwhelming desire for presenting to all the people the goodness they were lacking for, not the goodness they were having. Since he had both the wealth and power, he could spend as much as he could. But the people were never lacking of only wealth and power so much as they were short, in addition to, if not before them, of both the right guidance (to both goodness and truth) and the light (which would take them out of darkness).

He had nothing from guidance and light, which he could give to the people. It is true that he had the best morals, in which, and by which one should set the ideal and good example. But, he, like the people, was still short of the greatest guidance, i.e. the knowledge of the fact, of the greatest secret, which surrounded the whole universe and drove the whole life, or, in one word, (the knowledge of) Allah. Where then was the way to Allah?

His thoughts became elegantly affluent. There were, on the earth, a lot of people, who had the same longing for the knowledge of Allah, the Truth. They existed in Sham and Mecca, as well as in other countries of this great world of Allah. There were a lot of people, whose longing for such a knowledge troubled them. There were more and more (people), who had a great desire for the appearance of the light (of the fact), waiting for the time when the Word of Allah would unexpectedly rise upon them.

That is for Allah would (never) abandon those slaves of His. Would He leave them as confused and lost, despite the fact that they offered their hopes to Him (to be taken out of darkness to the light of fact)? Never (He would do so), because Allah is so much merciful that he would not be absent from those who supplicate to Him in order to have a better knowledge of Him. in this way, the right guidance would inevitably come.

Soon, a man would appear to the people, saying to them, and he would be true of course: "I'm Allah's Messenger to you." But, from where would he come?

However, those who had some knowledge from the Scriptures in Mecca as well as in Sham were almost unanimous on the fact that he would appear from here, i.e. from where (The Prophet) Abraham raised the foundations of the House. In other words, (he would come) from Mecca, the homeland of the great Ka'bah.

But, Mecca was crowded of the idolaters and idols, of those who practiced gambling and division arrows, and every abominable act. Would Allah not find from the people of the whole earth other than those (of Mecca), to select His Messenger from amongst them? But, what harm would be in this? Do the physicians visit but the houses of the ill persons? Similarly, wherever paganism could obliterate any kind of hope for monotheism, is it not that there would be a great wisdom in case there came from the same place (of paganism) somebody who would raise the flag of monotheism?

Therefore, there were, in Mecca, many people, who, in spite of their paganism, had an unmatched moral heritage. Which people other than them used to protect the kinsfolk, deal generously with the guests, support the oppressed ones, and help the deserving calamity-afflicted people? Which nation else had (four) Sacred Months, during which the swords would become (sheathed, as if they were) branches?

Which people else used to lit fire as high as it could be, so that it would act as guideposts for the guests, asking them to come to get their hospitality? Which people else had this habit, according to which the master would say to his slave: "If you bring me a guest, you would become free"?

Which people else were given the same wisdom as those (of Mecca) were given? It was those, who had Imru Al-Qais, Zuhair Ibn Abu Sulma, An-Nabighah Adh-Dhibiani, Tarafah Ibn Al-Abd, Umayyah Ibn Abu As-Salt, Labid Ibn Rabie'ah, Ka'b Ibn Zuhair, Qass Ibn Sa'idah, in addition to Sahban Wa'il.

Thus, Abu Bakr went on with his thoughts, where the best merits of his people, and the most excellent characteristics of his nation became visible before his sight.

Are there any people, talented with the true nature with which the Arabs have been talented? They (the Arabs) are people of truthfulness, and their life is void of both falsehood and lie. They are truthful in their meritorious characteristics, as well as they are truthful in their vices. Their life is as clear as the desert in which they live, as pure as the sky over them. As a result of this truthfulness and clarity of theirs, they have the gift of wisdom and Divination. They also have learnt the language of the silent objects in the life.

Those rightly-guided thoughts came upon the mind of (Abu Bakr) the most knowledgeable of the Arab's ancestries, and the keeper of its wisdom. He went on, as if he were talking to himself: This is Qass Ibn Sa'idah. This is Waraqah Ibn Nawfal. This is Zaid Ibn Amr Ibn Nufail. Besides, there were tens and tens before them across the centuries and generations, all of whom abandoned worshipping the idols, and deviated from the religion of their people, and from what they used to worship.

All of them called for the religion of Abraham, and looked forward to the heaven, expecting for the Word of Allah. There was none from among them but that he hoped to be the expected Prophet. But, at the same time, none of them alleged to be such a Prophet.

Had anyone of them pretended to be a Prophet, saying that he was a Messenger sent down from Allah, his faith, purity, and trustworthiness might have caused the people to believe in him. Moreover, those who kept themselves far from worshipping idols would have hastened to follow him. But, why had anyone of those not claimed to be a Prophet? The reason for this is simply that they were truthful.

Yes. The most meritorious characteristic of our people is their truthfulness and clarity. The Arab person would refrain from telling his she-camel a lie even if it was very thirsty, by saying to it: "I would like to raise the hopes of you for drinking so that you might become quiet, but I find it shameful to tell you a lie."

How could an ordinary Arab man feel shy of telling his she-camel a lie, and those pious pure men tell lies about Allah? That's because we (Arabs) are people of great truthfulness; and would the Prophet (from amongst themselves) be but a truthful man? Why then should those predictions not be true? I.e. those predictions, which foretold that the coming Prophet would appear to the people from (somewhere) by the side of the Ka'bah, Allah's Great House.

Those thoughts were going and returning in the mind of Abu Bakr as such. After he had fulfilled his job in Sham, he prepared himself to return to his town. A few days before his return, he saw a vision (in a dream). He saw as if the moon had left its position in the highest horizon, and then descended to Mecca, where it was divided into pieces and parts, scattered on all houses of Mecca. Then, all of those parts joined together once again, and the moon returned to its first (and original) entity, which remained in the lap of Abu Bakr.

This vision left a great influence upon him when he got up. He hurried to meet one of those pious monks, with whom he was familiar, since he kept good relations with him, to the extent that made him pleased (to talk to him). he narrated his vision to him. the monk grew so much happy and said: "His days have come." Abu Bakr asked him: "Whom do you mean? Do you mean the expected Prophet?" the monk answered in the affirmative and added: "You will believe (in Islam) with him, and you will be the happiest with him."

This vision of Abu Bakr was neither a merely talk to himself in his dream, nor was it only an expression of his desires (for the knowledge of the fact) lurking in his unconscious. On the contrary, it was a commencement of a firm fact, which gave him a certain feeling of the people's lacking of a Messenger, whose coming had turned to be obligatory and necessary.

On the other hand, his vision was a (form of) glad tidings for his certainty, and a greeting sent by the unseen to his spirit and faith, desirous (for seeing such a Prophet). In other words, when Allah selected Muhammad for (carrying) His Message, and when Abu Bakr hurriedly went to him, in order to announce his belief in him and with him, he did not do because he saw only a vision (in a dream), but because he saw a vision of mind and deep insight, which he received as a result of his long thinking, and paying attention to the wisdom (of those three pious men), as well as a result of his being selected for guidance by Allah Almighty.

In the morning, Abu Bakr made his journey with the caravan returning to Mecca. The camels and the she-camels ran fast, as happy (with the journey of return) as if they were in a festival. Some sweet breezes blew upon the riders, carrying with them the odor of the gardens of Sham, as if they were bidding farewell on behalf of (the inhabitants of) this good territory, which they left (for Mecca).

The living yearning moved the strings of hearts, and every organ in the human bodies (of those riders) started singing. In this very state, the riders set out, with their desires and longings.

Then, the voice of the driver of the camels rose as reciting (the following poetic verses): “I would assign a portion of (the food which is in) my vessel to my neighbour, for unless you let your companion share with you whatever you have, no matter little it might be, you would not then deserve to join him in superiority.”

Another reciter replied to him, as if they were in a (poetic) competition: “O daughter of Abdullah and of Malik, O daughter of the one of the two Burdahs and the strong horse! If you prepared the food, you should seek for somebody to share eating it with me, for I’m not to eat it alone. (You should seek for) a visitor (whose journey might have led him to come to us) at night, or a neighbour (who might have come) to spend the night with us.

Indeed, I’m afraid of the talks of the blamers, which might criticize me (if I found no guests to join me in eating and drinking). I’m not but a servant of my guest, as long as he is staying (with me); and (there is no blame for me to say that) I have no characteristic which makes me similar to a servant other than this (generosity which causes me to act as a servant only of my guest).”

This good singing took Abu Bakr out of his silence, when the good merits of his people became elegant before him once again, i.e. those people, who would regard as blameworthy the one in case he ate alone, without being doomed to have a guest to share food with him. the poems recited by the riders grew louder, and they went on a poetic competition. Then, the arm of Abu Bakr rose in the sky as if it were a flag.

He shouted: “Who amongst you could recite to us the saying of Umayyah Ibn Abu As-Salt?” a voice came from the other end of the caravan, asking: “Which saying of his do you mean O the most knowledgeable of Arab’s ancestries? Indeed, Umayyah said so many good things.” Abu Bakr said: “I mean his saying: “Isn’t there a Prophet for us, from amongst us...””

The man recited loudly: “Isn’t there a Prophet for us, from amongst us to tell us what would happen to us after death? Indeed, we have learnt, if such a knowledge could be a source of benefit for us, that the latter ones amongst us (who are still living) would certainly join the earlier ones

among us (who died). However, I've been struck with wonder, though there must be no wonder at death, why the living ones among us weep for those who died among us."

The camels turned to be more wandering, more intoxicated with the help of singing, and much faster in jumping and covering the distance (towards Mecca), with the result that the travellers grew much happier and more hopeful (to reach their homeland very soon).

Had anyone caught a glimpse of the face of Abu Bakr at that time, which was shining on the light of wisdom, he would have seen the tears of longing dropping (from his eyes) on his cheeks, as if they were pearls.

At the same time, the reciter (of poetry) continued reciting the same poem of Umayyah: "O Lord! Do not cause me to be a polytheist, and fill my heart (my inner thoughts and intentions) with faith forever. I take refuge with Him, for Whom the pilgrims went to perform their Hajj, and the people raised the corners and principles of the religion of Allah, who surrendered their faces to Him during their Hajj, who never intended to (sell) the reward of Allah with any price (whatever it might be)."

The caravan then went on towards its destination, halting at night, and proceeding when it was morning. A long time had passed since they left Mecca for Sham. What had happened during this long period? The land was being fold up, with (the region of) Sham (which they had left) going far and far (from them), and that of Mecca (to which they were returning) coming near (to them) gradually, until at last, the outskirts of their homeland and the odor of their people were visible to them.

There, near those outskirts, there was a group of people, waiting for the caravan. They had seen the caravan (coming towards them) while they were standing over the summit of the mountain, and, consequently, they called each other and gathered in order to come and receive it. The more the caravan came near to its receivers, the more (its riders) felt a great noise and trouble coming from them. What had happened?

Both of the comers and the receivers met in a state of kindly embracing one another, during which the voices rose, announcing the new events and the strange news. "Do you not know that the people of Quraish have become (so much worried that they've never went asleep) since you left them?" (Said some of the receivers). (Some of the comers asked): "Woe to Quraish! What is the reason?" "Muhammad seemed to have put the pieces of fire on the noses (of its people)." (They answered).

“The pieces of fire? How is that?” (They asked) “What had happened?” (They said): “He says that (there is only) One God, Whom we should worship alone, and let the others (which we used to worship).”

One of those who were inclined to joking said: “Then, let him destroy them. Indeed, for a long time, they (those alleged gods) thronged to join us in eating porridge and drinking milk.”

The various voices intermingled so much noisily. Some deliberate men approached Abu Bakr, and started narrating the story to him quietly, while Abu Bakr was trying to overcome his tears of pleasure.

At the entrance of Mecca, they met a little group of people, led by Abu Jahl (Father of Ignorance): Amr Ibn Hisham, and started embracing one another. Abu Jahl began to talk (to Abu Bakr): “Did the people tell you about your companion (Muhammad) O Atiq?” however, Abu Bakr’s name before his embracing Islam was Atiq. Abu Bakr said to him: “Do you mean Muhammad, the Honest?” he replied: “Yes, I mean the orphan person of the sons of Abd Al-Muttalib.”

There was a short dialogue between them. “Did you hear what he (Muhammad) says, O Amr Ibn Hisham?” (Abu Bakr asked). “Yes, I did, and so did all the people.” (Replied Abu Jahl). “What does he say?” (Abu Bakr asked). “He says that there is (only One) God in the Heaven, Whom we must worship, and let (all the alleged gods) which our forefathers used to worship.” (Abu Jahl answered).

“Did he say that Allah had revealed to him?” (Abu Bakr asked). “Yes.” (Answered Abu Jahl). “Did not he say how his Lord had communicated with him?” (Abu Bakr asked). “Yes, he said that (the angel) Gabriel came to him while he was in the cave of Hira.” (He answered). At this moment, the face of Abu Bakr became elegant, as if the sun had bestowed upon it all its light and brightness. He said quietly: “If he really said so, then, he has said the truth.”

Abu Jahl felt as if the earth was rotating with him. he hardly could move, and he was about to fall down. On the other hand, the statement of Abu Bakr “If he really said so, then, he has said the truth” became in circulation among the people, who kept uttering it.

Abu Bakr went directly to his home, in order to see his family, and wipe off himself the dust of the journey. Then, Allah might accomplish a matter already enacted.

But now, let's leave Abu Bakr in his house, in the company of his family for sometime, after which we should return to proceed with him until we see him standing in front of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him". therefore, let's live for some time with his unique comprehensive statement: "If he really said so, then, he has told the truth."

Yes. This truthful enlightening statement would form his coming life entirely, and would make the one who said it a master of all human beings in the art of faith. Look! The topic of the Message (sent with The Prophet) was not strange for Abu Bakr. He deeply scrutinized the case from all sides, depending upon his sound nature, intelligence, and thinking, concluding to the fact that Allah would not leave His slaves in their confusion. He was also, in view of his sound nature, intelligence, and thinking was a good expert in (understanding the dispositions and natures of) men.

He lived with (The Prophet) Muhammad "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" for a long time, and saw in him the living ideal of a complete person. In this way, he had no sooner received the great news (of Muhammad's Prophethood) than he was prepared to believe in it.

The problem for Abu Bakr was not whether (Muhammad) might have told the truth or a lie, but it was this: Is it true that Muhammad has said that which the people narrated about him? if he said it, then, he surely has told the truth. Whoever then likes, let him investigate, scrutinize, raise a doubt about (that which Muhammad had said), and wait (until he would be satisfied that it is true).

As for Abu Bakr, it was not so. It was very sufficient for him (to believe) that Muhammad would move his lips or his tongue with one word, since it contained this (kind of) truthfulness, which had no like, and certainty to which there was no match.

However, this overwhelming confidence was not arbitrary, but it was based upon and developed from every truthful Prophethood he (Abu Bakr) had heard (about the coming Messenger whose time became so much near), from every good rationality according to which he was guided (to the right), and from his reliable experience of Muhammad's truthfulness, greatness, and pure life which he saw him "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" living.

Muhammad! What a pure name it is, and what a great man its holder was! He lived forty years among the people before the coming of that day, on which he was selected (by Allah) to convey Allah's Message (to the people). He lived forty years, during which he neither betrayed, nor did he forge or falsify. He never told a lie even jokingly. He neither was turned from the course of pureness by any kind of caprice, nor was he turned from greatness by any despicable thing. He never was seen (by the people) but a great man, and one who was worthy of every great deed.

Since he was a child, his fellows used to invite him to join them in their playing and entertainments, but he would turn away from them and say: "I've never been created for this." When he became a young man, his odor of purity and truthfulness filled the spaces of Mecca, and his name turned to be a good hymn uttered by every tongue.

When all the people of Quraish gave him the title of "the Honest", they were not to talk lightly or jokingly to him, nor were they to flatter him, nor were they to be gracious to him. on the contrary, they (the people of Quraish) were, by doing so, to overestimate themselves, and vie in glory with the Arab tribes for having such a good man who rose high to attain, from the time of his youth, the highest level of trustworthiness. His honesty was not only shown in saving wealth and deposits, but he was the trustworthy of all good values, high patterns and (in short, every) good thing in the life.

Now, would Muhammad tell a lie (about his Lord)? Would this life (of his) based upon absolute truthfulness change suddenly into a great lie? (i.e. his claim that he had a Message from Allah, and telling lies about Allah). Would Muhammad, the repentant, penitent, pious, righteous, honest, and pure tell a lie about Allah? Never! Never! Never!

When did the followers of the true religion tell their people lies about Allah? Did the claim of receiving a Message (from Allah) have any (material) benefit, which might prompt anyone to do it? Did Muhammad "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" not see by himself how (the people of) Quraish had cried facing Zaid Ibn Amr Ibn Nufail, in spite of his old age, which was about to come to its end, though he neither brought a new religion, nor did he break their (false) gods and idols with the mattock?

What would (the case of Quraish) be if such a Messenger as Muhammad "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" came to say to the

people: "Leave the (worship of) idols for this is error, and worship Allah (Only), the Eternal, Ever-Lasting Living? Would there be any risk more terrifying than that? Would there be any reasonable man who could choose to run such a risk, just for entertainment and amusement? Would it not be then a true Message, which was enjoined on its holder (Muhammad), who was selected to undertake its irresistible burden?"

Therefore, Muhammad "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" was the highest example in which such blessings of Allah as the health of mind, disposition and conscience were clear. His mind never got distracted at any time.

A long time ago, the wise followers of the true religion used to give the glad tidings of the coming Prophet. Wherever Abu Bakr turned his face, he found that the people were so much lacking of a guide and a tutor, to a Messenger from Allah, in order to convey to them His Message, and raise to them His banner.

Then, if such a Messenger as Muhammad, in particular, came, would the people belie him? of course no. if he said so (that he was really a Messenger from Allah), then, he has told the truth. This was the logic of faith in the mind of the rightly-guided man, Abu Bakr.

He (Abu Bakr) rubbed his hands cheerfully, repeating the statement of Umayyah Ibn Abu As-Salt for the last time: "Isn't there a Prophet for us, from amongst us in order to tell us...". Yes, it was the last time, for from the very moment he met Muhammad, he would not repeat hopefully: "Isn't there a Prophet for us...". That is because The Prophet came, and the glad tidings (of his appearance) turned to be a fact. Instead, his (Abu Bakr's) slogan, his proclamation, his song would become: "If he said so, then, he has told the truth."

He would utter this (phrase) whenever Muhammad brought a Holy Verse (from Allah). He would utter it at any (time there would be) calamity or distress. He would utter it at (the time of) every difficult defeat (which might afflict the Muslims). He would keep uttering it until he would be given a reward for it from Allah, describing him as the second of two (persons) and the Truly Believer "As-Siddiq".

Now, let's return to him, and accompany his blessed steps on his way to The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", in order to see the first meeting between The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" and As-Siddiq.

Abu Bakr left his house, eagerly intending to go to the house of The Messenger. The Messenger (at that time) was in his house, with his wife Khadijah “Allah be pleased with her”, who was the first from amongst all the people to believe him, and embrace Islam.

She used to listen, for a long time, from her cousin Waraqah Ibn Nawfal his chants of longing for the coming Prophet. She had known Muhammad as a guardian of her trade, and then as a husband (after their marriage). However, she had never seen a man, purer in conduct, more merciful, more reasonable, and more sincere than Muhammad.

For this reason, The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” had no sooner talked to her about the blessing of revelation bestowed upon him by Allah than she said to him with certainty: “You have told the truth.” Allah knowingly chose her to be the wife companion of His Messenger, when the revelation was sent down to him, with its all glory, burdens, dignity, and solemnity.

There was in the company of The Messenger and his wife a slender boy, i.e. Ali Ibn Abu Talib “Allah be pleased with him”, whom The Messenger had taken under his care a long time ago, when his uncle was befallen by some hardship, with the result that he (the boy) lived with him (The Messenger). So, when the revelation came, the boy hastened to believe (in Islam).

Abu Bakr knocked at the door, and called (announcing that he was Abu Bakr, and that he wanted the permission to be admitted). The countenance of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” became so much elegant, and he said to Khadijah: “He is Atiq, O Khadijah.” The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” hurried to meet his companion. There was a talk between them, as fast and bright as the light.

Abu Bakr said: “O my Arab brother! Is it true that news which reached me from the people?” he asked: “Which news has reached you from the people?” he said: “They say that Allah has sent you to us (to order us) to worship Him Alone, and not to associate anything with Him.” he (The Prophet) said: “What did you answer them, O Atiq?” he said: “I said: If he said so, then, he has told the truth.”

At this moment, The eyes of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” overflowed with tears cheerfully and gratefully. He embraced his companion (Abu Bakr) and kissed his

forehead. Then, he narrated to him how the revelation came to him while he was in the cave of Hira, reciting: “Proclaim! (or Read!) In the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, who created, Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood: Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful, He Who taught (the use of) the Pen, Taught man that which he knew not.”

Abu Bakr lowered his head submissively and out of piety, in greeting of the banner of Allah, which he saw rising before him as high as it could be, as manifest in those Holy Verses, sent down (to The Prophet). Then, he lifted his head, and with both his hands, caught hold of the right hand of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, saying: “I bear testimony that you are a truthful honest. I testify that there is no god but Allah, and I testify that you are The Messenger of Allah.”

At this moment, there occurred the greatest historical explosion, made by the unseen. All of Islam’s future, civilization and expansion started, at this very moment, their departure from this (present unseen), in order to land on the long future.

Yes. It was at this very moment, which witnessed a man (Abu Bakr) shaking hands with another (The Prophet), giving him the pledge of allegiance, that there was a strong explosion sending out all its tremendous hidden things, giving birth to a new time, with its generations, miracles, and victories, although no one, on this very day, heard the sound of such an explosion, not even The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and his companion (Abu Bakr), because the voice of certainty (of faith) in their hearts was louder than any sound.

In this way, Abu Bakr embraced Islam quietly and strongly, with certainty (of belief), and he would keep carrying its flag in the same state of certainty, quietness and strength. There embraced Islam the man whom Allah selected to be the truly believer of His Messenger, and the second of two (persons in the cave of Thawr, the first of whom was The Messenger himself), and in the near future, he would be his (the Messenger’s first) successor. There embraced Islam the man who, though not himself a Prophet, would complement the role of The Prophet.

In his next visit to The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, he (Abu Bakr) was not alone. But, he had in his company five persons from amongst the chiefs of Quraish, whom Abu Bakr persuaded to embrace Islam. They came (with him) in order to give

the pledge of allegiance to The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”. They were Uthman Ibn Affan, Az-Zubair Ibn Al-Awwam, Abd Ar-Rahman Ibn Awf, Sa’d Ibn Abu Waqqas, and Talhah Ibn Ubaidullah.

Yes! They were those five prominent persons (whom he brought to give the pledge of allegiance) all at once. However, this was the first blessing of Abu Bakr. Very soon, the rows of the new converts to Islam would increase, and the people would come and say to one another: “Muhammad and Abu Bakr! By Allah, such two men never agree on anything which might lead them astray.”

Thus, Abu Bakr affirmed his faith (in Allah). Which sort of faith was his? The greatness of this man was clear in his faith. It was manifest in the fact that he observed, on the earth and in the world of people, an astonishing sort of faith. It was a confusing sort of faith: so much easy to the extent that it would be very difficult (to follow it); (as simple) as an atom, which one could hardly see, but, at the same time, it was (as strong and powerful) as an atom with the most amazing, tremendous energy it might have.

The faith of Abu Bakr was (as sweet) as the gentle smooth breeze, which we inhale, without making sense or paying attention to it. But, when anyone suffers from some kind of asphyxia, (and then is saved by inhaling such breezes), we would perceive that such an ordinary thing is the secret, if not the source, of life.

However, Abu Bakr would live among the people as quietly and amiably. But, when Islam would be put to trial (at the time the apostates would appear), it would be clear to the people, though suddenly and outstandingly, how powerful and strong energy this amiable and kind man had. at that time, the Muslims would perceive that those quiet wavering breaths (of Abu Bakr) were the spirit of life, and that this living faith which this man quietly had, was (as strong and firm) as a powerful destiny, which could destroy any obstacle or anything (that might seem to be) impossible.

The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” talked so much about (the good merits of) Abu Bakr. From among what he said about him, a mention might be made of the following: “There is no one who did a favour to us, but that we gave him a reward for it, except for Abu Bakr, who has done a favour to us, for which Allah would

give him a reward on the Day of Judgement. Moreover, no wealth of anyone (of you) was a (source of) benefit to me as the wealth of Abu Bakr was. I've never offered Islam to anyone (from amongst you) but that he faltered (before accepting it) except for Abu Bakr, who never hesitated (to embrace it)."

This (statement) is the truest description of Abu Bakr. His faith was decisive even from the first glance, as if he had an appointment with the new religion, to which he hurried so much eagerly and desirously.

Such a faith was also very decisive when the apostates revolted against Islam, and intended (to ruin its principles) after the death of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him". This faith was stronger, firmer, much more outstanding and powerful while facing this distress. Once it was well-aware of its duty, immediately, it started doing it to the full.

This faith was always decisive in so many situations, in which the faith of the believers was put to trial. (In those situations) there was no faith, much stronger and firmer than that of Abu Bakr. Let's now see some of those situations, in which this unique faith in Allah and His Messenger was clear.

One day, when it was forenoon, the people of Mecca were overwhelmed by an astonishing talk. Abu Jahl (Father of Ignorance) was out for some of his needs, when he passed by the Ka'bah, and saw The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" sitting alone in the Sacred Mosque. He was silent, absorbed in thinking. Abu Jahl wanted to hurt The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" with some of his ironies. He came near to him and said: "Isn't there anything new (of revelation) that has come to you tonight?" The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" raised his head towards him and replied firmly: "Yes. Tonight, I was made to go in a night journey to Jerusalem in Sham."

Abu Jahl said disapproving: "And in the morning, you returned among us!" The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" said: "Yes." Abu Jahl shouted madly: "O sons of Ka'b Ibn Lu'ai! Come here!" all of the people of Quraish came, calling one another. At this time, Muhammad "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" had not yet talked to anyone of his believing companions about the news of this Night Journey.

The people gathered near Ka'bah, and Abu Jahl went on talking to them cheerfully about what he had heard (from The Prophet), thinking it to be a good opportunity for all those who believed in The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" would turn away and disperse from him.

One of the Muslims who were present at this time proceeded and asked: "Is it true, O Messenger of Allah, that you was made to go in a night journey (to Jerusalem)?" The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" replied: "Yes, and I led the prayer there with my brothers from the Prophets."

However, the feelings agitated among the gathering people about that were different. As for the polytheists, they welcomed what they had heard, thinking it would put an end to (the call of) The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him".

There was a group of Muslims, which fell in doubt about it. Some of the chiefs of Quraish went to the house of Abu Bakr, merrily and gloatingly, having no doubt that they would return with the news of his (Abu Bakr's) desertion of this religion.

That is because Abu Bakr knew more than others the long time and the hard journey one had to take from Mecca to Sham. Then, what about the one who (pretended that he) went there, offered the prayer, and then returned home in no more than a few hours?

When they reached the house of Abu Bakr, they shouted: "O Atiq! The whole matter of your companion (The Prophet) was, before this time, too easy to endure. But now, come out to hear (what he had said)." Abu Bakr, who got surprised, came out to them, calmly and respectably. He asked them: "What is the matter with you?" they said: "Your companion." He trembled and said: "Woe to you! Is there any harm to him?" they retreated a bit, hardly swallowing their saliva. Then they said: "He is now sitting by the side of Ka'bah, telling the people that his Lord made him go in a night journey to Jerusalem."

Another person proceeded (towards Abu Bakr) to resume mockingly: "He went at night and returned at (the same) night, and now, in the morning, he is among us."

Abu Bakr smiled and said: "What harm is in this (which he said)? I believe him when he tells me about that which is farer and more distant than that. I believe him when he tells me about the news of the Heaven,

which comes to him either in the morning or in the evening.” Then, he put it powerfully: “If he said so, then he has told the truth.”

Is there any phrase capable of appreciating or (at least) commenting on that situation? There is only one phrase, which could help us in such a situation: “O Granter of this certainty! Glory be to You!”

However, this man never had his faith arbitrarily, but he had it as a result of a deep and shrewd understanding. He never had his faith depending only upon his emotions so much as upon his astute intellect. He had his faith, not prompted only by his heart so much as motivated by the logic of his mind before it.

Consider his saying: “I believe him when he tells me what is more distant and farer than that. I believe him when he tells me about the news of the Heaven, which comes to him (in a form of Divine revelation) either in the morning or in the evening.”

Consequently, would he not believe him when he (tells that) he cut a distance of several hundreds of miles only in a single night? The Power of Allah, in Whom Abu Bakr had faith, is infinitely never-ending. As for The Messenger whom Abu Bakr believed, there is no doubt about his truthfulness. Furthermore, there are a lot of phenomena, which we see and feel, though the human mind could hardly understand. Then, let this (Night Journey) be one of such phenomena.

The main point with which he (Abu Bakr) was concerned was the fact that The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” had told about that, and said so. Then, everything would be possible and believable. Since the Envoy and the Ambassador of the Heaven might come either in the morning or in the evening (from the Heaven to the earth with the revelation) only in a single moment, sending down the Holy Qur’an within the heart of The Prophet, so that he would be (one) amongst the Warners, and since Abu Bakr believed in all of that, then, how could he have any doubt after that?

Would he have any doubt about the journey of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” from Mecca to Jerusalem and then his return once again (to Mecca) in one night? What harm might be in that? Both time and space, both farness and nearness are important only within the limits of the human ability. As for Allah, Who says to the thing “Be” with the result that it would be immediately, what is the significance of both time and space in view of His (absolute)

Power? What is the significance of both distances and periods (of time) in view of His Will?

The main point here was not how The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” went to and then returned from Jerusalem in a single night. But, it was (in the sight of Abu Bakr) whether Muhammad “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” had said so. “If he said so, then, he has told the truth.”

Abu Bakr went quickly to the Ka’bah, where The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” was sitting. Near Ka’bah, he (Abu Bakr) saw the gathering people, surrounding him (The Prophet) gloatingly and noisily. He also saw (Muhammad) the light of Allah, sitting submissively supplicating (Allah Almighty), heedless of the noise around him, hearing nothing of what those foolish persons were saying.

Abu Bakr turned upon him, embracing him and saying: “Let my father and mother be sacrificed for you, O Messenger of Allah! By Allah! You have told the truth. By Allah! You have told the truth.”

There is another scene, in which this unique faith of Abu Bakr was clear, making him ready to sacrifice himself (for The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”). One day, while Abu Bakr was at home, he was pleased with The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” visiting him. he was surprised when The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” said to him: “O Abu Bakr! Verily, Allah gave me the permission to migrate (to Medina).”

However, the companions of The Prophet had emigrated to Medina before him. The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” remained in Mecca, expecting for Allah’s leave for him to migrate. Abu Bakr remained beside him (in Mecca). When he heard this news (of Allah’s permission of Migration to The Messenger) he grew so much happy and said: “Let me be your companion (in this journey) O Messenger of Allah!” The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” replied: “You’ll be my companion (in this journey) O Abu Bakr.”

However, the Migration itself was a healthy journey, since it put an end to Quraish’s almost never-ending hurts and plots. The Muslims emigrated from Mecca to Medina according to the permission of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”. They

were very happy with such a Migration. It released them from being hurt by their people (from polytheists), though the departure from their families and kinsmen was so much bitter.

But the process of Migration particularly for The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” was a matchless risk. If Quraish let the Muslims leave Mecca (for Medina) safely, surely, it would not let The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” do the same.

Its chiefs talked about that matter very much, and concluded to the fact that if they let The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” set out to Medina, where he would raise his flag, he, certainly, would gather the Arabs around him, with whom he would then invade Quraish. Henceforward, they decided to kill The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”.

Therefore, perhaps they had let the Muslims, including Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, and (let) Umar Ibn Al-Khattab in particular emigrate (from Mecca) so that The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” would remain among them without supporters, and in this way, it would be much easier for them to get rid of him.

To be sure, the Migration of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” was neither an ordinary journey, nor was it a merely (process of) emigration (from one town to another). On the contrary, it was a horrifying risk, which led to a terrifying pursuit. Abu Bakr was well-aware of that. He knew very well that Quraish would send its horsemen and tracers in large quantities, (in search of him) until it would get the emigrating Prophet. Then, what is the reason of his pleasure, great delight and eagerness to have such a companionship (in this journey)?

It was the faith. First of all, it was his belief that Allah was not to send down His Word to the people, and then leave it to be thrown away in the wind by those of Quraish with the first cry. Secondly, he thought that the belief (in Islam) should hold him responsible and ready to sacrifice himself (for the sake of this religion); and actually, he made himself responsible for (the rise of) this religion once he followed it, and for (supporting) this Messenger once he gave him the pledge of allegiance.

As dangerous as the consequences (of such responsibility) might be, there would be only one way for Abu Bakr (to follow), i.e. the way of

obligation as determined by his faith, the way of sacrifice for such a belief. No doubt, he believed in Allah, His Messenger and His religion.

His mission then was to make of his life a fence, by which he should protect the call and the caller, Islam and its Messenger “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”. when he became successful in this mission of his, it would be for him the greatest expected fortune, with which he would be so much pleased. The more it would become increasingly dangerous and horrifying, the more he would feel that he is the luckiest, the most fortunate, the most rewarded, and the happiest of all the inhabitants of the earth.

For this reason, he became so much pleased when he learnt that he would be the companion of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” in his journey of Migration, for which Allah Almighty rewarded him in abundance. This reward was a much stronger faith, with which Allah filled his heart on the light of one of the most wonderful experiences.

When he took shelter with The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” in the cave (of Thawr), in order to disappear from the pursuing forces which were chasing them, with the desire to win the prize made by the people of Quraish for the one who could bring back The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, the chasers came close to the cave, and started walking round it.

Then, Abu Bakr was scared by raising this persistently terrifying question: “What would happen if anyone of them looked at the middle of the cave? What would it be if those criminals arrested The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”?” at this moment, Allah was saving for As-Siddiq the last lesson, which would complete his faith to the full, and raise it to the highest level one could attain.

He (Abu Bakr) raised this question to The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”: “O Messenger of Allah! If anyone of them looked down towards us, surely he would see us.” He said so, while his eyes were turning timidly and anxiously towards The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”.

But, as soon as his eyes had caught a glimpse of the face of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, he saw what astonished him. he saw an elegant face, as if all the tranquillity, calmness and hope of life were given to it. He saw the palm of The

Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” touching his chest, making him rest assured. The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” said to him: “O Abu Bakr! Do not be sad, for Allah is with us. What do you think of two (persons), the third of whom is Allah?”

Thus, Abu Bakr became calm. He saw the chasers walking round the cave in a state of bewilderment, then turning away from it, confused and blind since they could do nothing. On that day, his faith became complete, and his certainty (of belief) was well established on the throne of firmness.

It seemed as if he was chosen by destinies to accompany The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” in this journey of Migration, just to show him this scene, or as if this scene was predestined for Abu Bakr, so that he might extract from it all the fortunes of his faith, which were kept for him, as a fitting recompense, and a cup full (to the Brim), after which he would never be thirsty for any kind of faith or certainty. That’s because his faith reached its peak at this very moment of the cave.

Let’s follow the procession of this unique faith, in order to see its majestic glory in various scenes, one after another. In the month of Dhul-Qa’dah of the fifth year of Hegira, The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” left Medina with a lot of his companions, for Mecca, in order to perform Umrah. He drove the sacrificial animals before him, so that Quraish would know that The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” came with the intention of visiting the Sacred Mosque, and not as a fighter.

But the news of this visit had reached Quraish in one way or another, with the result that it mobilized its people, and decided to prevent The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and his companions from entering Mecca and visiting the Ka’bah.

The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and his companions halted at the valley of Hudaibiyah, and delegated Uthman Ibn Affan to Quraish, to explain to them the true reason of his coming. On the other hand, Quraish delegated Suhail Ibn Amr to negotiate with The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” concerning this matter. The negotiations concluded to making a peace treaty (between the two parties), according to which, the Muslims

would return to Medina and postpone their visit to the House to the coming year. It also implied that the Muslims should bring back to Quraish anyone who might come to them as a Muslim, though it was not obligatory for Quraish to return to the Muslims anyone who might come (to Mecca) as an apostate.

The scribe had no sooner finished writing the treaty which was not yet sealed by The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, than the Muslims were surprised by a young man coming to them and crying for help. He was chained, dragging his shackles, which were fastened to a huge stone, to stop him from proceeding. This young man was Abu Jandal, son of Suhail Ibn Amr, the envoy of Quraish, who was negotiating with The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”.

The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” felt sorry for the state of Abu Jandal, whose cry was loud, asking for the help of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”. The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” said to Suhail: “Leave Abu Jandal for us, since the treaty has not come in force yet.” But, Suhail was not to leave his son going to embrace Islam, for he (Suhail) was one of the chiefs of Quraish. So, he insisted on taking him, otherwise, the treaty should be repealed, leading to the war (between the two parties).

Abu Jandal shouted: “O community of Muslims! Would you leave me return to the polytheists, after I had come as a Muslim? Do you not see the signs of torment on my body for the sake of (my belief in) Allah?” The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” called him with consoling words: “You should keep patient, and Allah would soon relieve you.”

However, this scene was too difficult for the Muslims to endure. How should they return (to Medina) without visiting the Sacred House? How should they hand over a Muslim who came to them, crying for their help? However, their vehement anxiety might be illustrated by the situation of one who had the greatest belief, the most wholehearted devotion (in the service of the religion of Islam), who was the most obedient (to Allah’s orders) from amongst them, i.e. Umar Ibn Al-Khattab “Allah be pleased with him”.

He went to The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and discussed the matter with him. he said to him: “O Prophet of Allah! Aren’t you really The Prophet of Allah?” he said: “Yes, (I’m really The Prophet of Allah) O Umar.” He asked him: “Then, why should we be humble in our religion?” He said: “O Umar! I am Allah’s Apostle and I do not disobey Him, and He will make me victorious.” Umar said: “Didn’t you tell us that we would go to the Ka’bah and circumambulate it?” He said: “Yes, but did I tell you that we would visit the Ka’bah this year?” Umar said: “No.” He said: “So you will visit and circumambulate it. ”

No doubt, this dialogue showed how strong the crisis from which the Muslims suffered at that time was. But, what is the relation of Abu Bakr with all of that? Verily, Abu Bakr was the master of the art of belief on this very day, as he would remain its master at any time.

Let’s follow Umar, for a few moments later, we would see him near the platform of such a mastership, where there was sitting upon it this great tutor, Abu Bakr As-Siddiq.

Umar turned away from The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, and he was still very anxious. Therefore, his politeness with The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” prevented him from going too far in his talk with him, and asking him more pressingly, although he felt it necessary to have a clearer understanding of the matter. With whom he should talk? He should talk with none but Abu Bakr.

He came upon the rows and circles of the Muslims until he saw him sitting in the furthest end of the gathering, covered by an astonishing tranquillity. He raised to him the same questions he had asked The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” a few moments earlier. He also had from Abu Bakr “Allah be pleased with him” the same answers he had heard from The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”.

Then, their discussion came to the end. Umar said: “Abu Bakr caught hold of my hand and said to me: “O man! He is Allah’s Apostle, who would never disobey Him, and definitely Allah would grant him victory. So, hold fast to his instructions, for by Allah, he is on the right.” Then, (Umar resumed) Allah sent down tranquillity upon my heart, and I learnt that this was the truth.”

This was the faith of Abu Bakr, which never faltered. It was the faith, which neither slumber nor a bit of doubt could seize, either secretly or publicly. At the times of difficulty, the faith of this believer (Abu Bakr) used to take out what was hidden in it, showing all sources of wonderfulness and astonishment over time and space.

Now, let's see him on the day of (the holy battle of) Badr, when Quraish alighted with its mobilized party at the furthest side of the valley, equipped by its pride and power. On the other hand, the Muslims set out with The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" on the day of Badr, and they were no more than three hundred, having only a few weapons of resistance. Then, the two parties confronted each other, and the battle flared up, while The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" was sitting in his bower. His companions appealed to him not to leave his tent, whatever dangerous the battle might turn to be. Abu Bakr was sitting with him.

The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" caught a glimpse of the flaring battle, and noticed that his companions were few in number in comparison with the great multitudes of pagans. The more he saw a martyr (from amongst the Muslims) falling down (as dead), the more he felt sorry and compassionate. Then, the fighting reached its decisive peak, and nothing could be heard except for the clashes of the flaming swords, playing the song of death and blood.

The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" felt that the whole religion became in the outbalanced and not the outbalancing pan (of scale). Then, he came out from his tent, stretching his hands towards the sky, as if they were sails of a ship, which came under the influence of strong and violent waves. Then, he went on speaking privately to Allah: "O Allah! If this pact of Muslims is destroyed (by the pagans in this battle), then, You would never be worshipped on the earth. O Allah! Fulfill what You've promised me."

The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" kept reciting his supplications, one after the other, until his stresses became hoarse, and his calls trembled, and his upper garment fell down from his shoulders. At this moment, Abu Bakr came close to him quietly, lifted the upper garment of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", and placed it once again over the shoulders, which were, by then, carrying the greatest burdens of life.

Abu Bakr said to The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, beseeching (him to keep quiet): “O Messenger of Allah! Stop from asking your Lord since this is very sufficient for you. No doubt, He would fulfill what He has promised you.”

However, The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” had no doubt that Allah would give him victory. He said to his companions a short time before the battle: “Verily, Allah has promised me to grant me victory.” He also said to them: “It seems as if I’m seeing the places of death of the infidels.” But the battle’s enthusiasm and anxiety were reflected upon his feelings as a result of his direct responsibility of his companions and of the new religion, which was facing the first battle against its enemies.

If anyone wanted to see the true faith of Abu Bakr at its greatest moments (of history), and if anyone wanted to see the supreme faith in its relationship with the Eternal Everlasting One of the heavens and the earth, then, let him see his faith on the day when The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” was called to the Highest Companions (in the Heaven), and he responded to the call and passed away. It was on that day, when the Muslims turned and did not find the father who used to fill their lives with compassion, and the light, which used to fill their existence with luminosity.

On that very day, the essence of this faith was visible. It was a faith of a man, who devoted himself to Allah, and gave Allah a pledge to be with Muhammad. If Muhammad “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” disappeared by death, then, this faith should not become weak, but it should be much stronger. It did not become anxious, but it mobilized (all of its forces). It did not collapse under the effect of the strike (caused by the death of The Prophet), but it undertook its responsibilities so much strongly, rightly and firmly.

In this way, Abu Bakr stood, or in another word, which is much clearer, the faith of Abu Bakr stood on the day The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” died, (as strong and firm to the extent) that none else could be able to do. On this day, after he (Abu Bakr) had led the prayer, and The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” had returned to his chamber, he asked for his (The Prophet’s) permission to leave him for some time. Then, he went to his home at the Heights of Medina.

It was not after a long time during which he fulfilled some of his family's needs and then prepared himself to return once again to The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", that the announcer of death covered the distance jumping, in order to inform him of the news (of the death of The Prophet), which (was so much destructive that it) could ruin the mountains. He praised Allah and said while shedding tears: "We are to Allah, to Whom we all refer."

Then, he hastened to go to the house of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", calmly and firmly. He had no sooner come near the mosque than he saw the great calamity. All of the Muslims had lost their minds. Umar himself, who was known to be strong and steadfast, stood up, raising his sword and saying:

"Some hypocrites allege that The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" died. Verily, he, by Allah, did not die. But he went to meet his Lord, just as Moses Ibn Imran had gone (to meet his Lord). By Allah! The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" would return and cut the hands of those men who pretended that he had died. I would not like to hear anyone saying that The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" died, otherwise, I would crush his head with this sword of mine."

This was the state of Umar. Then, what about the state of the others? The death of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" was, by all means, a sudden stroke to all the Muslims, although he fell sick (a few days before his death). They never imagined that one day it would be said to them that The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" died.

But, when Allah Almighty did what He had decreed, and took up His Messenger unto Him, and it was the fate of people to hear the word of death joined to The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", they lost their minds.

It is true that Abu Bakr had more right than the others to receive the greatest amount of grief and astonishment (because of such a stroke), for he was the most intimate friend of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" as of childhood, and was the first to believe him in the earliest days he had received the revelation. Furthermore, he loved him so much to the extent that he would be unable to be patient for his departure. But Abu Bakr seemed to be managed not

by the help of a human energy, but by the help of a godly energy. Let an eyewitness describe to us how firm and constant Abu Bakr was at the first stroke.

When Abu Bakr came, the people were speaking. He did not pay attention to anything. He entered the chamber of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", who was lying in one of its corners, with a Yemenite mantle over him. he uncovered his face and kissed him. then he said: "Let my father and mother be sacrificed for you! You were pleasant while being alive as well as you are pleasant now while being dead. No doubt, you have received the death which Allah Almighty has predestined for you." Then, he covered the face of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" with the mantle once again.

Then, he came out, while Umar was talking to the people. He required him to keep silent, but Umar insisted on going too far in his talking to the people. When he saw him refusing to keep silent, Abu Bakr faced the people and started talking to them. When they heard him speaking, they turned towards him, and paid attention to his speech.

He praised Allah and lauded Him. then he said: "O people! Whoever used to worship Muhammad (should know that) Muhammad had died, and whoever used to worship Allah, then (he should know that) Allah is eternally living, and He never dies."

Then, he recited the following Verse: "Muhammad is no more than a Messenger: many were the Messengers that passed away before him. If he died or were slain, will ye then turn back on your heels? If any did turn back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allah; but Allah (on the other hand) will swiftly reward those who (serve him) with gratitude."

By Allah! It seemed as if the people heard this Verse for the first time. As for Umar, he fell down on the ground, when he perceived from the statement of Abu Bakr that it was really the death (which The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" had received).

Can there be such a firmness during those catastrophic shattering moments? "O people! Whoever used to worship Muhammad (should know that) Muhammad had died, and whoever used to worship Allah, then (he should know that) Allah is eternally living, and He never dies."

However, what was expected from him to the utmost of his ability was to come back to his tranquillity, whenever he was consoled and advised to keep patient. But the faithful intuition, which was (as sharp) as a falcon's eye, in less than a glance, came upon the password which would bring back the minds which were crushed by the catastrophe (of The Prophet's death) to their right consciousness, in order to be able to receive strongly its formidable consequences, and peacefully get over the crisis of death.

This password was but that decisive cry: "Whoever used to worship Muhammad (should know that) Muhammad had died, and whoever used to worship Allah, then (he should know that) Allah is eternally living, and He never dies." Since Allah is eternally living and He never dies, then, O horsemen of Allah, ride (on your horses to continue the course of Jihad), and O banner of Allah, rise high (in the sky), and O carriers of this banner, get up to continue the journey of that rising sun and new religion.

However, the cry of Abu Bakr had its influence upon them, (as strong and powerful) as the destiny itself. They got up towards the honoured dead body (of The Messenger) and bade farewell to it, firmly determined to receive the consequences of the coming hours.

When we consider the different scenes, in which the faith of Abu Bakr was clear, we would find ourselves facing an important question: What would happen if Abu Bakr did not come to life? This question would be elegant, imposing itself more constantly and pressingly when we come to live with Abu Bakr on those great days: the day of the shed (of Banu Sa'idah), and the day of (fighting) the apostates.

It seems that when Allah Almighty selected Muhammad to be His Messenger to the people, He chose with him Abu Bakr, in order to complete the role of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him".

When we look forward to masters from whom and from whose biographies we could receive and learn the art of faith, we would find in the lead of those few masters, this great man of Islam, i.e. Abu Bakr As-Siddiq. We lived several moments with his faith. Let's then in the next pages see how this faithful believer undertook the responsibilities of that faith, and how he devoted his life, much powerfully, though also more humbly, to deal with (the acts resulting from) its consequences.

CHAPTER THREE

EVEN IF THE WOLVES SNATCHED ME

The situation of Abu Bakr on the day The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” died was (as rightly decisive) as a compass, which determined how the history would turn towards the man who would fill the space left by the death of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”.

That man who remained constantly firm while facing the catastrophic stroke which bewildered the Muslims, all the Muslims, the man who kept on his state of tranquillity, calmness, and wholemindedness in such a way (as we mentioned above) in a situation, which might distract the mind of the wisest man, this man was the worthiest of all to become the leader (of all the Muslims).

But even, this was not alone the reason of selecting him (for such a position). There was, in addition to it, his past, with its heroism and noble deeds and traits. During the fatal illness of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, Abu Bakr was chosen by him to lead the people in prayer, saying: “Tell Abu Bakr to lead the prayers with the people.”

It is true that A’ishah tried to have him cancel that (order) saying: “Abu Bakr is a smoothhearted man, and if he stood up in your position (as the leader of the prayers), he could not help weeping. So, you’d better ask Umar to lead the prayer with the people.” When The Prophet was asked to cancel his order, he became angry and issued the same order twice: “Tell Abu Bakr to lead the prayers with the people.”

Accordingly, Abu Bakr complied with the order of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”. Perhaps he knew or did not know that at this very moment (he was given the order of The Prophet), he, in fact, received the flag from The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, in order to carry it after him.

Following the death of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, Abu Bakr was taken by surprise because of a certain event, of which he never had thought before. It was the event of the Shed, which appeared as a commencement of dangerous evil. But, at the same

time, it came to a happy and pleasant end, after Abu Bakr had been selected as caliph.

Whenever we go through the history of Abu Bakr, we would find that he had no desire at all for ruling or for becoming a caliph. He was as Umar in abstaining from having any position in this world. Moreover, Umar in his refraining from having any kind of authority over the people, was following the example of Abu Bakr, as well as treading in his steps.

The day of the Shed came so that his (Abu Bakr's) faith should pass through a terrifying trial. This man, who preferred to live as a shadow person (far from the lights of fame), unless it was necessary for him (to do the opposite), the man who used to be so much pleased that no eye would fall on him (in admiration and appreciation for him), though he might be, at that time, on the top, this shy amiable repenting man was doomed to be established on the top of the events suddenly, not out of desire for that, but in response to the consequences of his faith, and the responsibilities of his religion.

Following the death of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", a lot of people from the Ansar gathered in the shed of Banu Sa'idah, in order to give the pledge of allegiance to Sa'd Ibn Ubadah as caliph. When Abu Bakr learnt of that, he went in the company of Umar Ibn Al-Khattab and Abu Ubaidah Ibn Al-Jarrah to the shed.

Indeed, Abu Bakr was in a hurry, not for sparing the caliphate for himself, but with the intention to stop the affliction on one hand, and to curb the tendency of sectarianism on the other hand, since there stood some people (from both the Ansar and the Emigrants) saying: "O community of Ansar!" "O community of Emigrants!". Furthermore, he intended to follow with the Muslims the best way to choose the caliph who would have the capability of filling the space left by The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him".

Abu Bakr faced the gathering people very deliberately. Their words were scattering, flying in all directions like bullets. There were some people from among the Ansar, who incited the Ansar powerfully and flamingly to stick to the matter of caliphate. On the other party, there were some Emigrants, who rose their voice loudly, rejecting such a desire of this group of the Ansar.

The people mostly lost their minds because of the death of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him". When

they thought of the matter of ruling, while still being in the atmosphere of this calamity, they were troubled, and went on dispute. The proof that this was not authentic in them as well as in their faith was their coming quickly to their senses, and their unanimous agreement on selecting as caliph this forbearing repenting man.

It is true that Abu Bakr would give preference to the Emigrants in regard to the matter of ruling. But, this is not because of their being Emigrants, belonging to the tribe of Quraish, but because the Migration conferred upon them the privilege of preceding (the Ansar) to embrace Islam. The Migration put an end to the stage of difficulty, during which they were vulnerable to (the torment of) Quraish, with all power it had so that they might be turned away from their religion. But this made their faith much stronger and more constant.

This was the measure by which Abu Bakr used to evaluate the people. He seemed to have derived it from the Book of Allah, when He Almighty said: "The earlier precedents (to embrace Islam) from the Emigrants (Muhajirs) and the Ansar."

Moreover, he would give preference to the Emigrants in regard to the matter of ruling in view of the fact that those who sought for it from amongst the Ansar were eager to have something which The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" usually rejected to give to anyone who demanded it devotedly, i.e. the matter of ruling.

No doubt, Abu Bakr remembered that day when Al-Abbas, the uncle of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" went to him, asking him to appoint him in charge of one of those jobs which were in his (The Prophet's) custody. The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" replied to him: "We, by Allah, never give it to anyone who asks for it, or is eager to have it."

That is because the responsibility of a ruler is a source of loss more than it is a source of benefit for him, a matter of sacrifice more than it is a matter of any kind of prestige. So, if anyone was keen on having it, then it means that he would not estimate well the great significance of such an important responsibility.

In the shed, Umar intended to speak to the gathering people, but Abu Bakr hinted to him with his right hand to keep silent, and took his permission to allow him to speak first. "O community of Ansar! There is no merit which you might mention, of which you are not worthy."

In this way, As-Siddiq started his speech. Then he went on talking, giving his opinion about the one who might be candidate for the position of caliphate. He might be one of two: Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, with whom Allah reinforced Islam, and Abu Ubaidah Ibn Al-Jarrah, whom The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” had described as the trustworthy of this nation.

He said: “I admit anyone of those two men (to be the caliph). At this moment, the hand of Umar trembled, as if a flaming piece of fire had fallen upon it. As for Abu Ubaidah, he cast down his weeping eyes very timidly. Then Umar cried: “By Allah! I’d better be brought and killed even without committing a sin than to be a ruler over people including Abu Bakr.”

Indeed, this scene itself is more glorious than any speech (one could say). As soon as Umar had said so and then moved forward, stretching his hand to give the pledge of allegiance to Abu Bakr, the Ansar rushed towards Abu Bakr to give him the pledge of allegiance, as if they were called by somebody from heaven (to do so).

The Muslims disliked to live even for one day without an imam to lead them. So, they went on discussing the matter, though The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” had not yet buried, and they were still influenced by his death. However, there was a probability that the day of the shed should not come to end without leaving some primes in the structure (of the Muslim society). But Allah Almighty honoured Islam and the Muslims on that day with Abu Bakr. Thus, the Muslims could peacefully and safely pass through this experience, which was the first as such, and the hardest upon them. With the sunset of that day, all disputes and differences about that matter passed away.

No doubt, the great distresses could only be faced by the great men. The fate chose (Abu Bakr) this great man in order to face the most disastrous matters and the greatest problems of the future. This great caliph would prove to be worthy of this position bestowed upon him by Allah in history, and in the hearts of people. That’s when he would face the catastrophic events in such a way as to show to what extent the faith could overcome the difficulties and achieve the marvelous things.

As soon as the news of the death of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” had become in circulation, those who

had a tendency to spread lies and false news, and those in whose hearts there was an ailment thought that not only The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" had died alone, but also Islam had died with him. thus, they had to start their operation as quickly as it could be, to lament this religion which came to its end, as they thought, and to restore their privileges they had lost under the pressure of this new religion (of Islam).

In this way, the movements of rebellion started, which soon turned to be an aggravated apostasy, having great armies, calling one another to proceed towards Medina and destroy Islam.

In the countries and towns, which were far from Medina, the most Muslims were almost new converts, in whose minds, the religion (of Islam) was intimately linked with its man and Messenger. So, when The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" died, their chiefs stood (as instigators among them), making use of their nearness (to the time of ignorance), and the result was that they followed them, and renegaded from the religion.

In fact, it was not, at first, a complete apostasy from the religion. But it was a kind of rejection to pay the obligatory charity. But Abu Bakr considered it to be an apostasy, and a deviation from the straight path of Islam, after the death of its Messenger; and if Islam appeared to be unable to face such a rebellion, then, the consequences would go beyond what one could expect.

At that time, there were two opposing opinions: Some saw that those (apostates) should not be fought, as long as they committed nothing more than their rejection to fulfill the obligatory charity. This opinion was adopted by many led by Umar Ibn Al-Khattab.

There was the opinion that the obligatory charity is an essential principle of the religion, and the caliph has no right to let the people destroy it. It also observed that this rejection (of fulfilling the obligatory charity) was only a beginning and commencement, which would be followed by so many movements of rebellion. Abu Bakr himself adopted this opinion.

Those different points of view show a difference between two sorts of greatness. It was, to be sure, a subtle abstruse difference. If the people were asked, before both Abu Bakr and Umar declared their different opinions about this matter, who of them would be more rigid and much

vigorous, and who would be more tractable and much easier and more inclined to peace (in regard to dealing with this movements of rebellion), the people would not hesitate, even a bit, to think that Umar Ibn Al-Khattab would adopt the opinion of a severe suppression (of this rebellion), and Abu Bakr would call for deliberateness and making peace.

But, what really happened was contradictory to that (which was expected). Abu Bakr intended to deal with this crisis so much strongly and vigorously, prompted by a whetted will, determined to strike decisively (those rebellious movements), explaining his situation in those words: “By Allah! If they rejected to give me even a camel’s string they used to give to The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” (as an object of obligatory charity), I would fight them for it.”

As for Umar, he had a different opinion about this crisis. He raised the following question to the caliph: “How would we fight people who testify that there is no god but Allah, since The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” had said that whoever said it would save his blood and property?” Abu Bakr answered in a form of this question: “Did not The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” say except rightly? No doubt, the obligatory charity is an essential right required by this (testimony that there is no god but Allah).”

There stood behind the situation of Abu Bakr two enlightening signs. The first showed how certain the faith of Abu Bakr was. The second highlighted the deep insight of Abu Bakr, not only as a caliph, but also as a caller (to Islam).

His certainty (of faith) in Allah and His Messenger was as high as to cause him to absolutely submit to all the commands and ways (of life) they presented. thus, he undertook the entire responsibility of the religion, in such a way that no change in the laws of Allah and the tradition of His Messenger would be permitted. Every obligatory duty, which was standing at the time The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” died, should survive, no matter expensive the sacrifice for that might be.

Furthermore, he thought, with his deep insight as a leader, a ruler, and a chief, that any sign of weakness which might seem to befall Islam during this decisive crisis, would provoke all forces of deterioration and darkness to jump on it from every direction.

With such faith and deep insight of his, there was formed within himself a great power, which prepared both his mind and will to confront this matter in such a way as we mentioned earlier, without which, as shown by the course of events, Islam would almost perish.

But, this faith, and this deep insight never worked far from the opinion of the public, and its right of consultation and discussion. It is true that in the crisis of apostasy, Abu Bakr could go on war (against the apostates and renegades) with no need of convincing the others, or even of his being convinced, for in this case, he would have executed a legal judgement, which neither he nor anyone of the Muslims could change, since they believed in the Holy Qur'an, and took it as their right method and way of life, and the Holy Qur'an itself stated powerfully in this connection: "And fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you".

But, Abu Bakr did not declare war (against the apostates) until all the Muslims were convinced with his opinion, and were persuaded that they were not facing only an attempt of retracting from fulfilling the obligatory charity, but they were really facing an armed rallying, having the firm intention to proceed towards Medina in order to destroy Islam.

At this moment, Umar said his famous statement: "It was just (after Abu Bakr had said so) that Allah expanded my chest (to accept) the opinion of Abu Bakr."

Ibn Mas'ud really illustrated this situation when he said: "Following the death of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", we were put to a situation, (which was so much critical) that we would have been ruined because of it, unless Allah Almighty had granted us (the privilege of having) Abu Bakr among us."

To some extent, it was possible to have different opinions and various points of view about this matter, which enabled Abu Bakr to put it to discussion, showing his determination to undertake the responsibility enjoined upon him by the Holy Qur'an. This range of difference in opinion about that matter was, at first, an attempt of some apostates to retract from fulfilling the obligatory charity. Then, should the fight (against the apostates) be obligatory only because of the rejection of fulfilling the obligatory charity?

To use our modern terms, we can say that the crisis started by a movement of civil rebellion, in a form of the rejection of paying taxes. Then, it turned to be an armed rebellion, in order to affirm the right of

such a rejection. Should the government submissively concede to this challenge, or would it undertake the responsibility of suppressing it?

It should be put in consideration also that those who refuse to pay taxes and took arms did not remain in their houses, taking only the positions of defense in case they would be attacked. But, they called one another to proceed towards (and attack) Medina; and this was the main point in the crisis. But in spite of that, the Muslims were so much tolerant in dealing with it, to the extent that the second man (in the Muslim society), Umar Ibn Al-Khattab adopted the opinion of making peace with them, and leaving them until they would comply with the order of Allah once again.

But, let's now leave a little the situation of apostasy, in order to discuss another situation, which was earlier than that of apostasy, in which Abu Bakr's faith in Allah and His Messenger was so much clear that this superior outstanding man turned to be matchless in his faith. It was his situation in regard to sending (the detachment of) Usamah.

Before the death of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", he had prepared an army led by Usamah Ibn Zaid, for proceeding towards Sham. On the day The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" died, this army was encamping three miles far from Medina, getting itself ready to set out (for fighting). But the death of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" postponed its advance.

There were different opinions about that army. A party from among the Muslims headed by Umar Ibn Al-Khattab thought that sending this army of Usamah was a great risk, at a time Medina itself, the capital of the Islamic state became under the danger of the apostates' invasion of it. They thought it necessary for this army to return to Medina, in order to face the new proceeding events. Indeed, Usamah himself, the leader of the army was of that opinion.

From the logical point of view, nothing other than this opinion adopted by Umar and Usamah seemed to be right. But Abu Bakr used to establish his own thinking depending on his faith. In his sight, every case could extend to be a subject of different verdicts, except when there was a case, in which Allah Almighty (and His Messenger) gave a command.

From this point of view, let him implement that which The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" had ordered to be

done, in spite of the new circumstances, and the dangers, which might threaten Medina.

Thus, the reply of Abu Bakr to the people was: “Implement the (process of) sending (the detachment of) Usamah. By Allah! If the wolves were to snatch me away, I would implement it as The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” ordered it to be. I’m not to retract from any command he gave.”

This put an end to any dispute over this matter. However, Abu Bakr, with his determination, did not act upon his own judgement, to the exclusion of the opinions of the others. That is because this case was not to be a subject of consultation and discussion, particularly after The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” had decided it, and given his command in regard to it. It was better for Abu Bakr to be snatched away by wolves than to cancel a command issued by The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, or to stand in the way of (implementing) his (The Prophet’s) will.

On the other hand, some Muslims, including Umar Ibn Al-Khattab asked Abu Bakr to appoint as the leader of the army somebody other than Usamah, who was still, at that time, a young man, not well-experienced (in wars), since this army implied the old and highly regarded companions (of The Prophet).

This opinion might seem to be right, from the logical point of view. But Abu Bakr used, as was his habit in all cases, to have his own thinking taken from his faith. It was The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” himself, who appointed Usamah as the leader of this army. The companions (of The Prophet) admitted him (as the leader) when The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” was still alive. Then, would Abu Bakr remove a man appointed by The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”?

As soon as Umar Ibn Al-Khattab had suggested such an opinion, this patient forbearing man became so much excited as he had never become before. Let an eyewitness describe to us this scene, saying: Abu Bakr jumped from his place and caught hold of the beard of Umar and said: “Woe to you, O Ibn Al-Khattab! Did The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” appoint him (as the leader of the army) and you ask me to dismiss him?”

Then, he went out, followed by Umar, until he came to the place where the army was encamping. He ordered the soldiers to start proceeding by Allah's blessing. He also walked with them in order to bid them farewell.

The caliph walked on foot, beside Usamah, who was riding his horse. Usamah felt shy, and intended to get down, asking the successor of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" to ride (on the horse). But, Abu Bakr made him firm in his riding place and said: "By Allah! Neither you would get down, nor would I ride. Why would I not cover my feet with dust for some time in the cause of Allah?"

Everything might be simple in his sight, and every matter, whatever important or difficult it might be, could be made easy, in case there was anything that would lead him, even as little as a hairbreadth, to obey Allah and His Messenger.

No doubt, there was a treaty and pledge between him and Allah, manifest in his silent deep-rooted faith. For this reason, he was determined to undertake, as long as he was alive, all the obligations enjoined by this belief, even if the wolves snatched him away. Moreover, he was certain that such a faith had with it the deep insight, which would guide him to both the truth and the right way. The truthfulness of this certainty was evidently clear in this story of Usamah.

His insistence on sending (the detachment of) Usamah did not only grant him the reward of obedience (to Allah and His Messenger), but also led him to the right guidance and method. Towards the North, the affliction had started to bring out its horns. But, as soon as those tribes upon which the army of Usamah on his way to Sham came, had seen this sweeping army, they came back to their minds. They said to one another: "By Allah! Had Medina been suffering from weakness and differences of opinions as we heard, it would not have been able to send such an army during those days in order to fight the Romans."

Thus, only the movement of the army towards its destination was a great disappointment and a significant discouragement to so many tribes, into which the affliction of apostasy started to enter.

Now, let's return to As-Siddiq while facing the apostasy with his constant faith. When we go through the historical sources, which recorded the events of those decisive days, we could observe a very

important question: What would the expected destiny of Islam be if Abu Bakr did not exist there (at this time)?

However, Ibn Mas'ud seemed to have simplified the matter when he said, as we mentioned earlier: "Following the death of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", we were put to a situation, (which was so much critical) that we would have been ruined because of it, unless Allah Almighty had granted us (the privilege of having) Abu Bakr among us."

Yes. Abu Bakr was, at this time, the blessing bestowed by Allah upon both the religion and people. The earth flamed with rebellion in some places, which were far from Medina, whose inhabitants, at most, did not embrace Islam but a short time ago. They did not imagine, according to their naive nature that The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" would die as all of the people die, particularly a short time (after their embracing Islam).

The result was that they fell under the influence of the cries of those liars (who pretended to be prophets), with lurking evil and wickedness against Islam. Suddenly, all those who had suspicion and lurking evil against it emerged. There appeared also false prophets, who led, depending upon their plotted lies, all those whose ignorance made them fall as victims of their untruths, particularly from those living far from Medina, who did not embrace Islam but a short time earlier than the death of the Prophet.

Tulaihah Al-Asadi stood up, announcing falsely that he was a prophet, and a lot of people from the tribes of Asad, Ghatfan, Taiyy, Abs and Dhubyah followed him. Then, the fire of apostasy flamed in the tribes of Amir, Hawazin and Sulaim. Then, it broke up in the tribe of Tamim, depending upon the appearance of Sajah, this woman who claimed false prophecy. Then, there rebelled the inhabitants of Yamamah, raising the flag of the most dangerous claimant of false prophecy at all, i.e. Musailamah the Liar.

In this way, Abu Bakr was forced to face so many armies consisting of tens of thousands of soldiers, instead of confronting a small groups of troops. Soon, the inhabitants of Bahrain and Oman were infected (by this affliction of apostasy), and all of them went on chanting the following poetic verse composed by one of their poets: "We obeyed The Messenger

of Allah as long as he was living among us. Then, O slaves of Allah, what does Abu Bakr have to do with us?"

But, Allah Almighty has, from amongst His creatures, some men, at whose hands the distresses would turn to be blessings, and the catastrophes would turn to be a spring of life; and Abu Bakr was one of such men. During this fusing distress of Islam, all points of human weakness appeared. Then, (Abu Bakr) the wise man got up, very immediately, in order to bring together (what was destroyed of Islamic society), and made firm and strengthened the rows of Muslims.

Therefore, Islam itself was greatly fortunate and prosperous for when it was befallen by such a distress, Abu Bakr was the carrier of the flag, and the leader of the nation. By Allah's virtue and mercy, this great man and the believing caliph was able to overcome those dangers which were about to ruin the structure of a high strong and firm empire, not to speak of a new born and still developing religion!

However, those shattering days were the greatest, the richest, the most flourishing, and the most blessed days after The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him". The veils of the disguised faces fell down, the chests vomited all of their lurking grudges, and the blessed fire (of truth) came to fuse (the faith of) the new nation, and entirely remove away its impurities.

At this point, the faith of Abu Bakr proved to be able not only to break through obstacles, but also to guide the whole world to the importance of faith. He surely believed that Allah is a fact, Islam is a fact, and Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" is a fact. Having such a faith, he no longer was able to break his commitment, or go back on his pledge.

The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" had left them on the straight path, whose night was (as pure) as its day; and Abu Bakr, who became the successor of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", was following this tradition. He had to do what he thought The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" would have done if he had been alive during those days (of apostasy).

Would The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" have kept silent (with doing nothing) to those liars who tried to turn over the flag of the truth and extinguish the light of Allah? In spite of

their wrong thinking, they did not use their own logic (in defense of their opinions), but they carried arms and called for invading Medina. Let him (Abu Bakr) then do what The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” had to do (if he was alive at the time of apostasy).

He sent his forces to fight the rebels everywhere, and his armies emerged victorious over those strongholds (of apostates). Then, they pursued the hidden motivating sources of affliction in both Sham and Iraq, which the Romans and the Persians used as centers of conspiracies and plots (against Muslims). In those regions of Sham, Iraq and Dumat Al-Jandal, the Muslim armies met with people, who were so much thirsty for faith (in Allah), justice and security.

Where did the rebels who carried the arms in order to obliterate the new religion go? Where did Musailamah, Tulaihah and Sajah (who falsely claimed to be prophets) go with their sweeping armies? Where were those who chanted while lifting their arms: “O slaves of Allah, what does Abu Bakr have to do with us”?

they all dispersed and were scattered to pieces like a stray whirlwind, and turned away from the truth, lamenting their state with another poetic verse, in which they said: “Behold! Let me drink before (the arrival of) the horsemen of Abu Bakr, for perhaps our death would be so near, though we do not perceive it.” “The horsemen of Abu Bakr”! this phrase became a clatter of terror for those who intended to demolish the truth with their falsehood.

Which great change did blow (the waves of) Abu Bakr’s character? In fact, there was no change (in his character). All the situations of this Truly Believer (As-Siddiq), which might go beyond any expectation, were not extrinsic. That is because the nature of this great man was of such a sort as attained its maturity from the very early years of age, without being eccentric during the very old age, which was rather a natural extension, continuation and development of its good merits, values and powers.

Abu Bakr who was amiable was himself the same strong man, since he came to life. His constant overwhelming strength which appeared when he became caliph, was itself the same over which he had control during the lifetime of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”. But during the lifetime of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, he did his best to remain a

shadow man (far from the lights of fame), with no light shed upon him, or (distinctive) favour with which he might be credited (in such a way as to put him on equal footing with The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”).

But, following the death of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, he became, whether or not he so wished, the one, who should play the main role on the arena of events. Henceforward, he was not able to hide his good characteristics, because his responsibilities placed him ahead of all the rows. In this way, Islam was capable of seeing, more clearly and explicitly, the good characteristics of its great blessed man.

His power and constancy with which he undertook his responsibilities as the caliph were also the same with which he had undertaken his responsibilities as a believing man. During the very early days of the call, whenever he heard that The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” was being hurt, he would run to support him in a hurry. He would set The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” free from being hurt, and surrender himself voluntarily to be hurt instead.

At the time of Migration, he became so much pleased with being the company of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” on the journey, although he was well-aware of the fact that Quraish would mobilize all its forces in their pursuit. On the day of (the holy battle of) Badr, he stuck to The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” in his tent, though he knew very well that this tent was effectively endangered (as being a main target for the enemies).

Furthermore, on the day of (the holy battle of) Uhud, when the archers did not comply with the order of their Prophet, thinking that the battle had come to its end by the defeat of Quraish, leaving their places on the top of the mountain, which led the army of Quraish to return and strike them, and consequently, the Muslims were defeated, and the battlefield was full but of the dead bodies of martyrs, being mutilated by the polytheists very monstrously, on that very day, The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” saw Abu Bakr running alone towards the polytheists, raising his sword to face them. But, The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” called him imploringly: “Sheath your sword, O Abu Bakr, and do not grieve us with your death!”

The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” kept calling Abu Bakr, ordering him to return; and he returned accordingly. That’s because he was not to disobey The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, even in case this obedience would stand in the way of his martyrdom, for which he had a great longing.

This was the reliable power, which Abu Bakr used to get from the depth of his entity, and from the depth of his faith. No doubt, it was a free Arab entity, which received the most wonderful and meritorious characteristics from his environment in which he was brought up. It was also a great faith, of a truly believer, who saw it better to be snatched away by wolves than to violate any order attached to his faith.

His outstanding situations before and after his caliphate, formed a unique pattern of power, honesty and right consideration. That is because Allah Almighty bestowed upon him a true straight nature and a firm faith. It was the faith of a man, who surrendered his face to Allah delightfully, sacrificed his life with all pleasure for the sake of his faith, and undertook the responsibilities of his role (as a faithful believer and then as a caliph) so much righteously, piously and honestly.

CHAPTER FOUR

I'M NOT THE BEST OF YOU

How did this excellent great man live as a ruler, and how did he act as caliph? It was he, who born as a chief (among his people) and lived as a chief. It was he, from whom no merit escaped, and in whom no good quality was missing. It was he, who rescued Islam from a certain danger, and restored to it its life and stability. It was he, under whose feet, the thrones of both Khosrau and Caesar started to fall down, and at whose hands, the ancient world entirely began to collapse.

Did the (office of) caliphate change his true disposition and his conduct of life? Did he forget his humility and his merits in the crowd of his victories? Did he live as a caliph (and seated himself in a place) above the people or did he live as an ordinary one amongst them? Let's then stand in his hospitality in order to be acquainted with all of that; and let's start with the first moments of his caliphate.

Here is he, shyly taking his steps towards the pulpit of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", i.e. this pulpit, on which The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" very often addressed the Muslims, calling them to guidance and to (believe in) the right and true religion. Here is Abu Bakr, ascending a single grade (of the pulpit) after its real master had disappeared from it (by his death). He ascended only two grades, where he sat down. Indeed, he did not allow for himself to ascend all the grades (of the pulpit), for he did not allow himself to sit in the same place where The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" used to sit.

Here is he, receiving the gathering people, reciting to them his pledge: "O people! I've been appointed as ruler over you, though I'm not the best of you. If I did well (to you), then you should support me, and if I did evil (to you), then, you should guide me to what is right. Behold! The weak person amongst you would be considered as strong in my sight until I bring back to him his right (usurped by others). Behold! The strong person among you would be considered as weak in my sight until I take from him the right of others, which he usurped. You should obey me as long as I comply with (the orders and instructions of) Allah and His

Messenger. But, if I deviated (from that), then you would (have the right) not to obey me.”

Although there are lots of pledges and treaties, as recorded in the history, addressed by so many rulers in the beginning of their ruling, we did not, and would not find such wisdom and balance of justice (as involved in this pledge of Abu Bakr). But, what is greater and more wonderful was that the man of such a pledge never deviated from it even for a moment, nor did he become far from its terms (even as little as) a hairbreadth.

But, Abu Bakr, with this marvelous statement of his, placed the responsibilities of the honest ruler within the framework of truthfulness and commitment, and highlighted the real nature of every valid and fitting government. “I’ve been appointed as ruler over you, though I’m not the best of you.” By Allah! how wonderful beginning it was!

Indeed, he wanted to remove from the hearts of people any illusion, which might lead them to overestimate the ruler. He intended to assure to them that the matter of ruling was neither a prestige nor a privilege (which might put the ruler in a superior position over all the people). But it should be a general service (for all the people), implying, in most of its levels, all sorts of responsibilities and difficulties.

In this enlightening statement, he decided that the ruling was a function other than a (process of) superiority (over others), a (matter of) cooperation, other than a (means of) haughtiness. He also decided that the ruler was only an individual in the nation, and not that the nation (should be in the possession of) a single individual.

“I’ve been appointed as ruler over you, though I’m not the best of you.” it is true that he was not the best of them only because he was a ruler. But, he was the best of them because he was a great wise as well as he was the Truly Believer, who had of truthfulness, faith, honesty, and right guidance what made him the second of two (persons, the first of whom was The Messenger of Allah).

Who might be worthier than him (of stating) those words? Who might be more right and deserving than Abu Bakr to have such a situation? It was a situation of the ruler who perceived very well that he would be great so far as the people of his nation were great, that he would be free so far as the people of his nation were free, that he would be strong so far

as the people of his nation were strong as well, and that he would be safe so far as the people of his nation were safe too.

The only way of achieving that, in his sight, was that the people should occupy their fitting positions, and be well-aware of the fact that they were the only guarantee for all expected goodness, security and peace of both the nation and its ruler.

“I’ve been appointed as ruler over you, though I’m not the best of you. If I did well (to you), then you should support me, and if I did evil (to you), then, you should guide me to what is right.” This was the function of the people in the sight of Abu Bakr, according to which, their essential relation to their ruler should be clear, i.e. to help him undertake his responsibilities. But, this would be achieved only if the people stood as clear-sighted partners and not as merely blind followers of him: i.e. to support him if he did well, and to guide him to the right if he did evil.

Then, Abu Bakr moved in his speech and pledge to the supremacy of law, which he made clear, affirming his insistence on (sticking to) it: “Behold! The weak person amongst you would be considered as strong in my sight until I bring back to him his right (usurped by others). Behold! The strong person among you would be considered as weak in my sight until I take from him the right of others, which he usurped. You should obey me as long as I comply with (the orders and instructions of) Allah and His Messenger. But, if I deviated (from that), then you would (have the right) not to obey me.”

How truthful and wonderful he was! He was a man of such good characteristics and merits among this believing community, who began his caliphate by calling the people persistently to take their places (as real partners in the process of ruling) beside him. they should have the same rights (he had), and fulfill the same responsibilities (he would fulfill).

Yes. He was so much great when he informed the people that he was not the best of them, and that he was always in need of their favours, opinions, self-confidence and constancy of truth.

However, he accepted the office of caliphate, for which he had no longing or desire; and were it not for the serious consequences of those decisive days (following the death of The Prophet), he would have taken shelter in a far corner, and escaped from that, to which the people used to rush, and for which they used to compete one another.

He had told the truth when he said: “By Allah! I was not eager to have the office of caliphate, even for a day or a night, nor did I ask Allah for it, either secretly or publicly.” Yes. He never had longed for it. Were it not for his thinking that by leaving it, he would give up the responsibilities enjoined upon him by his religion and faith, he surely would have fled away from it.

In fact, he made this attempt, particularly after he finished from suppressing the affliction of the apostates. One day, Umar “Allah be pleased with him” entered into his house, and saw him weeping. He had no sooner seen Umar in front of him than he adhered to him, as if he was a lifeboat. He said to him: “O Umar! I have no need for the matter of ruling over you.” but, Umar did not let him complete his speech and replied to him hurriedly: “Where would you escape (from it)? By Allah! We should neither discharge you, nor should we let you resign.”

Now, let's come closer to some scenes, in order to see how the caliph carried out (the principles) that he announced in his speech on the day he was given the pledge of allegiance. Let's come much closer to see clearly this great blessed man, not only of Islam but also of the whole life. Let's also see this ruler, who was abundantly overflowing (with goodness and blessings), that he overfilled the life of people with all kinds of health, mercy, wonder and safety.

No doubt, he was doomed to begin the time of his caliphate with a great event, in which his loyalty to the (supremacy of) law was put to trial. Fatimah, the daughter of The Messenger of Allah “Allah's blessing and peace be upon him”, and Al-Abbas, his paternal uncle, went to him, asking him to give them their right (of inheritance) from a small piece of land, which The Messenger of Allah “Allah's blessing and peace be upon him” had got as booty without war.

The Messenger of Allah “Allah's blessing and peace be upon him” used to give Fatimah and some of his family a portion of its yield, and distribute the rest among the poor persons of his companions.

Following the death of The Messenger of Allah “Allah's blessing and peace be upon him”, Fatimah “Allah be pleased with her” went to his successor (Abu Bakr), asking him (to give her) this piece of land, as her inheritance from her father, The Messenger of Allah “Allah's blessing and peace be upon him”.

But, Abu Bakr said to her and to Al-Abbas: “No doubt, I heard The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” saying: “(The property of) us, Prophets, should not be inherited. Whatever we leave should be given in charity.” By Allah! I never let anything I saw The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” doing but that I should do it. Therefore, I’m afraid that if I left anything he used to do, surely I would go astray.”

Verily, Abu Bakr was well-aware of the fact that the one, who was the most deserving of his care, as regards the right, was the daughter of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”. He also knew very well how The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” used to love her, and give preference to her (over others). He also was conscious how she, her husband and children were in need of this small piece of land. On the other hand, it was much better for Abu Bakr to do what is difficult than to say “no” to the daughter of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”. But, in spite of all of that, he said it.

When he believed in The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, his religion and method, this method turned to be a (governing) law for him. his belief in this law was inseparable from his belief in Allah and His Messenger. Since The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” said: “(The property of) us, Prophets, should not be inherited”, it was a command of law that (the property of) his Prophet would not be inherited.

In this way, he found himself under a tension of two sorts of loyalty: his loyalty to The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, as manifest in his daughter, the dearest person to him, and his loyalty to the law, with which the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” had come.

However, he was not to hesitate (to announce his situation clearly in this matter), since he had not only the faith of an ordinary person, but also the faith of a genius man. It was the faith, which would not be frustrated by whatever kinship or flattery.

As soon as Fatimah had heard the (negative) reply of Abu Bakr to her question, her face was covered with sorrow and sadness. As-Siddiq was well-aware of the fact that she was the fastest of all the people to comply with the orders of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace

be upon him”, and that she was not to deviate from his instructions. But perhaps, she might have doubt as to whether The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” had said this Hadith, and issued such a command.

Henceforward, he sent (a message) to Umar, Talhah, Az-Zubair, Sa’d Ibn Abu Waqqas and Abd Ar-Rahman Ibn Awf, (to come). He asked them in her presence: “I beseech you by Him, with Whose Power both the heaven and the earth exist! Do you not know that The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” said: “(The property of us (Prophets) should not be inherited, and whatever we leave should be given in charity)?”

But, Fatimah presented a new proof in this concern. She said: “Do you not know that The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” granted me this (piece of land) during his lifetime? Thus, it should be for me, according to the right of gift, and not the right of inheritance.” Abu Bakr replied: “Yes, I know this fact. But, I saw him distributing (the yield of) it among the poor people, the needy persons and the wayfarers after giving you what would suffice you. In this way, he wanted to have the poor people get a permanent right in it.”

Fatimah said: “Then, let it be in our possession, and we shall deal with it in the same way it was treated while being in the possession of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”.” Abu Bakr said: “I do not see that. No doubt, I’m the guardian of the believers after (the death of) their Messenger. So, I have more right than you to deal with it in the same way as The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” used to do.”

In this event, which faced Abu Bakr in the beginning of his rule, his faith in what is right, and his belief in (the supremacy of) law passed through a serious trial, whose terror and difficulty could not be experienced but by such a man as Abu Bakr himself. But, he had a great success in this trial.

Furthermore, Abu Bakr’s respect for (the supremacy of) law was inseparable from his respect for those who were to undertake with him the responsibility of protecting it. On the day he set out to bid farewell to (the army of) Usamah, Umar Ibn Al-Khattab was enlisted in this army. Abu Bakr was eager to have Umar remain with him in Medina. As the

Muslim caliph, he had the right and power to have him remain (in Medina) by issuing a resolution in this concern.

On the other hand, he was well-aware of the fact that by doing so, he would oppress (and usurp the rights of) one of his employees, who should have all the guarantees, which might enable him to fulfill his duties, and practice his function to the full. The first of those guarantees was that his rights should not be usurped by any kind of authority, even if it was the authority of the caliph himself.

The caliph came close to Usamah, the leader of the army and whispered to him hopefully: "If you see it better, you might let Umar Ibn Al-Khattab (remain along with me in Medina). Indeed, I think his stay with me would be (a source of) goodness and benefit." Usamah accepted immediately.

Abu Bakr did not do that out of flattery (to Usamah) and modesty, but out of (his belief that it was a) duty. Had Usamah's reply at that time been in the negative, Abu Bakr would not have disobeyed or refused to comply (with his will).

Whoever wants to see the glory of ruling, and the greatness of the ruler, then, let him look at Abu Bakr in the morning of the day he was given the pledge of allegiance as caliph, when he came out of his house, carrying upon his shoulders a huge bandage of clothes.

On the way, both of Umar Ibn Al-Khattab and Abu Ubaidah Ibn Al-Jarrah met him and asked: "Where are you going, O successor of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him"?" he said: "I'm going to the market." Umar asked: "What would you do in the market since you were appointed as the ruler of all Muslims?" Abu Bakr said: "Then, from what would I feed my dependents?"

That's because the position of caliphate never caused such a great man to become arrogant or self-conceited, nor did it provoke in him any desire for changing the way of life (he had before being a caliph). Umar said to him: "Come along with us so that we might assign for you something (as remuneration) from the treasury."

Actually, Abu Bakr went along with them to the mosque, where the companions of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" were called, to whom Umar offered his suggestion of assigning an occupation charge to the caliph. They did accordingly, and allocated for him just what might sustain him, i.e. a daily portion of a

goat, and two hundred and fifty Dinars annually. But that rose afterwards to a daily full goat, and a yearly income of three hundred Dinars.

With this income, Abu Bakr lived along with his household, even after the gates of livelihood were opened for the Muslims, and the wealth of both Sham and Iraq started to come to Medina.

However, As-Siddiq did not stick to satisfaction (with the minimum necessities of life) out of abstinence, but his satisfaction was an essential part of his philosophy (of life). He sanctified only the lawful piece of bread, and used to be careful of having any fragment of food, in which there was suspicion. He thought that what was lawful was not too much to extend for extravagance and dissipation.

If there was such extravagance, then, it should be known that there were also illegal ways of living. From this point of view, it was better for the successor of Muhammad to tighten two stones over his belly out of hunger as his tutor The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" used to do, than to let any piece of bread in which there was suspicion enter his abdomen.

The imam Al-Bukhari narrated in his Sahih that Abu Bakr had a slave, who, one day, brought to him something to eat. When he finished it, the slave said to him: "Do you know what is that (from which you ate) O successor of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him"?" Abu Bakr asked him: "What is it?" he said: "One day, during the pre-Islamic period of ignorance, I acted as soothsayer for somebody. Since I had no knowledge of Divination, I deceived him. today, he met me and gave me (the price of Divination), and it is that, from which you ate."

Consequently, Abu Bakr placed his hand into his mouth until he vomited everything he had in his abdomen. The composer of As-Safwah "The Best Chosen Things" added in his book: Someone said to Abu Bakr: "Allah's mercy be upon you! Do you do all that you've done only for a morsel of food?" he answered: "By Allah! Had it not come out but with my soul, surely I would have taken it out. I heard The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" saying: "Every human body which grew up from an ill-gotten property, would be more entitled to enter the fire (of Hell)." So, I am afraid that (a portion of) my body might grow up from this (unlawful) morsel."

He had a great insistence on having from the treasury only what should suffice him and his dependants just reasonably and fairly. He did not get from wealth and blessings of life, even when he was caliph, but what enabled him and his dependants to eat the rough food and wear the coarse clothes.

But, in spite of that, when he was at the threshold of death, he called his daughter A'ishah "Allah be pleased with her" unto him, and said to her: "Detect what has increased in the wealth of Abu Bakr since he was appointed as caliph, and return it to (the treasury of) Muslims." His pure soul was moving, ready to come up to its Creator, while he was uttering those words.

What was there to occupy Abu Bakr to such an extent (at this time of approaching death)? What property did he save during the time of his caliphate, he was afraid that he might meet Allah with? Behold! Immediately, after the death of Abu Bakr, and giving Umar the pledge of allegiance (as caliph), A'ishah took the wealth of his father, in implementation of his will, to the Commander of the Believers. As soon as Umar had seen (the property) and heard (his will from A'ishah), he burst into tears and said: "Allah's mercy be upon Abu Bakr! He made it (the matter of ruling) a difficult task for anyone coming after him."

He meant by this that As-Siddiq, with his behaviour and piety, had laid the foundation of a tradition, too hard for any caliph coming after him to attain. Why then did Umar burst into tears when the wealth of Abu Bakr was spread before him?

In fact, it was something beyond reason! The heritage of this man, who paid all of his wealth in the cause of Islam, of this caliph, in whose time, the wealth of both Sham and Iraq started to come in abundance, i.e. this heritage left by Abu Bakr, who insisted on giving it back to the treasury consisted of only a camel, on which he used to draw water, a milking vessel, in which he used to milk (his animals), and a garment, which he used to wear for meeting the delegates.

This was the great dutiful man, who took as a slogan of both his life and ruling (the phrase): "I'm not the best of you." he did not utter this slogan out of humility, but with it, he expressed his own nature, and the highest principles of his behaviour. That's because he really saw himself no better than anyone, although Allah Almighty sent down a Qur'anic Verse concerning him, when He said:

“If ye help not (your Leader), (it is no matter): for Allah did indeed help him, when the Unbelievers drove him out: he had no more than one companion: they two were in the Cave, and he said to his companion, have no fear, for Allah is with us: then Allah sent down his peace upon him, and strengthened him with forces which ye saw not, and humbled to the depths the word of the Unbelievers. But the word of Allah is exalted to the heights: for Allah is Exalted in might, Wise.”

Before Islam, he was one of the prominent persons and the chiefs of Quraish. In Islam, he soon took his position from the first moment (he embraced it) beside The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, and no one preceded him (in this respect). When he embraced Islam, he was at the peak of his richness. But he saved even no Dirham for him and his dependants, because he spent his wealth entirely in the cause of Allah, setting free the (Muslim) slaves (in order to rescue them from the torment of their masters), feeding, for the love of Allah, the indigent, the orphan, and the captive.

No doubt, The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” cherished him so much that he ordered that all the gates of the mosque should be closed except for one gate, which was (open to the house of) Abu Bakr. Moreover, although The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” could hardly feel angry for himself (if anyone caused harm to him), he used to become angry if any harm, no matter little it might be, was caused to Abu Bakr.

furthermore, The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” pressingly made him his successor to lead the prayers. Following the death of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, the Muslims gave him the pledge of allegiance as their caliph and imam. He faced the challenge of the affliction of apostasy, over which Allah granted him a great victory.

He also saw (during the time of his caliphate) the thrones of Rome and Persia falling down under the toes (of the hoofs of the horses) of his horsemen and the feet of his soldiers. He saw the ancient world as a whole starting to perish under his triumphant fluttering flags.

In spite of all that, he never thought he was better than anyone. But, he used to place his right hand on his heart and repeat loudly the supplication of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be

upon him”: “O (Allah) the Turner of hearts! Make my heart constantly firm on Your religion (of Islam).

Although he had such a faith, which was too great to suffice all the inhabitants of the earth, he was afraid that his heart might go astray. So, he used to utter, while weeping: “Would that I have been a bitten tree!” whenever he was reminded of his position in Allah’s sight, he would say: “By Allah! I would not rest assured and feel safe from Allah’s punishment, even if one of my feet was in Paradise.”

From this point of view, his phrase “I’m not the best of you” was truly expressive of his nature and religious understanding. From this point of view too, he strongly kept himself far from any aspect of vanity and loftiness.

Verily, As-Siddiq achieved this principle in such a way that made him run a unique matchless life. On the day he had a great wealth in his possession, he asked himself why he should be blessed with such a wealth, while the Muslims were suffering from a great poverty: “Am I better than them?” he answered himself: “No doubt, I’m not better than they. Then, let’s live equally in such a bliss.”

In this way, he spent all of his wealth in the Cause of Allah, to the extent that one day, The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” asked him: “What have you kept for your dependants, O Abu Bakr?” he answered: “No doubt, I have kept for them (what is better than money, I’ve left them under the care of) Allah and His Messenger.”

When he became caliph, and when Allah opened for them (the Muslims) what might enable him to live in luxury and comfort, he took (as remuneration for his job) from the treasury no more than the minimum requirements of living, and no more than what was given to any of the houses of the Muslims, having the same number of members as his household.

In this context, he asked himself why he should take more than he deserved. Was he better than the others to assign to himself more than what they would get? He answered himself that he was not better than anyone. Then, let him live at the same standard of living of the ordinary citizen in his nation and society, although when he was living depending upon his private trade and wealth, the standard of his living was fitting for his income, which was expressive of his abundant richness and great luxury.

When he was appointed as caliph, he cancelled everything, which might give him any kind of privilege (over others) at any cost. On the other hand, he brought back the favour of those who selected him as caliph, by putting himself on the same level as theirs, and doing his best for their sake.

However, the greatness of Abu Bakr, followed in this connection by Umar, the Distinguisher of Truth from False, was more clearly manifest in the fact that both of them abided by such an unprecedented way of life, while they were sitting on the throne of caliphate; and where did they do so? They did so in a nation, which was new, in all the senses of the word, with its conquests and victories in all directions of the world.

The ruler of a nation as such must have had, to some extent, an amount of vanity and a (desire for) enjoyment of (the luxuries of) life, whatever abstinent and pious he might have been. But, nothing as such happened. On the contrary, Abu Bakr lived with his sincere tears, repeating his famous statement: "Would that I've been a bitten tree!" so did Umar with his sincere tears, repeating his well-known statement: "Would that the mother of Umar never gave birth to him!"

Both of them distributed among the people the spoils taken from Khosrau and Caesar, although they used to walk, while each was wearing his garment, which had a lot of patches. When Abu Bakr died (as we mentioned earlier), he left no more than a camel, a milking vessel, and a garment, and he insisted (according to his will) that they should be given back to the treasury.

O inhabitants of this planet, on which we live! Do you have anyone who might be equal (in value and characteristics) to those pure ideals? Behold! It is the school of the Holy Qur'an. Behold! It is the school of Muhammad "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" (which created such good ideals).

The pregnant statement "I'm not the best of you" illustrates to us the true nature of this unique character of Abu Bakr. Since he embraced Islam, and before he was appointed as caliph, he situated himself at the same level of the people. Now, let's pay attention to Rabie'ah Al-Aslami, the companion of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him":

"There was a discussion between me and Abu Bakr, who said to me something which I disliked. Then, he regretted and said: "O Rabie'ah!

reply to me with something like it in implementation of the law of equality.” I said: “I would not do so.” He said: “You should take your right from me, otherwise, I would complain you to Allah’s Messenger “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”.” I said: “I would not do.”

He went to The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, and I followed him. then, some people from (the tribe of) Aslam came and said: “Allah’s mercy be upon Abu Bakr! Why does he invoke The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” against you, since he said to you what he had said?” I said to them: “Keep silent! He is Abu Bakr, about whom Allah said: “He was the second of two persons in the cave”. I beware you, for he might turn and see you supporting me against him, and then he would become angry, with the result that The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” would become angry for his sake, and consequently, Allah Almighty would become angry for their sake, which may lead to the destruction of (the tribe of) Rabie’ah.”

I went behind Abu Bakr until he entered upon The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and told him what had happened. The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” raised his head towards me and said: “O Rabie’ah! what do you have to do with As-Siddiq?” I said: “O Messenger of Allah! He said to me something, which I disliked. Then, he requested me to reply to him with the like of it. But I rejected to do.” The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” said: “You have done well, O Rabie’ah! do not return it to him, but say: Might Allah forgive you, O Abu Bakr!” I said: “Might Allah forgive you, O Abu Bakr!” Then, Abu Bakr turned away weeping.”

Now, let’s consider the matter. It was just a single word, which skipped unintentionally from him. of course, it was not to be of the obscene language, because his good morals were not to allow him to do so. Moreover, he was reported to have said nothing as such, even during the pre-Islamic period of ignorance.

It is true that it was not a harsh word, though it caused pain to Rabie’ah. but, Abu Bakr was shaken because of it, for which he insisted on applying the law of equality to him, even though he occupied, by then, the second position in Islam after The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”.

But, why did he not do what he had done, since he saw the first man (The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” in Islam) having the same situation, and following the same method? Once, he struck a man in his chest while he was straightening the rows of fighters in one of the holy battles. As soon as he had seen that this strike pained him, he (The Prophet) uncovered his chest, and asked the man to give him a similar strike.

Abu Ad-Darda narrated to us a story like this when he said: “I was sitting in the company of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, when Abu Bakr came, catching hold of the end of his garment until his knees were visible. He said: “O Messenger of Allah! There was a quarrel between me and Umar Ibn Al-Khattab. (Feeling that perhaps I caused him to be angry) I regretted, and hastened to meet him, in order to beg his pardon, but he rejected.” The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” said to him: “Might Allah forgive you, O Abu Bakr!”

On the other hand, Umar regretted and went to the house of Abu Bakr (to apologize to him), but he did not find him. he then went to The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and said: “O Messenger of Allah! No doubt, I was more unjust (to Abu Bakr than he was to me).”

Upon that, The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” said: “Verily, Allah has sent me (as a Messenger) to you, and all of you said: “He (The Prophet) is a liar”, except for Abu Bakr who said: “No doubt, you have told the truth”. Furthermore, he supported me with himself and his property. So, should you keep my companion (Abu Bakr far from your hurt) for my sake?”

Whenever a fleeting word skipped from him to Umar or to Rabie’ah, he would not say to himself: “There is no harm, and Allah would forgive it for Abu Bakr, the man of glorious situations, and great sacrifices”. That’s because the blessing of success and high qualities, granted to him by Allah, never motivated him to become arrogant, so much as it prompted him to be thankful, and urged him to be modest and gratuitous.

That was the essence of his relationship with all of the people before and after his caliphate, i.e. he was not better of them so much as he was just one of them, having no superiority over them but by virtue of his outstanding merits and high greatness.

CHAPTER FIVE

“THE GOAT’S MILKER, O MY MOTHER!”

his simplicity was the most important element of his greatness. Before he became caliph, he used to be at the service of the people of his district so much amazingly and wonderfully. From amongst his neighbours, there were some old widows, whose husbands died or were martyred in the cause of Allah. there were also some orphans, who lost their fathers.

He “Allah be pleased with him” used to take care of the houses of those widows, and milk the goats in behalf of them, and look after the houses of the orphans, and cook the food for them.

But, when he became caliph, he heard about the sorrow and sadness of those old widows because they would be forbidden, as of the day (of his appointment in his office of caliphate), from this glorious service this good man used to do for them. therefore, he contradicted their thoughts.

One day, he knocked at one of the doors of those houses. A young girl hurried to open it. As soon as she had opened the door, she cried: “He is the goat’s milker, O my mother!” her mother came, and behold! She saw herself face to face with the great caliph.

She said to her daughter shyly: “Woe to you! Would you not say the successor of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”?” Abu Bakr lowered his head, humming in himself with faint words. Perhaps he said: “Let her, for she described me with this act of mine, which is the dearest to Allah.”

Then, the goat’s milker proceeded to undertake the task he enjoined upon himself. Yes. He was the milkman of the goats for the old (widows), and the dough maker of the orphans. What simplicity and mercy (he had), out of devoting himself wholeheartedly to fulfill the right of life!

Do you think that had Abu Bakr, with those good characteristics of his been doomed to become the president of a certain state in our modern age, would his method have changed? Nay! It is true that he might have neither milked the goats (for the old widows), nor might he have cooked the food (for the orphans), but those good merits of him would have been

manifest in similar scenes, fitting for the spirit of this age, without any kind of reduction.

No doubt, the simplicity and mercy of this dutiful man were marvelous. Verily, The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" had given him his right fully, when he said about him: "The most merciful one from among my nation to (the people of) my nation is Abu Bakr."

He had a great heart, whetted with the feeling of every human pain. He also had a blessed will, very hasty to fulfill the recommendations of his lovely rightly-guided heart. In the beginning of his embracing Islam, he could not endure to see a believer being tortured. He used to be more pained whenever those tormented Muslims were slaves. For this reason, he set aside (a great portion of) his wealth for emancipating them; and, of course, he could have managed to manumit all of them with his property: Bilal, Amir Ibn Fuhairah, Zubairah, Umm Abs An-Nahdiyyah and her daughter, the slave-girl of the son of Amr Ibn Mu'ammil, and others.

He was great when he set those emancipated slaves free. indeed, he did not set them free so much as he (by paying for their emancipation) manumitted himself before them. That's because, since Allah Almighty bestowed upon him wealth and the blessing of Islam, it was obligatory for him to destroy whatever chains of oppression he could break.

When he manumitted Bilal, his owner said to him, out of contempt (for Bilal): "Take him! Had you rejected to pay but one ounce (for him), I would have sold him to you for it." Abu Bakr replied to him: "By Allah! Had you rejected to accept (as his price) less than one hundred ounces, I would have paid that for him."

It was exquisite that the people spread the news in Mecca that Abu Bakr used to spend his wealth so much generously in emancipating the (believing) slaves. That's because this led some, who were befallen by financial crises, to excruciate their slaves so that Abu Bakr would hurry to rescue them (by buying them) with an appropriate prices, with which their owners could get rid of their financial crises.

He was a repenting merciful. He was a man, endowed with the utmost degrees of compassion and (readiness for) support available for a human being. He was created as such, and for all of that. During the pre-Islamic period of ignorance, that was his character. He never was known, even once, to have (illegally) fought, quarrelled (with others), abused

(anyone), given up his sense of honour, or withheld his wealth and power (from rescuing others).

When he embraced Islam, the truthfulness of his religion was added to the truthfulness of his nature. He was God-observing in all his feelings and behaviours. He used to worship Allah as if he was seeing Him, and treat all the people as if they (had the same position to him as) his sons.

After the death of Abu Bakr, Umar went to his wife, Asma Bint Umais, and asked her: "How did Abu Bakr use to worship his Lord whenever he became alone with himself?" she answered: "Whenever it was the last portion of the night, he would get up, perform ablution and offer the (supererogatory Night) prayers. During his prayer, he would keep reciting the Holy Qur'an and weeping, falling in prostration and weeping, and supplicating (Allah) and weeping. By then, I used to detect the smell of a liver being roasted (out of his extreme submission to Allah) in the house." Upon that, Umar wept and said: "How would Ibn Al-Khattab be able to do like this?"

Then, there was a smell of liver being roasted in the house of Abu Bakr, the man who never was known to have committed a mistake. He had this weeping spirit and those flaming organs, out of fearing of Allah.

Yes. His great admiration and respect for his Lord made him so much wonderful, and caused him to feel so much shy and humble. He knew for certain that it was an essential part of his full respect for his Lord to show reverence to the slaves of this Great Lord.

In this way, his relationship with the people was formulated depending not only upon what should be done (traditionally because of this respect), but also according to his God-observance placed by Allah within his heart and conscience.

This divine man used to give the people not only what they expected to take from him, but he used to give them what he was able to give; and he was able to give more and more. Henceforward, he was the one, who always used to proceed to take the initiative to fulfill any obligation, to deal with any crisis, and to offer any sacrifice; and the levels of his excellent and outstanding merits were always proportionately the same.

This brave spirit with which he (Abu Bakr) faced the crises of the call (to Islam) during the lifetime of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" and after his death, was the same,

which prompted him to milk the goats for the old widows, and make the dough for the orphans.

Moreover, the simplicity of his character was in harmony with the simplicity of his features. As well as the simplicity of his character was extraordinarily great, the simplicity of his features was extraordinarily distinctive.

If we want to see the constitution of this glorious master, then, it is as follows, as presented by his daughter A'ishah: He was white and thin, with slim shoulders. he was hunchbacked, vein-faced, eye-sunken, forehead-raised, and hand vein-naked.

This was the man, chosen by fates to be on the top of all human masters in the art of faith and greatness. This was the man, who was selected so that his days (of caliphate) would record the first lines of the obituary of (the destruction of) the greatest empires in his age and world: the Roman and the Persian (empires), and he would be the first successor of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", whose religion rose as (fast and widespread as) the light towards both East and West, making a great civilization, which filled the whole world, and pleased all of the people.

Yes. In this thin body (of Abu Bakr), the greatness had its appropriate position and station. It is true that he had no kingly body, nor did he have anything belonging to the constitution of the emperors. It seemed that Allah Almighty knew the following about His good servant: That he would not be disturbed in his life by anything as he would be in case he was given anything, distinguishing him from the people in such a way that might make him an object of their astonishment. For this reason, He chose for him this simple appearance and ordinary constitution.

Consider the description of him as given by his daughter: He was eye-sunken, vein-faced, and forehead-raised. There was nothing extraordinary (in the bodily constitution) of the chief of Quraish, the successor of The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", the defeater of the apostasy armies, and the milker of the goats of the old widows.

There was nothing extraordinary, except for (the light of) those pearls, emanating from his eyes, which used to send forth wonderful bright radiance and brilliant glitter, as if they were shining stars. They were

lying under a raised forehead, upon which, all light, power and love of his heart were reflected.

Whenever they fell upon (any object of) distress or sadness, they would shine, showing overflowing mercy, compassion and (desire for) supporting others. Whenever they fell upon (any object of) oppression, they would flare with the sacred flaming (of longing for rescuing the others). Whenever they caught a glimpse of the face of a man, they would read (and know everything about) it only in a moment. Whenever they received one of Allah's signs, they would overflow with tears, out of fear and respect.

It is true that they were sunken eyes. But, at the same time, they were created in order to see the truth and to be guided to it easily and with no trouble. Although his body was thin and lean, it had the utmost energy and liveliness. Within this humble body, there existed one of the greatest souls given to mankind.

This was As-Siddiq (the Truly Believer), whom all the writers were not to overvalue in their compositions about him and his good characteristics, so much as they were to raise themselves as high as to be qualified to talk about this supreme great man.

He "Allah be pleased with him" used to be the most shy whenever he received even a single word of praise. By then, his eyes would become wetted with tears and he would recite his well-known supplication: "O Allah! Might You make me better than what they think of me, and forgive for me what they know not, and do not account me for what they say (about me)."

Might Allah bestow His mercy upon you, O Abu Bakr! You were always better than what they thought of you, and better than they composed about you.

**BOOK TWO
BEFORE UMAR**

**“WOULD THE COMMANDER OF THE BELIEVERS GIVE
PERMISSION?”**

INTRODUCTION

I neither write a history of Umar, nor do I give the people a better knowledge of his greatness and well-known highness, nor do I commend myself before Allah, to write about a man, whom Allah loved and selected (as one of His best slaves). That's because my attempt (of writing about Umar) is more humble than all of that.

In fact, I (try to) pay attention, and look forward to the Commander of the Believers, no more or less. In the course of history, I and the readers would make an attempt to meet the man, whom we were unfortunate to meet in the streets of Medina, where his good characteristics and merits dominated both space and time, (in such an amazing way that) no eye was able to see, and no ear was able to hear about such justice of rulers, abstinence of capable (and rich men), humility of ascetic people, power of merciful amiable people, and kindness and compassion of pious powerful men (as of Umar).

Yes. This is what we try to attain in the following pages, i.e. to see (at least) several moments in the hospitality of Umar, take from the written scene, what might recompense us for the missing living scene, pay attention, with all our hearings, sights and hearts, to this trustworthy strong man, and the matchless tutor, and spend in his company some moments, which would give more value to our life.

However, the company of the Commander of the Believers is unlike that of the other rulers and kings. It is something very different, in which, there is no place for the sweet kinds of food and drink, and the pleasures of life. There is no place for the Thrones (of dignity), raised on high, goblets placed (ready), Cushions set in rows, and rich carpets spread out. There is no place for comfort. There is no place for vanity. There is also no place for flattery.

For this reason, as well as approaching this company is frightful, it is also lovable, praiseworthy, and honorable. Therefore, Umar is of such a sort that makes you, while going through his written history, overwhelmed by the same fear and respect by which you would have been overwhelmed, had you sat in his company.

Moreover, the written scene of his history is not different from the living scene, except in the absence of the hero from the sense of sight (in regard to the written scene). Yes. From the sense of sight alone. But as

far as the heart and insight are concerned, they feel, while going through the biography of Umar, that they live with him, sit in his company, see clearly the glorious deeds and aspects of heroism dealt with, being achieved by a really great master.

But, in spite of the abstinence and hardship from which one might suffer while being in the company of Umar, there is, on the surface of the earth, no pleasure, no joy, no blessing better than the delights and blessings of such a company.

This great man in his simplicity, simple in his power, and strong in his justice and mercy, neither takes rest, nor does he let the others take rest. But, he gives them, instead of the missing rest, the greatest power, pleasure and excellence the life could have.

This is (Umar) the Commander of the Believers, begotten by mankind and brought up by (the principles of) Islam. This is the faithful ruler, who would remain, if all the presidents of the states and governments in the world were mentioned from the dawn of human history to this day on which the people are living, the greatest, the most dutiful and the most intelligent of them all, with no exaggeration, whatever little it might be.

This is the ascetic man, whose abstinence burst into activity, intelligence, work and construction. This is the tutor, who set right the concepts of life, shed light upon them from his own spirit, and endowed them with greatness from his own good behaviours, since he was, for the pious people, a leader that should be followed.

What would the history, in your opinion, mention now of his great news? Which (stories) of his meritorious biography would the people narrate? Would they mention his conquests, which were so many? Would they remember his victories, which were so much wonderful?

No doubt, the conduct of (Umar) the Commander of the Believers occupies, by all means, both the history and the people from anything else. There always appears the image of that divine man, who, at the time of the scorching heat, was running after a camel from the objects of charity of the Muslims, for fear that it might go away and be lost, with the result that Allah would account him by a hard reckoning (for it).

(A mention might be made also of this image) of him, as accompanying his wife, during the last portion of the night, carrying on his shoulders and in his hands a waterskin, a small leather container, and a vessel of butter. His wife was taking care of a strange lady, suffering

from (the pains of) parturition, and he was sitting outside the hut, cooking the food fitting for such a case.

(We can also refer here to the image) of him, who once delayed in attending the Friday prayer. Then he came hurriedly, dressed in a mantle, having twenty-one patches, under which he was wearing a shirt, which was still wet. He no sooner had ascended the pulpit than he apologized to the people for his delay, saying: "Indeed, I was detained from you because of this shirt of mine. (I washed it and) I waited until it becomes dry, for I have no shirt other than it."

(There is, in addition, his image) when he received a present of sweet, sent to him by his appointed governor of Azerbaijan. He asked the envoy who brought it: "Do all the people there eat this (kind of sweet)?" the man answered in the negative. Then, he replied: "Take your present and return to the one who sent it, and say to him: Umar tells you: Do not satisfy yourself from any kind of food until all the Muslims eat their fill from it before you."

This is Umar in the memory of history and in the conscience of humanity. This is the minaret of Allah in the world, and His gift to the life. On his repast, though void of the sweet kinds of food, it is full of the sweet aspects of greatness, with which we would spend the happiest and the most affluent moments of our life.

KHALID MUHAMMAD KHALID

CHAPTER ONE

HE WOULD MAKE THEM ABUNDANTLY BETTER

(The people of) Mecca bade farewell to the guests who came to visit it from all sides of the Arab peninsula, in order to attend the festival of Ukaz, in which the different tribes used to vie in glory with its excellent poets, and the racetrack of fighting used to be adorned with the strong young men of Quraish, displaying their games very skillfully.

(The people of) Mecca bade farewell to those guests, who made their journeys, returning to their countries and towns, except for a small group of people, who had longed for the Sacred Town. So, they left their riding camels and favoured to stay in Mecca.

From among the members of this small group, a mention might be made of this old man, who was covering the distance, turning his face towards the house of symposium, in order to spend there some time before sunset with his fellows of the same age and memories.

On his way (to the house of symposium), he met a desert man, who stayed in Mecca only a short time ago. He was a shepherd of one of the chiefs of Quraish. As soon as this young man had seen the old man, the words came out from between his lips ardently and hastily: "Did you learn this great news, O Arab brother?" the old man replied: "Which great news do you mean, O my son?" he said: "This left-handed affluent man embraced Islam."

The old man asked: "Is it he, who used to fight in the (racetrack of the) market of Ukaz?" the young man answered: "Yes, it is he." The old man said: "What is the matter with him, O young man?" he replied: "He embraced Islam and followed Muhammad." The old man said surprisingly, with the wise of years covering his face: "Woe to you! He would make them (the infidels of Quraish) abundantly better (by forcing them to follow the right), or severely worse (by fighting them strongly)."

As for this left-handed man who used to fight in the (racetrack of the) market of Ukaz, it was Umar. As for the prophecy of this old wise man, it came as true as the light of the morning. however, that affluent left-handed man, Umar Ibn Al-Khattab Ibn Nufail Ibn Abd Al-Uzza, from the

sons of Adi, did no longer become the man, who used to fight the strong men in the (racetrack of the) market of Ukaz. But, he became the Distinguisher of Truth from Falsehood (Al-Faruq) Umar, who would fight the falsehood in the Arab Peninsula during the early days (of Islam), and in the whole world during the last portion (of his life).

He would be the man, who would fill the land of the people with justice, safety, mercy and right guidance. He would be the tutor, at whose hands the human rationality would attain its maturity, and the master, by whose feet, the world would sit down. Yes. He would be the man, with whom Allah would give more value to the people and the life itself.

“He would make them abundantly better or severely worse.” How did this Arab old man perceive the destinies of matters as such immediately and prudently? In fact, whoever was doomed to see Umar in his youth, even though swiftly, would surely be able to give the same prophecy, and expect for the same future foreseen by the old man easily, without the least trouble or difficulty.

Indeed, he was Umar, this strong, fleshy, almost red-complexioned man, of fat palms and feet, and broad shoulders, who was tall, lofty and huge, who never walked among a group of people but that he was the tallest of them all.

He was the man who was as they described him: whenever he spoke, he would (speak so much loudly so as to) cause the others (no matter far they might be) to listen to him; whenever he walked, he would be fast (so as to become ahead of all); whenever he struck (anyone), his strike would be so much painful.

He was Umar, who never feared anyone or experienced any kind of terror or scare. He was Umar, who inherited from his father a hard severity, firm strength and decisive determination.

Such being the case, it was very easy to discover his reality, read (whatever was lying within) himself and foresee the fates of matters at his hands, which would go either to the utmost right or to the utmost left.

Umar was the furthest of all the people from being a double-person, or ambivalent. His center of weight was not to be distributed among scattered shreds of spirit, nor was it to be inclined by the help of opposing desires. On the contrary, it had a decisive harmonious distinctive nature.

Wherever Umar existed, all of his personality, his will and his method (of life) would exist all and once. He never was indecisive. He never was so much irresolute that he would place one of his feet here and the other there. He was a comprehensive man, whose faculties used to move exactly, in harmony, in such a way that excelled the accuracy and consistency of a trained army. There was no opportunity for even a single atom of his entity to fail or lag behind. Indeed, it was a unique nature, which could hardly be reoccurred, since it was matchless.

Verily, The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” perceived the reality of the human nature with which Umar was endowed, as well as he was well-aware of its authenticity and capability. At the same time, he also knew the power and authority Amr Ibn Hisham (Abu Jahl) had. For this reason, he invoked his Great Lord to support Islam with anyone of the two persons, who was much dearer to Him: Umar Ibn Al-Khattab or Amr Ibn Hisham.

No doubt, Islam gained the one, who was much dearer to Allah, Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, the one of the passionate strong upright nature. He put his weight as a whole into the pan of monotheism, while the other (Amr Ibn Hisham) put his entire weight into the pan of paganism.

But, on the other hand, the destiny of the scale itself was decided once Umar became a strong weight in one of its pans. Moreover, the future of Islam became as visible as the light of the dawn since Ibn Al-Khattab uttered: “There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”.”

In this context, Abdullah Ibn Mas’ud said: “We’ve become powerful since Umar embraced Islam. His embracing Islam was a great victory, his migration was a decisive triumph, and his ruling was a mercy. However, I saw us unable to offer the (congregational) prayers in the mosque (of Ka’bah), until Umar embraced Islam.”

This constant force of Umar’s personality might apparently seem as if it was a kind of radicalism, extremism and harshness. During the pre-Islamic period of ignorance, his opposition to Islam was alone (as strong as to be) equal to the whole harm caused by those of Quraish entirely. His adherence to his situation abrogated any hope for his retracting from it, to the extent that one of the Muslims illustrated his disappointment of Umar’s conversion into Islam by saying: “Verily, he would not embrace Islam unless the donkey of Al-Khattab embraces Islam.”

During the days (following his embracing) Islam, his opposition to paganism was (as strong and violent as to be) alone equal to the whole opposition of all of the Muslims.

His just rational severity became an example set forth (for others to follow), to the extent that he was, from amongst the companions of The Prophet, the only one who was able to discuss The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” so much (in many religious matters), and sometimes give many proposals to The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, which he might implement, and for which he would praise him.

He showed severe violence against the enemies of Islam, in such a way that made him uniquely matchless among the other companions.

But, this was not to be considered as radicalism or extremism or harshness from Umar. It was rather a sort of excellence. That’s because the nature of such gifts and faculties as granted to Umar, would not give its owner the option to choose but to be at the level of this comprehensive overwhelming superiority; and as such Umar was.

He was endowed with a strong and abundant nature, whetted (by senses and faculties). It was a nature, straight in its purpose, very influential in its guidance as well as in its perversity. Whenever it adopted a certain situation, it would go as far as to reach the peak, not in response to the tendency of exaggeration, but as an achievement of its own possibilities and faculties, and a spontaneous expression of its excellence and abundance.

Therefore, there is a great difference between excellence and extremism. The former is like the natural growth (of something), and the latter is like the disease of bone swelling. The former is supported by active vital cells, and a growing and normal nature, and the latter is an accident of disease and weakness. Moreover, excellence is a just force, which implies wisdom. It neither rises above goodness, nor does it hide itself from the truth.

In this way, Umar was excellent not extremist, strong not harsh. The circumstances which drove him to embrace Islam, and surrounded his conversion to it highlighted the essence of his nature, and illustrated that matter so much clearly.

One day, when it was very scorching hot, he set out, eagerly insisting (on killing The Prophet), carrying his strong sword, and turning towards

the house of Al-Arqam, where The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and a group of his believing companions were, celebrating and worshipping Allah.

On the way, Nu’aim Ibn Abdullah saw him. He noticed the (signs of) indignation and resentment on his features. He came closer to him with fear. He asked him: “Where are you going O Umar?” he said: “I’m going to this deviating man, who dispersed the society of Quraish, stultified their minds, criticized their religion and insulted their gods, in order to kill him.”

Nu’aim was astonished by his feeling of this critical situation, and the dangers which might result from opposing Umar (at this time). Nu’aim said to him: “how evil endeavour is yours, and how wicked (intention of) walking is yours!”

Fearing that Nu’aim might have embraced Islam, Umar said to him: “Perhaps you have (embraced Islam and) deviated from our religion. If you’ve done, then, by Lati and Uzza, I surely would begin with (killing) you.” Knowing that Umar really meant (to do) what he had said, Nu’aim ended the dialogue with a statement, which turned the direction of Umar, who could hardly keep patient: “Then, you should know O Umar that your sister and her husband Sa’id Ibn Zaid embraced Islam, and abandoned that religion of yours.”

His sister Fatimah Bint Al-Khattab (embraced Islam then). What then does he have to do with the house of Al-Arqam, since the danger penetrated his house and lair? So, he betook himself to the house of his brother-in-law, Sa’id Ibn Zaid.

In the house, there were Fatimah Bint Al-Khattab, her husband, and Khabbab Ibn Al-Aratt, in whose hands, there was a document, having some Holy Verses (of the Holy Qur’an) from Allah’s revelation, which they were reciting and studying.

Then, the door was strongly knocked. They said: “Who is it?” it was said: “Umar.” As for Khabbab, he rushed hurriedly to a far hideaway in the house, asking Allah to save and rescue him. Umar’s sister and her husband went to receive him at the door, astonished by the terror of surprise. Though facing such an overwhelming distress and adversity, the daughter of Al-Khattab did not forget to hide the bounteous document, which had the Holy Verses of Allah under her garment.

Umar asked, with the horror coming out of his eyes: “What is this hidden speech which I heard in your house?” they answered: “Nothing more than privates talks and conversations.” He said to them: “I heard that you (embraced Islam and) deviated from your religion.” Sa’id said: “Tell me O Umar What would you say, if the truth is in (a religion) other than your religion?”

Umar did not wait him until he could finish his statement. But, he hurriedly and violently jumped upon him, caught hold of his head, dragged him, and then twisted it. Then he threw him on the ground, and sat over his chest. When his sister moved forward to defend her husband, he gave her a slap, which caused her face to bleed.

Then, she cried, as if her voice was a heavenly trumpet, sounding very loud: “O enemy of Allah! Do you slap me for my belief in Allah, the One and Only? Do what you are going to do. Verily, I testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is The Messenger of Allah.”

Now, pay your attention very well, for the (bill of the) decisive moment is ringing, announcing the commencements of the change, and uncovering the strong pure essence, from which the nature of this great man was created. While he was in his severe strength, the truth confronted him with its loud cry, to which he became soft, and gave in.

That’s because the words expressive of his sister’s insistence (on sticking to her faith in Islam), had the ringing of truth. It was the ringing which none could perceive but he, who has such a true nature as that of Umar, in the same way as the horseman could perceive the purity of origin of horses from their neighing.

Had the strength of Umar been resulting from his harshness and stubbornness, it would have continued its severity until it could get from such a situation what it wanted. But, since it was a strength of excellence and heroism, it responded immediately to that, which was visible in front of it, to that raised dear head, i.e. the head of Fatimah Bint Al-Khattab, who believed in Allah and His Messenger, and to those words, which were glowing with the light of reality, and sounding with the ringing of truthfulness.

Suddenly, he got up from the chest of Sa’id, and stretched his hand towards his sister, asking her to give him this document he saw appearing from under her garment: “Give me this document to see what is in it.”

His sister answered him: “No, for none but the purified persons are to touch it. Go and take a bath, and get yourself purified.”

Umar went amiably and kindly, though a while ago, he was (as violent) as a muttering hurricane. Then, he returned, with water trickling from his beard. His sister gave him the document, in which he read: “Ta Ha. We have not sent down The Qur’an to thee to be (an occasion) for thy distress, But only as an admonition To those who fear (Allah), A revelation from Him Who created the earth And the heavens on high. (Allah) Most Gracious Is firmly established on the throne (of authority). To Him belongs what is In the heavens and on earth, and all between the soil. If thou pronounce the word aloud, (it is no matter): for verily he knoweth what is secret and what is yet more hidden. Allah! there is no god but He! To him belong The Most Beautiful names.”

Then, Umar went on reciting submissively and dutifully: “Verily, I am Allah: there is no god but I: so serve thou me (only), and establish regulate prayer for celebrating my praise. Verily the hour is coming my design is to keep it hidden for every soul to receive its reward by the measure of its Endeavour. Therefore let not such as believe not therein but follow their own lusts, divert thee therefrom, lest thou perish!”

Umar embraced and then kissed the document. He stood up and said: “It is not proper that the One Who has sent down those Holy Verses should have a partner to be worshipped with Him. Guide me to (the place where) Muhammad (is present now).”

At this moment, Khabbab Ibn Al-Aratt appeared from his hiding place and hurried to Umar, saying: “Have the glad tidings, O Umar, for, by Allah, the invocation of The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” for you was responded to (by Allah).”

Then, Umar took his way towards Safa, where there was the house of Al-Arqam. There, before The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, Umar entered into the religion of the truth. All of the Muslims magnified Allah so much loudly that shook (the horizons of) Mecca entirely.

Only within a glance, this great magnificent change happened. A man, who earlier stood at the extreme end of paganism, moved to the extreme end of the hospitality of the right guidance. This strong nature, which earlier mobilized all of its faculties in order to safeguard the gods of Quraish from the proceeding of the new religion, jumped now in the

light, to the other side of the battlefield, with all its power and strength, at a decisive moment, well appointed and prepared by the destiny of All-Wise, All-Knowing One.

Umar used to defend the sanctified gods of ignorance when he believed that they were true. But, since he embraced Islam, and surrendered his face to Allah, he would put all of his power and life at the service of the religion which he believed to be true. That's because he was a man, whose conduct depended upon his belief, his satisfaction, and his right desires.

But his former and latter beliefs were, by no means, equal. His old belief had no proof other than the conventions, which screened from him the light of the truth, and prevented his heart from receiving the pleasure of truthfulness. But his new belief had a clear sign and proof.

The God Whom he would worship now is not of stones, for He is the Light of both the heavens and the earth, Who has Power over all things, and has Knowledge of all things. Moreover, the caller to this new religion is not of such a sort as those soothsayers, who depended upon the idols, and had their authority from the ignorance of the people, as well as from spreading the myths and fables.

He is Muhammad "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", whose truthfulness and honesty were beyond any doubt or suspicion during the forty years he spent among his people, as an obedient, submissive pure worshipper. Moreover, his companions and brothers in this new religion were not like the others, whose main interest was amusement, games, gambling and wasting (their time and wealth). They were a great leading group, whose people abandoned their sins, and removed off themselves the vanities of this world, and got themselves ready for receiving a noble message, and undertaking a great Jihad.

Yes. Those people who were with Muhammad "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" found a great purpose for which they could live. But those (on the other side), whom Umar left behind, used to sit at the tables of gambling, by which they would become more foolish, or stand in circles around the division arrows, asking them about their bad fortunes, or circumambulate round idols made of stones, which they sculpted with their own hands, and then they fell in prostration for them.

There (on the side of the believers), was a true faith, which had its clear proof from Allah. There existed a sort of faith, which would raise

the heads (of those who had it) very high, and permanently relate them with Allah Almighty with no need for any kind of access or mediator.

Such a nature as that of Umar, which rejected any kind of surrender, since it considered itself too lofty and high to submit, could find no vital field, or natural atmosphere (in which it might live and develop) but such a religion, according to which all of the people should stand as equal as the teeth of the comb, the most generous of whom in Allah's sight would be the most pious from among them, and both purity and truth were widespread (in all directions among all the faithful believers), where Muhammad "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" recited the Holy Verses of his Lord, through which the features of the coming life, and the promising destinies would become visible, and in which the minds could hear the ringing of the reality, and the hearts could feel the peace and tranquility of certainty.

However, both power and authenticity worked together in the unique nature of Umar, particularly after Islam had become his religion. But this nature became, after his embracing Islam, much more excellent and outstanding than it had been before his embracing Islam. That's because it attained its finality, and right guidance, and its field became neither those motionless idols around Ka'bah, nor those trivial insignificant affairs of the life in Mecca.

On the contrary, this nature turned to be attached to (the affairs of) both the heaven and the earth altogether, and the topic of its struggle became a religion, which perceived, with the help of its rising intelligence, that such a religion would not be restricted to the land of sand, camels and poetry (i.e. the Arab Peninsula), but it would proceed towards the East and the West, until it would overwhelmingly cover all parts over the world.

For this reason, the elegant concern characteristic of Umar's nature started to work from the first moments of his embracing Islam, when he said to The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him": "Aren't we on the right (path) in our living as well as in our death?" The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" replied to him: "Yes, O Umar. By Him, in Whose hand is my life, you are on the right whenever you lived, as well as whenever you died."

Then, Umar exclaimed: "Why are we to hide ourselves (in performing our prayers)? By Him, Who has sent you with the truth, you should come

out, and we should come out with you (in order to offer the congregational prayers in the House).” The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” came out, followed by the Muslims. They aligned in two rows, one of which implied Umar, and the other had Hamzah in it.

With those first steps prompted by Ibn Al-Khattab, the blessed procession (of Islam as a world religion and method of life) started, and lasted (until now) about one thousand and four hundred years, and would remain in progress.

This man, who once carried his sword and set out with the intention to kill The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, turned, in a few happy moments, to be a faithful believer in Allah and His Messenger. What would he do then? To what extent would his nature continue to work? What was the expected reaction, which would modify its new direction?

His speedy thoughts appeared in such a way as if they were moving according to a detailed map, preset earlier. Umar the Muslim would surely continue undertaking the task which Umar the previously pagan started to do, but at a higher level, and for a more supreme purpose.

Yes. He came out, carrying his sword, from his house to the house of Al-Arqam, in order to destroy the (truth which he thought to be before embracing Islam as) falsehood. Well. Let him go to his aim, and continue implementing his mission, but he would not (after embracing Islam) destroy the truth which he thought to be falsehood, but he would destroy the falsehood, which he thought to be the truth (during the days of his ignorance). He would destroy the falsehood which was (and is still) truly falsehood, from the reality of whose falsehood Umar was deceived for a long time (during the days of his ignorance before his embracing Islam).

Since the reality was exposed to him, he shouted with his loud voice: “By Allah, I would never leave a place where I sat, proclaiming disbelief (in Islam), but that I would sit in it, proclaiming my faith (in Allah and His Messenger).” His nature had of intelligence and capability what enabled it to work permanently, fixing its sight on the target.

For this reason, he was a man, so much decisive that he never had faith in any kind of compromises, nor did he keep patient while being wronged even for a moment, by day or at night. Such a wrong in his sight had a wider sense than being troubled or oppressed (by anyone). It

implied also to be unable to achieve the ambitions of himself, accomplish his right desires, and attain whatever he wanted.

So, he considered as wrongful to let the features of his ignorance survive even though hidden and overturned. Then, the traces of his feet in the streets of Mecca, where he used to walk, condemning Islam and pursuing Muslims, should be obliterated and removed by his new firm steps in the same streets (of Mecca), glorifying the praises of Allah, and celebrating His names.

Moreover, everywhere he raised his voice loudly, praising the idols of Quraish, he should proclaim much more louder: "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him"."

Yes. Umar would pursue all of his statements, movements and passions of mockery at the religion of Allah for six years, as of the beginning of the Divine Message (sent down to Muhammad) to the day when he embraced Islam. He would pursue them in all their places and locations, in order to substitute a good deed for every evil deed.

He would uproot all thorneys, with which he filled the way of Muhammad "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" and his companions, and replace them with flowers and roses, which he would plant out of love and wholehearted devotion. Furthermore, he would buy the safety of this religion even by sacrificing his life.

His nature used to call for both time and space, if not cancel them (for sometime), in order to have its authority and sovereignty. If Umar committed a mistake in a certain point of time and space, then, it would not be sufficient, for such an excellent outstanding unique nature as his to ignore that mistake. But it wanted to uproot that mistake, in addition to this point of time and space in which that mistake happened.

Henceforward, it would insist on returning once again to that place, where the mistake was committed, and if it could, on restoring the same point of time, during which the mistake happened, in order to say that such a mistake should not have been committed, in addition to the place where it was committed, and the point of time in which it happened.

For this reason, he went to every place where he had sat announcing his disbelief, (before his embracing Islam), in which he sat (after embracing Islam), proclaiming his belief (in Allah and His Messenger). But, was this to be sufficient (in his sight)? Of course no, for there was a

lot of work which Umar would do, in order to believe that he really got himself purified from all the sins of his ignorance.

He remembered that his earlier adherence to the religion of Quraish was the most important reason for the persecution Muhammad “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and his companions received. And now, since he embraced Islam, that should be, in his sight, a decisive factor in supporting the Islamic resistance.

Yes. His previously paganism was the most important reason which led the Muslims who were still few in number, to flee with their religion to the house of Al-Arqam, where they could be able to worship Allah, though hidden. And now, his embracing Islam should be a decisive factor in making public the call (to Islam), and giving up the state of concealment (in worshipping Allah).

He went to The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and said: “Let my father and mother be sacrificed for you, O Messenger of Allah! What does detain you (from making public your call)? By Allah! There is no place where I had sat down earlier raising my voice with disbelief, but that in which I made public my faith (in Allah and His Messenger), with no fear or anxiety. Behold! We should not worship Allah in secret after today.”

Accordingly, The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” responded to his opinion, and the call (to Islam) thus came out from its hiding place to the earth of Allah, which is much larger and more spacious. But, was this sufficient for Umar? No. There would be another step, really so much astonishing.

He remembered that earlier, the unbelievers of Quraish were haughty because Umar used to strike with his own hand the companions of Muhammad. So, let him now (after his embracing Islam), give the Muslims the same pride. If he was not able now to strike the chiefs and the strong young people of Quraish, let him, at least, give more value to the torment of the weak Muslims, by sharing it with them.

Let those (Muslims) be proud that Umar, this fearful huge strong man would be struck as they were struck and would be persecuted as they were persecuted (by the infidels of Quraish).

Yes. The persecution of Quraish would not be restricted only to Bilal, Khabbab, Ammar, Suhaib, and their fellows of the poor and oppressed Muslims. But, this fearful strong man, whose power and might used to

lot of work which Umar would do, in order to believe that he really got himself purified from all the sins of his ignorance.

He remembered that his earlier adherence to the religion of Quraish was the most important reason for the persecution Muhammad “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and his companions received. And now, since he embraced Islam, that should be, in his sight, a decisive factor in supporting the Islamic resistance.

Yes. His previously paganism was the most important reason which led the Muslims who were still few in number, to flee with their religion to the house of Al-Arqam, where they could be able to worship Allah, though hidden. And now, his embracing Islam should be a decisive factor in making public the call (to Islam), and giving up the state of concealment (in worshipping Allah).

He went to The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and said: “Let my father and mother be sacrificed for you, O Messenger of Allah! What does detain you (from making public your call)? By Allah! There is no place where I had sat down earlier raising my voice with disbelief, but that in which I made public my faith (in Allah and His Messenger), with no fear or anxiety. Behold! We should not worship Allah in secret after today.”

Accordingly, The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” responded to his opinion, and the call (to Islam) thus came out from its hiding place to the earth of Allah, which is much larger and more spacious. But, was this sufficient for Umar? No. There would be another step, really so much astonishing.

He remembered that earlier, the unbelievers of Quraish were haughty because Umar used to strike with his own hand the companions of Muhammad. So, let him now (after his embracing Islam), give the Muslims the same pride. If he was not able now to strike the chiefs and the strong young people of Quraish, let him, at least, give more value to the torment of the weak Muslims, by sharing it with them.

Let those (Muslims) be proud that Umar, this fearful huge strong man would be struck as they were struck and would be persecuted as they were persecuted (by the infidels of Quraish).

Yes. The persecution of Quraish would not be restricted only to Bilal, Khabbab, Ammar, Suhaib, and their fellows of the poor and oppressed Muslims. But, this fearful strong man, whose power and might used to

frighten the others, should suffer from the same persecution from which they (the Muslims) had suffered.

Thus, Umar should be struck as they were struck, and in this way, the strike and torment they received would not become a point of humiliation, which might defeat their spirits and dishonour them. Then, the Islam of Umar would be complete since he became equal to those Muslims in paying the price by which they bought the banner of Allah.

As such Ibn Al-Khattab considered the matter. As such the man of the straight true nature thought it to be. But, how would he do so, since he was so much fearful and atrocious (in the sight of the infidels), to the extent that made the matter of merely disturbing him a losing adventure?

That's because if Umar wanted to be the victorious and the winner, he surely would find the way to that. But to be the defeated struck person, this was a serious problem, whose solving should cater for a great effort. Who from amongst all the people of Quraish would dare to strike Umar?

But Umar decided to give more value to the torment of his Muslim brothers, by making himself vulnerable to it, and taking a portion from it. Yes. He decided and intended to do so; and since he intended to do so, he should find a way to that.

He put his plan. He began his tour by Abu Jahl. He went to him in his house and knocked at the door. As soon as Abu Jahl had come out and seen that the knocker was Umar, he closed the door immediately. He came upon the chiefs of Quraish in their houses one by one challengingly, hoping that a quarrel might break up between him and anyone of them, resulting in a slap on the chest or an injury in the face he should receive, but all of them avoided fighting him, and saved themselves from him.

At last, he decided to meet them while gathering near Ka'bah. As soon as he had approached them, he talked to them, which motivated them to be angry. Let's listen to him as narrating the rest of this event.

He "Allah be pleased with him" said: The people proceeded towards me, and started striking me as well as I was striking them. Then, my maternal uncle came and asked: "What is this?" they said: "It is Ibn Al-Khattab (being struck by the people)." He stood on the Hijr and said: "Behold! I give shelter to (Umar) the son of my sister." Thus, the people dispersed from me. But, I still kept seeing those Muslims who were struck (by the infidels), while no one struck me. I said (to myself):

“Shouldn’t I receive (something) from that which befalls them?” I came to my maternal uncle and said to him: “Your shelter granted to me should be cancelled.” He said to me: “Do not do, O son of my sister!” I said: “No, it should be cancelled.” He said: “Do as you like.” I kept on striking (infidels) and being struck (by the infidels) until Allah reinforced Islam through us.

This outstanding conduct of Umar emanated from a nature, having all the elements of power and perfection. It was a nature, more loyal to undertake its responsibilities and occupied by the gravity of its unique essence. The person who had such a situation from the early days of his embracing Islam, is the same, whom we would meet later as the Commander of the Believers, with his armies breaking the power of both Khosrau and Caesar, when he ascended the pulpit, after calling for a gathering of the Muslims, and said: “O people! I remembered when I was looking after goats belonging to some maternal aunts of mine from the sons of Makhzum, in return for a handful of dates or raisins.”

Then, he descended, while the gathering people were in a state of surprise and wonder. Somebody, who could not keep patient on what he had seen, i.e. Abd Ar-Rahman Ibn Awf, approached him and said: “What is that at which you aimed by your saying, O Commander of the Believers?” Umar replied: “Allah’s mercy be upon you, O Ibn Awf! Once I sat alone with myself, which whispered to me: “Now, you’ve become the Commander of the Believers, with no one between you and Allah. Who then is more superior than you (in this respect)?” so, I wanted to let myself know its real value.”

This was a truly straight nature, which neither had any kind of crookedness, nor was it to endure, even for a moment, what might prevent it from observing and following the truth. This true upright nature made its owner really a great man, who had no longing for being rewarded or praised for what he used to do. He just expressed his affluent nature, which he put at the service of Allah, and vowed for His religion.

The more it filled the space (surrounding it) with its unique activities and abundant capabilities, the more it took out from its hidden inexhaustible valuable heritage (what might benefit the Muslims), the more it made (and raised) a flag for Allah and destroyed a castle for the unbelievers, and fulfilled a right to a certain man, the more it did all of that, the more Umar grew really so much happy.

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT WILL YOU SAY TO YOUR LORD LATER?

Nothing could distinguish the outstanding upright natures other than their alienation from haughtiness. Had there been a certain man, into whose preventive fort haughtiness should enter, in view of the multitude of his good qualities and wonderful victories (he achieved), it should have been Umar.

He entered into Islam under the shadows of great hospitality of both the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and his companions. He saw how Islam became strongly sounding and chanting just on the very day he was converted to it. He also saw the Muslims, who used to hide themselves from the (torment of the) tyrannies of Mecca earlier, facing the torture delightfully, and shaking it with their magnifications (of Allah), particularly after Umar had had his position among them.

The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” used to describe him as Faruq (Distinguisher truth from falsehood), after Allah Almighty had distinguished truth from falsehood, and (put a decisive limit) between flattery and facing through him. He saw himself having suggested some opinions to the Messenger, who did not only agree with him, but some Divine revelation Verses were sent down for their confirmation, and they became part of the Holy Qur’an being recited by the people.

Later on, he became one of the successors of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” after Abu Bakr, and the Commander of the Believers, during whose time, the gates of nearly the whole world (known in this period) were opened for the religion of Allah,, with the result that his flags filled the horizons.

In view of all of that, should haughtiness not find even an opening through which it might creep into himself? However, (with another man) there might have been more than a single opening. But (in case of Umar), we almost never know such a spirit, too strong and preventive to be penetrated by haughtiness, whose attempts to infiltrate its stronghold were destroyed, as that of this man, i.e. Umar, the Faruq.

From where did all of this stem? No doubt, his nature and primitive readiness had their great beneficial effect in this issue. There is also no doubt that the way in which such a nature was connected with Allah provided it with an inexhaustible source, limitless capability, and (a desire for) complete separation from all vanities of this world.

Umar himself referred whatever virtues, honour and abilities he had to Allah on the one hand, and the religion he adopted on the other. He frequently said to his brothers (of Muslims): “Indeed, we were (before becoming Muslims) nothing until Allah strengthened us with Islam. If we went to seek for power in anything other than it, surely we would be disappointed and humiliated.”

Let’s see how Umar’s relation with his Lord was. Let’s see how a strong nature gathered with a strong structure, in order that they would produce such a strong honest man (as Umar). We will find that all of Umar Behaviours were determined within the framework of his esteem and respect for Allah Almighty.

Indeed, Umar used to fear and highly respect Allah so much that he could be about to melt and dissolve whenever he felt (as if there was) a single flash of Allah, full of Majesty, Bounty and Honour, going around him. He kept repeating to himself the following repenting tune: “What will you say to your Lord later?”

Yes. “What will you say to your Lord later?” that’s a phrase which we might utter gently and easily. But as for him, it used to shake him so much. In this context, Al-Ahnaf Ibn Qais said: I was in the company of Umar when a man met him and said: “O Commander of the Believers! Come with me to support me against so-and-so who wronged me.” He lifted his stick with which he beat the head of the man to whom he said:

“Do you call the Commander of the Believers, while facing and approaching you, and whenever he got occupied by the matters of Muslims, you would say: Come to support me (against so-and-so)?” then, the man went in a state of anger and grief.

Umar demanded that this man should be brought to him. when he returned, he gave him his stick and said: “Take it and retaliate for yourself from me.” The man said: “No by Allah, but I’ll expect (the reward for giving up) it from Allah.” Then, he went away.

Later, Umar went back to his home and offered a two-Rak’ah prayer, after which he sat reckoning himself and saying: “O Ibn Al-Khattab! You

were humble, and Allah has raised you. You were straying, and Allah has guided you (to the right path). You were low, and Allah has given you power, and made you responsible for (the matters of) the people. Then, a man came to you (to support him), and you beat him. Then, what will you say to your Lord later if you come to meet Him?”

“What will you say to your Lord later?” in this sentence, all of Umar’s religion and method of life was represented, and from which, his life took its standards and scales, and in which there existed his passport to this world, and the passport of this world with all its pleasures to him.

With every morsel of delicious food, with every sip of cold water, and with every new garment, his tears would fall, i.e. those tears which left under his eyeball two brown lines, because of the excessive weeping. He repeated within himself such a warning as “What will you say to your Lord later?”

This is the oppressive giant of the pre-Islamic period of ignorance, who became the great powerful man of Islam. This is the Commander of the Believers, with the help of whose flirting flags, most countries of the world (known at that time) were conquered, with their inhabitants receiving cheerfully his armies as if they were glad tidings (to their future freedom and happiness).

That’s he, leading the people in the prayers, with his weeping and whimpering being heard by those of the last row. That’s he, running after a camel which fled away from its kneeling place. When Ali Ibn Abu Talib met him, he asked him: “Where are you going O Commander of the Believers?” he replied: “I’m running after a camel from those given as charity, which fled away.”

Ali said to him: “No doubt, you’ve troubled (by those behaviours of yours) those (governors) who will come after you.” But Umar answered him in a wavering expression: “By Him, Who sent Muhammad with the truth! If a single goat was lost even in the Euphrates shore, Umar would be reckoned for it on the Day of Judgement.”

However, Umar was not to fear Allah in the same way of a slave who used to be frightened by stick strike or a whip lash. But, he used to fear Him in the same way of a free man who had a great respect to his Lord, before Whom he used to humiliate himself in exaltation and glorification, feeling very shy to meet Him with any kind of deficiency or negligence.

This is his song, with which he used to chant: “O Ibn Al-Khattab! You were humble, and Allah has raised you. You were straying, and Allah has guided you (to the right path). You were low, and Allah has given you power, and made you responsible for (the matters of) the people. Then, a man came to you (to support him), and you beat him. Then, what will you say to your Lord later if you come to meet Him?”

But, what is the reason for such pressing fear and overwhelming shyness? Indeed, Umar was well-educated and well-mannered at the hands of Allah’s Messenger to the best. Moreover, he used to follow the Messenger much more faithfully and exactly. He used to devote himself to worship. He was unique in his piety, humiliation before Allah, abstinence and fearing Him.

Is not it that all of that might grant his worrying spirit more tranquility and rest? Nay! It should do, if he was somebody else other than Umar. But, as for him, he saw in all of that wholeheartedly devotion to worship only the effort of the one who (though doing his best) does but little, in view of his inability (to do what he has to do). Furthermore, he saw in Allah’s grant of success to him no more than a blessing bestowed upon him which should be much worthy of appropriate thanking.

One day, he said to Abu Musa Al-Ash’ari who was sitting with him: “O Abu Musa! Would you be pleased if our embracing Islam and Emigration with the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, in addition to the martyrdom (of some) of us and all of what we did with him should not be recorded for us, in return for our being saved (from the fire of Hell) only with the necessary requirements (of a Muslim), neither to have (extra reward), nor to bear (any bad deeds)?”

Abu Musa replied: “No, by Allah, O Umar! Indeed, we did much more effort, offered prayers, observed fasts, did a lot of good things, and at our hands, multitudes of people embraced Islam; and we expect the reward of all of that.” Umar answered him, with his tears falling on his cheeks, as if they were scattered pearls: “As for me, I would like that all of that should not be recorded for me, provided that I would be saved (from the fire of Hell), neither having (extra) good, nor bearing any evil.”

You should consider to what extent he feared Allah, and felt shy of His Glory. No doubt, the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” had given him the glad tidings of being admitted in Paradise. He was stronger than any (worldly) desire or longing so much

as if he was entirely guiltless and sinless. But, in spite of all of that, he always used to fear Allah, feel shy of him, and be careful (lest he might displease Him).

Why not, since he saw the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” himself, spending (nearly) the whole of his nights as offering prayers and worshipping, and (most of) his days as fasting and fighting in the Cause of Allah? Whenever it was said to him: “O Messenger of Allah! Why do you trouble yourself, since Allah has forgiven for you all of your sins you had made earlier, as well as those which would come later?” he “Peace be upon him” would say: “Would I not be a thankful servant (of Allah)?”

That’s the highest degree of reverence one could have (to Allah), as well as it is the highest point of praise (one could offer for the blessings of Allah).

this was the school, in which Umar was well-bred, and then graduated. It was a school, whose people were not to think of disobeying Allah, even if they did not fear Him, nor were they to think of committing a single sin, even if there was no punishment for it. Had Allah said to them: “Do whatever you like, for I’ve forgiven for you all of your sins”, they would not have thought of doing but that, which their Lord would like and with which He would be pleased.

The reason for that is that their relation with Allah was not established on the basis of their being scared so much as it was on the basis of their liking , love and respect for Allah, in addition to their shyness of Him; and Umar, our great brilliant man, is the most successful and the best example of such understanding.

He was certain that none could thank Allah as He Almighty deserves, no matter meritorious, just and right his life might be. He knew very well that every thanking of Allah was a granted blessing which deserved a new thanking. He also knew well that such blessings as faith, right guidance and ruling granted to him by Allah were due to the virtue of Allah Almighty, and that Allah was, of course, able to assign all of that to anyone else.

But, since Allah favoured him, and said to him: “All of those gifts are for you from Me, O Umar”, that would make him melt and melt, shrink and shrink, and then say so much shyly: “Would that the mother of Umar

did not give birth to Umar!" he also might repeat: "What will you say to your Lord later?"

However, he was determined to transcend upon himself, and surpass the limits of his capability, in order to achieve the greatest amount of gratitude and thankfulness to his Creator, Evolver and Lord.

Umar who used to stand behind the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" as one of his companions, and Umar who became later the successor and trustworthy of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", Umar here and there was the same, i.e. that submissive subservient obedient and repenting man, who hoped for nothing but to be saved (from the fire of Hell), having the minimum requirements (for being kept far from fire), with neither sins nor rewards.

He had no desire other than for being far from standing before Allah shyly because of a fault he might have committed, or an injustice he might have neglected to deal with, or a blessing he might not have done his best to thank Allah for. Nothing disturbed him while being asleep, or worried him while being awake but his fear that his Lord would ask him later (after death) admonishingly: "Why did you do such and such a thing O Umar?".

Such and such a thing is a symbol of any unknown act (he might have done ignorantly), which made him spend the whole of his life as a wanderer within and outside himself, searching for such and such (evil) thing (he might have done), and cautious of committing even ignorantly a single slight error.

For this reason, he gave up all pleasures and luxury of life made lawful by Allah, for fear that such and such a thing of which he was afraid to be asked by Allah might be disguised.

Let's read some paragraphs from his letter to Utbah Ibn Ghazwan, the governor of Basra appointed by him: "No doubt, you accompanied the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", with whom you became powerful after you had been humble, and strong after you had been weak, until you became now a chief directed (to govern the people with justice), and a ruler obeyed (by his subjects). If you said something, your speech would be heard (by the people whom you govern), and if you issued an order it would be implemented. Indeed,

what a good blessing it will be unless it makes you overestimate yourself, and arrogantly feel yourself superior to those inferior to you.

Be cautious of (being self-conceited because of) such a blessing, so that it might protect you from committing sins. What I fear for you most is that it might withdraw and deceive you, with the result that you would fall down and go to the Hell. I ask you to seek refuge with Allah as well as I myself seek refuge with Allah from that.”

Jabir Ibn Abdullah was reported to have related: Umar Ibn Al-Khattab saw a (basket full of) meat hung to my arm of which he asked me. I replied: “It is meat for which I had a desire. So, I bought it.” He said: “Is it that whenever you have a desire for anything you would buy it? Do you not fear that it might be said to you on the Day of Judgement: “You’ve taken to the full all of your pleasures in the world”?”

What do you think his situation from the evil deeds was, since he feared the pleasures of life for his religion? But what would evil deeds have to do with Umar, since (he used to resist them so much that) they used to flee away fearfully from him whenever they saw him passing even many Farsakhs far from them?

However, Umar prevented himself from many pleasures, and from several blessings, which Allah did not forbid to him. That’s because he saw himself unable to thank (Allah) for the few (things he allowed himself to enjoy of); and consequently, he did not want to be much more unable to thank (Allah) for more blessings. Moreover, he undertook honestly the responsibility of being the leading example (of all the people of whom he was guardian).

had he wanted to get all the blessings and pleasures available to him, though they were so much, surely, he would have got all of them. But, the heroism of his spirit, the greatness of himself, and the uprightness of his method of life led him to favour no more than the minimum necessities of life.

One day, Hafs Ibn Abu Al-As visited him, while he was having his meal, to which he invited Hafs. When Hafs saw the dry meat from which Umar was eating, he did not want to force himself against eating it distastefully, nor to trouble his stomach with its hard digestion. So, he excused him (not to eat) thankfully. The Commander of the Believers knew the reason for refraining from such a food.

He raised his sight to him and said to him: "What does prevent you from eating our food?" Hafs was too clear to reply: "It is a hard rough food; and I'm going to return home, in order to have delicious soft food which was prepared for me."

Umar said: "Do you see that I'm unable to order that good sheep should be slaughtered (and its meat should be cooked for me), and fine wheat should be baked for me, and that a Sa of raisins should be thrown in some butter until they get swollen, with water being poured over that, until it turns (into red) like the blood of the deer, with the result that I would eat from that and drink from this?"

Hafs said laughingly: "No doubt, you are expert in the delicious and fine sorts of food." Then, Umar resumed talking: "By Him, with Whose Hand my life is! Had it not been for fear of the decrease of my good deeds, I would have shared you in the luxury of life. If I desire, I will have the most delicious food of all of you, getting the best luxury of life. Indeed, we know about delicious food better than more of its eaters. But, we are going to let it for The day ye shall see it, every mother giving suck shall forget her suckling babe, and every pregnant female shall drop her load (unformed. However, I should keep my pleasures (for the hereafter), because I heard Allah Almighty saying about some people: You used up all of your pleasures of which you enjoyed in your world."

In this way, his shyness of Allah made him refrain from every kind of pleasure or even of every sort of rest in this world. He insisted on getting no more food than what might satisfy him and his family, and living only with the minimum requirements of life.

As for his situation from the matter of ruling, where most people would concede almost everything in return for only a few days they would spend as ruling chiefs, what might we find concerning this issue? The dearest of his hopes was to remain Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, no more or less, and not to be a caliph or a commander of the believers. Following the death of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", the position of caliphate was near to him when Abu Bakr stretched his right hand to him on the meeting of the Shed, saying: "Stretch your hand O Umar, so that we might give you the pledge of allegiance." But Umar saved himself from it when he said: "No, it is you to whom we should give the pledge of allegiance, since you're better than me."

Then, how did this man spend those ten years, six months and four days during which he was the caliph of Muslims, and the Commander of the Believers? How did he spend and experience such a period, suffering from this shaking sense and the trembling heart, because of fearing Allah (Exalted and glorified be He)? did the people learn about a ruler with whom all majesty and luxury of authority turned into blazing pieces of fire, which he used to fear most, and from which he was the keenest on fleeing away, as possible as he could find a way to that?

He was a ruler, who subjugated all powers of his authority in the service of Allah's fear, and saved for people safety and security as much as he himself feared Allah. He was a ruler, whose self-tranquillity was neither affected by the most serious and dangerous matters and issues, nor it was by mobilizing the victorious armies, with their news (of conquests and victories).

But, in spite of all of that, he used to tremble so much by hearing a slight cry of an oppressed one, a whisper of a distressed man, or a humming of (one whose) right was lost, whose claimant might say to him: "Fear Allah O Umar!" Did the people hear anything about such a ruler? And when did they hear of him?!

One day, while he was sitting with his companions, a distressed man, covered with the dust of the journey, intruded the session. While he was coming nearer to the people whom he heard saying (addressing Umar): "O Commander of the Believers", he turned directly to him and said: "Are you Umar? Woe to you from Allah O Umar!" then, he went away carelessly. Some of those who were present caught up the man angrily, but Umar called upon them to return to their sitting places. Then, he ran after the man with his heart beating strongly. Did the man say to him: "Woe to you from Allah O Umar?" that's the great catastrophe, and the formidable atrocity for which Umar could not be patient!

He joined the man whom he brought. He said to him: "Woe to me from Allah! what is the reason for that O my Arab brother?" the man replied: "Because your employees and governors do not do justice, but they wrong others." Umar asked: "Which employees do you mean?" he said: "An employee called Iyad Ibn Ghunm." As soon as Umar had heard the details of his complaint, he chose two of his companions, giving them a command to ride (their mounts and go) to Egypt, in order to bring Iyad Ibn Ghunm.

However, if you want to see Umar, this overwhelmingly lofty high man, who was full of strength, power and courage, as trembling as a little bird under the effect of a hurricane, you would not have to do but to say to him: “Wouldn’t you fear Allah O Umar?”

Then, you would see a man as if his day of Judgement has come, and as if he was standing before Allah, with the balance of acts on his right, and the bridge on his left, and his record (of deeds) spread in front of him, and all of the horizon sounding in his hear: “Read your record (of deeds), for it is sufficient for you today to reckon yourself.”

In spite of his hard suffering so much from such situations, he used to be pleased and happy with them, because they used to remind him of Allah’s Majesty and Station, as well as make him certain that he would not exceed the limits of being just a merely slave of Allah and a servant of His worshippers.

He much frequently asked Abu Musa Al-Ash’ari to recite for him some Verses of the Holy Qur’an with his sweet impressive voice, saying to him: “Remind us of our Lord O Abu Musa.” Whenever Abu Musa recited, Umar would went on weeping.

It happened so much that Umar met in the streets of Medina a young boy, whose hand Umar would take hold and say: “Invoke Allah for me O my son, for you’ve not committed a sin yet.”

During his last moments, he said to his son Abdullah: “O Abdullah! Take my head and place it on the ground, would that Allah might look at me (while being in that state), and then bestow mercy upon me.”

No doubt, the balance of acts became right in the hand of Umar from the very day he surrendered to Allah (and embraced Islam). his strong agitated nature, and his excellent outstanding capabilities stood firmly on the path of virtue, justice and duty when he constantly connected himself with Allah, and followed the steps of Muhammad. Umar feared no danger for himself and his destiny more than to become far away from Allah, or to deviate from the way of His Messenger “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”.

Before his embracing Islam, he used to look for what is right, in order to comply with it in a way that was fitting for his readiness, great qualities, and powerful spirit. But now, he knew the truth when it was brought to them from the Heaven through a bounteous Messenger, who was not to speak (aught) of (his own) Desire.

Indeed, Umar used to put a date of his birth the very day, on which he shook hands with the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, and said: “I testify that there is no God but Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him””. that is because on this day, he found himself (being on the straight path), having met his great destiny.

When he believed in Allah, His Messenger, and His religion, he did not have such a faith as of the common people, the beneficiaries, or the capricious ones, but on the contrary, he had such a faith as of the righteous knowledgeable men. When he heard for the first time the following Verse from the mouth of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”: “Do you think that We’ve created you vainly, and that to Us you would not return”, he heard it as if he was alone, and as if it was sent down addressing him alone. On that day, as well as before that day, he perceived that his short life, whatever years he might live, would not benefit him, and he was in need of a thousand lives alike in order to be able to make what would satisfy him, worship and thank his Lord.

For this reason, he was afraid that even a single crossing moment could be lost, a single word might be spoken mistakenly, and a crossing feeling might be wrong. He was strongly afraid that his lofty life might be changed by even a single sin, or be defected by any suspicious thing.

That is because, if such a life was of his own property, he should keep it away from any kind of evil. Then, what would it be since it was, in his sight, not his own life, nor was it of his own property, but it was a deposit of Allah to him, and it is Allah, its Owner and Holder, who would ask him about it “Do you think that We’ve created you vainly, and that to Us you would not return”.

For this reason, he was suffering from worry and trouble during his life. But, it was the worry of an intelligent one, and it was the trouble of a thinker, who used to sleep just abit, to eat but to keep himself alive, and to be dressed but in coarse clothes.

He used to be carefully awake. In this issue he used to say: “If I sleep in the night, I would waste myself, and if I sleep during the day, surely I would waste the (rights of, and neglect in serving the) people (of whom I’m guardian).”

He used to ask whomever he met so much eagerly and seriously: “Tell me by your Lord: how do you find Umar? Do you think Allah is pleased with me? Do you see that I did not betray Allah and His Messenger (by ill-treating you)?”

Whenever he felt he was deficient (in serving his subjects or short of fulfilling the rights of Allah), he would cry: “Would that the mother of Umar did not give birth to Umar!”

The reason for all of this tremble, shyness, and concern is that he did not know what he would say to his Lord later.

CHAPTER THREE

IS IT THAT FOR YOU'RE THE SON OF THE COMMANDER OF THE BELIEVERS?

We saw how he (Umar) was gifted an excellent outstanding and brilliant nature, which was upright (in all of its behaviours), and how he connected through it with Allah and put it in His service, and under His disposal. Such a man must have a high and strong sense of responsibility.

Umar was this man. He used to be motivated by responsibility, to which he would devote himself determinedly and resolutely. For him, the responsibility was not to be divisible or divergent (according to the different cases, circumstances, or persons). For him, there was no difference between what might be considered as greater or minor, ordinary or extraordinary responsibilities. There were just responsibilities (which must be dealt with equally).

In dealing with all of those responsibilities, Umar was the same, who used to devote himself to every consequence and task equally, with the same level of wholeheartedness, because he used to behave according to his strong, honest, faithful nature.

Furthermore, his nature was not to be divisible or separable. In every work of Umar, we could find the whole entity of Umar. Look at any one of the events of his life, and you would find that all of his merits and good qualities are represented in it: his justice, piety, abstinence, faith, rigidity, lenience, greatness, and simplicity.

He used not to bear the responsibility as much as might be assigned to him, and make him feel rest, but rather as much as required by the situation, in such a way as to achieve whatever consequences resulting from such a responsibility. During that time (of carrying out such a responsibility), he would not ask himself whether he was alone or he had supporters (to share it with him).

Indeed, he used to devote himself wholeheartedly to the extent that he would not ask about or even estimate whatever consequences might result from such a devotion.

On the day he embraced Islam, he was the fortieth member of the Muslim group. Just a few moments had no sooner passed after his

embracing Islam than he felt so much responsible for the religion and the Muslim group as a whole. Moreover, he felt responsible for the future of this religion and its people over the coming centuries.

Thus, he came out, announcing publicly his embracing Islam in the same way we referred to earlier. At that time, he perceived that he was not announcing his own conversion into Islam, but also the conversion of those thirty-nine persons who preceded him to embracing Islam, who worshipped Allah in secret. He was also announcing the conversion of hundreds of millions of people into Islam who would come later in the future (over centuries).

His responsibility for this religion did not come to its end only at the point of embracing his Islam, but it went as far as to take both Islam and Muslims out of the state of being hidden, to which they were forced under the pressure of Quraish's persecution.

Thus, he went to the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" and said: "By Allah O Messenger of Allah! we would not worship Allah in secret after today." Consequently, the call (to Islam) got out in order to face its enemies, and (at the same time) address those promised (to accept it). The tribe of Quraish then received the first magnification of it (the call) in some words, announcing the news of its (Quraish's) and its idols' death (of the period of ignorance).

That was the first blessing of Umar, and it was a pattern of the way, in which Umar would undertake his responsibilities for the religion of Allah and the world of people later. It was a way of a man who used to see himself facing the events and situations, as if he was the only responsible for all of them. Umar then would face every crisis striking Islam and Muslims, in such a way as if he was the only responsible of confronting and solving it.

His belief in such a responsibility would lead him to reject every low matter concerning the religion, and every kind of concession to its enemies. In spite of his absolute belief in the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", his responsibility would move in every direction, to the extent that might make him seem to oppose the (opinion of the) Messenger whom he honoured and for whom he was ready to sacrifice his life.

In the treatment of peace contracted in Al-Hudaibiyah, he saw that the benefits given by the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be

upon him” to the infidels of Quraish were so much. At the same time, he believed that it was necessary to fight them and enter Mecca willingly or unwillingly, since they were not inclined to peace, nor did they want to follow the right judgement. Since truth and falsehood were fighting one another, then, the truth must be superior rather than to be inferior, and must face (the falsehood) instead of keeping up with it.

In this way, Umar understood the matter, and there was no flee from announcing it publicly. Umar went to the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” before the scribe began to write the document of agreement and said: “O Allah's Apostle! Aren't we in the right and our opponents in the wrong?” The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” said: “Yes.” Omar said: “Aren't our killed persons in Paradise and theirs in Hell?” He said: “Yes.” Omar said: “Then why should we accept hard terms in matters regarding our religion? Shall we return before Allah judges between us and them?” The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” said: “O Ibn Al-Khattab! I am Allah’s Apostle and Allah will never degrade me.”

The phrase “I’m Allah’s Messenger” had a sounding ringing of truthfulness in the heart of Umar. He deduced from the utterance of Allah’s Messenger of such a phrase in this very situation that the plan was much beyond being merely a crossing opinion of the Messenger, so that he might argue him. Thus, he went away, but not afar, thinking of the whole situation.

But, his overwhelming sense of responsibility returned to overpower him, and urge him to review (the issue once again). So, he went to Abu Bakr “Allah be pleased with him”, talking to him: “O Abu Bakr! Aren't we in the right and our opponents in the wrong?” he said: “Yes.” Umar said: “Then why should we accept hard terms in matters regarding our religion? Shall we return before Allah judges between us and them?” Abu Bakr assured to him that Allah will never degrade His Messenger, and that Allah’s victory would be soon. Umar became quiet, though such quietness of him did not stop him from sending off Suhail Ibn Amr with strong gazes.

When Abdullah Ibn Ubai Ibn Salul, the chief of hypocrites in Medina died, Umar insisted on opposing the opinion that Allah’s Messenger should offer funeral prayer on him. Let’s pay attention to Umar himself while relating to us the news:

When Abdullah Ibn Ubai died, Allah's Messenger was called to offer the funeral prayer on him, who got up (to do so). When he stood in front of his (dead body) in order to offer the funeral prayer for him, I turned until I came in front of him. I said to him: "O Messenger of Allah! would you offer the funeral prayer on the enemy of Allah?" I started counting his evil days, while Allah's Messenger was smiling.

When I disturbed him by that, he said: "Be away from me O Umar! I was given the option to choose (whether to pray on him or not), and I chose (to offer funeral prayer on him). It was said to me: It is the same to ask for Allah's forgiveness for him or not. If you asked for Allah's forgiveness for him seventy times, he would not be forgiven.

Had I known that by increasing such asking for Allah's forgiveness over seventy times he would be forgiven, surely I would have increased it." Then, he offered the funeral prayer for him, followed his funeral procession, and stood near his grave until he was buried.

I became astonished because of my situation, and my being too much daring (to say what I've said) to the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him". by Allah! it was just a short time later that the Divine Verse was revealed:

"Nor do thou ever pray for any of them that dies, nor stand at his grave; for they rejected Allah and His Messenger, and died in a state of perverse rebellion."

Henceforth, the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" never offered the funeral prayer on a hypocrite, nor did he stand at his grave until Allah Almighty took him unto Him.

This scene shows how courageous and truthful Umar was in bearing his responsibilities. All the risks of this world were much more easier for him than to dare say "No" to Allah's Messenger. But, he was a man, who could hardly have more alternatives (to choose from), when his responsibilities would force him to behave in a certain way.

Since he thought it was obligatory for him to say "No" (for anything of which he might not be convinced), then, lets him say it, and his matter would refer to Allah. if the Messenger insisted on his situation, then, Umar had expressed his opinion, and freed himself (from committing the sin of not saying the truth whenever he learnt it), and then, he had no way but to obey and comply (with the Messenger).

In this event, he considered that if the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” offered the funeral prayer on such a great hypocrite as Abdullah Ibn Ubai Ibn Salul, this might lead many hypocrites to be more wicked and evil, and, at the same time, reduce the credibility of the sanctity of both truthfulness and fidelity in the sight of other people.

However, the respect he had for his responsibilities called him to announce publicly that opinion of him, even in this critical situation, where the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” stood up to offer the funeral prayer on the dead body of the man. But Umar opposed him saying: “Would you offer the funeral prayer on the enemy of Allah O Messenger of Allah?”

However, Umar’s dealing with his responsibilities was much more wonderful when he became the Commander of the Believers, where we could find the greatest signs of human superiority, and see the heroic spirit and marvelous behaviours. We could also see that which no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and no mind has ever thought of.

Yes. The merits here were so much great that they seemed to excel one another, and compete one another. Umar here was a ruler of a unique type, giving all human beings everlastingly a lesson of honesty, and an ideal of fidelity.

Consider his situation from himself, from his family, from the weak as well as from the strong ones among his people and nation, from his governors, and from the wealth and treasures of the (Muslim) nation. Look at all of his situations, matchlessly abundant of respect for his responsibilities of his job (as a commander of believers), and of the matter of ruling in its all aspects.

As a ruler, he forbade to himself not only the pleasures legal for him as a governor, but also the pleasures legal for an ordinary man in everywhere and time. He did so with the spirit of responsibility, which gave him the desire to be the first to become hungry whenever his people became so, and the last to be satisfied whenever his people were so. It also made him suffer from everything people suffered, no matter hard it might be.

He “Allah be pleased with him” illustrated this wisely when he said: “how would I be concerned with the matters of people unless I suffer from what they suffer?”

In this way, we saw how the Commander of the Believers stuck to eating oil (as condiment with bread) when the Muslims were befallen by a strong disaster as a result of shortage of meat and butter. He became addicted to eating oil until his stomach was troubled to the extent that he used to place his hand over it, and say addressing it: "O Stomach! You should be trained to have only the oil, since the butter is (too expensive to be) sold by (gold or silver) ounces."

One day, during the year of famine (known as the year of) Ramadah in Medina, he ordered that a camel should be slaughtered, and its meat should be distributed among the people of Medina. Those who were assigned to do the task achieved their job, and set aside the finest pieces of meat to the Commander of the Believers.

At lunch, he found (some pieces of) the hump and liver, the finest of a camel. He asked: "From where is this?" it was said: "From the (meat of the) camel you've ordered to be slaughtered today." He commented while pushing the table with his hand: "How miserable ruler I would be if I ate the finest meat of it, and left for the people its bones!" Then, he called Aslam, his servant, to whom he said: "O Aslam! Take away this bowl and bring for me some bread and oil."

His saying: "How miserable ruler I would be if I ate the finest meat of it" drew a complete enlightening picture of the spirit of responsibility, which dominated the behaviours of this matchless ruler. He regarded himself just as one of the ordinary people, whom Allah favoured him only by more burdens and duties when he made him ruler of them, and not by giving him such a prestige as to make everything permissible for him as a ruler.

Therefore, as a commander of believers, Umar used to exert his best efforts (in the service of people) in such a way that it would be admitted if he assigned to himself some delicious food which might provide him with power to continue working; and this is our thinking, which is right according to our opinion.

As for Umar, who knew justice in its highest degree, which one could hardly reach, he had another way of thinking. It is true that he perceived that his responsibilities required him to save good living (for the people). But, if he, under certain circumstances, failed to do so, then, he should do justice with all of them, and he should be the first of them to bear his fortune of starvation and poverty.

One day, he received a gift of sweet from one of his governors. As soon as it had been placed before him, he asked the one who brought it: "What is this?" he replied: "It is sweet made by the people of Azerbaijan, with which Utbah Ibn Farqad sent me to you." He (Utbah) was governor of Azerbaijan. When Umar tasted it, he found it so much delicious.

Then, he asked the one who brought it once again: "Do all the Muslims here eat that?" the man said: "No, it is the food of the elite." Umar well closed the vessel and asked the man: "Where is your camel? Take it and return to Utbah and say to him: Umar orders you to fear Allah and satisfy the Muslims from what you satisfy yourself."

This was a ruler whom we could hardly find taking his position on the top, or in the front of a procession, except when there were destructive dangers. But on all occasions other than that, he chose to have his position there, on the last seat, and in the last row, in order to guard amount the caravan of all the Muslims, and be sure that if there was a certain blessing, it would not reach him until it has reached all of them.

If we came to his situation from his family, we would find a very great sanctity of responsibility and a matchless respect for the matter of ruling. He did not only forbid them what they did not deserve legally, but also what they deserved legally. Moreover, he made them undertake much more consequences than their counterparts might do, to the extent that being related to Umar's kinship became a heavy burden, from which one would like to flee away.

The Commander of the Believers knew that the matter of ruling should not be examined very well more than it might be in his relations with his kith and kin, i.e. should they have a particular way of treatment different from that of others, or all of people should be equally treated in the same way, under the same law, and with the same justice?

For this reason, he was extremely rigid in making them bear the responsibility of being an ideal, that should be followed by the others. So frequently, he made them live in hardship. So often, he took from their hands, and even from their mouths the good food they were eating. (He used to become so much angry as if) the earth was to move to and fro with him, and the sky was to wave over him, whenever he learnt that one of his family had a certain privilege, whatever little it might be.

Whenever he stipulated a law or issued an order, he would gather his family first and say addressing them: "I forbade people to do so and so."

Indeed, people regard you in the same way as birds regard the flesh (of the animal when it dies). If you fall, they will fall after you, and if you fear and show respect, they will do the same. By Allah! If anyone of you is brought to me because of doing what I forbade people to do, surely, I would double his punishment for his position (of kinship) from me. Anyone of you should be at the head of others (in bearing responsibilities) if he so wishes, and he should be in the rear (when it comes to gains) if he so wishes.”

Do you consider his saying: “I would double his punishment for his position (of kinship) from me”? However, one’s belonging to Umar’s kinship did not mean that justice should be cancelled, or that law was vainly established. On the contrary, it meant multiplying responsibilities, consequences and forbiddance.

It also meant keeping away from any kind of joy, and abandoning any suspicious thing. It meant that those kith and kin should be at the head of others in case of facing dangers, and be in the rear in case of gains. Finally, it meant, in Umar’s sight, to be forbidden even an acquired right in avoidance of probable suspicion.

If we saw him blaming his son Abdullah Ibn Umar, certainly, we shall be astonished, although Abdullah “Allah be pleased with him” was in the lead of piety, abstinence and god-fearing. That’s because he used to follow the steps of his father, to the extent that he was not to do a single thing in which there was suspicion.

But, in spite of all of that, whenever Umar saw him getting even the least and humblest blessing, he would say to him: “Is it that for you’re the son of the Commander of the Believers?”

However, the phrase “Is it that for you’re the son of the Commander of the Believers” was the vital slogan of Umar with his family in particular, and with all of the people in general towards establishing the right and justice.

One day, he entered the house of his son Abdullah, whom he found eating slices of meat. He became angry and said to him: “Is it for you’re the son of the Commander of the Believers that you eat meat, while most people suffer from starvation? Is it not enough for you to eat bread and salt? Is it enough for you to eat bread and oil?”

On another day, he went out to the market in an inspective tour, where he saw some fat camels, better than those of others by virtue of their

fullness, of which he asked: "To whom do those camels belong?" they replied: "They belong to Abdullah Ibn Umar." He trembled so much as if the Doomed Hour was established, and said: "Abdullah Ibn Umar! How miserable you're, O son of the Commander of the Believers!"

Soon, he sent someone to bring him. He (Abdullah) came immediately. When he stood before his father, Umar started twisting the hair of his moustache, as was his usual whenever he was concerned with a serious thing. He said to his son: "What is the matter of those camels O Abdullah?" he replied: "They are some lean camels which I bought with my own money, and then sent to the protected zone for grazing, in order to practice trade with them, and get profits as Muslims do."

Umar commented ironically: "In this way, people would say: Graze the camels of the son of the Commander of the Believers, give water to the camels of the Commander of the Believers, with the result that your camels would grow fat, and your profits would increase, O son of the Commander of the Believers." Then, he shouted: "O Abdullah Ibn Umar! Take the money you've paid for those camels, and give the profits to the Muslim Treasury."

O Creator of this man! Exalted be You! Abdullah Ibn Umar did not do a thing, which might be condemned, but he invested his lawful property through a legal trade. Moreover, with his strong religion and morals, he was beyond any suspicion. But, because he was the son of the Commander of the Believers, the Commander of the Believers forbade him what was his right, for fear that his belonging to Umar might give him more opportunities than others.

Indeed, this (Umar) was a ruler who took hold of the balance of acts so much fearfully. He did not only prevent his family to get fortunes and privileges, but also he forced them to live with him over a path, thinner than a blade, and smoother than a hair, to the extent that it seemed as if they were distressed rather than being blessed by their belonging to Umar's kinship

One day, wealth from some provinces was brought to Medina. Hafsah, his daughter went to him in order to take her portion. She said to him mockingly: "O Commander of the Believers! Do not forget the right of your kith and kin from this property, since Allah Almighty recommended anyone to treat his kinship well." He replied to her seriously: "O my

daughter! The right of my kinship should be from my property. But this is the property of all of Muslims. Get up and return to your home!”

This was a man, who was brought up at the hands of Muhammad “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”. He frequently heard him saying to Fatimah, his dearest daughter: “No Fatimah! There are among the Muslims some who are in need of this property more than you.” Then, he used not to give her in order to give the others.

From this source (of morality) Umar quenched his thirst, and on the light of this guidance he went on. He always asked his family to rise to the level of bearing the responsibility, and not to be given superiority or privilege to others, for Umar had no privilege to give to anyone. He wanted them to help him fulfill his duty, and that should necessitate them to exert more efforts and be more excellent (over themselves). It necessitated them to give more and take less, expecting from Allah a good reward for that, and (in other words), to be an example for those of purity, who live only with the minimum requirements of living.

When Allah Almighty granted the Muslims lots of wealth during the time of his ruling, of which the treasury of Muslims became abundant, some of his companions suggested to him to issue an order to make a census, in which all of the people might be enlisted in order to get their yearly income systematically. Such men as Aqil Ibn Abu Talib, Jubair Ibn Mut’im and Makhramah Ibn Nawfal, the most knowledgeable of the lineages of Quraish as well as of the Muslims, were chosen for accomplishing this mission.

They sat and started enlisting the names, beginning from those of Banu Hashim, then the family of Abu Bakr, and those of the family of Adi, to whom Umar belonged. When the Commander of the Believers went through the document, he returned it to them, and ordered them to enlist more of Muslims before those of Adi. He mentioned to them those names and families which he wanted to be placed before his family, and said to them: “Put Umar and his family in their appropriate place.”

Those of Adi learnt of what had happened. They went to him, asking him to make their names as they were in the front, so as to be able to get their portions when the wealth was still abundant. They said to him: “Aren’t we the family of the Commander of the Believers?”

He replied: “How miserable you are O sons of Adi! You want to get your portion on my account, and my good deeds be given to you. No, by

Allah! You should take your position fitting for you, even if it makes you the last of all of the people.”

Indeed, the kinship of the Commander of the Believers did not mean favouritism or being given preference over others, as we mentioned earlier, but it meant (doing one's best to the extent of) swcating and living with the least requirements of life. As a commander of the believers, Umar opposed the insistence of some of his companions and brothers on giving his son Abdullah an office in the state.

In their insistence, they were motivated by eagerness to benefit of his great talents. But Umar refused, as well as he refused to name him as his successor when he was approaching death. He also rejected to include him in the six candidates whom he selected to choose a successor from among themselves. He said in this issue: “It is enough for the family of Umar that only one of them would be reckoned (for the office of caliphate).”

So much frequently, it was said to Umar: “O Commander of the Believers, your son Abdullah is the most pious and just one. Is his sin, as well as the sin of people who (will be deprived of his ruling, though in fact they) will be happy by his being the caliph, that he is the son of the Commander of the Believers?” but, he used to remind those who said so that his son Abdullah was not the only pious just one, but from among the Muslims, there were a lot equal to him in piety and justice. So, if Umar favoured him, he would be considered to have taken his side, and flattered him.

On the other hand, Umar was an ideal, before being a ruler. If he appointed the good men from among his family, where then would his destiny be in case that after him there came some rulers who might go too far in appointing their families, depending upon the fact that this was done by Umar? For this reason, he stipulated the glorious principle that “whoever appointed a certain man for no reason other than love or kinship, would be considered to have betrayed Allah and His Messenger and the believers.”

Had he given his son Abdullah an office in the state, he would not have done because of the position of Abdullah from him, but for his being worthy of, and qualified for such an office. But, in spite of that, he insisted on his situation.

One day, he was sitting among his companions when he said to them: “The people of Kufah troubled me. If I appointed a lenient man to be their governor, they would regard him as weak, and if I appointed a strong one, they would complain of him. Would that I find a strong honest Muslim to appoint him as their governor.”

One of those sitting with him said: “By Allah, I could guide you to such a strong Muslim.” Umar asked eagerly: “Who is he?” the man replied: “Abdullah Ibn Umar.” The Commander of the Believers said: “Might Allah destroy you! By Allah! You do not want by this (the pleasure of) Allah.” Then, he selected another governor.

However, we used to imply such behaviours of Umar under the title of the abstinence or austerity. Umar used to let himself hungry and austere in his clothes because of his abstinence. But in fact, behind this abstinence, there was another incentive, much more deep-rooted and essentially profound.

It was the excellent respect for his responsibilities, and unique fidelity and loyalty to his obligations and commitments. The responsibility had, in his living pure conscience, its great sanctity, to the extent that all matters and situations would be adapted to it, although in itself it would not submit to any matter or consideration.

We would be fortunate to go through this speech, which he delivered just in the beginning of his caliphate: “I was told that the people feared my hardness, and became scared because of my rigidity (in the religious matters), and they said: Umar used to be hard upon us when the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” was among us, and when Abu Bakr became our ruler. Then, how would the matter be, since he became the caliph?”

No doubt, whoever said so has told the truth. During the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, I was his servant and helper, and he “Peace be upon him” was matchlessly kind and merciful, and was, as Allah Almighty described him “to all of the believers compassionate and merciful”.

I was for him an unsheathed sword (upon his enemies) until he would stop me, or let me so that I might go on (facing his enemies). I became as such with the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” until he died while being pleased with me, praise be to Allah so much, of which I’m very happy.

Then, Abu Bakr became caliph of the Muslims, and he was certainly so much amiable, bounteous and tractable. I was his servant and helper, mixing my hardness with his lenience, in such a way as to be an unsheathed sword until he would stop me (or let me) so that I might go on (facing his enemies). I became as such with him until he died while being pleased with me, praise be to Allah so much, of which I'm happy.

Then, I became your ruler O people. It should be known that this hardness has been now weakened, except with those wrongdoers and aggressors. As for those of peace, religion and moderation, I would be more lenient to them than they would be to themselves.

I'm going not to let anyone wronging or assaulting another until I would (subjugate him to the extent that I would) place his cheek on the ground in order that he should submit to the truth. Moreover, after this hardness, I would (be so humble that I would) place my cheek on the ground (in respect) for those of modesty and moderation.

O people! You've from me such rights for which you should account me as I'm going to mention to you: I've the obligation not to set aside anything for myself from your coming tribute or from what Allah Almighty would grant you (by virtue of conquests), except legally; and I'm committed that if anything of it falls in my hand, it would not be spent but on what is right.

I'm also committed to increase your (yearly) gifts and incomes, Allah willing, and protect your borders. I'm committed not to throw you in what is destructive, and if you go on detachments, I would be the guardian of your dependents until you return to them safely.

So, fear Allah, and help me against yourselves, by keeping your harm away from me, and help me against myself, by ordering (others as well as yourselves) to do good, and preventing (them) from doing evil, in addition to giving me the sincere advice concerning your matters, for which Allah made me responsible."

However, this speech is not the most comprehensive, elegant or brilliant delivered by Umar. But, in this situation, it shed an overwhelming light on the deep-rooted incentive, which was behind all movements and steps taken by this great man.

During the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", he was an unsheathed sword on every kind of fabrication and falsehood, with which the Messenger used to strike

whatever he wanted. During the lifetime of Abu Bakr, he was the same sword in the hand of the successor of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”. In other words, he was a soldier, who might discuss the matters with his leader, but ultimately, he would be the obedient (of the leader’s orders).

But now (since he became caliph), he became both the sword and the one who strikes, both the soldier and the leader. He came to be directly responsible for everything. He did not consider himself responsible (for everything) in the sight of people or history or their like, but he regarded himself responsible before the Clear Truth, i.e. Allah Almighty, from Whom nothing could be hidden. Yes, before Allah, the Great, the Highest, Umar undertook his responsibility in the same way as his two companions, i.e. the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and Abu Bakr had done earlier.

If we saw earlier how he, with his responsibilities, did beat out all desires, whether of himself or his family, let’s see now how he undertook his responsibilities towards the people, of whom he became caliph by virtue of Allah. Here, we meet, as we met earlier, and would meet later, with the matchless man, who used to regard himself directly responsible for every man in his group, for every woman in her house, and for every infant in his cradle.

He began his responsibilities for the people by living in the lowest standards they used to live. If even a single morsel of food having the least degree of superiority was given to him, he would say as we mentioned earlier: “How miserable ruler I would be if I had the finest of it and left for the people its bones!”

What is more astonishing was that this was not his conduct only towards the living ones, but also towards the dead ones. He rejected to get a single blessing his brothers of Muslims who died or were martyred in the Cause of Allah had not got before (the life of) Muslims had become luxurious.

When he visited Sham, he was served with delicious kinds of food. But, instead of eating of it, he gazed at it with weeping eyes and then said: “Is it that all those kinds of food became available to us, while (most of) our Muslim brothers died as poor, and they did not eat their fill of the parley bread?”

On the other hand, he always used to subjugate the ferocious strong men until they would submit to the right, and treat well those to whom they regarded themselves superior. At the same time, he used to (be so much humble to the extent that he would) place his cheek, as we heard him earlier, (in respect) for those of chastity and moderation.

He used to undertake his responsibilities by himself, without distributing them among those who were busy in their own responsibilities. If anyone of his companions got up to relieve him from a certain job, or even share him in doing it, he would chide him saying: "Would you bear my sins on behalf of me on the Day of Judgement?"

If we look at the psychological atmosphere filled with movement whenever Umar was called upon for undertaking a certain responsibility, we would see a waving moving world, and not merely a single man. The crossing event to which the most sensitive sympathetic man could not make sense, used to cause Umar to tremble, receive it with all of his entity, make analogies and comparisons depending upon it, in order to stipulate a certain law (to be applied on similar situations).

One evening, some traders came to Medina, and encamped at its outskirts. The Commander of the Believers set out, accompanying Abd Ar-Rahman Ibn Awf, in order to call on the caravan. That was at the last portion of the night. Near the sleeping men, Umar and his companion took their seat. Umar said to Abd Ar-Rahman: "Let's spend the remaining portion of the night here, so that we might guard our guests."

While they were sitting, they heard a child weeping. Umar kept silent and waited so that the child might stop, but he went on weeping. Then, he got up and ran towards him. When he became near him, and heard his mother trying to hush him, he said to her: "Fear Allah and treat your child well." Then, he returned to his place.

A short time later, the child went on weeping once again. Umar ran to him and said to his mother: "I ordered you earlier to fear Allah and treat your child well." Then, he returned to his sitting place. But he had no sooner sat down than the weeping of the child shook him.

He went to his mother and said: "Woe to you! I think you're an evil mother. What is wrong with your child?" she answered, without knowing to whom she was speaking: "O slave of Allah! No doubt, you've annoyed me. I try to wean him, but he rejects." Umar asked her: "Why do you try to wean him?" she replied: "Umar does not prescribe obligatory share

(from the Muslim treasury) but to the weaned ones.” He asked while gasping: “How old is he?” she replied: “Only some months.” He said to her: “Allah’s mercy upon you! Do not be hurry (to wean him).”

His companion Abd Ar-Rahman Ibn Awf said: On that day, he led us in the Morning prayer, with his recitation nearly not understood by the people because of his weeping. When he finished the prayer with the end salutation, he said: “How miserable Umar is! How many Muslim children were killed!”

Then, he ordered that an announcer should call in Medina: “Do not be hurry in weaning your children, because we assign from the treasury an obligatory share to every born child of Muslims.” Then, he sent this order to all of his appointed governors in the different regions.

The Commander of the Believers, whose armies destroyed the forts of both Khosrau and Caesar, undertook the task of guarding a caravan at the last portion of the night, and while being in that state, he became worried and troubled by the weeping of a child to the extent that he went on weeping while leading the prayer. Moreover, he did not deal with this event solely, but immediately, he put a law, which would involve all the similar cases. Indeed, this is an astonishing concern with the matters of the people, and a unique practice of the responsibilities of ruling.

During the year of famine, he learnt that a group of people in the furthest place of Medina was troubled by food shortage more than anyone else. He carried on his back two leather containers of flour, and made his servant Aslam carry a waterskin full of oil. Then, they ran to this group, having the relief for it.

When they reached there, the Commander of the Believers took off his garment, and cooked food for them until they ate their fill. Then, he sent his servant to bring some camels in order to carry them into Medina to be near him, live in a better residence, and get a better care.

People: people: people! This word was the higher invisible caller, which used to cry within the spirit of Umar during day and night. Even during his last breaths, with his wounds bleeding, he was occupied by nothing other than the matters of people. He called to him the six candidates whom he selected to chose a caliph from among them.

When Uthman, Ali and Sa’d came, he recommended them, though unable to speak: “O Ali! If you were chosen to undertake the matters of the people as the caliph, I beseech you by Allah not to make the sons of

Hashim superior to all people. O Uthman! If you were chosen to undertake the matters of the people as the caliph, I beseech you by Allah not to make the sons of Abu Mu'ait superior to all people. O Sa'd! If you were chosen to undertake the matters of the people as the caliph, I beseech you by Allah not to make your kinship superior to all people."

In the year he (died and) met his Lord, he had decided to take a tour in all the provinces, in order to inspect the matters of people and learn their news. One day, he said to his companions in this issue: "If I live, by Allah's will, I would go round the people (in all the regions) for a full year, for I know that people have many needs which are prevented to reach me. As for their governors, they do not convey them to me. As for them, they could not reach me. I would set out to Sham, where I would spend two months, then to the peninsula where I would spend other two months, then to Egypt for two months, then to Bahrain for two months, then to Kufah for two months, and then to Basra for two months. By Allah! What a blessed year it would be!"

Umar's responsibilities for the matters of the people moves us directly to his responsibility for his appointees to whom he trusted the task of undertaking the affairs of people in the different countries of the state. How did Umar used to undertake his responsibilities for his appointees and assistants in government?

He used to do so according to his unchangeable way, in whose examples there was not even the least degree of disparity or discrepancy. He used to select them as careful as if he were to define his destiny. He regarded himself responsible for every fault committed by anyone of his appointees, whether he learnt or not.

In this way, he used to turn his face, think, ask Allah for the best choice, consult his companions, and be as deliberate as he could before selecting anyone of his appointees and assistants.

In this context, he used to say to his companions: "Tell me, if I appoint as your governor the best one in my knowledge, and then order him to do justice among you, would that make me free (in the sight of Allah)?" his companions would say: "Yes." But, he would reply to them: "It is not until I see his job, and whether he worked as I ordered him to do or not."

He also used to say: “If anyone of my appointees wronged anyone of people, whose complaint reached me and I did not change this appointee, then, I would be considered to have wronged him too.”

He said to Khalid Ibn Arfatah: “My advice for you while you’re sitting with me is the same to anyone in the furthest borders of Muslims. This is due to (my responsibility for) the matters of the people with which Allah has encircled my neck. Indeed, the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” said: “Whoever died while deceiving his subjects would not (approach and even) smell the smelling of Paradise.””

Umar wanted his appointees to undertake their responsibilities at the same level he himself used to do. Since this was difficult, if not impossible, because Umar could hardly be replicated, then, he used to look for the one who might approach this level most. For that reason, he used to be so much careful, vigilant and watchful in selecting them.

He used, first of all, to reject anyone eagerly seeking for the office. In this issue, he followed the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” who said: “By Allah! We do not appoint anyone asking or being eager for it.”

This is the first step of Umar to select his appointees and assistants, i.e. to exclude anyone having a desire or ambition for the position. That’s because whoever has the desire for ruling would surely have the same desire for ruling tyrannically. Moreover, those who seek for being rulers and governors never estimate the responsibility of ruling as it should be, for had they done, surely, they would have escaped and refrained from it.

One day, he wanted to select one of his companions to be governor of a certain country. Had this companion kept patient for a few hours, Umar would have invited him in order to give him the office to which he nominated him. But our brother initiated to that of which he knew nothing. He went to the Commander of the Believers, asking him to appoint him as governor of a certain country.

Here, Umar smiled for the wise of fates. He thought a little and then said to his companion: “No doubt, we wanted you for this position, but whoever seeks for it should not be helped to get it, and his demand should not be responded too.” Consequently, he removed him and appointed somebody else.

Let's ask ourselves: What harm would be in anyone asking for the right of getting a certain position, since he is certain of being able to undertake the responsibilities of it very honestly? Did not (the Prophet) Yusuf, the truthful say to the king: "Make me the guardian of the stores of the country, since I know well how to take care of them"?

It is true that Yusuf the truthful said so, but when he introduced himself for this position, he seemed to be a fedayce, who ran the risk of his life, or a fire fighter, who threw himself into the mouths of flames, not knowing whether he would return as healthy as he was or would turn into ashes. It is true also that he asked for a high position, but at this time, this office was a source of loss not gain (for its claimant), and its certain dangers were more numerous than its probable pleasures.

At that time, the country was suffering from bankruptcy, famine and destruction, to the extent that all officials tried to escape from what their hands had caused. Meanwhile, a man introduced to solve such a difficult matter. He was not a position claimant so much as he was a lover of difficulties and dangers.

However, Umar was not in need of philosophizing the matter in such a way. For him, it was very clear. He wanted a governor who could rise to the same level of responsibility understood by Umar; and anyone of such a kind would surely try to escape from it instead of being eager to get it.

Umar himself escaped from what was greater than governorship. He escaped from the office of caliphate following the death of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him". Had it not been for the fact that Abu Bakr encircled his neck with it at a critical time in which one could not hesitate, surely, he would have fled away from it, and favoured, as he said earlier, to be killed rather than to find himself a commander of the believers.

Then, everyone asked for the office of governorship would underestimate its great consequences. Hence, Umar would regard him not worthy of getting it. This was the first requirement from his appointees: to be abstinent and flee away from it; and even if it came to them unwillingly, they would accept it fearfully. Then, he himself would select for it the strong honest one.

Whenever he selected a certain governor, immediately, he would take hold of his hand and say to him: "Indeed, I did not appoint you to violate the lives and honours of Muslims, but, on the contrary, I appointed you

so that you might establish the prayers among them, distribute the incomes equally among them, and do justice among them.” Then, he would count to him the taboos, which he should avoid: Do not ride on a fat (expensive) mount. Do not wear a fine garment. Do not eat an easily smooth food. Do not shut the gate of your house to prevent the needs of people from reaching you.

But, why did Umar use to forbid his appointees those legal pleasures of life, i.e. the fat mount, the fine dress, and the tender easy food? He did so in order that they would live under the same standards of the poor working class of people, and remain in their real positions, servants and not chiefs of people.

He wanted his appointees not to be seduced, rich or even to get, in the name of ruling, any kind of pleasure or privilege. For this reason, he used to track them in all aspects of adornment and superiority in order to push them far away from it. even if this aspect was a mount, it should be for doing a job and not for haughtiness, for service and not for showing pride, for necessity and not for showing any kind of luxury.

He did not want that his appointees should lose their eminence or prestige, but, it should be legal, not excessive or expressive of haughtiness and pride. He wanted them to excel others by superiority of their spirits, and not by elegance of their dresses, by the praiseworthy acts, and not by the false aspects and vain fame.

Consider how he drew cleverly the picture of the chief whom he liked, and the governor whom he favoured. One day, he said to his companions: “Guide me to somebody to whom I’d like to confide something of great concern to me.” They said: “So and so.” He replied: “We are not in need of him.”

They asked him: “Then, whom you want?” he answered: “I want someone, if he is among the people, he would seem to be their chief, though he is not really so. If he is among them while being their chief, he would seem just an ordinary one of them.”

What an intelligent resourceful person you were (O Umar)! Consider: this is what Umar wanted, i.e. chiefs in their morals and humility, and not in their dissipation and showing pride and arrogance, chiefs who would not illegally surpass others, for whom people would not leave the roads (whenever they passed by in view of their being so much frightful), but they would walk on the ground easily and lived satisfied and pleased,

chiefs who would share people in work and not distinguish themselves except by the good deeds and exerted efforts.

Indeed, he learnt all of this from the best tutor, the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him". The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" never saw his companions doing anything but that he would share them in doing it, carrying the most difficult part of the work, such as collecting the wood sticks for his companions one day while being on a journey. If they said to him: "We would do this on behalf of you O Messenger of Allah", he would reply: "I dislike to distinguish myself among you."

Once, he heard some of his companions saying to him: "You're our master, and the son of our master." He forbade them saying: "Let not Satan lead you stray from the right path."

Once, he came to some of his companions, who stood up in respect for him. But he forbade them saying: "Do not stand up as the foreigners do, greatening one another."

However, Umar's responsibility for his appointees did not come to an end only by selecting and well directing them, but it also went as far as to guarantee that their governorship and ruling over the people should be (a source of) mercy, luxury and safety. His way to achieve that was to make the governor under the observation of the governed people, to investigate himself immediately every complaint of the governor he learnt, and to track so much vigilantly the behaviours of his appointed governor in the different regions and provinces.

During the season of the greater pilgrimage, publicly in the presence of the people coming from the different parts (of the Islamic state), he gathered all of his appointed governors and stood up to deliver a speech, in which he said: "O people! By Allah! I do not send my appointed governors to you in order to strike you, or usurp your property. But, I send them to you in order to teach you your religion, and the sunnah of your Prophet "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him". Hence, whoever was treated differently should complain to me, and by Him, in Whose Hand is my life, I would enable him to retaliate for himself (according to the law of equality)."

Amr Ibn Al-As who saw that such an encouragement might endanger the respectability of governors stood up and asked him: "Tell me, if there is a certain governor of some subjects, who punished some of them,

would you retaliate from him?” Umar answered: “By Him, in Whose Hand is my life, I should do. No doubt, I saw the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” exposing himself to retaliation, saying: “Whomever I lashed his back, this is my back, let him come and take his right.””

Umar meant what he said. Whenever he was told of a suspicious thing from any governor, he would investigate it determinedly and vigilantly.

Once, he asked some visitors from Hims about its governor Abdullah Ibn Qurt. They replied: “He is a good governor, O Commander of Believers, except that he built for himself an expensive comfortable home.” Umar murmured: “Expensive comfortable home in order to show pride with it over the people! How miserable Ibn Qurt is!”

He sent an envoy to him and said to him: “Start with the home and burn its gate. Then, bring him to me.” The envoy traveled to Hims and returned bringing with him its governor. But Umar rejected to meet him for three days. On the fourth day, he received him. He chose to meet him in the rocky ground (of Medina known as Al-Harrah), where the camels and sheep of charity lived.

As soon as the man had come, Umar ordered him to put off his suit and wear the garment of shepherds. He said to him: “This is better than that which your father used to wear.” Then, he gave him a rod and said to him: “This rod is better than that, with which your father used to beat down fodder for his sheep.” Then, he pointed to the camels and said to him: “Follow and graze them O Abdullah!”

Some time later, he invited him and said to him blaming: “I sent you (as governor) in order to construct and build (for all the people and not for yourself). Return to your job, and do not do what you’ve done once again.” This was his situation from a man, although the people testified that he was a good governor, except that he distinguished himself by an expensive home.

Do you not see that we are face to face with a myth, though if it was so, one could hardly believe it really existed? But, it was fortunate that Umar was not a myth, but he was a reality, which dominated both time and space, and a guidance from Allah to all the people, saying to them: “As such try to be.”

At the time the Persians and their allies gathered in Nahawand, while Sa’d Ibn Abu Waqqas was getting ready to face their overwhelming

armies, a complaint against Sa'd reached Medina. Umar sent for him immediately, without waiting even a little until the battle, which had not begun yet, would end. That is because Umar thought if the complaint was true, he would not keep Sa'd in his position, even if that would result in the Muslims' loss of the battle. Indeed, victory, as Umar used to say, would not be at the hands of any leader committing sins.

In this very critical conditions, Umar sent Muhammad Ibn Maslamah there in order to investigate the complaint. If it was true, he would bring Sa'd to Medina.

Muhammad Ibn Maslamah went and caught hold of the hand of Sa'd, the great conqueror and the highly-respected leader, and went with him round the people, in order to questionnaire their opinions concerning him. Some people praised him, and others counted many faults committed by him. Finally, Ibn Maslamah accompanied him to Medina.

However, we know well the story of Umar with Amr Ibn Al-Ass, the governor of Egypt. A distressed young man visited him saying: "O Commander of Believers! This is the station of the one who seeks refuge with you." Umar asked him to tell him the story. He learnt from him that Muhammad Ibn Amr Ibn Al-Ass had struck him severely because they took part in a race, in which he won over him. He lashed him on his back saying: "Take it, since I'm the son of the good noble men."

The Commander of the Believers sent for Amr Ibn Al-Ass and his son Muhammad. Let Anas Ibn Malik narrate to us the story as he saw it:

While we were sitting in the company of Umar, Amr Ibn Al-As came wearing a lower and upper garments. Umar turned around in search for his son, who was behind his father. He asked: "Where is the Egyptian?" he said: "Here I'm O Commander of Believers." Umar said to him: "Take the stick and strike with it the son of the good noble men."

He struck him severely and we liked he might do so. He did not stop until we liked he would do so because he struck him so much. During this time, Umar was saying: "Strike the son of the good noble people." Then, Umar said to the Egyptian young man: "Strike with it the bald head of Amr, for he (his son), by Allah, did not strike you but under the protection of his authority." He said: "O Commander of Believers! I satisfied myself and quenched my thirst, and struck the one who had struck me." Umar said to him: "By Allah! If you strike him, we would not prevent you from doing so until you leave him."

Then, he turned to Amr and said to him: “O Amr! When have you enslaved the people since their mothers gave birth to them as free?” he turned to the Egyptian young man and said to him: “Go away, might you be rightly-guided, and if anything suspicious happened to you, you should write to me (in order to enable you take your right).”

This was Amr Ibn Al-As, one of the great companions, and a governor of one of the greatest countries of Islamic state, whose son was not be able to be saved from the punishment, which was about to catch Amr himself, but for the pardon granted to him by the one who had the right to punish him.

But all of those strong rigid situations of Umar from his appointed governors who misused their authorities would turn into scenes, in which Umar would seem to be so much merciful, kind and happy, whenever he investigated with any of his appointees and found him sinless.

Once, he received a complaint against one of his appointees, i.e. Sa'id Ibn Amir Al-Jumahi, including three points of critique. The first was that he never came out to the people before forenoon. The second was that he never answered anyone at night. The third was that he had one day per month on which he never came out to the people, and none of them would see him.

Then, Umar called upon him to defend himself. He introduced the complainers to him and asked them to speak. They said: “He never comes out to us until it is noon.” The Commander of the Believers looked at Sa'id, and asked him to answer. He said: “By Allah, O Commander of Believers! though I hate mentioning the reason, but anyway, my wife has no servant. So, I always make the dough and wait until it is fermented to be able to bake it. Then I perform the ablution of the forenoon prayer and come out to them”.

Umar smiled and became happy. It seemed that a man in whose faith he was confident, and whom he selected would not be sinless. He asked the complainers: “What else?” they said: “He never answers anyone at night.” Sa'id said: “by Allah, I hate saying the reason. But, anyway, I've made the day for them and the night for (celebrating the praises of) Allah (and performing prayers).”

Umar asked: “From which thing else do you complain him?” they said: “There is one day every month, on which he never meets anyone.” Sa'id said: “I have no servant to wash my garment. So, I always wash it

myself. And, since I have no more than a garment, I always wait until it is dry sometime later. Then, I come out to them at the end of the day.”

Umar commented happily: “Praise be to Allah Who has not disappointed my true sense.” He would be so much happy whenever a complaint (against anyone of his appointees) was refuted or disappointed, or whenever anyone of his governors proved to be sinless. That’s because he wanted to see his appointees, if not all of the people, much more excellent and free from sins.

He sent Umair Ibn Sa’d as governor of Hims, where he stayed for one year, without sending any tribute or news. He said to his clerk: “Write a message to Umair (to come) for I’m afraid that he betrayed us.” He sent for him to come.

One day, the streets of Medina witnessed an unkempt man covered with dust, suffering from the trouble of the journey. He could hardly lift his feet while walking because of his long suffering and great fatigue. On his right shoulder, there were a scabbard and a bowl, while on his left shoulder, there was a little waterskin containing water. He was reclining upon a stick, which could hardly bear him, though thin and weak.

He entered into Umar with slow steps. He said: “Peace be upon you, O Commander of The Believers!” Umar returned back the greeting and asked him, grieved by the trouble and fatigue he noticed on him: “What is the wrong with you O Umair?” (Umair said): “I’m as you see. Do not you see me healthy and pure, having the world which I’m dragging by its two horns”. Umar asked: “What do you have?” he replied: “I have my bag, containing my food, my bowl, in which I eat, my waterskin in which I have water in order to perform my ablution and drink, and my stick on which I recline and with which I could fight an enemy, if there is any. By Allah! All of this world is for me but my luggage”.

Umar asked: “Did you come on foot?” Umair replied: “Yes”. Umar asked: “Did not you find anyone to give you a mount to ride?” Umair said: “They (the people of Hims) did not give me, and I did not ask them to do”. Umar asked: “What did you do concerning the job which we confided to you?” Umair said: “I went to the town to which you sent me. I gathered its righteous good men, to whom I confided to collect the tribute. When they collected it, I spent it in its right places. Had anything of it remained for you, surely I would have sent it”.

Umar asked: "Then, did not you come with anything to us?" Umair said: "No". Umar cried admiringly and happily: "Make a new term of governorship for Umair!" but Umair replied, showing no need for it: "Those days (during which I was a governor) had passed away. I would never function for you or for anyone after you."

Woe to anyone who might think of presenting to Umar any gift. In fact, all of them were too prudent to be involved in such a problem. None of them did so except for this good pious man, Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari, who did so only once. One day, Umar returned home where he found a piece of carpet as little as no more than a meter or so. He asked Atikah, his wife: "From where did you get this?" she replied: "It was presented to us by Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari." He cried: "Abu Musa? Bring him to me."

Abu Musa came, preceded by his fears. He had no sooner come near and seen the carpet in his right hand, while being angry than he said to him: "Do not hurry (to reproach) me O Commander of Believers." But, the Commander of the Believers hurried to hit his head with the carpet, addressing him: "What did lead you to present anything to us? Take it, for we're not in need of it."

Woe also to anyone who might imagine he could face the responsibilities of this great man by any kind of intercession. Once, he ordered that one of his appointed governors should be punished. His wife Atikah took the opportunity of being at rest and interceded for him. She did no more than saying: "O Commander of Believers! What is the reason of your being angry with him?" Umar trembled so strongly as if a corner of Allah's religion was ruined. He cried to her: "O enemy of Allah! What do you have to do with this matter?"

Had this been a sort of consultation from his wife, surely, he would have accepted it, and discussed the matter with her, for later, we shall see him bowing admiringly to a woman who opposed his opinion concerning the dowers. But here, Umar understood it as an interference in the responsibility from someone who himself was not responsible, and a sort of intercession or intermediation, for which he was not to keep silent.

This was his responsibility towards his appointees. Let's see his responsibility towards the property of the Muslim nation. It was an astonishing responsibility. Let's begin with this story:

Abdullah Ibn Amir Ibn Rabie'ah said: I accompanied Umar Ibn Al-Khattab on a journey from Medina to Mecca for performing Hajj, and

then we returned. During this journey, no tent or building or anything alike was made for him to shelter him from heat. But, he used to put a piece of cloth over a tree, under whose shade he would shelter himself.

Bashshar Ibn Numair said: Umar asked me: "How much money did we spend in our journey?" I said: "Fifteen Dinars." He commented: "No doubt, we've spent this money so much excessively."

Do you see this man, under the threshold of his stores there laid the wealth of both Khosrau and Caesar, who set out on the journey of Hajj in a scorching desert, without assigning to himself even the least necessities of it, feeling the heat of the blazing atmosphere and the flaming mountains as the other people did, spending during his journey no more than fifteen Dinars, for which he commented: "We've spent this money so much excessively"?

It was said that before his being the ruler and commander of Muslims, he worked as a trader, getting the earnings for himself, his family and dependents from this job. When he devoted himself to his new mission, he assigned to himself an obligatory salary from the treasury which might enable him, his family and dependents just to live, at the level of poverty i.e. to have only the necessary requirements of life.

Over days, his burdens, needs and expenses increased. Whenever there was more luxury, he would raise the salaries of people whether inside or outside Medina. But he did not think to increase his own even a single Dirham, to the extent that his companions heard one day that the Commander of the Believers took some money as a loan in order to be able to continue living.

A group of companions, including Uthman, Ali, Talhah, and Az-Zubair gathered and agreed that they should talk to him in this matter, and ask him to increase his salary and assignments. But, they feared talking him because they knew well that in this issue, he was hard and rigid, and might become angry. But, Uthman Ibn Affan said: "Let's enter into him from behind."

They went to Hafsah, daughter of Umar, and asked her not to disclose (to her father) their opinion, and requested her to know the opinion of her father. Hafsah went to Umar shyly, and started talking cautiously and gently. But, Umar asked her: "Who sent you to me with such an opinion?" she said: "None." He said: "Nay! Some people sent you, and if I know them, surely I would reckon them."

Then, he asked his daughter: “You were a wife of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”. Which clothes did he use to keep in your home?” she said: “Only two dresses.” He asked: “What was the best kind of food you saw him eating?” she said: “Parley bread prepared with butter.” He said: “What was the most comfortable bed on which he used to sleep in your home?” she said: “A heavy clothing which we used to spread in summer. When it was winter, we would spread the half of it, and cover our bodies with the other half.”

He said: “O Hafsah! Tell those who sent you that the example of myself and my companions, the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and Abu Bakr is that of three persons who followed a certain way. The first passed with his provisions, and he reached his destination. The second followed him, going through his way until he reached him. There remains the third one. If he adhered to their way and was pleased with their provisions, he would join them. But, if he followed another way different from theirs, he would not join them.”

Are there any words to comment on this unique wonderful scene? No, of course. Then, let it be with no comment.

He used to become so much angry if he heard that even a single Dirham from the public wealth was misappropriated or spent illegally. He then would tremble and tremble as if all the stores of money and not a single Dirham or lesser were lost. He swore that if a single camel of those set aside to charity was lost on the banks of Euphrates or Tigris, while he was in Medina, he would be afraid that Allah might reckon him for it.

Once, on a very scorching summery hot day, Uthman Ibn Affan looked from a window of one of his buildings in the upper part of Medina, and saw a man driving two little camels, with the hot wind covering him. He said to himself: “Why does this man not wait in Medina until it becomes somewhat cool?” he ordered his servant to see who was this man crossing afar, whose features were nearly hidden by the strong violent wind.

The servant looked from an opening in the door and said: “I see a man wearing a turban, driving two young camels before him.” He waited a little until he came near, where he knew him and cried: “He is Umar! He is the Commander of the Believers!”

Uthman got out his head from a small opening, protecting himself from the heat of the wind. He called him: “What did cause you to get out

at this time O Commander of Believers?” Umar replied: “Two young camels of those assigned to charity went far from the protected zone (pasturing place). I feared they might be lost, and Allah would ask me about them.”

Uthman said to him: “Come to the shade and water, and we would (order somebody to) do this on behalf of you.” Umar answered him: “Return to your shade O Uthman.” He said: “We’ve (of servants) who could suffice you (and do this task on behalf of you)O Commander of Believers.” He said once again: “Go back to your shade O Uthman.”

He went on his way, while it was too hot (as if it were) to melt the rocks. Uthman said admiringly and admiringly: “Whoever wants to see the strong honest one, let him look at Umar.”

The strong honest man used to practice his financial responsibilities so much cleverly and skillfully. He was not only concerned with relentlessly keeping the wealth of Muslim nation, but also he was concerned with developing it, increasing its profitability, and raising the national income as possible as it could be.

For example, he opposed distributing the public land among the soldiers who conquered it, because this act would create a monopolistic class of people, unable to serve the land, in view of their shortage of agricultural experience. So, he left the land with its original farmers, regarding as sufficient the taxes taken to the treasury, from which every Muslim person would get his portion.

Furthermore, he encouraged men to give life (by taking and farming) to the dead land, which had no owner, in which the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” said: “Whoever gave life to a piece of dead (barren) land (by farming it), it would be for him.”

But, when the Commander of the Believers saw some people taking and then fencing any piece of such a land, with negligence of reclaiming and farming it, he stipulated a law, according to which the one who took such a land would be given a time of three years (to cultivate it). If he was unable during this period to give life to it, by changing it into a field, a garden, or a pasture, it would be taken from him and given to another one who might be more capable of doing so.

He used to urge Muslims to get legal earnings. So, he stimulated them to practice clean honest trade. He addressed them saying: “Later, you will

have sons and grandsons. Then, how would that which is in your hands benefit you (if it has been gained illegally)?"

He was so much concerned with animals. He set aside to the cattle a rich affluent pasture, where Muslims could graze their cows with no return. He always used to look after this pasture, and so frequently, the people used to see him everyday coming out at noon, putting his garment over his head in order to protect him from sun, aiming at the protected zone of pasture, looking after, and inspecting it himself, warning its guard to allow for anyone to cut anything of its trees, or to strike in it with an axe.

No one should think that we talk about a few resources of wealth during the ruling of Umar. That's because Umar did not die until he had control over one of the greatest national resources and incomes, particularly after almost all the property of both Romans and Persians had become in the possession of Muslims.

Khalid Ibn Arfatah said to him: "O Commander of Believers! You've caused the people to ask Allah Almighty to increase your lifetime, even on the expense of theirs. No one had entered (and taken part in the conquest of) Al-Qadisiyyah but that his salary would be two thousand or fifteen hundred. No child, male or female, had been born but that he would receive one hundred per month. No child had attained the age of puberty but that he would receive five or six hundred."

Umar was eager to develop the wealth of Muslims, but not covetously or greedily. The wealth, in the sight of Umar, should be in the service of man, and it is not that man should be in the service of wealth. For this reason, he used to be so much angry with any governor who withheld it from his subjects, in order to increase the tribute sent to Medina, thinking this would cause the Commander of the Believers to be more pleased with him. He used to order that the resources of any country should be distributed among its inhabitants. If they were satisfied, the portion of the capital would be sent to it.

He ordered his employees to take taxes gently, kindly and justly. One day, a great wealth in abundance was conveyed to him from a certain province. He asked about its source, and the reason of its affluence. When he learnt that it was a mixture of the obligatory charity paid by Muslims, and the tribute paid by those of Scriptures, he said while looking at its being abundant: "I think you've troubled the people so

much.” They replied: “No, by Allah, we did not take but what is legal.” He asked: “Without striking or forcing anyone to pay?” they answered in the affirmative. He commented smiling: “Praise be to Allah Who did not make such (a coercion a sin) on me, nor during the time of my authority.”

Moreover, from among the people of Scripture, he used to exempt those falling in debts implying all their property. That is because it was not a tax of submission, but a tax of income; and if its payer was unable to afford it, immediately, he would be exempted from it.

This was Umar, the ruler, the responsible (for everything), and this was his way in undertaking his responsibilities. This was the man, whose armies removed away and obliterated the injustices of the Romans, while he was walking in the streets of Medina, wearing a garment having 21 patches (out of humbleness).

One day, he delayed in attending the Friday prayer. When he came, he ascended the pulpit and apologized to the Muslims saying: “This shirt of mine detained me (because I was washing it) since I’ve no shirt other than it.”

His blessed responsibilities put him on the top of every way and good example, with the result that his behaviours came to be the utmost limit of perfection a human being could approach.

As for his responsibilities of himself and his family, he used to make them bear the worst consequences and forbid them the best gains of ruling. As for his responsibility for his employees and assistants, he used to select them by himself, and get them adhere to a straight path, much thinner than a blade, and smoother than a hair. As for his responsibility for the wealth of the nation, he was the keenest on keeping it and being very moderate in spending it. As for his responsibility for the strong tyrants, he used to be so much rigid and decisive. As for his responsibility for the weak and simple ones, he used to attain the utmost degrees of lenience and mercy.

His responsibility used to lead him, and he used to practice it wholeheartedly, in the spirit of a devoted worshipper. However, his great behaviours as a responsible man could not be represented only in those hurry short news which we narrated, except in the same way as the sunlight could be shown through the ray from a small window.

Indeed, Umar as a ruler troubled all the rulers over all history, and made their responsibilities to difficult to bear. The reason was that he was

not a god or an angel, or a Messenger Divinely inspired. But, he was just an individual belonging to human beings, and he used to do his best (to undertake his responsibilities); and since he was able to attain such an utmost degree of justice, mercy and honesty, then, what would the excuse of others be if they failed to do so?

Umar the ruler is then Allah's proof (of ruling) against any ruler on the earth. So, if any ruler said while being reckoned: "O my Lord! I was unable (to rule almost justly and perfectly)", it would be said to him by Allah: "Then, why did Umar not fail to do so?"

CHAPTER FOUR

THERE WILL BE NO GOOD IN US UNLESS WE HEAR IT

The Commander of the Believers did not undertake his responsibilities as a man proud of his genius, arrogant of his position, feeling superior to others because of his authority. But on the contrary, he undertook those responsibilities with a conscience of the one who was guardian of treaty, searching for the truth, urging others to get up and share and cooperate him (in carrying the responsibility) with their thoughts and opinions, so as to complement his own. This necessitated him to sanctify (the principle of) consultation, and bow submissively and happily to every kind of brave true opposition.

If we were admired by the great majesty of responsibility in the sight of Umar, then, let's put our hand on the base, upon which this huge construction was established. It was (the principle of) consultation and opposition. However, it is astonishing that the banner of (the possibility of showing) opposition to such a range as we shall see later was raised by a man, who believed absolutely in the Divine texts, who feared to explain any Verse of the Holy Qur'an, lest he might load it with some additional meaning from his own, which it did not imply, who did not allow for himself to deviate from the established method and the set plan even as little as a hairbreadth, and who, in other words, was a man of everlastingly great obedience and faith.

But, what astonishment could we find in this phenomenon? Indeed, those who know well Muhammad and his religion, must be well aware too of the fact that the great respect given to the Divine text should not mean to underestimate the right true opinion (of people), and that the faithful obedience could not be inseparable from the honest sincere opposition.

On the other hand, Umar was not a man of appeasement (i.e. to try to please others). It is true that he was a man of obedience as we mentioned, but he was a man of such everlastingly great obedience and faith as required by his firm satisfaction. Indeed, since he was persuaded by the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", in whom

he believed strongly, he should follow his traces without the least hesitation or reluctance.

For this reason, he would discuss those matters which were apt to discussion, and he sometimes would take for granted some matters, without understanding their significance, for nothing more than the fact that he was persuaded by the honest true Messenger who had brought them earlier.

When he kissed the Black Stone in Ka'bah, he said as if he were addressing it: "No doubt, you're a stone which could neither cause harm nor benefit anyone. By Allah! Had not I seen the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" having kissing you, surely I would not have kissed you."

When he ran (during compassing Safa and Marwah) uncovering his shoulders, he said: "What is the reason for such running and uncovering shoulders since Allah has made Islam victorious and defeated infidelity? But, in spite of that, we should not give up anything we used to do during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him"."

Once, he caught hold of a waterspout in the house of Al-Abbas from which the water brought by the rain used to flow to the mosque, and removed it. But as soon as Al-Abbas had told him that it was the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" who placed it as such, he brought it once again, and swore by Allah that Al-Abbas should stand over the shoulders of Umar in order to put the waterspout in the same place where the Messenger had put it.

Once, he was asked about the meaning of Allah's saying: "By the (Winds) that scatter broadcast; And those (clouds) that lift and bear away heavy weight." He explained them and then commented: "By Allah! Had not I heard the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" having said so, I would not have said it."

To such an extent Umar adhered to the Divine texts, and stuck to following (the Prophet). But, in spite of that, he had the same belief in the significance of consultation and showing opinion; and of course, consultation is a kind of expressing opinion and opposition.

However, I know nothing that could estimate the consultation, as did Umar's belief in it, and his way of applying it. The development of political life in Medina did not allow at this time for such democratic

institutions as the parliament or so to come to light. But, in spite of that, democracy at that time, and at the hands of this man had a great opportunity of flourishing.

Umar did not try to make the people adhere to his own opinion. He did not issue a judgement at any time without making them share him effectively in its responsibility. What is wonderful in that is that he did not do so out of humbleness or grace, but according to his true nature on the one hand, and out of duty and obligation on the other.

If the case on which Umar wanted to decide something had an evidence in the Book of Allah, then, Umar would carry out the Word of Allah. If it belonged to the current emerging problems, and newly occurring matters, on which there might be no detail in the Book of Allah, then, Umar would not act arbitrarily, trying to put the Holy Verse "We have not left anything not mentioned in the Book" inappropriately, but he would adopt the principle of consultation and taking the opinions of others.

However, the opinion in his sight was not to seek for agreement, but to seek for the truth. He so much frequently said to the people: "Do not say the opinion which agrees with my desire as you think, but you should say the opinion which agrees with the truth." Let's go through this scene of carrying out his principle of consultation.

When the Muslims released Iraq from the Persian ruling, and most of its people were converted into Islam, Umar was of the opinion that its cultivated land should not be distributed among the conquerors, and should remain in the hands of its farmers, provided that its taxes should be given to the treasury, so that all the people would take their obligatory portions. He thought that distributing the land among the fighters would obstruct them from fighting in the Cause of Allah, reduce the yields of the land, in view of the fighters' lack of experience of agriculture, create a class of feudalists and monopolists, and finally leave poor the remaining Muslims who did not share them, and forbid the coming generations their legal rights.

But, some of the companions opposed this opinion of his. The more they raised their voices expressing their opinions, the more Umar said quietly: "Indeed, I express the opinion I thought of (as true)." Then, the gathering dispersed, with reaching an agreement upon a single decision.

In another meeting, to which Umar invited some people from the Ansar, famous for their great mature experience, there was another discussion of this topic. Umar was afraid that someone might flatter him by adopting his opinion as the Commander of the Believers.

So, Umar started the meeting saying: "I invited you in order to share with me the responsibility of your matters which I undertake. I'm only one like anyone of you. Now, you should say the truth (as you think it might be), whether some of you might be different with me, or might agree with me. I would not like that you should follow my own desire, for you've in Allah's Book what is right and true. By Allah! If I express anything for which I've a desire, surely, I want nothing but the truth."

The consultation and opposition in the sight of the Commander of the Believers were the wings of the right ruling, and the source of life for every successful judgement. For this reason, as soon as he had become the caliph, and heard people's whispering about his rigidity and violence, he sat with himself, thinking.

Hudhaifah entered upon him and found him concerned and worried, with his eyes shedding tears. He asked him: "what is wrong with you O Commander of Believers?" Umar replied: "I am afraid that I might commit a mistake, and no one of you would alarm me in respect and for fear of me." Hudhaifa narrated that he said to him: "By Allah! If we see you having deviated from what's right, surely we would turn you back to it." Umar became happy and pleased and said: "Praise be to Allah that I've companions who might set me right if I deviated."

The greatest aspects of estimating (consultation and) opposition in the situations of this outstanding unique caliph could be shown in his loyalty to it, and saving all kinds of safety for those who expressed different opinions. One day, he ascended the pulpit and said: "O community of Muslims! What would you say if I turned with my head to the world as such?" a man broke the rows, and said while pointing with his arm as it were a sword: "Then, we would do with the sword as such." Umar asked him: "Do you mean me by your saying so?" he replied: "Yes, I mean you by my saying." Umar became happy and said: "Praise be to Allah Who made from among you those who might straighten my crookedness."

This situation of the Commander of the Believers was not for showing off, for Umar was too strong and honest to be forced to take refuge to such situations. But, it was a true behaviour, and a spontaneous way, with

which Umar wanted to reach the truth, and become sure that he was ruling a nation of (people as strong as) lions, and not a flock of sheep.

Indeed, Umar was eager to enable all the people to get their right of practicing the matter of ruling with him, and taking their places beside him. Had he struck even once the right of opposition, then the consultation in his age would have greatly failed. But, on the contrary, he separated from him those of flattery, and raised to a higher position those of discussion, who used to express their opposing opinions, by asking why and where. Moreover, he used to become so much extraordinarily happy and pleased by any brave true sincere word of opposition, whether to him or to anyone of his appointed governors.

One day, he ascended the pulpit in order to talk to the Muslims about a serious matter. He started his speech, following Allah's praising: "Listen (to me) Allah's mercy be upon you." But one of the Muslims got up and cried: "By Allah, we would not listen. By Allah, we would not listen." Umar asked him eagerly: "Why Salman?" he said: "You've given yourself preference over us in this world, by giving everyone of us one garment, and two to yourself." The caliph caught a glimpse at the rows of the people and then asked: "Where is Abdullah?" he answered: "Here I'm O Commander of Believers." Umar asked him publicly: "Who is the owner of the other garment?" Abdullah answered: "I'm he, O Commander of the Believers."

Then, Umar addressed Salman and the people with him saying: "I'm, as you know a tall man. My garment was short, so, Abdullah gave me his own, with which I lengthened mine." Salman said with tears of happiness and confidence in his eyes: "Praise be to Allah! now say, and we listen and obey O Commander of Believers."

Could the freedom of opposition attain this extent at which people assign to the ruler the number of his garments and clothes in this rigid manner? Indeed, if there is anyone who knows something similar to that, then, let him tell us about it.

On another day, while he was sitting with his companions, an excited man, having a handful of shaved hair broke the rows of people. As soon as he had reached Umar, he threw the hair at his chest, in a state of bitterness and protest. All people present there became angry, and some of them intended to harm him, but Umar hinted to them to stop.

Then, Umar collected the hair, and pointed to the man to sit down. He waited some time so that the man might become calm, after which he said to him: "What is wrong with you?" the man answered, while becoming excited once again: "Indeed, by Allah, had it been for the fire (of Hell) O Umar!" Umar said: "You've told the truth by Allah. Had it been for the fire (of Hell)! What is your matter O Arab brother?"

The man narrated his complaint, telling that Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari punished him illegally. He lashed him and shaved his head. The man collected the shaven hair, which he brought to Umar. Umar looked at the faces of his companions and said: "If all of the people are as strong and brave as this man, it would be dearer to me than all that which has been bestowed upon me by Allah." Then, he sent a message to Abu Musa, ordering him to enable the man to retaliate for himself, lashing-by-lashing, and shaving-by-shaving.

This was a ruler, who used to be happy on the occasion of every kind of (true correct) strong protest and opposition. If there was only a single man who demanded his right without being cautious or coward, it would be dearer to him, as he himself said, than all of his conquests, and all of his heritage from both Khosrau and Caesar.

However, Umar was self-confident, as well as he was sure of his upright method. So, he did not fear any kind of criticism or opposition. Moreover, he used to search, and give reward for them. He also used to establish them in both the hearts and minds of his people, taking from them a guiding lamb, and a complementary proof.

One day, he addressed women saying: "Do not raise the dowers of women over forty ounces. Whoever increased it over than that, I would put the addition in the treasury." One from among the women got up and said: "You have nothing to do with that." He asked her about the reason, and she said: "That is due to Allah's saying: 'But if ye decide to take one wife in place of another, even if ye had given the latter a whole treasure for dower, take not the least bit of it back: would ye take it by slander and a manifest wrong?'" He smiled and said his famous phrase: "A woman has been right in her opinion, while Umar has been mistaken."

On the other hand, whenever he was faced by an exciting violent opposition, he would not be angry at it, nor would he be disturbed by it. After he had dismissed Khalid Ibn Al-Walid, he gathered the people and said to them: "I apologize to you for my dismissing Khalid. However, I

ordered him to distribute this wealth among the poor weak Emigrants, but he gave the strong rich noble ones.”

But, Abu Amr Ibn Hafs got up and said: “By Allah! there is no excuse for you O Umar. You’ve dismissed a man appointed by the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, and in this way, sheathed a sword unsheathed by the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, and cancelled something set by the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, and severed a relation with your kith and kin, and seemed as an envier to one of the sons of your paternal uncles.”

As such the Commander of the Believers was accused publicly, and in the presence of people of envy and severing relations with kith and kin. But, Umar did no more than he smiled and said addressing Abu Hafs Ibn Amr: “(Do you accuse) me of severing relations with my kinship? Do you become angry for the son of your paternal uncle?”

This was not only a just ruler, but also a great tutor, and much more excellent in polishing the natural essence of man, in order to reenergize it. What a brilliant astonishing effect this situation might leave on the people! What an overwhelming rest of assurance they might feel by virtue of a ruler having such behaviours! But, why did Umar not do that, since he was a disciple of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and a companion of his successor Abu Bakr?

Once, he saw with his eyes and heard with his ears a desert man pulling and speaking harshly to the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, saying to him: “Give me, since this wealth is not yours or your father’s.” he saw also the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” having smiled and said to the man: “You’ve told the truth. It is owned by Allah.”

This scene irritated somebody, who was Umar himself, who intended to harm this desert man, but the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” prevented him smilingly and said: “Let him O Umar, for the claimant has the right to speak.”

On such a straight method Umar went on, estimating every kind of useful criticism, and honest opposition. All the people had the right to suggest their views to the Commander of the Believers, and oppose his behaviours of which they might not be persuaded.

He let them understand well that consultation was not a sort of luxury or filling the free time, but it meant that all the people should get up to share with the ruler all of responsibilities. The people's belief that their ruler seriously wanted to know their opinions and discussing his own, in addition to the lot of experience that proved his estimation for consultation and opposition, were on the top of incentives, which inspired the people the courage to express their opinions and carry the consequences of responsibility.

Umar was so much expert in knowing those who had the ability to perceive the desires of the ruler, and take the initiative of giving him the opinion which would keep up with his own will. So, he used not to consider them. He used to say to anyone of them when he showed his opinion: "O enemy of Allah! by Allah, you did not want the pleasure of Allah with that." However, those were few in number. But most of the people were of such a good brilliant sort, who used to say their useful word sincerely, loudly, and clearly, resulting from their belief in their duty and right they had with him, as well as from the behaviours of the Commander of the Believers with his advisors and opponents.

It was a great characteristic of Umar that he used to ask for consultation as an ordinary individual and not as a ruler and the Commander of the Believers. Whenever he asked for an opinion or consultation concerning a certain matter, he would not show any kind of authority, but he would let the others feel they do a favour to him, and save him from the burden of reckoning, since they help him distinguish what is right from what is false.

With such a spirit, he received every sort of opposition to or condemnation of him. One day, he was crossing the street in the company of Al-Jarud Al-Abdi, when a woman called him: "Wait a little O Umar, for I want to talk to you." Umar turned to his back, and stopped until the woman reached him. She said to him, while he was paying attention to her smiling: "O Umar! I knew you since you were called Umair, fighting with the young men in the market of Ukaz. Then you became called Umar, then the Commander of the Believers. Fear Allah concerning your subjects, and know that whoever feared death would also fear (committing even a single) slip."

Al-Jarud Al-Abdi said to her: "You've dared to talk so much bravely to the Commander of the Believers." But, the Commander of the Believers pulled him and said to him: "Let her, for you do not know her.

She is Khawlah, daughter of Hakim, whose saying Allah heard from the seventh heaven, while she was arguing the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and complaining to Allah regarding her husband. For this reason, Umar is to listen to her speech.”

No doubt, the Arab nature, in addition to the Islamic spirit provided the early Muslims with a strong rich fortune of bravery in facing the ruler. But, at the same time, this sort of bravery would not have reached such a high great extent unless the ruler’s behaviours towards it had been glorious and gracious, in such a way as to develop and not extinguish it as done by Umar.

At the hands of this great man, the consultation was safe from any kind of crisis and trouble. That is because the crisis of consultation always exists when there is a ruler, who likes authority more than freedom. Umar did not only do what is contradictory to that, but also he looked at authority just in the same way as one was forced to look at the flesh of a dead body.

Although Umar deprived the authority when he practiced it of all its vanities, seduction and violence, he kept considering it as such, i.e. as the one who was forced to have it, and not the one who sought to get it.

He kept on preparing the people to be the real ruler, and to be his true successor when he would pass away. He was entirely concerned to leave the nation strong and constant, and he succeeded to do so. He put in its service all the income of the state, and for it, he established the protective forts and castles at the borders, and constructed cities and districts.

In addition to all of that, if not before it, he was able to make sense to the psychological force of the nation, which let the people feel they were masters and safe, and that they make their destiny by themselves, and no one outside should make it for them unexpectedly.

In this way, Umar made every plan and decision subject to consultation, and he had great respect for the truth and right. Moreover, he did not restrict consultation to special class of people, but he estimated it as an admitted right of all the nation. That is because the Commander of the Believers was not to make a special class of people surrounding him on the expense of the others, but, he was a man for the entire nation,, a knowledgeable, and one worthy of being recorded by history.

However, we are with a man, having the authenticity of his origin, environment and religion, a man who used to know his real position from

the people, as well as the people's position from him, in addition to the position of both him and the people from the quiet current of life. Furthermore, he was well-aware of the facts of his world, without studying them in any university or book.

The first, if not the most important, of those facts in his knowledge was, as he put it powerfully and comprehensively: "When have you enslaved the people since their mothers gave birth to them as free?" this is the first of the facts of our human world as Umar perceived. I.e. freedom is a right one acquires at the moment of birth. As a ruler, he did not fear it. On the contrary, he liked and sanctified it so much faithfully.

The concept of freedom, in his sight, is so much easy and comprehensive. It is the freedom of fact, which should be beyond all restrictions. Since the people themselves uncover such a fact, they should be free in practicing its uncovering; and since there is no one to possess or know solely such a fact, then, everyone should have the right to follow his way to know the fact. This means that people are free to announce their opinions, and express their ideas. If it is right, then, all the people would be profitable, and if is mistaken, then, the one who expressed it would know his mistake.

But, it is necessary to say here that Umar respected the difference of opinions and views about those facts, for which there is no clear evidence, whether from Allah or His Messenger. There are a lot of facts, which Allah left for the people to discover. There are also a lot of facts, which require the opinions of people in order to be clear.

According to Umar, expressing the opinion is a right of everyone, male or female, young or old he might be, i.e. that is not to be restricted only to the elite. That is because he looked around him and found empires being destroyed, thrones of kingdoms being ruined, and humiliated people getting up to find themselves free. He also wondered at which hands all of this had been done, it was at the hands of the ordinary unlettered poor simple people, who believed in Muhammad, and followed the light, which was sent down with him. Those people then were the basis of the new life.

If we were to respect their hands, which destroyed (infidelity) and built (a new life for Islam), we then should respect their opinions, which they would express. If we were to ask for their help and support, we then should accept their consultation and criticism. Since it was they, who

undertook all of the burden, the ruler then should have no right to behave solely, or make decisions independently of them. Consequently, he should have no right to ignore their right to say no, since he needed their yes one day.

One day, there was a dialogue between him and one of the people, who was insisting on his opinion, to the extent that he said to him: "Fear Allah O Umar!" he repeated it so much that one of the companions scolded him saying: "Keep silent, for you've talked to the Commander of the Believers so much pressingly." But the Commander of the Believers said to him: "Let him, for there will be no good in you unless you say it, and there will be no good in us unless we listen to it."

Yes. There will be no good in the people unless they say what think it is right, and there will be no good in the ruler unless he listens and pays attention to it.

But, the problem is not of saying and listening so much as it is of confidence and assurance, which raises the level of courage in showing one's opinion, and of justice in accepting it. That was the greatness of Umar in this situation as was in every situation. He was great in perceiving that courage is the secret and essence of life, and if men lost their courage, they would lose all that which qualify them to be worthy of uprightness, progress, and successful development; and if this happens, then, woe to them as to their ruler! Indeed, if both ruler and his people gave up expressing and accepting opinion, they would be considered to have decided to withdraw from life.

Pleased be a nation led by Umar, this strong honest man, who was free from the ailment of ruling and rulers in every point of time and space. That ailment is the rulers' eagerness to have their word (decisions) superior. Umar was not only free from it, but also he transcended upon it. The superior word in Umar's sight was only of the truth, whatever it might be.

He sometimes passed a certain judgement, and took a specific decision (concerning him), who might object to it, saying to the just imam and the honest caliph: "Let others judge between you and me." But, Umar, by your Lord, would never be sad or angry. On the contrary, he would accept happily, because if he was right, he would find those who would support him, and if he was mistaken, he would find those who would guide him to the right.

One day, he met Al-Abbas and said to him: "I heard that the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" had a desire before his death to increase the area of the mosque. Since your home is near the mosque, give it to us to be implied in it, and take one more spacious." Al-Abbas said: "No, I would not do so." Umar said: "Then, I would take it from you by force." Al-Abbas said: "You've nothing to do with that. Make someone judge between you and me rightly." The Commander of the Believers said: "Whom you choose?" he said: "Hudhaifah Ibn Al-Yaman."

Instead of inviting Hudhaifah to his sitting, the Commander of the Believers went to him in the company of Al-Abbas. Yes, since Hudhaifah now represented an authority even higher than that of the caliph, because he would judge between the caliph and one of the Muslims, or between the state and an ordinary citizen, something similar to the council of state in our modern age (let him then go to him).

Before Hudhaifah Ibn Al-Yaman both the commander of the Believers and Al-Abbas sat and narrated to him the difference between them. Hudhaifah said: "I heard that the Prophet of Allah David wanted to increase the area of the mosque of Jerusalem. There was a home near to it, which he wanted to take. The home was owned by an orphan, from he demanded it, but he refused. David wanted to take it by force, but Allah inspired to him that "The home which is to be the furthest from oppression is Mine." So, David cancelled his opinion and left it for his owner." Al-Abbas looked at Umar and asked him: "Do you still want to take my home by force?" Umar answered in the negative. Al-Abbas said: "But, I would give you the home to be implied in the mosque of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him"."

I think most that if Umar saw our astonishment by his democracy, surely he would himself be astonished. In all of his marvelous and wonderful things, he did not regard himself doing something extraordinary. This is the essence of greatness, the greatness of a man who asked for Allah's mercy upon anyone showing him his mistakes, or saying to him "No Umar."

Allah's greeting be upon the Commander of the Believers! Greeting be to the humanity which produced him, and the religion which brought him up.

CHAPTER FIVE

I'M NOT A DECEIVING MAN, AND THE DECEPTION COULD HARDLY MISLEAD ME

His intelligence and prudence were at the level of his nature, responsibility and faith. A'ishah, mother of the believers, talked about his outstanding brilliant cleverness and skill in the following short phrase: "He, by Allah, was a uniquely matchless knowledgeable of everything, who prepared for every matter what was fitting for it. Allah Almighty granted him rich understanding and wisdom; (He (Allah) giveth wisdom whomever He wants (of His slaves), and whoever was granted wisdom had won a great.""

However, Umar was worthy of Allah's grace, grant and goodness. In all of his life, there was nothing (of it) for himself solely, because his life entirely was devoted to Allah, assigned to His obedience, and the service of His creatures. His intelligence was to support the truth not the falsehood. It stemmed from his responsibility according to which it worked. It was the intelligence of the upright nature and the vigilant experience. Consequently, it was not elliptic so much as it was to seek for the truth to which it would penetrate as fast as a glance, if not faster.

Furthermore, he had a so much great fortune of Islamic jurisprudence. In this issue, Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud said: "Umar was the most knowledgeable from amongst us of Allah's Book, as well as of the religion of Allah." his companions told that he alone had nine-tenth of the religious knowledge.

In fact, his glittering intelligence and rich genius were so much clear in all of his behaviours and words. As well as Umar was not proud of his authority, he was not arrogant because of his genius, although if he wanted to plunge into every competition of intelligence, surely, he would win all of them. But, as he thought, he was not gifted the blessing of intelligence but to see the truth on its light, and with which he would be able to avoid the evil tricks of cunning made by the enemies of clearness and foes of truth.

So frequently, he "Allah be pleased with him" said: "I'm not a deceiving man, and deception could hardly mislead me." This phrase illustrates the nature of his outstanding intellect and intelligence. It was

not aggressive or hostile or elliptical or assaulting or opposing intelligence, but, it was an intelligence of an excellent man, working in the service of outstanding principles. It was then not an intelligence of battlefields so much as it was an intelligence of heroism. It was also not a traditionally instructive intelligence so much as it was a creatively imaginative intelligence.

This was one of the signs of the mind, which used to believe in the (religious) text, and submit to the sayings (of the Prophet). In addition to that, it was going here and there, having the capability of foreseeing what is unseen, and sometimes, it would (utter the truth even) ahead of the Divine revelation, to the extent that made the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” say, describing this extraordinary prudence and astuteness: “Indeed, Allah has made the truth manifestly shown and expressed through the tongue and heart of Umar.”

One day, he said to the Messenger: “O Messenger of Allah! is that the station of Abraham, our father?” the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” answered in the affirmative. He then said: “Would that you take it a place of prayer!” it was no more than a few days later that the Holy Verse was sent down: “Remember We made the House a place of assembly for men and a place of safety; and take ye the Station of Abraham as a place of prayer.”

There were a lot of similar events, in which an idea or hope would emanate from his enlightening mind and intelligent insight, with which the Divine revelation would be sent down some time later.

For this reason, the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” said about him: “If there are to be inspired people after me, then, it would be Umar.” For this reason too, the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” made him a source of legislation when he said to his companions: “I do not know how long I will live among you. So, follow (the steps and methods of) those people after me, i.e. Abu Bakr and Umar.”

Umar had a general extensive intelligence and deep sight, which used to uncover all ambiguities, and reach everything, no matter far it might be. His opinion in what is easy was as serious as his opinion in what is dangerous, i.e. short words and comprehensive judgements.

He also had an understanding of the natures and dispositions of people, as great as his understanding of the course of events of life. He

used to say: "People are more similar to their time than they are to their parents." He also said: "No one has a certain blessing but that it would have its envier. Moreover, if one is straighter than a shaft, you would find a backbiter to him."

Although they are short judgements, they are also general and comprehensive, in which all of Umar's wisdom and genius, in addition to his experience of the human nature are represented.

He used to regard the people according to an accurate balance, when he said: "The dearest one to us before seeing you is the one having the best conduct. If you speak, then it will be the one having the best expressions. If we experience you, it will be the one doing the best acts."

The crossing aspects were not enough, in his sight, to form right judgements about others. Once, he heard someone praising another, describing him that he was a man of sincerity. Umar asked him: "Have you ever traveled in his company?" the man answered in the negative. He asked once again: "Have you ever gone at odds?" he answered in the negative. He asked: "Have you ever deposited with him anything?" he answered in the negative. Umar commented: "Then, you have no better knowledge of him. Perhaps you've seen him raising and lowering his head in the mosque (during the prayer)."

Although Umar then was one of those imams of piety, god-fearing and guidance, he did not regard only raising and lowering one's head in the prayer as enough to be confident of the one who used to do it, not out of underestimating the matter of worship, but because of his great comprehensive knowledge of the secrets of human disposition, and good understanding of its hidden currents.

Umar's intelligence was not to understand the matters only from some of its sides and angles, but it was to uncover them as a whole, and assimilate all of its patterns and examples. In his knowledge of people, he would not be satisfied with investigating the side of worship in them, in spite of the high position of worship and worshippers in the sight of Umar. But, he would survey all the sides of the personality, because the right concept of worship in his sight meant that one's personality should be upright and almost complete.

For this reason, he used to complain so much from the innocence of the pious man vis-à-vis the capability of the non-pious one. He did not regard the innocence one of the characteristics of worship and piety,

because the piety in his sight was to be strong, pure, resourceful, and excellent. Moreover, life for him was not a good innocence, but it should be a successful experience, and an honest heritage.

One day, people talked well in his presence about somebody, describing him that “He never knows evil.” Umar commented: “Then, this would make him more apt to fall into it.”

That’s not to say that committing evil is necessary for anyone to know it. But it means one should be knowledgeable of evil, so that it would not invade him in a dress of goodness. He also perceived with his elegant prudence that virtue does not mean that one should withdraw from life in avoidance of afflictions, but it should be to face life, and fight afflictions.

In this context, he was asked: “Who Is better and more intelligent: a man who never commits a sin because he has no desire for committing it, or a man who never commits a sin though he has a desire for it?” Umar, the astute prudent man answered: “Those who have desires for committing sins, though they never commit them (are better), because it is those, whose hearts have been examined by Allah. they would be forgiven, and would have a great reward.”

Such intelligence and jurisprudence reached a much greater extent when the problems of life and people were offered to him. Once, a certain case was filed before him, on which he gave a particular verdict. A short time later, a similar case was filed, on which he gave a different verdict. Whenever he was asked about the reason of this difference, he said: “That (first case) was according to our earlier judgement, and this (current case) should be according to our present judgement.”

The circumstances of both similar cases were different. Umar the genius jurisprudent, did not have unchangeable moulds of verdicts, set for every occasion. But, he had a good understanding, moving in every direction, with which he perceived whatever effects the difference of conditions had on the event itself, and consequently upon the judgement.

Nothing could excel the intelligence of Umar except for its bravery. He, whom we see adhering to the Divine text, and following the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, was the same, who announced the end of a legal judgement, which was in force when the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” died, and remained as such when Abu Bakr died too, and the utterance of this judgement is still a Holy Verse being recited in Allah’s Book. This

judgement is to set a part of the obligatory charity to those whose hearts were made to adhere to Islam.

Those whose hearts were made to adhere to Islam were a group of people, who embraced Islam depending upon a weak satisfaction, or even unsatisfied at all. So, the Holy Qur'an assigned to them a portion of wealth from the treasury, in order to make their hearts adhere to Islam, before their turning away from the religion, before tasting the good sweet of faith, and then accepting it with certainty and satisfaction.

Umar considered the different opinions of this issue, and then said: "The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" gave them when Islam was still weak. But now, Allah has reinforced His religion, and raised His Word (of monotheism). So, one could believe if he so likes, and one could disbelieve if he so likes. No doubt, this religion would not extend but for him, who enters into it with certainty and satisfaction."

Indeed, this situation alone rose to the highest level of human intelligence, not only for the good reasoning it implied, but also for the brave thinking it had. It is true that many people could perceive the wisdom of legislation of this issue as did Umar. But it is Umar alone who could be able, by virtue of his decisive intelligence, to develop this legislation, particularly, if it was established by a non-abrogated Holy Verse from the Qur'an, and a non-cancelled act made by the Messenger.

In fact, the deepest vision of insight, and the deepest understanding of Islamic law were extraordinarily implied in the mind of this rightly-guided honest man. The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" confessed of this blessing bestowed by Allah upon this man. In this issue, both of Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrated that Ibn Umar "Allah be pleased with both" told: I heard The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" saying: "While I was sleeping, I saw that a cup full of milk was brought to me and I drank my fill till I noticed the milk's wetness coming out of my nails. Then I gave the remaining milk to Umar Ibn Al-Khattab." The companions of The Prophet "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" asked: "What have you interpreted it, O Messenger of Allah?" he "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" replied: "(It is religious) knowledge."

Once, a Muslim who committed a sin deserving a legal punishment was brought to him. Three witnesses were against him, and there

remained only the fourth one, after which the legal punishment would be implemented. Umar sent for the fourth witness to come, and as soon as he had come, Umar became frightened. When he approached him, the Commander of the Believers said: "I'm seeing a man, through whom, I hope Allah would not scandalize one of the Muslims." Then, the witness came and said: "I did not see anything deserving the legal punishment." Umar then became relieved.

On another occasion, a man came to him, thinking he carried a glad tidings to him. He said: "O Commander of Believers! I saw such and such a man, and such and such a woman embracing each other behind the date palms." Umar caught hold of the dress round his neck, striking him so severely with his stick. Then, he said: "Would you not screen their act, and ask for Allah's repentance for them? No doubt, the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" said: "Whoever screened his (Muslim) brother, Allah then would screen him in this world as well as in the hereafter.""

This man was too pious and righteous to condemn any kind of moral mistake. But, at the same time, he was too prudent and intelligent to estimate the circumstances of such a mistake. Moreover, he had of religious understanding such an amount as to enable him to fulfill the rights of both.

He used to recommend the people to follow this religious understanding by saying: "As such you should do. If you saw any of your brothers committing a slip, you should (screen him and) help him transcend upon it. You should also ask Allah to repent on him, and you should not assist Satan against him."

It is true that the Commander of the Believers was so much rigid and strong (concerning Allah's rights), but the right understanding always would enlighten all of his situations. He used to pass his judgements depending upon his intelligence not his emotions. It is true that he used to refrain from sins, but at the same time, he used also to investigate in the manner of an expert the circumstances of every committed sin, establishing the golden rule that to suspend the legal punishments in whatever is suspicious would be better than to implement it.

Once, a man came to him in order to take his religious verdict concerning the following issue: "My daughter committed a sin which necessitated a legal punishment. She took the blade to slaughter herself,

but we could prevent her, after she had cut her jugular veins. We treated her until she recovered. Then, she repented sincerely. Now, her hand has been demanded by someone. Would I tell him of what she had committed?" he replied to him, in an intelligent piety, and pious intelligence: "Would you intend to uncover what Allah Almighty has screened? By Allah! if you tell of that anyone of the people, I would punish you so much severely that you would be an example of all the inhabitants of the Islamic territories. Go and give her in marriage in the same way as a chaste Muslim should be married."

However, the Commander of the Believers was not to form previously partial judgements on anyone. But his judgements were always all-inclusive and comprehensive. He also used not to turn his insight away from the reality, but he would concentrate upon it to the extent of making it an important source of his rightly-guided thinking.

On one night, he got out on a detective tour, in order to uncover whatever hidden distresses that might befall the people of Medina. Then, he heard a woman complaining her grief and sadness, saying: "No doubt, this night has become too long to bear, and there is no companion (husband) beside me to entertain me. By Allah! but for Allah, other than Whom there is no Lord, both sides of this bed might have been shaken (by someone to approach me. But surely, this would not happen) for fear of my Lord, and because of my shyness, which prevents me (from doing anything evil), and also because that which my husband used to ride should not be approached (by anyone other than him)." Then, she continued: "Is it as such that Umar finds easy our loneliness and the absence of our husbands from ourselves?"

Umar discovered that her husband was enlisted in one of his armies. In the morning, he went to Hafsah, his daughter, whom he asked: "O Hafsah! How long could a woman be patient against (the absence of) her husband?" she answered: "She could be patient for one, two, or three months at most. Then, with the end of the fourth month, her patience would come to an end." Immediately, he stipulated a law, according to which, the married man enlisted in an army should not be absent (in the battlefield) more than four months. Moreover, he sent for the husband of this woman, ordering him to return.

Once, he heard an old man weeping in a wonderful poetic verses the long absence of his son from him. When Umar asked about him, he knew that he was also enlisted in one of the Muslim armies. He sent to him

immediately, ordering him to return. Then, he stipulated a law, according to which, no one having old parents alive should set out for fight but after taking their permission.

He had an intelligence, which used to act upon the nature, taking as source of its thinking the reality of people and life. It has been conventional and legal that confession is always the main evidence (in any case); and it is right. But, the Commander of the Believers decided, depending upon his prudence and astuteness that it should not be so in all cases, and in order to consider it as evidence, it should be inseparable from the circumstances and conditions surrounding it. That's, it might be a result of fear and compulsion, and in this way, it would become insignificant. In this context he said: "None could be safe from confessing (of doing anything he might not have done) if you made him hungry, frightened or imprisoned him."

He used to order the leaders of his armies not to punish their soldiers (in case they committed mistakes) until they were on their return. If a soldier committed a mistake, let it be investigated for defining the responsibility. But, the punishment should be postponed until the soldier leaves the country of the enemies and return to his state. The Commander of the Believers mentioned the reason for such a decision of his which accounted for fear that the soldier being punished might join the countries of the enemies, and take shelter with them.

Indeed, his legislative intelligence was so much clear in those situations we mentioned above so as to show us the penetrating understanding and great readiness of this inspired rightly-guided man. One day, some young boys who thieved a she-camel of a man from the tribe of Muzainah were brought to him. He no sooner had seen them having pale faces and lean bodies than he asked about their master. They replied: "Hatib Ibn Abu Balta'ah." He said: "Bring him to me."

When Hatib came to him, he asked him: "Are you the master of those (young boys)?" he answered in the affirmative. Umar said: "I was about to punish them, but (what prevented me is) that I know you beat them, and leave them hungry. When they became hungry, they committed a theft. So, punishment should not befall but you."

Then, he asked the owner of the she-camel: "O one of Muzainah! How much is your she-camel?" he said: "Four hundred." Umar said to

Hatib: "Go and give him eight hundred." He said to the young boys: "Go away, and do not do it once again."

When we follow the ideas of Umar expressed in his words so much rightly, we would see the greatest lucidity and clarity, having the strongest meanings and the noblest objectives in every word uttered by his lips. When he was appointed as ruler of Muslims, he got up and addressed his nation saying: "The matter of ruling which I have been given over you would not change anything of my morals, for greatness be only to Allah alone, and none of His slaves has anything of it."

He addressed them, in his speech of money: "No doubt, the legality of this fund could be achieved only by three things: to be taken legally, to be given legally, and to be withheld from (being spent on) falsehood. No doubt, I'm in relation to your fund as the guardian of an orphan: If I'm wealthy, I would refrain from taking anything of it, and if I'm poor, I would take from it fairly."

He also said in luminous pleasant words: "Whoever wanted to ask about the Holy Qur'an should come to Ubai Ibn Ka'b. whoever wanted to ask about the obligations should come to Zaid Ibn Thabit. Whoever wanted to ask about religious jurisprudence should come to Mu'adh Ibn Jabal. Whoever wanted to ask about the fund should come to me, for indeed, Allah has made me a treasurer and distributor of it.

I'm going to start by giving the wives of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", then the early Emigrants, who were driven away from their homes and property, then the Ansar, who had both faith and abode before them, and then, whoever was fast to migration, the income would be fast to be given to him, and whoever was slow to emigrate, then, the income would be slow to be given to him. So, let none blame but the kneeling time of his mount."

On distributing the wealth, he said: "I'm keen on letting no need (of anyone) but that I would fulfill it, so long as it (the money of the treasury) is too sufficient to extend for everyone. But, if we became unable to do so, then, we should reduce the standards of living until we would be equal in living, abiding by the least requirements of life."

When we review his letters to his leaders and appointed governors, we see how his intelligence was so much rightly-guided in all cases and matters. He wrote to Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari, explaining to him the method

of adjudication (passing judgements for settling disputes among the people) he should follow:

“From the slave of Allah, the Commander of the Believers to Abdullah Ibn Qais: Peace be upon you. Now and then: (You should know that) adjudication is an elaborate obligation, and an (act of) sunnah, which should be followed. So, you should understand well (the case) if it was filed before you, and then carry out (the decisive judgement) once it becomes clear before you. Indeed, the right (with which it is judged) will not be useful unless its related judgement is implemented. You should settle disputes among the people rightly and equally, so that no strong noble one would expect from your injustice what is not for him, and no weak poor person would be disappointed because of your (being short of doing) justice.

You should ask the claimant to bring evidence, and the one who denies it to take oath (to refute such a claim). It is permissible to make peace between the Muslim (foes) except that which might make lawful what is illegal, or make unlawful what is legal.

Furthermore, if you passed a judgement and then you became guided to the truth and found out that you had been mistaking, nothing should prevent you from returning to the truth, for, in fact, the truth is eternally ancient, and returning to the truth is much better for you than keeping on and abiding by falsehood.

You should be certainly well-aware of whatever is suspicious in your sight, on which you do not find anything in Allah’s Book or the sunnah (of the Prophet). In this context, you should know the similarities and analogies, in order to be able to make comparisons, from which, you should select the dearest to Allah, and the nearest to the truth.

For anyone who have a claim over an unclear right pretending to have an evidence, you should set a specific period of time, during which he should bring his evidence, otherwise, you should make the judgement against him, for this would be more likely to remove suspicion, clarify what is ambiguous, and cancel the (opportunity of offering) excuses.

On the other hand, all of the Muslims have the right to be just witnesses for or against one another, except for one who was lashed earlier in implementation of a legal punishment, or one being experienced to have made a false witness, or one whose loyalty or

kinship is suspicious, for it is Allah Who knows the secret intentions (of anyone), and it is He, Who forbids you to fall into what is suspicious.

Beware of being worried, annoyed, or disturbed by the people, and refusing to settle disputes of the foes on the situations of right, for which Allah gives reward, for whoever makes sincere his intention between himself and Allah Almighty, Allah then would suffice him (and set right what is) between him and the people.

Whoever beautified himself before the people (in character and manner), with acts or aspects which Allah Almighty knows they are not so, then, Allah would dishonour him, uncover what he screened, and scandalize his act. Then, what do you think of Allah's reward from His current inexhaustible resources and treasures of His mercy! And peace be upon you."

One day, a delegation from the fighters in the Cause of Allah, who took part in the conquest of Tikrit and Jalawla visited him. They had lean bodies and pale faces. When he asked them about the reason of their weakness, they told him that it was due to the unhealthiness and humidity of those regions.

He then wrote to Sa'd immediately, ordering him to be perfect to choose a location fitting for the residence and living of people. He drew the way to him as follows:

"Send both Salman and Hudhaifah in order to explore the way, and make them choose a location, between which and me, there should be no sea or mountain. Then, order Abu Al-Hayyaj Ibn Malik to build it, making a portion of it as streets, at a breadth of forty cubits for each, and some at a breadth of thirty cubits, and some at a breadth of twenty cubits, as minimum. Order him also to make in it alleys, at a breadth of no less than seven cubits."

He wrote some military instructions to Sa'd saying:

"Be easy to the Muslims in their marsh, and do not trouble them. Do your best to make them take rest in every location fitting for that, so that they would reach the territory of their enemy not weakened by their suffering from the journey. You should make them take rest at least a day and a night per week, so that they might relieve themselves, by putting down (for some time) their arms and luggage."

Then, he continued: "Once you reached near the territory of the enemy, spread the spies so that nothing could escape from you. Select for this mission those of whose sincerity and truthfulness you are sure, for the news given to you by a liar would not be of use to you, even if he told you the truth concerning some of it, and, in addition, the double dealer would be a spy against you and not for you.

Once you came nearer to the territory of the enemy, take more reconnoiterers and detachments. As for the detachments, they would cut off their (the enemies') supplies and corrupt their facilities. As for the reconnoiterers, they would uncover their news. Select for the mission of reconnoitering those of opinions and strength from among your companions, for whom you should choose the fastest horses. In this way, if they met the enemy, the first strike it receives would be very strong. Make the leaders of those detachments from among those strong hardy steadfast fighters.

Do not entrust the matters of your detachments to anyone who might be misled, lest most of your strength and good thinking would be lost. Do not send the reconnoiterers or detachments anywhere you are afraid that they might be lost, or that something spiteful might occur to them. Once you became well acquainted with the news of the enemy, join to you all of your fragments, reconnoiterers and detachments."

He wrote to him another letter, which goes as follows:

"I was told that you and your family distinguished yourselves by such a sort of clothes, food and mounts, as not available to all the Muslims. Beware, O slave of Allah, to be like the beast, which passed by a rich valley, having no concern, but to (eat until it became) fat, and nothing except fat would kill it. It should be known that the guardian would surely return to Allah. If he deviated, his subjects would follow him. No doubt, the most miserable of people is the one, with whom his subjects become miserable."

In those letters, Umar gave his opinion in many problems and matters, concerning adjudication, architecture, fighting in the Cause of Allah, and the honesty of ruling. However, his genius and intuition are clearly elegant in them.

Even when he expressed his ideas and opinions jokingly and not seriously, the intelligent wisdom was shown in his words. One day, he passed by a new home in one end of Medina. He asked about its owner,

and he was told that it belonged to so and so, who was one of Umar's appointed governors. Umar commented: "The Dirhams refused but to get out their necks."

Once, he saw a weeping woman irritating the grief of people, trying to sweep her false tears. He struck her with stick and drove her away, saying: "She does not weep for your grief, but for your Dirhams."

He asked a son of Haram Ibn Sinan, whom the poet Zuhair Ibn Abu Sulma eternalized with his poetry to recite to him some poetry composed in praise of his father. When he recited to him, Umar commented: "No doubt, he talked about you very well (in his poetry)." The man replied: "No doubt, By Allah, we gave him so much." Umar commented: "What you had given him was over, but what he had given you remains."

It was a penetrating intelligence expressed in discerning words. However, the human intelligence always is linked with the great ambition, and the permanent seeking for achieving the highest glories of this world. At this point in particular, we meet with the intelligence of Ibn Al-Khattab, which was godly and saintly. It did not work in the service of its man so much as it worked for and with Allah, in the cause of truth, goodness and mercy.

Yes, it was an intelligence of a repentant, who was created by Allah, and would return to Allah, and all of his activity, glory and richness, was in the Cause of Allah.

CHAPTER SIX

“GIVE YOUR COMPANION THE GLAD TIDINGS OF BEGETTING A CHILD!”

If this upright strong nature, this firm faith in Allah, this complete honesty of undertaking the responsibilities of both existence and life, in addition to a penetrating great intelligence gather altogether in a single man, what good qualities and great merits would remain for the human completion to be embodied in a man walking on foot?

However, Umar did not take from such justice, piety, wholehearted adherence to duties, and uprightness on the path of the truth and prudence, which could hardly be deceived, an ordinary fortune, but he reached the utmost end of each one, in such a way as to transcend upon their record levels.

Well. When the human completion wanted to achieve its material existence, it embodied itself in so much few, though outstanding brilliant patterns of human beings, of which Umar Ibn Al-Khattab was one. He was, as we saw, a great man to the extent that greatness itself was desirous to be one of his good characteristics.

However, the image which we tried to draw for him over those earlier pages has not yet been complete in its features, for there is still a turning brilliant feature (of which we have not spoken yet). It is true that it is apparent in all the previous features (which we mentioned above), but as for us, who use to divide the subject in order to be able to study it well, and look for such a high greatness considerably, this prominent feature is still before our eyes, trying to attract and call for us.

How was the method of life of this man whom Allah granted the kings of both Khosrau and Caesar, the man, whom his companions used to expect for his smiles as they used to expect for the new moons because of his having control over himself (to laugh or even smile so much) for fear and because of respect of Allah, and for fear of stumbling in his responsibilities, the man who was created to lead the whole world, who was gifted a nature (so much active to the extent that) comfort might kill it, and work might motivate it to do more, this high strong agitated man, who lived under the pressure of his responsibilities, his wholehearted devoutness, and the motivated nature and energy?

Did his characteristics make him more complicated and ambiguous, or much clearer? Did they cause him to be introversive and narrow-minded, or extroversive and open-minded? However, there is an amount of reservation and pride, with which victorious chieftaincy would protect itself and its majesty. Did Umar take his ordinary fortune of that, or he had another alternative, which supported his chieftaincy, leadership and majesty?

Yes. There was another alternative fitting only for Umar, and none but Umar was able to get. It was simplicity. But, we would wrong simplicity of Umar if we said that it was an alternative for another thing. That's because there is no characteristic or merit of Umar which could be an alternative for the other. They all were of absolute authenticity, and Umar himself was their center and homeland.

It is true that courage, piety, justice and uprightness are human morals of all mankind. They exist relatively in all of people. But Umar's courage, justice, piety and uprightness stemmed from Umar himself, and they were unique of him. Had not Umar been, they would not have existed; and this was the greatness of the man.

He did not take from virtue its mark and nature, but it is he who gave it his mark and nature. For this reason, all virtues became as flourishing within himself as his character. Moreover, all virtues were complete and united within him in a whole and single entity known as Umar.

If we were to divide them, saying for example, Umar's justice, Umar's piety, Umar's honesty, Umar's prudence, and Umar's strength, we did so in order that we might learn. Yes, we divide our way, in order to be able to understand it well, and divide the matter in hand in order to be able to study it well. But, as for the good merits of the Commander of the Believers, they were indivisible, whether in the field of work or in the balance of evaluation. That's because they were not medals related to his owner. They were its owner himself, as well as the man from whom they stemmed, and to whom they belonged. They were Umar himself.

Such an excellent man, who was full of greatness could hardly be tempted by feeling of superiority, and he could hardly be comfortable and happy but with the utmost simplicity, and in living among the people, and not over them. He used to sit down wherever he found a place to sit, because he had no sitting place on the top of the gathering. He used to sleep wherever he was overtaken by sleep, on the straw mat in

his home, or on the sand, under the shade of the date palms. He used to eat whatever he found, i.e. whatever enabled him to live, and no more. He might eat a slice of dried meat, a slice of bread wetted with oil, and spiced with salt.

He would be happy if he heard somebody calling him "O Umar" (and not O Commander of Believers). He was so much happy to the extent that if anyone from among the kings of the earth were to know it, surely all of them would envy him for it, when he saw an old woman carrying a basket, too heavy for her to bear. He then came near to her and carry it on behalf of her for a portion of the way. Then, he laughed so much when he heard her saying thankfully: "Allah might reward you O my son! You've the right to be the caliph instead of Umar."

One night, he went out alone in one of his nightly tours, while people were asleep, so that he would rest assured of (the comfort of) his people, know their news, and be acquainted with their needs. At the outskirts of Medina, he saw a hut, from within which there came out a voice of moaning. When he came nearer, he saw a man at the gate of the hut, from whom he learnt that he was the husband of the woman who was moaning, because of her suffering from the pains of birth, and there was no one with her to help her, for both the man and his wife were from the desert, and they alighted there alone as aliens.

Umar returned home quickly, and said to his wife Umm Kulthum, daughter of imam Ali: "Would you go and do something for which Allah would give you reward?" she said: "Well. (What is it?)" He said: "A strange woman is suffering from parturition, and there is no one with her." She said: "Yes, I could do, if you so likes."

He got up, and prepared the required food and instruments for a woman suffering from parturition, such as flour, butter, and pieces of cloth for wrapping the born child. The Commander of the Believers carried the vessel on one shoulder, and the flour on the other, and said to his wife: "Follow me."

They went to the hut, wherein his wife Umm Kulthum entered in order to help the woman in her parturition. As for the Commander of the Believers, he remained outside, set up the oven, over which he put the vessel, beneath which he kindled fire in order to prepare food for the woman, while the husband was looking at him gracefully. Perhaps, he

talked to himself that this good Arab man had more right than Umar to be the Commander of the Believers.

Suddenly, the born child cried from within the hut. His mother gave birth to him safely. Then, the voice of Umm Kulthum came out loudly: "O Commander of Believers! Give your companion the glad tidings of receiving a child." The desert man took a breath quickly out of surprise, and turned back out of shyness. He tried to utter "Commander of the Believers", but his lips could hardly move because of his great surprising and sudden happiness.

Umar noticed that, and pointed to him to be in his place, and not to be worried. The Commander of the Believers carried the vessel and came near to the gate of the hut, calling his wife: "Take the vessel O Umm Kulthum, and feed the mother to her fill." Umm Kulthum fed it until she became satisfied. Then, she gave back the vessel to Umar with the remaining food, which he placed before the desert man to whom he said: "Eat to your fill. Indeed, you have been sleepless for a long time, and suffered a lot." Then, he turned away with his wife, after he had said to the man: "When it is tomorrow morning, come to me, so that I would order that some money should be given to you to improve your case, and that a salary should be assigned to the born child."

Allah's pleased be upon Umar. He was as described by the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", i.e. "I've never seen a strong man drawing (water) as he was drawing." With the help of his intelligence and insight, he knew the reality of happiness and greatness in this world of ours, from which he took to the full. No doubt, by the Lord of Umar, a single scene as that we've seen is much better than all thrones, crowns, vanities and ornaments, on which sun rises and sets.

How humble, simple, compassionate and kind he was, through whom Allah Almighty raised the level of life! Where were the aspects of authority, even the legal and necessary ones? However, Umar was not a man of authority, because he was beyond any kind of authority. He was not to take greatness from anything other than him. But, on the contrary, he was to bestow greatness upon everything coming near to him. He did not do great effort to show simplicity, because simplicity was fundamental in him as if he were to breathe it.

He used to submit happily to everyone, old or young he might be. One day, he passed by young boys, who were picking up dates thrown from

the palms. They no sooner had seen him than they dispersed and went away, except for a single one, who remained firm in his place. The Commander of the Believers came near him, but the young boy spoke first: "O Commander of Believers! Those dates are thrown by the wind." Umar said to him: "Let me see it, for I know whatever is thrown by the wind." He looked at the dates which he examined, and then he said to the young boy: "You've told the truth." The young boy smiled and then said to him simply: "Do you see those young boys there? They expect for me to be alone, so that they would attack me and take those dates from me by force." Umar laughed and patted on the shoulder of the young boy. Then, he said to him: "Go along with me until you reach a safe place." He caught hold of his hand, and walked along with him until he reached near his home.

Did his simplicity stem from his responsibilities, or did all of his excellent characteristics stem from his greatness? Indeed, whoever wanted to see what pleases the eyes, and soothes the hearts, and whoever wanted to see the human greatness in its utmost sincerity and truthfulness, let him look at this very tall and bald-headed man, of striding feet, who used to wear a garment having twenty one patches, carrying an inkpot in his right hand, and a document and a pen in his left hand, knocking at the doors and asking those women, whose husbands were protecting the Muslim borders, or fighting in the Cause of Allah to sit behind their doors, and dictate to him their letters to their husbands, for the postmen were about to depart, or let him look at the same man, Umar, the Commander of the Believers, who conquered the two large empires of both the Romans and the Persians, knocking at the same doors, asking those wives whose husbands were absent (in fighting), to mention to him their needs, and whoever wanted anything from the market, should mention it to him, or send her servant with him, if she had a servant, for he feared they might be cheated in transactions. Then, he would go to the market, followed by a lot of servants, where he would buy by himself and put the things with his hand in the baskets.

Is it true that this man lived on the surface of the earth, and was the Commander of the Believers? Did he also live with such a simplicity, treating people with such a justice? Was he also so much humble and submissive? Is it true that there was a man called Umar, who was a caliph of Muslims, whom Allah made clearly victorious, whom all the kings of the earth (at this time) feared, and to whom their tyrants became subject,

and at whose hands the wealth and treasures of money, gold and silver were in abundance?

Once, the delegate of Iraq including Al-Ahnaf Ibn Qais visited this very man. They were surprised when they saw him, and it was very hot, during a scorching summer, treating by tar a camel of those assigned to obligatory charity. He no sooner had seen his guests, including Al-Ahnaf, than he said to him: "O Ahnaf! Take off your garment, and come to help the Commander of the Believers treat this camel, for it was one of the camels assigned to the obligatory charity, in which there is right for all the nation, and particularly, for both the orphan and the needy ones." One of those visiting delegate, surprised by this scene, said to him: "Might Allah pardon you O Commander of Believers! No doubt, a slave of those assigned to charity would suffice you this job." Umar replied to him: "Which slave is worthier to be a slave (of Allah) than Al-Ahnaf and me?" then, he resumed treating the camel. It is true?

Fortunately, it is true. All human race has from Umar an inexhaustible resource of pleasure, greatness and hope. Fortunately, Umar was one of this human race, in order that it would know it has the possibilities of human perfection, for which it seeks and has longing, and what it should do is no more than to uncover its talents, polish its good merits, with the result that it would take out its hidden values, yield its fruits and produce both greatness and perfection.

However, the simplicity of Umar shows the great foolishness and stupidity into which everyone would fall in case he is overtaken by haughtiness and pride because of a certain position he occupies, a victory he achieves, or a wealth he collects. Haughtiness and pride are but heavy burdens carried by those whom they might deceive, since they might taste their torment unfeelingly. As for the true simplicity which Umar lived, it is the real happiness, in which everyone would return to his natural essence, and transcend upon every seduction and haughtiness.

Glorified be the Lord of Umar, Who inspired him his right guidance, and protected him against the evil of the spirit, and granted him the uprightness of personality, which made him matchless, not only in his country and time, but over every time and space. Whenever and wherever we meet him, we meet his heroism, his simplicity, his sincerity and truthfulness, to the extent of astonishment.

How did this man have such a great amount of meekness, honesty and simplicity, although the number of his soldiers increased over several hundred of thousands, and the wealth and treasures were accumulated in abundance at his disposal in Medina, to whom the delegations from all parts of the earth sought in order to ask for safety, whom all the nations he released from the oppression of the Romans and the arrogance of the Persians surrounded, and whom all forces of seduction, haughtiness and superiority encircled, though we could hardly find the least effect of such superiority and haughtiness?

But on the contrary, we would see him having the utmost summits of abstinence, piety, justice, simplicity and humbleness, i.e. great summits of good characteristics, which he raised as high as it could be by virtue of his good merits and qualities, heroism of his spirit, and his upright method of life.

Once, he set out for Sham, whose people went out to receive him. They met a man riding a camel, sitting on a covering of coarse wool, hanging his feet through the two sides of the saddle, without a stirrup. He was wearing a shirt of cotton, having a lot of holes and patches. They approached him and asked him: "Where is the Commander of the Believers? Have you not met his procession on the way?" he answered them with a smile: "The Commander of the Believers is in front of you."

They proceeded in search for him, but later they learnt that the Commander of the Believers had arrived in Ailah, where he alighted. They returned hurriedly and entered upon the Commander of the Believers, who was sitting with the people. But, they were nearly shocked by surprise, for the Commander of the Believers was no more than the same man who had been riding the camel, whom they met earlier, and asked about the Commander of the Believers and he said to them that "The Commander of the Believers is in front of you."

A hackney having a beautiful saddle was brought to him, which he refused to ride and said: "Turn this devil away from me." When it was said to him that camels were not fitting for this country, he rode it, but after depriving it of any kind of decoration and ornaments, throwing down the smart saddle, replacing it with this wool clothing, which he used as covering whenever he rode, and a cushion whenever he alighted and took rest.

In his first visit to Sham, he was received by his leaders and chiefs of his armies, riding their horses, having their belts of heavy silk. Umar had no sooner seen that than he dismounted with his hand on the ground, picking up from its bricks and pebbles. Then, he quickly came near the leaders and chiefs of the army, and addressed them saying: "Have you been seduced very soon? Do you receive Umar in this dress? Have satisfaction and luxury misled you very soon, though you never ate your fill but two years ago?"

However, the simplicity and humbleness were not favoured by this man as hobbies, but they were out of his religion, true nature and sincere honesty. One night, he met a woman carrying a heavy waterskin. He came near her and asked her about her matter. He knew from her that she had many dependents, and since she had no servant, she always waited until it was dark, so that she might be able to get out and fill her waterskin. He took the waterskin from her, and she did not know who he was. When they came near her home, he said to her while giving her the waterskin: "When it is tomorrow morning, go to Umar so that he might assign a servant to you." She said: "Umar is so much busy. Where could I find him?" he said: "Come to him in the morning, and Allah willing, you will find him."

The woman acted upon the advice of this good man. As soon as she had gone and stood before Umar, she cried while being astonished: "You are he then!" the Commander of the Believers laughed, and ordered that a servant and expense should be assigned to her.

No doubt, had the Commander of the Believers been given the opportunity to choose between this sincere simplicity and all decorations and ornaments of this world, surely, he would not have preferred anything to the blessing of humbleness and simplicity. However, the intelligent glorious piety, which set forth an inexhaustible example to the people of this world in general, and the rulers from among them in particular, was the most wonderful marvelous and permanent victory in the sight of this man who lived as excellent and outstanding, whose life on the surface of the earth was a procession of victories and aspects of happiness, since he was a young man, fighting with his counterparts in the market of Ukaz, and winning over them, until he embraced Islam, and his conversion into Islam was, by all means, a victory, then emigrated, and his migration was a triumph, and then became the Commander of the

Believers, under the strikes of whose armies the strong forces of the ancient world entirely were destroyed.

It was an example of a ruler, on the threshold of whose home, all of the world with its pleasures knelt down, which he himself left fairly, though he administered in favour of the people, giving them its good things, and removing away from them its misleading ones.

When he wiped off his hands all of this wealth, he resumed his journey (of faith), running at noon after a camel of those assigned to charity for fear of being lost, or turning over a vessel, cooking a good food for a strange woman suffering from the pains of parturition, or receiving on the sand or under the shade of palms a delegate or another of those aiming at Medina in succession, searching on behalf of their nations and states for a place in the new world which Umar was building, or ascending the pulpit, addressing the Muslims, reminding them of the days of Allah, wearing a garment decorated with twenty one patches or even more.

Then, is there still anything to say? Nay! Might Allah pardon me! Have we said anything of the more and more things which should be said? Indeed, it is enough for us to catch those flourishing moments which we lived with him, and let's be satisfied, before we would be breathless, by those glad steps, with which we followed, for some time, a man who was ahead of time.

If we want to express our great astonishment, let's save ourselves from carrying the burden of what we could not desire for or be able to undertake. In this context, it is sufficient for us the phrase of Ibn Mas'ud: "How good Ibn Al-Khattab was! Which sort of men he was!"

BOOK THREE
FAREWELL UTHMAN

INTRODUCTION

This is a book of Uthman Ibn Affan, the third rightly-guided caliph. It is a book of the great news, about which people have been different.

The method with which I introduce now our speech about Uthman “Allah be pleased with him” is the same with which we started our speech about Abu Bakr, Umar, and Men Around the Messenger. It is a method, which does not relate us to the events of history but as much as we could see the spirit of history, and according to which, the multitudes of events would not occupy us from keeping up with the flow of excellence and greatness in those men. The spirit of history, and the essence of character constitute, in our attempt, both the topic and material.

With historical truthfulness not deceived by myth, and certainty of thought not misled by suspicion, and psychological assurance not irritated by excitement, let’s go on as we went on earlier to draw the picture of the character from within its interior greatness and decisive situations, without adopting one tendency or another, or relieving ourselves from one burden or another.

In fact, when I went through the references of history, in order to study once again the life of Uthman in such a way as to enable me to draw a picture of his reality, I did not think at all that Allah Almighty would make easy my way and enterprise as I found it. However, the image in minds of the majority of us about Uthman’s age and caliphate reveals that the way to do so is so much difficult. It also reveals that this age, with all its contradictions, problems and afflictions provides source only to the historian who is mainly concerned with recording the events, and no more. But it does not relieve the drawer who aims at making a picture, reflecting its good signification of the world of values and examples.

Indeed, what a false picture it is, and what unjust it is to a man and an age, though both were full of greatness and devotion. Those who have doubts and wonders about Uthman and his age, and then they, or some of them, hasten to load this great caliph many sins which he did not commit at all, have been unable to know the true reality, because they went on evaluating this age under scales, which were not fitting for it, if not contradictory to it. They intended to study a society which had passed

one thousand and four hundred years earlier, with its specific circumstances and values, scrutinizing it within modern labs of logic, science and history interpretation, i.e. labs, though capable of interpreting some events of this age, are unable to issue a final judgement on it as a whole, whatever skillful or cunning they might be. They also are unable to draw out its deep far-reaching realities.

Uthman the caliph was doomed to undertake the responsibility of ruling under such circumstances as had no match at all in the history. But, before being accused of exaggeration in this issue, I should hasten to say that he undertook the responsibility of ruling at a time, which was an end of a Prophetic age, with all its piety, firmness and wholehearted submission, and a beginning of an empirical age, with all of its pleasures, dangers and seductions. It is true that the great conquests were achieved under the ruling of Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, the Commander of the Believers who was before him, during which the Islamic state took its empirical form, though not seen as such by Muslims.

But Umar, the Commander of the Believers, placed all of his force and determination in the right pan of the scale, in order that the Prophetic age would remain dominant, with its morals, conventions, piety, and devoutness, taking refuge, in this way, to the godly suppression, with which he prevented people from keeping pace with their desires.

But, of course, things could not remain unchangeably. The conquests implied contradictions, which were calling one another. Moreover, the wind of imperative new changes drove the Islamic state and society to a multitude of inevitable desires and aspirations, which one could hardly know its coming consequences.

However, the assassination of Umar was a sign of the beginning of a new age, in which the Muslims did not give up their banners and principles, but they were, at the same time, occupied by new relations, urgent traditions and coming problems, which imposed their obligations upon the monotony of life, the method of the state, and the ambitions of the society.

In such critical period and difficult years, Uthman was doomed to undertake such a formidable responsibility as to keep on the spirit of the Prophetic age, and, at the same time, interact with the empirical age. Was he able to find his way to that? Yes. Surely yes, he was able to find his

way; and the following pages of this book would introduce to us, Allah willing, a useful talk of that.

We shall see of which glorious sort the personality of Uthman was, and of which kind his caliphate and ruling was, and what irritated the catastrophic distresses during his time, and whether he died as a martyrdom of his virtues or as a victim of his mistakes.

We will see another man of the great companions of Muhammad, who undertook his responsibilities constantly and determinedly, with right guidance (from Allah Almighty). When he did not find but his own life to protect such responsibilities with, he sacrificed it wholeheartedly.

One day, when the world was unable to bear his resistance, his soul rode the boat of eternity, assailing to its Glorious Lovable Lord, over a stream of his odorous valuable blood. Indeed, blessed be the dead body, which was filled with injuries, and blessed, be his saved soul. O martyr of your virtues and satisfaction! Peace be upon you, and farewell!

CHAPTER ONE

THE FIRST OF EMIGRANTS

During the early hours following the rise of the dawn of the holy message, there were a group of bounteous men, doomed to be the first generation in the long brilliant glorious procession, which would carry over centuries the word of the religion (of Islam) to all of the world, and would carry the light and guidance of Allah to all the creatures in a profound wilderness, having neither start nor end.

When the dooms make selections, it leave minds confused because of their way and method of selection. In this issue, it selected the elegant master, of good position in his people, and of the highest glory among his clans, along with the slave, who used to be sold and bought (by others), having nothing to possess in this world but chains and shackles (with which he used to be tied). They also might select the one of great richness and wealth along with the very needy poor one, and the strong powerful hardy one, who might fight and win over the young boys in the festivities of Ukaz along with the weak lean slim one, whose legs might be shaken by the gentle amiable wind, and the cunning skillful resourceful one along with the innocent naive unimaginative one, who might have no experience during his life.

From this divergent dispersal, without considering any specific characteristics or relations, the doom selected from among the multitudes of people the heroes of the first procession of the new religion, for whose selected Messenger, Muhammad "Peace be upon him" Allah gave permission to announce its call, and raise its flag.

From such a generation of opposing characteristics and different natures and levels, Islam would formulate its greatest marvel. It would make some from amongst the greatest nobles of Quraish as Abu Bakr, Uthman and Abd Ar-Rahman Ibn Awf equal brothers to some of its weakest and the most oppressed slaves as Suhaib, Bilal and Ammar. It would create unity from dispersal, and ties of good relations from divergence and difference.

Did the doom not have a common standard while selecting those people, according to which this different mixture of characteristics, positions and capabilities could be united? Nay! It seemed that there was

a common standard, and it is not difficult to perceive it. Since the Holy Qur'an has told us that "Allah has better knowledge of where to make His Messages", He Almighty also has better knowledge how to choose for His Messenger his disciples and close companions.

Moreover, if Allah is to select any Messenger in order that his existence and entire life would affirm and support the excellence of the truth, goodness and virtue, then, this Messenger should be, by help of the blessing of his Lord, the good merits and firmness of himself, at the level of his role, message and the example he represents.

If any Messenger is not to work alone, but he must have supporters to believe in him and work with him, such supporters should be at the level of the glorious mission, which they would undertake. However, when doom selects its heroes from among the multitudes of people, it always concentrates on the interior character of every individual, where lies his reality, without being decorated or false, whether those supporters come from the rows of the nobles, chiefs and wealthy men, or from the rows of the simple poor and needy ones.

The doom then would put its sign of honour on the straight personalities, whose pureness, nobility and uprightness qualify them to be chosen, announcing in this way the selection of a certain hero for his definite role. At such a level, and depending upon such a method, the dooms selected for Islam those people, who were worthy of carrying its call, during its newly fresh dawn and early days.

Uthman was one of those being selected by the doom. Uthman "Allah be pleased with him" was called by doom from among the elite of Quraish and the Arabs, in order to occupy his position early, among the early Muslims in the procession of the right guidance and religion.

When he received the sign of doom (of being selected for such a role), he did not hesitate even for a single moment. From under his raised ceilings, and from over his placed thrones, and from among his blessings, luxuries, and abundant world, he got out, carrying the burdens of his new role, and receiving the life of troubles, sacrifice and devotion.

Indeed, the title, which is the truest and the most fitting for him, as illustrating his reality, is the title of "the Emigrant". From his lofty height, richness, large majesty and abundant blessing, he got out for the Call of Allah and His Messenger, and when did he do so? It was not during its strength and victory, but during its early hours, while it was

Islam, let's return to our main topic of Uthman, the Emigrant, or Uthman, the first of Emigrants.

His migration to Allah along all years of his life were intimately linked with his conversion into Islam. Both migration and Islam were clearly linked with his interior character and psychological structure. In his interior character, we could find two dominant merits, which were more superior to all of his behaviours. They are tolerance and shyness. They stood behind all good deeds recorded for him, and all mistakes accounted against him. Let's begin with his conversion into Islam.

His conversion came out of both tolerance and shyness, but not shyness of his close friends so much as shyness of Allah, the signs of Whose existence he used to see within his feeling and conscience, and shyness of His Messenger, the signs of whose truthfulness used to fill the clear spirits with both acceptance and certainty.

However, such a man as Uthman, whose shyness used to lead his behaviours and thinking, could not flee away from his persuasion. He would be shy before himself if he falsified or even gave up his persuasion. As such we see him at the moment of his embracing Islam, and as such we would see him when he was besieged by the rebels, demanding his life; and although he was able to turn them away by many ways, all of which were under his control, he, who was over eighty years old, refused to be saved by using a way, of which he was not persuaded.

At the moment of his conversion into Islam, both tolerance and shyness led his amiable firm steps to the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" in the company of Abu Bakr, where he put his right hand in the right hand of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", giving him a sincere pledge of allegiance. His embracing Islam came as easy and smooth as the breaths of the flowers in the dawn of the spring. Abu Bakr had no sooner whispered in his ears of the news of the new call reported by the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" from his Lord, than the heart of this tolerant shy man opened to it so much largely.

He did not ask for a time to think it over, for he was well aware of the falsehood of the religious life which his people lived, as well as he knew that Muhammad had reached a high level of truthfulness, and sincerity of his speech and visions. Muhammad "Allah's blessing and peace be upon

him”, even before being a Messenger, used to have a great effect on the clear and pure intelligent men.

Uthman got a heart of such a sort as having for Muhammad the most wonderful and brilliant image. This admiration, and even this faith in Muhammad was reflected in a vision he saw in a dream while he was returning from Sham. One day, he alighted in order to take rest under a shade of a tree in a place between Mu’an and Zarqa. He and his companions were overtaken by sleep, during which he heard someone calling them: “Get up and awake, for Ahmad has come out in Mecca.”

Thus, his sentiment was prepared for waiting the rescuer. In Mecca, there was no one whose good merits would enable him to have such high position but Muhammad Ibn Abdullah Ibn Abd Al-Muttalib.

Then, would Uthman turn back on heels after he was given the glad tidings of the emergence of the rescuer and the Prophet? If he did so, where would he flee from his shyness? Would Uthman give in to hesitation, demanding from himself some time for thinking and consultation? If he did so, where would he escape from his tolerance? Indeed, his shyness pushed him away from hesitation, while his tolerance pushed him away from postponement.

However, both shyness and tolerance were, for him, not only two good characteristics. They were (to give him) a great energy, having control over his personality, and driving the rest of his merits. He reached, with the help of his tolerance, a record level, which no one could be able to attain, to the extent that the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” said loudly following one of those brilliant scenes: “Nothing befalls Uthman whatever he does after today. O Allah! might You be pleased with Uthman, for I’m pleased with him.”

Up to such a level was his shyness, so that the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” commended him by saying: “The truest one in his shyness from among my nation is Uthman.” There is a famous event, which shows us, more than anyone else, how great the shyness of Uthman was.

In this issue, A’ishah, the Mother of the Believers, reported that Abu Bakr asked for the permission of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, to be admitted into him. The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” was lying on bed with his garment uncovering one of his legs. He admitted him,

and he entered and talked with him for some time, after which he went away. A short time later, Umar asked the permission of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and he was admitted while the messenger was as such. He stayed some time with the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”. Then he went away. But when Uthman wanted to ask for permission to be admitted, the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” got himself ready for receiving him. He sat down, and placed his garment over his uncovered leg. Uthman stayed some time with him, after which he went away. Following his departure, A’ishah said: “oh messenger of Allah! I did not see you getting ready for receiving Abu Bakr or Umar as you did for Uthman.” The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” replied: “indeed, Uthman was so much shy. I feared if I allowed for him while being in such a state of lying, he would have felt shy of entering, and would have returned before I could fulfill his need, for which he came. O A’ishah! Would I not be shy of a man, of whom angels feel shy?”

This phrase alone “a man, of whom angels feel shy” illustrates to us all of this shyness, which was so much authentic and permanent. Uthman was never seen but in the company of his shyness. The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” always recognized this shyness, as if he were to set it forth as example to be followed. In this context, he “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” said: “The most merciful one from among my nation is Abu Bakr, the strongest and the most violent for the sake of the religion of Allah is Umar, and the shyest one is Uthman.”

His tolerance and shyness, as we said earlier, led him, easily and happily, to the gathering of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, where he gave him the pledge of allegiance for the true religion, with all its obligations and duties. However, the migration was the first obligatory duty imposed by this religion. We do not mean geographical migration TO Ethiopia, then to Medina, but we mean migration in its deep spiritual meaning, i.e. the migration from life to life, and from existence to existence, the migration which is to concede what is old, with its sanctities and glories, in order to make journey to Allah with new provisions. Let the Emigrant then have his faith, and go on by Allah’s blessing.

We said that Uthman's conversion into Islam was very early, for he was among the first five or seven who embraced Islam. At this time, the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" was still calling to Allah in secret. Moreover, the house of Al-Arqam in which his companions used to meet secretly had not appeared yet. Thus, Uthman entered into the field of the call, with all of its dangers, at a time when it was difficult to find supporters.

This was the first stage of his migration. He left his stable and safe life, which was abundant of luxuries and blessings for an unknown jeopardized endangered space. He put his steps on an uninhibited path, not prepared for walking, leaving the inhibited one, which was waving with companionship and joyful abundant life.

It was not after a long time that Quraish, motivated by its rancour and ill wishes went on pursuing this faithful group led by its Messenger to the way of right guidance and light. However, Uthman Ibn Affan received his fortune of this violent rancour as much as fitting for his position among his people.

His paternal uncle Al-Hakam Ibn Al-As was responsible for torturing him. He fastened him with ropes, crying in his face: "Would you turn away from the religion of your fathers for a new created religion? By Allah! I would not unloose you until you leave this religion you're following." But, Uthman answered him, with the insistence of the Emigrant, who knew the way to Allah, on which he made his steps firm: "By Allah! I would never leave the right religion of Allah, nor will I give it up." His uncle kept torturing him, but Uthman became much more insisting (on his faith).

Furthermore, those of Quraish besieged him with their artificial contempt, hoping this would dishonour and humiliate him. But, the Emigrant to Allah had abandoned their world entirely, with its haughtiness and vanities. The dignity which used to take its pride from falsehood was no longer the one he had now, after his believing (in Allah and His Messenger) and being guided (to the straight path).

The dignity granted to him by faith was of such a sort as (strong and authentic that) Quraish, if not all of the world could hardly hurt it. It was a dignity which could not be harmed but by turning away from the right and true religion, or giving it up, or escaping from its heavy burdens. In this way, Uthman was firmly steadfast in resisting hurt. The number of

those who accepted Islam increased, to the extent that flamed up Quraish, which, in turn, tortured them more and more.

The merciful Messenger saw that most of his companions had no energy or capability of forbearing this hurt. So, he ordered them to emigrate to Abyssinia, which was at this time ruled by a just king, whose hospitality and safety would be sought for, and whose shelter and strength would be hoped. Uthman was the first Emigrant to it, in the company of his wife Ruqayyah, daughter of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him". the Messenger had given her to him in marriage following his conversion into Islam.

The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" stood up, bidding farewell to them kindly, with his merciful gazes, saying: "No doubt, they are the first to emigrate to Allah after the Prophet of Allah Lut."

The migration strengthened the good characteristics of Uthman, and made them more effective and elegant. His perception of its real significance, i.e. the fact that it was a migration of spirit before being a migration from one place to another made his faith so much attentive and responsive.

He returned to Mecca, and then emigrated once again to Medina, and at every time and place he existed, his faithful spirit became more sticking to migration in its deepest connotations, and its highest concepts. The words of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", which described him as the first Emigrant to Allah stimulated his longing, and made him much more insisting on living at the level of such description and glorification; and he succeeded, and his insistence achieved a great victory in this field.

When the rebels besieged him, in order either to oust him or kill him, Al-Mughirah Ibn Shu'ba suggested to him: "O Commander of Believers! You are suffering from that which you know. I suggest to you three things, from which you should choose one: either you should get out and fight them, and we are beside you, and you are on the right and they are on the wrong; or you would make an opening from behind the home, through which you could get out stealthily, and then your mounts would carry you to Mecca, for they would not make lawful your blood while you are there; otherwise, you might go to Sham, where there is Mu'awiyah."

The great caliph answered him with words far from the least degrees of cunning, or longing for life, but they expressed the conscience, morality and insistence of the Emigrant. He “Allah be pleased with him” replied to his companion: “As for getting out in order to fight them, by Allah, I would not be the first successor of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” to lead his nation to bloodshed. As for my going to Mecca, no doubt, I heard the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” saying one day: “A man from Quraish would go to Mecca, and would bear half the torment of all of the world.” I would not be this man. as for my setting out for Sham where there is Mu’awiyah, no, by Allah, I would not depart from the homeland of my migration, or the neighbourhood of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” as long as I am living.”

How wonderful and glorious he was! A man besieged by armed rebels, who wanted his life, had opportunities of saving himself, but he refused all of them, for nothing except that (accepting anyone of them) would dishonour his migration and its reward. How old was he (at this time) when he had such a loyalty as of a young man to the migration, and its right upon him? He was eighty years old.

He refused any kind of abrogation, whatever formal or material it might be, of the migration and leaving Medina, in which the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and his two companions Abu Bakr and Umar lived and then died. That was the abrogation of migration, which he rejected at all, even if he were to pay his life as a price of his refusal.

On the other hand, entering into any battle with the rebels, who were, in spite of their rebellion, Muslims, belonging to his religion and faith, was, in his sight, another kind of cancellation of migration, which he refused, even if he were to sacrifice his life as a price of such a rejection.

However, anyone has the right to differ with him in opinion. But at first, we have to form a complete notion of what the word Emigrant meant for Uthman. It meant just what he did, i.e. a thing much more valuable than security, and more expensive than life. He penetrated, with the sincerity of his conscience and the fidelity of his heart, into the true essence of Islam, which he knew well with certainty.

He knew that Islam in its essence is to be a full migration to Allah, in such a way that all of majesty, wealth and even life itself should have no

authority upon the conscience and spirit of the Emigrant. Indeed, Uthman conceded to his Islam and migration of his majesty, wealth and finally his life, with matchless tolerance.

If we saw him giving his property with no account to the call (of Islam), in which he believed, and whose banner he raised with the faithful believers, surely, we would see a man of a unique sort. He seemed with his giving and generosity to be the only financial sponsor of the newly emerging nation. If we wanted to recognize of a man, who emigrated from his world which was abundant of wealth and property to the extensive wholehearted devotion and the beneficial giving, we could hardly find a match to Uthman.

When the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and his companions emigrated to Medina, where they stabilized, very soon they were troubled by the problem of water shortage. Medina had a well, overflowing with sweet water, called the well of Rawmah, in the possession of a Jew, who used to sell a full waterskin for a Mudd (of food). The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” had a desire that one of the Muslims could buy it, so that the Muslims would get its water with no price.

Uthman “Allah be pleased with him” ran to fulfill the desire of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, and suggested to the Jew, its owner to buy it from him. But, he rejected. Then, Uthman offered to him to buy only its half. He then bought its half by twelve thousand Dirhams, on the condition that it would be for the Jew one day, and for Uthman one day (i.e. to take it on alternate days).

On the day assigned to Uthman, the Muslims used to take their supplies from water for two days. In this way, the Jew found that he lost his marketable commodity. So, he offered to Uthman to buy the other half, and he did. Thus the well overflowed with its sweet water, providing the people of Medina with water with no price or account.

When the number of the converts to Islam increased in Medina to the extent that the mosque was too narrow to have all of them, the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” hoped that he could find one of his companions to buy the area neighbouring to the mosque, so that it might be added to it, and in this way, it would become more spacious. Once again, there was none other Uthman to pick up happily the desire of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon

him”. he went to the owners of this area, which he bought from them by a high price, estimated by the narrators as twenty five thousand.

When Allah made His Prophet conquer Mecca, to which he returned victoriously, he thought of expanding the area of the Sacred Mosque. He suggested to the owners of a home beside the mosque to donate it to be added to it, but they excused because they had nothing except for it, and they had no money to buy another one. For the third time Uthman emerged. He had no sooner been told of this news than he ran to the owners of such a large house, which he bought from them by ten thousand Dinars.

In the ninth year of Hegira, Heraclius, the conspirator, turned to the Arab peninsula , having a strong desire for attacking and taking it by force. The new religion, with its great Messenger and courageous men disturbed him as well as all of the Byzantines, and caused them to become so much frightened. Since the emperor was at this time proud of his victory he achieved over the Persians, he decided to proceed with his army to this new nation in its homeland.

Indeed, he ordered his forces to be ready and to expect his command to proceed. The news reached the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, who called upon his companions to get themselves ready for fighting in the Cause of Allah. it was a very scorching hot summer, and the country was suffering from the difficulty of drought.

If the Muslims were able to resist, with the help of their faith the pressure of this destructive heat, and set out for fighting on the flaming desert, from where then would they get the expensive equipment and costs required by fighting?

Although the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” urged his companions to donate for this fighting, and everyone gave as much as he could do, and even the women hurried to give their ornaments to the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, in order to help him achieve the campaign, all of the donations were of no great value in view of the countless requirements of the big army, which was described at this time as the Army of Difficulty.

The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” looked at the long broad rows of the people, who got themselves ready for fighting and said: “Who might provide those people with their

requirements, and Allah would forgive for him (his earlier and later sins)?" as soon as Uthman had heard this call of the Messenger, he hurried to get a forgiveness and pleasure from Allah. In this way, the pressing difficulty found its Uthman, the giver.

He "Allah be pleased with him" prepared the entire army, to the extent that he did not leave it without even a single nosestring or binding rope. In this issue, Ibn Shihab Az-Zuhri said: "Uthman gave to the Army of Difficulty in the holy battle of Tabuk nine hundred and forty camels, and sixty horses, in order to complete it one thousand."

Hudhaifah said: "During the time of the Army of Difficulty, Uthman brought to the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" ten thousand Dinars, which he placed before him. The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" started turning them with his hands while saying: "Allah has forgiven for you O Uthman whatever you've done secretly and publicly, and what will be until the Day of Judgement." Abd Ar-Rahman Ibn Awf said: "I was present with the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", when Uthman Ibn Affan brought to him seven hundred ounces of gold."

Did I not say to you that he seemed to be the only financial sponsor of the new nation and religion? Do you see that Uthman was not to do such a voluntary giving unless he emigrated so much sincerely to Allah Almighty, and it is this migration which caused him to forget all except for Allah, His Messenger and the everlasting home in the hereafter?

The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" set out leading his Muslim army until they arrived in a place called Tabuk, a midway between Medina and Damascus, where the glad tidings came to him that the emperor who had been preparing himself for proceeding from Damascus was disappointed by virtue of Allah, and that he left it and cancelled his attempt, after knowing of the coming out of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" and his companions to face him.

The Messenger praised his Lord that Allah sufficed the Muslims (the evil of) fighting. The army returned with its equipment and supplies provided to it by Uthman. Did he take back anything of it? Did he take back any small coin, camel or even a nosestring? Nay! Far be he from doing that! On the contrary, he remained as he always was quickly responsive to every hint from the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing

and peace be upon him”, resulting in new (objects of) giving and more sacrifice.

This is a synopsis which discovers to us the reality of the migration of Uthman, i.e. the migration which made him get out leaving all of his property, majesty and luxurious world, and travel shyly to Allah. he was a man, who used to escape from the light (of fame), spending his days among his companions and in his society so much quietly, giving his back to the noise of fame and the seduction of prominence.

The worship was the entertainment of his spirit, and the Holy Qur’an was, since he embraced Islam, the most beloved to his heart, and bosom friend during his entire life. Is it not time to see from his worship and piety a scene which might make us more acquainted with the magnificence of his spirit and the greatness of his certainty? Nay! It is time to do so.

CHAPTER TWO

THE REPENTANT MERCIFUL

The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” gave him his daughter Ruqayyah in marriage. When she died, he gave him in marriage his daughter Umm Kulthum. When she died too, the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” became sorry for he had not another daughter in order to give her in marriage to his beloved son-in-law. In this issue, he said: “Had we had a third daughter, surely, we would have given her in marriage to you.”

There is another narration in this context, according to which, the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” said: “Had I had forty daughters, certainly, I would have given all of them in marriage to Uthman, one after the other.”

What then are the good qualities and characteristics, which qualified Uthman to deserve such a great love and preference given to him by the great Messenger of Allah? indeed, they are a lot, abundant of goodness and gallantry, fragrant of mercy wherever we meet them or him.

The bounteous Messenger granted by Allah to His slaves as He Almighty says: “Now hath come unto you a Messenger from amongst yourselves: it grieves him that ye should perish: ardently anxious is he over you: to the Believers is he most kind and merciful”, was not to be inclined to any of those characteristics more than he was to mercy, firm piety and sincere devoutness to Allah.

However, Uthman had a great fortune of mercy and piety. He was repentant merciful. He used to observe fasts during the day, and stand for prayers during the night. He was full of mercy and compassion. It is for this reason that the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” said one day: “For every Prophet there is a companion in Paradise, and mine in Paradise is Uthman.”

In the field of worship, he was one of its very few nonesuch persons and prominent heroes. His contemporaries described his passionate love for worship saying: “He used to observe fasts all the time, and stand up for prayers all the night, except for a light slumber during the first portion of it.” We know well the great luxury and blessing Uthman had. So, when such a man as Uthman spent all the time fasting, though his home

was full of the best kinds of food, and when a man, seduced by the soft and comfortable beds (having his wives), spent all the nights standing for prayers, this man then must have belonged to another sort (of men, so much worshipping to the extent that) the word of Allah reached the depth of his spirit, and his heart turned to Allah so much that made him forget everything but for Him.

Moreover, when we see him keeping on his worship during a life, as long as eighty years, we will see an image of a repentant worshipper, with its complete features, opening our eyes upon his realities, positive or negative they might be. In his worship and purity, he related himself to Allah, with great loyalty. That's because his life, even before Islam, was pure. He used to talk about the blessing of Allah bestowed upon him, saying: "I've never committed fornication or theft, whether before or after Islam." The relation of his heart with Allah after Islam was established upon a right awareness of the essence of this relation.

If the Qur'an is the word of Allah, with which He draws for the people how to live and worship Him, his heart adhered to the Qur'an so much passionately. It might take from him the whole night to perform only two Rak'ahs, in which he would keep reciting from the Holy Qur'an, until he quenched his thirsty spirit, and until he was about to come to its end.

However, we shall see him later, when the rebels intruded his home, motivated by the blind spiteful affliction to assassinate him, he would be concerned with no more than receiving death, with the Qur'an in his hand, and the words of Allah in his lips, and on his tongue.

His longing for the Holy Qur'an did not only make him stop at reciting and repeating its blessed Verses, but also acting upon it, and worshipping Allah with it formed the essence of this love. In the beginning of the affliction which broke up against him, the people talked with him for a long time. His reply to them was: "If you find in the Book of Allah anything that enable you to put my legs in chains, then, do so.." Allah's Book then was for him the strongest and the most decisive proof.

Yes, the Qur'an was his direction and right pattern which he should follow; and for this reason, his worship attained such a degree of purity and glory. So much frequently, he used to be shaken by the following Verse, which he repeated a lot: "Set forth to them the similitude of the life of this world: it is like the rain which we send down from the skies:

the earth's vegetation absorbs it, but soon it becomes dry stubble, which the winds do scatter: it is (only) Allah who prevails over all things.”

The rich man of a great wealth found what protected him from the seduction of money, as well as he found his firm charm (which would save him) from its violent trial in this Holy Verse, which scandalizes and uncovers the falsehood of this world to those seduced by it, in order to see its reality, i.e. dry stubble thrown by the wind.

In this way, we found his great generosity, i.e. the generosity of a man, for whom the money became no more than straw, except if he spent it in the Cause of Allah. it is only as such that it would turn to be a true eternity and great everlasting reward.

For this reason, we saw him having bought alone the well of Rawmah, and prepared the Army of Difficulty with great expenses, as much as filling big stores. We also saw him having made a treaty with himself, which he did not cancel during his lifetime, i.e. to emancipate every Friday a slave, whether of his own, or by buying him from his master for any price, and then manumitting him, seeking for the pleasure of his Lord the Highest.

Whenever he saw the traders intending to monopolize food or any source of life or sell it by a high price, he would very soon send his caravans (to purchase commodities and then) return loaded with what spoils their monopoly or selling of food very expensively, disappointing their evil intentions. Whenever his mounts came from Yemen or Sham, loaded with commodities, and the traders of Medina and the surrounding areas gathered around him, he would enter with them into interesting bargains. How beautiful it would be to go through one of them, as narrated by Ibn Abbas:

During the time of Abu Bakr's ruling, the people suffered from drought. The caliph said to them: “Allah willing, it is not after tomorrow evening that Allah will relieve you.” When it was tomorrow morning, a caravan belonging to Uthman came. Then, the traders came to him. He got out to them, having a sheet, crossing its two ends upon his shoulders. They asked him to sell to them his caravan. He asked them: “How much would be the profit?” they said: “ten are for twelve.” He said: “Someone increased me over than that.” They said: “Ten are for fifteen.” He said: “Someone increased me over than that.” They asked him: “Who did increase you since we are all traders of Medina?” he said: “Allah has

increased me ten Dirhams for everyone. Do you have more than that?" the traders turned away from him, while he was calling: "O Allah! I grant it to the poor people of Medina with no price or account."

As such his loyalty to the Qur'an and his method of worship were. It was a worship, that meant the generous giving in addition to fasting during the day and standing for prayers during the night.

However, the spirit of this worshipping repentant was so much elegant in his capability of abstinence and simplicity, which he applied to his life a lot, although money was flowing in abundance with him, which he used to spend with no account. In this context, Sharhabil Ibn Muslim said: Uthman used to feed the people as good as that assigned to the ruler, and he himself used to eat oil and vinegar. Abdullah Ibn Shaddad said also: I saw Uthman delivering a speech on Friday, and he was wearing a garment as cheap as no more than four or five Dirhams. At this time, he was the Commander of the Believers.

This was a conduct of a worshipping repentant, who emaciated the appetite for food in him, to the extent that it became satisfied by fasting, and subjugated the pride of ignorance in his veins until he was empowered by Islam. From wherever you came to him, you would see the majesty of the worshipper in him, which might astonish your sight.

One day, he became angry with one of his servants. He rubbed his ear so violently that he caused pain to him. But very soon, the conscience of the worshipper disturbed him. He called the servant, and ordered him to retaliate from him by rubbing his ear painfully. The servant rejected and turned away. But Uthman ordered him once again decisively, and he complied with his order. He said to him: "Straighten (my ear) O boy, for the retaliation of this world is much more merciful than that of the hereafter."

He is the worshipping repentant, whom we meet here as we could meet everywhere. When we enter the mosque of Medina, we find a glorious man of majesty, lying over its pebbles, placing his garment under his head. When he got up, the traces were visible on his side. He was the same repenting abstinent worshipper, Uthman Ibn Affan, who had, from among his people, the greatest wealth and blessings during the period of ignorance, as well as of Islam.

This reminds us of the opinion of Abdullah Ibn Umar in him. Whenever he recited the Holy Verse: "Is one who worships devoutly

during the hours of the night prostrating himself or standing (in adoration), who takes heed of the Hereafter, and who places his hope in the Mercy of his Lord (like one who does not)? Say: are those equal, those who know and those who do not know? It is those who are endued with understanding that receive admonition”, he would say: He is Uthman Ibn Affan.

As for Uthman the merciful, he was astonishing. Mercy was as runny in his life as water in the fresh satisfied green stick. From the simple ordinary behaviours to the behaviours related to destiny, upon which the matter of life and death depended, the mercy was the dominant quality of them all. Uthman, the Commander of the Believers, who used to get up at night and reject to awaken anyone of his servants to prepare water for his ablution, forcing against his old age to bring water and perform ablution perfectly, was the same, who rejected to be saved from the swords of his killers, if the price for that would be drops of blood shed from only a sinless Muslim.

Once, Zaid Ibn Thabit entered upon him, when the rebels were calling one another to besiege his house. He said to Him: “O Commander of believers! Those are the supporters “Ansar” saying that they want to be supporters for the sake of Allah twice.” But, the merciful caliph replied to him: “As for fighting, it is no.” then, he cried to the companions who gathered around his house with their arms in order to face the rebels: “The greatest one to protect me from among you is him, who stopped his hand and arms (from fighting).”

He saw Abu Hurairah raising his sword excitedly. He called him and said to him: “Would you be pleased to kill all the people including me? By Allah! if you kill only a single one, you would be considered to have killed all the people.”

When he learnt that a lot of the young men of Muslims, under the leadership of Al-Hasan, Al-Husain, Ibn Umar and Abdullah Ibn Az-Zubair gathered to guard him with their swords, he became so much grieved. He called them to him beseeching them: “I beseech you by Allah, by Whom I ask you that a single drop of blood should not be shed for my sake.”

Did I not say to you that he was a repenting merciful? It was an overwhelming mercy, which covered with its great giving the glorious actions and events. The servant, for example, had a portion from it,

according to which, he would have the right to be blessed by the rest of sleeping, even if it was on the expense of the caliph's troubling himself in the darkness of the night. The drops of blood had also the right of being blessed with peace, even if the alternative of that was the killing of the caliph himself at the hands of oppressive aggressors and betrayers.

However, Uthman was one of the very few men, who were ready to sacrifice their lives as price for their high merits. Mercy itself penetrated his life and behaviours to the extent that led him to sacrifice his life, which he gave, preferring to die while being so much loyal to his mercy other than to live while giving up his position on the top of the merciful people.

Of course, a man, whose mercy extended to cover all of the people would cover his kith and kin. He "Allah be pleased with him" was matchless in his loving for his family, and keeping good relations with his kith and kin. In this issue, it is sufficient for us to repeat the saying of imam Ali about him: "The best from among us of keeping good relations with kith and kin is Uthman."

Later, when he would undertake the responsibility of caliphate, we shall see how his mercy to his kith and kin, and loving for them so much played an important role in the violent events which distressed Islam.

We said some time earlier that Abdullah Ibn Umar used to recite Allah's saying: "Is one who worships devoutly during the hours of the night prostrating himself or standing (in adoration), who takes heed of the Hereafter, and who places his hope in the Mercy of his Lord (like one who does not)? Say: are those equal, those who know and those who do not know? It is those who are endued with understanding that receive admonition." Then he would comment: "He is Uthman Ibn Affan." Indeed, it was a right witness, in whose light the pure worship is elegant, or in another word, it itself was elegant in the light of pure constant worship, which filled and decorated the life of Uthman since he knew (the right way to) Allah until he (died and) met Him as a glorious martyrdom. He "Allah be pleased with him" used to be careful of the hereafter, and hope for the mercy of his Lord. His carefulness of the hereafter, and hoping for the mercy of his Lord were very clear in all of his life, as well as in his behaviours, and even those behaviours for which he was criticized, which he did with such a confidence of a man, who hoped for the mercy of his Lord.

He had a great fear from the hereafter, which we could see in his speech he delivered to the Muslims: “O people! fear Allah, for god-fearing is a gain. Indeed, the most intelligent one is him, who surrendered himself (to Allah) and worked for what would come later after death, and in this way, took from the Light of Allah a light to his grave. Let any slave fear that Allah would bring him (on the Day of Judgement) as blind, though he had sight (in the world).”

He said in another speech: “No doubt, Allah has given you this world in order to seek for the hereafter through it, and He did not give it to you just to rely on it. The world will perish, but the hereafter will everlastingly remain. So, give preference to what will remain over what will perish. The world will come to an end, and the destiny will be to Allah Alone.”

He would tremble and his eyes would overflow with tears whenever he remembered the hereafter, and imagined himself, while his grave split open, rushing towards offering and reckoning. He was narrated to have said: “If I become between the Paradise and the Hell, not knowing to which of them it would be ordered for me, I would hope to turn into ashes before knowing to which of them I would go.”

A man being careful of the hereafter as such could not be mistaking in knowing the ways which lead to it. He also could not be mistaking in knowing the best ways to it, i.e. fighting in the Cause of Allah. here, as in all of his characteristics, we could hardly find in Uthman a worshipper spending his life in seclusion, but a worshipper spending his life in hard work, earnest seeking, giving and wholehearted devotion.

According to his shyness and psychological structure, he used to dislike to see bloodshed. But, when the forces of paganism got up in order to extinguish the Light of Allah, and Allah Almighty ordered his Messenger and those with him to carry their arms with their right hands, and sacrifice their lives for the sake of Allah, Uthman threw himself into the horrible dangers of wars, and occupied his position among the rows on the battlefield.

Indeed, he did not attend the holy battle of Badr, because his wife Ruqayyah, daughter of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” was fatally ill, and at the threshold of death. The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” ordered him to keep himself beside her, in order to take care of her. He complied

with the order. On the very day the glad tidings of the Muslims' victory in the holy battle of Badr reached Medina, she died.

When the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" distributed the spoils of war on the fighters, he regarded Uthman as being attending fighter, and gave him a portion like theirs. In the holy battle of Uhud, he fought as all of the Muslims, but when the army of the infidels attacked Muslims surprisingly, their rows were dispersed, and their constancy was lost. There were loud voices, announcing the death of Muhammad. Uthman was overtaken by confusion and grief, to the extent that he turned away from the battlefield with those who fled away, motivated by confusion not cowardice. However, Allah forgave them, and accepted their excuse. Some Verses from The Holy Qur'an ascended on their occasion, saying: "Indeed, Allah has forgiven them."

From this on, he never failed to attend any holy battle carried out by the Muslims. He attended the holy battles of Khaibar, the conquest of Mecca, Ta'if, Hawazin, and Tabuk.

On the day of Al-Hudaibiyah, he faced a noble risk, for which the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" had selected him. He hurried to run it so much bravely and courageously. It was during the sixth year of Hegira, when the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" decided to visit the Sacred House. He set out to Mecca for this purpose. When he reached near Usfan, the news reached him that Quraish had learnt of his proceeding towards Mecca, and hence, they set out in the dress of war to meet him.

The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" resumed his proceeding until he reached the valley of Al-Hudaibiya, at the outskirts of Mecca, where he alighted with his companions. Quraish started sending its envoys and delegates to the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", in order to frustrate him and cause him to return. But all of their envoys returned with faces different from those with which they had come to him.

Yes. They came to the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" with dull angry faces, symbolizing the insistence of Quraish on challenging. But, as soon as they had sat with the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" and talked with him, their hearts became much smoother and submissive. Although they had come to warn the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be

upon him” of the strength of Quraish, they returned and warned Quraish of the great strength of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”.

The last of those envoys was Urwah Ibn Mas’ud, who sat and said to the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”: “O Muhammad! It is Quraish, in whose company, the most wicked men wearing the skin of tigers set out, deciding that you would not enter into it (Mecca) by force.” But, being astonished by the glory of what he had heard and seen, he returned to his people and said: “O community of Quraish! No doubt, I have been to Khosrau in his kingdom, Caesar in his kingdom, and the Negus in his kingdom, and by Allah, I’ve never seen a king being glorified and honoured by his people as Muhammad is glorified and honoured by his companions. I’ve never seen a king being loved by his people as Muhammad is loved by his companions. By Allah! they would never surrender him to anyone. So, consider your matter.”

But Quraish, as was its use, was overtaken by its false power. At this point, the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” was of the opinion that he would send an envoy from him, asserting to them that he did not come to invade Mecca, but only to visit the House and glorify it. He called Khirash Ibn Umayyah Al-Khuza’i, and delegated him to this mission. But as soon as Quraish had seen him and listened to his words, they slew the camel he was riding, and intended to kill him. But those of Ahabish rescued him from death. Khirash returned to the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, and related to him what had happened.

On the following day, Quraish sent fifty of its strongest men, in order to disturb Muslims and strike their camp with stones and arrows, and take away whomever they could. In this way, it seemed to have grown mad, to the extent that it intended to kill the envoy of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, a matter criticized by the conventions at this time. They never were known to have killed envoys.

The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” noticed the dangerous situation in which they were. So, he decided to send another envoy, to make the people of Quraish return to their minds if they had. He selected Uthman Ibn Affan.

This delegation was endangered. Quraish tried to kill the envoy sent by the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” earlier. This was not sufficient for it. It sent fifty of its men in order to annoy the companions of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, attempting to take away whomever they could.

Amidst of those formidable horrible dangers, Uthman carried out the order of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”. he went to Quraish, with no concern whether he would return alive, or would die as a martyr. At the entrance of Mecca, he faced the irritating gatherings, and reported to them the message of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”. their reply to him was: “If you yourself wanted to circumambulate the House, you might do. But it is not for Muhammad and his companions.” Uthman said to them: “I’m not to do until the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” circumambulates it.”

However, his prestige and high position among his people prevented them from attacking him. But, they did not prevent them from detaining and keeping him. It seemed that Quraish intended to examine the Muslims and learn their real intentions. So, it instigated some of its men to go to the camp of Muslims, and announce that Quraish killed Uthman. The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” decided to show the infidels his firm determination, and strong insistence and capability (of fighting them) so that they might stop from going on their tyranny.

He called his companions for giving him the pledge of allegiance (of fighting the infidels beside him). Beneath the tree, there was one of the most wonderful, glorious and supreme pledges in all of the history. It was the pledge of (Allah’s Good) Pleasure, which the Holy Qur’an eternalized in some of its blessed Verses: “Verily those who plight their fealty to thee do no less than plight their fealty to Allah: the hand of Allah is over their hands: then any one who violates his oath, does so to the harm of his own soul, and any one who fulfils what he has covenanted with Allah, Allah will soon grant him a great Reward... Allah’s Good Pleasure was on the Believers when they swore Fealty to thee under the Tree: He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down Tranquillity to them; and He rewarded them with a speedy Victory.”

It seemed that the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” learnt, with the help of the light of Allah and pure insight, that

Uthman had not been killed. So, he gave himself the pledge of allegiance in the name of Uthman. He “Peace be upon him” no sooner had finished from taking the pledges of allegiance from his companions, than he placed one of his hands upon the other and said: “This is the pledge of allegiance of Uthman.” Thus, there was no Muslim but that he hoped to be the one of such a high position and honour.

Some time later, Uthman returned in a good state. Then, Quraish sent another envoy, i.e. Suhail Ibn Amr, who was able to sign with the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” the treaty known as the treaty of Al-Hudaibiyah.

As such was the worship of Uthman. He used to stand the whole night (for prayers) submissively, and observe fasts during the day dutifully. He also used to spend his money with no account, and carry his sword whenever he was called for fighting in the Cause of Allah. he used to fulfill all the duties and obligations of his religion within a firm circle of honesty and loyalty to his responsibilities and burdens as a faithful believer and a glorious companion.

His eyes would overflow with tears whenever he recited the following Holy Verse: “We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof; but man undertook it; he was indeed unjust and foolish.” Do you think that his deep insight foresaw, from behind the unseen, those days, on which he would carry bearable and unbearable trust and responsibilities?

Indeed, he carried the trust of his religion and his life as much as he could. The trust in his sight meant to be completely loyal to this religion. So, he was so much faithful and loyal (to it) to the extent that the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” gave him the glad tidings of being admitted in Paradise. He also selected him to write the revelation for him. He gave him the glad tidings of being a martyr on the day he was standing on the mountain of Uhud, in the company of Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman. When the location on which they were standing trembled, the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” struck it with his foot and then said to it: “Be firm, O Uhud, for there is none on you but a Prophet, a Truly faithful believer and two martyrs.”

CHAPTER THREE

THE THIRD SUCCESSOR

Umar, the Commander of the Believers, refused to appoint a successor during his last breaths. When some of his companions pressed upon him to choose by himself his successor, he held fast to his rejection and said to them: "Shall I carry the matter of yours during my death as I did during my life? Would that my fortune from (the matter of ruling) you might be just the necessary requirements (of an ordinary Muslims), neither having a reward, nor bearing a sin. No doubt, if I appoint a successor, then the one who was better than me (i.e. Abu Bakr) had done so, and if I give up appointing a successor, then, the one, who was better than me (i.e. the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him") had done so. It is up to Allah Almighty to keep His religion."

Then, he turned submissively to Allah, asking Him to guide him to what is right. He closed his eyes, and went on thinking. Immediately, it seemed that a light from Allah appeared to him, and as if he remembered this day, though far in time, but near to one's mind, on which they paid attention to the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" while he was instructing them a few days before his death: "O people! Abu Bakr never harmed me. So, you should appreciate him for this. O people! I'm pleased with Umar, Ali, Uthman, Talhah Ibn Ubaidullah, Az-Zubair Ibn Al-Awwam, Sa'd Ibn Abu Waqqas, and Abd Ar-Rahman Ibn Awf, in addition to the early Emigrants. So, you should appreciate them for that."

Ali, Uthman, Talhah Ibn Ubaidullah, Az-Zubair Ibn Al-Awwam, Sa'd Ibn Abu Waqqas, and Abd Ar-Rahman Ibn Awf, how glorious remembrance it is, which returns in its appropriate time. Then, let those six men, whom the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" honoured, undertake the consequence of the matter which concerns the dying caliph. Let him confide to them the trust which he carried during the years of his ruling so much powerfully and constantly.

Thus, he gathered them around him, and addressed them saying: "I considered the matter, and found out that you are the chiefs (of the nation), and this matter (of ruling) should not be undertaken but by (anyone of) you. The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be

upon him” died while he was pleased with you. I do not fear the people for you as long as you are straightly right. If I died, you should hold consultations among you for three days, and the fourth day should not come but you have a ruler from among you. Let Abdullah Ibn Umar attend with you as an advisor, but he should have no right of this matter (of ruling as you have).”

Talhah was absent from Medina, so the remaining (five) companions, to whom Umar had confided the trust before his death, gathered. Abd Ar-Rahman Ibn Awf suggested that anyone of them should concede his right of candidacy so that his vote would be decisive in case difference occurred. Then, he took the initiative of concession. Then, Az-Zubair gave up his right to Ali, and Sa’d Ibn Abu Waqqas conceded his right of candidacy. In this way, the option was restricted between Uthman and Ali; and selecting one of both was entrusted to Abd Ar-Rahman Ibn Awf.

However, Ibn Awf had to fulfill the mission within the three days, of which the late caliph had recommended them. During such a short period, he had to make a lot of consultations and referendum among most of the Muslims. Thus, he went on knocking at the doors of the houses of Medina (for taking the opinions of the people).

Ibn Kathir said: Abd Ar-Rahman Ibn Awf “Allah be pleased with him” undertook the task of consulting the people and collecting their opinions: their commons and leaders, their gatherings and individuals, in pairs, solely or in groups, secretly and publicly, to the extent that he went to the women screened in their homes, and asked the young boys in their learning places, and asked the travelers who came to visit Medina.

Let’s go on with Ibn Kathir, to see how the matter was done, and how Uthman carried the trust of ruling, and what a formidable trust it was.

Abd Ar-Rahman sent for Uthman and Ali who came to him. He faced them and said: “I asked the people about both of you, and none of them had a match to you (or anyone of you both better than the other).” Then, he took the pledge from both of them that if anyone became the caliph, he would do justice, and if he became under the ruling of the other, he should listen and obey.

Then, he came out in their company to the mosque. Indeed, Abd Ar-Rahman wore the turban which the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” had dressed him, and carried a sword. He sent to the elite from both the Emigrants and Ansar. Then, it was called: “Come

to the prayer in congregation!” the people aligned until the mosque was so much crowded of them, to the extent that Uthman did not find a place to sit but in the rear. However, he was a shy man.

Then, Abd Ar-Rahman Ibn Awf ascended the pulpit of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, and recited a long supplication, after which he said: “O people! I asked you in secret and public, and found none of you having a match to both Ali and Uthman (or favouring one of them over the other). Come to me O Ali!” he got up and went to him. He caught hold of his hand and asked him: “Do you give me the pledge of allegiance for following the Book of Allah, the sunnah of His Prophet, and the tradition of both Abu Bakr and Umar?” Ali replied: “I give you the pledge of allegiance for following Allah’s Book, the sunnah of His Messenger, and doing my best to do what is right according to my own knowledge.”

Then, he said: “Come to me O Uthman!” he got up and came to him. He caught hold of his hand and asked him: “Do you give me the pledge of allegiance for following the Book of Allah, the sunnah of His Prophet, and the tradition of both Abu Bakr and Umar?” Uthman replied: “By Allah! it is yes.” Then, Abd Ar-Rahman raised his head up to the ceiling of the mosque, while his hand was in the hand of Uthman. Then, he said: “O Allah! listen and be a Witness! O Allah! I’ve given this matter (of ruling) I’m carrying to Uthman.” The people gathered round Uthman crowdedly, giving him the pledge of allegiance.

The first hand to give him the pledge of allegiance was that of Ali Ibn Abu Talib. Then, all of the Muslims gave him the pledge of allegiance in succession. In this way, Uthman carried the heavy burdens of caliphate, when he was about to reach the seventieth year of his age. Do you see he was happy with it, and eager to get it?

However, to our knowledge of the natures of people, the age of seventy is not appropriate for the ambition and aspiration, nor is it to be full of desires for the troubles of authority. Then, what about a man, whose life was under the control of shyness, which always led him to live in the shade? What about a man of such an age, who received the responsibility following a horrible warning, shown in the assassination of a caliph, whose justice, piety, strength, and great merciful authority were challenged by the crime?

It is thought mostly that Uthman received the pledge of allegiance while trembling. There is a certain narration which might be indicative of that. It is narrated that after the caliph had received the pledge of allegiance from those of consultation, he turned to the pulpit with a sad countenance. Perhaps, it was his fear of the majesty of such a responsibility, which stopped him from lengthening the first speech he delivered. He just warned the people of this world and its vanities, and exhorted them to seek for the hereafter, with its pleasures. Had it not been for the pressure of the situation and the hard responsibility (he felt he was carrying), surely, he would have lengthened it, for he “Allah be pleased with him” was not unable to talk, nor was he faltering.

In this issue, Abd Ar-Rahman Ibn Hatib narrated from his father: “I’ve never seen anyone more expressive than Uthman whenever he talked, except that he used to fear talking (in public).” Of course, he was to be frightful of talking, as long as he was under such a control of shyness. If we added to his great shyness the heavy pressure of this formidable responsibility, then, his short speech he delivered on that day might give us the first indication of the troublesome confrontation which would be between the old-aged caliph and his hard formidable responsibilities.

But, whatever difficult and pressing the responsibility might be, Uthman, with his faith and honesty, would give it its right to the full, as well as he would practice soon the consequences of the pledge of allegiance which he gave, and which he received. He gave a pledge to follow the sunnah of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and his companions Abu Bakr and Umar.

When he gave this pledge, his intentions were inseparable from his words. Moreover, his determination was not to keep behind his intentions. But, in spite of all of that, he was well aware of the fact that his capability was limited in comparison with his two companions, who were inimitable and incomparable.

Perhaps he remembered that day, when he was looking from the window of his house, and saw afar a man running during the scorching heat and desert, whom he thought to be a stranger, who was distressed. He kept looking from his window so that this distressed man would return and he would consequently invite him to the shade of his house, and rescue him from his distress. How he was surprised and astonished when this man became near, and knew that he was Umar Ibn Al-Khattab,

the Commander of the Believers, catching hold of a nosestring of a camel, after which he was running.

Uthman asked him: "From where (did you come) O Commander of Believers?" Umar answered him: "From what you see. A camel of those assigned to charity fled away, and I ran after it and then returned with it." Uthman asked him: "Is not there anyone else who might do this job instead of you?" Umar answered him: "Then, who would stand in my position for reckoning on the Day of Judgement?" Uthman invited him to (come in and) take rest until it would become cooler, but, Umar did no more than he said, with tears flowing from his eyes: "Go back to your shade O Uthman."

Then, he went on his way, while the eyes of Uthman were attached to him until he disappeared from him. Uthman murmured saying: "No doubt, you've troubled those (rulers) to come after you O Umar."

Now, since he became the caliph, and was doomed to be the first man to come after Umar (as ruler), he would remember this event, as well as tens of events alike, and then would fear for himself and his nation. He came after two matchless caliphs, and particularly after ten years of Umar's ruling, during which, Al-Faruq imposed his rigid method and firm justice, and forced his employees and appointed governors to follow such abstinence, asceticism and suffering as he did.

He also came while the Islamic state was increasingly expanding, implying several kinds of people, having different natures and purposes. He came when the world was open to Muslims so much abundantly that their incomes from trade, legal portions of the war spoils, and from the treasury were more than their needs to the extent that a lot of them came to form a class of rich and wealthy people.

Whenever Umar saw the emergence of (the luxuries of) this world in its beginning, he would tremble out of fear for the destiny, and he would say: "No doubt, wealth has such a predation as of the wine." He used to mention the saying of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him": "By Allah! I do not fear poverty for you so much as I fear that this world would be open to you so much abundantly that you would compete with one another for it." Since it was open, and Uthman was called to undertake the responsibility and seize the reins, would he be perfect in using the curb bits as was his predecessor?

However, the lenient tractable quiet calm good amiable man perceived that the burden was heavy, and the heaviest of it was this world which came to the Muslims with all of its dangerous inducements, which ran away towards them, and encircled them increasingly after the protective high dam which used to keep it away from them had been broken. Furthermore, we have no doubt that Uthman himself was well aware of the fact that most of those who welcomed him as the caliph instead of Ali just did so in order to get themselves free from the rigidity of life and asceticism of living, from which the people had a long suffering (under the ruling of Umar), and which would have remained longer if Ali Ibn Abu Talib had seized power, who, with his rigid method, firm justice, piety, and asceticism, was a clear and firm extension of Umar's rigidity, asceticism, piety and justice. All of that was not, as we think, absent from the mind of Uthman, the third successor.

For this reason, he saw in the world luxuries which would come to the Muslims the most difficult problem during his ruling. For this reason too, his first words in the first speech he delivered to the people were to warn them of such a danger before being erupted, with the result that neither him nor the Muslims would be able to prevent it.

Thus, after receiving the pledge of allegiance, he stood up and said: "This world implied vanities, so let not the world mislead you, and let no deceiver seduce you. Treat this world as Allah deals with it, and seek for the hereafter, for Allah gives an example of this world when He said: "Set forth to them the similitude of the life of this world: it is like the rain which we send down from the skies: the earth's vegetation absorbs it, but soon it becomes dry stubble, which the winds do scatter: it is (only) Allah who prevails over all things. Wealth and sons are allurements of the life of this world: but the things that endure, good deeds, are best in the sight of thy Lord, as rewards, and best as (the foundation for) hopes.'"

However, the situation of the third successor from richness and wealth remained different in its estimation and results from that of his predecessor, Umar, the previous Commander of the Believers. Although both of them agreed that the escalating richness might be dangerous for the Muslims who vowed their lives for both call to Islam and fighting in the Cause of Allah, and for everyone of whom, the religion made it beautiful to have his provisions from the world as that of a traveler, we find that their methods in facing this danger were different.

As for Umar, the previous Commander of the Believers, he was of the opinion of suppressing the legal enjoyment of richness, and resisting the surrender to the pleasures of this world. he began the process of suppression by himself, his family, his clan, and then his appointed governors and employees. Whenever he heard that a certain governor led a life of good dress or food, he would immediately send to him to come to Medina, in order to scold and reproach him. If he returned once again to his surrender to such a blessing, he would dismiss and drive him away.

However, he wanted the public to see in their governors examples, which might help them confront giving in to the inducements of richness, the pleasures of life, and the luxuries of living. This was Umar's method.

As for Uthman, the third caliph, he saw that money was created in order to make life so much easy and comfortable. Since the money is lawful, and the enjoyment of it is legal, then, let the people take their fortunes of the pleasures and blessings of life, with no difference in this matter between the chiefs, governors and the public. However, it is a point of view, which might agree with his origin and characteristics.

Yes. Uthman saw that he had no right to dismiss a governor for he led a comfortable easy life, and took with both of his hands from the pleasures of this world, as long as this enjoyment of his did not do an evil or commit a sin. He did not regard money as (causing one to be) voracious as wine, the opinion adopted by Umar earlier, that the lawful sometimes might be as dangerous and seductive as the unlawful, and that the human being is always covetous of more and more, and if he is not weaned from a lot of legal pleasures of life, it would be easy for him to flee away and turn towards the impermissible joy.

Anyway, Uthman was selected to be the caliph, and he was confident of his honesty in keeping the religion of Allah, and the valuable things of the state and the nation, for which he undertook responsibility. As a caliph, he had the right to choose the method of practicing his authority, so long as he was putting in consideration the principal foundations set by Allah, and followed by His Messenger "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" and his two companions. Thus, under the shadows of this firm principles, he started practicing his missions, tasks and responsibilities so much determinedly and constantly.

Now, let's accompany him in some of his shining achievements. He began, as narrated by Ibn Kathir, with writing to the appointed governors,

the leaders of armies, the imams of the mosques, and the storekeepers of treasuries, ordering them to do good, and preventing them to do evil, and urging them to obey Allah and His Messenger "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", and exhorting them to follow the sunnah, and leave the religious innovations. Moreover, He saw the treasury abundant of wealth, so, he increased the salaries. He made a tablecloth in the mosque, on which the good delicious food would be served for those in I'tikaf, worshippers and wayfarers.

But, as soon as he had received his position, and begun in achieving the reforms which he intended to do, he was surprised by the armed uprisings attacking the state from everywhere. The Roman state cancelled its previous treaties, and so did some Persian provinces. It seemed as if the killing of Umar "Allah be pleased with him" was the starting sign of all forces of rebellion. There was uprisings at Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Romans attacked with their fleet Alexandria and Palestine. In this way, the fire (of rebellion) encircled the extended state.

The rebellion was, at this time, not from the side of the people of those areas, for they were so much happy with the Islam when it entered into them, because it released them from the tyranny of both the Persians and the Romans. But, the rebellion came from the remaining forces which had a dominant control over them before Islam. They were not a few groups or weak troops, and what increased their power was the lies spreading among the public of those areas that Islam had come to its end, after the assassination of its strong caliph at the hand of a Magian of them, and that there was chaos in different parts of the Islamic state.

On the other hand, the chiefs of those afflictions were instigated by what they learnt about Uthman, the new caliph, who had no famous aspects of heroism as those of Khalid Ibn Al-Walid or Sa'd Ibn Abu Waqqas or Ali Ibn Abu Talib. His name was not in circulation among the well-known names outside Medina, for nothing but that his shyness and quietness made him always inclined to the shades. All of that induced the rebels to attack the state.

The man of seventy years found it necessary for him to show those foolish secessionists that the capabilities of the companions of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" were not to be scaled by their huge bodies or old ages, but by the deep faith they had within their hearts in Allah, His Promise, Messenger, and religion.

He did not waste a single moment in thinking. He did not turn to his right or to his left (as a sign of hesitation). He did not ask anyone even just a single question about what he had to do. But, his faithful conscience defined the right way for him. Immediately, he issued his orders to extinguish the fire (of rebellion), and overcome the rebels. This was not only what he ordered to be done.

Moreover, he gave his commands that the conquests should go beyond those rebellious areas to borders much farther and more distant, so that there would remain no sides or furthest regions of the state, which could easily rebel whenever they so like. He chose by himself the leaders of armies which would undertake those tasks. Surprisingly, none of them lost a single battle, excluding only one.

At this time, Uthman thought well, estimated the matter well, and took decisive resolutions, in such a way as if the youth of history was placed within his skeleton.

This great old caliph astonished us with his sharp determination and brilliant spirit during those events. When he saw the necessities of fighting and the needs of victory having catered for naval equipment, and sending multitudes of troops through the sea, he did not hesitate (to do so), although he was aware of the fact that Umar Ibn Al-Khattab remained during the time of his ruling on his rejection of this risk. When both the leaders and soldiers saw this elegant shining spirit of their old caliph at this time, they became much more powerful, capable and courageous.

The caliph began confronting the rebellious forces, which carried the arms against Islam and its state in both Azerbaijan and Armenia, which repealed the treaty they had signed (with the Muslims) earlier. He sent to them an army under the leadership of Al-Walid Ibn Uqbah, who made them return to their minds, and sign a new treaty with the same conditions of the previous treaty made by Hudhaifah Ibn Al-Yaman "Allah be pleased with him".

While Al-Walid and his army were returning from Kufah, they were told that the Romans were trying to attack Sham. Moreover, the order of the caliph came to him to prepare an army of ten thousand fighters, under the leadership of a (honest bounteous and brave) man. let's see how the good qualities appeared in this notice. He ordered Al-Walid to choose a bounteous man to lead this army. The father of generosity, whose bounty

was limitless saw a good omen in generosity. Hence, he would optimize of the leader if he was a bounteous generous man.

Al-Walid achieved the order of the caliph. He prepared the army under the leadership of a brave tolerant man, called Habib Ibn Maslamah Al-Fihri. Habib proceeded with his army of ten thousand fighters, or perhaps less than that, while the army of both the Romans and Turks was more than eighty thousand soldiers. The wife of Habib Ibn Maslamah was enlisted in the Muslim army. Before fighting, she asked him: "Where should I meet you when it flared up and the rows were inclined to one another?" the husband and the leader answered: "In the tent of the Roman leader, or in Paradise."

Allah is Greater! The two armies met one another, and the result was the defeat of the Roman and Turkish army. But, Habib did not stop at this victorious tour. He plunged into the Roman territories, conquering the high strong forts, one after the other, and in this way, opening the gates of Islam and freedom for multitudes of people, who waited for a long time the days of their salvation.

On the other hand, the province of Ray repealed its treaty, and then rebelled against the Islamic state. So, a force under the leadership of Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari attacked it, which made its people return to their minds, and the treaty they had signed earlier with Hudhaifah Ibn Al-Yaman.

Then, the caliph who was living in Medina, the capital of Islam, turned his mind towards Alexandria, after he had been informed that the Roman naval fleet had raided it, and that a large number of footmen and horsemen had been proceeding towards it. The caliph issued his commands to Amr Ibn Al-As, his appointed governor of Egypt, to move with his army towards Alexandria, where he made the raiders taste the scorching heat (of destruction), and defeated the rebels and ruined their power forever.

At the same time, Mu'awiyah was conquering Qinisrin, and Uthman Ibn Abu Al-As was overcoming the rebellion which broke up in Istakhar, and reopening it once again.

The caliph sent a great army under the leadership of Abdullah Ibn Sa'd Ibn Abu Sarh, in the company of both Abdullah Ibn Umar and Abdullah Ibn Az-Zubair to North Africa. On the opposite side, the Barbarian armies came under the leadership of their king in large numbers, estimated, according to some historians at two hundred

thousand fighters. Indeed, it was a horrible meeting between the two sides, in which the Muslims in general, and Abdullah Ibn Az-Zubair in particular, warred out so much perfectly. Indeed, his good bravery in this war was matchless. The Muslims had a clear victory in this war, and their army returned with countless captives and wealth.

Uthman, the caliph, saw that the Roman fleet took from the island of Cyprus a base of departure for attacking the Muslims. So, he decided to invade it. But how, since the Muslims did not fight through the sea, and their great caliph, Umar, was, as we mentioned earlier, against any risk as such? However, Uthman discussed this matter with some of his companions and advisors, and was persuaded of the necessity of such a risk; and for the first time in history, the Islamic navy was born.

The caliph gave permission to Mu'awiyah to invade Cyprus, to which he went by sea. The caliph also supplied him with another army led by Abdullah Ibn Sa'd Ibn Abu Sarh. The two overwhelming armies rushed upon the island, which they assailed and defeated. It then surrendered, and signed a treaty on the conditions set by the Muslims.

In this invasion, an ancient Prophecy of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" was realized. The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" (used to visit Umm Haram Bint Milhan, who presented food to him. Umm Haram was the wife of Ubadah Ibn As-Samit. Once, The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" visited her and she presented food to him and started looking for lice in his head. Then The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him") slept, and afterwards woke up smiling.

Umm Haram asked: "What makes you smile, O Allah's Apostle?" He said: "Some of my followers who (in a dream) were presented before me as fighters in Allah's Cause (on board a ship) amidst this sea made me smile. They were as kings on the thrones. Umm Haram said: "O Allah's Apostle! Invoke Allah to make me one of them." The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" invoked Allah for her and then said: "You're of them." Then he slept again and woke up smiling. Once again Umm Haram asked: "What makes you smile, O Allah's Apostle?" He replied: "Some of my followers were presented to me as fighters in Allah's Cause." He repeated the same dream. Umm Haram said: "O Allah's Apostle! Invoke Allah for me to be one of them." He said: "You are amongst the first ones."

This event was in circulation among the companions during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him". they expected for its interpretation, and they were astonished as to how they would sail on the sea as kings on thrones, until the invasion of Cyprus came, in which they sailed on the sea, and were on their huge victorious ships as kings on beds or thrones.

In this invasion, Ubadah Ibn As-Samit set out with the army, accompanying his wife Umm Haram Bint Milhan "Allah be pleased with both". The prophecy of the honest truthful Messenger was realized, when he said to her: "You're of them." Of course, you mention that we said that he slept again and woke up smiling. Once again Umm Haram asked: "What makes you smile, O Allah's Apostle?" He replied: "Some of my followers were presented to me as sailing on the sea (as fighters in Allah's Cause)." He repeated the same dream. Umm Haram said: "O Allah's Apostle! Invoke Allah for me to be one of them." He said: "You are amongst the first ones."

At this point, the prophecy became completely true, glorious and brilliant. Umm Haram did not die until she had sailed on the sea with the others. She died after the end of the battle of Cyprus, where she was buried. Her pure grave was known later to be the grave of the good pious righteous woman.

Then, the battle of Sawari came to affirm the constancy and strength of the Muslim state under the ruling of Uthman Ibn Affan. Constantine gathered an overwhelming army, which the Muslims had never faced, in view of its outnumbering soldiers and equipment. Constantine set out leading his army on nearly five hundred ships, proceeding towards the countries of Arab Maghrib, in order to face the Muslim forces led by Abdullah Ibn Sa'd Ibn Abu Sarh, who gathered his army and sailed on the sea. The two parties met in a battle, whose violence and fierceness was beyond description.

The leader of the Muslims called them to disembark so that they would fight on the land, but they refused. Then, a group of the Muslim army ran to fascinate the Roman ships to those of Muslims, after making them near to theirs. Then, they went on fighting with swords and dragons. The Muslims suffered a huge number of victims, but the Roman victims were several times those of Muslims. The Muslims then achieved a great decisive victory, and Constantine fled away after he had been injured.

In this way, the armies sent by the caliph proceeded under his victorious banners to everywhere. Mu'awiyah plunged into the Roman territories until he became near the gate of Constantinople. To Persia, Karman, Sajistan and Marw, Ibn Amir, Al-Ahnaf Ibn Qais and Al-Aqra Ibn Habis proceeded, conquering all cities they met on their way. Moreover, the land was made easy for the Muslims to proceed bravely to reach Sudan and Abyssinia in the South, and India and China in the East. The old-aged caliph, who attained at this time over seventy-seven was in Medina, being blessed by all of those conquests bestowed upon him through his armies.

With the returning of the victorious armies, the spoils of war were flowing to the capital of Medina, as abundant as if there was heavily overflowing rain ascending from the sky. However, those flourishing years of the caliph contradicted all thoughts, which the enemies of Islam did not estimate well.

But, this continuous fighting in the cause of Allah, and those invasions following one another did not occupy him from showing interest in architecture. He went on decorating Medina, increasing its buildings, beginning with the mosque of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him". he increased its area, and built it with the sculptured stones, and made its pillars from the engraved stones.

However, if we were to be admired by the firmness and success with which the caliph faced all forces of evil against Islam, in order to extinguish its light, surely, we would be astonished similarly, if not much more, by his wonderful achievement of making all the Muslims be unanimous on one copy of the Holy Qur'an (i.e. a single Mushaf), between its two binders, the Qur'an has been kept (and it will be so) until the Day of Judgement. We know that the Verses of the Holy Qur'an were sent down to the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" in installments, according to both the circumstances and causes of their revelation.

There were a group of people, whom the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" had chosen to write down the Verses immediately after their revelation. The companions used to transmit those Divinely inspired Verses, depending upon the memory of some of them, or through their writing down by some of them, who would keep them in written form.

During the ruling of the first caliph Abu Bakr, he decided, with the help of an advice from Umar, to collect the Holy Qur'an. He confided to the glorious companion Zaid Ibn Thabit to supervise the implementation of this sacred mission. However, Zaid was the most capable from among the Muslims of carrying out the task he was delegated to do. He kept in memory the whole Qur'an, and was, from among all writers of the revelation, the most sticking to the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him".

Zaid exerted an extraordinary effort, depending on his awareness, attention and honesty, in collecting the Qur'an, with the help of several companions, some of whom kept it in memory, and others kept it in written form. In this way, the Verses, which were dispersed, either in the breasts of men, or in documents, turned to be a single Mushaf, whose Surahs and Verses were put in order, whose beginnings and endings were known. This Mushaf was kept in the house of Abu Bakr, and then it became in the home of Umar.

During the ruling of Umar, there were a lot of conquests, in different parts of the world, which was under the tyranny of both Persia and Rome. During the ruling of Uthman, the conquests reached much more distant areas and territories and more spacious horizons. With those great conquests during the ruling of both Umar and Uthman, Islam increasingly received new people and nations, of different languages. The Islamic society grew so much widely, though containing a lot of differences among its waves.

However, the dialects and languages, with their resulting consequences, were the fastest aspect of such differences to be visible. During some of the invasions, in which the glorious companion Hudhaifah Ibn Al-Yaman took part, he was frightened by the different ways, in which the Qur'an was recited. It is true that the Arabs of the Peninsula had different dialects, but the dialect of Quraish, in which the Qur'an was sent down polarized most of those dialects, and turned them into one language, which was the main language.

Even, when it happened, though rarely, that some difference occurred in reciting the Qur'an during the time of revelation, the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" used to settle the matter, by favouring a certain recitation, or by regarding as right the recitation about which there was difference.

But, following the great conquests, as a result of which, the Qur'an had been adopted by a lot of nations, each of which had its language and dialect, the difference in its recitation became an important source of danger, which was about to threaten the unity of this new nation spreading in the different parts of the world so much as it was about to endanger the Qur'an itself.

It is true that Allah Almighty guaranteed to keep the Qur'an by Himself when He said: "We have, without doubt, sent down the message; and we will assuredly guard it (from corruption)."

This danger appeared in the event which Hudhaifah witnessed, when there was a great difference between the people of Sham and the people of Iraq. The people of Sham used to recite by the recital of both of Al-Miqdad Ibn Al-Aswad and Abu Ad-Darda. The people of Iraq used to recite by the recital of Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud and Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari. Each of the two parties was radically inclined to its way of recital. This difference was about to turn into dispute and then clashes between them.

Hudhaifah Ibn Al-Yaman had no sooner finished from the invasion in which he took part, than he rode his mount, running as fast as racing the wind to Medina. He filed the case before the rightly-guided caliph, ending with this conclusion: "O Commander of Believers! Come up with this nation before its people differ in their Book, as those before them had differed in their Scriptures."

The caliph did not hesitate even for a single moment. He sent to the companions of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" who were present in Medina at this time, and consulted them in this matter. Then, he decided to write down the Qur'an on a single way of recitation. Thus, the Muslims, not only in his time, but also over all ages forever, would agree unanimously on one way of recitation, which should be the fundamental one, in order that this dangerous evil (resulting from the different ways of recitation) would be removed away.

He called Zaid Ibn Thabit, who undertook the mission of collecting the Qur'an during the ruling of Abu Bakr, Sa'id Ibn Al-As, Abdullah Ibn Az-Zubair, and Abd Ar-Rahman Ibn Al-Harith Ibn Hisham. He explained the nature of their mission, and told them that if they were different about something, they should write it in the dialect of Quraish. The caliph brought to them the first Mushaf, to be their reference and the basis of

their work. However, before his martyrdom, Umar had deposited it with Hafsaah "Allah be pleased with her".

When the companions achieved their glorious work, the caliph ordered that several copies of this Mushaf should be copied, each of which was sent to a territory of the state. Furthermore, the scribes in every territory went on making copies for themselves as well as for others from this comprehensive Mushaf, known at this time, and still known until now, as the Mushaf of Uthman.

But even, the problem was not completely solved with the emergence of Uthman's Mushaf, for a portion of it remained, which was the most sensitive and embarrassing. Before this copy of the Mushaf appeared, there had been several Mushafs, owned by many companions. They had difference in some Verses, concerning their written form and utterance. Furthermore, the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" regarded as right most of those different recitations, when he said: "The Holy Qur'an was sent down on seven ways of recitation." This led to the appearance of the famous seven ways of recitations.

Uthman, in his intention to decisively settle this difference, and belief in the necessity of such a settlement, found no way but to depend upon a single way of recitation, i.e. this Mushaf which he achieved (even if he was to ignore all of the other ways).

Then, what had he to do with the other Mushafs, and documents containing a lot of Verses, which some of the companions had? He collected them, and then burnt them, canceling in this way their mission, in order to give room to the single comprehensive Mushaf, on whose Verses all the Muslims would agree unanimously over centuries.

Thus, Uthman faced determinedly and rightly his formidable responsibilities, and filled with his honesty, sincerity and firmness a gap, which was about to turn into a deep and great pitfall, drawing to its furthest bottom a great amount of the valuable things of religion, and destinies of people.

But, was the wind of difference to run well during the years of Uthman's ruling, which witnessed a lot of conquests and victories? Perhaps it was so for the first two or three years of his ruling. But, for the remaining period of his ruling, the cold quiet wind turned into a violent storm, whose parts started to gather one by one, calling one another, until it became a great hurricane, which the caliph alone was doomed to face,

in a distress, with which the violence of the conspirators came down to the deepest bottom (of evil and wickedness), while the caliph's tolerance rose up to the top (of goodness).

Now, let us accompany the history to those years which witnessed the beginning, developments and the end of those events, whose remembrance still frightens and even causes grief to the people, though they occurred fourteen hundred years ago.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DIFFICULT YEARS

The effective change of Islam in the map of the world surrounding it, and in its tenets, organizations and psychological structure was not to happen without its influences being reflected upon Islam itself, i.e. its state and society in general, and in particular, its leaders and pioneers, who undertook, more than anyone else, the burdens of such a great change.

The assassination of the great caliph, Umar, the Commander of the Believers, was the first aspect of this dangerous reflection. It was a clear portent that the reactions to the overwhelming Islamic conquests started to enjoin their canon, and impose their authority. Indeed, the great conquests carried out at this time ruined the kings of both Persia and Rom, and the evil of the remaining groups of the destroyed authorities kept (as flaming as) fire, trying to burn from beneath the ashes.

On the other hand, the conquests brought the problems of the emergent unexpected richness, and the world of seductions and mixtures of different types, nations, and traditions. All of this should have its influence upon the conquerors.

The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" foresaw from behind the veils (of time) such warning reflections. In this issue, Usamah Ibn Zaid said: Once The Prophet "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" looked out from upon one castle amongst the castles (or the high buildings) of Medina and said to his companions: "Do you see what I see?" his companions who were present with him replied in the negative. Then, he said: "(No doubt) I see the spots where afflictions will take place among your houses, as numerous as the spots where raindrops fall."

Abdullah Ibn Umar narrated also in this connection that the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" said: "If the people of my nation used to walk with haughtiness and pride, and were served by those of Persia and Rom, then, it is the time in which its evil men would be made to oppress its good pious ones."

In this way, he indicated to the inevitable reactions to their great conquests, and prepared them to be cautious, and ready for facing the

coming events with the help of good qualities and virtues granted to them by Islam.

In fact, the afflictions which appeared during the ruling of Uthman, imposed upon him by the natural movement of history, without being able to postpone them, were as inevitable as none could be capable of pushing them away. It is true that it was possible for the affliction to be less violent or to be delayed for some time. But to cancel it totally was beyond one's capability.

Those events, though so much formidable and horrible, were a part of the timeline and historical development. They were also an aspect of a historical tradition, enjoined upon all the great movements over the human history.

Uthman was doomed to have tasted the burdens and responsibilities of such a historical characteristics twice: the first was when he was selected to be the caliph, in a time during which there were afflictions and conspiracies. The second was when he was made responsible for the sins of those historical events.

However, it is unjust to see in the caliphate, and in the difference which broke up between the caliph and some of the companions and the people coming from different countries the only essence and form which the affliction took. That is because this difference, and the mistakes, for which the caliph was criticized at this time were not the only reasons or the main factors of the afflictions.

Both the difference and the mistakes were but a few from among several results of conspiracies and plots which were much wider and more profound. They were planned perfectly by foreign powers, with the help of some agents from those who entered into Islam, in order to make plots against it, on purpose of ruining it.

If the mistakes attributed to the caliph Uthman were the direct reason for the afflictions, which struck Islam and Muslims, what then are the mistakes which stood for the assassination of Umar, the previous Commander of the Believers? Indeed, the assassination of Umar, as we said earlier, was the first bullet shot in the hidden battle by the force of evil, which were allied against Islam. The people never learnt even a single mistake committed by Umar, the Commander of the Believers, which might justify his sinful assassination.

We could hardly be able, whatever tolerant we might be, to consider his killing merely an individual crime. Furthermore, its extension was not an individual crime, but it was a congregational act, in which all forces which Islam weakened took part.

The Jews, for example, who were deported from Medina, and dispersed as a result of their treachery and infidelity they showed in it, the Roman empire, which Islam disbanded, and swept its authority far away from the countries which they occupied and colonized for a long time, and pushed it within its narrow borders, and the Persian empire, with which Islam did the same as he did with the Romans, and which lost all of its interests, treasures, and the most important and the greatest military leaders it had, all of those forces had their grudges and hatred still fresh against Islam and its state, which was increasingly and so much highly developing, and the croaking of retaliation did not become quiet within themselves, but for a time, expecting for the opportunity to come on a day, for which they prepared themselves well.

However, the opportunity came to them by the assassination of Umar, the previous Commander of the Believers. For this reason, we found rebellion having overwhelmed those countries which the two great empires had lost as a result of their wars with (the state of) Islam.

It was not an interior rebellion coming from the inhabitants of those countries, who, as we said earlier, were so much pleased with Islam's coming to them. This applied also to those from among them, who were not converted into it. On the contrary, it was resulting from the instigation of both the Persians and Romans to some people, who lost their authority by virtue of Islam, and in other cases, it was a direct attack from the armies of the Persians and Romans against those countries.

As those moved from outside the state of Islam, the Jews moved also, and at the same time, from within the state. It was not vain, or even accidental that a Jew from Yemen came to Medina during the ruling of Uthman, said to have studied and loved Islam, having a desire to embrace Islam, and occupy his place among the believers.

This man played, veiled by his conversion into Islam, the most dangerous and formidable role in disuniting the Muslims, and preparing the armed affliction, which resulted in killing the caliph, who died as a martyr. This man was Abdullah Ibn Saba; and later, we will see a portion of his destructive activity.

The faults for which the caliph was criticized, and which we will discuss later, were not the direct reason, or even the fuel of the affliction. But, it was the conspiracy, which played against Islam, and started weaving its threads afar. When the opportunity came to it, assisted by time, it jumped over the arena of scenes, in order to play its role publicly.

In order to give a complete illustration of this case, we've to come back some time earlier. There is an obscure incomplete image anyone of us might perceive, whenever we think of or imagine the Arab Peninsula in its ancient past. We think of it as merely a large area of desert, inhibited by some people separated from the world, and no one was concerned with them, nor were they concerned with anyone (in the world outside them).

we might imagine it when Islam appeared as no more than various tribes and villages, far from one another, lying on the sand, at the middle of which, there was Mecca, whose caravans used to go and return within the area between Yemen and Sham. Apart from that, none was concerned with or interested in it.

In addition to being far from the truth, this image might separate our perception from the important premises, without which, we could hardly interpret the serious and dangerous events which the Arab Peninsula had witnessed before and with the appearance of Islam.

In order to have a complete image of the case, we needn't to go back to the very deep and ancient time. In the South of Arab Peninsula, the civilizations of those of Ma'in, Hadramaut, and Sheba were established. They made their country abundant of gardens everywhere on the right and on the left. In the North of the Peninsula, the city of Batra existed, which had control over the way of caravans between South and north. It had its forts and castles so high and preventive that the armies of Antigen, a successor of Alexander, the greater, were defeated at its gates in the year of 312 PC. It also had a great and wonderful Arab civilization. In Sham, Tadmur was established by some Arabs, who came out of the Peninsula. It had a widely appreciated civilization and a very powerful military force, which enabled it to defeat the Persians, and took from them Syria and Mesopotamia in 260 AD. For this reason, the Roman Emperor at that time appointed Muzainah, the ruler of Tadmur as his deputy in Syria, Egypt and Armenia. Moreover, some people from the descendants of Qahtan came out of Yemen, and established the

civilization of Lakhm in Iraq. Some others belonging to them established the state of Ghassan in Sham.

I said that we needn't to refer back beyond this very ancient time, to uncover the great civilization and importance, the Arab peninsula had before Islam, and the nearly equivalent relationships in so many times between some of its tribes, adjacent either to Sham or Iraq, and the Roman and Persian empires. It would be sufficient to catch a glimpse of the Arab Peninsula, its position and relations, at the time Islam appeared, or a short time earlier.

A short time before Islam, the Arab Peninsula concerned those near to, as well as far from it, in spite of having no political authority at this time. Although the ambitions of the invaders turned towards the South, where existed Yemen, with its pleasures and strategic position, the north also was not absent from their mind. There was Mecca, with its wealth and flourishing. It had the Ka'bah, which attracted the Arabs from everywhere, and granted it an irresistible spiritual authority.

For this reason, Abrahah, the deputy of the ruler of Abyssinia led an overwhelming army in order to invade Mecca and ruin the Ka'bah, when its church which he built in San'a was unable to appeal the Arabs to it as Abrahah thought.

Furthermore, in view of the fact that Mecca was a passage way for caravans, and had its large trade with Sham, its inhabitants used to show mutual interest in the foreign world. This mutual interest grew up with the emergence of Islam. The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", for example, chose Abyssinia to be the (first) homeland of migration for his companions who were persecuted by Quraish. He also wrote his messages, and sent his envoys to the kings and chiefs (of the foreign world), calling them to Islam. He sent his envoys (carrying his letters) to the Roman and Persian emperors, the Negus of Abyssinia, the chief of Egypt, the presidents of Oman, Bahrain, Yamamah, and Sham.

When the Persians defeated the Romans, and took from them their colonies in Asia, then Egypt, and were at the gates of Constantinople, the Muslims in Medina were grieved, for they learnt, according to their religion, to be inclined to those of Scriptures. Since the Romans were Christians, the Muslims became sorry for they were defeated by the worshippers of fire.

But, the Divine revelation descended in order to reassure them, giving them the glad tidings (that the Romans would achieve victory later) in a Holy Surah called the Surah of Romans: “A. L. M. The Roman Empire has been defeated In a land close by; but they, (even) after (This) defeat of theirs, will soon be victorious Within a few years. With Allah is the Decision, in the Past and in the Future: On that day shall the Believers rejoice With the help of Allah. He helps whom He will, and He is Exalted in Might, Most Merciful. (It is) the promise of Allah. Never does Allah depart From His promise: But most men understand not.”

To this extent, the Muslims were concerned with the foreign world, and intimately linked with its problems and developments. The Holy Verses of Allah have told the truth, since His Promise was actualized. It was no more than a few years later that the Roman armies defeated those of Persia, and the Roman empire took back from Persia all countries and colonies it had seized earlier.

But, as soon as the Roman Caesar had achieved victory over the Persians, he, having been intoxicated by the delight of such a victory, flamed up with rage, and turned into a tiger against the Muslims. He feared their increasingly great power for his kingdom. So, he mobilized his army in Sham, and decided to attack the Arab Peninsula.

Here, we might observe the concern shown by the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and the Muslims with the foreign world, and see his valid estimation of every situation resulting from this concern. He refused to be indulgent in accepting this threat against his nation and country. So, he set out during very scorching hot and difficult days with the army of Muslims in order to face those Romans at the borders of Sham, and this was in the holy battle of Tabuk, which passed with no fighting, since Caesar preferred peace for his soldiers, and returned wherefrom he came.

The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” also recommended, while being at the threshold of death the Muslims to carry out the campaign of Usamah. The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” had appointed Usamah as the leader of an army, to which it was entrusted to turn back those waiting for the opportunity to attack the borders of the country.

Thus, the people of the Arab Peninsula never ran a wild life in an empty desert, neither before nor at the time when Islam emerged, but

they always received a main concern from the foreign world, as much as they themselves were mainly concerned with it.

When the time of Umar's ruling came, during which the armies of Islam, raising the banners of the truth, right guidance and goodness destroyed the Roman and Persian empires, the Arab Peninsula, which became the main homeland of Islam, attracted the concern of everyone, and imposed its name upon every mouth, every hearing and mind.

In this way, the Muslims, who proceeded from the Medina of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" to everywhere in the territories of infidelity and error, were the main talk, and the topic which had the greatest concern of the foreign world. although the military and political force of the Romans was destroyed by the power of Islam, the fire of retaliation did not become quiet in the breasts of those who remained alive, and had authority in their countries and homes.

In Persia, as well as in Rome, the priests, nobles of the court, the feudalists, who possessed most of the land, and monopolized both trade and wealth, had a great feeling of resentment, grudge and hatred against the Muslims, as much as the treasures and authority they lost. On the other hand, there were the Jews of Banu Qainuqa and An-Nadir, who had been expelled to Sham, from which, they took, even after the Islamic conquest, their center for making and then exporting afflictions to everywhere their plots and intrigues could be able to reach.

The conspiracies of both parties started gathering as much as an overflowing torrent. Umar, with all of his great vigilance, and the Islamic state with all of its power stood as preventive dam against them. When Umar (died and his) son was inclined to setting, those violent conspiracies found their way out. The result was those armed wars which faced the Muslims in different parts of the state during the early portion of Uthman's caliphate, of which we talked earlier.

When the armies of Islam were perfectly capable of repelling those conspirers, destroyed their armies, though they were in great numbers, and then disappointed their hopes for attacking the borders of the supreme Muslim state, they put down their arms as submissively and acquiescently. But, they did not give up the poisoned grudges in their breasts. On the contrary, they became much more spiteful and flaming up with rage.

In view of the failure of their military campaigns against the Islamic state, they decided to take refuge to making plots against the state from within, and stealthily reaching the affliction to the leaders of the first rows, from among the great companions of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, and then among the rows of the public, in the far as well as the near regions of the state.

This heavy and so much pressing burden was kept for the man, who succeeded Umar in ruling, i.e. Uthman “Allah be pleased with him”, who was doomed to undertake those difficult years in the entire history of Islam. Indeed, we should confess that describing those years as just difficult is a great simplification of their danger. No doubt, they were much more than difficult, if not more than horrible.

The conquered countries always have problems which might disturb the conquerors. In spite of the fact that Islam used to make its mercy and justice widespread in those countries immediately after conquering them, and although their conquest was to release their people from tyrants, Persians or Romans they might be, who colonized them for a long time, Islam did not put an end to all of the problems resulting from the conquest, though it dealt with a lot of them.

But, the remaining problems started to grow increasingly over the days. For instance, after the people of the conquered countries felt honoured and pleased that their governors were from among the companions of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, whom the Commander of the Believers in Medina would choose and delegate to undertake the responsibility of government, the people of those regions, or some of them, asked why their governors should not be from among themselves, and why they should be from Quraish or from Medina.

some of those people had arguments in this issue, by which Umar, though being strong and firm, was about to be disturbed. It is enough for us to take as example one of them, which is grievous and heartbreaking as much as laughable. It was on the day, when the people of Kufah asked Umar, the Commander of the Believers to drive away their governor, who was one of the great companions, (i.e. Sa’d Ibn Abu Waqqas), justifying their demand by saying that “He could not offer the prayers perfectly”.

the companions, equal to the caliph in majesty and precedence (of embracing Islam and virtues).

He began his poisoned expressions by this phrase: "Indeed, every Prophet has a commended person, (he recommended that he should undertake the matter of ruling after him); and Ali is the one whom the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" commended (and entrusted the matter of ruling to him), but Uthman jumped upon the matter (of ruling) of this nation, and in this way, usurped illegally the right from the one who has more claim over it."

He went on reinforcing his claim with the help of a group of Prophetic traditions, in which the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" had commended Ali, and given him prestige (over the others). A mention might be made here of his saying: "Everyone to whom I'm a friend, then Ali also is a friend to him." The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" also supplicated Allah for Ali: "O Allah! Might You be a Friend to everyone to whom he (Ali) is a friend, and be Enemy to everyone to whom he is an enemy!"

In spite the fact that as soon as the imam Ali "Might Allah Honour him" had heard this claim of Ibn Saba, he hurried to scold and stultify him, and warn the people of the cunning of such a claim of him, and the evil of his plot (Against Muslims).

But, Ibn Saba went on executing his plan, and rushed as strong and violent as the south wind, flaming the fire of affliction in different regions of the Islamic state. He first went to Basra, then to Kufah, then to Sham and then to Egypt, where he stayed for a long time. During those journeys of his, he selected some of those seduced by his claim as disciples, whom he sent to spread the affliction, and drew to them their method in those words:

"Pretend to order the people to do good, and prevent them from doing evil, so that you might have them inclined to you. Begin with criticizing your governors, and say to the people that Uthman illegally usurped the caliphate, and that Ali is the one commended by the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" (who gave him the prestige of taking the matter of ruling after him). So, you should get up and give back the right to the one who has more claim over it."

Astonishingly, the affliction which went on increasingly until the killing of Uthman depended upon those three advices: at first, the

instigators and contributors in it had the sackcloth of monks, raising the slogan of ordering the people to do good, and changing the evil. Secondly, they went on criticizing the governors, magnifying their mistakes, and refuting their positions. The affliction got up to face the caliph directly, demanding him to retire and give up (ruling).

However, there were many factors, from which Ibn Saba and his callers benefited well, and which made his call widespread among multitudes of people in Kufah, Basra and Egypt. From among those factors, if not the most important of them, was the conduct of some governors belonging to Umayyads. In our opinion, the role of those governors in the complications of the affliction was not in their mistakes which could be corrected and even avoided. But it was mainly in their ignorance of the cries of warners, as well as in their response to the call of their rising haughtiness and challenging pride, and then in their gambling the destiny of the caliph himself, for the sake of their own desires, which they could suppress anyway, with no loss, whatever insignificant it might be.

The situation of Mu'awiyah, the governor of Sham at this time from the opposition was not at the level of his responsibilities, nor was it at the level of his well-known forbearance and resourcefulness. He scolded them with words, which increased their anger and hatred when he said to them: "I was reported that you harbour malice against Quraish. No doubt, but for Quraish, you would have returned humiliated as you were. Indeed, Allah granted this power to Quraish, which He Almighty gave the matter of caliphate, which is fitting for none but Quraish."

Then, he went on his fanaticism by saying: "Quraish knew that Abu Sufyan was the most generous and the son of the most generous from among them, except for what Allah bestowed upon His Prophet."

On the other hand, Sa'id Ibn Al-As, the governor of Kufah used to sit among the people, while being intoxicated by authority, pointing with his right hand to the land of Iraq, which was abundant of greenness resulting from farming, and then saying: "No doubt, this territory is a garden belonging to Quraish."

Quraish! Quraish! What is that which made the word of Quraish replace that of Islam? However, using this tone was a dangerous precedence. The greatest characteristic of Islam was that it ruined, within a few years, the rules of the most violent and the strongest fanaticism in

the history. But now (i.e. at the time of Uthman) fanaticism returned with its tones, on the tongue of some of the governors and officials of the Islamic state.

But, it is just to mention the role played by the rebels at this time in reviving this hateful tone. Their manners of opposition used to irritate the anger of the most forbearing, as if they were to put in their mind the matter of irritating and provoking all men of the state with all means, so that the officials would behave nervously, in a state of tension.

Just a single case introduced by Jabalah Ibn Amr, a chief of rebels at this time, would be representative of tens of cases, i.e. when he faced the caliph himself in the presence of a great gathering of Muslims, and said to him: "By Allah! I'm going to kill you O lazy person, and then carry (the dead body of) you on a mangy camel."

Is it a way of describing the third successor of Islam in the presence of multitudes of people, whom the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" had given the prestige of being the one of two Lights "Dhun-Nurain", and said: "Uthman would be my companion in Paradise"? moreover, did Jabalah and his pact want to carry (the dead body of) on a mangy camel Uthman, who prepared the Army of Difficulty with one thousand camels and horses, having no mangy or lame one?

Now, after four hundred years, with nothing to join us to those events but the words in the documents of historians, would become furious at such a foolish facing, how then was the feeling of those who heard with their ears, saw with their eyes the caliph, while being in the majesty of his old age, having been vulnerable to those distresses, ignorance and evil of people? furthermore, what about the feeling of the caliph himself?

However, if the event we mentioned above might irritate one's fury and sorry, it was not the lightest one, compared with a lot of events, in which the rebels challenged both the authority and honour of the caliphate, from which the caliph suffered at this time. Yes, i.e. the authority and honour of the caliphate. That's because it was the caliphate not the caliph, and the state not its president, that the conspirators aimed at in their work to ruin.

No doubt, Uthman "Allah be pleased with him" did not describe those difficult years as such. But, it is they, which enjoined their difficulty,

trouble and dangers upon him as well as upon the entire state, for the afflictions which had long been prepared and then kept for them.

But, all of that should not exempt us from raising this necessary question: Where was the position of the caliph Uthman in relation to those mistakes, which the conspirators were perfect in benefiting from them? We could refer all of those mistakes to four origins:

The first is about the governors. They criticized the caliph that he dismissed some of the great companions, and replaced them with his kith and kin, who had, or at least some of them, a distinctive precedence, which might make them worthy of being governors of Muslims.

The second is due to the public wealth. It was said in this issue that the Umayyads took the opportunity of being relatives of the caliph, and illegally usurped that in which they had no right.

The third is his situation from some of the virtuous companions, and some violent actions taken against some of them.

The fourth is his situation from some matters of religion, in which he had a private opinion depending upon his knowledge.

As for the governors, the caliph has the right to choose the men, who would help him achieve the responsibilities of ruling, so long as such a choice is not a result of a desire, which might oppose the main values of the state and the society, i.e. Allah's Book, and the sunnah of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him".

It is true that changing governors was a right given to Uthman "Allah be pleased with him", he did not use it at first. But, he was motivated to it by the conditions of the regions, whose governors he changed, and the pressing insistence of their inhabitants on the necessity of such changes.

The first region whose governor Al-Mughirah Ibn Shu'bah was changed was Kufah. The people of Kufah had a desire for changing him. So, Uthman ousted him, and replaced him with Sa'd Ibn Abu Waqqas, who remained as governor of Kufah, until a great dispute between him and Ibn Mas'ud who was the storekeeper of its treasury broke up. Consequently, the caliph ousted Sa'd, and replaced him with Al-Walid Ibn Uqbah.

However, Al-Walid remained as its governor for a long time, and made a great effort in invading both of Azerbaijan and Armenia. But, when the news of his getting alcoholic drinks reached the caliph, he

immediately sent to him to come to Medina. He executed the legal punishment against him, ousted him, and replaced him by Sa'id Ibn Al-As.

As for the people of Basra, they sent a delegate from among them, asking him to drive away their governor Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari. He responded to their demand, and replaced him with Abdullah Ibn Amir.

As for Egypt, there were many delegates from it, asking him repeatedly to oust Amr Ibn Al-As, and appointing someone else. He deprived him of the responsibility of military leadership and collecting tribute, and appointed Abdullah Ibn Sa'd Ibn Abu Sarh in charge of military leadership and collecting tribute. But very soon, a dispute broke up between them. The result was that the caliph sent to Amr to come to Medina, and in this way, Ibn Abu Sarh became the governor of Egypt.

As such was the situation of the caliph from the ousted governor, i.e. a quick response to the desires of the citizens of those regions. If there are some faults, for which he might be criticized, it would be his leaving the pious good men from among the companions of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", whom he did not appoint to occupy the empty positions, which he kept for his kith and kin.

Abdullah Ibn Sa'd Ibn Abu Sarh was his foster brother. Abdullah Ibn Amir whom he appointed as the governor of Basra was his maternal cousin. Mu'awiyah whom he kept as the governor of Sham was his paternal cousin. Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam, whom he appointed as the chief of employees was his paternal cousin.

As for leaving the pious good men for others, the caliph himself replied to this question, when he claimed that Umar, the previous Commander of the Believers did so sometimes, not out of neglecting both piety and goodness, but out of seeking for qualification and competence. He gave examples of some people whom Umar selected for such positions, at the time he had with him in Medina those who were much more pious and devout, from among the companions of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him".

As for his giving preference to his kith and kin over the others, we could not hesitate to say that it was better for the caliph to follow a different method, no matter qualified and competent they might be. No doubt, the caliph "Allah be pleased with him" remembered this day, when Al-Abbas, the paternal uncle of the Prophet went to the Messenger

of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, and asked him to appoint him in charge of something. He answered him, while driving him away from it: “We, by Allah, O uncle, do not give this matter to anyone sought or asked for it, or was eager to get it.”

then, he followed his saying by a valuable advice, in which he said to him: “O Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet Muhammad! Beware of governorship, for it will be (as good when one is perfect by the help of Allah in fulfilling its responsibilities as) a good suckling woman, but it will be (as evil when one fails to do so as) an evil weaning woman.”

During those difficult years, when the affliction broke up, and the fanaticism appeared, the people’s right upon the caliph was that he should have the people avoid any questioning about the Umayyads, and about the privileges they used to assign to themselves. But, we would not be just in this case unless we approached the conditions surrounding all of those events. The conditions, as we mentioned earlier, were an overwhelming affliction, aiming, in the final analysis of its objectives, at undermining the Muslim state, which destroyed, within a few years, the corners of the ancient world surrounding it. Now, since the conspiracy was perfectly prepared, it searched for every possible way to give its final strike to the stronghold of the state, i.e. the caliph himself, and let the main reason for that be the case of governors.

It is known that the tendency of criticizing the governors was a convention practiced by some regions. Umar, the previous Commander of the Believers, who supported the experience of Islamic ruling during its first years, used to put into consideration the desires of the people under government, particularly in changing the governors when they had desires to change them. we saw how Uthman followed the same method, and changed the governors of Kufah, Basra and Egypt, in compliance with the desires of the inhabitants of those countries.

But very soon, the case turned into a part of the plan set to ruin the state, and deprive it of its authority. Thus, responding to the desires of critiques followed by changes of governors became no more than an aspect of inability, which would increasingly seduce and make the conspirators much more powerful. At this point, there was no way but to prevent those tendentious attempts, and the state found no way other than being decisive and firm in its situation.

In this way, the caliph adopted his rightly-guided situation, illustrated by his words he delivered to the rebels: “What do I have to do since whenever you disliked a governor, I would dismiss him, and whenever you became pleased with a governor I would appoint him?”

this situation, regardless of any consideration, might be, during the time of distresses and afflictions, the only guarantee of protecting the state from being lost or disunited. If some parts of rebels were able to issue commands which should be implemented by the state, and thus deprive it of one of its own rights, then, there would be no way but to refute the parasitic rebellion.

It is true that Uthman “Allah be pleased with him” was the most from among the people to love and keep good relation with his kith and kin, and that this excessive love was an important cause of choosing the governors he appointed, but of course, it did not form all reasons. The affliction which succeeded at this time to shake the firm confidence between the Muslims and their caliph put him in a psychological atmosphere, so much critical that it caused him to seek for confidence with the nearest and the most compassionate people to him; and we should put in mind that this was one of the reasons for choosing and giving preference to his kith and kin.

Moreover, there was the challenge to him, calling for the necessity of ousting the governors who were from among his relatives. This challenge, with its daring to attack the majesty and position of the caliph, was another cause of his adherence to his choice.

In addition to all of that, we should consider the qualification and competence of those governors, at whose hands, and under whose leadership, the Muslim armies proceeded to overcome the rebellion, which was widespread in different parts of the state, and with the help of the bravery shown by the great companions who took part in those armies, the breaking away countries returned to the fold of Islam, the armies of Byzantine and Persia were destroyed, and the banners of Islam flirited forever in those regions. Then, the caliph had the right to cherish this great efforts of theirs, and prevent them from being a subject of criticism of such destructive rebels as Ibn Saba, the carrier of the banner of affliction, and spreader of darkness.

Here, there is a question which should be raised, in order to be faithful to the truth for which we are seeking: Were those governors chosen by

Uthman from among his kith and kin criticized and displeased by only the destructive conspirators, or were they so also by a group of the greatest and the best companions? What were the reasons for this displeasure? How did the caliph do in order to avoid it?

It is a well-known fact that some of the greatest companions of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, including the grand imam Ali thought it was better for the Muslim nation that those Umayyad governors in general, and Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam in particular should be driven away. They were of the opinion that assigning the administration to those would give the government a type of favouritism. Moreover, those Umayyad governors were not at the level of such idealism as required by their positions, particularly when nothing could strengthen and reinforce Islam more than god-fearing, piety and devoutness could do, in addition to setting forth the best examples from the officials of transcending the inducements of luxury and pleasures of life.

In short, we could say that at this time, there were conspiracy and opposition:

a conspiracy prepared by those harbouring grudge against Islam as religion, state and nation, with the objective of striking religion, state and nation, and an opposition from some of the great companions, with the objective of correcting the mistakes, and setting what is right, within the limits of the truthful word and sincere advice.

If the caliph was well-aware of the evil intentions of the conspirators in criticizing his appointed governors, he had no doubt even for a single moment as to the good true intentions which made such great companions as Ali and Ammar to take aggressive situations from those governors.

But, he thought of the matter differently. He was not persuaded that they should be driven away just for they were belonging to his kith and kin, or for getting much pleasures and luxuries of life. He wanted that to be ousted, they should be suspected of committing mistakes which necessitate their being driven away; and just at that time, it would be right upon him to drive them away immediately.

For this reason, he took a right action, when he chose a group of companions whose honesty and sincerity were so much unquestionable. He chose Muhammad Ibn Maslamah, to whom Umar, the previous

Commander of the Believers used to confide to account his appointed governors, inspect the regions, and investigate the facts and realities of people in every country. He also chose Abdullah Ibn Umar, the good remnant of the family of Al-Khattab, the pious right imam, to whom the governorship was offered more than once, but he rejected it. He chose Ammar Ibn Yasir, the great blessed militant in the Cause of Allah, the hero of those difficult days during the dawn of Islam. He chose Usamah Ibn Zaid, the beloved person, son of the beloved person, of whom the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" said, while getting himself ready to meet his Lord: "Carry out sending the detachment of Usamah." He chose all of those, leading a group of people, to whom he entrusted to set out to the different regions, and investigate the real conduct of their governors and chiefs.

Was it not a right action, and a just method (of dealing with his appointed governors)? What then was the reply of those envoys? All of them, except for Ammar Ibn Yasir who was sent to investigate the facts in Egypt, where he stayed for a long time, returned soon.

Ibn Maslamah returned from Kufah, Abdullah Ibn Umar returned from Sham, Usamah Ibn Zaid returned from Basra, and offered to the caliph their reports, and what they had seen and heard. They found even no single mistake which necessitated the dismissal of any of the governors.

Do you see that their witnesses refuted the situation of such great companions as the grand imam Ali? No, as well as the situation of the grand imam Ali and his companions was not to be disapproval of that of the caliph. Both the two parties agree on the necessity of guarding the sanctities of Islam. But, they considered this case differently.

The grand imam Ali and his companions saw that there was no right for those who were set free on the day of the conquest of Mecca to be chiefs or governors of Muslims, and in particular, those who proved to be retrogressive, either before or after their embracing Islam. However, the released persons were those who (were forced to) embrace Islam on the day of Meccan conquest under the shade of swords. Then, the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" looked at their trembling gatherings and said to them: "Go, you've been set free (from punishment)." The Umayyad governors about whom such dispute broke up were involved in those gatherings.

But, Uthman, the caliph, had a different opinion as to this case, i.e. that Islam should annul all (sins committed) before embracing it, as well as repentance should nullify all (sins committed) before it. In this way, the mistakes committed by those persons before Islam had been cancelled when they embraced Islam. Similarly, the mistakes committed by them, or some of them, after embracing Islam had been nullified when they showed repentance to Allah. according to the caliph, unless anyone of them was suspected of doing a sin or mistake, which might cause him to oppress or wrong his subjects, the caliph would not be persuaded by ousting him particularly under the pressure of the armed violent afflictions, led by some evil destructive people.

Al-Walid Ibn Uqbah, for example, was the governor of Kufah. He achieved great victories for the state. At the same time, he was of the caliph's kinship. But, when the news of having alcoholic drinks reached the caliph, he did not leave him even for a day. He sent to him to come to Medina, ousted him, and established the legal punishment publicly against him. This was what he did with no hesitation with the other governors from among his kith and kin whenever anyone of them was suspected of committing a mistake which necessitated his being dismissed or punished.

In short, this was his opinion concerning the crisis of governors, of which he became more persuaded following the return of his envoys from the regions to which he had sent them (for investigating facts), announcing that they did not see anything evil or mistake (for which the governors should be dismissed).

But, in spite of that, he sent letters to all the regions, in which he said: "I've been told that some of you are abused, and others are beaten. So, whoever has a complaint should come to me in the season (of pilgrimage), and take his right from me or from the appointed governor."

There is a dialogue between grand imam Ali and Uthman, the caliph, narrated by Ibn Kathir, which put their different points of view face to face, and consequently, threw new light upon the case. This dialogue occurred when the people chose Ali, in order to convey their complaints to the caliph. The imam Ali sat with the caliph alone, to whom he talked about his own feeling, as well as the feelings of the people. the imam was, in his words, so much keen on the goodness of both the caliph and the nation.

Uthman commented on the words of Ali, saying: “Indeed, by Allah! had you been in my place, surely, I would not have blamed you, nor would I have expose you (to the critiques of people), nor would I have found fault with you. Do you see that I committed a sin when I kept good relation with my kith and kin, or rescued whomever was in need of being saved, or sheltered a wandering one, or appointed as governors persons similar to those whom Umar used to appoint? I beseech you, by Allah, O Ali to tell me whether you know that Al-Mughirah Ibn Shu’bah was appointed as governor during the time of Umar?” Ali answered in the affirmative. Uthman said: “Then, why should I be blamed if I appointed Ibn Amir, who has a similar kinship to me, taking in consideration that Al-Mughirah is not superior to him?”

Ali said: “I’m going to tell you. Whenever Umar appointed anyone, he would have a strong control over him. Whenever he was told of something evil he had committed, he would bring him to Medina, and go as far as he could in scolding him so much violently. But you do not do so, because you became so much lenient to your kith and kin.”

Uthman said: “They’re your kith and kin too O Ali.” Ali said: “Yes, they are also my kinship. But there are others who has better characteristics than them.” Uthman said: “Do you know that Umar appointed Mu’awiyah as governor of Sham during the whole time of his ruling? Then, why should I be blamed if I appointed him?” Ali said: “Do you know that Mu’awiyah used to fear much more even Yarfa, the servant of Umar?” Uthman said: “Yes, he used to do so.” Ali said: “But now, he behaves out of his own will, without being ordered by you, and you do not prevent him to do so.”

This paragraph of the dialogue shows us how there were two different points of opinions predominant in both the state and the opposition, each of which had its own direction. When we say the opposition, we mean this group of good pious persons, the most important of whom was Ali Ibn Abu Talib, and not the other pacts, which went on preparing for the overwhelming affliction, in different parts and regions of the state, and which did not feel rest until they killed the caliph so much atrociously

In this dialogue, we could see how the caliph understood the situation. He considered the situation of the opposition, in spite of its validity and sincerity, a kind of supporting others, who were cunningly making plots against him. For this reason, he said to grand imam Ali: “Had you been

in my place, surely, I would not have expose you (to the critiques and harm of others), nor would I have blamed you.”

Furthermore, he regarded entrusting to his kinship the matter of governorship a kind of faithfulness to them, attracting them to adhere (to the group of Muslims), and keeping strong their loyalty to Islam. They also deserved to be governors for their skills and capabilities of administration and fighting (in the Cause of Allah). he also was of the opinion that by giving preference to those qualified and capable persons over those pious and good men, he followed what Umar, the previous Commander of the Believers used to do sometimes.

As such was the persuasion of the caliph in the crisis of governors, concerning which, he took a firm persistent situation. The opposition also had its persuasion, expressed by the words of grand imam Ali in the dialogue which occurred between him and the caliph.

The imam saw that the request of driving away those governors was a just case, and if there were some people who took from their adherence to the truth a screen, behind which they hid false purpose, the same as the pacts of rebellion and affliction did, this would not mean that the faithful sincere to the truth should keep silent of announcing it and calling the people to it publicly.

Moreover, the imam saw that the piety of the governor was more important than his capability, as well as his sincerity was more significant than his intelligence, and if Umar sometimes favoured those of cunning, intelligence and capability, this was because he used to have strong control over all of his appointed governors and employees, in such a way that none of them could be able to shut his eyes to the truth even for a single moment during the night or day.

But, since the caliph was approaching eighty, in addition of his kind tolerant quiet safe nature, the governors then could behave in such a way as if there was none to review or observe them.

However, the caliph was not to absolve his appointed governors from mistakes (particularly when they proved to have committed them). But, he wanted to get mistakes, too great to justify their dismissal.

The grand imam saw that their origins, dispositions, and their psychological and social structures did not make them the most fitting for occupying the positions which they got. With such structures, and for the sake of them, they would continue committing mistakes increasingly,

with which they would be familiar, until they would reach a rugged slide and fall into a deep difficulty. In fact, they went on bitterly, uncovering the true discerning insight, the right vision, and the valid opinion of the grand imam Ali.

Now, let's move to the second critique or crisis which was raised against the caliph, i.e. the public wealth. First of all, we should ascertain that none of his opponents, even those who made the affliction, just for the sake of affliction, and plotted to kill him, did not accuse him of violating the financial obligations. His clean conscience, great spirit and pure morals were certain, and beyond suspicion and criticism.

But, what was said then, which the conspirators magnified, was that the caliph used to give his kith and kin more than the others from the treasury. They went as far as to pretend that once, the caliph had given Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam one-fifth the tribute of Africa.

The conspirators also went on circulating the false wicked rumors against the caliph. When he gave in marriage his daughter to the son of Al-Harith Ibn Al-Hakam, and married his son to the daughter of Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam, and prepared their luggage from his own property, which was so much abundant from the pre-Islamic period of ignorance unto Islam, they said that he prepared their luggage from the treasury of Muslims.

When Abdullah Ibn Khalid got a loan of a few thousands from the treasury, and all of the Muslims had the right at this time to do so, they said that the caliph had given that to him illegally.

When he enlarged the protected zones of pastures, which the state from the time of Umar's ruling used to assign to the camels of charity, and developing the animal wealth, Abdullah Ibn Saba went a delegate from the rebels of Egypt, in order to accuse the caliph of doing so only to graze his own camels and cattle.

Once, the caliph appointed Al-Harith Ibn Al-Hakam in charge of the market of Medina. But Al-Harith misused his job and bought the date stones with the intention of monopolization. As soon as the caliph had learnt, he sent to him to come to him, and then he insulted him and dismissed him. The conspirators made an accusation from this case.

Furthermore, the different regions and territories, particularly of Iraq were abundant of the barren land, which had none to cultivate it. The caliph granted those pieces of land to the rich people from among the

companions, whose wealth might enable them to spend on them in order to cultivate them. However, there is an Islamic principle, which encouraged such a construction, i.e. the Prophet's saying: "Whoever gave life to a dead barren land (by cultivating it), then, it would be for him." The conspirators also wove an accusation from that.

On the other hand, Abdullah Ibn Arqam, the keeper of the treasury became very old. A simple quiet difference occurred between him and the caliph, with the result that he was replaced by Zaid Ibn Thabit. The conspirators then pretended that the caliph had dismissed him because he objected to his dissipation and misconduct of expenditure.

If it was so, would then it not be proper for the caliph to select a man other than Zaid Ibn Thabit, to whom, Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman entrusted to supervise the process of collecting the Holy Qur'an? He was the glorious companion, who was so much respectable and highly appreciated by all of the Muslims.

According to his religion, good morals and honesty, he could not undertake, before his Lord, the responsibility of any kind of transgression or negligence. This was the man, whom the caliph appointed in charge of the treasury. But, in spite of that, the conspirators invented from this event a false accusation against the caliph.

They also did not feel shy to pretend that the caliph used to take (illegally) from the treasury, in order to build palaces and gardens for him as well as for the members of his kith and kin. However, the inventors of false accusations took from the financial matters a rich topic, from which they wove lies and untrue stories.

But here, it might be said that there is no smoke with fire. If his opponents took from his financial behaviours a rich topic for criticizing and abusing him, would that not be an indicative of some mistakes in such behaviours, which the inventors of lies misused well? Concerning

In fact, depending upon the historical realities of this period, the opponents of the caliph, such as Ibn Saba and his followers from among the conspirators, were not, in their campaign against the caliph, to wait for mistakes, from which they might weave their lies. They insisted on and capable of such criticism while preparing their plots, even if the caliph's financial behaviours were free from mistakes.

We do not deny that there were some mistakes. But, we certainly deny that such mistakes were resulting from a deficiency in the great caliph's

conscience and honesty, which the conspirators wanted to imply. What happened at this time, which formed a good atmosphere for the inventors of lies and conspirators was that the wealth became in abundance in the hands of all the people, with the result that the pleasures and luxuries of life grew and became widespread increasingly.

The Umayyad governors and chiefs were not too abstinent and pious to be diverted from joining the people their pleasures and dissipation. But, on the contrary, then went, according to their origins, practicing such luxuries and delights of life so much exaggeratingly.

The caliph himself was of the opinion that there was no harm for the people to enjoy of the blessing of life as much as they wanted, as long as they did not take money unlawfully, or spend it illegally.

Admittedly, had Uthman, the caliph followed in this issue the way of Umar, his predecessor, and suppressed people from being involved in the legitimate pleasures of life, it would have been much safer, particularly for those governors, who were required to be good examples for others of simplicity of living, and refraining from luxuries.

But, there is a necessary question, which should be raised in this context: Was this possible with the wind of change and development which blew upon the large great state from the four directions, carrying with it different nations and groups, having various traditions and conventions, as waving as mountains?

This is the case, and on the light of this reality, we should look for an interpretation of the mistakes of dissipation and excessive luxury, for which they wanted to make the caliph alone responsible, though his conscience remained so much clean and pure.

Let's now go to the third crisis of the difference which was between the sincere honest opposition undertook by a group of the great companions, and Uthman, the caliph "Allah be pleased with all of them". The caliph was blamed for taking a violent situation from Abu Dharr Al-Ghifari, Ammar Ibn Yasir, and Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud, the glorious companions. However, we would deviate from the truth if we studied this difference far from the general framework of violent events and afflictions which were attacking the state at that time.

Every difference between the caliph and anyone of such great companions was supposed to find its good solution, but for this dull atmosphere, which the conspirators succeeded to make. They covered the

daylight with a dark affliction, which might confuse the wisest man. They misused this sincere difference to flame up the fire they did their best to kindle. In this way, any good sincere advice said by a glorious companion would turn at the mouths of those going about with calumnies into insults and abuses. Moreover, the caliph's words of blaming uttered so much deliberately would turn, with the help of those poisoned lips into threats.

There is nothing more painful and enraging to the very shy man than people's taking from his shyness a reason for regarding him as a weak person, to whom they dared to say, speak or treat badly. This is one of the cases of a human being, too clear to be proved.

Uthman "Allah be pleased with him" so much shy. Instead of the fact that this shyness was to prevent those conspirators from violating his respectability and good position, they had no appreciation for this shyness. The result was that the caliph was pained so much, and became angry, and said to the rebels his famous statement: "By Allah! You've blamed me for that, which you had accepted from Ibn Al-Khattab. But, he trod upon you with his feet, struck you with his hand, and prevented you with his tongue. So, you submitted to him, whether you liked or disliked. But, as for me, I was lenient to you, subjugated myself for you, and prevented my hand and tongue from harming you. So, you dared to treat me as such."

However, those grief words uncovered the injury which hurt the feeling of the tolerant amiable shy caliph. Such a man as Uthman, having the same deliberateness and calmness could not become angry and utter such words unless the injury reached the depth of himself, to the extent that he could no longer be able to keep patient over the conspirators' depreciating him.

In such a psychological atmosphere as this, if a friend gave an advice to his friend, surely, he (the other would feel as if the former) caused harm to him. Hence, the caliph's spirit, which was full of injuries, was not prepared for responding to the pure opposition made by his friends in the call (to Islam), sacrifice, and the company of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" during the early days of the dawn of Islam.

He was not to feel haughty or proud to accept the true word. But, he did so because he saw that the conspirators took from the opposition of the great companions fuel for their destructive affliction.

On the other hand, we do not want by this to condemn the right granted to the glorious companions of criticizing whatever mistakes they saw. Such pious men as them were not to keep silent of any kind of mistake. But, what we wanted is to see with open eyes the nature of the psychological atmosphere, which was inevitably reflected upon the feeling and thinking of the caliph.

Now, let's turn to the difference between the caliph and those glorious companions, which the chiefs of the armed affliction misused, and from which they made an accusation to the caliph they used to justify their violating both the caliphate and the caliph.

We are going to begin with the difference between the caliph and Abu Dharr "Allah be pleased with both". Abu Dharr Al-Ghifari was one of the greatest pioneering persons produced by Islam. He took from the pure spirit of Islam a method of abstinence and distributing wealth, of which he went on relentlessly and wholeheartedly giving glad tidings. With this method of his, he was not only different from the caliph, but also he differed from some companions, whose wealth was in abundance.

He thought that the wealth was Allah's deposit with His slaves, for which He made them responsible on behalf of Him. Everyone should take from it just his minimum requirements and needs, with no more. Furthermore, he thought that Muhammad and his companions had come to life to give not to take from it.

As for the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", he gave life, with his right guidance, truth and light, the most valuable and wonderful things. In spite of that, he rejected during his lifetime to take anything from its pleasures or delights. But, when he died, his armour was mortgaged for a handful of parley, from which he made some dry bread for him and his family.

So, his companions should follow the same method until they would (die and) meet him. Both of Abu Bakr and Umar followed the same method. Abu Dharr wanted then that the caliphate of Uthman should be an extension of the days of the Divine revelation, As-Siddiq and Al-Faruq in abstinence and austerity, in addition to rejecting all inducements, no matter legitimate and lawful they might be. Indeed, he

(Abu Dharr) lived alone, as predicted by the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” to him, died alone, and would be resurrected alone.

On the other side, most of the companions saw no harm in the enjoyment of the pleasures of life. No doubt, the Holy Qur’an told them in this connection: “On those who believe and do deeds of righteousness there is no blame for what they ate (in the past), when they guard themselves from evil, and believe, and do deeds of righteousness, (or) again, guard themselves from evil and believe, (or) again, guard themselves from evil and do good. For Allah loveth those who do good.”

It also told them: “Say: who hath forbidden the beautiful (gifts) of Allah, which He hath produced for his servants, and the things, clean and pure, (which He hath provided) for sustenance? Say they are, in the life of this world, for those who believe, (and) purely for them on the day of judgment thus do we explain the Signs in detail for those who understand.”

But, if it was permissible for Abu Dharr to show tolerance to the moderate enjoyment of pleasures, but, he was not to be indulgent even for a single moment in dissipation, excessive luxuries, monopolization of gardens and hoarding up treasures. Consequently, he did not hesitate to set out to Sham, once he heard of its abundant waving luxuries, its palaces ,forts, and gardens owned by governors, who enjoyed of their pleasures and delights, at the top of whom was Mu’awiyah, along with some of the companions, who were not created, in his opinion, for perishing joys or blessings of this world.

In Sham, he raised the banner of opposition, which was about to destroy the position of Mu’awiyah himself. He kept reciting before the public the following Verse, which seemed as if the people heard for the first time: “And there are those who bury gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah: announce unto them a most grievous penalty, On the day when heat will be produced out of that (wealth) in the fire of Hell, and with it will be branded their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs. This is the (treasure) which ye buried for yourself: taste ye then, the (treasures) ye buried.”

Mu’awiyah tried, though in vain, to quieten him. In fact, although he felt the danger of his call would befall him, he kept showing all respect and reverence for him. He did nothing more than he wrote to the caliph

that Abu Dharr confused the people in Sham. The caliph replied quickly: "Send him to me."

Abu Dharr returned to Medina, and there was a long dialogue between him and Uthman, but none of them was persuaded of the other's opinion.

Here, we have two historical narrations. The first claimed that the caliph decided to deport him to Ar-Rabdhah, a village far away from Medina. The other pretended that Abu Dharr himself asked the caliph to give him permission to go to Ar-Rabdhah, in order to spend his remaining days there.

Whether each of them was true, the caliph was eager for having Abu Dharr stay beside him in Medina, when he said to him: "Be with us, so that you would benefit from the milch camels' coming and returning from you (on their way to the pasture)."

But, Abu Dharr was well-aware of himself, as being of loud voice against those matters to which the caliph seemed displeased with his way of opposition. So, this glorious companion set out to Ar-Rabdhah, where he lived the remnant of his days, worshipping Allah, the Highest, the Greatest, until he (died and) was called unto the highest companionship.

However, we could notice in this difference between the caliph and Abu Dharr just a single scene, which is indicative of the fact that the difference between the state and the opposition, whatever rising and escalating it might be, was not to lead to such a painful sinful conclusion as was attained at the hands of the destructive conspirators.

Some rebels in Kufah visited Abu Dharr in Ar-Rabdhah, and offered to him to lead an armed revolution. But, he scolded them saying: "By Allah! If Uthman crucified me on the longest piece of wood or on the longest mountain, surely, I would listen and obey his order. I also would become patient and expect the reward from Allah, and see that this (order of him) would be better for me.

If he made me walk from the furthest side to the furthest side of the earth, surely, I would listen and obey his order. I also would become patient and expect the reward from Allah, and see that this (order of him) would be better for me. If he brought me back to my house, I would listen and obey his order. I also would become patient and expect the reward from Allah, and see that this (order of him) would be better for me."

Of such a sort was the difference between the caliph and some of his companions, and as such it tasted. But, to deny that there was any degree of difference is, to be sure, against the nature of things.

Now, let's leave the event of difference between the caliph and Abu Dharr to another one, similar to it between him and Ammar Ibn Yasir. Ammar was a great glorious companion, whose parents were martyred on the wood of torture, with which Quraish wanted to extinguish the Light of Allah. Ammar received with his parents his painful fortune of torment. He also received with them his great fortune of the wonderful glad tidings of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", when he called them while being tortured: "Be patient O family of Yasir, for (you're promised that) your appointment (after death) would be in Paradise."

Ammar went on difference with the caliph about some cases. But, perhaps he dealt with such difference in such a way that disturbed the caliph, particularly during the last portion of Uthman's ruling, when some of the Umayyad governors ill-treated violently their opponents, without distinguishing the glorious companions, who would expound loudly with the truth, just for the sake of truth, from those unfair tendentious extrinsic persons, who wanted to make it blind affliction.

However, the difference between Ammar and Uthman would have been controlled by the rights of their good companionship during the days of difficulty as well as of victory. Nay! It remained as such in spite of its complications by virtue of the great anger with which people were increasingly flaming up, as a result of the daily events and conspiracies.

We saw how the caliph did not forget Ammar when he selected some of the great companions, to form a committee of investigating facts. On the contrary, he implied him in this committee in spite of his opposition to him, and sent him to Egypt.

When the envoys of the caliph returned except for Ammar who stayed for a long time in Egypt, where there was, at this time, Abdullah Ibn Saba, the talebearers and tattlers found their opportunity to kindle rancour in the breast of the caliph against Ammar, pretending that he used to meet Ibn Saba, and pay attention to his speech. However, this calumny played with others an important role in escalating the difference between the caliph and Ammar.

But, attacking Ammar was the strongest aspect of this difference. Did the caliph then take part in this attack as alleged by some narrations? The grand imam Tabari denied and refuted this news. He narrated the story at the tongue of the caliph himself when he was blamed for this attack carried out by some employees of the caliphate.

The caliph said: Once, both of Ammar and Sa'd Ibn Abu Waqqas came to the mosque, and sent to me somebody saying: "Come to us, for we have many things to discuss with you." (He mentioned them). I sent to them somebody saying: "Today, I'm occupied. Return and come again later." Sa'd returned away, but Ammar rejected to do. I sent back the messenger to him (with the same message), but he rejected. I sent back the messenger to him (with the same message for the third time), but he rejected. But my messenger hit him without my order. By Allah! I did not order him to strike him, nor was I pleased with striking him. I submit to Ammar, and let him retaliate from me as much as he wills.

As we saw Abu Dharr having rejected earlier the call of the rebels of Kufah to lead a revolution against the caliph, we could notice a similar situation of Ammar. When the armed rebels besieged the house of the caliph, and forbade him water, Ammar grew angry, and cried before them: "Glory be to Allah! Do you withhold water from the one who bought the well of Rawmah and then granted it to the Muslims?" then, he ran to the grand imam Ali, whom he told of the news, and suggested that he should go to the house of the caliph, carrying the waterskin in his hand, so that the rebels would not prevent him.

This situation signifies that the difference between the caliph and those group of glorious companions, whatever directions it took, was not to spoil the majesty of companionship, which was established between them as brother in the religion of Allah.

But, the difference which led to some alienation and estrangement, and caused the caliph to unusually take a violent action was that between the caliph and Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud. Abdullah was a wonderful companion in his sacrifices, bravery, and company to the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him". The difference between him and the caliph was aggravated to the extent that the caliph withheld his income from the treasury.

Although a violent action as such could hardly be in harmony with the caliph's lenience and tolerance, such kindness and tolerance were visible

in some resulting situations. As soon as the caliph had been informed of the fatal ailment of Ibn Mas'ud, in which he died and met his Lord, he regretted and set out, though very old and weak, to the home of Ibn Mas'ud. He apologized to Ibn Mas'ud, asking him pressingly to pardon him for what had happened. Then, he went to the house of Umm Habibah "Allah be pleased with her", asking her to use her good offices with Ibn Mas'ud, to forgive him.

After Ibn Mas'ud had died and been buried without telling the caliph, he came out sad and grieved, went to his grave beside which he stood and then lamented him saying, with tears falling from his eyes: "By Allah! You've buried the best one from among the remaining companions of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him"."

As both of Abu Dharr and Ammar did when they rejected that the rebels would misuse their difference with the caliph, Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud had a similar situation. During the fatal ailment, some of those rebels visited him in order to ask about his health. They threatened to kill the caliph during their speech with him. Ibn Mas'ud scolded them and said: "No doubt, if you kill him, you would not have one as good as him."

Thus, whatever the difference between them became violent, it would be overpowered by their faithfulness to the glorious companionship established between them by the religion of Allah, and their company to the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" whenever the caliph did a mistake to anyone of them, he would apologize, and they also would reject that the differences with him should be used as fuel for the ill desires of the conspirators.

Had the Umayyad governors transcended upon the claims of their rough conducts, surely, they would have reduced a lot the troubles from which the caliph suffered. But, on the contrary, many of them increasingly made things much worse, with their growing violence, particularly during the last portion of Uthman's ruling, when they saw that the affliction became much more widespread around them, to the extent that its fire was about to burn them.

Moreover, when the caliph, pressed upon by the rising events, used to look gloomily to some companions, this was because he had entered into a critical stage, in which he was so much concerned with keeping the respectability and majesty of the state in the sight of the people.

However, perhaps he thought that if he frowned to some of the chiefs and the great companions, this would prevent the other people, for whom he had (as little as) less than one-tenth the compassion and respectability he had for those companions (from opposing him). It seemed that he aimed at this objective in particular when he asked the grand imam Ali (Might Allah honour him" to leave Medina for elsewhere near it, otherwise, the caliph was not to dispense with the imam's advice and relief. Whenever he felt the heavy pressure of matters, he would seek for his relief, and let him share the burdens with him.

In this issue too, we should remember that the caliph was so much eager to let no fighting, for which he might be the cause, break up among the Muslims. Indeed, we've mentioned earlier his reply to Al-Mughirah Ibn Shu'bah when the latter suggested that he should kill the rebels, saying: "No, by Allah! I should not be the first successor of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" in his nation to cause bloodshed among them."

Then, is it reasonable that the conscience and morals of such a caliph could allow him to cause harm to those glorious companions and sincere advisors such as Ali, Ammar, Abu Dharr and Ibn Mas'ud, and at the same time, when the afflictions and conspiracies were increasingly flaring up around him, and were about to turn into an armed revolution of wicked aims, which he did not want to face with the help of the sword, and regarded as enough for him to scold and threaten those, who used to abuse and insult him so much, and instigate people to oust, disobey and then kill him, for they had for Islam every sort of evil and bad intentions, he did not transgress the limits of scolding and reproaching them?

Furthermore, the rebellious Khawarij did not suffice with those false accusations, with they suspected the caliph, and which we mentioned and refuted during the previous pages, but, they went as far as to allege that the caliph had some religious innovations, which had no origin during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", and then his two companions. This is, however, the fourth and last point of critique which we are discussing. They went on picking up what they thought, according to their evil conduct and false intentions, to be critiques against the rightly-guided caliph's piety and obedience to Allah and His Messenger.

They said that the caliph made all the copies of the Qur'an only a single Mushaf, and collected the other Mushafs, and then burnt them.

Indeed, we talked about this matter in detail earlier, and explained its reasons. Moreover, it was a step, which acquired the blessing of all of the companies, even those who had differences with the caliph.

They also said that the caliph completed the prayer in Mecca during his pilgrimage, while the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and his two companions shortened it. This point alone is sufficient to uncover the reality of the evil vicious factors, which used to motivate those rebellious Khawarij, and how they used to pick up false things in order to make accusations from them, with which they would instigate the public to attack both the caliph and the state.

It is known that shortening prayer during journey is permissible and not obligatory. There is no harm for a Muslim to leave what is permissible for what is obligatory. If we also adopted the opinion of those who make obligatory shortening prayer during journey, the grand imam Ali “Might Allah honour him” replied to this point of criticism, in his argument with the rebels, when he said that the caliph had married in Mecca, where he intended to stay, and for this reason, he completed his prayer.

They also said that the caliph did not establish the legal punishment of killing against Ubaidullah Ibn Umar, who rushed furiously following the assassination of his father Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, and killed a young girl belonging to Abu Lu’lu’ah the Magian, who killed the previous Commander of the Believers, and killed also Al-Hurmuzan, after the false news of his plotting with Abu Lu’lu’ah.

It is true that Islamic law made obligatory the retaliation according to the law of equality, but the caliph did his best in this case to do what is right depending upon his knowledge, motivated by his estimation of the conditions which led the son of Umar, the previous Commander of the Believers, to retaliate for his father and Islam. He also did not want to have two distresses and aspects of grief befall the family of Ibn Al-Khattab: the first is the assassination of Umar, and the other is the killing of his son, in implementation of the law of equality. He did not release Ubaidullah, making lawful the blood he shed. But, he substituted the retaliation for blood-money. He paid an abundant blood-money to the blood claimants.

They said that the caliph brought back to Medina Al-Hakam Ibn Al-As, whom the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon

him” had expelled from it. The caliph explained that he interceded for him with the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, and that the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” promised him to forgive him sometime later.

Moreover, the caliph did not bring him back but after the reasons of his deportation had been over. He showed repentance from that, for which he had been punished by being exiled.

They said and said so much, without being satisfied by saying false things, or pretending what is untrue, from which they wove their wicked conspiracy, taking the opportunity of any sincere opposition by a glorious honest companion, which they would magnify and use as access to their falsehood.

But, whenever any kind of sincere opposition made by some of his glorious companions against many resolutions he took, the caliph “Allah be pleased with him” did not show arrogance or rejection of the right opinion and truth. On the contrary, he stood on Friday, in the presence of a public of Muslims, and confessed of some mistakes which occurred, imploring to Allah to pardon him, asking Him for repentance and forgiveness, weeping and causing all who were present, paying attention to him, to weep. Before this situation of him, the first wave of attacking Medina at the hands of the Egyptian rebels, where Ibn Saba was staying was over.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE MARTYR GUEST OF PARADISE

The opposition went on its way, pressing upon the necessity of changing and shifting to what it thought to be much better and more fitting, using the continuous dialogue with the caliph, which was ranging from the state of smoothness to that of roughness. But, it neither spoilt faith, nor did it corrupt the companionship.

On the other hand, the conspiracy went on its way, with the intention to undermine both religion and state, implying all desires, and making use of all opportunities and forces which were opposing to the caliph, taking both falsehood and plotting as means to that.

Although Uthman, the caliph “Allah be pleased with him” attained the age of eighty, his good qualities remained newly fresh and increasingly strong, leading him on his way of persuasion and principles. He disliked bloodshed and violence. So, he went on attempting many times to put an end to the conspiracies, gently at a time, and fiercely, at another time. But neither gentleness nor scolding were beneficial.

Here, a duty, which seemed to the caliph to be the most sacred, concerned him, i.e. to keep completely on the majesty of both the state and its authority. When we go through the news of those last days of the caliph, we could easily notice the voice of his thoughts while studying the case on the light of the following question: For whom would the authority be? Would it be for the state (as an organization) or for the chaos?

As a matter of fact, when a certain state is faced by a destructive affliction, and a rebellion of renegades, aiming at ruining its entity, and obliterating its values, then, its holding fast to its majesty and authority would become the first duty and the most sacred responsibility it has to undertake. The caliph perceived this reality with his truthful insight, and undertook his responsibility so much firmly and determinedly.

Although the news of Abdullah Ibn Saba and his movements, as well as those who were preparing for an armed affliction in Egypt, Kufah and Basra reached him. Those rebels had their way of harassment uncover their evil intentions and suspicious objectives, which were much more

far-reaching than they apparently claimed, the caliph kept adhering to his principles, qualities and merits.

There was no aspect of such adherence, more wonderful, brilliant and glorious than his absolute rejection of using force for halting the affliction. If it is necessary for anyone to be killed in this dispute, then, let it be him, but not anyone of the other Muslims.

This is a brilliant image of which, most persons who study the history of this great caliph do not think. It seemed as if it is an image of another glorious Christ, who saw the rebels besieging his home, raising their swords, and he had many opportunities to fight them, and even defeat them, but, he refused all of them, saying his eternal word: "I do not like to (die and) meet Allah, bearing even a single drop of blood of a Muslim."

Then, he had the opportunity of getting out of the besieged home and saving himself from the expecting killers, but he rejected it, announcing that he had an appointment in Paradise with the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" and his two companions, and that he was getting himself ready for this time.

Indeed, whoever wants to see the interior personality of Uthman Ibn Affan with its reality and greatness, it would be sufficient for him to consider only this situation. But, why would we be in a hurry, and pass quickly over the events? Let's be back abit.

We mentioned that a group of rebels had left Egypt for Medina, to which two delegates from both Kufah and Basra had gone. They offered to the caliph their demands. There were a violent dialogue between them, which came to end through the good offices of the grand imam Ali, and with a promise from the caliph to respond to what is right in their demands, and a pledge from them to return to their countries quietly and obediently.

Then, the caliph sent to his appointed governors of different regions, and consulted them. Had they been sincere in helping him, they would have resigned. But, they had a different situation, which made the caliph hesitate to oust them, particularly when he was seeing the fire of affliction flaring up around him.

This first attack on the capital of the caliphate was a dangerous warning and a very clear portent of coming hurricanes. But, the caliph was firmly determined to stand steadfast while facing the dangers. He

was satisfied that the crisis escalated to the extent that he had no right to give up the majesty or authority of the state, no matter little it might be.

Despite the fact that there might be some points of critique and dangers, affirming this authority became the first and the most important obligation in facing the overwhelming chaos, not only of attacking the caliph with the most obscene and foul language, but also of threatening the state with the force of arms.

There are lots of pictures, illustrating the brilliant firmness of the caliph, from which we would choose the following: When he finished his meetings with the governors of the different regions, who prepared to return to their countries, Mu'awiyah offered to him to take him to Sham, until it would become more stable. But, the caliph refused and said: "I'm not to take a shelter other than that of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him"."

Mu'awiyah offered to him to send a detachment from Sham, to stay in Medina, and safeguard his life. But, the caliph rejected saying: "I'm afraid that they would fill Medina, which, in turn, might be too crowded for the companions of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" from among the Emigrants and the Ansar to live at ease in it."

Mu'awiyah said to the caliph: "Then, they would assassinate you." The great caliph replied: "Allah is sufficient for me, and He is the best upon Whom I rely." It was a wonderful firm sticking to his principles, and unique loyalty to his persuasion.

The events passed very quickly, without the least delay for the people even to take their breaths. The chief of affliction in Egypt, Kufah and Basra wrote and exchanged messages with each other, and agreed that their armed groups should get out until they would meet in Medina, in order to oust the caliph by the force of arms.

One day, the people of Medina got up to hear something like a thunderclap, and see thousands of armed rebels. They gathered at the outskirts of Medina, and sent a delegate to meet the grand imam Ali. But, he had no sooner learnt their news and seen their gathering than he cried in them so much strongly and sincerely: "Return to your countries, might Allah not let you live until morning!"

But, the rebels remained in their positions, led by their chiefs from the three countries, while the caliph was in his home, wondering what they

wanted. "Do they want me to drive away the governors of the different regions? What then would the consequence be, if any governor they dislike should be driven away? Do they want me to hand over Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam to them? How would I surrender him to them so that they might kill him?" yes, (they wanted) to kill him.

Moreover, what would the destiny of the state with its majesty, authority and dignity be in case it submitted to those rebels? But, the situation developed so much rapidly that the caliph asked for the relief of the grand Ali "Might Allah honour him", in order to negotiate with the rebels, and get them put down the arms and depart from the Medina of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" and the capital of Islam.

The honour of the state concerned him to the furthest extent. In order to keep this honour, he put the condition that the rebels should depart at first. After their return to their countries, he would drive away Marwan, the chief of his employees, and any governor against whom there was a complaint. He gave a firm sincere pledge and promise to Ali to do so.

Immediately, the grand imam Ali set out to the tents of the rebels, in the company of Muhammad Ibn Maslamah and Sa'd Ibn Abu Waqqas. He was able to persuade them to return to their countries, exerting in achieving this task an extraordinary effort.

But, a few days later, the inhabitants of Medina were scared by the rebels who returned once again, and proceeded towards Medina, occupying its streets, and besieging the home of the caliph. What happened? What did afflict the rebels (and cause them to do so)?

The messenger of peace, i.e. Ali Ibn Abu Talib, got out to them, in order to ask them why they repealed the pledge and returned once again. The chiefs of the Egyptian rebels spread before him a letter and said: "We detained a man on the way, having this letter, signed by the sealing of the caliph, ordering the governor of Egypt to kill and crucify us."

The grand imam asked the rebels of Kufah and Basra: "And you, what is the reason which brought you?" they said: "We've come to support our Egyptian brothers." The imam said to them: "But, you took a way, and they took a different way. How then did you learn of this letter?" but, it was not time of discussion and argument.

It was the affliction, whose firelock was tightened to the end, and it was expecting for a finger's touch, after which there would be the

greatest distress and the worst disaster. What was the reality of this letter which they alleged to have found?

It is very impossible for the caliph to have written, dictated, or even learnt of it. He took oath by Allah, and he was true, that he neither wrote it, nor did he order that it should be written, nor did he learn anything of it. Without swearing, this was not the morality of a man, who was hurt and abused a lot so that a single drop of blood of a Muslim would not be shed, even if this Muslim person was of those who spoil their Islam with conspiring and disobedience.

Then, who did bear the sin of this letter? He was one of two: a group of the chiefs of the rebels, or Marwan himself.

As for the former, they had a precedence of forgery. When they intended to set out from Egypt, Kufah and Basra to Medina, some of their chiefs made a plot to have as much Muslims as it could be to get out with them. They forged letters on behalf of A'ishah, the Mother of the Believers, Talhah and Az-Zubair, calling upon the Muslims to proceed to Medina in order to fight Uthman. But, the reality of this false mistaking guile was uncovered after the assassination of the caliph. For this reason, it is not surprising that the forgers of those letters themselves invented this new lie perfectly.

If they were not the doers, it was then Marwan. Marwan, as we know from the history, had no enough religion or morals, which might prevent him from committing such a sinful act. The rebels demanded that he should be handed over to them immediately. But the merciful caliph saw his decisive predestination (would be the killing) if he handed him over. so, he rejected to surrender him.

However, the caliph did not do this out of pleasure with what Marwan had done, but out of the disposition of a man who could hardly bear surrendering anyone to be killed or executed. Was not he, who had rejected earlier the execution of Ubaidullah Ibn Umar, though it was a legitimate retaliation, and undertook before Allah the responsibility of substituting blood-money for retaliation? His mercy to others, and fear of seeing bloodshed did not let him, even during those horrible hours, save himself from the rebels.

The rebels then took out the last paper they had, and cried daringly: Uthman should be ousted, otherwise, he should be killed. But the caliph firmly refused to resign. Why? Was it out of his keenness on the prestige

of position? Indeed, let's look for the dispositions of human beings, since Adam, father of mankind had been to this world onto this time: is possible for a man over eighty to be involved in such an ambition surrounded by destructive shaking horrible dangers?

Uthman then rejected to resign because he was a man of responsibilities, who belonged to a unique pattern of people; and this characteristic was hidden beneath the curtain of his humbleness and shyness, which we could hardly see as visible as daylight except in such crisis, distress and situation.

In this context, he remembered something with which the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" had recommended, when he said to him: "O Uthman! If Allah Almighty dressed you a shirt, which the hypocrites pressed upon you to take off, you should not take it off for a wrongdoer."

Indeed, Allah Almighty dressed him the shirt of caliphate, which those rebels wanted, by force of arms, to oblige him to take off. Would he submit to them? Would he surrender the destiny of Islam and state to a pact of tempted people? No, of course.

In order to rest assured of the validity of his situation, he sent to a man, from among the great companions of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", in order to consult him, i.e. Abdullah Ibn Umar "Allah be pleased with both". Let's here pay attention to Nafi, the freed slave of Abdullah Ibn Umar, who narrated the dialogue between the caliph and Abdullah:

Caliph: Those people want to drive me away. If I respond to their demand, they would let me alive, and if I reject, they would kill me. What's your opinion?

Ibn Umar: Tell me, if you resigned, would you live in this world eternally?

Caliph: No.

Ibn Umar: Tell me, if you do not resign, would they do more than killing you? Do they have both Paradise and Hell in their possession?

Caliph: No.

Ibn Umar: Then, do not set this tradition in Islam, and do not take off a shirt which Allah Almighty has dressed you.

However, we likely are about to notice the pleasure visible on the countenance of the caliph, while listening to those words, with which such a glorious companion as Abdullah Ibn Umar supported him.

But, if the caliph was constantly determined on sacrificing his life for the sake of the honour and entity of the state, he did not delay to do his best to persuade the rebels to put down their arms, and abandon their haughtiness and falsehood. In this issue, he used to take refuge to the grand imam Ali "Might Allah honour him" so much, if not permanently.

In fact, the grand imam undertook during those afflictions as much burdens as beyond his capability. However, the surging wind raised by the rebels on the one hand, and Marwan on the other, challenged his brave quiet boat, and ruined his noble attempts. But, he was not disappointed, and kept trying to overpower the tempest, overcoming its uproar with his logical arguments. But, the affliction had become beyond the limits of reasoning, and gave room to nervous tension, which left no place for wisdom or persuasion. When the nervousness reaches its furthest end, people then would relieve themselves from its troublesome burdens, while facing the dangers which irritated it.

This is what happened. The rebels strengthened their besieging the home of the caliph, and prevented his visitors to come to him. They also prevented him from water of the well of Rawmah, which he had bought from his own wealth during the early days of the migration to Medina, and granted to the Muslims.

Moreover, some of the rebels were not satisfied only by abusing and insulting him publicly, nor did they suffice that one of them attacked him while being on the pulpit of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", getting himself ready to deliver the sermon of Friday. But, they were tempted by his forbearance and patience. They thought, though it was ill, that the reason for such forbearance and patience was the caliph's eager to keep his office. They did not learn, or perhaps they knew and disregarded that the real cause of his forbearance and patience was his deep insight of the coming disastrous destiny of both the nation and the state, in case they violated the authority and then assassinated the caliph.

Earlier, he had said to them: "The people ran to take part in the affliction, when they regarded my lifetime as too long to bear. By Allah! If I depart from them, surely they would hope that my lifetime should be

longer as much as a year per each day they would live after me, in view of the bloodshed from which they would suffer.”

His deep insight of the coming destiny which realized his prophecy prompted him to keep patient, and seeking for every possible means with which the rebels might abandon their affliction. but, the chiefs of the rebels, who had long prepared for it, were not to be satisfied by less than exploding the blowing up grudges and resentment so that the whole state would fall into pieces.

Since they caught hold of the situation, they got themselves ready for the final strike. They besieged the caliph's home in preparation for it. The period of this blockade was too long to the inhabitants of Medina to become familiar with it, who went on going and returning, and living their normal and usual life.

All of them were certain that something would happen, after which it would be clear, and the rebels would turn away. But, no one expected, in spite of the violence of this rebellion, that a hand would stretch to kill the caliph. He was an old man, of eighty or even over eighty. He belonged to the very early faithful believers. He also was a son-in-law of the Messenger of Allah “Allah's blessing and peace be upon him”, as well as his (third) successor, and the one who was given by him the glad tidings of being admitted in Paradise. He was the one who prepared the Army of Difficulty, and devoted his own property and wealth with no accounting in the Cause of Allah, His Messenger and religion.

Who would not take care of such sanctities, whatever his differences with the caliph might be? Who from among those who had even as little as an atom's weight of faith in his heart could be prompted foolishly to face Uthman with any sort of arms?

In fact, the assassination of the caliph uncovered the reality of the conspiracy, and some of its hateful chiefs. It also uncovered that there were multitudes of people, who were not short of good intentions, but, they were deceived and tempted and then followed a group of those, who expected all evil for Islam.

We mentioned that whenever the nervous tension reached its peak, none would be able to get rid of it, but through facing the fears which irritated it. The violent facing went on its way as such, and it became necessary for the theater to be prepared for receiving the final scene.

Within the home of the caliph, there were Marwan and some of his armed followers. At the gates, there were some of bounteous companions, who hurried carrying their arms, in order to sacrifice their lives for the caliph. They included both Al-Hasan and Al-Husain, sons of Ali, who sent them to safeguard the openings of the home. They also had both of Abdullah Ibn Az-Zubair and Abdullah Ibn Umar, in addition to others among them.

Outside and surrounding the home, there were many rows of the armed rebels. They became more eagerly enthusiastic when the news reached them that Mu'awiyah had sent a force from Sham, which was about to arrive in Medina.

As for the caliph, he became in the morning of that day (on which he was martyred) thinking of another world, likely heedless of what was happening in this world. He received an invitation to Paradise, by which he was so much occupied from anything else.

On the previous night, after he had offered as much prayers and recited as much Qur'an as he could, then surrendered himself to his Lord, imploring and invoking Him, and went to bed, he saw in his dream the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" having said to him: "(Observe fast but) break your fast with us tomorrow O Uthman."

What cheerful words they were, which brought him to a new life! It was a true vision (in a dream), in which Uthman had faith most. Thus, he had only a short time before getting ready for the appointment of the Selected one (i.e. the Prophet), and the journey of eternity, after which he will leave to the people their world, and to the rebels those four walls which they besieged, going in his great procession to the Hospitality of Allah, and the neighbourhood of Muhammad.

On that day, he got up with the intention of observing fast. However, from the very early days of his embracing Islam, he used to observe fasts during most of days, and stand during all the nights for offering supererogatory prayers. He called all who were present with him, inside and outside the home, carrying arms in defense of him to put down their arms, and leave the home with gratitude and by Allah's blessing. But, all of them, particularly Al-Hasan, Al-Husain, and sons of Umar and Az-Zubair, rejected to leave their positions with and surrounding him. But, the constant order of the caliph kept on calling everyone carrying arms to

put down his arms: "No doubt, the greatest one from among you to benefit me would be a man, who stopped himself and his arms (from bloodshed). I beseech you by Allah not to shed a single drop of blood for my sake."

Then, he heard a great noise outside the home. A lot of the inhabitants of Medina came and clashed with the rebels, trying to turn them away from the caliph's home. The caliph looked over the gatherings of people from the window of his home. He addressed the rebels with his last words, with which he wanted to free himself: "O people! Do not kill me! By Allah! If you killed me, you would fail to love one another after me, and you would also fail to offer your prayers congregationally (behind a single imam upon whom you will be unanimous)."

Then, he returned to his room, offered two Rak'ahs. Then, he carried his Mushaf in his hand, and went on reciting and reciting thoughtfully, enjoying of its perfect Holy Verses, and fresh and flourishing gardens.

On the other hand, the chiefs of the affliction became more furious, and feared that they might be overpowered. So, they issued their command to attack the home. But the pure group of companions, including Al-Hasan, Al-Husain, Ibn Umar and Ibn Az-Zubair showed great bravery in facing and turning away the rebels submissively.

They became more angry, since the devil of the crime touched them. They saw a home neighbouring that of the caliph. They decided to jump over its fence, and from which, they would come into the place of the caliph. They selected from among them a group to do the task quickly. They called upon Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakr to accompany them.

It was not after a few minutes that the plan they had prepared was achieved. Suddenly, the caliph saw before him those who jumped the wall, led by Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakr. He caught hold of the caliph's beard with his hand, and started threatening him. As quiet as the holy men, he called him: "O son of my brother! Let my beard, which your father used to honour, and had he seen you as such, surely he would have felt shy of what you are doing."

Then, Muhammad was shocked and his hand returned regretfully and submissively. He turned away, running outside the home, driving before him those who jumped the fence with him. In front of the gate of the house, he stood, trying to drive away the crowds of the attackers.

But, the chiefs of the affliction got so much mad, and were shaken by Muhammad's situation as they had never been before. They saw their dull destiny. So, they attacked the home at a time, and jumped to it as hungry wolves from above the wall which was close to it. Then, they intruded the seclusion of the caliph.

At this time, he had reached in his reciting the following Holy Verse: "Men said to them: a great army is gathering against you: and frightened them: but it (only) increased their Faith: they said: for us Allah sufficeth, and he is the best Disposer of affairs."

He paid no attention to them. Perhaps, he did not feel of their entering upon him, for the pleasure of his spirit, his delight of the Holy Verses of his Lord, in addition to his joy of the meeting in Paradise, to which he was invited, screened him from seeing the devil ghosts.

He kept reciting, while the criminals rushed to commit their wicked crime of killing him. He neither resisted, nor moved from his sitting place, nor let his Mushaf. When his palm was strongly struck, he did no more than saying: "By Allah! It is the first hand to write lines of the Mufassal and the Holy Verses of Qur'an."

When he saw his blood overflowing, wetting the papers of the Mushaf, he folded it lest it might contaminate some of its Holy Verses. Then, he embraced to his breast while dying. When his (dead) body lie still and motionless, the Book of Allah was sticking to him as his intimate friend; and who else might have more right than him to be so? Is not it he, who made it a single (way of recitation), kept and sacrificed his life for it?

His rapid assassination was in the period between afternoon and the short period before sunset. Then, there was a sufficient time for his spirit to reach its appointment at the repast of breakfast in Paradise at the time of sunset. Let it then ascend to its Evolver and Creator, and go joyfully to His Hospitality. Here, the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", and his two companions Abu Bakr As-Siddiq and Umar Al-Faruq expected for him very eagerly, and had a great longing to see him.

Uthman suffered a lot for as long as twelve years, which spent as caliph, carrying the heavy burdens, as well as the banner of caliphate. He was mainly concerned with having the flag not fall down from his right

hand. He also was interested in meeting Allah, having no single drop of Muslim blood.

Did he achieve his objective? Yes, he did. Let then his dead body for the ground, full or even void of injuries it might be. This matter was insignificant in his sight, as long as his pure spirit got its happy future with Allah.

BOOK FOUR

BY THE SIDES OF ALI

“Say: No reward do I ask of you for this except the love of those near of kin. And if any one earns any good, We shall give him an increase of good in respect thereof: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate (service).”

INTRODUCTION

Indeed, it is a difficult attempt to summarize the life and biography of the grand imam in a written book. In fact, I have to tell you that I was careful of such an attempt, from which I fled away earlier.

After I had introduced my two books “Abu Bakr has come” and “Before Umar”, I came upon the biography of the grand imam Ali, in order to get the honour of illustrating and introducing it.

But, as soon as I had done, I became strongly frightened, and of course, the reason for it was clear to me. The life of the grand imam, particularly during its last portion beginning from his being appointed as caliph, and ending with his martyrdom, was extraordinary. It was of such a different type of lives as required a higher level of awareness and strength, in order to be able to deal with its written history.

As much as great, glorious and marvelous life it was, it was, at the same time, painful and horrible. It was a life, in which both victory and defeat, both capability and piety, both suffering and distress, both heroism and pain, and both greatness and tragedy gathered so much effectively and interactively that it led to a unique danger, dealing with which even in written form should be difficult and frightful.

For this reason, I felt afraid of treating the whole topic. I also felt afraid of seeing the great hero during his difficult days, when the conspiracies, afflictions and wars were expecting for him so much eagerly. Moreover, I feared seeing the horrible conflict between the Muslims, for which, they introduced one another (as fuel).

At this point, I turned my direction, and dealt with a lot of companions of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, whom I introduced in my book “Men Around The Messenger”. During my continuous meeting with those great companions, I started gradually becoming familiar with facing the case, of which I felt afraid to treat earlier. I rest assured and became more aware (of the course of matters) that I was granted the capability of responding to my longing for the hospitality of the grand imam.

But, as soon as I had started, I faced a new problem. I do not want with my written biographies to introduce a classic traditional books of history. I’m mainly concerned with the spirit of history. I do not write the

history of events so much as I write the history of the human greatness lurking in those events and incidents.

My way to do so is to accompany the history in all of its details, and even its labyrinths, and then return to formulate my historical vision in what is likely a canvas, reflecting the essence of the personality in issue, and its fortune of excellence and greatness.

the biography of the grand imam Ali was so much abundant of likely endless details and events, that I feared to deviate from my method at the midst of those horrible incidents and events over time and space. But, as soon as I had started going on the way, I found it astonishingly easy, which made me exclaimed from the depth of a thankful spirit: Might Allah greet the blessings of the grand imam!

In fact, the phrase “By The Sides Of Ali” is not only a title of a book. It is also a simple expression of the overflowing provisions one would find whenever he turned his face towards (dealing with the biography of) Ali, the great disciple of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, and the dutiful son of Islam.

From his great spirit, noble and good characteristics, and marvelous capability of expression and great efforts, there come out limitless broad sides (of greatness), reflecting heroisms and sacrifices, great deeds and glories, which you might regard, but for the credibility of history, as dreams and myths.

I liked that my talk in this introduction might be longer than that, for how beautiful speech might be, whose subject is such a man as Ali. But, I have no right, since we are happily called to meet the grand imam in those coming pages, to let you stop at the gate for a long time. So, let me give room to you, in order to enter into this rich and dutiful shades.

O father of both Hasan and Husain, if we exceed the limits of ourselves with this meeting, your great satisfied pleased spirit will give us the right to hope for you to admit us as guests on your light glorious biography, as well as guests in your abundant overflowing broad shades.

CHAPTER ONE

A SON AND A GRANDSON

He (Ali) inherited the glory from the family of Hashim, and was so much generous, belonging to very generous descendants.

The young man sat astonishingly and eagerly amidst the people who came to see his father during his last agonies. The would-be death of his father concerned and also grieved him. But, he was much more interested in seeing how both heroism and death could meet together. It was a unique opportunity of the young man who was eager to know, for the representative of heroism at his time (i.e. his father) was getting ready to departure, from whom death was approaching, being welcomed as a friend. Then, let the young man wait as long as he will, to see how heroes would face death.

The old man who was at the threshold of death moved restlessly in his bed, and asked the present people to enable him to get up abit. When his back was raised, and his head was reclined, he caught a kind glimpse of them, which extended over all of them. Then, he addressed them saying what he wanted to make his last words to them in this world:

“O community of Quraish! I recommend you to glorify this House (of Ka’bah), for it has the pleasure of Allah, and the necessities of your living. You should keep good relations with your kith and kin, and do not severe them, for keeping good relation with onc’s kinship is to have one’s (good portion of) lifetime much longer. You should give up oppression, for it destroyed the people who had been before you.

You should accept (the invitation of) anyone calling you (to a wedding banquet), and give the beggar, because those give one the honour in his life, as well as in his death. You’ve do adhere to truth in your speech, and fulfillment of trusts to their holders.

No doubt, I advise you to treat Muhammad well, for he is the honest one in Quraish, and the truthful one among all the Arabs, and he has all good merits and qualities with which I recommended you. He brought us this matter (of religion) which the mind accepted, though the tongue rejected for fear of provoking the hatred of others.

By Allah! It seems as if I'm seeing the poor people from among the Arabs, the inhabitants of the desert, and the powerless from among the people having accepted his call, believed in his words, and glorified his matter, with whom he came over the risks. It seems as if I'm seeing the Arabs having submitted to him, and complied with his orders.

By Allah, none takes his way but that he will be rightly-guided, and none follows his guidance but that he will become happy. Had I been to live much longer, surely, I would have sufficed him against dangers, and pushed disasters away from him."

He looked at his nearest kinship, and assigned to them the following advice: "As for you community of sons of Hashim, accept and believe in the call of Muhammad, so that you would be successful, prosperous and rightly-guided." Then, he pointed to them to have him lie once again. He laid beneath his covering. A few moments later, he was overtaken by death.

The deceased man fulfilled his last trust, which he was afraid that the fear of death might unable him to do. His frightened head was inclined to his compassionate breast. But from which thing did he fear? And for whom did he feel pity? It was his fear from Quraish. But as pity was for his nephew, against whom Quraish mobilized all of its power for nothing more than he exclaimed: There is no god but Allah.

Have you known about whom we are talking? We are talking about Abu Talib, the chief of Quraish, and the master of men of his generation. As for the young man, who was sitting astonishingly and eagerly, he is Ali, his son. Look at him while kissing the forehead of his father. then he covered him, and got up to look after his affairs.

There was a clear feeling of pleasure within himself, besides those of grief and sadness. He saw his father at his last agonies, neither silent nor disappointed, but, he spent his last moments as an orator, summarizing in bright short words the whole good merits of his life which he lived on the earth, and among the people, persistently continuing his support to those merits, and their new representative, the caller to Allah with His Permission, Muhammad Ibn Abdullah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him".

Yes. As grieved as the son was by the loss of his father, he was pleased to receive at the last moments of his father the most truthful and wonderful instructions of life: glorify this House (of Ka'bah). You should

keep good relations with your kith and kin, and do not sever them. You should give up oppression. You should accept (the invitation of) anyone calling you (to a wedding banquet), and give the beggar. You've do adhere to truth in your speech, and fulfillment of trusts to their holders.

No doubt, I advise you to support Muhammad, for he is the guide to the straight path.

From this man, Ali had come. The people of Quraish used to consider Abu Talib as their chief, whom they loved and respected, not only for his high position in Quraish, but also for his generosity, great merits, justice, and virtues, which astonished the people with its power, uprightness, and loftiness.

However, just some of his situation towards Islam and Quraish are sufficient for us to recognize the personality of this hero. He alone, apart from the other paternal uncles of the Prophet, and also all of his kinship, undertook the heavy burden of supporting the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", and facing Quraish. The man was firmly steadfast facing maneuvers and conspiracies (as strong and powerful as) to destroy the mountains. He was the most open-minded, wholehearted and the bravest from among all the men of Quraish.

During the early days of the call of the Prophet, Abu Talib saw his son Ali offering his prayers as hidden behind the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him". This was the first time he knew that his young son had followed Muhammad. The boy did not tremble when he learnt that his father had seen him praying. When he finished his prayer, he went to his father to whom he said very clearly and firmly as was his usual: "O my father! I've had faith in Allah and His Messenger. I believed in what he has come with, which I followed." Abu Talib replied to him: "Since he does not call you but to the goodness, then, adhere to him."

It was not only that which he did. One day, he saw the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" praying, with Ali on his right. He saw afar his son Ja'far, whom he called. When he approached him, he said to him: "Be the other wing of your cousin, and stand in prayer on his left."

This was out of his open-mindedness and wholeheartedness, which led their owner to open the door for the new reality in order to take its opportunity, and prove to be right. Had a man else other than Muhammad

“Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” brought this call, surely, Abu Talib would not have failed to support him.

He was, as shown from his news and biography, an intelligent just man, who was not to be involved in fixing the time and denying access to the future. He also, as shown from his will at his death, was of the believers of the power of the virtue and goodness. During the whole of his life, he defended and supported every call and its caller on that way.

Furthermore, Abu Talib was the most knowledgeable from among the people of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”. He was his paternal uncle, who took him under his guardianship (following the death of Abd Al-Muttalib). He knew him as complete sincere truthful man, who never was experienced to be a liar, a perfectly honest, and so much pure, beyond the level of suspicion. He frequently saw him so much desirous for seeing the fact. He saw him grieved and concerned for his people, who abandoned their minds and entities when they worshipped the stones, which they thought of as gods and lords. Then, would he leave him, since he was not to leave any stranger coming to carry the banner, and announce his call?

Abu Talib had great characteristics, talents and personality. His situation of supporting the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and the rising religion of Islam was out of his greatness and gallantry. He was firmly persistent in facing Quraish, and had all of its plots and intrigues fail. Consequently, it resorted to an act, which was against all conventions of the Arabs, when it lost hope from getting the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” give up his call, and persuade Abu Talib not to support him. The chiefs of Quraish decided to boycott the sons of Hashim and Al-Muttalib.

Sons of Hashim and Al-Muttalib were inclined to Abu Talib, and stayed with him in his courtyard. They spent under this horrible blockade nearly three years. They suffered from a great food shortage that they were forced to eat the dry leaves in order to satisfy their hunger.

Abu Talib remained as firm and constant as a mountain. He refused all attempts of haggle made by Quraish, which he used to criticize in his poetry as follows:

“You should get up before the soil would be dug (for you to be buried), and then, the sinless one would be on equal terms with that who is sinful. Do not follow the conspirators, and severe relations with us

after there had been cordiality and love among us as belonging to the same kith and kin. We, by the Lord of the House, are not to surrender Ahmad to any kind of disaster or distress which might befall him; and any attempt made on that way would inevitably fail.”

Whenever Abu Talib believed in something, his faith would be strong and firm; and it is this strength and firmness of faith that not only his son Ali but all of his sons inherited from him. Abu Talib believed in the right of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” to say what he wanted to say, and convey his call. If it was right, then, the right should emerge victorious and become dominant. If it was false, certainly, falsehood would perish.

For this reason, he resisted Quraish when he saw it enjoining silence upon the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”. He did not stand in support of Muhammad, his nephew, but in support of Muhammad, the caller to the truth and goodness, Muhammad, the truthful and honest.

Had Abu Talib had doubt about the truthfulness of his nephew, he would not have supported or backed him. Indeed, he supported the right not the kinship in him.

The clearest proof of that came on the day, when the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” told him that Allah made the small insects to eat what was written in the document, in which Quraish had written its pledge to boycott the sons of both Hashim and Al-Muttalib, and hung it inside the Ka’bah. The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” told him that Allah Almighty caused those small insects to eat all of the document except for the Name of Allah.

Abu Talib went to the people of Quraish in their gathering place, to whom he said: “O community of Quraish! My nephew told me so-and-so. Get up and see your document. If it is as Muhammad has said, then, you should put an end to this boycott, and abandon what is in it, otherwise, I would surrendered him to you.”

The people of Quraish were satisfied with that. They got up and brought the document from Ka’bah. It was as mentioned by the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”. The people of Quraish then were puzzled. In this way, the age of boycott came to an end, and the conspiracy failed.

in this issue, Abu Talib was of the opinion that the truth should be protected, and not that kinship should be backed. He simply mentioned to Quraish that if Muhammad's truthfulness was clear in this event, which was easily verifiable, then, he should have the proof against you, and if he was a liar, then, I would not protect the liars; and far be the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" from not being a truthful.

Earlier than that, when the delegate of Quraish went to Abu Talib and said to him: "You are of a good position and high honour among us. We asked you to prevent your nephew (from resuming his call), but you did not prevent him from us. We could not keep patient on insulting our forefathers, criticizing our gods, and stultifying our minds. Either you should prevent him from us, otherwise, we would fight him and you until one of the two opposing parties would perish."

When they said this to him, followed by the reply of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him": "By Allah! If they place the sun in my right, and the moon in my left, I would not leave this matter (of religion) until Allah makes it victorious, or I would die while attempting to do so", he became more determined, and firmer. Abu Talib, the hero, went on striking Quraish with his usual firmness, saying:

"No doubt, I've learnt that the religion of Muhammad is the best one from among those which the whole creatures experienced. By Allah! They would not be able to hurt you before my being buried in the ground."

This was the man, from whom Ali came. One day, he was sitting in a shed of his, when the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" came to him sadly and briefly. He asked him what wrong with him. He knew that Quraish instigated one of their foolish men to throw some abdominal contents (of a dead animal), while he was prostrating in Ka'bah, talking his Lord in prayer.

Immediately, he got up, carrying his sword in his right hand, and taking the arm of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" with his right one. When he reached the conspirators and saw them moving restlessly when their sights came upon him, he cried in them: "By Him, in Whom Muhammad has faith! If anyone of you got up now, I would strike him with my sword." He went on sweeping the abdominal contents and blood with his hand from the back of the

Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, with which he was throwing their faces, i.e. the faces of the chiefs of Quraish, who turned before this hero into rats. In the end, Quraish perceived that it could hardly hurt the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” during the lifetime of Abu Talib, who was beside him, defending and protecting him.

Abu Talib liked in his nephew all good qualities and merits he used to sanctify, to which he saw the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” calling so much faithfully. He expressed of his liking with his firm powerful will in the situation, from which we saw a portion. He also expressed of it with his poetic talent:

Indeed, they’ve learnt that our son (Muhammad) is not a liar in our sight, nor is he concerned with saying what is false. He is forbearing, rightly-guided, just, and so much wise and rational. He has faith in God, Who is not to be negligent of him. He is so much pure and clear to the extent that it seems as if it is with the help of his face water would be sent down. He used to help the orphans, and protect the widows.”

When Abu Talib died, he was overwhelmingly inclined to this new religion, and compassionately sympathizing with its glorious Messenger. The result was that Quraish increased its harm to the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”.

One day, when his suffering from the infidels increased, he greeted his deceased uncle as he deserved it, saying: “Quraish failed to cause harm to me as much as I would dislike until Abu Talib died.” Then, he nodded with his great head and said: “O uncle! How soon I felt I had missed you (after your death)!”

Was Ali only the son of this hero? He was also a grandson of another great hero, i.e. Abd Al-Muttalib. By a quick review of the good qualities and merits of Abd Al-Muttalib, it would be clear to us that Ali did not inherit from his father emergent contingent merits, but he inherited very authentic and ancient good merits, which went as the light through pure and clean offspring.

Who was then this glorious man, Abd Al-Muttalib? He was the man, who reached not only in Quraish, but also in all the Arabs, a great position, so much high that anyone could hardly attain. Whenever the pilgrim gather in crowds around the well of Zamzam in the seasons of pilgrimage every year, they should remember with goodness and glory

the man who dug it, and at whose hands, it burst into water; and who else could do so but Abd Al-Muttalib?

One night, while he was sleeping, his pure spirit received, in a true vision he saw in a dream, a proclaimer who said to him: "You should dig Taibah." He got up, without knowing the interpretation of his vision. But, the proclaimer visited him in the coming night and said to him: "You should dig Barrah." He got up, not knowing what he should do. On the third night, he was called: "Dig Zamzam." He asked: "What is Zamzam?" the proclaimer replied: "It never exhausts, nor is it closed. It would provide with water the multitudes of pilgrims." Then, its place was assigned to him.

As soon as the day had risen, he took his son Al-Harith and went on digging the earth with their mattocks. Then the water of this blessed well burst. It was this well granted to Ishmael and his mother by virtue of the merciful dooms amidst the scorching desert in the ancient past, but, sometime later, it was interred by rocks and sand.

However, Abd Al-Muttalib, or Shaibah, as was his name, was a unique person, of brilliant and nearly matchless sort of people. Is it not that the first grandfather of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", and also of Ali Ibn Abu Talib should not be but a man made under the sponsorship of fates?

His remembrance used to fill the Arab desert from north to south. In view of his praiseworthy good merits, the people called him Shaibatul-Hamd. They described him as the man who used to feed the people in the valleys, and the monsters on the mountains. He had a great amount of wisdom and deep faith.

When Abrahah invaded Mecca, and came in a powerful army in order to ruin Ka'bah, the people of Quraish ran towards their chief Abd Al-Muttalib in order to consult him. Knowing the inability of Quraish to stand steadfast in front of the proceeding army, he ordered them to take their women, children and luggage to the top of mountains, leaving in this way the Sacred town open, and the Lord of the House would protect it. But, if the proceeding army tried to jump the mountains to violate their honours, let them then fall dead in defense before their honours would be hurt.

He also had the same situation from Abrahah, when the later asked for talking with the chief of Quraish. Abd Al-Muttalib went to him, and said

to him those famous words: “As for the camels, they belong to me, but as for the House, it has its Lord, Who would surely protect it.”

However, Shaibatul-Hamd did not take this situation but because of his firm strong faith in Allah and in His capability. For this reason, as soon as he had finished from his meeting with Abrahah, he went to the House, and caught hold of two rings of the gate of the Ka’bah, and start speaking privately Allah, firmly faithful and confident of His victory: “O Allah! Indeed, everyone of human beings protect his belongings (from being taken or even touched), so, please, protect Your House, which belongs to You.”

But, what would it be if the dooms let Abrahah ruin the House? And, where would then the destiny of the faith of Abd Al-Muttalib be? The depth of his deep faith, and authentic wisdom appeared when he said, resuming his private talk to his Lord: “If You are to leave them ruin our Ka’bah, then, we would submit to Your order whatever it might be.”

Yes. Even if Abrahah and his army were able to ruin the Sacred House, which Abd Al-Muttalib feared and of which he was careful, Abd Al-Muttalib’s faith in Allah would remain, without the least decrease. But, what would happen would be due to a certain judgement which no one knows but Allah.

However, this was a faith of a godly man. Although the earth around him was full of idolatry and heathenism, not only in the Arab Peninsula, but also in such civilized countries as Persia and Rome, he had a hidden feeling that there is a Divine God, Who is Higher, Greater, and more Supreme.

The faith of Abd Al-Muttalib seemed to be pure and righteous as shown from his private talk to his Lord we’ve mentioned. Around the Ka’bah, there were over three hundred idols, which Abd Al-Muttalib did not let protect it. He did not call upon Hubal, Lati or Uzza. He called upon nothing of those idols which were very near to the Ka’bah. But, he called and implored to Allah, the Highest, the most Supreme, of Whom he had a clear, though hidden, feeling. He addressed Him supplicating: “O Allah! Indeed, everyone of human beings protect his belongings (from being taken or even touched), so, please, protect Your House, which belongs to You.”

Abd Al-Muttalib received immediately the reward of his faith in the strike given by the great fates to Abrahah and his army. Allah Almighty

sent down to them the weakest of His creatures, i.e. flights of small birds, which carried death to them, and left them dead as an empty field of stalks and straw (from which corn was) eaten up.

Furthermore, Abd Al-Muttalib was a source of good omen and blessing for his people. There were many times, in which it did not rain, with the result that drought and famine were about to kill them. The people used to go to their chief Abd Al-Muttalib who would set out with them, placing them in rows on the top of mountains, submissively imploring to Allah to send down rain with the following words: "O Allah! Those are Your slaves, and the sons of Your slaves. We now are suffering from that You see well. So, please, remove drought away from us, and bring us rain and richness." It would not be after a long time that rain would come as generous and merciful, planting, cultivating and reenergizing.

In fact, the faith of this man who was unique in his age, was so much astonishing, although heathenism was his religion. Indeed, Abd Al-Muttalib used to see Allah in every kind of blessing brought to him, and in every step he made.

When he was given the glad tidings of the birth of his grandson Muhammad Ibn Abdullah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", he carried the child in his arms, and went to the Ka'bah, where he offered a prayer of thanking and praising. He went on saying: "Praise be to God Who has given me this good blessed child, who excelled, though still in his cradle, all the young boys. I seek refuge to God Almighty to protect him (against all kinds of evil) until I see him having grown up and become strongly well-built man."

However, his pure spirit made him see the high great position this child would have in the future. He loved him as he had never loved anyone before, and treated him, though still being a child, as he used to treat his friend. On every occasion, he used to take the hand of his son Abu Talib, and put it in the hand of his grandson Muhammad "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", and say to Abu Talib, as if he were to see what is unseen: "O Abu Talib! This son of mine would have a great high position in the future. So, you should take care of him, and do not let anything harm him." Abu Talib kept the treaty, and looked after his nephew according to the recommendation of his father, out of his gallantry, good origin and merits.

When both the grandson and the father died and passed away, Ali inherited from his father Abu Talib, and his grandfather Abd Al-Muttalib the good virtuous merits and greatness. He inherited from them both the nobility of characteristics and blood. The sons of Hashim were always the chiefs, leaders and nobles of the society.

In view of values, the sons of Hashim were always the most generous from among the people, the most adhering (to their pledges), the most bounteous, the most sacrificing in the cause of goodness, the most protective, and the most fitting for taking care of neighbours. In short, they were among their people, and in their time, the conscience of those people and that time.

Now, perhaps we are able to know what the son inherited from his father, and the grandson from his grandfather, i.e. what Ali received, took and inherited from both Abu Talib and Abd Al-Muttalib. He took from them all virtues and good qualities, and inherited all good deeds and characteristics. He inherited from them the strength of wholehearted devotion, the power of determination, and the firmness of faith.

Yes. This is the distinctive characteristic of this glorious inheritance, i.e. the strength, which used to get the virtues of those people always ready for work and relief. All powers of goodness they had were always strongly whetted, far from weakness, hesitation or even relaxation.

We shall see this much clearer in Ali, the son and the grandson, particularly, after all of this inherited virtues and merits would be tested by the valuable true religion of Islam, with the result that it would get out their hidden precious things, and they would become much more elegant.

On the other hand, there is another point which we will see as clear and visible in the life of Ali as it was in the merits of his grandfather Abd Al-Muttalib. It is the entrustment (all affairs to Allah) which was nearly absolute. We saw how Abd Al-Muttalib, when he and his people suffered a lot from what they had no power to face, having simply and astonishingly, if not innocently entrusted the whole matter to Allah Almighty.

It was not the entrustment of the weak unable ones. On the contrary, it was the entrustment of the one, who was faithful that Allah Almighty is the only cause of everything, and if the powers of goodness among the human beings were unable to do a certain thing, He should be confided to achieve it. It was a good wonderful entrustment which our young man

inherited among what he inherited. However, we shall see that whenever Ali was distressed or befallen by a great disaster, during his coming days, he would entrust the whole matter to Allah Almighty so much astonishingly. We also would see that there stood behind such an entrustment the faith of the dutiful men, and not the submission of the powerless ones.

We will see him having entrusting the affair to the Knowledgeable of what is unseen and what is noticeable, in which he was not concerned with the results and consequences of the situation. That's because the son of Abu Talib, during his lifetime, was not interested in achieving even the least victory for himself. But, he was mainly concerned, and firmly interested in the victory of the principles, in which he believed, and before Allah, he undertook their responsibility. At the top of those principles are to have faith in Allah, and depend upon Him.

He saw how his father adhered to what he thought was right. He also saw how his grandson Abd Al-Muttalib, and before him his grandson Hashim stuck to what they thought was right. He came from people, known to have been the protectors of faith, virtues and goodness, although they did not know the reality of the God, to Whom they should take refuge, and upon Whom they should rely, their loyalty to His Irresistible Power and Merciful Grace was always strong. Then, what would the loyalty of Ali be, since he knew the reality of Allah, to Whom he was rightly guided?

But, how did he know Him? How was he guided? Let you come to see. Are you seeing this simple glorious home? The young man whose steps we are tracing is there, in the company of his cousin, Muhammad Ibn Abdullah, the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds.

The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" had taken the permission of his uncle Abu Talib, some time earlier, and many years before his death, to let his son Ali live with him in the home of him and Khadijah, his wife. He gave him permission. Now, Ali is there, inside this home, in which the Divine revelation is drawing the map of a coming new world, and new humanity. How blessed fortunate this young man is now! His glorious heritage is now flourishing at the hand of a capable master, i.e. his cousin, who enabled him to have a good relation with his Lord, and who guided him to the straight path. Let us go to this blessed home, to accompany Ali during the journey of his glorious life. Let's go to it submissively.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STEPSON, AND THE PRECEDENT (TO ISLAM)

The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” said: “If there is anyone of whom I’m a friend, then, Ali is also his friend.”

Now, we are approaching (this home). We are at the gate. Are you not hearing? A sweet ringing is coming from the inside. An astonishing Qur’an is being recited. The household are praying. Who is there? None of course other than the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, leading in prayer Ali, his cousin, Khadijah, his wife, and Zaid Ibn Harithah, his servant.

How glorious the scene is! How wonderful those Verses are, which are sending their sweet scent and strong ringing! Let’s pay attention submissively and piously:

“In the Name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful

Ha. Mim. The revelation of the Book is from Allah the Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom. Verily in the heavens and the earth, are Signs for those who believe. And in the creation of yourselves and the fact that animals are scattered (through the earth), are Signs for those of assured Faith. And in the alternation of Night and Day, and the fact that Allah sends down Sustenance from the sky, and revives therewith the earth after its death, and in the change of the winds, are Signs for those that are wise. Such are the Signs of Allah, which We rehearse to thee in truth: then in what exposition will they believe after (rejecting) Allah and His Signs? Woe to each sinful dealer in Falsehoods: He hears the Signs of Allah rehearsed to him, yet is obstinate and lofty, as if he had not heard them: then announce to him a Penalty Grievous!”

Now, it is silent. Perhaps, they are kneeling and prostrating. Perhaps, they are asking for Allah’s forgiveness, and glorifying Allah. Perhaps, they are meditating and considering. Let’s be in our places, keeping our submission and attention. The sweet ringing returns once again, but much more glorious and wonderful. Pay attention O my companions:

“Then we put thee on the (right) Way of Religion: so follow thou that (Way), and follow not the desires of those who know not. They will be of no use to thee in the sight of Allah: it is only wrongdoers (that stand as) protectors, one to another: but Allah is the Protector of the Righteous. These are clear evidences to men, and a Guidance and Mercy to those of assured Faith. What! do those who seek after evil ways think that We shall hold them equal with those who believe and do righteous deeds, that equal will be their life and their death? Ill is the judgment that they make. Allah created the heavens and the earth for just ends, and in order that each soul may find the recompense of what it has earned, and none of them be wronged. Then seest thou such a one as takes as his god his own vain desire? Allah has, knowing (him as such), left him astray, and sealed his hearing and his heart (and understanding), and put a cover on his sight. Who, then, will guide him after Allah (has withdrawn Guidance)? Will ye not then receive admonition? And they say: What is there but our life in this world? We shall die and we live, and nothing but Time can destroy us. But of that they have no knowledge: they merely conjecture: And when Our Clear Signs are rehearsed to them, their argument is nothing but this: they say, Bring (back) our forefathers, if what ye say is true! Say: It is Allah Who gives you life, then gives you death; then He will gather you together for the Day of Judgment about which there is no doubt: but most men do not understand.”

Here, (in this home), Ali lived, since Muhammad was just a worshipper (before his Prophethood), seeking for the truth. He used to worship (Allah) in the cave of Hira', turning his face in the sky, as if he was hurriedly expecting for an appointment, for which he had a great longing.

Here also he lived, after the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” had been Divinely inspired, and the Heaven called him to convey the Word and Message of God (to the people).

When the early days, or say the early moments of the message started, there were three men, who noticed the significant change which began to influence upon the life of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”: his wife Khadijah, his cousin Ali, and his servant Zaid Ibn Harithah. They also embraced Islam in this order too.

Ali, who was no more than ten years old, asked him: “What are you doing?” the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon

him” replied: “I’m praying to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.” Ali asked: “Who is the Lord of the worlds?” the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” instructed him, and guided him (to the straight path): “He is a Single God, with Whom there is no partner, to Whom all the creation refers, with Whom are all affairs. It is He, Who brings beings to life, as well as causes them to die, and He has Power over all things.”

The boy did not hesitate, and he embraced Islam, and in this way, he was the first Muslim among the men, and Khadijah “Allah be pleased with her” was the first Muslim among women. As of this day, he remained with the Prophet, and did not leave him. He used to offer prayers with him, pay attention to him, and notice him while getting himself ready for receiving the Divine revelation. There were many Verses, which he was the first to listen just after its being revealed.

Then, those, whom the Heaven selected to be from among the companies of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” started coming to him as faithful believers: Abu Baker, Uthman, Talhah, Az-Zubair, Ibn Awf, Sa’d Ibn Abu Waqqas, Abu Ubaidah, Abu Salamah, Al-Arqam, the sons of Maz’un, Khabbab, Sa’id Ibn Zaid, Ammar, Mus’ab Ibn Umair and Ibn Mas’ud, all of whom were doomed to be from among the precedents to Islam.

The home of Al-Arqam on (the mountain of) Safa became their meeting place, in which, they used to meet in secret, and the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” would recite to them what he had received from the Divine revelation. He used also to offer the prayer with them, and bless their faith.

Ali did not fail to be present in the home of Al-Arqam, and no event of it could escape from him. Under its ceiling, as well as under the ceiling of the home of the Prophet, in which he lived, he frequently heard the Holy Verses of Allah being recited, and saw the lights of Prophethood washing his sins and mistakes.

What did I say? Did I say washing his sins and mistakes? But, when did he commit any kind of sin or mistake? When did he do, since he was born amidst the worship, faith and right guidance? Beginning from his age of six, he lived with Muhammad, the truthful and honest one. He was educated at his hands, influenced by his greatness, purity, and piety. When he was ten years old, the revelation was sent down to the

Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, ordering him to call people to Islam. He was the first to precede all the Muslims to embrace Islam.

Then, as of that day unto the day, on which he met his Lord, his life became a complete sincere application of the method of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, and of the instructions of the Holy Qur’an.

Indeed, blessed be this life, which did not have even the least flaw, fault or evil desire. The one of lived this life was born, carrying from childhood the same responsibilities that men used to undertake, to the extent that he had no fortune of even the amusement of children. As a child, he never satisfied his hearing with the desert musical instruments or songs, nor was he influenced by such things when he was a young man, as if the doom saved his hearing and feelings for other words, which would change everything in this life.

Yes. The hearing and the heart of this young man were saved, in order to receive with them as no one other than him had never received before the Holy Verses of Allah, the Highest, the Greatest. Do you see the Verses which we heard earlier? Let’s imagine Ali while hearing them as fresh, elegant, just after their revelation, and being recited by the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds. But no, we could hardly imagine that. It is sufficient for us, while going through his life, to be able to follow the words which narrated its news.

On the light of those sent down Verses, which were Divinely brought in installments, Ali Ibn Abu Talib spent the early days of his life, influenced by their light, and astonished by their sweetness. Whenever he heard a Verse about Paradise, being recited by the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, the rightly-guided young man would seem as if he were seeing it, to the extent that he was about to stretch his right hand, in order to pick from its fruits and grapes. Whenever he heard a Verse about the fire of Hell, he would tremble as a bird shocked by a hurricane, and but for the majesty and sanctity of the prayer, he would flee away from the heat of the fire, which he would seem as if he was feeling and seeing.

Whenever he heard a Verse describing the Greatness and Glory of Allah, or blaming the people for their disbelief in Allah, though they know not, and their ungratefulness of His virtue and blessing, this

rightly-guided young man would be about to melt out of piety and shyness.

However, he drank into his heart the sweetness, beauty, majesty and secrets of the Holy Qur'an, for he witnessed its Divinely sending down Verse after the other, to the extent that he was worthy of saying, and of course, he is truthful: "Ask me more, more, and more about the Book of Allah as much as you will. By Allah! There is no Verse from among its Verses but that I know whether it was sent down at night or by day."

Moreover, he was as described by Al-Hasan Al-Basri, who said: "He gave the Qur'an all of his strength, determination, knowledge, and work. So, all of it was so much clear to him."

This was Ali Ibn Abu Talib. This was the one, whom we might describe, hoping not to be excessively exaggerating, the stepchild of the Divine revelation. Along the years, during which the revelation was Divinely sent down, our young man was there, witnessing it, and preceding the others in receiving it from the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds, paying his attention to its secrets and lights.

How often he was seen in the mountain passes of Mecca, as the second of two persons: the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" and him, Ali "Might Allah honour him", offering the prayers together, far from both the sight and harm of those of Quraish.

There, in the large space of the desert, where there are no limits or dams, and the secrets of this great universe could be reflected with glory and majesty on the feeling, Ali used to receive from the mouth of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" the Words and Verses of the Qur'an. He had a sensitive feeling, a cheerful determination, a great heart, and a free spirit. His personality, with its characteristics, inherited or acquired, used to receive an irresistible influence, and then surrender so much cheerfully to those Verses, in which he believed as a Divine revelation, and religion, as well as he believed in their reciter as a Prophet and Messenger.

For this reason, we are not to be surprised if we know that Ali during his lifetime, used to give the Holy Qur'an an absolute loyalty, to the extent that he was not to accept the least deviation from it, or the least indulgence in it. No doubt, he was the stepchild of the Divine revelation, and the first disciple of the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, he was the first precedent to embrace Islam. Did he not hear the Holy Qur'an expounding: "Such are the Signs of Allah, which We rehearse to thee in truth: then in what exposition will they believe after (rejecting) Allah and His Signs?"

"then in what exposition will they believe". Indeed, the repenting young man trembled because of the horror of such a wondering and the majesty of the speech. He replied so much loudly: "We never believe in any exposition but Yours, O Lord of everything."

From this Verse, as well as the like of it in the Holy Qur'an, Ali drank into his heart a matchless loyalty to it. Did he not hear the Holy Qur'an defining for the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" his straight way saying: "Then we put thee on the (right) Way of Religion: so follow thou that (Way), and follow not the desires of those who know not"?

It is also from this Verse, as well as from the like of it in the Holy Qur'an, and the instructions sent down from the Heaven, he was provided with an extraordinary determination to go on the way of truth with firm steps, transcending the desires of those who know not, as straight as a holy one, as lofty as a self-confident. Might Allah keep you O father of Al-Hasan! Did you know which violent battles you would fight in the future against the desires of those who know not?

Ali was the stepchild of the Divine revelation because of his firm loyalty to the Qur'an, and his witness to the dawn and forenoon of the revelation. Moreover, Ali was the first precedent of all the Muslims because of his firm loyalty to Islam, and his precedence to embrace it.

However, the first precedent of Muslims is a title, of which Ali was worthy, not only for his precedence to embrace Islam, for Ali himself taught the people later that the straight way should not be for him, who preceded the others, but for him, who proved to be truthful. But also he deserved it because he got the best of the two things, i.e. the precedence and the truthfulness.

When we follow the aspects of his Islam, we would be astonished. When we receive the good merits of his faith, no doubt, we would receive flourishing meadows, of which we would enjoy so much, and become intoxicated by its odor, purity and piety.

Now, what do you say of a man, whom the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" selected from among all of his

companions to be his brother, on the day he established the bond of brotherhood (between the Emigrants and the Ansar)? How were the dimensions and depths of his faith, which led the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” to give him preference of having such a privilege?

After the migration of the companions of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” from Mecca to Medina, the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” established a bond of brotherhood between the Emigrants and the Ansar. He assigned to everyone of the Ansar one from among the Emigrants. When he “Peace be upon him” finished from involving them in such a great bond of brotherhood, he caught a glimpse of a young man, self-satisfied, of a high-forehead, and a rising conscience, to whom, he pointed to come to him. In the sight of the people, whose eyes were concerned with this glorious scene, the Prophet made Ali sit beside him, embraced him, and patted on his shoulder, saying: “And this is my brother.”

Both of Abu Bakr and Umar were there. Do we have the right to wonder why the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” did not give them the same preference he had given to Ali? However, such a wonder might spoil the glory of the scene, and extinguish its shine. Any Muslim, who seeks for dealing politely with the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and his companions, should bow his head in respect for the first generation of those companions equally. Then, the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” selected Ali in order to be his brother in this bond of brotherhood.

Every honour bestowed by Islam upon the son of Abu Talib strengthened his feeling of his religious responsibility. The son of Abu Talib regarded nothing in this world entirely to be reward for his embracing Islam. The grand imam “Might Allah honour him” knew well the significance of that, to which Allah Almighty had guided him.

He was of those, who believed that goodness should be a reward for itself. In this way, whoever succeeds by the help of Allah to be guided to both goodness and truth, would be ignorant of the value of both goodness and truth, if he expected a reward in this world for doing good, and carrying the flag of truth.

Thus, Ali carried his Islam between his sides, under his ribs, and within the depth of his spirit, and went on regarding as little all affairs of this world. The more its pleasures appeared to him, the more he persisted them with his famous sentence: "O world! Be far away from me! O world! Deceive (with your vain hopes) anyone else other than me!"

In his Islam, Ali was a complete model, in form and essence. If Islam is to be worship and devoutness, refraining (from world vanities) and abstinence, prudence and piety, chieftaincy and humbleness, justice and virtue, straightness and knowledge, simplicity and capability, loyalty and understanding, then, Ali, the first precedents of Muslims was a matchless brilliant model (to have all of those merits).

Whoever liked to know the life and conducts of the grand imam, let him read his words, for indeed, there was no difference between his acts and sayings. Yes. There was not even the least gap between what he used to do, and what he said. When he, for instance, urged the people to be abstinent, that's because he was their precedent to it. When he urged them to give in abundance, that's because he was the most capable of doing it from among them all. When he urged them to be obedient, that's because he used to practice it in its highest level.

One day, while he was the Commander of the Believers, he led the Dawn prayer. When he finished from the prayer, he sat sad and grief, surrounded by his companions, who respected his silence. They did not move until the sun rose, with its rays falling upon the inside of the wall of the mosque.

Then, the grand imam Ali got up and offered two Rak'ahs, after which, he sadly nodded his head, turned his palms and said: "By Allah! No doubt, I saw the companions of Muhammad "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", and today, I see none or nothing similar to them. They used to get up in the morning, having the effects of the night which they spent in prostration before Allah, reciting His Book, alternating between their feet and foreheads. Whenever they remembered Allah, they would be inclined as trees would be on a windy day, and their eyes would overflow with tears until their garments would be wetted."

This was the image of the great past, the glorious wonderful days of the Message and the Divine revelation, in which Ali, the worshipper,

lived forever, from which time itself whatever far it might be, could not take the worshipping imam, since they were his hermitage and Mihrab.

He talked to the Muslims about the Islam, in which he believed, and which he made the book and method of his life, saying: "You should learn knowledge, with which you could know everything, and then become of its men. Beware! The world is about to go away, and the hereafter is about to come. Each one of them has its sons. So, you should be of the sons of the hereafter, and you should not be of the sons of this world.

No doubt, those abstinent in this world has taken the earth as carpet, the dust as bed, and the water as perfume. Indeed, whoever has longing for the hereafter should refrain from the worldly desires. Whoever fears the fire (of the Hell) should prevent himself from doing what is unlawful, and whoever seeks for the Paradise should ran towards all aspects of obedience. Whoever is abstinent in this world, then, its distresses, whatever great they might be, would become easy in his sight.

Indeed, Allah has slaves of Him, whose evil is not to be feared, and they have their hearts concerned (with hereafter matters). They are chaste, and of no heavy burdens. Although they kept patient for a few days (in this world), they would take rest for a long time later (in the hereafter).

If you see them at night, you will see them standing in rows for prayer, with their tears flowing over their cheeks, imploring to Allah to release them (from the fire of Hell).

They would be, during their day, thirsty, forbearing, dutiful and pious, as if they are the vessels. If anyone catches a glimpse of them, he would regard them as sick persons, though they have no ailment, but it is the great matter! It is the great matter (of the religion), which concerns them so much. They sleep and get up while hearing its sounding. It is the religion of Allah, whose trust they undertake, and whose Book they recite, and on the Day of Judgement, they will stand before Allah in order to see its reward and reckoning."

Is it for this reason that Ali used not to sleep and take rest? Yes. For this reason, he used to spend his night and day in continuous worship, which exhausted his strong well-built body.

It is for this reason too that he turned his back to the world which he left behind him. He refused, even when he was the caliph of Muslims, to

stay in the palace of governorship, preferring to it the space land, and the uninhibited home. When they pressed upon him to live in this palace of governorship, he rejected saying: “No, I never live in this palace of evil.”

For this reason he also dressed himself in a coarse garment. When his companions asked him to give himself and his position a portion of their rights, he said to them: “This garment diverts me from pride, and helps me be more submissive in my prayer. It is also a good example for the people, so that they would not be excessive in their expenses.”

Then, he followed his saying by reciting this Holy Verse of the Great Qur’an: “That Home of the Hereafter we shall give to those who intend not high handedness or mischief on earth: and the End is (best) for the righteous.”

He never relied upon this world, even for a single moment during the day. The world in his sight was considered to have turned away, and about to depart. So, why then would he give it his loyalty and effort?

On the contrary, the hereafter in the sight of the grand imam was the eternal abode. All the people of this world over different ages are to walk over a bridge, and the more a section of them comes to its end, the more they will find themselves at the threshold of eternity, where there will be either Paradise or Hell. Let’s pay attention to his speech in this issue:

“Today you’re in the arena, and tomorrow, you would be in the race. No doubt, you now are on days full of hopes, after which there will be death. So, whoever is not able to achieve his hope before his death, then, his work would fail. Indeed, you should work for the sake of Allah’s pleasure out of your own desire, as well as you do out of your fear from Him.

I’ve never seen that the one who seeks for Paradise might sleep, as well as I’ve never that the one who flees away from the Hell might sleep. If the truth does not benefit him, then, falsehood will harm him. Whoever is not straight by help of the right guidance, then, he would go astray by help of perversity and mischief.

No doubt, the world is no more than a temporary incident, from which both the dutiful and the wicked persons eat. But, the hereafter, on the contrary, is a truthful promise, in which a Capable King will judge (among the people). What I fear for you most is following the desire, and the length of hope. However, following the desire could keep off the truth, and the length of hope could cause one to forget the hereafter.”

Let then the events and horrors come as (violent and strong as) a storm which might uproot the mountains around the grand imam, but, he would never follow his own desire. In fact, following one's own desire could keep off the truth. Moreover, let the world offer itself to him, with its pleasures, luxuries, delights, and seductive things, but, he would let no hope join him to it. However, the length of hope might cause one to forget the hereafter.

He "Allah be pleased with him" did not want to go astray from the truth, nor did he want to forget the hereafter. No doubt, the truth was his life, and the hereafter will be his eternal abode.

The son of Abu Talib's abstinence in, and refraining from the world were not of one, who wanted to flee away from the consequences of existence, and the responsibilities of life. But, they were out of his Islam, which makes the just responsibility (an aspect of) religion, and the good permanent work a kind of worship and relation (to God).

Here, we would meet Ali, while correcting the standards. As soon as he had heard a man criticizing the world in a way of an disable one, he said to him: "No doubt, the world is a homeland of truthfulness but for the one who is sincere to it. It is also an abode of saving but for him, who understands it well. It could be a home of richness and livelihood but for the one who takes provisions from it. It is the place, where the Divine revelation ascended, the mosques of Allah's Prophets were established, and in which those sticking to Allah's religion took shelter, earned His Mercy, and got the Paradise."

Yes. This is the world of a Muslim, as understood by the stepchild of the Divine revelation, and the first precedent of all the Muslims to embrace Islam. It is a homeland of work not amusement, in which one would do his best in order to establish for himself a happy destiny on the Day of Judgement, when all the people would be made to get up to meet the Lord of the all worlds.

It is also a home of truthfulness but for the one, who lives in it sincere to his responsibilities and consequences. It might be a home of saving, but for him, who went in it on the way of being saved. With this valid understanding of the world, Ali was able to get it, in addition to his happy destiny and hereafter. It was never for him a homeland of playing and amusement.

From his early childhood, he carried Islam in his heart, and with it, he undertook all responsibility which none but men could be able to undertake. He covered (the years of) his life, which he spent in continuous struggle and hard work, and did not know even how to take rest.

He, as described by the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, led a rough life for the Cause of Allah. He disliked all kinds of pleasure, from which he kept himself very far. That’s because he was able to understand (the reality of) Islam, which he lived well. He learnt from it that the pleasure of life is the occupation of those jobless ones, who have nothing to do.

The man who lives carrying such great responsibilities as enjoined by the true Islam upon its real men, should have his fortune of truthfulness and firm sincerity equal to his fortune of simplicity and the rough life he lives. Thus was the grand imam, and thus he wanted the people to be.

When he returned from Yemen to Mecca, during the time when the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” was performing the Farewell Hajj, he hastened to meet him, leaving his soldiers who returned with him at the outskirts of Mecca, appointing one of them as their leader. It seemed to this appointed leader to dress his soldiers from those bright suits, which they brought from Yemen, so that they would enter Mecca, having such a smartness which would please the eyes. In this way, he ordered them to take out new suits from their containers, which they wore and resumed their proceeding towards Mecca.

Then, Ali returned after meeting the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, to accompany his soldiers. At the entrance of Mecca, he saw them having their bright suits. He hurried to them and asked their chief: “Woe to you! What is this (which I’m seeing)?” he said: “I’ve dressed the soldiers in those suits in order to seem beautiful when they reach their brothers in Mecca.” Ali cried in him: “Woe to you! Let them take those off before you reach the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”.”

All of them took off their suits, and controlled themselves from expressing of the bitter effect they felt because of what Ali had done with them, the pious, the abstinent, the repentant.

When they entered Mecca and met the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, some of them complained to him what Ali had done, relating to him the story in full. The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” faced the people and said: “O people! Do not complain Ali, for, by Allah, he leads a rough life in the Cause of Allah, and this is why none should complain of him.”

In, and with his Islam, he kept firmly unchangeable, whether he was a child, a young man, and an old aged one, or a soldier, a leader, and even a caliph of all Muslims. His god-fearing used to occupy him so much. He used not to treat the people with the help of his intelligence, or depending upon his honourable origin, or pedigree, but with the help of his sincerity and fearing of god. He also did not want them to deal with him but sincerely, and with the help of their fearing of god.

For this reason, we shall see that, when the clashes would break up between him and Mu’awiyah, he favoured to admit a defeat with god-fearing and sincerity, to a victory which might be achieved depending upon cunning and manipulation.

When his cousin Abdullah Ibn Abbas, the pious righteous man said to him: “Deceive them, for war is guile”, the pure grand imam answered him: “No, by Allah, I shall never sell my religion for their world.” How a great Muslims he was, filling the world round him with sincerity, uprightness and purity.

As such we might see him in his first speech on Friday in the mosque of Kufah, just after his being appointed as the caliph. He did not deliver a speech of a caliph, a chief, or even a governor. He did not issue resolutions or draw a certain policy, although the conditions at this time required that. He did not also use this speech to respond to the enthusiasm of his companions, and increase their fervor for getting themselves ready to face the army of Sham, which was experienced in wars. The caliph and grand imam did not imply anything of that in his speech. But it implied no more than a mere call to god-fearing, good worship and obedience to Allah. Listen to what he said:

“I advise you, O slaves of Allah, to fear Allah, for god-fearing is the best advice Allah’s slaves might give to one another. It is also the closest deed to His pleasure, and the most yielding of the best results in His sight. No doubt, you’ve ordered to fear Allah, and you have been created (by Allah) in order to be faithful. So, you should beware of Allah as He

Almighty has warned you of Himself. Indeed, He has warned you of a strong violence (if you do not comply with His order).

Furthermore, you should fear Allah so much. You should do the good deeds without the intention of showing off or gaining good reputation. Whoever does the good deeds for anything other than for the sake of Allah, surely, Allah would make him suffer from the evil consequences of what he had done. Whoever does good deeds sincerely (for the sake of Allah), certainly, Allah would be his supporter, and He would give him the goodness of his intention.

You should fear of Allah's punishment, for He has never created you vainly, nor has He left anything of your affairs to no purpose. He made you, learnt your secrets, recorded your deeds, and then decreed your terms (of life and death). So, let not the world deceive you (with its vain hopes), for, no doubt, it is to beguile its people, and how haughty he is, who is deceived by it. The hereafter is the abode of the eternal stay."

Is this a speech of a state president? It is not, of course. It is a speech of a devout man. It is a speech of a faithful Muslim and believer, who turned his face, heart, and all of his life to Him, Who created both the skies and the earth. He was concerned with nothing but to live piously for the sake of His pleasure, and to have those around him live also pious and pure.

As such also we would see his firm and strong Islam, when his facing Mu'awiyah in the battle of Siffin was inevitable. He faced his army on the night of the battle, and addressed them with a speech, in which he did not promise them of anything, nor did he give them any hopes. He also did not offer to them the delights of this world as the expected price for victory, if they achieved it. But, he gave them a speech, different from all speeches required by similar occasions. Consider what he had said in this issue:

"Indeed, you are going to face the people tomorrow, so, you should stand for the longer portion of the night in supererogatory prayers, recite the Qur'an so much, and ask Allah to provide you with the ability to be patient, steadfast, and strong, and to forgive you."

Nothing occupied him but god-fearing in all times of peace and war, victory and defeat, lenience and distress. This is clear when he wrote to Amr Ibn Al-As, who was inclined to the party of Mu'awiyah, and in this way, caused a great danger to the party of the grand imam. The grand

imam did neither promise Amr of anything of the delights of life, nor did he attempt to polarize him, depending upon a promise of responding to his own desires, the same as Mu'awiyah used to do, in order to gain more supporters. But, on the contrary, he expounded Amr with the truth directly with no flattery. He only asked him to have god-fearing, i.e. this fearing of Allah, which circulated in the body of the son of Abu Talib as the blood did. He said to him:

“From the slave of Allah, Ali, the Commander of the Believers to Amr Ibn Al-as: now and then: No doubt, the (vanities of) world occupy one from anything else, although one will, surely be interred into it (after his death). None gets anything from this world but that it will lead him to be much more eager (to have more and more), and gave him a provision, which would make him more desirous for it.

The result is that one would keep desirous for what he did not get from, without being satisfied with what he had got, although after all of that, he will depart from all he had gathered. Happy is him, who takes lessons from what happens to others. So, do not let your reward fail, O father of Abdullah, and do not keep up with Mu'awiyah in his falsehood. No doubt, Mu'awiyah deceived the people, and disregarded the truth.”

He rejected that the relations of others with him, and his relation with them should be determined by any sort of benefit or purpose, even during the most critical periods of his life. He believed that the truth should be more sacred and honoured than to be sold for whatever price.

Nothing on the surface of the earth could represent the truth, in his sight, as could Islam. For this reason, he vowed his life from his early childhood to the cause of Islam. He lived the whole of his life as a Muslim, breathing purity, sincerity and uprightness. During his life entirely, he did not stop for a single moment just to think of flattery or adulation.

Had he had a desire for that, surely, he would have been so much excellent. His sharp intelligence and flaring insight would make him as much cunning as he wanted. But, he gave up all the talents of a cunning man, and adopted instead all talents of a pious god-fearing man.

However, his true understanding of, and great loyalty to Islam overburdened him what was beyond his capability. Only some of his efforts (he made in Islam) would have been sufficient for him to occupy such a high position as he had among the good righteous sincere ones.

But, the man, whom the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” described as leading a rough life in the Cause of Allah, did his best and let himself carry what is impossible to be carried. He vowed his life to Islam, and went on getting it undertake as much burdens as of one hundred lives.

During his glorious days, which he lived in the world of people, the Islam achieved the marvel of formulation, i.e. the capability of formulating the human greatness in the best of moulds.

The son of Abu Talib was, in all fields of his life, one of those, in whom the miracle of Islam was visible. Let’s go on with him, in order to see how the human greatness and wholehearted giving would be.

CHAPTER THREE

THE HERO AND THE MAN

“Tomorrow, I will give the flag...” said the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”

one day, while the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” was in Medina, he received a new Holy Verse from the Qur’an, which the Messenger went on reciting to his companions who were paying attention to him:

“Muhammad is no more than a Messenger: many were the Messengers that passed away before him. If he died or were slain, will ye then turn back on your heels? If any did turn back on his heels, not the least harm will he do to Allah; but Allah (on the other hand) will swiftly reward those who (serve him) with gratitude.”

This Verse had a strong reaction from the companions. Some of them though it announced them the death of their Prophet “Peace be upon him”. Ali Ibn Abu Talib cried: “By Allah! We never would turn back on our heels after Allah Almighty has guided us. If he (the Prophet) died or was slain, I would keep fighting (the infidels) until I die sticking to that for which he fought.”

However, this Verse did not escape from his memory during and after the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”. Moreover, it kept pressing upon his feeling so much astonishingly. He used to remember and then recite it, following that with his comment we heard earlier: “By Allah! We never would turn back on our heels after Allah Almighty has guided us. If he (the Prophet) died or was slain, I would keep fighting (the infidels) until I die sticking to that for which he fought.”

But, why did he choose fighting as means of expressing his loyalty to the religion, and following the way of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”? Why did not he say: “And if he died or was slain, I would continue following his method, and adhering to his tradition and right guidance”?

However, the nature of fighter occupied every atom of his entity. If he gave the pledge to continue following the way under the flag which he

was raising with his right hand, then he would formulate his pledge from words fitting for and honestly and sincerely expressing of his nature. Which word could express of the nature of the fighter better than his saying: "I would fight"?

It is true that the Verse ascended during or a few period after the battle of Uhud, i.e. when the infidels spread the false news that the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" had been killed. The Verse then was sent down in order to stultify their minds, and strengthen the Muslims, telling them that even if the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" died or fell as martyr, his flag would never fall down, his religion would never be defeated, and his soldiers would never put down the arms.

If it was the nature of the occasion which resulted in such a reply as "I would fight", it was the nature of the fighter which made the word "I would fight" a slogan of life, and not of a certain occasion. In this way, during his glorious lifetime, whenever the grand imam remembered this Verse, he would recite it and then comment: "By Allah! We never would turn back on our heels after Allah Almighty has guided us. If he (the Prophet) died or was slain, I would keep fighting (the infidels) until I die sticking to that for which he fought."

We said that Ali had both the nature and characteristics of the fighter. Is it to be a merit which might be put in the scale of his good qualities and virtues? In other words, is the nature of the fighter in anyone something which might honour him?

As for the son of Abu Talib, the answer should be in the affirmative. His having the nature of a fighter in his depth was to honour him, raise his position, and make him more perfect. That's because the nature of a fighter reached in him such an extent of uprightness, justice and gallantry as conferred upon by the Qur'an, the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", and Islam.

It was, as for the grand imam, not aggressive, or false, nor was it to achieve any material purpose or desire in this world. For this reason, it transcended to the highest level of heroism. Heroism itself in his sight was a function, having the highest responsibility of gallantry. Gallantry in his sight was not an overwhelming rush, prompted by his great energy. But, it was a nearly absolute commitment to the method of the Messenger

of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, in which he had faith, and the religion whose banner he carried.

In this way, we see the (merits of the) hero, the man, and the Muslim having gathered in the personality of the grand imam Ali, so much firmly and intimately. Yes. The hero never was separable from the man, or from the Muslim during the lifetime of the grand imam Ali. If we saw him, for example, dueling an enemy, it would not be only the capable hero in him, which is fighting. But, it would be the gallantry of a man, along with the piety of a Muslim which draw for the hero the style and manners of such a swordfight.

During the holy battle of Uhud, one of the strongest fighters from among the infidels, i.e. Sa’d Ibn Abu Talhah came out, calling Ali to duel with him. Ali came out to him, and they faced each other in a violent fierce swordfight. But, the sword of Ali succeeded to give him a strong strike, which caused him to fall down on the ground, turning from the great pain he was suffering from.

While Ali was getting himself ready to attack him with a decisive strike in order to kill him, the garment of the infidel was raised, and his private parts became exposed. Ali shut his eyes, turned his sight from him, and withdrew his swords onto him. Then, he returned to his place among the rows of the Muslims. The Muslims asked him why he did not kill him. He replied: “He faced me with his private parts, so, I felt merciful to him, and it is that which turned me away from him.”

the honour of the fighter is a good manner, which Ali was not to forget, even in the moment of victory and glory. This was known of him. So, his enemy went on misusing it whenever they saw death approaching them from his strong sword.

The great real heroes never seek for merely a victory, but, they always seek for a noble pure just victory. But, if it did not come adorned with such virtues, then, let it be away.

We shall see during our following of the scenes of the heroism in the life of the grand imam, how his keenness on the honour of the fighter was, to him, dearer than any victory.

Paradoxically, it is true that his strength and cleverness as a fighter used to shake his enemies and foes out of fear of him, but the honour of fighter he had used to make them rest assured and feel safe. Yes. His hatred towards his enemies often turned into mercy for them, just for

nothing except that his true belief that the noble just fight is the only way of men, whenever they were forced to fight.

After he had won the battle of the Camel, and before the battle of Siffin broke up, and he still had a hope that Mu'awiyah might return to the right, in spite of the evidences which portended his insistence on his situation, and his preparation for war, the grand imam learnt that two from among his great companions, i.e. Hujr Ibn Adi and Umar Ibn Al-Hamq abused Mu'awiyah and sent their curses upon the people of Sham publicly. He sent to them a messenger, ordering them to stop from abusing and sending their curses against those of Sham.

They entered upon him and asked him: "O Commander of Believers! Aren't we on the right, and they on the wrong/?" the grand imam answered them: "Yes, by the Lord of the Ka'bah." They asked: "Then, why do you prevent us from abusing and sending curses upon them?"

the grand imam said: "I disliked that you might become abusive and cursers. But, you may say: O Allah! Might You spare the lives of us and them, make peace between us and them, and guide them until the one who is ignorant of the truth should know it, and the one who is led astray should turn away from it!"

however, this was out of the honour of the fighter he had, and the heroism which stems from his gallantry formulated by Islam in the best moulds.

But, why did we hurriedly surpass the time, seeking for the examples of heroism of the grand imam from the last portion of his life? Is not better for us to regard this heroism in its wonderful beginnings? Yes. Let us then return back to the time, when the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" was getting himself ready for migration from Mecca to Medina, to which his companions had preceded him.

The plan of migration as put by the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" necessitated that somebody should take his place in the home, whose movement might occupy the sights of the infidels of Quraish, who were besieging it, and divert them, for some time, from the exit of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", during which he and his companion Abu Bakr would have crossed the area of danger, and left behind a distance of desert, long enough to hinder the pursuit of Quraish, if they went out in their pursuit.

But, what would happen to him, who would replace the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” in his home, and deceive all the people of Quraish? What would happen to him when Quraish would detect such a trick, and see that its plot for which it mobilized its force failed and became not only a great defeat, but also a mockery, from which its young men would laugh, and a disappointment which might dishonour it forever?

No doubt, his destiny would be settled. It would be the killing, if it find nothing stronger than killing to quench its burning thirst. In fact, such a man would have a cheerless end. The man who would be doomed to sacrifice his life would not only be killed, but also he would be killed in a desolate town, which became void of all of his companions, who earlier used to fill its spaces with the sounding of the Holy Qur’an, likely as the sounding of bees.

In this deserted town, he would be killed alone, finding no one of his Muslim brothers to encourage him even afar by a glimpse which might made him firm, or to bid farewell to him afar by a glimpse of love and sympathy, or to infiltrate stealthily in the darkness of night, in order to stop beside his grave, and greet him.

Nothing of that would happen, and nothing would dilute the severe effect of the evil end which Quraish might choose for him, who would replace the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” in his home, in order to divert it from him, and in this way, cancel its intrigues and plots.

From which sort would this great fedayee be? And, from where would such a hero come? Surely, he would come from the house of the Prophethood. He belonged to the descendants of Hashim. he was the disciple of Muhammad “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”. He was the stepchild of the Divine revelation, and the first precedent of all the Muslims (to embrace Islam).

He was Ali, who surprised the people of Quraish. Let then its morning be evil at his hands, as well as its evening was evil because of the exit of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”!

However, the mission of Ali was not exclusive of spending the night in the place of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and deceiving Quraish until the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” could leave Mecca. But, it implied

another side, which necessitated the same degree of redemption and sacrifice. It was to undertake the task of bringing back the deposits and trusts which the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" kept with him to their owners from the Meccans.

Ali received from the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" all of those deposits, and the names of their owners from the Meccans. He had to go to their homes, and give them their deposits one by one, without giving Quraish an opportunity to do what might hinder him from achieving his mission to the full.

Anyway, the hero and the man accomplished the mission to the best, and Allah Almighty kept him. The promise of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" to him was true when he said to him while bidding farewell to him: "They could never harm you."

The strong young man spent three days in Mecca, during which he gave back the deposits to its owners. Then, he covered the desert, emigrating to Allah and His Messenger. He set out alone, following the same way, which the forces of Quraish took in pursuit of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" and As-Siddiq, hunting them, affording for that every possible effort and price.

Ali set out in a state of matchless pleasure, and an absolute faith, which strengthened his determination.

A few days and nights later, he reached Quba, and stuck to the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", in the same house prepared for him, i.e. the house of Kulthum Ibn Hidm, the brother of the sons of Amr Ibn Awf.

A few days later, he moved with the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" to Medina, the homeland of Migration, and the capital of the new world, which Muhammad came to establish and build on the bases of faith, truth, justice, mercy, and peace.

Some time later, there was the holy battle of Badr, in which Islam had its first facing with heathenism. In this holy battle, both Ali and his paternal uncle Hamzah showed an astonishingly great amount of capability, strength and aspects of heroism.

Then, there was the holy battle of Uhud, for which Quraish mobilized all of its forces in order to retaliate for its killed persons on the day of the holy battle of Badr, and wash off the shame of the great defeat it had

received on that day. In it, Ali filled the battlefield with his heroism and victims (from the infidels),

When the flag fell down from the hand of Mus'ab Ibn Umair, after showing an extraordinary heroism, the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" called Ali to carry it. He carried the flag with one hand, while the other was catching hold of his sword, known as Dhul-Fuqar, i.e. this strong sharp sword, about which as well as about whose holder, the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" said: "There is no sword (much stronger) than Dhul-Fuqar, and there is no young man (more steadfast) than Ali."

The son of Abu Talib had no sooner carried the flag, which rose in his hand as high and flirting, than the carrier of the flag of the infidels saw him, who cried: "Is there anyone to duel with me?" none from among the Muslims replied to him, for there were so much occupied by the battle, which reached the peak of violence and fierceness. The swords and blades crashed each other (out of the violent strikes).

Once again, the carrier of the infidel flag sent his cry much louder, saying: "Do you not claim that your killed persons would be admitted in Paradise, and ours would be admitted in Hell? Let anyone from among you come out to (duel with) me!" Ali could not help patient more. He replied to him: "I'm coming to you, O Abu Sa'd Ibn Abu Talhah! Appear to me, O Allah's enemy!"

Amidst the fighting rows, and under the strikes of swords, they faced one another. They exchanged two strikes, after which Ali gave him a single strike, strong enough that made him fall down on the ground, breathing his last. Ali intended to give him another strike, in order to kill him decisively, but his privates were exposed to Ali, who felt shy, lowered his sight, and turned away from him as we mentioned earlier.

When the fighting was over, the Muslim women proceeded to treat the wounded persons. The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" saw Ali surrounded by a group of women, who almost did not know what to do with his injuries. They said to the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him": "O Messenger of Allah! We do not treat an injury, but that another one would be ripped open."

The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" approached his brave body, which was full of injuries, and helped in treating it, saying: "A man who received all of that in the Cause of Allah

(should be considered to) have done his best in fighting, to the extent that he was excused (by Allah).” The battle was concluded by the defeat of Muslims, who had achieved a great victory in the beginning of it.

However, the books of history and biographies agree that the defeat was not a result of the infidels’ excellence in their fighting and efforts. But, it was a result of a mistake committed by a group of Muslims, i.e. the archers, to whom the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” confided to protect the back of the army from over the mountain, ordering them not to leave their places, whatever it might be, until he would give them another command to leave.

But, as soon as they had seen the defeat of Quraish, which started withdrawing from the battlefield, leaving the spoils and belongings, they left their places, and went down to the battlefield, and began gathering the spoils and belongings.

At this time, the withdrawing army gathered its fleeing troops, and returned stealthily to the Muslims, whose back was uncovered. Then, it surprised with a sudden violent attack. thus, the victory turned into defeat.

However, the carrier of the Muslim flag, Ali Ibn Abu Talib “Might Allah honour him” understood well the lesson from that. His previous knowledge was affirmed by the fact that the religion of Allah should not be a way for getting (any material benefit from) this world, and that those who proceed in order to carry both the Word and flag of Allah should not be occupied from them by spoils, belongings, desires, or positions. But, if they do so, then, Allah would entrust them to themselves, and how powerless and helpless the people would be if they lost Allah’s sponsorship and support!

On that day, Ali learnt this lesson, and so did the most companions. Ali lived his life entirely, without forgetting it. Later, he would never forget the lesson of Uhud, when the office of caliphate would be brought to him at a time of the afflictions, which were likely as the pieces of the dark night, and when he would be forced to enter into clashes with Mu’awiyah and the Kharijites. He would never put the religion of Allah to any kind of flattery or outbidding. All inducements of authority and the delights of ruling would fail to get even a single glimpse from him. Both his eyes would keep open only to the religion of Allah, without turning away or being closed from it. He would never buy the hatred of

Allah for the pleasure of this world, with all things in it. On the contrary, he would admit all hatred of this world with all things in it for even a single moment of the Pleasure of Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

Now, let's go on with the hero in Khaibar. Before its strong fort, the first detachment led by Abu Bakr As-Siddiq returned back on the first day. On the following day, another detachment led by Umar Ibn Al-Khattab returned back. The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" was not scared, for, he never was to be scared. But, he got a hopeful glimpse of the rows of his companions, from whom the army consisted, and said: "Tomorrow, I'll give the flag to a man, who loves Allah and His Messenger, as well as Allah and His Messenger love him, at whose Hand, it would be conquered by the help of Allah."

In this issue Umar Ibn Al-Khattab said: "I've never liked to be a leader as I did on that day, hoping for being loved by Allah and His Messenger."

When it was morning, the Muslims got up and went to the place where they met their Messenger "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", all of whom had a great longing for knowing whom the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" would give the flag, at whose hand, this strong fort would be conquered (by the help of Allah).

When they became complete in their rows, with their necks rising up, and everyone was hoping (to be the expected one), the voice of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" broke the silence, asking: "Where is Ali Ibn Abu Talib?"

Ali was there, amidst the crowds. He never thought that he might be the one, with whom the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" promised his companions,, and gave them the glad tidings of the near conquest. He never thought of this on that day, just for a simple reason. On that day, he had an eye trouble, which was not to enable him to achieve such a hard work as required by this mission.

But, immediately, he responded to the call of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him": "Here I'm, O Messenger of Allah!" the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" pointed to him with his right hand to come closer to him. The hero proceeded to him.

The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" notice that he was suffering from eye trouble. He wetted his fingers with

his pure saliva, and then passed them over the eyes of the hero. Then, he asked for the flag to be brought to him, of which he caught hold. Then, he raised it up, Then, and shaken it thrice. Then, he placed in the right hand of Ali, saying: "Take this flag, and go on until Allah would bestow victory upon you."

Although they were a few minutes, perhaps no more than five, they represented a whole life, whose dimensions were limitless, and whose glories were endless, during which the hero carried the flag, and proceeded ahead of his detachment.

He ran hurriedly towards the fort, in front of whose gate, he shouted loudly: "I'm Ali Ibn Abu Talib!" yes. He was well aware of the horror and disappointment this name might cause to his enemies.

Ali received a strong strike, which did not harm him, but it caused his shield to fall down from his hand. He found himself facing an armed group of the guards of the fort. He cried loudly: "By Him, in Whose Hand is my life! I would taste that (martyrdom in the Cause of Allah) which Hamzah had tasted, otherwise, Allah would grant me victory."

The descendant of the sons of Hashim found himself fighting having no shield with him. He rushed towards one of the gates of the fort, where the people did not know what had happened. All what they remembered was that Ali exclaimed: "Allah is Greater!" then, he turned to them, and the door of the fort was in his hands.

Abu Rafi, the freed slave of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", who was enlisted in the detachment of Ali: "I intended, with the help of other seven men to move this door on the ground, but we failed."

Then, the Muslim detachment led by Ali, its hero, attacked the fort, and within a short time, the triumphant force was repeating from the windows of the fort which fell with all things in it (in the hands of Muslims) the call of victory: "Allah is Greater! Khaibar has been destroyed!"

The Prophecy of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" which he conveyed to his cousin was true: "Take this flag, and go on until Allah would bestow victory upon you." Yes. Allah made the conquest of the fort at his hand, and gave him clear victory.

Now, let's go on with the hero on the day of the holy battle of the Trench, when Medina was attacked by nearly twenty-four fighters, led by Abu Sufyan and Uyainah Ibn Hisn. When the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" learnt about their setting out and proceeding towards Medina, he responded to the suggestion introduced by Salman Al-Farisi, of digging a trench around it.

The trench was dug, with which the army of infidels was surprised. A group of fighters from the camp of Quraish led by Amr Ibn Abd Wudd, which failed to intrude the trench, set out in search for a gap, through which they could be able to go.

Actually, they found a narrow gap, into which their horses plunged. He stood in front of the Muslims, in the company of those who were with him from the horsemen of Quraish, and shouted: "Who could duel with me?" within a (time, as short as a) flash, he found the hero in front of him. Ali stood before him face to face.

Ali said to him: "O Amr! You've taken a pledge that none from among the people of Quraish called you to two things, but that you would accept from him the better." Amr answered in the affirmative. Ali said: "Then, I call you to believe in Allah, His Messenger, and Islam." Amr said: "I have no need for that." Ali said: "Then, I call you to the swordfight." Amr said: "Why O son of my brother? By Lati, I dislike to fight with you." Ali said: "But, by Allah, I like to fight with you."

Amr became angry, and was taken by the arrogance of ignorance. He dismounted and slew his horse. Then, he attacked Ali, who received him more violently. They had a horrible duel, which was not very long, after which Ali raised up his victorious sword, while Amr was lying on the ground, after he had been killed.

Ali returned to the rows of Muslims, received by the greetings of their poet, saying: "He (Amr) supported the stones, out of his bad thinking, but you supported the (religion of the) Lord of Muhammad, out of your sound mind and right thinking. Do not think, O community of the confederates (of infidels), that Allah would disappoint His religion and Messenger!"

But, before going on our speech about the different scenes of his extraordinary heroism, it is better for us to remember what we said earlier, i.e. that the heroism of Ali was adorned with every aspect of the honour of gallantry. It never was in the service of any material inclination

or haughtiness. But, it was in the service of the high principles, to which he was guided by Allah, and in which he had a firm strong faith.

for this reason, we could hardly find a single scene of his heroism in which he was aggressive or false. In spite of the superiority and capability of his heroism, it was peaceful, just and rational. In this heroism, both lenience and strength gathered so much successfully. For this reason, the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” used to delegate him to those missions of war, which required a great amount of self-control and lenience. This gave prestige to his heroism, and made it more appreciated.

On the famous day of Meccan conquest, the Ansari chief Sa’d Ibn Ubadah carried a flag of a great detachment of Muslims. As soon as he saw the outskirts of Mecca, he was agitated by the remembrance of Quraish’s torment to the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and the Muslims. He cried, intoxicated by the delight of victory which used to mislead minds: “Today is the day of war. Today, the Ka’bah would be lawful.”

Some of the companions heard him, and they were scared by such a cry. Then, Umar Ibn Al-Khattab went to the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, to whom he conveyed the words of Sa’d, commenting: “O Messenger of Allah! We are afraid that Sa’d might attack Quraish.”

Immediately, the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” sent for Ali, to whom he said: “Join Sa’d and take the flag from him, then enter into Mecca while you are carrying it.” He was Ali, who witnessed all kinds of harm the people of Quraish caused to his cousin, the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”. He was Ali, who had a great powerful energy.

Although on that day, Ali was expected to show the strength and violence of a fighter, and the haughtiness of a victorious, the one, who knew him more, chose him in a mission of overpowering the haughtiness and forgetting the retaliation, i.e. the mission of entering Mecca which was conquered, in a state of humility, devoutness and peace.

There is another scene, which would make us more acquainted with the beauty and humanity of this heroism, and both deliberateness and justice it had. Following the conquest of Mecca, the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” sent some detachments to the

tribes around Mecca, in order to call them to Islam with no fight or war with them.

Khalid Ibn Al-Walid was leading one of those detachments. The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” ordered him to proceed below the region of Tihamah, as a caller, not as a fighter. When he reached the tribe of Khuzaimah Ibn Amir, one of its men behaved in a way, which caused Khalid to become angry. He was hasty in using the sword against them.

This news reached the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, who grew so much angry and sad. He freed himself before Allah Almighty from what Khalid Ibn Al-Walid had done. Then, the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” saw it better to run to send an envoy of peace. He selected Ali Ibn Abu Talib for this mission.

The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” called him and said to him: “O Ali! Go to those people and detect their affairs. Abandon the matters of the ignorance.” Moreover, the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” gave him enough money for the blood-wits, and recompensing the people for their losses. However, Ali fulfilled the mission to the best.

Thus, whenever there was a need for both deliberateness and wisdom to be superior in the company of heroism, Ali would be the man and the hero whom the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” would choose, in order to establish the balance with fairness, and join retaliation (according to the law of equality) with justice, and power with mercy, putting bravery under the disposal of deliberateness and wisdom.

If the witness of anyone’s enemy or foe in his favour should be taken for granted, then, let’s listen in this issue to the witness of Abu Sufyan when he was still infidel. When Quraish broke its treaty with the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, who asked his Lord to guide him to what is better concerning the matter of conquering Mecca, the news reached the people of Quraish, who were puzzled. They sent Abu Sufyan to Medina, in order to apologize to the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, and ask him to agree on resuming the treaty which was signed between them on the day of Al-Hudaibiyah.

Abu Sufyan arrived in Medina, and met the chiefs of Muslims, hoping that they might commend his mission to the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, but all of them rejected to do so. Moreover, his daughter Umm Habibah, who was a wife of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, refused to make him sit on the bed of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, which was spread in her chamber when her father entered upon her. She folded it and kept it far from him. When he blamed her for what she had done, she said to him: “You’re an infidel, and no infidel could touch the bed of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”.”

When he returned to Mecca disappointed, he sat and talked to the people of Quraish about his failure, saying: “I went to the son of Abu Quhafah, i.e. Abu Bakr, but, I found no support from him. I went to the son of Al-Khattab, but found him the most grievous enemy (to the infidels). He said to me: “Would I intercede for you with the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”? By Allah! If I did not find but the dust, surely, I would fight you with it.” Then, I came to Ali, and found him the most lenient.”

Yes. On this occasion, when nothing was expected from Ali other than the violence of a fighter, and the desire for quenching and satisfying his desire for revenge, we found lenience and mercy distinguishing his situation and behaviours; and who witnessed to that? It was his enemy, Abu Sufyan, who was at this time the chief of Quraish, and the leader of its armies, and the carrier of the banner of its heathenism.

This was the sort of heroism granted to Ali. It was a heroism led by reasoning not emotion. It was governed by its supreme noble morals, in such a way that it was not to feel too arrogant to be merciful, nor was it to deviate from the truth, nor was it to leave the way of deliberateness and wisdom.

With this just gallant heroism, he fought the infidels. He never failed to attend any holy battle, except for a single one, for the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” ordered him to stay behind, in order to be his successor in looking after his family in Medina. When he was disturbed by this, the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” satisfied him in the presence of his companions, saying: “Would you not be pleased to be in relation to me as was Aaron to Moses, except that there would be no Prophet after me?”

With this just gallant heroism too, he would fight Mu'awiyah and the Kharijites. He would face the dark afflictions, which might confuse the wisest man with his pure good morals, before facing them with his overpowering capability.

He would find no harm to lose even one thousand battles, but, at the same time, he would not let the conditions, whatever catastrophic and violent they might be, to deprive him of even a single merit.

In fact, the battle of the civil wars, which the grand imam was forced to fight, were the greatest fields of testing his greatness, gallantry, and nobility. So, let's go there, in order to see some of their scenes.

However, the platform of mastership was raised upon the trouble and horror. The master stood upon it, in order to show all the world how the great heroisms could work while adhering to its uprightness, nobility and honour.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CALIPH AND THE EXAMPLE

“I give you only that, through which you would undertake the burden of giving others, and not that, through which you might take from others” said the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”

the more one’s responsibilities are great, the more elegant his merits and good characteristics become; and this is the truest and firmest proof of the human greatness. Whenever the responsibilities are so much heavy and more pressing upon one’s mind and will, the incidental virtues would find an opportunity to shrink and withdraw. But, as for the authentic glorious virtues, nothing could strengthen its excellence and capability other than this field.

However, the son of Abu Talib was doomed to have his life be a continuous procession of formidable responsibilities. Were his fates to give preference to him, in order to make his life a continuous review of his elegant virtues and supreme greatness?

His sense and faith in the responsibility were astonishing. But, such an astonishment should be insignificant, since he was doomed to be the cousin of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, his son-in-law, and his first disciple. Whoever had such a position from the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, should give without taking anything, and lose without gaining anything. He had to get himself ready for the hardship and suffering of life. But, as for its delights and pleasures, or even merely taking rest in it, they are things, from which the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and his family had not to get anything.

This was a case, of which Ali was well-aware. However, the cousin and disciple of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” was the best one to put his will and behaviours in the service of the truth, of which he was well-aware. He would, with no difficulty, deep thinking or even attempt from him, find the utmost of his power having gathered within him, whenever the dangers and evil consequences reached the peak of challenge and complication. He would, with no difficulty, deep thinking or even attempt from him, find his virtues and good merits having reached the utmost of superiority and glory at the

time of dangers, in order to draw for his capability and heroism how to work.

This was what he had learnt from Muhammad, his cousin and sponsor. He also learnt that from the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, his tutor and guide. He saw him, when the danger for him and his paternal uncle Abu Talib became at the rim of destruction, the merit of steadfastness appeared in order to overpower the danger, expressing itself in those words: “By Allah! If they place the sun in my right, and the moon in my left, I would not leave this matter (of religion) until Allah makes it victorious, or I would die while attempting to do so.”

He also saw him on the day of the Conquest (of Mecca), when the destinies of all the people of Quraish were suspended by a word from his mouth. Then, the merit of forgiveness emerged so much generously and compassionately, in order to say to those killers, who caused his family to suffer a great starvation (when they besieged them in the courtyard of Abu Talib), killed his companions, and chewed the liver of his uncle Hamzah, after they had mutilated his pure body so much grievously: “Go, you have been set free.”

Indeed, there is no danger, no matter severe it might be, which could be able to prevent the supreme merits from playing its role in directing both excellence and heroism. Furthermore, there is, from among all inducements of this world, what might turn the great just man from undertaking his great just responsibilities. This was the lesson, which Ali understood from the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, and of which he became well-aware.

As belonging to the family of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, Ali was to get another lesson which might be added to that, i.e. to undertake his responsibilities, and live all of his life within a rigid circle of abstinence and hardship of life, to the extent that he had no fortune or portion in its lawful pleasures and delights.

He knew that very clearly from the sayings, deeds and behaviours of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”. He knew it when he saw the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” having forbidden even a sip of milk to himself and preferred to send it to a poor needy one from among the Muslims.

He knew it when he saw that one day, his wife Fatimah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, had sent to her father, asking him to give her something of which she had a right, since it was given to all the Muslims. But he replied to her, and his eyes were full of tears of the father’s compassion: “No O Fatimah! I’m not to give you, and let the poor people of the Muslims.”

He knew it when he saw his uncle Al-Abbas having asked the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” to appoint him in charge of something, to which he was qualified, and of which he was worthy. But, the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” answered him while feeling sorry: “By Allah, O uncle, do not appoint in those jobs anyone who asks for it, or is eager to get it.”

He knew it more and more on the day of the Conquest, when he carried the key of the Ka’bah, and went to the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, who was sitting amidst his companions in the Sacred Mosque, and then he said to him: “O Messenger of Allah! Give us the privilege of looking after the House, in addition to supplying the pilgrims with water, might Allah bless you!”

But, the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” stretched his right hand towards him, and take the key from him. Then, he called: “Where is Uthman Ibn Talhah?” however, he and his family had the job of taking care of the Ka’bah for a long time. When Uthman Ibn Talhah got up, the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” made him closer to him, and gave him the key of the Ka’bah saying: “Here it is your key O Uthman. Today is the day of duty and fulfillment (of rights).”

Then, he turned to Ali, his cousin, to whom he said: “I give you only that, through which you would undertake the burden of giving others, and not that, through which you might take from others.” (He meant by the former the privilege of supplying the pilgrims with water, in which they would be useful and helpful to all visiting people, and by the latter the guardianship of the House, for fear they might take from what the others present to it.)

He then had to undertake all of his responsibilities, and go on, without expecting any reward or grace from this world. That’s because the family of Muhammad are only to give, not to take anything. However, the world is too simple and humble for Allah Almighty to make it a reward to them.

But, none from among the family of the Prophet was able to perceive this fact and believed in it other than the grand imam Ali. He also learnt that the pleasures of life, which might delight the others, would turn into distresses and source of suffering whenever they are doomed to be bestowed upon the family of Muhammad. The reason is that they never search in them for benefits and delights so much as they search for duty and responsibility.

Furthermore, none from among the family of Muhammad could excel Ali "Allah be pleased with him" in subjecting his life according to such a notion. When the office of ruling of the state, which had the greatest authority on the earth at this time, it was regarded by the grand imam to be a catastrophe, which afflicted him, although the mouths of others might water for getting such an office.

Had he wanted, surely, he would have made it a source of endless blessings and infinite delights. But, because it turned with him into a responsibility, undertaken by a conscience, which was perfect in piety, uprightness, god-fearing and rigidity, this caliphate came to be, in the sight of the grand imam, more than a great distress, undertaken by one who should be as strong and steadfast as a patient, who might lose everything (for the sake of his loyalty to his responsibilities), and not as happy as a joyful, who considered himself to have gained (all things by getting the office of caliphate).

He was mainly concerned with the responsibility, only the responsibility. The subject of any responsibility should be the truth, and nothing else. Whenever he saw the truth, he would immediately undertake its responsibility; and if he undertook a certain responsibility, then the consequences, whatever they might be, would not be put into his account.

This explains to us his situation from the caliphate since the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" died and was taken to the highest company, until he joined him. When As-Siddiq Abu Bakr was given the pledge of allegiance, the grand imam delayed in swearing fealty to him. He himself gave the reason for that very clearly during his dialogue with the companions, at the top of whom Abu Bakr and Umar.

He said: "No doubt, you drive away the family of Muhammad from taking his place, and occupying their position among the people, and

deprive them of their right. By Allah! We have more right to have this matter (of ruling) than you, since among us there is the reciter of Allah's Book, the jurist in Allah's religion, the knowledgeable of the traditions of His Messenger, who could deal with the affairs of subjects, and distribute among them rightly."

Thus, he thought that since the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" did not confide the matter of ruling to anyone, then, the home, from which the Heaven chose the selected Prophet "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" should be the home from which people would choose their caliph, since there is, among the men of this home, those who are qualified to occupy such a position of caliphate.

It is true that belonging to the home of the Prophet is not the only reason for nomination. There should be, before that, the perfect qualification, which makes one perfectly comply with Allah, His Book, and Messenger, as well as in the capability of dealing rightly with the affairs of Muslims.

This was what the grand imam said: "since among us there is the reciter of Allah's Book, the jurist in Allah's religion, the knowledgeable of the traditions of His Messenger, who could deal with the affairs of subjects, and distribute among them rightly."

however, it is not our topic here to discuss the opinion of the grand imam in the caliphate of As-Siddiq "Allah be pleased with him". But, we certainly affirm that the grand imam was not prompted in his situation by his own inclinations and desires. Moreover, he did not envy Abu Bakr for this position. But, he defended a right he thought he had a claim over it without the least suspicion.

When the Muslims gathered in the shed of the sons of Sa'idah, and the Ansar saw that the caliph should be from them, while the Emigrants saw that the caliph should be from them, the reason brought by the Emigrants who won at the end depended upon their saying to the Ansar: "The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" was from among us, the Emigrants. So, let the caliphate be among the people of Migration."

It was upon this proof itself that the thinking of the grand imam depended. If the Emigrants were to be worthy of the office of the caliphate because the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" was from among them, then, the family of the Prophet should

be worthier of it, because the Prophet was from them. In this way, the grand imam thought.

But, it is better for us not to be diverted by the outside form of this difference from its essence and reality. Such great companions of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” as Abu Bakr, Umar, Ali and Uthman were, with their faith and piety, not to compete over any kind of benefit in this world, whatever great it might be, particularly at this time, during which they were still grieved by the death of their Prophet, which left within themselves no place for life desires. But, the adherence of each one to his situation was due to the fact that both supported what he was persuaded to be right.

On the other hand, if the caliphate was considered, at least in its outside form, to be a political authority and worldly position, it was, in their sight no more than one of the highest jobs of guidance and giving the good examples which should be followed; and over this, let the competitors compete each other.

All events and realities of history agree with no doubt that Abu Bakr, Umar and Ali regarded the position of caliphate as a great heavy burden, and had it not been for the fact that abandoning it might be considered to be a betrayer to Allah, His Messenger and the Muslims, surely, they would have made themselves as far from it as it could be.

Thus, neither the personal ambition, nor the desire for authority and power were to be considered as motives of this difference.

The party which favoured the selection of Abu Bakr estimated his precedence in Islam (as being the first from among men to embrace Islam), in addition to his old age, wisdom and experience, as well as this marvelous faith he had in his heart, who made the slogan of his life entirely with the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”: “If he said so, then, he has told the truth.”

However, the good merits, which led to selecting Abu Bakr, were so much elegant, enlightening and glorious. The grand imam Ali himself did not deny that even for a single moment. He put it powerfully when he gave the pledge of allegiance later to As-Siddiq, saying: “We know well your superiority and what Allah has given you. We are not jealous of the good Allah has bestowed upon you (by being caliph). But you did not consult us in the question of ruling, in which we thought that we had a right because of our near relationship to The Messenger of Allah “Allah’s

blessing and peace be upon him” “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”.”

He expressed of those merits in a more wonderful way when he stood to lament Abu Bakr saying: “Allah’s mercy be upon you Abu Bakr! By Allah! You’ve been the first of people to embrace Islam, having the most sincere faith, and the firmest certainty. You’ve believed the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” when (most of the people) belied him, gave him when they were miser, and got up to support him when they failed to do so. By Allah! You’ve been a strong fort for Islam, and a disappointer for the infidels. Your proof never weakened, your insight kept strong, and you’ve never become coward. You’ve been as described by the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, weak in your body, but strong in your religion, and humble in yourself. Might Allah not forbid us the reward of (accompanying) you, and might He not let us go astray after you!”

Yes. The two men between whom the selection was made were of a high pattern of people. The third man, who played the most important role in selecting Abu Bakr, was at the same level of highness and greatness. It is so much sufficient to mention anyone of such names as Abu Bakr, Umar Or Ali, that a gate of a new world of virtues, good characteristics, supremacy and piety, for which there is no match, would open to us.

Abu Sufyan went more than once to the grand Imam Ali, urging him to stick to his right of the caliphate, saying: “If you want, we would fill the land surrounding them with horses and men (in order to support your right), and besiege them from all sides.” But, in each time, the grand pious abstinent knowledgeable imam rejected his opinion saying: “O Abu Hanzalah! You call us to something, which is far from our morals and merits. No doubt, I gave it up, and turned my back to it.”

Indeed, the difference of the pious men about the truth is not to take them out of the field of truth, virtue and honesty. Their difference was not over a matter of world, for which they competed one another. Thus, the vanities of this world remained far from their faith and morality. They remained as far from the points of their agreement as they were from the points of their disagreement.

Thus, the grand imam gave it up, and turned his back to it, and devoted himself to worshipping Allah and instructing the Muslims their religion, in addition to giving advices and consultations to the ruler.

There was no one to find solutions to all problems and dilemmas other than Ali. Very frequently, the caliph Abu Bakr sought for Ali saying to him: "Give us your verdict concerning this matter, O Abu Al-Hasan!"

Furthermore, the caliph Umar very often asked for the help of his religious understanding, intelligence and deep sight, saying: "But for (the religious knowledge and sincere advice of) Ali, Surely, Umar would have been ruined."

The caliph Uthman also used to rely upon his opinions, ask for his help, and seek for his advice. But, when the routine of government interfered, they were able to spoil the good relation between them. So, the advices and consultations of the grand imam were not doomed to get the appreciation of which they were worthy from the caliph.

With the martyrdom of Uthman, the grand imam Ali was called to receive the great distress of ruling, which came to him at last, but full of injuries, and overburdened with all sources of suffering, troubles and storming catastrophes. Really, the family of Muhammad never had from the fortunes of this world but what might be a source of distress for them.

During the last portion of the ruling of Uthman, the personal desires of some governors belonging to the Umayyads played with the destiny of the state, which led at the end to an armed affliction, to which people from different parts and regions within the Islamic state called, and which the enemies of this new religion (of Islam) misused, i.e. those whose ancient world and interests were destroyed by Islam.

In its first tour, the affliction reached the peak of flaring up, with the assassination of the caliph Uthman. It is not our topic to talk about the horrible events, which we dealt with, at any rate, in our book of Uthman "Allah be pleased with him and with all the companions of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him"".

But here, it would be sufficient for us to look at the dark conditions during which the Commander of the Believers Ali "Might Allah honour him" undertook the burdens of ruling, and the responsibilities of caliphate.

with Allah Almighty. But, it should give them their needs in order to be able to live. For this reason, there is no point for putting a distinction between them.

On the other hand, divergence of giving might create opportunity of the accumulation of wealth with some people, and this might lead them to be religiously seduced, and worldly spoilt. During the ruling of the Commander of the Believers Umar, his rigidity and vigilance left no point for the accumulation of wealth. It was sufficient for him to learn that the wealth and blessings of anyone of his governors became abundant, in order to send, consequently, to him, requiring him to divide his wealth, giving him half of it, and the treasury the other half.

But, during the ruling of Uthman, when the Muslims had reached a great extent of hardship of living and abstinence enjoined upon them by their great Commander of Believer Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, they found the caliph Uthman too tolerant and lenient to seduce them to get of the delights and pleasures of life as much as they wanted. Thus, the world opened to them with no account.

Although there were some of the companions of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", who saved themselves from it with their piety, abstinence and god-fearing, there were others, particularly from among those who embraced Islam after the conquest of Mecca, and after the death of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", who surrendered to the vanities and inducements of life, and failed to rise up to the high level set by Islam for the Muslim person, particularly during its early days.

Many of those people came to have large palaces, gardens, and trades, particularly those Umayyads, who misused certain conditions, in order to make of themselves a distinctive class with their wealth and authority.

The grand imam Ali came to restore the way of giving to the method followed by Abu Bakr, though he knew well that this might displease some of the great companions who supported him, and he was still in need for their continuous support. But, the cousin of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" was not to know any flattery in dealing with the truth. So, let him stand in support of the truth, whatever consequences to which it might lead.

This was one thing. The other, which caused troubles to him, although he did faithfully in response to his sticking to the truth was that many

governors whom Uthman had appointed were not, in the sight of Ali qualified for ruling. Moreover, they were the direct cause of the affliction, which led to the assassination of Uthman.

For this reason, the grand imam began, from the early moments of his caliphate to issue his commands to drive away those governors. He replaced with by many companions, whose religion, uprightness, and capability would make them reliable in the sight of both the caliph and the people. He ousted those, and appointed others in their place.

Mu'awiyah, was governor of the entire region of Sham at this time was implied in those who should have been driven away. Indeed, Mu'awiyah spent a long time in Sham as governor, during which he prepared all of what was needed for his expected treachery. He built there a strong army (to use when it would be necessary). He was able to attract the people, with the help of money and cunning, until Sham became his strong fort.

The Commander of the Believers Ali knew well this fact, as did some of his companions, who went to him, asking him to postpone driving away the governors appointed by Uthman, particularly Mu'awiyah, until they gave him the pledge of allegiance, the troubles were over, and the caliph strengthened his authority, after which he might drive them away as he wanted.

But, the cousin and the sincere disciple of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" never was devious in dealing with the truth. His cousin Abdullah Ibn Abbas went to him, asking him to postpone the dismissal of Mu'awiyah, until the opportunity of driving him away would come soon. But, the rightly-guided imam rejected, in spite of all the consequences, to bear before Allah the responsibility of retaining Mu'awiyah as a governor of the Muslims even for a single moment, saying his famous phrase: "No, by Allah! Allah would not see me taking those leading astray as supporters."

In view of his brilliant loyalty to his responsibilities, he did not waste his time in vain. But immediately, he sent his newly appointed employees to the different regions: Uthman Ibn Hanif to Basra, Ijarah Ibn Hassan to Kufah, Abdullah Ibn Abbas to Yemen, Qais Ibn Sa'd Ibn Ubadah to Egypt, and Suhail Ibn Hunaif to Sham.

All the employces received their jobs peacefully, except for Suhail Ibn Hunaif, who was appointed as governor of Sham, instead of Mu'awiyah.

He had no sooner arrived in Tabuk, which was bordering to Sham, than he was received by a detachment belonging to the army of Mu'awiyah, which prevented him from entering the country. When he returned to Medina, and reported the grand imam this news, he (the later) was not surprised, for he expected from Mu'awiyah such a conduct.

Along his lifetime, Ali did not use to put himself to choose between his principles and interests. This is for one reason, i.e. he had no interest at all. His life was a message, and his deeds and behaviours were expressive of this message. With the help of a little deal of cunning, he was able to subject Mu'awiyah, until he could uproot him from his place quietly. But, he used to wonder: Why is the truth in need for haggling? And if it is to be haggled for, then, what would its superiority to falsehood be?

Thus, he would behave according to this notion of the value and sanctity of the truth. He drove away a governor, whom he regarded as non-fitting for his position, but this governor rejected to implement the order of his caliph, and the president of his state. Let him then bear the consequence of his situation and rebellion.

The grand imam wrote to him: "Now and then: You've learnt that Uthman was killed, and that the Muslims agreed unanimously on selecting me (as ruler), and giving me the pledge of allegiance as caliph. You should choose to enter into peace, otherwise, the war would be against you."

He hoped that those words might deter Mu'awiyah from such a rebellion, but the reply of Mu'awiyah was so much strange. He said to the envoy of the caliph: "Return whence you have come, and I will send my reply with a messenger from me." However, he sent his reply with a man belonging to the tribe of Banu Abs, who covered the distance from Sham to Medina, carrying the message of the governor of Sham.

As soon as the grand imam had disclosed the message, he became surprised. It consisted of a long broad paper, having no more than a single line: "From Mu'awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan to Ali Ibn Abu Talib."

A bitter smile was visible between the lips of the caliph. He turned towards the envoy of Mu'awiyah, who had got up and went on saying: "O people! Listen to me, and understand from me! I've left behind in Sham fifty thousand men, all of whom dyed their beards with their tears beneath the shirt of Uthman, which they raised on the ends of their

spears. They pledged to Allah not to sheath their swords until they kill the killers of Uthman, otherwise, their souls would join to Allah (as a result of their death in fighting).”

This was the message of Mu’awiyah, and this was also his plot to oppose the new caliph, i.e. the shirt of Uthman.

In this book, as well as in our similar books, do not write the history of events so much as we write the history of the human greatness. I mean the human greatness, which attained with those of whom we write the history its highest level and furthest finality. For this reason, we would not let the noise of events, and the crowd of details divert us from following the human greatness drawn by the grand imam with his situations from those events.

However, the matters went on in such a way that helped Mu’awiyah, though made it more difficult for the grand imam. A’ishah “Allah be pleased with her” had let for Mecca, in order to perform Umrah, and this was a short time before the killing of Uthman. When she learnt of his killing, she was overtaken so much. Furthermore, the grand imam gave permission to both of Az-Zubair and Talhah, who were from among the great companions of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, to leave for Mecca too, when they asked for that, in spite of the advice given to the grand imam by some of his companions to retain them in Medina, in order to rest assured of what they might do.

A’ishah, the Mother of the Believers, and Talhah and Az-Zubair, who were from among the great companions of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, proceeded leading a multitude of people towards Basra, in order to instigate the Muslims of Iraq to retaliate from the killers of Uthman.

The grand imam Ali left Medina for Iraq when the message of Mu’awiyah came to him, which we mentioned earlier, saying: “The people of Sham could have an assault (claiming to retaliate for Uthman), and I like to be close to them (in order to stop them).” But, on his way to Iraq, the news reached him of the movement of A’ishah, Talhah and Az-Zubair to Basra.

How great disaster it was! Would the retaliation for Uthman not be left for the state to carry it out, and punish those who killed him according to the law of equality but in the appropriate time for doing so? The grand imam had no doubt that A’ishah, Talhah and Az-Zubair were

sure of his being free from the assassination of Uthman. Then, what is the reason for their setting out?

There was a circulating news that they had set out in order to pursue the killers of Uthman in Basra, and seek for the help of the good pious men, as well as the remaining people of Basra, who were grieved by the killing of Uthman against those who killed him.

But, there was a state, having a responsible president, whose sincerity, honesty, piety, and rigidity, even on himself were unquestionable, since he came to light until he became caliph. Would the state, with its president of such a high good matchless pattern not settle the case of Uthman? If one party within the state stood, asking for retaliation from the killers of Uthman, and another party stood against it, and there was clashes between both, where would the state be? Would it sit at the window of the playground in order to watch such a slaughter? Moreover, what would the destiny of Islam as a religion? What would the destiny of the Muslims as a nation?

The caliph thought of all of that. Very soon, he decided to turn with his procession, which set out from Medina towards Basra. When they approached its borders, they alighted at a place called Dhu-Qar.

Immediately, his suspicions and anticipations turned to be true. As soon as the procession of A'ishah had alighted in Basra, there was a horrible armed clash between it and a huge multitude of the inhabitants of Basra, who rejected to hand over the member of their kinship, who were involved in the killing of Uthman.

It was the civil war, of which the grand imam was cautious, for which he alone was the only responsible. Was he not the president of the state? Either he should be competent and qualified to enjoin the respect of both the law and the state, otherwise, he should leave his position to anyone else who might be more competent, although there was, at this time, anyone more competent than the father of Hasan. However, the great things should have their equivalents of great men to deal with them.

The grand imam used to behave in a way of a good pattern which should be followed. In all his movements, decisions and deeds, he was committed to the duties of such a good pattern. His words and steps were to be a general method to be followed by the coming generations over the time. Hence, his sense of responsibilities of the good pattern was the most directive and the most pressing upon him.

During his childhood, he used to conduct like a good example (which should be followed). He used not to play like his friends of children, or entertain himself like the young boys. During his youth, he used to behave like a good example too. So, the period of youth he spent was pure. Very early, he made it undertake the responsibilities of men. Along his manhood and the time of his caliphate, he was as strong and determined as required by such a good pattern, in order to be devout and persistently steadfast.

Now, since he had to face afflictions as waving as mountains, he would not only deal with them depending upon his responsibilities as a caliph, but also he would treat them depending upon his responsibilities as a good example. Yes. According to the responsibilities of a good example, which would make all of his directions and decisions a general method to be followed by the coming generations over the time.

Along the lifetime of Ali entirely, we could hardly find anything more wonderful than his situations during those dark horrible afflictions, which accompanied his caliphate from the first hour until he died and met his Lord. Here, we would meet a matchless great tutor, who was not concerned with emerging victorious over his enemies, nor was he interested in strengthening and supporting his position of caliphate, ruling, and authority. But, he was more concerned with giving from his life and conduct an honourable image expressing of the first generation of people, who heard the early sounding of the Divine revelation, and offered the prayer behind the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him".

Yes. He was interested in introducing an honourable image of a Muslim person, brought up by the Qur'an, and of a good pattern to be followed by the Muslims of coming generations in the near as well as the far future. This was what concerned him, and after that, let it be whatever it might be, victory or defeat, caliphate or resignation, life or death. Nothing beyond the good pattern to which he looked forward, or for which he had a desire.

Thus, we would meet the caliph having behaved in a way of a good example, now as well as in every time, today, while facing an army led by the Mother of the Believers, Az-Zubair and Talhah, tomorrow while facing the armies of Mu'awiyah, and later while facing the Kharijites.

When the news of the clashes in Basra came to him, he sent to the people of Kufah, calling them to support him. When they came to him, the horizon was shaken with their cries, and filled it with their raising swords. They went on urging the grand imam to hasten to set out with them in order to face the army of Basra.

Here, the deep insight of the imam was visible. He knew, from the flaming enthusiasm of the people of Kufah, that they were about to set out with their arms to Basra, in order to join to the armed resistance, which broke up for facing the army of Talhah and Az-Zubair.

If some of the people of Basra were involved in the armed rebellion against the late caliph Uthman, some of the people of Kufah also were involved in it. Since they found themselves facing the storms, they called themselves for backing and supporting one another. Thus, it was reasonable to put those revolting forces under the control of both the state and the law.

The Commander of the Believers saw the flaring enthusiasm of those of Kufah. So, he wanted to guide them to the right way. He went on instructing them that the right might be taken by many ways, the last of which is using force, and if it was enjoined upon them to plunge into fight, it should be just and legitimate. But, it would not be so, unless all efforts for enforcement of right through persuasion and peace were used up.

Then, he called Al-Qa'qa Ibn Amr, and sent him in a mission of making peace between him and the Mother of the Believers, Talhah and Az-Zubair. In Basra, Al-Qa'qa held talks with the Mother of the Believers, then with Talhah and Az-Zubair. Then, all of them gathered in a meeting, in which there was a long dialogue among them. Let Ibn Kathir, the great historian relate to us some paragraphs of this dialogue:

Al-Qa'qa: O Mother of the Believers! What led you to come here?

She replied: Setting right the matters among the people.

Al-Qa'qa: As for you Talhah and Az-Zubair! What led you to come here?

Talhah and Az-Zubair: Setting right the matters among the people.

Al-Qa'qa: Tell me then, how should such a setting right be?

Talhah and Az-Zubair: It should be by retaliating for Uthman, and killing his killers.

Al-Qa'qa: You fought with his killers from among the people of Basra, and you were more right before fighting with them than you are now after fighting them. That's because you fought six hundred, for whom six thousand men became angry. Now, you are asking for one of the killers, Harqus Ibn Zuhair, but you are unable to arrest him, for there are six thousand people protecting him. Would you not then excuse Ali, the Commander of the Believers if he postponed killing the killers of Uthman until he becomes capable of facing them?

However, the words and opinions of people differ from one country to another. There are multitudes of Rabie'ah and Mudar, who gathered in order to kindle the fire of a destructive war.

The Mother of the Believers: Then, what do you see O Qa'qa?

Al-Qa'qa: I see that you should be inclined to peace, and you should give Ali the pledge of allegiance, and be keys of goodness as you've been. Do not expose yourself to such a trial, which might afflict you.

The dialogue concluded with their persuasion of the logic of Al-Qa'qa, and they agreed that Ali should come to Basra, in order that a meeting of peace would be held.

When Al-Qa'qa returned and told the caliph of what had happened, he grew so much happy and joyful. No one on the surface of the earth at this time was more pleased and much happier than him. The lives of Muslims were kept, and their blood would not be shed; and nothing else might bestow such happiness and pleasure upon the grand imam.

However, his speech he delivered to his soldiers at this time showed us how happy, joyful and pleased he was. He went on reviewing to them the pre-Islamic period of ignorance, with its strong enmities and violent wars, until Islam came, and joined the hearts of people in love, and enjoined a bond of brotherhood among them, and made them as equal as the teeth of a comb, with no superiority of an Arab person to a foreigner but with god-fearing.

He reminded them of this brilliant unity which joined them from everywhere under the leadership of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", then his successor Abu Bakr As-Siddiq, then the Commander of the Believers Umar, and then the caliph

of Muslims Uthman. Then, he concluded his speech by saying, as if he meant Mu'awiyah:

“Then, there happened that from which the nation is suffering. There are people, who seek for the world and wanted the regression of Islam. But Allah Almighty would surely complete His matter (of religion). I'm going to depart tomorrow. So, you should depart with me. But no one who helped in the killing of Uthman even by half a word should join me.”

He talked in view of being a good example, which should be followed. He used the words, and took the situations which strengthened the authority of the truth, deepened the justice, and flourished the virtue.

The Commander of the Believers went to Basra, in the company of his followers and soldiers. They encamped at a certain place, and each party started getting itself ready for reconciliation. But, on the other hand, there were sleepless eyes, and conspiracies being prepared, and Allah Almighty alone knows the hidden power which instigated those eyes, and made those conspiracies, and in the end, changed the direction of the wind.

The history told us that the killers of Uthman decided to spoil this peace, thinking that it would be done on the account of their lives. But, was it so, or there was, in addition to that, an unseen power, which had interest in flaring up the afflictions?

However, as soon as the dawn of the day which was fixed for making peace had appeared, about two thousand from among the killers of Uthman attacked the tents of the army of Basra led by Talhah and Az-Zubair, and went on striking them with the swords. Then, all the people got up and took their swords. There was no time for removing the confusion and canceling the conspiracy, or even stopping the affliction, for the army of Basra thought that the talk of peace was deceitful.

Thus, the two armies met in the battle of Al-Jamal, in spite of all the attempts made by the grand imam to save Islam (from the affliction). The fight was violent and fierce. The more a head was chopped off, an arm or a leg was cut off, or even a single drop of blood flowed, the more the grand imam would become grieved and sad. He used to be so much joyful with the tours of going here and there in fighting with the infidels. But now, since both the killer and the killed were of one religion, and

since he was the caliph, who was the guardian of the members of this nation, who then would shelter him from such a critical situation?

But, in spite of all of those horrors surrounding him, he never lost the honour of heroism and greatness. What was the reason for which thousands of Muslims fought each other? Was it not that some of them fought in support of Ali, and others in support of Talhah and Az-Zubair? Then, let Talhah and Az-Zubair, in addition to Ali emerge in order to settle by themselves the case, in whatever way, and with this, the bloodshed might stop.

He rushed his horse, amidst the crowds of the fighting army, and called: "Come to me Talhah! Come to me O Zubair!" both of them got out to him. The three men stood between the fighting rows.

He made a cry to Talhah, which had all honour and nobility he inherited from his forefathers: "O Talhah! Have you kept your spear in the home, and come with the spear of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" in order to fight with it?" he made a roar, by which the sides of the horizon were shaken. Then, it rained suddenly, as if it were the tears of sky, which was shaken by the wonder and sorrow of words.

Then, he (Ali) turned towards Az-Zubair and said to him: "O Zubair! Do you remember such and such a day, when you saw me approaching the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", and you laughed for me? Then, the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" asked you: "Do you love him O Zubair?" you answered him in the affirmative. He said to you: "No doubt, you would fight him wrongfully."

The words were to mobilize in his mouth, and then burst through his lips, as elegant as the sun, as strong as the doom. Az-Zubair shouted: "Yes. No doubt, you reminded me of that which I've forgotten." Then, he put down his sword, and returned through the fighting rows, while his tears were falling in abundance.

Then, Ali returned to his soldiers, while both Talhah and Az-Zubair left the battlefield. They left after they had heard from the grand imam that which they heard, and after they had learnt that Ammar Ibn Yasir was fighting beside the grand imam Ali. They remembered what the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" had said one day to Ammar: "The aggressive party would kill you."

But, the horrible grudges did not let them leave peacefully. As for Az-Zubair, a sinful pact watched him and killed him on the way. As soon as Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam had learnt of the intention of Talhah to withdraw from the battlefield, he watched him, and shot him with an arrow, which put an end to his life.

In this way, the army of Basra lost his leaders, since both of Talhah and Az-Zubair left it, or say left the world entirely. Those who had a desire for continuing the fight did not find but the Mother of the Believers in her howdah, on the back of the camel she was riding, in order to look over the battle.

The grand imam saw that his enemies took from this camel their Ka'bah, which they surrounded. It seemed to him that ending this battle and stopping the fight would be done by killing it. It was suggested, or he had the opinion to shoot the camel with an arrow, which would kill it. He recommended his companions and soldiers to be as close to the camel as they could, for if the camel was slain and then fell down, they would hasten and surround the howdah with their lives, and receive it before it fell on the ground, with the result that she might be hurt.

He was a man, a hero, and a good example to be followed. Then, what else should be expected from him? The plan was carried out successfully. Thus, the battle was over, and the fight stopped.

He called to him Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakr, and ordered to accompany his sister A'ishah to a home, which was prepared for her, until the means of transportation would be ready for her to return to Mecca, and then Medina safely, peacefully and respectfully.

Then, the grand imam stood amidst his companions and soldiers in order to tell them of his new decision: "Do not pursue an escaping one. Do not kill a wounded person. Do not take people's property by force. Whoever put down his arms is safe, and whoever closed his home is safe."

The historians said commenting on this issue: "The followers of the grand imam used to pass by gold and silver, but none of them would take anything of it." They, or at least some of them, carried out the command of the grand imam bitterly, which caused them to ask him how it was lawful to fight them, and not to take their property or take them as captives. The grand imam answered: "No doubt, the believers, who have

faith in Allah Alone should not be as captives, nor should their property be taken, nor that, with which, or for which they fought.”

The caliph was well aware of the fact that such a prevention of him would cause some of his followers, particularly those of weak faith, to be against him. But, let all the people disperse from him, as long as favouring the right would remain his only objective and way.

However, this tour concluded with the victory of the Commander of the Believers. But, the military victory had a minor significance. That's because what was more significant here was the victory of his principles. The withdrawal of both Talhah and Az-Zubair while the fight was flaring up, meant that they admitted the fact that Ali was on the right. The regret of the Mother of the Believers later of being involved in this battle meant also that she admitted that Ali was on the right.

This was the important victory with which the grand imam was so much pleased. All what he hoped for, and looked forward to was to stand beside the right; and it was this that people had to understand of him, in order to support him to sanctify it. Moreover, all what he hoped for, and looked forward to was to remain faithfully loyal to the duties and obligations enjoined upon him as a good example; and it was this that people had to learn of him, in order to benefit from it in their life.

He faced the first wave of the violent afflictions as brave as a hero, as deliberate as a wise, and as pious as a good example which should be followed. Let's see this last scene of the battle of Al-Jamal. He was sitting in his house with some of his companions after the battle was over, when somebody entered upon him saying: “Amr Ibn Jurmuz, the killer of Az-Zubair is at the door, asking for your permission to be admitted.” The grand imam admitted him. The killer entered haughtily and arrogantly, thinking that the caliph would be happy with him, and receive him as a hero. But, as soon as he had faced the grand imam, he cried in his face: “Is this which you are carrying the sword of Az-Zubair?” he said, with his haughtiness disappointed by the cry of the grand imam: “Yes, it is. I took it from him after I had killed him.”

The grand imam took it from him with his right hand, caught hold of it with both his hands, raised it, and then kissed it compassionately and sadly. He said, with his tears falling upon his cheeks: “It is a sword, with which his owner used to relief the Messenger of Allah “Allah's blessing and peace be upon him”.”

Then, he looked at the killer so much furiously and said to him: “As for you, O killer of the son of Safiyyah, take the tidings of being admitted in the Hell (of fire).” Amr Ibn Jurmuz got out as disappointed, saying: “How astonishing you are! Do we kill your enemies, and you give us the tidings of being admitted in the Hell (of fire)?”

This was the greatness of the stepchild of the Divine revelation, and the first precedent of Muslims. This was the greatness of both man and hero. This was the greatness of both the caliph and the good example. It was a greatness, which would never fail to affirm itself, as long as he was alive, doing the great things and the good deeds.

Let’s go to other scenes, in which we shall see what is astonishing. You might remember the message and the envoy sent by Mu’awiyah to the Commander of the Believers, i.e. the message which consisted of a large white paper, having no more than a line, in which it was written: “From Mu’awiyah Ibn Abu Sufyan to Ali Ibn Abu Talib.”

He addressed him as Ali Ibn Abu Talib, without any point to his title, neither the Commander of the Believers, nor the caliph of Muslims. Moreover, putting his name and that of the Commander of the Believers in such a position might hint to the ancient tribal dispute which was widespread during the pre-Islamic period of ignorance. He simply said to him: I’m the son of Abu Sufyan and you are the son of Abu Talib, and we would see who is stronger and who has the higher position.

Might Allah forgive Mu’awiyah! He was not in need of that in which he involved himself. He raised in Sham the shirt of Uthman, as his envoy said, underneath which he mobilized nearly fifty thousand fighters. They wetted their beards with the blood of Uthman, and they pledged to Allah not to sheath their swords until they kill the killers of Uthman, otherwise, their souls would join to Allah (as a result of their death in fighting).

What is the reason for all of that? It is true that the killing of the caliph Uthman was the most grievous crime committed during the history of Islam. It was not only the assassination of the legal caliph, though this alone was sufficient to make it the most grievous crime. It was, more and more than that, the way, in which the assassination was made. It was a crime, about which we now are not to talk, for it had its appropriate place of talk in our book about Uthman. But here, it is sufficient for us to ask about the reason for all those cries in the face of Ali: “Where is the (retaliation for the) blood of Uthman?”

We do not blame, if not greet every sincere honest voice which raised, asking for revenge from the killers of Uthman. The way in which the life of the caliph Uthman and the honour of the state in his person was attacked was so much horrid that it might cause the deaf stone to speak and cry: "Kill the killers of Uthman!"

But, did Mu'awiyah follow the right method, which was the most fitting for retaliating from those killers of Uthman according to the law of equality? Was it the right way of retaliation according to the law of equality to refuse giving the pledge of allegiance to the new caliph, who was selected by both the Emigrants and the Ansar in Medina, and then all the Muslims from all regions supported him? Was it the right way of retaliation for Uthman that Mu'awiyah should reject giving the pledge of allegiance and rebel against the state in those critical circumstances, which necessitated nothing other than the agreement and unanimity?

Was it the right way of retaliation for Uthman to go with his shirt round all parts of Sham, affirming to the people that Ali had helped in killing Uthman earlier, and now he was sheltering his killers? Was it the sign of his love for Uthman to take of his shirt, wetted by his blood a banner, beneath which he gave rise to all instincts of the period of ignorance, and fight the most miserable civil war, which had an evil influence upon Islam, and at the result of which the Muslims were killed? Once again, might Allah forgive Mu'awiyah! He was not in need of getting himself into this difficult pitfall and deep snare.

after the killing of the caliph, all of the well-guided Muslims demanded that his blood should be respected, and the retaliation for him according to the law of equality should be carried out. This was out of the respect for the state itself, and taking retaliation for its honour and sanctity.

The grand imam Ali himself demanded the carrying out of the retaliation for Uthman. But, since he became the president of the state, he was no longer merely a claimant for blood retaliation. He also became representative of the authority which should carry out such a retaliation according to the law of equality.

Since those involved in the killing of Uthman, in addition to those who instigated to do so were many hundreds, and not tens of people, and since their armed affliction was still emerging, in addition to the new critical complications which affected the state following the battle of Al-

Jamal, and the rebellion of Mu'awiyah with the people of Sham, there was no opportunity to carry out this retaliation according to the law of equality, except through finding the appropriate time for enforcing the law in this atmosphere of conflict and chaos.

Abdullah Ibn Abbas, the cousin of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", and one of the greatest leaders of Ali in his wars demanded the carrying out of the retaliation from the killers of Uthman. In this issue, he said a word, which was so much beneficial: "If the people do not demand the retaliation for the killing of Uthman, the sky would rain stones over them."

What is then the reason for accusing Ali, the Commander of the Believers? What is the reason for instigating the people to rebel against him? Mu'awiyah in Sham wasted no time in preparing for a great battle. He provoked the people there against the imam. But, where was the imam at this time?

He left Basra for Kufah with his companions. The new unexpected events did not occupy him from sticking to his merits, which he went on practicing in his own way. He began with the treasury, from which he took out what was in it, and distributed it among those people of which they were worthy.

Some of his companions suggested to him to think of the matter, and keep some money for which he would be in need, in order to polarize the chiefs of the clans, but he rejected. He went on his purpose, until it was empty. Then, he ordered that his land should be washed with water. When it was done, he stood and offered two Rak'ahs on its land.

This prayer on the land of the treasury after having been washed was a symbol of a new meaning. It was a commencement of a new era, in which the (values of the) hereafter would overpower those of the world, and both piety and god-fearing would take back their authority and control over the state, society, and all the people.

Then, he was called to stay in the palace of governorship, which was so much attractive, with its large and high building. As soon as he had seen it, he turned away from it, saying: "I would never live in this palace of evil seduction." The people of Kufah pressed upon him to live in it, since it was larger and more fitting for him, but he rejected and said: "I'm not in need for it. No doubt, Umar Ibn Al-Khattab used to dislike it."

He used to walk in the markets of Kufah, while he was the caliph of Muslims, where he guided the misled one, helped the weak person, and met the old aged man, and carried his belongings on behalf of him. When his companions were disturbed by what he used to do, they approached him calling: "O Commander of Believers!" but, he would not let them complete their speech. He hastened to recite Allah's saying: "That Home of the Hereafter we shall give to those who intend not high handedness or mischief on earth: and the End is (best) for the righteous."

He also used to buy the needs of him and his household which he would carry by himself. If anyone of his companies approached him in order to carry them on behalf of him, he would reject saying with a smile to them: "The father of the dependents is more right to carry them."

The caliph of Muslims used to wear a garment which he bought by three Dirhams. He used also to ride a donkey, with his legs hanging on its sides, as if he was one of the desert poor people. His companions suggested to him to take as means of transportation a horse which might be fitting for the Commander of the Believers. But, he answered them saying: "Let me subject this world."

Yes. This was his method, i.e. to subjugate all pleasures of life and delights of authority, and live as lived his Messenger and tutor, as humble as a Prophet and not as gaudy and flashy as a king, waiting for the hereafter, and not relying on the world.

However, Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz was right when he described him saying: "The most abstinent person in this world was Ali Ibn Abu Talib."

Al-Hasan Al-Basri described him saying: "Allah's mercy be upon Ali Ibn Abu Talib! He was the godly person of this nation."

The godly-person of this nation stayed there in Kufah, leading a life of the simple and amiable people, worshipping his Lord as the holy persons used to do, undertaking the responsibilities of his state and nation as strongly and determinedly as a Prophet.

All the Muslim regions gave him the pledge of allegiance, except for Sham, which had a great number of conspiracies moving against him, and prompting him to fight.

Mu'awiyah in Sham urged the people to abuse the grand imam, although the grand imam in Kufah prevent the people vigorously from abusing Mu'awiyah, saying to his companions: "You should better say:

O Allah! Might You save our and their lives, and make peace among them and us!”

In Sham, Mu’awiyah lived in the precious palaces, luxurious pleasures and great amount of wealth, which came to him with no account, and which he spent in the service of his own ambitions. On the contrary, Ali in Kufah used to wear a no more than three-Dirham shirt, eat the rough dry food, and distribute the wealth of Muslims among the Muslims so much justly and piously.

The delegates went on going and returning between the grand imam in Kufah and Mu’awiyah in Sham. Some of them had the intention of seeking for the truth, in order to be guided, while others sought for the better benefit, and opportunity.

Sham introduced to the people lots of expectations and promises, as well as it offered to them a great amount of wealth. On the other side, Iraq had only one word: “Whoever is rightly guided, would be guided for the benefit of himself, and whoever is misled would be misled on the account of himself.” Beyond that, there would be no hopes or promises, no bribe or wasting of the wealth of the nation, as did his opponents, whatever the dangers and consequences might be.

When some of the companions of the grand imam asked him to use this wealth in polarizing some of those whom Mu’awiyah made adhere to him with his great and abundant grants, the grand imam would cry in them: “Do you ask me to seek for victory with the help of injustice?”

O disciple of Muhammad! O cousin of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”! Who other than you could have the same situation you had, and say the same words you said?

Mu’awiyah stood facing the gatherings of delegates, addressing them under the shirt of Uthman, suspecting the grand imam of instigating people to kill him, and then giving shelter to his killers. On the other side, the grand imam in Iraq stood facing the visiting delegates, addressing them, summarizing the affliction in words, which were so much sincere and clear, as being expressive of chastity and purity:

“Now and then: Allah Almighty sent His Prophet “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, through whom He rescued people from being misled, and saved them from being destroyed, and made all the people agree upon one thing (i.e. the matter of religion) after their separation.

Then, He took him onto Him, after he had accomplished what he was to do.

Then, the people selected Abu Bakr as their caliph. Then, Abu Bakr advised that Umar should be appointed as caliph. Both of them were good in conduct, and just in treating the affairs of the nation. It is true that we were displeased with them because they took the matter on the exclusion of us, though we are the family of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, and have more right to get it. But later, we’ve forgiven this for them.

Then, Uthman was appointed as caliph. He did many things, for which the people found fault with him. Some people attacked and then killed him. Then, the people came to me while I was far from their affairs, and asked me to accept the pledge of allegiance, but I rejected. Then, they returned to me once again and said to me: “Accept the pledge of allegiance, for the nation would not be pleased but with you as caliph. Indeed, we are afraid that if you do not do, the people would disperse.” So, I accepted the pledge of allegiance from them.

But, nothing scared me more than the secession of two men, who had given me the pledge of allegiance (he meant Talhah and Az-Zubair), and the dispute of Mu’awiyah with me. It is he, who has no precedence in the religion, nor was he from among the early Muslims. He is a released person, the son of a released person, who were forced to embrace Islam (following the conquest of Mecca) (i.e. Mu’awiyah and Abu Sufyan).

I call you to hold fast to the Book of Allah and the sunnah of your Prophet. I said this of mine, and then, I ask for Allah’s forgiveness for you and me.”

This was the case, which the grand imam reviewed clearly. It is true that the late caliph Uthman lost control over the state, because of his excessive confidence of his kith and kin from the Umayyads, who did not rise up to the required level of their responsibilities as a retinue of the caliph, and guardians of the nation. The grand imam so much frequently advised him and warned him of the evil consequences. When the event of killing Uthman occurred, he was the most troubled from among all the people, and he went on exclaiming: “O Allah! I free myself before You from the killing of Uthman. O Allah! I do not kill, nor am I inclined to his killers. O Allah! Might You send Your curses upon the killers of Uthman!”

But, the people of Sham, mostly from the newly converts to Islam, who did not see or even know well the grand imam Ali believed the claim of Mu'awiyah, since they found no one to instruct them to the reality of matters. They found no one to say to them that the killing of Uthman was a crime, which was not to comply with the religion and good manners of the grand imam Ali.

They found no one to say to them that Ali at this time was in a certain place of Medina, while the rebels came from different parts of the state. Then, when did he met them, and instigate them to set out for revolution, and even prompt them to assassinate the caliph? They found no one to tell them that Ali had no power to face nearly ten thousand rebels, who alighted in Medina and besieged the caliph.

But, in spite of all of that, he used his appealing thinking and persuasive proof against him, until they responded to his advice of leaving Medina and returning to their countries. Actually, they left Medina for their countries, but they found on their way of return a man having a letter forged by Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam on behalf of the caliph, and signed it with his seal without his knowledge. This letter contained an order to kill all the chiefs of the rebels. At this time, Marwan was acting as the chief of the employees of the palace. The result was that the rebels returned to Medina more furious and aggressive.

Yes. They found none to tell them so, or to tell them that when the rebels tightened their blockade and withheld water from the caliph, Ali went to him, carrying a waterskin upon his shoulder. When they tried to prevent him (from conveying it to him), he cried in them saying: "By Allah! The infidels of both Persia and Rome never do what you do. Whenever they take captures, they would feed and provide them with water."

There was a clash between him and them, and his turban fell down on the ground, but nothing concerned him except to convey the water to Uthman, and he succeeded to do so, and conveyed the waterskin to him.

The people of Sham found no one to tell them that the grand imam called his sons Hasan and Husain, the apples of his eye, and gave each a sword, and ordered them to stand beside the bed of Uthman, although he saw the horrible blockade, and perceived that by doing so, he introduced his sons as victims.

They found none to tell them that when his sons Hasan and Husain returned and told him of the killing of the caliph, he did with them as he had never done before along his life. He violently scolded them, and wondered how Uthman was killed and they were still alive: "If you failed to protect him, you have to die while defending him."

The people of Sham found none to tell them that Ali used to see the great mistakes (committed by the governors of the caliph), and he would become sorry for the caliph's indulgence. But he never regarded the assassination of the caliph, any caliph, as a treatment. What then would he think, since this caliph was his brother in the religion of Allah, his colleague in all the holy battles and scenes, who prepared the Army of Difficulty from his own property, and who was his broth-in-law, for each of them married one of the daughters of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him"?

The people of Sham found none to tell them so, or anything else. They found nothing but the shirt of Uthman, which was carried to Mu'awiyah in Sham by some Muslims. Then, he raised it high, and mobilized under it fifty thousand fighters pointing with their swords and spears, and crying: "Come to retaliate for Uthman!" tell me, had Ali not got the position of caliphate, would Mu'awiyah have made him responsible for the killing of Uthman? Nay! He would suspect the other caliph, unless he was of those with whom he might be pleased, and desirous for putting him under his disposal.

Mu'awiyah was too intelligent to know from the beginning his destiny since Ali became the caliph. For this reason, he decided to fight a battle of his own destiny, and not of a lost right, of a justice which was not enforced, or even for a blood which was shed. For the third time, might Allah forgive Mu'awiyah! He was not in need for disregarding the destiny and fate of Islam to such an extent.

I told you that we write the history of the human greatness in its most brilliant patterns. You might see now how great was Ali during this conflict. You've seen it without I tell you anything of it. Let's follow seeing some of the scenes of his greatness, if we are not able to follow all of them.

The grand imam was well aware of the reality of the incentives which motivated Mu'awiyah to do so. He described his exclamation for the

retaliation for Uthman so much elegantly and comprehensively when he said: "It is a word of right, from which falsehood is wanted."

But, in spite of his knowledge of those suspicious incentives, he did his best in attempt to keep the Muslims the evil consequences of the civil war. Although he knew well the reality of the incentives of Mu'awiyah, he accepted to discuss the matter with him, and hold a long dialogue with him, so that he might retract.

He sent to him somebody, telling him that the blood of Uthman would not go in vain, and the retaliation for Uthman would be carried out according to the law of equality in the appropriate time. That's because the killing of the caliph was not done by two, three or even ten, who infiltrated and assassinated him secretly and then fled away. But, his life was attacked during an armed revolution, implemented by nearly ten thousand, who besieged Medina for four months, during which Mu'awiyah failed to send one or two detachments of his army, in order to put an end to this revolution. And, since those ten thousand men were still carrying their arms, then, how could the grand imam arrest and judge them all? And when could he do so? Would he do so in those conditions which enabled the affliction and chaos to break up?

But, did Mu'awiyah give him the opportunity, and helped him with his army in order to be able to arrest the real fighters from among the ten thousand men who were protecting and defending him? Had Mu'awiyah done so, and then the grand imam neglected, and shut his eyes from the killers, surely, he would have condemned himself, and all of the Muslims would have convicted him.

But, Mu'awiyah, for a certain desire within himself, rejected all attempts made for reconciliation, suspending that on the necessity of handing over the killers of Uthman. Of course, he knew well the news of this famous event, when some of the good people interceded to Ali for handing over the killers of Uthman. While they were negotiating with him, about ten thousand fighters came and besieged the place of negotiations. The horizon was shaken with their cries: "We all are the killers of Uthman."

They were ten thousand fighters, having their swords in their hands, while roaring: "We all are the killers of Uthman." After this Mu'awiyah would say to the grand imam: "There should be no peace until you give me the killers of Uthman."

Moreover, why would he take the killers of Uthman? Was he the heir of the killed person? No of course, for the sons of Uthman had more right of it than him. Even in case he was the claimant of the blood-money, did he think he still lived in the ancient tribal world, in which if a one was killed, his heirs would retaliate for him, or take his blood-money? Was the governor of Sham not aware that he lived in a great state, which was alone responsible for enjoining the law?

It is clear that Mu'awiyah wanted nothing but to put the grand imam to difficulty, and instigate the rebels against him. He was not satisfied that they killed Uthman, but he wanted them to be the killers of Ali too.

But, Ali, the great man, would behave according to his good merits. He sought for peace once again. He sent Jarir Ibn Abdullah to Mu'awiyah, carrying a letter to him. Jarir set out for Sham and met Mu'awiyah, in the presence of some of his companions around him. Mu'awiyah asked him: "What is the matter with which you've come?" he said: "Ali was given the pledge of allegiance by all the people of Hijaz, Mecca and Medina, Basra and Kufah, Yemen, Oman, Egypt, Bahrain and Yamamah. None remained (without giving the pledge of allegiance) but the inhabitants of those forts where you are in Sham. If he attacked it, he would overpower its people. I've come to call you to what guides you to the right."

Then, he gave him the letter of the grand imam. See what this man who sought for peace with all of his power said in his letter. He said:

"In the Name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful.

Now and then: The pledge of allegiance given to me in Medina has become obligatory upon you in Sham. That's because the people who gave the pledge of allegiance to Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman are the same who has given me the pledge of allegiance. In this way, the attendant has no right to have another choice, nor has the absent to reject it.

You should know that the right of consultation is only for both the Emigrants and the Ansar. If both agree upon a certain man, whom they named as their imam, all the people should admit him out of the pleasure of Allah. If anyone seceded and had a desire for something else, they should bring him back to the right. If he rejected, they should fight with him, for he followed another way, different from that of the faithful believers.

Both of Talhah and Az-Zubair gave me the pledge of allegiance, but later they cancelled it. Their cancellation was likely as their deviation (from the right). So, I fought them, until the truth came, and the matter of (the right of) Allah emerged victorious.

You should enter into that into which all the Muslims has entered. No doubt, the best thing I like concerning you is peace, except when you reject. If you rejected, I would fight you, and ask for Allah's help and support against you.

You talked much about the killers of Uthman. You should enter into that into which all the Muslims has entered, and then you might ask for judging them before me in your presence, and I would judge them according to the laws of Allah's Book. But as for that which you want, it is likely as a guile for a child to turn away from milk. Indeed, if you think of the matters with your mind, apart from your own desires and inclinations, you would find me the most sinless of the killing of Uthman.

You should know that you are from the released men (whom the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" set free on the day of the conquest of Mecca, and then, they embraced Islam), who have no right to get the office of caliphate, and who are also far from the matter of consultation.

I sent to you Jarir Ibn Abdullah, who is from the people of faith and Migration (in order to negotiate with you). So, you should give the pledge of allegiance, and there is no Power but with Allah."

This is the letter of the grand imam to Mu'awiyah, as narrated by Muzahim Ibn Nasr in his book about the battle of Siffin. Is there any way of thinking more just and right than this? Consider his saying to Mu'awiyah: "No doubt, the best thing I like concerning you is peace", and his saying: "You should enter into that into which all the Muslims has entered (i.e. giving the pledge of allegiance to the grand imam), and then you might ask for judging them before me in your presence, and I would judge them according to the laws of Allah's Book."

In spite of Mu'awiyah's rebellion, retraction from giving the pledge of allegiance, instigating the people against the grand imam, and calling them to fight him, the grand imam offered to him to be the general prosecutor in the case of Uthman. Is there any right and justice beyond that? Is there any indulgence and concession beyond that?

But, Mu'awiyah had agreed with his assistants (to insist on rejecting the call of the grand imam). So, his reply to the letter was that he went too far to accuse the caliph of killing Uthman, and diligence of mobilizing more armed people from the inhabitants of Sham under the shirt of him.

In Medina, there were some companions from among the Emigrants and Ansar, who favoured to be neutral, at the top of whom a group of such great companions as Abdullah Ibn Umar, Usamah Ibn Zaid, Sa'd Ibn Abu Waqqas, and Muhammad Ibn Maslamah. When the grand imam intended to set out for Basra, a short time before the battle of Jamal, to which he called them, they excused, depending upon the proof that they were ordered by Allah to fight the infidels, and since this fight would be among the Muslims, they had not to be involved in it.

This situation caused pain to some of Ali's companions, who asked him to force them to get out with him, but, he rejected, and respected their neutrality, saying: "Let them be with they have chosen for themselves."

Indeed, the refusal of those elite (to get out with the grand imam) was not out of their denial of the right or merits of Ali, but, it was due to the reason we offered earlier. In this issue, Sa'd Ibn Abu Waqqas said to him: "Give me a sword, if I strike an infidel with it, it would kill him, and if I strike a Muslim with it, he would return (to the right)." Abdullah Ibn Umar said: "I pledged my Lord not to fight anyone, who testifies that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him". Usamah Ibn Zaid said: "By Allah, O Commander of Believers! Had you been in the mouth of a lion, I would have liked to be with you. But, I never like to face with my sword any Muslim person."

However, the caliph respected the neutrality of his brothers, and he did not prevent them from following the way they had chosen for themselves.

But, Mu'awiyah was not satisfied with whatever force he prepared in Sham. He had a desire for polarizing those great companions, thinking that they remained behind and did not support the grand imam out of their suspicion in his right or valid intention. So, he sent his messengers to them, inducing them to support him, telling them that they had more right to get the caliphate than Ali. He sent to Sa'd, Abdullah Ibn Umar

and Muhammad Ibn Maslamah. But very soon, he received (their replies which were as violent as) slaps from them, which made him regret for what he had done.

As for Abdullah Ibn Umar, he replied to him: “Now and then: The matter which made you desirous for my supporting you is the same, which led you to be in the state you’ve reached. I did not remain behind from supporting Ali out of my refusal of him, by my life, I’m not as Ali in both faith and Migration, as well as his position from the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, and his striking the infidels. But there happened something for which I never made a pledge to the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, in which I became neutral. So, you should stop your evil from us.”

The reply of Sa’d Ibn Abu Waqqas was as follows: “However, this is a matter, which we disliked in the beginning, as well as we disliked it in the end. As for Talhah and Az-Zubair, had they adhered to their houses, it would have been better for them. Might Allah forgive for (A’ishah) the Mother of the Believers what she had done. I’m not to fight Ali, since I heard the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” having said to him: “You’re from me in position as Aaron was from Moses, except that there would be no Prophet after me.””

Muhammad Ibn Maslamah wrote to Mu’awiyah saying: “As for you, by my life, you asked for nothing other than the (material benefits of this) world, and followed nothing other than your own inclinations. If you claim you are supporting Uthman after his death, you had disappointed him while he was alive. If you see that this (claim) should lead you to something different from what you wanted, surely, you would not set out for that for which you’ve claimed. No doubt, I know what is right better than you.”

It was better for Mu’awiyah to awake up on the voices of those three men from the great companions of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”. But, he hid their letters, and went on his way which he chose for himself, raising on whose forepart the shirt of Uthman.

The grand imam Ali perceived that Mu’awiyah was haughtily proud of the power of his army, and the support he had from the people of Sham who surrounded him. Moreover, he did not appreciate well the power of the grand imam itself. The grand imam thought that if he

pressed upon Mu'awiyah, and showed him his great power, this might lead him to comply with his order. Hence, he decided to proceed towards Sham, and give Mu'awiyah a crossing, but scolding, strike, after which he would call to reconciliation and making peace.

The grand imam left the camp of Nakhilah in Kufah, and Mu'awiyah left Sham, and the two parties met in Siffin. The early hours of this meeting gave us one of the brilliant scenes of the son of Abu Talib, i.e. the scenes of his greatness and heroism of his morality.

When Mu'awiyah and his army reached Siffin Eastern of Euphrates, they ran towards the only way which leads to the river, and occupied it. They placed ten thousand fighters in order to safeguard it, and prevent the army of the grand imam from reaching the water.

The grand imam sent to Mu'awiyah, reminding him of the honour of fighting, and that he should leave the way of water open to the thirsty men. But, Mu'awiyah, and those who advised him rejected. The companions of the grand imam spent a day and a night without water, and they became so much thirsty, to the extent that the weakest from amongst them were about to die.

In the morning, a force from the army of the Commander of the Believers led by both of Al-Ash'ath Ibn Qais and Al-Ashtar. It succeeded to sweep the forces of Mu'awiyah from the way of water, which it occupied. In this way, it was open to the army of the grand imam, and close to the army of Mu'awiyah.

Let's pay attention to the dialogue between Mu'awiyah and Amr Ibn Al-As, after their force had been driven away from the way of water:

Amr: What do you think of the army (of Ali) O Mu'awiyah, if they withhold the water from you as you did yesterday?

Mu'awiyah: give up what was in the past. but, do you think Ali would do so?

Amr: I do not think that Ali would make lawful from you what you've made lawful from him. He did not come in order to make you thirsty, but he came for other purpose.

This dialogue between his enemies was sufficient for the Commander of the believers (to affirm his nobility and honour). This opinion in his gallantry, greatness and high conducts towards those who accused him of the killing of Uthman was sufficient for him.

The first command of Ali following the occupation of the way of water was that no one should be driven away from it, and no drinker should be prevented from it. Thus, the army of Mu'awiyah did not taste the bitterness of thirst even for a single moment, because Ali, with his greatness and gallantry was there.

After this strong scolding, the grand imam tried to turn Mu'awiyah away from the war, and save for him a good opportunity for reconciliation. He delegated four of his men to go and meet him. They went to him and had a long talks with him. They said to him: "Our companion (Ali) is him, of whose virtue and good merits all of the Muslims were well aware, and we do not think you're ignorant of them. The pious men of religion and good qualities would not find anyone match for Ali "Peace be upon him", nor would they make a comparison between you and him. So, you should fear Allah O Mu'awiyah, and do not differ from Ali! We, by Allah, find none more god-fearing, more abstinent in this world, and having more good merits of goodness than him."

Would the heart of Mu'awiyah not be smooth after all of that? Consider how was his reply: "Your companion killed our caliph, dispersed our group, and gave shelter to the caliph's killers, and prevented us from retaliating for him. Your companion pretends that he did not kill him, and we would not refute that. Let him give us the killers of Uthman, so that we would kill them. After that, we would respond to you, and comply with the obedience and adhere to the group (of Muslims)."

The delegate returned to Ali, and conveyed to him the reply of Mu'awiyah. The grand imam received it sadly, and then recited Allah's saying: "Truly thou canst not cause the Dead to listen, nor canst thou cause the Deaf to hear the call, (especially) when they turn back in retreat. Nor canst thou be a guide to the Blind, (to prevent them) from straying: only those wilt thou get to listen who believe in Our Signs, and they will bow in Islam."

Since they were in the month of Muharram, in which the fight is forbidden, the grand imam waited until the month of Safar, when he decided to go on fight. Some of his companions had the intention to attack the army of Mu'awiyah surprisingly, but, the grand imam, the man and the hero rejected.

At the sunset of the day before fighting, he ordered a group of his soldiers to stand near the camp of Mu'awiyah, announcing that the fight would be on the coming day. He called Marthad Ibn Al-Harith, and ordered him to jump the nearest hill to the camp of Mu'awiyah, and make them hear the following words: "O people of Sham! The Commander of the Believers says to you: I waited you for a long time, so that you might return to the truth. I established a proof upon you depending on the Book of Allah, to which I called you (for judgement). But, you did not stop from your tyranny, nor did you respond to the truth. So, I threw to you the time of the beginning of fight to be equal in readiness, for Allah Almighty never loves the betrayers."

In this way, he rejected to attack them by surprise, or give them a swift strong strike, which would have saved more time and victims in winning the battle. He rejected to do so because he had a hope for peace to the last moment. He thought that if he told them of the firm intention and time of the fight, they might return to their minds and adhere to the truth. Furthermore, he rejected to do so because his good morality was not to accept this kind of victory, whatever speedy and decisive it might be. We would see him practicing the strife with Mu'awiyah according to this high morality, without abandoning his ideals and religion, whatever evil the consequences might be.

However, the front of his enemies was more intelligent and prudent than him. But he "Allah be pleased with him" rejected to replace sincerity, piety and faithfulness with intelligence. In this connection, he told, and he was true, that if Mu'awiyah emerged victorious over him, he would not do so by his capability, bravery, or intelligence, but he would do so with the help of the piety of the grand imam himself. Yes. His refraining from the means which his religion and good manners rejected saved for Mu'awiyah more opportunities for victory.

The grand imam told them of the time of fighting as we mentioned. Then, he went on mobilizing his forces, to which he issued his instructions in fighting:

"Do not fight your enemies until they begin it, for you are, praise be to Allah, fighting depending upon a right proof, and your leaving them until they begin fighting you is another proof for you against them. If you fight and them emerge victorious over them, do not kill an escaping one, or a wounded person. Do not uncover the private parts of anyone, and do not mutilate any dead body.

If you reach their tents, do not violate a curtain, or enter a home without taking permission. Do not take anything from their property, and do not approach their women, even if they abuse you or your chiefs and good men. You should celebrate Allah much, so that you might be prosperous.”

The two armies met in the battle of Siffin, which was so much horrible and long, until the ground was filled with blood, and covered with the dead bodies of the victims. The grand imam was scared so much because of the multitudes of victims.

In order to put an end to the matter, and stop bloodshed, he introduced on his horse, and called Mu'awiyah to get out (to have a swordfight with him), but he did not do. When the battles of this day was over, he sent to him a letter in which he said: “O Mu'awiyah! Why do you kill people between you and me? Get out to me, and whoever killed his foe would have the office of ruling.”

Mu'awiyah consulted his friend Amr Ibn Al-As, who said to him: “The man has done justice to you. So, you should get out to him.” But, the opinion of Amr made him angry, and he found in it an evil intention to get rid of him, for he knew well that Ali did not fight anyone but that he would kill him.

In order to divert this disturbing idea of Mu'awiyah, Amr said to him: “I'm going to fight Ali tomorrow.” On the coming day, after the two armies were ready for fighting, Amr stood up and called the grand imam Ali to have a swordfight with him. The grand imam got out to him, and they competed one another while being over their horses. While the grand imam was about to strike Amr with his sword, Amr jumped on the ground, and stretched his body in a state of surrender, fright and imploring (to him to save his life). The grand imam caught a glimpse of him victoriously and generously. He left him, and did not harm him.

Had Amr saved for the grand imam this grace, and abandoned his desire for governorship, surely, the course of strife would have taken a different direction. But, he did not do so.

When the fight troubled the army of Sham, and the victory was about to be for the army of the grand imam, there remained just a short period, after which the rebellion of Mu'awiyah would come to an end. At this time, while Mu'awiyah was expressing his regret, and gazing at Amr,

begging for his opinion and advice, the son of Al-As opened his quiver in order to take out a new trick.

He said to Mu'awiyah: "I've made with the help of my cunning a trick, which I kept for that day. Raise the Mushafs (over the teeth of the spears), and call to the judgement according to the laws of Qur'an. If they (the people of Ali) accepted the judgement, they would go on difference among themselves, and if they rejected it they would go on difference too."

Yes. The judgement in this way, under those circumstances would not give rise to differences among the defeated men, for it, at least, would give them an opportunity to remobilize themselves, and rebuild their force once again. But as for the victorious people, between whom and the decisive victory there was no more than an hour, it would give rise to a great difference among them; and this was what happened.

As soon as the forerunners of the army of Mu'awiyah had raised the Mushafs with which they proceeded towards Iraq, there was a dispute (among the soldiers of the army of Ali). The grand imam perceived immediately that it was a guile, of which he warned his people. But Al-Ash'ath Ibn Qais and a group of the reciters (of the Qur'an) went on persuading the people of the necessity of judging the case according to Allah's Book.

The grand imam said: "I've more right than anyone else to respond to Allah's Book. But I know them better than you. It is a word of right, with which falsehood is wanted. I have not fought them but to comply with the judgement of the Qur'an. Then, how should I refuse its judgement now? However, the people did not raise the Mushafs for they wanted the judgement of the Qur'an. But they wanted no more than deceiving and beguiling you. So, you might give me your arms only for an hour, for the truth was about to reach its destination."

But, very soon, the opposition reached its heights, and Al-Ash'ath took the lead of it. Al-Ashtar with his detachment and force was near the dilapidated camp of Sham. He was getting ready for the last attack upon it. Nothing was between him and them more than a few steps of a horse, as he himself described.

Al-Ash'ath and those with him asked the grand imam to send someone to summon him. The grand imam sent somebody to summon him, but Al-Ashtar grew mad, and said to the messenger: "Return and tell

them that there remain no more than a few moments, after which all would be over. Then, how should I return now?"

As soon as the supporters of the arbitration had heard the reply of Al-Ashtar, they threatened to assassinate the imam himself unless Al-Ashtar returned immediately.

What had happened to those suddenly? What had happened to Al-Ash'ath in particular? Had the war troubled him? Had he worked on behalf of himself or anyone else in favour of a certain purpose, far from the case for which the grand imam was fighting? Had he been jealous of Al-Ashtar whom he had envied, to the extent that he felt it hard that Al-Ashtar would be the hero of the last strike, the forerunner of the conquest, and the carrier of the glad tidings of victory? Had he thought that the war did not come to its end with this imagined speed, and that the offered peace was a good opportunity which they should not skip?

All or at least some of that might be possible. Anyway, they imposed their opinion of the necessity of accepting arbitration. Al-Ashtar returned from his place near the gates of the camp of Sham, after he had been getting himself ready for giving them the last strike. He returned in a state of fury and angry.

The document of arbitration was written, and Mu'awiyah announced that his representative in it was Amr Ibn Al-As. Who then would be the representative of the grand imam? Al-Ash'ath and another group appeared and nominated Abu Musa. The grand imam objected, suggesting Abdullah Ibn Abbas. It is true that the faith of Abu Musa was not questionable in the sight of the grand imam Ali, except for some faults for which he criticized him concerning this dispute between him and Mu'awiyah. But the situation in the sight of the grand imam was in need of a man, as cunning and resourceful as Amr Ibn Al-As. Ibn Abbas, as well-known to all people, was the required match. He was, though being pious and god-fearing, far-reaching and too difficult to be deceived by whatever cunning and sneakiness Ibn Al-As had.

But, Al-Ash'ath and his group insisted on Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari. In order to avoid any possibility of afflictions among his people, the grand imam accepted their opinion concerning the representative for arbitration, as he had done in the matter of the arbitration itself.

The matters went on its well-known way. After a long dialogue between both Abu Musa and Amr, they agreed that each of them would

oust his companion, i.e. Ali and Mu'awiyah. With this, the matter of ruling would become subject to consultations among the Muslims, who would choose their imam and caliph.

Amr called upon Abu Musa to start talking. Abu Musa started talking, and ousted both Ali and Mu'awiyah. Then, Amr followed him saying: "Abu Musa ousted his companion as you've seen, and I also oust him as he did, and I affirm Mu'awiyah as the Commander of the Believers, and the claimant of the blood of Uthman. So, you should give him the pledge of allegiance."

But, Abu Musa grew angry and furious because this visible deceit. In this way, the arbitration ended with this comic conclusion, in order that fight would turn to break up once again. But, against whom would it be?

However, this man, Ali Ibn Abu Talib was uniquely great. He seemed to be prompted by a strong longing for departure from life when he would fall as martyr of his ideals, principles and faith, of the right conduct, intention and conscience.

He had an opportunity to refute the trick of the arbitration before the two arbitrators gathered. When Al-Ash'ath Ibn Qais went on reciting the document of arbitration before the groups of the army, one of those groups received him with cries of denial saying: "No doubt, we've committed a mistake when we accepted the arbitration. Let's retract from this mistake. There is no judgement but for Allah."

Had the grand imam introduced and merely adopted this new opposition to the arbitration, surely, the direction (of the conflict) would have changed. But, on the contrary, he said when the news of such an opposition had reached him: "Would we do so after we had given the pledge and treaty (for accepting arbitration)?"

Might Allah save you O father of Hasan! Have you been doomed to fight with honour in a battle, from which the honour itself was absent and in which it was alien? He refused to repeal a pledge which he gave, though he was surrounded by treachery from all sides.

Moreover, the conclusion of the arbitration was as comic as Amr Ibn Al-As wanted and predicted. The disputes ruptured the rows of the followers of the grand imam, and very soon, they turned into opposing factions, fighting each other, and even fighting the grand imam himself, facing him with the most wicked violation.

The grand imam stood among the remaining group of his companions, who were not turned away from their loyalty to the truth. He had no time for reproach or pang of guilt. But all the time and opportunities available to him, if there was any, was just sufficient for remobilizing his forces, and proceeding towards Sham. But, with whom would you proceed to Sham, O Commander of Believers? And why? Would he go on with those who had faith in the truth, no matter few they might be, in order to complete his militancy which he started in the cause of the truth itself?

He was as strongly rigid as it could be in undertaking his responsibilities. When he plunged into the fight which was imposed upon him by the other side, he did not do so in order to get a victory or support his position as a caliph. But, he did so, because his responsibilities enjoined upon him to do it. When his companions forced him to accept the arbitration, he stopped fighting. But, since the arbitration failed and turned into falsehood and deceit, his responsibilities made it obligatory upon him to resume fighting once again.

It is true that the situation changed significantly, for a large portion of his companions turned against him, and carried arms in his face because he, in their sight, accepted the arbitration, i.e. the arbitration which they themselves imposed upon him. Another portion of his followers stayed behind, and did not take part in fighting. But, all of that, and even more than that was not to weaken the strength and determination of the grand imam. That's because he thought he was fighting in a battle of truth; and the battles of the truth were not to be fought depending upon large numbers of people. He had then to go on with his responsibilities until Allah Almighty settles the matter which has been decreed.

In this way, he mobilized his forces. But, as soon as he had moved from Nakhilah, he received some disturbing news. It was the news of the Kharijites, who set out wandering in the cities and towns, killing everyone who might differ in opinion with them.

Whenever they met anyone of the Muslims, they would ask him: "Was not the acceptance of arbitration considered to be infidelity? Has Ali not committed a sin by accepting it? Are we not free from his obedience and pledge of allegiance we gave to him until he confesses of his mistake and repent to Allah?" if he answered in the affirmative, they would let him safely, and if he answered in the negative, they would shed his blood and kill him.

Their news reached the grand imam, to whom the people from everywhere sent for relief, beseeching him not to go to Sham for fight before securing them, and saving them from this destructive danger, which became widespread unexpectedly.

Do the people learn of a trial more difficult and much heavier than this of our hero? But, the father of Hasan was the most fitting for facing it. He was not to give up his responsibilities even if the earth was replaced with another, and even if the sand of the desert turned into fighters against him, and the seas turned into blazing fire surrounding him. Let all such titles and properties as the caliph, the imam, and the skillful victorious go away from him, for the sake of only one, i.e. the faithful believer.

However, the life according to his thought was a case of faith. Whoever lost his faith, would surely lose his life, even he lived one thousand years. Whoever gained his faith would gain his life, even he lived no more than a few years. Now, while being surrounded by destructive dangers, was not regretful of any step he had taken.

His son Hasan approached him and said to him blaming: "O my father! I advised you to get out of Medina when Uthman was besieged. If he was killed, he would be killed while you were outside it. I also advised you following the killing of Uthman, when the people came to you returned and then came once again to offer to you the pledge of allegiance as caliph, not to accept it until the pledge of allegiance came to you from all parts of the state. When you learnt that Talhah and Az-Zubair, in addition to A'ishah, the Mother of the Believers had set out to Basra, I advised you to return to Medina and stay in your Home. But, you did not accept my advice in anyone of those."

Al-Hasan was worried about his father. So, he went on remembering the past. but, his father was rest assured, confident and pleased with what had happened in the past, as well as what would happen in the future. That's because along the journey of his life, he was not a slave of his inclinations, nor was he a claimant of glory. But, he was a soldier in the battle of the loyalty to the truth.

He answered his son Al-Hasan: "As for my getting out (of Medina) when Uthman was besieged, it was impossible, for the people surrounded me as well as they surrounded him. As for my waiting for the pledge of allegiance from all regions, no doubt, the pledge of allegiance would not be valid but from the inhabitants of the two Sacred mosques in Mecca

and Medina, from among the Emigrants and the Ansar. If they accepted and gave the pledge of allegiance, it would become incumbent upon all to accept and give the pledge of allegiance. As for my returning to Medina and staying in my house (when I learnt that Talhah and Az-Zubair, in addition to A'ishah, the Mother of the Believers had set out to Basra), had I done so, I would have been treacherous to the Muslims and the nation.”

Those were his situations, as clear and decisive. Those were his motivations, as pure and clean. He felt no sorry for standing beside any right, which he failed to attain. He used not to be scared by a fate, which had been decreed by Allah.

During his life in general, and this conflict and afflictions in particular, the hero was also keen on investigating the right, and proceeding under the banner of the truth. Yes. The right was his favourite deed and way, i.e. all sorts of right: the right of thought, the right of feeling, the right of will, and the right of deed.

If he was wrong in a certain matter (in which he depended upon his knowledge to reach the truth), it would not com out of his feeling too arrogant to accept or challenge the truth, nor would it be because of his shortage of investigating the truth. But, on the contrary, it would be out of his excessive loyalty to the truth and right, and his attempts to overpower the difficult dark conditions, during which he was doomed to bring back the reality of Islam, and the unity of Muslims.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE LATE AND THE LIVING

“I leave them in their world and choose Allah and His Messenger.”
(Said Ali).

Although all the opportunities were lost, Ali himself lost nothing. They were lost from the rightly-guided Muslim state, which Ali wanted to bring back to its reality, and go on with it on the straight path on which it was at first.

They were lost from Islam itself, which was so much closer to becoming at a time of getting a caliph like Umar in his rigidity and justice, in his uprightness and piety, and in his refraining (from the worldly benefits), humbleness and abstinence.

He was the ascetic caliph, to whom the property and wealth used to be brought lawfully from all parts of the state, although he himself used to put on a garment at a price of no more than three Dirhams. He was the orator, whose words used to affect all the people, while coming out of his lips as elegant and attractive. He was the knowledgeable religious jurist, who was whole-minded and wise, through his tongue the truth used to be clear. He was the pious god-fearing worshipper, who overpowered all inducements of this world and desires of people. He was the first righteous disciple of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, and the stepson of the Divine revelation, in addition to being the first precedent of all the Muslims (to embrace Islam).

The man who had all of that is now on his way to departure (from this world), in order that a strong king would occupy his position, who had his palace and throne in Sham, where the banners of vanity and favouritism was flirting, and the drums of the empty glories and scabby ambitions were being beaten.

Now, the matters are approaching their conclusion. The hero stood between two overwhelming afflictions: The first was in Sham, crying: “Come to retaliate for Uthman”, and the other was in Iraq, crying: “There is no judgement but for Allah.”

Although the first was more violent and much stronger, the second was more bitter and painful. That’s because those who flamed and

kindled it were the same, who were earlier his followers and soldiers, who insisted, or at least most of them, on accepting the arbitration of which he warned them, calling them to reject it, and who insisted, or at least most of them, on choosing Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari, when he called them pressingly to choose Abdullah Ibn Abbas, because he was more capable of blunting the cunning, and refuting the maneuvers of Amr.

They were the same, who carried the arms in order to judge the matters according to their own desires. They were the same, who frightened and scared the safe people. They were the same, who forced him at last to carry the arms against them. He made several attempts to persist them, and get them return to the right, but both seduction and error had a great control over their minds and hearts.

However, he lost all hopes for guiding them to the right, when the news of their killing Abdullah Ibn Khabbab and his wife, and the way they had been killed had reached him. Abdullah was a son of a glorious companion, whose embracing Islam and life entirely were regarded as a wonderful and elegant pattern for all, i.e. Khabbab Ibn Al-Aratt.

The Kharijites met them on the way, while they were on journey, and then, they detained them. They asked Abdullah to relate to them some Prophetic traditions of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", which he had heard from his father. He said to them: I heard my father saying: I heard the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" having said: "There would be affliction, in which the one who is sitting would be better from him who is walking, and the one who is walking would be better from him who is running." They asked him about the grand imam Ali, and he spoke well of him. The result was that they killed him and his wife.

Now, let's see this laughing paradox. While they were going with them, a fruit fell down from a date-palm, which one of the Kharijites received with his mouth. Before he chewed it, his companions said to him loudly: "How do you make it lawful without the permission of the owner of the date-palm, and you did not paid its price?" he threw it, regretted, and went on asking for Allah's forgiveness.

A few steps later, they attacked Abdullah and slew him. Then, they turned grievously to his wife, who cried fearfully: "I'm pregnant, so, fear Allah concerning me." But, they slew her too, and split open her belly.

Those were from the people, who fought beside the grand imam earlier. No doubt, Allah Almighty learnt whatever evil in their hearts. So, He purified him from their companionship.

As soon as the grand imam had been informed of the killing of Abdullah and his wife, he felt how painful the destiny of the sinless people would be if those wild wanderers were left to cause mischief on the earth. Thus, he turned his army from Sham towards Nahrawan, where he met the Kharijites in a decisive battle, in which he was able to destroy them, dispersed their group, and killed their chiefs and leaders.

Was not it time for him to take rest, wipe off his hands this darkness and depart from this desert, in order to worship Allah Almighty with his pure heart, and benefit the Muslims with his comprehensive knowledge?

Perhaps this might have been some of his hopes, but who else could undertake his responsibilities and consequences? None but him could carry them upon his shoulders, and nothing other death would relieve him of them. Where was it, and when would it be? He felt it was time for it.

The people of Kufah, whom he called to set out with him towards Sham for facing Mu'awiyah, stayed behind, and did not go with him. They started escaping stealthily from his camps in Nakhilah, until when it was morning on one day, the imam turned towards them, and found that they decreased to no more than one thousand. His role came then to an end. What is the reason for his survival for more time?

All of his life during its last portion was restricted to a great case, i.e. to bring back the reality of Islam, the unity of Muslims, and the constancy, straightness, and right way of the Islamic state. Yes. The case for which he vowed his life was to restore Islam to its reality, and to bring the Muslims back to Islam. He did not let any aspect of peace or war with which he might achieve his purpose but that he followed so much justly and with great honour.

Anyway, his case was apparently obvious, elegant, pure, and having a clear proof. Its greatness was proved to be true on the day, when Mu'awiyah got up to take the pledge of allegiance by force for his son Yazid, and we seek refuge with Allah's Words (of goodness) from the evil of what he had done. Had he taken it for one of the good righteous men from among the Umayyads, surely, it would have not permissible

for him to use force against the Muslims in doing so. Then, what about it since it was for Yazid, and this is enough!

This act of Mu'awiyah uncovered one side of the glorious case for the sake of which the grand imam fought. It was that the matter of caliphate and ruling of Muslims should not end up to the released men of the Umayyads, and instead, it should remain among the good righteous pious people from among the early Emigrants and Ansar who had the precedence of embracing Islam.

Yes. On that day, this side of the great case, for which the hero had vowed his life was uncovered, which, in turn, threw light upon all sides of it. At this time, there was no one of the Muslims but that his voice became hoarse out of weeping and asking for Allah's mercy upon the grand imam Ali. On this day, one of the greatest companions stood up and said: "I never felt sorry for anything in my life but for that I did not fight beside Ali the transgressing faction." Yes. He said so, with tears wetting his beard. This glorious companion was the good man, the son of the good man, Abdullah Ibn Umar.

The Muslims everywhere, and in Iraq in particular, felt they were involved in the crime, as if they took part in the sin (of killing the imam), on the day, when they left the hero alone in the lonely space, among people who were like monsters and wolves. They went on weeping and wailing. They felt suddenly the destructive space left by the absence of their good compassionate merciful and kind father. They went on asking for Allah's mercy upon him from the depths of their chanting imploring hearts.

I say that they asked for Allah's mercy upon him. Yes! I forgot to tell you that he died. He was assassinated, and then fell as martyr. The hero, the caliph, and the grand imam was martyred while he was approaching the mosque of Kufah. It was also narrated that he was killed while he was praying or getting himself for prayer, after he had crossed the streets of Kufah, awakening its inhabitants for performing the Dawn prayer with his glorious voice: "Come to the prayer O faithful people! Come to the prayer, might Allah bestow mercy upon you!"

Then, in the middle of darkness, one of the Kharijites named Abd Ar-Rahman Ibn Maljam came close to him, who made a conspiracy with other two men to get rid of the grand imam in Iraq, Mu'awiyah in Sham, and Amr Ibn Al-As in Egypt.

Since the grand imam had no guards, his killing was so much easy. The crime was not in need of any strength, power or heroism. It necessitated no more than a dead conscience, a misled thinking, a blind heart, and a disfigured will. When all of this was available in a certain person, armed with a poisoned sword, and then ordered to kill this (man representing the) right guidance and glory, the crime was done very quickly.

In this way, the fate of the hero realized for him the last hope. A few days before his martyrdom, he addressed the people of Kufah through one of his letters, which one of his companions stood up to recite to them following the Friday prayer, in which he said:

“Would that Allah might let me depart from you, and then take me unto Him. Would that I have not neither seen nor known you at all. By Allah! You caused me to be so much angry and furious, suffering from a severe bitterness, and spoilt my opinion with your disobedience and disappointment, to the extent that the people of Quraish said about me: The son of Abu Talib is a brave man, but he has no enough knowledge of the affairs of war.

Might Allah bestow mercy upon their fathers! Is there from among all of them one who has been more experienced and powerful than me in it? I started practicing it when I was less than twenty years old. And I’m now over sixty. But, no doubt, there would be no good opinion for him, who is not obeyed (by his followers).”

Yes Commander of the Believers! There would be no good opinion for him, who is not obeyed by his followers. The fate hastened to realize your hope, and very soon, Allah Almighty took you out of them. He took you unto His Mercy, as pious, god-fearing and pure. You were carried unto the highest companions by your safe amiable boat, with which you overpowered the waves of afflictions, until you succeeded to cross them peacefully, to which you took refuge along your entire life.

You used to adhere to it so much deeply whenever you remembered the dialogue which was between you and the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” one day, i.e. when he asked you: “O Ali! What would you do if the people became abstinent in the hereafter, desired for the (material benefits of the) world, devoured Inheritance all with greed, and loved wealth with inordinate love, dealt with their religion very defectively, and then turned into opposing

factions?" you, O Commander of Believers, answered him: "Then, I would leave them and their world, and let them be with what they chose for themselves. Then, I would choose Allah, His Messenger and the hereafter, and keep patient until I join you."

Nay! You selected well O father of Hasan! You also kept patient and you've done well, O father of Husain! Then, you joined those whom you loved from the Messengers, martyrs and pious dutiful people.

The grand imam met his Lord after he had been struck by a poisoned sword, the same as Umar, Al-Faruq had met Him as a result of a strike by a poisoned dragon. Here, the greatness of this hero kept on making the last scene of his life so much worthy of it, and indicative of its reality.

As soon as he had received the strike of the sword on his head, he was carried to his home. While being in such a critical distress, he ordered his carriers and those surrounding him to return to the mosque and catch the Dawn prayer before they have missed it, i.e. this prayer for which he was getting himself ready, but the sinful assassination prevented him to complete it.

After they had finished from the prayer and returned to him, and at the same time, some people returned to him arresting Abd Ar-Rahman Ibn Maljam, the killer, the grand imam opened his eyes, and looked at him. When he knew him, he nodded sadly and said: "Is it you (who did so)? No doubt, I did well to you so much."

The great hero caught a glimpse of his sons and companions, and found that they were so much angry and furious, filled with hatred towards the killer. He felt the cool of death circulating in his limbs. He foresaw the evil destiny of Ibn Maljam. He nearly felt the horrible revenge, which his sons would take of him (Ibn Maljam).

So, he introduced to protect his killer from any excess in mistreating him, or transgressing the limits of the legitimate retaliation, according to the law of equality. He called them unto him, with his words getting out of his mouth hoarse and husky, in order to draw a brilliant canvas, inspired from the human greatness bestowed upon him by virtue of the Holy Qur'an. He said to his sons and family: "Do well in his hospitality, and treat him generously. If I live, I would be more right to deal with him, whether by retaliation according to the law of equality or pardon. But, if I die, let him join me (by killing him), so that I would judge him

before the Lord of the worlds. Do not kill anyone else for me. No doubt, Allah loves not the aggressors.”

We should let this scene with no comment, for no words could rise up to its level. But, let's move to another scene, or in other words, to another side of the scene of the conclusion of the life of the grand imam.

During his last moments, a delegate from his companions visited him, and asked him to appoint his son Hasan as his successor. But, he rejected that and said: “I neither order you to do so, nor do I prevent you from doing so, for you're more knowledgeable of your affairs.”

They wanted to force him to do so, by touching the sensitive string, which they knew would move the son of Abu Talib from his depths. They said to him: “What would you say to your Lord when you meet Him, without appoint your successor as ruler over us?” he replied to them: “I would say to him: I left them without appointing anyone as my successor as well as Your Messenger had left the Muslims without appointing anyone as his successor.”

Then, he called unto him all of his sons, on the top of whom was Hasan “Allah be pleased with them”, and dictated his well to them: “I advise you to fear Allah, your Lord, and do not die but as Muslims. Hold fast , all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves. No doubt, I heard the Messenger of Allah “Allah's blessing and peace be upon him” having said: “Indeed, putting an end to the hostilities and enmities among you is better than offering prayers and observing fasts.”

Fear Allah and beware of Him in keeping on reciting and acting upon the Qur'an, for in this way, none would precede you in deed. Fear Allah and Beware of Him in taking care of the poor and needy people. Join them in your living. Do not fear, (in saying and doing what is right) for the sake of Allah, the blame of any blamer, for it is He, Who would protect you against anyone who wanted to hurt or oppress you.

Do not let the matter of ordering the people to do good, and preventing them from doing evil, and speak well to the people as you've been ordered by Allah Almighty. You should keep good relations with one another, and beware of harbouring mutual enmities among yourselves. You should cooperate with one another on the matters of dutifulness and god-fearing, and not upon committing sins and aggression.”

The grand imam was assassinated on the dawn of Friday, the eighteenth of the month of Ramadan, in the fortieth year of Hegira. His pure soul departed (from his body) at the time of sunset on Saturday, the nineteenth of Ramadan. In this way, the traveler returned to his homeland.

Although the son of Abu Talib departed from this world, his life, and the days he spent on the surface of the earth turned to be as shining and rising as the sun, which occupied its high position in the human life and history, to which it attracted the real values of the truth, heroism, faith, goodness and honour. Thus, the grand imam departed though he did not leave, and rode the mount (of the hereafter) though he did not let this world. He then is the present rider, and the resident going.

He opened for his celebration and remembrance the gates of eternity when he left the people to their world, and chose Allah, His Messenger and the hereafter. The tempests and hurricanes (of afflictions) surrounded him in order to lead him astray from the right way, or at least get him lose some of his rationality, or occupy him from his finalities and principles. But, on the contrary, he neither deviated from the right way, nor did he lose anything of his rationality, nor did he give up his principles. Moreover, when death came to him, it found him a great one, carrying his flag (of truth and faith).

However, this unique matchless sort of mankind is always granted eternity, in such a way that it is not to enter into the circle of forgetfulness and nonexistence, because it is the conscience and reason of humanity.

The biography of the son of Abu Talib has its position in the field of eternity, reminding all of humanity every time and space of the news of the astonishing loyalty to the truth, i.e. the loyalty of the child, the loyalty of the youth, and the loyalty of the old man, the loyalty of the fighter, and the loyalty of the devout man, the loyalty of the ordinary citizen and the loyalty of the ruler, and in short a firm unchangeable loyalty along all stages of life. That is because it is a natural and not an artificial loyalty, a primitive and not acquired loyalty, a faithful and not beneficial loyalty.

If the loyalty to the truth is to overpower the (material desires of this) world, and overcome its inducements and sources of seduction, the cousin and the disciple of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and

peace be upon him” reached in this issue the furthest point one could reach, and transcended upon what is possible.

One day, while being the caliph, he went to one of the markets of Kufah, carrying a sword of his, which was much dear to him, offering it for selling, saying: “Who might buy this sword of mine? By Allah! Had I had the price of a lower garment, surely I would not have sold it.”

What is the reason for this poverty, since the treasury received everyday the money in abundance, from which he had the right, as a Commander of the Believers, to take what is sufficient for him? Why did he insist on grinding his wheat and patch his garment by himself to the extent that it had no place for new patches? Why did he insist on eating the dry bread, whose wheat or barley was mixed with its bran? Why did he escape from the palace of ruling in Kufah to a hut of mud?

We are going to say why. That’s because one could not have both the loyalty to the truth and the haughty pride of the (vanities of this) world together. He learnt that from a good example, which he followed, about which he talked much, and of which he reminded others so much.

It was this good pattern, which did not turn from his mind even for a single moment, and about which he said, pointing to the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”: “The luxury of it (the world) was withheld from him, though it was subject to those who came after him.”

He also found it (i.e. the good pattern) in Moses, to whom Allah Almighty talked, who said: “O my Lord! truly am I in (desperate) need of any good that Thou dost send me!” By Allah! He did not ask Him but for a piece of bread to eat. He found it also in the Christ, son of Mary, who used to wear the coarse clothes, and eat the rough dry food, whose mount was his legs, and servant was his hands.

These are the high standings, which the repenting abstinent hero reached. For this reason, he found nothing equal in his sight to the coarse clothes and the dry rough food. His great hobby was to humiliate the world and overpower its inducements, by denying all of them very firmly and persistently. But, when he was in charge of the matter of ruling, and became the caliph of Muslims, this hobby turned into obligation.

Yes. His denying the world, and humiliating its authority and inducements were no longer merely a heroic hobby or even a spiritual exercise, but, they became obligatory, enjoined by the responsibilities of

ruling, and the consequences of his being an example which should be followed by others.

At this time, we heard him saying: “Would I be pleased to be said of me that I’m the Commander of the Believers, though I do not share people their distresses and hard times? By Allah! Had I wanted, I would get as much as I like from the finest sort of this honey, the best sort of wheat, and the softest kind of clothes. But, far be I from being overpowered by inclination to spend the night after eating my fill, while there are multitudes of hungry people suffering from hardship of life!”

For this reason, he still is present (in the teachings and instructions he gave), though he died. He instructed (and still instructs) man in every generation and age that the loyalty to the truth is the most expensive value one could have (and for which he might sacrifice everything and even his life). He instructed (and still instructs) the rulers of every generation and age that the loyalty to the truth is to reject the worldly inducements and the arrogance of authority.

He still is present, though he died. Our modern age could find in his method and way of ruling a source of mastership, and right guidance. Today, while the modern civilization mobilizes all power it has, in order to face the problem of poverty, develop the satisfaction and distribute wealth among the people with justice, we could notice that Ali, the Commander of the Believers, perceived nearly fourteen hundred years ago the severity of poverty, and the function of money, as a responsible ruler, and not as a hopeful instructor.

Although he was very devout and abstinent, this did not prevent him from knowing the severity, difficulty of poverty, and its hindering both the spirit and conscience from development. In this issue, he put it powerfully: “Had the poverty been a man, surely, I would have killed it.”

From the early hours of his ruling, he started to stop the accumulation of wealth, caused by the distinction between the portions and gifts of those who embraced Islam before the conquest of Mecca, and those who embraced Islam after it. He adhered to the rule of equality of giving. Within the limits of the treasury, everyone should take his needs with no more. However, he replied to the protesters of this method with short words, though having a significant meaning, when he said: “If this money is of me, surely I would give them equally. Then, how it should be since it is of Allah Almighty, and they are His servants?”

The function of money in his sight is to cover the needs of the people, one by one. Moreover, the money should not be given as reward for embracing a certain religion, or gift for having a certain position, nor should it be given as a price for any kind of effort. It should be given in order to enable people to get the necessities of their living, and cover their needs, no more or less. In this understanding, it should not be monopolized, or even pass around a few number of the rich people.

The confinement of money in the hands of a few number of people or homes is to underestimate its great function, and cancel its important and true role (it might play in the society) according to the religious understanding of the grand imam, as well as of Islam.

For this reason, he said some enlightening words, with which he formulated one of the greatest principles of his ruling and government:

“No doubt, Allah Almighty has made the sustenance of the poor people in the wealth of the rich ones. No poor person becomes hungry but because of the dyspepsia of a rich one (resulting from his excessively eating and getting much more than he needs).”

It is difficult to find a phrase talking of the function of money, implying such a uniquely mixture of both scientific thinking and human brightness as this: “No doubt, Allah Almighty has made the sustenance of the poor people in the wealth of the rich ones. No poor person becomes hungry but because of the dyspepsia of a rich one (resulting from his excessive fullness of eating and getting much more than he needs).”

The grand imam, with this principle, did not only want to deprive the money of the tendency of monopoly, but also he wanted to deprive it of the tendency of dissipation and spending it excessively, and defiance of using it in seeking for the pleasures. Indeed, the hungry of the poor persons results from the excessive fullness of the rich ones. Both hungry and excessive fullness are aspects of the dysfunction of money, and distributing it with no equality or justice.

Thus, when the function of wealth plays its role properly in covering the needs of living and meeting the necessities with no dissipation or extra spending, there would be no excessive fullness which creates hungry, nor would there be hungry, which harbours hatred against excessive fullness.

His true right phrase “No doubt, Allah Almighty has made the sustenance of the poor people in the wealth of the rich ones. No poor person becomes hungry but because of the dyspepsia of a rich one (resulting from his excessive fullness of eating and getting much more than he needs)” gives us a wonderful religious rule, i.e. that the right of the rich people in their wealth should not be exclusive of themselves, since in their societies, there are poor and needy people. On the contrary, both of them and the poor and needy people have right in it. In other words, the poor people whose hands are void of it have right in it as well as those whose hands are filled with it have right in it.

The grand imam “Allah be pleased with him” used to put to practice this principle of him, the same as he did with all of his principles. Nothing such as the violent afflictions or the flaming wars around him was able to divert him from doing so.

Do you think that this policy of him had a role in causing those who were his supporters earlier to bear grudges against him later? Did the fears of the rich Muslims or even of the would-be rich Muslims have an unseen role in fighting the caliph, who raised this slogan, and adopted this principle: “No doubt, Allah Almighty has made the sustenance of the poor people in the wealth of the rich ones”?

Anyway, only the outside form of the hero departed from this world. but, his living content and pure substance remained (and still would remain) as provision for the truth. The grand imam would remain living in all values and facts, for the sake of which he struggled along his entire life, and then died while carrying its banner.

He would remain living in all his virtues and good merits, from which he formulated his life which was as long as sixty-three years, and which Dirar Ibn Damrah Al-Kinani was perfect in describing when he said about the grand imam:

“He (had a deep insight which) was far-reaching, so much strong and determined. Whatever he said was unmistakably decisive, and he used to pass judgements with justice. He was so much knowledgeable, and wisdom used to be visible on his tongue. He felt an aversion for the world and its pleasures, as much as he felt rest by the night and its loneliness.

He was abundantly tearful and deeply thoughtful. He used to turn his palms and talk to himself. He admired the coarse clothes, and the rough

food. He was among us like anyone of us. He would answer us whenever we asked him, take the initiative (of responding to us) whenever we came to him, and come to us whenever we invited him.

Although we felt, by Allah, we were very close to him, we could hardly speak him in view of his strong respectability, nor could we take the initiative of talking to him in view of his greatness. Whenever he smiled, his teeth would be seen as white as pearls.

He used to appreciate the people of religion, and make the poor needy people close to him. The strong man would never be covetous of his lenience, nor would the weak one be disappointed because of his justice. I witness that I saw him on some occasions, when it was so much dark in the night, having sat down in his Mihrab, catching hold of his beard, moving with difficult as if he were a sick person, and weeping so much because of grief. It seemed as if I heard him saying:

“O World! O world! do you turn your back to me, or do you have longing for me? Far be I! Far be I (from being seduced by you)! You should induce anyone else. I detected three things in you, which could hardly change: One’s lifetime in you is short, the living in you is despicable, and you have a great danger (on those whom you might seduce). How painful the shortage of the provisions, the long journey, and the loneliness of the way (to the hereafter) might be!”

However, although the grand imam had no good fortune with the people, he had a great fortune with himself concerning his piety and purity. Without any support or aid from his friends or supporters, and without fear of the violent conspiracies made by his enemies, the grand imam Ali stood to build alone, with his firm faith and strength a high life, which would remain over the time enlightening to those of sound minds and intellects.

Indeed, if those who were extraordinarily excessive in fighting him, as well as those who were excessive in loving him were not just to him, his unique greatness was just to him, since it imposed its glory upon his enemies, as well as it affirmed to his friends its being too satisfied to be in need for anything or anyone, and remained over the time pure, flourishing and victorious; and this is the real greatness.

BOOK FIVE
THE MIRACLE OF ISLAM
UMAR IBN ABD AL-AZIZ

INTRODUCTION

Let the Commander of the Believers (Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz) forgive a writer, who transgressed his limits in talking about him, and writing the history of him, just as he did the same earlier in similar attempts.

Let the Commander of the Believers (Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz) forgive a writer, who could not suppress his desire for talking about him, though he knows for certain that the Commander of the Believers used not to like to be appraised, or his good qualities to be appreciated by anyone.

But, anyway, what might intercede for me in this issue is that the Commander of the Believers is not self-owned, but he is the dutiful son and the valuable precious property of Islam. Henceforth, writing about him is not his own right, it is a right for Islam itself, of which the son of Abd Al-Aziz was a good fruit.

Let him then give me the permission to fulfill a right for Islam, which I could hardly undertake, though I might fail to do so now as I did earlier in many right alike.

However, his story is so much astonishing, and only imagining it is so much difficult. But, in spite of that, it became necessary for us to go beyond the imagination to belief, as long as we respect and rely on history, of which we have confidence.

No doubt, those marvelous signs, which we shall see later, and the investigated facts through which we will go, have been transmitted to us by the most reliable sources of narration, transmission and history. Yes. The news of this brilliant man, and the holy ruler reached us with an unquestionable historical certainty.

The real difficulty, which I'm facing now, is what should I take, and what should I leave from this voluminous multitude of the facts and news, telling about his glorious simplicity, wonderful respectability, supreme justice, noble spirit, and marvelous method (of life and ruling). If there is an Arab aphorism saying: "Whoever has richness of matter would rather be able to select from it." But now, I find that it should be: "Whoever has richness of matter would be confused (because of difficulty of choosing from it)."

I thought that my writings in the Islamic biographies would stop after what I had written about the four successor of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, and this group of those pure great men around the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, and then the martyr grand imam Husain, and the grandsons of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” in Karbala.

I thought that my writings would stop at those good high patterns of the age of Divine revelation, whose beauty and majesty I admire so much. But, very soon, I saw, in the heights of glories, an empty place for a man, who, though not historically belonging to the age of Divine revelation, since he came tens of years later, might be considered to constantly and firmly belong to it with his holy spirit, and glorious piety. He is the marvelous man of Islam, Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz.

He did not only belonged to the age of the Divine revelation, but also he tried to imitate the age of the Divine revelation with its good ideals and virtues in a world, waving of troubles, wrong and oppression, which became decomposed by the excessive luxuries, dissipation and indulgence. He succeeded in his attempt so much astonishingly.

Would then we be surprised and amazed because he alone tried to achieve what was impossible? Or, would we be surprised and amazed because he alone succeeded in accomplishing what was impossible? He turned the tyrant kingdom established by the Umayyads sixty years ago into a just dutiful caliphate, representing all good qualities and merits of the age of the Divine revelation. And, what time it took him to do so? It took him not twenty years, ten years, but as little as no more than two years, five months and a few days.

However, we would not only be astonished by this good success and extraordinary capability granted to him by Allah in doing so. But also the biography of the son of Abd Al-Aziz had a unique characteristic, which made it the most interesting, the most brilliant and the most wonderful fact of humanity, and which made him a myth more truthful than a fact, and a fact more wonderful and astonishing than a myth.

He did not only occupy both people and history with his great worship, mercy, justice, judgement, ruling and caliphate, but also he occupied both people and history, before all that, with this astonishing spiritual turning, and the conditions which produced it.

The office of caliphate might uncover whatever genius its occupant has of organization, administration, judgement and policy. But, what is too difficult to imagine, if not to interpret is the fact that this position, with its inducements, authority, power and pride would be a direct cause of giving rise to the genius of spirituality and holiness; and this is what happened in the case of Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz.

Although he was, before his appointment as caliph, and along his lifetime, pure, righteous and meritorious, all of that was nothing to mention in comparison with his life and method of living after this glorious sudden leap, during which there happened the greatest spiritual turning one could ever see in the history of mankind.

What is more astonishing is that this brilliant turning occurred to the full within a time, as short as no more than a few minutes, and that this spiritual turning was not a result of motivations of abstinence, seclusion and devoutness, but, it was, on the contrary, a sudden result which gave rise to all desires for pleasures and delights of life in one's own self, no matter pious and god-fearing it might be.

Yes. During the minutes, or even during the moments he was called as the caliph and the ruler of the greatest empire at his world and time, this turning which was beyond description occurred. The man, who used a few minutes before his appointment as caliph, to use the most expensive kinds of perfume, live in one of the highest palaces, wear the most smart suits, eat the sweetest food, ride the finest sort of horses, and get a yearly income of as much as forty thousand Dinars, turned, within a few minutes, not hours or days, into another man, whose perfume was his sweat, whose horse was his feet, whose clothes were of the coarsest kinds, whose food was of the roughest sorts, having no income, for he gave his property and wealth to the treasury, and having no palaces, for he abandoned all of his great palaces, and instead, lived in a humble house made of mud, and whose throne, how glorious it was, turned into an old mat of straw, on which he sat over dust.

What was more complicating as well as wonderful and astonishing was that this hero of the interesting spiritual turning was not from among the commons, but, on the contrary, he was brought up in palaces of ruling, and the stepson of glories and blessing. Furthermore, at the time of this great spiritual leap, he was not an aged old man over sixty or seventy, but, he was at the flour of youth, since he was no more than thirty-five.

What was the irresistible effect which gave rise to this turning in those conditions? Nothing we could observe but the responsibility of ruling, which turned him, within a few moments, into a matchless saint. But, he did not change into a saint of a hermitage, but into a saint of authority, power and state, which was the greatest at this time; and, indeed, this is nearly a source of amazement.

From the very early moments of his caliphate, he went on moving painfully under the pressure of his responsibilities, crying from all of his depth: "Who would save me on the Day of Judgement from the right of the hungry poor person, the lost sick one, the oppressed wronged person, the orphan, the widow, and the captive?"

O son of Abd Al-Aziz! Introduce (to undertake the responsibilities of ruling), and do not fear! Introduce to show the people of this world how Islam gave birth (to good people), and how Muhammad educated and instructed (the Muslims)!

Introduce, O grandson of caliphate and ruling, O suckling infant of delights and blessings (of life)! Introduce, O abundant young man, of smooth complexion, and good perfume! Introduce, O Commander of Believers, and show us now your patched garments and scum (of food you used to eat)!

Show us your shirt which you would wash and wait for it in the corner of your house until it was dry, because you had no one else to wear! Show us your pale cheeks, and lean body because of your excessive effort, and the effect of the bread spiced with salt, and wetted with oil! Show us the straw mat, which you took as your throne, O Commander of Believers, and caliph of Muslims!

Show us your humble home, to which a lady made her journey from a distant country, in order to get more gifts. But, as soon as she had seen it, she said bitterly: "Would I come to construct my house from this ruined house?"

Might Allah Almighty send greetings to Fatimah, your wife, for how truthful she was when she replied to her: "No doubt, this house has been ruined for nothing but the construction of such others homes as yours."

Introduce O Commander of Believers! Indeed, we do not know a certain fact (as astonishing) as if it was a myth, or a myth, (as truthful and confidential) as if it was a fact than you and your great story.

Accept my pardon once again, for I forgot that you dislike to be appreciated or appraised. Would that I could promise not to do so again. But, I could not promise not to appraise you, since all of the world is astonished by your greatness, standing incapable but of appreciating you. Who could keep patient on those miracles you've brought? Who could do O Commander of Believers?

Khalid Muhammad Khalid

CHAPTER ONE

COMMENCEMENTS FROM CHILDHOOD

You then would be happy!

This was during his early flourishing childhood. His father Abd Al-Aziz Ibn Marwan was the governor of Egypt during the regime of his brother Abd Al-Malik, who was at this time the caliph of Muslims. Abd Al-Aziz spent twenty years as governor of Egypt. His wife, Umm Asim, left Medina, where she lived, for Egypt, in order to join her husband, taking with her their beloved son Umar.

In Helwan, where Abd Al-Aziz observed its beauty and good atmosphere, and took from it a health resort, the evolving child went on running in its gardens, and filling his breast from its clean air. One day, he entered the fold of horses, where one of them kicked him, with the result that his head was injured. The wounded child was carried to his home.

As soon as his mother had seen him, she was scared and grieved. They sent to his father to come, and he came soon, and saw the blood covering the face of his son, whose head was deeply injured. But, before being overtaken by grief, he remembered something which caused him to become cheerful, showing a smile on his mouth.

When he finished from bandaging the injury of his son, he patted on the shoulder of his wife, while growing more smiling and elegant. Then, he said to her: "Rejoice O Umm Asim!" then, he stretched his right hand, and moved it gently on the head of his son, while he was gazing at his pale amiable face. He said to him: "If you are the head-injured one from among the Umayyads, then, you would be happy!"

What was the remembrance which was prompted by this event? What about the prophecy to which the words of Abd Al-Aziz hinted? Let's be back abit, in order to see the story from the beginning.

It was on a windy night, and Medina was quiet and silent, and the people went to their homes and beds, seeking for warmth from the thundering frost, except for a single man, whose responsibilities prompted him, as was his usual, and caused him to lift his covering, and go out to the streets of Medina, which were void of every living being,

and nothing remained in it but the huge pieces of darkness and the snarl of wind.

The man went out alone for detecting whether there was a hungry person, a sick one, an oppressed or wronged one, or even a wayfarer, or whether there was something of the affairs of people which escaped from him, about which Allah Almighty would ask him and reckon him on the Day of Judgement, since he was the caliph of Muslims and the Commander of the Believers.

Yes. He was Umar Ibn Al-Khattab “Allah be pleased with him”. He spent a long time as detecting and going round until he was tired and troubled by frost. He took shelter to a wall of a small humble home, in order to have rest after which he would resume walking to the mosque, for the time of dawn was approaching. While he was sitting, he heard a dialogue inside the home.

This was a dialogue between a mother and her daughter about the little quantity of milk produced by the udder of their goat during the last portion of the night. The mother asked her daughter to mix milk with water in order to grow more, and its price could fulfill their needs of the coming day. The Commander of the Believers heard their dialogue.

The mother said to her daughter: “O my daughter! Mix the milk with water!” she said: “How would I do since the Commander of the Believers prohibited so?” the mother said: “But the people mix milk with water, so you might do. How would the Commander of the Believers come to know that we did so, since he did not see us?” The daughter said: “If the Commander of the Believers does not see us, the Lord of the Commander of the Believers sees us.”

The eyes of the Commander of the Believers overflowed with tears of pleasure. He hurried to the mosque, and led the Fajr prayer. Then, he returned quickly to his house. He invited his son Asim, and ordered him to bring him the news of the reality of the household of this house.

Asim returned to his father, and introduced to him enough information of the mother and her daughter. The Commander of the Believers related to his son the dialogue he had heard between them. Then, he said to his son, who had the intention of marriage: “Go and marry her O my son, for she is a blessed woman, and perhaps she would give birth to a man who would have control over all the Arabs.”

Asim married this poor noble pious girl. She gave birth to a girl whom they named Laila, and gave a nickname of Umm Asim. Umm Asim grew up as pious and pure until she became a young woman, and was given in marriage to Abd Al-Aziz Ibn Marwan. She gave birth to a boy, who was Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz.

This is then a good offspring, which came from good pious forefathers. Thus, the prophecy of Umar Ibn Al-Khattab concerning the blessed young woman was proved to be true. But, Abd Al-Aziz Ibn Marwan did not think at this time of this portion of the prophecy, when he said to his injured child: "If you are the head-injured one from among the Umayyads, then, you would be happy!"

The prophecy has another portion, which recalled the remembrance in the memory of Abd Al-Aziz. One night, the Commander of the Believers Umar saw a vision in a dream, after which he got up astonishingly saying: "Who would be the head-injured from the Umayyads, belonging to the offspring of Umar, and named Umar? He would follow the way of Umar, and fill the earth with justice."

Umar saw this vision in his dream, and looked forward to this unseen about forty years before the birth of Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz. Although the son of Al-Khattab died and departed to the highest companions, his prophecy remained in circulation among his family, who went on seeking for this sign (of injury) in the faces of their sons.

When Abdullah Ibn Umar begot his son Bilal, who was injured in his face during his early childhood, he was thought to have been the promised one. But, he was not doomed to be so, until there came the day, on which the son of Abd Al-Aziz was injured in his face. Then, his father remembered the ancient prophecy, and said his famous phrase pregnant of hope and expectations: "If you are the head-injured one from among the Umayyads, then, you would be happy!"

This was only one and not all the aspects of commencements in the childhood of our hero. We shall see the commencements during his childhood covering all fields. They would be as complete as the great role would be in the life of the man, and the life of the caliph, Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz.

However, this commencement was not only this bodily sign caused by the injury of the face, but also it was in the binary belonging to great contradictories: Umar Ibn Al-Khattab with his pious god-fearing

offspring, and the Umayyads, with their aggressive oppressive offspring. At this point, the commencement might go beyond Umar Ibn Al-Aziz to a larger circle, and a deeper significance.

It seemed as if the fate which left the Umayyads who seized the caliphate, which they turned into a tyrant kingdom and Umayyad farm, decided to bring a man from among them, who would announce publicly (by his justice and adherence to the right method of Islam) the documents of their crimes, and bring back to the religion of Allah its enlightening reality, to the world of people its absent health, and to the position of caliphate itself its honour and piety.

Moreover, he would be for all of the world a sign of what the great Islam might do, when its supreme rising spirit transmigrate a certain man, and turn him into a marvelous godly light, even if this man came from the offspring of those, most of whom filled the earth with mischief, tyranny and transgression.

But, this sort of commencement outside the personality of the promised child was managed by the fate itself on his behalf, with no interference or even knowledge of him. Let's see another kind of commencement, whose matter and tools were the personality of the child himself. It was also an aspect of his own efforts in discovering himself and building his personality. In this connection, we might see that the desires of the child were indicative of his future as a man. Furthermore, we would see from his maturity, straightness and rightly-guidance during his childhood, as shown by his psychological and mental direction, what might be significant signs of his future.

Later, he talked about his childhood, saying: "I saw myself in Medina as a young boys, playing with other young boys in Medina. Then, I had longing for knowledge, from which I got my need."

From this point, we would start looking over the personal commencements during this blessed childhood. The child told his father of his desire to leave Egypt for Medina, in order to get the religious knowledge. At this time, Medina was a lighthouse of goodness and religious knowledge, in which there were a great number of religious scholars, jurists and righteous worshippers. It also was a society of human genius of poetry and singing.

Abd Al-Aziz Ibn Marwan responded. He was one of the best from among the Umayyads in general, and the sons of Marwan in particular,

and the nearest one from among them to piety, god-fearing and uprightness. Anyway, he responded to the desire of his son, whom he sent to Medina. He entrusted him to one of the greatest knowledgeable tutors, jurists and righteous ones of Medina, i.e. Salih Ibn Kaisan.

A child like our companion, who was brought up in the palaces of blessing, and carried the title of his highness prince, having as much delights and pleasures of life as more than he wanted, was not expected, at least during his childhood, but to have longing for the world of amusement, joy, and pleasure. Why did he then keep himself far from all of that, and was inclined to the horizons of men, and even the wise men? Moreover, why did his childhood imply all and not some of the signs of his coming maturity and straightness so much astonishingly?

Yes. The commencements of all manifests of his good behaviours, which we shall see later when he became caliph of Muslims, appeared and were integrated from his early childhood. In this context, we might observe, from the beginnings of his early childhood, the portents and developments of all his characteristics and good merits and qualities, which would form his behaviours and life during his caliphate, such as his constant fear of Allah, his powerful seeking for worship and religious knowledge, his absolute respect for the truth, and refusal of falsehood, and his great longing for the significant affairs.

As we saw earlier, he told his father of his desire for going to Medina, in order to take provision from its religious knowledge, saying to him: "Let me go to Medina, and learn from its religious jurists, and educate myself with their good behaviours."

As soon as he had reached Medina, he went to the old men, religious scholars and jurists, avoiding the children of his age. He devoted himself to the Qur'an until he completed keeping it within a short time. Then, he came to the Arab language, with its literature and poetry, from which he learnt a rich amount.

Anyway, this sort of early endeavor for learning and knowledge might seem to be familiar, compared to the excellent standards of genius children. But, could a child attain such a genius as causing his conscience to fear Allah so much, to the extent of weeping and wailing for fear of Allah Almighty? Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz was this weeping pious child. One day, his mother entered upon him, while he was alone in his room, weeping and wailing. She threw herself upon him, and asked him about

what had occurred to him. He answered her: "Nothing O my mother, except that I remembered death."

We might have a desire for interpreting such an event as an emergent case, prompted by an incidental temper. We might say too that perhaps he, as a sensitive child, was scared by the image of death which would deprive him of the pleasures and delights of life.

But, the case had further dimensions. His tutor Salih Ibn Kaisan, the great religious jurist of Medina, gives us a complete illustration in his talk about the childhood of the son of Abd Al-Aziz when he said: "I've never known anyone, who fear Allah Almighty more than this child."

When a religious scholar, having such a good position as that of Salih Ibn Kaisan says that he had never known anyone, who fear Allah Almighty more than this child, we then find ourselves with a human pattern which was matchless.

That's because this amount of piety, god-fearing and devoutness would be available to the excellent righteous men after they grow old. But, it is difficult to be so as children, except for one of those, whom Allah Almighty selects for Himself, and makes in the Sight of Him.

However, the childhood of the son of Abd Al-Aziz would astonish us in the way of selecting the good pattern and the high example to be followed. We saw that the boy had been strongly inclined, with his mind and emotions to the old men, with their religious knowledge, wisdom and good manners. Then, he adopted an astonishing and wonderful method of selecting his high example and good pattern he should follow.

This young boy did not take his high example from his environment which was full of chiefs and princes, nor did he look forward to the world around him of delights and pleasures of life. He did not also resort to the visions and dreams which were fitting for his age. On the contrary, he sent his deep insight as far as to the furthest and glorious horizons, in order to return back to him, having his high example, to which he looked forward to follow. He saw it in a person, who was much greater, more pious, more knowledgeable, and the most god-fearing from among the people of his time, i.e. Abdullah Ibn Umar.

Abdullah Ibn Umar was the paternal uncle of the mother of Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz. So, he was as his grandfather, though the young boy liked to call him his maternal uncle. Since he arrived in Medina, he stuck to him, learnt from him, and took him as good pattern which he followed.

He admired him so much. He used to estimate his religious knowledge, piety, generosity, and noble spirit. Much frequently, he made fun with his mother by those words: “Do you know O my mother? I would be like my maternal uncle, Abdullah Ibn Umar.”

He had a spirit, much greater even tens of time his body in which it was, and tens of times greater than his young age. It was a spirit of a young boy, who was so much hasty to be a man, not for the power and strength it would have, but for the fact that during it, his virtues and good qualities would complete, as well as his characteristics would flourish.

We also might observe, in the childhood of the son of Abd Al-Aziz, a matchless self-respect. He did not only avoid the amusement which was legal for those of his age, but also he conducted in such a way that none but the powerful and strong men could be able to do. Moreover, he did not only avoid such mistakes for which the men would be reckoned, though it might be pardonable for the children, but also he avoided committing all kinds of mistakes, significant or insignificant it might be.

Such a vice as the lie, for instance, would be faced by the young boy with a great amount of aversion and revulsion. Later, we would listen to him talking of himself saying: “I’ve never made lie since I grew up as much as to straighten a lower garment on me, and learnt that lie would bring shame on him who makes it.”

During his rightly-guided childhood, we would be astonished by his strong response to correcting whatever mistakes he detected, and developing whatever goodness available to him. One day, he was too late to catch one of the obligatory prayers in congregation at the mosque of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” in Medina. Salih Ibn Kaisan, his instructor and educator asked him about the reason of his delay. He answered to him sincerely: “The servant maid was combing my hair.” His mister said to him blaming: “Do you do the combing of your hair before the prayer?”

On the other hand, Abd Al-Aziz Ibn Marwan required from Salih Ibn Kaisan to convey to him the news of his son. He wrote to him about this event. The result was that Abd Al-Aziz sent his order to his son to get his head shaved.

The young boy removed the brightest portion of his good looking. He did so with pleasure and happiness, not only because he knew how to obey and comply with the orders whenever it was necessary to do so, but

also because he saw in doing so expiation for his sin he had committed by letting his desire for completing his good looking hold him up from attending only a part, and not the whole prayer.

The young boy used to look forward to do what is right in everything relating to him, beginning from his feeling, his thinking, his behaviours and his will. In spite of being still a young boy, he did not regard himself as a prince, who should have the right to get prestige over others, or to be treated distinctively, but, on the contrary, he considered himself an ordinary one, whose spirit had the right of being distinctive through whatever knowledge, virtues, and the capability of doing what is right.

We say once again that what is marvelous in all of that is that the hero was no more than a boy in his early age of growing up. He was a boy, born in the bosom of blessings and pleasures of life, and brought up in a world full of delights and inducements. But, the following event narrated by those who wrote about his biography, is considered to be the most wonderful aspect of his rightly-guided response to correcting the mistakes, and tendency towards the complete rationality.

During his early childhood, he was influenced by the opinion of the Umayyads concerning the grand imam Ali "Might Allah honour him", and the false untrue sayings they formulated against him. He had not yet detected the reality of the conflict between the martyr rightly-guided imam, and the Umayyads. One day, he talked badly about the grand imam, and his speech was conveyed to his good righteous tutor Ubaidullah Ibn Abdullah Ibn Utbah, for whom Umar had all respect and estimation.

One day, the young boy went to visit him, but he turned back from him, and did not show love to him as he was used. The young boy noticed that his mister was angry with him. He asked him in order to know the matter. But, his mister said to him loudly: "When did you learn that Allah Almighty became displeased with the people of Badr, after he had been pleased with them?"

Immediately, the intelligent right-guided young boy understood it. He understood that the least merit of the grand imam Ali is that he was from the people of Badr, of whom the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" told that Allah Almighty looked at them and then said to them: "Do as you like, for I've forgiven for you all of your sins."

He woke up on this turning from his mister, to whom he said submissively and regretfully: "I apologize to Allah and to you, and by Allah, I would never repeat the like of it once again."

Then, he devoted himself to studying the case once again, far from the falsehood and lies of the Umayyads, until he was guided to the truth easily. He came to be one of the defenders of the great imam. One day, as narrated by some historians, he sat with a group of worshippers and good men, who went on surveying the main abstinent pious men in Islam. Then, the son of Abd Al-Aziz declared publicly with those words: "The most abstinent one in the world is Ali Ibn Abu Talib "Peace be upon him"."

The speech about the commencements of childhood might seem to be endless, if we resumed talking about all the events of the transcending life of the child and the young boy. From the early age, a strong capable determination was visible, which moved all the motivations of the child, and guided them to the way of goodness, virtue and perfection, to the extent that his childhood became a complete example and a perfect pattern of the period of his caliphate, which would come nearly thirty years later, and which would be one of Allah's great signs, and one of the unique miracles of Islam.

Now, we have to follow this unique outstanding childhood, or in other words to transcend it, to deal with another stage of this wonderful interesting astonishing life, until we reach later the age of marvelous caliphate.

CHAPTER TWO

THE LONGING SPIRIT

“I have a longing spirit, which do not get anything but that it would have longing for getting what is beyond it.”

When he became young man, his high virtues and good merits had been well-established within himself. He also was proved to be competent and talented in many aspects.

During the age of youth, with its ambitions and defiance, one's talents and skills would be inclined to work together, independent from the virtues and good merits, which often try to suppress them, particularly if those talents and skills are reflection of a powerful energy, prompted by vitality and activity.

Although the talents and skills of the son of Abd Al-Aziz were prompted by such activity and power, they were not inclined to work far from his virtues and merits. That's because the personality of Umar was so much uniquely integrated in such a way that allowed for as much cooperation between his talents and skills on one hand, and his virtues and merits on the other, which reflected later upon his method and behaviours.

All we would see during his youth and then manhood is that his virtues and good merits which had a restricted expression of themselves during his childhood, would be able to emerge more largely. The reason for this is that when the age of youth comes, it would extend the ranges of one's dreams, visions and movements. The virtues, during the stage of childhood, which start to open (like the flowers) in their buds and send their sweet perfume, would, with the coming of youth, leave those buds while growing up, in order to occupy the large extensions brought by it. Thus, they take many aspects of expression. Let's set forth an example of that from the life of Umar himself.

The virtue of self-elegance emerged from the early years of his childhood, and it was visible in his refraining from playing with his rivals of the same age, and instead of that, he came to the gatherings of wisdom in the company of religious scholars and sages. It was also visible in his refraining from such evil vices as making lies, for he perceived, from his early childhood, that it brings shame on, and causes harm to its maker.

It also expressed of itself in his avoiding the vain talk and deed, and instead of that, he used to keep thoughtfully silent, and become earnestly serious. We would meet this virtue which we called the self-elegance, when Umar became young man. But it grew up and extended, taking with it its previous manifests during the age of childhood after their growth, on the one hand, and innovating other expressions, produced by the new consciousness and feeling of youth.

In this way, the self-elegance extended to imply handsomeness, not as a kind of luxury, but as an extension of the virtue of self-elegance, and expansion of its field. For this reason, we could see Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz as a youth wearing the most expensive garments, and perfuming with the sweetest kind of perfume, to the extent that whenever he crossed a street, the people would know that he passed by it, in view of the good scent scattered in this space and lasted for a long time

Moreover, he used to be smart in everything, in his talk, his way of walking for which he was famous, and which the young men have longing for imitating, and it was known, because of its smartness and showing pride as the Walk of Umar.

But, why do we say that the excessive handsomeness was an extension of and not a reaction to self-elegance? The answer of this question is the same to many questions, which would be raised whenever we saw the son of Abd Al-Aziz, and how more we would see him as such, sipping from the delights and taking from the pleasures and blessings of life with no regard for anything.

The answer of all those questions is that we never see in all those aspects of blessing what might reflect any kind of thirst, hungry (for it), or even suppression (from enjoying of it). That's because he, from the moment of his birth, never was thirsty or hungry for pleasures, nor was he forbidden or prohibited to take from blessings and delights of life as much as he wanted.

Furthermore, in the most elegant and the smartest aspects of youth and manhood, and during the period he plunged into the delights and pleasures of life, Umar never was known to have committed a single sin or mistake from those, which might be reaction to suppressed or depressed inclination or desire. However, from his early youth, he was so much open-minded, and through such an openness, his longing spirit, as

described by him, introduced towards all new aspects of its good merits and possibilities.

It is a well-known fact that the Arab disposition in its pure nature and essence is the most resisting of suppression, even if it was a suppression of sinful inclinations. What would it be when it was, as in our topic, a suppression of legitimate desires, and straight virtuous ambitions?

Thus, we might notice that those delights and pleasures which would overwhelm and distinguish this long period of the life of Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz were not reaction to an action equal to him in power, and opposite to it in direction. But, they were extension of the first action itself, but with new aspects and styles.

During this period of his life, his heredity cooperated intimately with his talents. The longing spirit which we would see prompting his emotions and leading his steps, would be the same which astonishingly motivated his father Abd Al-Aziz Ibn Marwan to be interested in the significant matters.

One day, he committed a mistake in speaking with a man, who came to complain to him his son-in-law (Khatn in Arabic). Abd Al-Aziz asked him: "Who circumcised you (Khatanaka in Arabic)?" the man answered: "The circumciser who circumcises the people." Abd Al-Aziz said to him: "I ask you about the name of your son-in-law." The man said to him commenting: "Then, you had to say (Khatnuka in Arabic and not Khatanaka)."

Abd Al-Aziz felt it. On the coming day, he closed his house, and went on studying the grammar with a group of knowledgeable grammarians, until he was perfect in it, and became an example to be set forth in the good right expression. This was not enough for him. He announced publicly among the people of Egypt and all African countries under his rule that those who learnt and were perfect in Arabic would be given more from the treasury than the others.

He had longing for generosity. So, he came to be the most generous from the Umayyads. He did not give poets in order to appraise and flatter slavishly or adulate him, but he gave only those who were in need to be given. He took as his slogan in this matter his famous words: "I wonder how a faithful believer, who believes that Allah Almighty gives, and recompenses him, would withhold his property from being a source of good reward for him (through giving others)!" The historians of his

biography described him saying: “He was the most from among all the people to give in abundance.”

He also had longing for god-fearing and piety, though he did not attain such a range as reached by his son later. He expressed of this god-fearing when he was overtaken by his fatal disease, in which he died, saying: “Would that I am nothing to mention, and would that I am no more than a gush in this current water, or a plant in the land of Hijaz!”

This longing spirit of the father moved to the son, though in such a way as much greater, more comprehensive and abundant. In this issue, we would meet his developing personality living in a festival of activity, creation and joy, with no fear of criticism or committing a sin to prevent it from doing so. That’s because it, in all of its activity, creation and joy, did not work far from, but in the company with its virtues and good merits.

We mentioned that Medina at this time was a big society, having all kinds of human activities. The spiritual side of this activity developed through its representatives or worshippers, abstinent and good righteous men. The side of the religious knowledge developed at the hands of its representatives of religious scholars, jurists and narrators of traditions. As for the world of arts, its representatives were the poets, musical players and singers.

From his early childhood, Umar satisfied his spiritual tendency through sticking to the worshippers and abstinent people, and learning from them. He also covered his religious ambition of knowledge through sitting with the religious scholars and jurists, taking from them so much, and following their conducts. Anyway, his mental and spiritual tendencies would continue their development.

But, the new aspect which we would meet in his youth is his artistic tendency, which uncovered an authentic talent of art. The man, which allowed for all of his talents and activities to rise elegantly surprised us with a sweet voice of singing, to the extent that if he wanted to take singing as a profession, surely he would excel all of its distinguished persons and celebrities. He also surprised us with his talent of musical composition, with which he would stand out its greatest men if he wanted to be proficient in it.

What is more than both was his longing for the Arab poetry, from which he kept a great number of poems. He was also able to criticize it, and distinguish its finest and good from the bad of it.

The talented artist put a musical composition for the following poems: "Sulaima had an intention to depart. Where do you think she is? She had said to some rivals of her when they met at noon: Come with me, come O girls! The living (in the place for which I'm going to leave) has become god. So, you should come with me, O girls!"

He went on singing it to himself and among his friends. But, very soon, the melody became widespread, and the professional singers chanted with it everywhere. Ibn Sarij, the chief of singers in Hijaz at this time sang from the musical compositions of Umar the following verses:

"The heart was inclined to Su'ad, who came to visit it, with the result that it recovered. The more he it was blamed for loving her, the more it went on as far as it could be. Indeed, it is concerned with Su'da, to the extent that it transgressed all permissible limits."

But, in spite of the fact that he enjoyed of every sweet voice and singing, and in spite of his melodious voice, he did not let loose his talent and joy, for the voice of piety was always louder within himself, to the extent that we saw him saying more than once while listening to Ibn Sarij: "How beautiful this voice is, if it is chanting with the Qur'an!"

However, he was mainly concerned with poetry, and there is no harm in that! Poetry at this time was the main culture and language. If Umar did not compose poetry, his longing spirit which prompted him to compete the chiefs of musicians and singers, if not outstand some of them, without joining them proficiency, led him to share in the culture of this age. In addition to whatever religious knowledge he acquired, he came to get from the poetry, keeping in memory a great amount of poems, and sharing in criticism.

No doubt, longing for poetry was one of the most apparent characteristic, which distinguished the Arab and Islamic society during those ages. During the age of Umayyads, it had a sounding like the sounding of bees. Its great composers at this time, Jarir, Al-Farazdaq and Al-Akhtal, known as the Umayyad triangle, filled the Arab world with their poetry, and occupied the attention of people so much.

There were new conditions during the life of this young man, which would strengthen his longing spirit to the utmost of excellence in the

fields of religious knowledge and poetry. His father Abd Al-Aziz who was the governor of Egypt died and was buried there. Then, the caliph Abd Al-Malik Ibn Marwan joined his nephew to him, and gave him his daughter Fatimah in marriage.

Abd Al-Malik was much more strong in religious knowledge and poetry, so that he used to compared in the former to Urwah Ibn Az-Zubair and Sa'id Ibn Al-Musayyab. Ash-Sha'bi said about him: "I've never mentioned a Prophetic tradition to Abd Al-Malik but that he would complete it to me, nor have I told him a poetic verse but that he would mention to me more." He said about himself: "My hair became white out of fear of ascending the pulpit and committing mistakes in speech."

The following dialogue between him and Jarir illustrates to us how he was expert in poetry and poets. One day, he asked Jarir about the most poetic from among the poets. Jarir said: "The one of twenty." He meant Tarafah Ibn Al-Abd, who was killed when he was a few years over twenty. He asked him: "What is your opinion in the poetry of the two sons of Abu Sulma?" he meant Zuhair and his son Ka'b. he said: "Their poetry is good, O Commander of Believers."

Abd Al-Malik asked: "What do you say about Imru Al-Qais?" he said: "He took from the evil wicked poetry his shoes." He asked: "What do you say about Dhur-Rummah?" he said: "He is able to say the odd and astonishing poetry as none has ever been able to do." He asked him about Al-Akhtal, Al-Farazdaq and himself.

Then, the dialogue went on between them, showing Abd Al-Malik's deep experience in this art. Since Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz came to live with this paternal uncle who was excellent in religious knowledge and poetry, his longing spirit prompted him to (learn more and more in order to) become equal to him in religious knowledge and poetry.

But, the rein remained under the control of his virtues and good merits. Wherever his talents went, his virtues and religion would have the superior word, no matter ambitious his longing spirit might be. Although he had a great longing for poetry, he kept himself away from its evil rhapsody and wicked erotic poems, to the extent that when he became governor of Medina, he exiled Umar Ibn Abu Rabie'ah because of impudence, insolence and shamelessness his poetry had.

In short, Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz surrendered his talents to their finalities, as well as he surrendered his youth to the pleasures and

delights of life, but within the limits of what Allah Almighty has made lawful to His slaves. His agitated disposition sought for getting as much delights as it wanted, and found in what is lawful the utmost of what it wanted. The young man who was of religious knowledge and open-minded, never tried to suppress it.

It seemed as if he was pleased with its purity, uprightness and refraining from what is wicked, and for this reason, he rewarded it by letting it get as much delights and pleasures of life as it wanted. It seemed also that the youth of the son of Abd Al-Aziz was doomed to come as rich and abundant for the fact that when he would become the caliph later, resulting in this spiritual turning which made him one of the greatest saints, it would be clear to the world that his abstinence and piety were not aspects of an introversive quiet nature, but they were results of an extraordinary spiritual excellence, which was fitting for a submissive nature, agitated with ambition.

Yes. We would see from the affairs of this man what is astonishing. Before his being a caliph, one of the softest and finest garments made from the silk of Iraq was brought to him, which he touched with his fingers and then said grumbling: "How coarse it is!" but, when he was caliph, a coarse garment, which the poorest from among the people would scorn, was brought to him. He touched it with the same fingers and then said, with his tears falling from his eyes: "How soft it is! Bring me a garment much coarser than it."

So, let this prince (who did not become caliph) have longing for whatever (delights and pleasures of life) he wanted for this period of such longing would be the mirror which would reflect to us the extraordinary miracle, by which we would be surprised during the years of his caliphate.

Let him have longing for whatever sources of pleasure he wanted. Let him wear from the clothes the most expensive and the softest. Let him have from the kinds of food the sweetest and the most delicious. Let him ride from the horses the highest and the most beautiful. Let him sit and lie on the softest and the most comfortable.

Let him get as much knowledge as it could be, and as much good merits and virtues as possible. Let him also have all thins in this world as the covering contains the book.

He lived in blessing and luxuries, beyond all description. His yearly income from his salary, assignments and the yielding of the land he inherited from his father was over forty thousand Dinars. Whenever he traveled from Sham to Medina, his procession would reach fifty camels, carrying his luggage. Whenever he bought a garment, no matter expensive and bright it might be, he would wear it once, or if he was humble, twice, after which it would seem old in his sight. He used to hang down his lower garment to the extent that he was about to stumble by its slender tail. He used to walk so much smartly, for which the peacock was about to be jealous of him. Wherever he walked, the perfume would emanate from him strongly. He seemed to be in a powerful race, not with those of blessing, but with the blessing itself.

Then, how could this man withdraw from all of that within a single moment, namely when he became caliph, and go to the opposite extreme? No doubt, our longing for seeing this amazing turning prompts us to be in a hurry. But, we have to keep patient and wait for sometime, so that nothing of the scenes of the life of this marvelous man might escape from us, for which we are in need, in order to be able to see all features of the picture and the angles of the frame.

CHAPTER THREE

THE EXPERIENCE

“I see a world, with some of whose parts destroying others”

when he was twenty-five years old, the caliph Al-Walid Ibn Abd Al-Malik chose him to be the governor of Medina. The inhabitants of Medina became joyful because of this choice, for the good conduct of the son of Abd Al-Aziz preceded him to everywhere. Moreover, he with his good merits and virtues, took the place of its ousted governor Hisham Ibn Isma'il, who was so much violent and oppressive, that he provoked the hatred and resentment of the people of Medina against him.

The new governor had a beginning, which, from the early moments, made clear the distinction between him and the other governors. It is true that the previous governor used to surround himself with a group of grievous violent oppressive people, affirming to the people with such a conduct that falsehood was dominant. This new blessed governor came to announce with his conduct that nothing could be valid but what is right, and that goodness and not evil, sincerity and not flattery, and uprightness and not deviation (from the right way) would be the constitution of his governorship, and the method of his age.

So, he started with selecting ten from among the chiefs of religious knowledge, piety and virtue in Medina, and made them a private council for his consultations. They were: Ubaidullah Ibn Abdullah Ibn Utbah, Abu Bakr Ibn Abd Ar-Rahman, Urwah, Abu Bakr Ibn Khaithamah, Al-Qasim Ibn Muhammad Ibn Hazm, Sulaiman Ibn Yasar, Kharijah Ibn Zaid Ibn Thabit, and Abdullah Ibn Amir Ibn Rabie'ah.

He said to them in his first meeting with them: “I called you to a matter, for which you would be given a reward, and you would be my assistants in supporting the right. I beseech you by Allah that if you see any kind of aggression or falsehood, you should convey it to me, and guide me to the truth.”

With this beginning of estimating those of goodness, god-fearing, and religious knowledge, he raised the banner of the new life, which they would live under his governorship, and filled their hearts with tranquility, and safety.

He went on making the territory he governed a good pattern which should be followed by others. Then, his authority extended to imply all the region of Hijaz, i.e. Mecca, Medina, Ta'if, and the area surrounding them. It seemed as if he was doomed, from this governorship, to undertake an experience of the great and glorious mission kept for him in the future, on the day when he would become the caliph of Muslims and the ruler of the Islamic state.

We would see how successful was this experience. the son of Abd Al-Aziz was mainly concerned with the morality and etiquettes of ruling, in order to make his territory he was governing an abundant green oasis amidst the hell whose fire was kindled by most governors of the Umayyads.

He sought for his glory, not in the power and arrogance of authority, but in his great humbleness before the people, establishing the right balance of justice, and spreading the shade of mercy upon every oppressed and wronged person, and forbidding its warmth to every oppressive and wrongdoer.

Thus, very soon, he became beloved by all the people. The religious scholars, who were, according to their piety and abstinence, used to avoid governors, having no love or even respect for the most of them, went on showing their sincere regard for the son of Abd Al-Aziz, to the extent that Sa'id Ibn Al-Musayyab, who was at this time one of the greatest religious scholars of Muslims, who was known to have rejected along his life to go to visit a governor or even a caliph, if not receiving and sitting with them, went with all respect to the house of governorship many times, in order to meet Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz, talk to him, and sit in his company.

The young governor went on spreading justice among the people, having them taste the sweetness of mercy and tranquility, penetrating this horrible screen, with which the Umayyad governors surrounded themselves and their ruling, chanting with the word of truth and justice, keeping himself far from the evil sins and crimes of their age, and challenging their tyrants and violent people, at the top of whom was Al-Hajjaj Ibn Yusuf Ath-Thaqafi.

Once, the caliph delegated Al-Hajjaj, the tyrant of Iraq to be the chief of pilgrims on behalf of him. Umar Ibn Al-Aziz used to dislike him so much because of his tyranny and oppression. He sent to the caliph, Al-

Walid Ibn Abd Al-Malik, asking him to order Al-Hajjaj not to pass by Medina. He did so, in spite of his knowledge of the position of Al-Hajjaj in the sight of the Umayyad caliphs in general, and of Al-Walid in particular. He also knew that this might irritate the anger of Al-Hajjaj who was capable of revenging for himself.

The caliph responded to the demand of Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz, and wrote to Al-Hajjaj saying: "Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz sent to me, asking my permission not to let you pass by Medina. It is better for you not to pass by him who dislikes you. So, keep yourself away from Medina."

However, Umar's aversion to Al-Hajjaj, even before he became caliph, and experienced this great spiritual turning which we would see later when he was appointed as caliph, really uncovered the purity of his nature, and the authenticity of his god-fearing and piety.

It is true that the Umayyads were indebted to Al-Hajjaj with the survival of their ruling, and the expansion of the territories, involved in their state, and for this reason, he was appreciated by them. But, what might this extensive kingdom for such a man like Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz, if it was based at the hands of tyrant persons like Al-Hajjaj?

Anyway, his situation from Al-Hajjaj and his rivals strengthened our sense that the period of his governorship was doomed to be an experience of his great future. Umar was well-aware of the fact that challenging Al-Hajjaj was not an easy task, since Al-Hajjaj was at this time holding the reins of the state. He also knew well that the caliphs belonging to the sons of Marwan were ready to sacrifice anything and anyone, no matter dear he might be, for the sake of Al-Hajjaj, as long as they were in need of his power and cunning.

But, all of that was of no significance for the man, who was faithful to his responsibilities. What concerned him more, if not necessary for him, was to take the side of the truth, regardless of the results and consequences. He was able to regard the matter with an intelligent vision. The experience of governorship granted him an overall sight of what was happening around him in the large state ruled by the Umayyads. He, though an Umayyad governor, was not to be deceived by the pompous aspects from the realities and facts, nor was he to sell his religion for the world of his family and people.

The world around him was waving with desires and falsehood. It was, as he saw from his experience, and as he himself described, a world,

some of whose parts destroy the others. If the matter of this world was under his control, surely, he would straighten its crookedness, but at this time, he had no control but over the territory he was governing.

Yes. He had control, or say a partial control only over the territory of Hijaz, since he was its governor. Then, let him fulfill his duty to it, and distinguish it with the nature of his upright sincere just personality. The life before his coming should remain the same after his coming. Everything should change: the people with their conducts and behaviours, and the land with its construction, streets and canals.

So, he went on constructing, starting with the mosque of the Prophet, which he rebuilt. He sent the missionaries of construction everywhere in the land of Hijaz, digging the wells, and making the streets.

Within the limits of his authority, he brought back to the public wealth its honour and sanctity, and in this way, it was no longer accessible to be usurped illegally. It also was no longer a play in the hand of everyone showing dissipation and exaggeration in spending it. But, on the contrary, every Dirham was spent in its right place, no more or less.

Furthermore, he opened the gates of Medina to everyone who escaped from the oppression of the governors in different parts of the state, and protected them from being chased, and guaranteed for them safety, tranquility and peace.

In the second year of his governorship, a phenomenon occurred, which the historians were only satisfied with recording, although we see in it a strong reason for his development, and the spiritual turning which would cover his personality later. In this year, he was appointed by the caliph to be the chief of pilgrims.

As soon as his procession had reached Mecca, he found its people suffering from drought, famine and a lot of difficulties. Immediately, he called the elite of religious scholars and good people, and whoever wanted from among the public to follow him. He got out with them to the space of Mecca. Then, the son of Abd Al-Aziz stood and supplicated to Allah, after he had led them in the prayer of asking Allah for rain "Istisqa". Suddenly, something like a miracle happened. He did not leave his place before it had rained unexpectedly. The people did not believe their eyes, which went on gazing at the sky, which was clear and blue, having no piece of cloud. In this year, the land of Mecca was unusually rich.

In our opinion, this phenomenon stabilized within the depths of Umar, and turned over time into a spiritual experience, which would have a direct effect in his coming spiritual turning. His consciousness, or unconsciousness, or even both perceived, in view of this clear charisma, whatever secrets and holiness Allah Almighty had bestowed upon him.

Anyway, the governor was involved in his responsibilities, which kept him away from some of his hobbies such poetry and poets, singers and singing. But, he kept desirous for being smart in his clothes, and the delights of life. One day, one of the abstinent people saw him having bought a good garment for a high price. So, he said to him: "Would it not be better for you to give its price to the poor persons?" he did not grow angry, nor did he refuse his saying. But, he said to him: "Did you see that I've neglected the poor persons?"

It is true, and there is no doubt. The days during which he was governor of Medina and Hijaz, there was a great of amount of luxuries and blessing, the like of which the people never witnessed.

The governorship did not occupy him from being increasingly perfect in developing his good merits and god-fearing. He constantly devoted himself to worship. More often, he was delighted to spend the night on the surface of the mosque of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", worshipping and invoking Allah Almighty,

One day, Anas Ibn Malik, the companions of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", offered the prayer behind him. When he finished the prayer, he said: "I've never offered the prayer behind an imam, whose prayer was more similar to the prayer of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" than that of this man."

Furthermore, the governorship did not occupy him from taking his provisions from religious knowledge. He went on enriching his mind, and filling it with religious knowledge, until he became reliable in this field.

One day, Abu An-Nadr Al-Madani stood and addressed the people. He said while pointing to Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz: "He is, by Allah, the most knowledgeable of you."

The glorious religious scholar Mujahid Ibn Jabr, who reviewed the Qur'an with Ibn Abbas thirty times, and who was one of the most distinguished imams, said about Umar Ibn Abd-Al-Aziz: "We've come

to Umar to teach him, but we have not returned until we learnt from him.”

The grand imam Al-Laith said in this issue: “We’ve not asked for the knowledge of anything, but that we found Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz more knowledgeable of its origin and branches. No doubt, the religious scholars were no more than disciples of him (in relation to his much knowledge which was incomparable to them).” No doubt, this witness from those great religious scholars gives us a brilliant image of the way in which Umar used to develop his mental and spiritual virtues.

To what extent do you see the general organization of the Umayyad ruling could bear a man belonging to such a patten as of Umar, whose uprightness and honesty uncovered all of the sins and defects committed by this organization? It would not keep patient on him for a long time.

Although he was a prominent prince in the family of the sons of Marwan, and although all of them used to respect and fear him, they were not to be patient on his new glorious method. He always condemned the bad way of ruling, and the tyranny of governors.

We said earlier that Al-Hajjaj, the tyrant person who worked in favour of the sons of Marwan did not forget Umar’s dislike and aversion he had to him, in addition to uncovering his violence and oppression to the people. So, he took the opportunity of Umar’s sheltering some of the oppressed persons who were victims of injustice, of which they condemned. Then, he wove his conspiracies and plots against Umar, which kindled rancour in the caliph’s breast against Umar, his cousin, brother-in law, and governor of Hijaz.

Al-Hajjaj sent to Al-Walid, the caliph, complaining to him that Umar gave shelter to everyone pursued by Al-Hajjaj, in order to judge them for their conspiracies against the Umayyads. It was easy for the plot made by Al-Hajjaj, and even for any plot made against Umar to find its way. The reason for that is that his general method was too superior for, and beyond the capability of anyone of the Umayyads to attain, if not to live with it.

Once, the caliph learnt that some people in the territory which Umar was governing criticized and insulted the Umayyad caliphs. He invited him and then asked him: “What do you say about him who abuse the caliphs? Would he be killed?” Umar kept silent, and did not comment. The caliph became more angry and frowned. He asked him once again:

“What do you say about him who abuse the caliphs? Would he be killed?” as faithful to his religion and good merits as it could be, he answered, having no regard for the consequences: “Did he murder any person illegally O Commander of Believers?” Al-Walid said: “No, but he abused the caliphs, and transgressed the sanctity of their death.” Umar said: “Then, he should be punished for whatever sanctity he violated, but he should not be killed.”

The caliph ended the meeting with an angry hint, and then Umar went away, expecting a speedy indignation from him, illustrated with his words: “I got out from him, and no wind blew but that I thought there was a messenger from him, inviting me to go to him.”

In this troublesome atmosphere, Al-Hajjaj decided to catch his enemy. So, he made his plot against him. In fact, Umar used to open his breast in the same way he used to open the gates of Medina for those who escaped from the oppression of Al-Hajjaj and others. He used to respect their right to criticize the mistakes of ruling, and uncovering its falsehood and deviation (from the straight path).

But, there was none from among those whom he protected and gave shelter, who might have the intention to organize an armed coup as Al-Hajjaj tried to give Al-Walid the false impression of that.

Perhaps, the plot of Al-Hajjaj would have been disappointed if Umar had showed willingness to please Al-Walid. But, his pure pious nature was not to know in this field any kind of adaptation or indulgence.

Thus, as soon as the caliph sent to him asking about the claim of Al-Hajjaj, he wrote a rigid and hard message in reply to him. He went on talking him about the absent justice, and the dominant oppression, worrying him with the grievous injustices committed by Al-Hajjaj and his rivals, under the screen of keeping the authority of the Umayyads. He told him that never there was a state, respecting itself, which might admit Al-Hajjaj as one of its governors. Then, he said his expounding word: “If every nation came on the Day of Judgement with its mistakes, and we came just with (the mistakes of) Al-Hajjaj, surely we would outbalance all of them (in view of (the mistakes of him).”

Al-Walid saw himself facing a moral capacity, able to challenge, if not harm him. So, he issued an order to oust Umar from the governorship of Medina and Hijaz.

The hero left Medina, which he loved as he had never loved any town else. He left it for Sham, after he had constructed great parts of it, and let its inhabitants feel safe and peaceful, luxurious and delightful. In Sham, he did not ask himself what to do, or how to spend his free time, for in fact, he had no free time. Every moment of his life, he was occupied, full of energy. The exerted effort to attain the desired perfection drove all hours and minutes of his life towards the way of this holy journey and blessed travel.

As soon as he had returned to Sham, the army of Muslims was getting ready to face the army of the Eastern Roman empire, which used to harass the borders of the Islamic state. Umar carried his arms, and went to take his place among the fighters, as an ordinary soldier, hoping for the victory of believers, or the reward of martyrs.

When he returned from the war, he was devoted to piety, god-fearing and virtue. As we found him in Medina favouring the companionship of such pious people as Abdullah Ibn Utbah, in Sham too, he favoured the companionship of such good people as Raja Ibn Haiwah. He exchanged letters with the grand imam of his age, Al-Hasan Al-Basri, from whom he learnt, and tried to follow his way of life.

He went on thinking of the mistakes of the state, and the problems of people. More often, he was overtaken by sorry and grief, but, what should he be able to do, since he had no power or authority to do anything? All what he could do was to raise his voice loudly against deviation and oppression; and he did so.

Some of his scorching phrases, with which he used to throw the ruling Umayyad family were in circulation among the people in different countries. He said for instance: "Al-Walid in Sham, Al-Hajjaj in Iraq, Muhammad Ibn Musarrif in Yemen, Uthman Ibn Hayyan in Hijaz, Qurrah Ibn Sharik in Egypt, and Yazid Ibn Abu Muslim in Maghrib, nay! the earth was, by Allah, filled with oppression."

When Al-Walid Ibn Abd Al-Malik died, his brother Sulaiman Ibn Abd Al-Malik succeeded him. In spite of the love and appreciation Sulaiman had for Umar, he feared him as governor. So, he favoured to keep him beside him as a brother, a friend, and if more an advisor.

The spirit of Umar, during this period, was transcending, ascending to its high positions. The worship polished his spirit, as well as religious knowledge polished his thought. He constantly kept on performing his

role, as giver of the glad tidings of virtue, goodness and truth, warning of evil, vice and wickedness.

He used to measure all tendencies of the state in the fields of wars and policy, as well as social, economic and moral directions according to the scale of the straight religion. But, he found out that it was, in all of this, as inclined to the desires of caliphs, governors and chiefs, as far from the spirit and method of religion. He undertook the task of announcing publicly this fact.

One day, the caliph Sulaiman accompanied him to visit some camps of the army. In front of one of them, which was filled with equipment and soldiers, Sulaiman asked him haughtily: "What do you say about that which you see O Umar?" immediately, the reply of Umar came as strong as to break the back: "I see a world, some of whose parts destroy the others, of which you are responsible, and for which you would be reckoned." The caliph was surprised by this unexpected answer, on which he commented saying: "How astonishing you are!" Umar said: "Nay! how astonishing he is, who knew Allah and disobeyed Him, knew Satan and followed him, and knew the world, and then relied on it!"

Once, the caliph accompanied on a journey of Hajj. On the way, it rained so much abundantly. Sulaiman was scared, and frightened by this sweeping torrent. He turned and found the son of Abd Al-Aziz laughing. He asked him: "Do people laugh for such things?" Umar said to him: "O Commander of Believers! Since this is what Allah Almighty might do at the time of His Mercy, then, what would it be at the time of His anger?"

Yes. If the rain, which is a direct effect of Allah's mercy and relief, might frighten people and cause them to be scared as such, how then would the anger and punishment of Allah be? How would the resentment and wrath of Allah which He Almighty has made as reprisal be?

As such Umar went on making his admonitions, in an attempt to open the blind eyes, and the deaf ears. Later, he would be doomed to introduce to undertake the great responsibility as the caliph of Muslims and the Commander of Believers. Until we meet him, Allah Willing, during the most wonderful days of his life, if not of the life of all humanity, we have to catch a glimpse of the sort of this grievous heritage, which the son of Abd Al-Aziz was doomed to carry and then straighten its crookedness. We mean this heritage of the Umayyad ruling beginning from Mu'awiyah, and reaching to Sulaiman Ibn Abd Al-Malik.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DESTRUCTIVE HERITAGE

“Save yourself O Sa’d, for Sa’id has been ruined!”

Mu’awiyah, the governor of Sham became the caliph following the guile of arbitration in Siffin, then the martyrdom of the grand imam Ali at the hands of one of the Kharijites, who was misled by the affliction, and then the peace made with him by Al-Hasan, in order to prevent the blood of Muslims from shedding.

He became the caliph, and immediately, he cunningly went on founding the basis for a long-term Umayyad state. However, we here are not talking about regarding as right or wrong the situation of Mu’awiyah. Anyway, we talked about this matter in detail in our books “In Ali’s large spaces (of honour)”, “Farewell Uthman” and “The Sons of the Messenger in Karbala”.

But, it is sufficient for us here to announce our rejection and refusal the situation of Mu’awiyah in relation of making his son Yazid as his successor, and taking the pledge of allegiance for him by force, i.e. Yazid, who ruined by his dissoluteness and violence what his father had built with his cunning and patience, and who laid the foundation for the law of forest, upon which the Umayyad state depended.

Astonishingly, this man, through whom Mu’awiyah sought for keeping the caliphate in the sons of Abu Sufyan, was doomed to prevent them from caliphate four years later, when he died. He died after he had spent four years as a tyrant oppressive ruler. During his fatal illness, he made his son Mu’awiyah the Second his successor, out of his keenness on surviving the flag of caliphate flirting among the sons of Abu Sufyan.

But, there was a surprise, doomed to amaze the world. Mu’awiyah the Second, this pious god-fearing young man gathered the people on a famous day, and addressed them saying: “My father Mu’awiyah usurped the matter of ruling illegally from its real claimant, who had more right than him, for his relation of kinship to the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, and his precedence to embrace Islam, i.e. Ali Ibn Abu Talib.

Then, my father took power after him, and he was not fitting for it. He was inclined to his own desires, and false expectations. The matter which is the hardest upon us is our knowledge of his evil consequence and destiny. No doubt, he killed the grandson of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" (Husain), made lawful fight in the Sacred mosque, and ruined the Ka'bah.

I'm not to undertake the responsibility of your affairs as ruler. So, you should choose for yourselves (whomever you think is more fitting)."

Then, the young good pious man remained in his home, rejecting the position of caliphate until he died and met his Lord. In this way, the house of Abu Sufyan was not only forbidden to have the position of ruling, but also, it received a document of horrible condemnation from one of its good dutiful men.

Indeed, the situation of Mu'awiyah the Second resulted in a catastrophe which had a negative effect upon the ruling of the Umayyads, and frightened their tyrant and strong men, such as Ubaidullah Ibn Ziyad, the killer of the glorious martyr Al-Husain Ibn Ali. He fled away disguised in a dress of a woman, and went on fleeing until he was murdered.

The Umayyad state strongly dispersed, and became on the rim of decline. The matter of ruling was about to end up to Abdullah Ibn Az-Zubair, in order to become on the right, but for many conditions, which there is no need to mention here, prepared for Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam to jump on the platform of ruling, amidst dark afflictions and cunning conspiracies.

In this way, the ruling moved from the house of Abu Sufyan to the house of another one of the Umayyads, i.e. Marwan Ibn Al-Hakam, who had a suspicious history since he was the chief of employees during the caliphate of Uthman. He had many situations, which condemned him.

He began his evil experience in Egypt, whose governor at this time Abd Ar-Rahman Ibn Jahdam supported Abdullah Ibn Az-Zubair. Egypt was a stronghold which Marwan feared so much. He came leading an army with which he defeated Abd Ar-Rahman and then called the people to give him the pledge of allegiance by force. When most of them refused, and kept on their previous pledge of allegiance, he killed eighty of them, in order to frighten the others.

At the same time, he sent Ubaidullah Ibn Ziyad to Iraq, and ordered him to make everything in Kufah lawful for him after conquering it. Furthermore, he betrayed Khalid Ibn Yazid, whom he made his apparent heir. He was also unfaithful to Khalid Ibn Sa'id, but for whose military efforts, the matter would not have stabilized to Marwan.

Thus, the Umayyad state of Marwan began its method of ruling by oppression and treachery. Before Marwan had died, ten months after the beginning of his ruling, he took the pledge of allegiance to his son Abd Al-Malik, followed by Abd Al-Aziz. In this way, he followed the method of Mu'awiyah, in making it as heritable as that of Heraclius, i.e. whenever a king died, another from his family would be held to inherit him.

However, Abd Al-Malik undertook the matter of ruling, followed by his son Al-Walid, then his brother Sulaiman. During this period of ruling in general, and of Abd Al-Malik in particular, there were a lot of achievements, which should be appreciated.

But, along with those achievements, the state suffered a lot from corruption, the people were frightened and scared, and the life itself had many aspects of falsehood, which constituted the destructive heritage, with which the son of Abd Al-Aziz was doomed to be afflicted, when he undertook the matter of ruling. What was then this horrible heritage?

It was in the severe violence, with which the sons of Marwan tried to make firm their authority, in the corruption which overwhelmed the life of both the state and the nation, and in forging the values and facts, which made the people suffer from a destructive spiritual, and mental ruin.

As for the method followed by the sons of Marwan of oppression and violence, it was visible in taking Al-Hajjaj and his rivals as their assistants. Abd Al-Malik chose him to fight the son of Az-Zubair only because he announced his desire for that, saying to him: "I saw myself in a dream catching hold of the son of Az-Zubair, and stripping his skin off him. So, send me to fight him."

Immediately, Abd Al-Malik sent him in order to realize his vision, and slay the son of the disciple of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", and the son of Asma, the two-belted woman, who was the repenting devout worshipper.

Al-Hajjaj went to his miserable purpose, and let no sanctity but that he violated it. He held the mangonel on the mountain of Qubais, with which he threw the Sacred Mosque in the Sacred month (of Shawwal), while the Muslims were performing the ceremonies of Hajj. The result was that he received his reward from Abd Al-Malik, who appointed him as governor of Mecca, Medina, Yemen and Yamamah.

Then, he turned him towards Iraq, in order to pour on its people his oppression and violence. As soon as he had reached it, he delivered his famous speech, in which he said: "No doubt, I see some heads having ripened, and it is time to pick up them, and I'm the one who would take them. I see blood underneath turbans and beards, which is ready to flow (by killing their persons). I swear by Allah! I will take (and kill) the friend by the sin of his friend, the sitting one by the sin of the rider, and the obedient one by the sin of the disobedient, so that one would meet his brother and say to him: "Save yourself O Sa'd, for Sa'id has been ruined!"

This is the real description of the destructive heritage which would be left by the sons of Marwan to the good pious man, Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz, killing, killing killing, until the ground would be filled with pieces of dead bodies and blood.

It might be said that this severity, or that violent hunger for blood was a result of the conditions of rebellion and armed resistance which faced the Umayyad state at this time. But, what is much truer than that is to say that it was this violent hunger for bloodshed which flamed this rebellion, and kindled its fire everywhere.

One from among the Umayyad family witnessed to this severe tyranny, which distinguished that horrible heritage. He was Abd Al-Malik himself, who went on repeating the following words of regret: "What would I say on the Day of Judgement about what Al-Hajjaj had done?"

Furthermore, one day, he intended to oust him, and wrote to him a letter, implying the words of scolding and reproach, which he concluded with this phrase: "Resign from your job with the Commander of the Believers, and have the curses and punishment which you deserve." But, he returned and retained him, for fear of his authority and ruling.

However, bloodshed was not the only aspect of the severity of this age. But, the people were unlawfully humiliated. The sons of Marwan

deprived the non-Arab Muslims, whom Islam gave all right of any Muslim, of their right from the treasury, forbidding them to be appointed in the jobs and employments of the state, enjoining the tribute upon them, depending upon the claim that they embraced Islam in order to avoid paying it, although a majority of religious scholars, imams, worshippers and abstinent people of Muslims emerged from among them.

The Umayyads also went on instigating the people against one another, through their distinction between the Arabs and the non-Arab Muslims, and revival of tribalism, which Mu'awiyah began among those of Mudar, those of Qais, and those of Yemen.

This is all about severity. As for corruption, it covered up everything in the state. The consciences of people were ruined, and everyone allowed for himself to misappropriate everything he was able to usurp illegally. The good manners and morality were hidden, and replaced with aspects of delight and dissoluteness.

No doubt, this corruption led to decline. The state started to suffer from overpowering financial crises. The yielding began to shrink, to the extent that Iraq, the richest country in the state, yielded during the age of Al-Hajjaj no more than twenty-five Dirhams, although it had yielded even until the age of Mu'awiyah more than twelve thousand Dirhams.

Although Al-Hajjaj was not known to have misappropriated for himself, or become illegally rich, his wars broken up by his severity, his dissipation of spending money on creating patrons, and his killing great numbers of people, who were working in the fields of agriculture, and other professions.

Along with this corruption and that severity, there was a complete falsification of the values of both religion and life. In this issue, it is enough for showing such a great forgery to know that from over the pulpits of the mosques in all the countries under the control of the Umayyad state, Ali Ibn Abu Talib, the great hero, the dutiful son, and the repenting imam of Islam, was cursed.

Yes, it was obligatory for the imams of the mosques to curse him in their sermons of Friday, which they would start saying: "O Allah! Might You send Your blessing upon Muhammad, and the family of Muhammad", i.e. the family of Muhammad, among those members Ali had a position as great as an expensive pearl in a necklace of pearls.

Is there a falsification of values, or even a cancellation of sound mind and thinking more visible than that? However, such a forgery of truth and fact depended mainly upon poetry and poets who took its lead, and bore the sin of it. Perhaps, this would explain to us the situation of Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz from them, when he would be the caliph. He would drive them away from him, and forbid them to take the bounteous gifts they used to take from the wealth of Muslims, as a price for their lies and hypocrisy.

Every court had its poets, and every chief and governor had its praising supporters. We explained earlier how poetry was the culture and language of this age, and how great the people's longing and seeking for it was. For this reason, any caliph who wanted to spread a lie among his nation, or caused it to forget a certain right, found no way to do so other than poetry.

Such a man as Mu'awiyah, could hardly find in his cunning, no matter sharp it might be, a source of benefit for him by which he might dispense with poetry, when he intended to take the pledge of allegiance to his son Yazid. He hinted to his private poet to make a poem for this purpose, which he would recite before a gathering of people, whom Mu'awiyah would mobilize at a certain time. At this time, the elite of Sham gathered in the palace of the caliph, without knowing the reason for their meeting. Then, the private poet of Mu'awiyah stood and recited:

“O, how astonishing what the son of Amir, Marwan, or even Sa'id might say! O sons of the viceroys of God, be quiet! Allah Almighty, the most Gracious might bestow it (the matter of caliphate) upon whomever He wills. If the Western pulpit was left empty by its Lord (following the death of Mu'awiyah), then, the coming Commander of the Believers would be Yazid.”

As soon as he had finished from reciting his poem, Mu'awiyah, the cunning person, seemed falsely that he was surprised with what he had heard. He rubbed his palms, and said so much sneakily, addressing his poet: “We would consider what you've said, and ask Allah for guiding us to what is better.”

When Abd Al-Malik Ibn Marwan tried to justify the massacres committed by his governors and leaders against the Shiites, Kharijites and the supporters of Abdullah Ibn Az-Zubair, he asked for the help of his poet Jarir, who said in this context:

“But for the caliph who always recite (and act upon) the Qur’an, surely, there would be no judgements or prayers in congregation to be established. You (Abd Al-Malik) are the trustworthy, and the one to whom Allah has entrusted (the matter of ruling), in view of your justice, faith and bravery. O family of Marwan! No doubt, Allah Almighty has given you preference over those of religious innovations.”

In this way, the situation changed, as the devil of Jarir wanted, in such a way that Abd Al-Malik Ibn Marwan became the imam of right guidance, while Abdullah Ibn Az-Zubair turned to be religiously innovative.

When Al-Walid inherited the ruling of his father, he called upon poetry to support and strengthen him, and have the people appreciate his authority. Here, Jarir also introduced to say:

“No doubt, Al-Walid is the selected imam, whose banner emerged victorious and gainful. Allah Almighty of the Great Throne doomed you to be the caliph, and ruler, so, let your name rise up peacefully the pulpits (on the tongue of the imams as invoking Allah for you in their sermons).”

In this way, Al-Walid became a selected imam, and it is Allah Almighty Who has decreed him to be caliph, whose caliphate was a source of blessing and mercy.

As well as the caliphs depended upon poetry in forging their falsehood and affirming their ruling, their appointed governors and leaders went on imitating them. Ziyad, son of his father (for Abu Sufyan, on whose bed he was born rejected to recognize him as his son) had his poet, who praised him with many poems, in one of which he said: “The people competed with one another over gaining his love, and they could hardly hide their mutual grudges and hatred they had in their breasts. But, when the sword of Allah, i.e. Ziyad got up as their leader and governor, all matters became clear beyond any suspicion.”

Al-Hajjaj also did not forget his fortune in those banquets, which were rich of false claims. He was well-aware of the fact that his crimes were so much grievous and aggravated, that nothing could cover or screen them. So, he took refuge to the two heroes of the famous Umayyad trio, i.e. Jarir and Al-Farazdaq. Jarir for instance put it powerfully when he said:

“The son of Yusuf, as you should know certainly, has a deep sharp insight, in addition to a clear true method.”

Al-Farazdaq also tried to be equal or similar to him in this field, discovering some merits which Al-Hajjaj himself did not know of himself:

“I’ve never anyone as Al-Hajjaj in his piety and god-fearing, who used to pursue only those who are perverse, with a sword, with which he would strike anyone who violated (laws and religion), just for the sake of Allah, chopping off their heads.”

But, Al-Hajjaj was not satisfied with what both Jarir and Al-Farazdaq had said. But, he asked for the aid of A’sha of Hamadan, who made of him a rescuer saint:

“Allah Almighty insisted on completing His Light, and extinguishing the light of the wicked evil persons. In this way, He humiliated the inhabitants of Iraq, for their repealing the firm constant pledge they took earlier. For this reason, their killed persons are worthy of being killed in view of their perversity and afflictions they provoked, and their living ones became humiliated and dispersed after having been driven away.”

Thus, the poetry was misused in order to falsify the truth and goodness, and obliterate the fact in the mind and consciousness of people, as well as to confuse them, and weaken their relations with values and good morals. Nothing would relate the people with the good manners when they saw the leaders of Al-Walid Ibn Abd Al-Malik filling the earth with blood and oppression, then the poem of their poet Ali Ibn Ar-Riqa would be recited in the gatherings of people, in which he said:

“There prayed he, for whom be all blessings and goodness, and upon whom the faithful believers who offer prayers in congregation on Friday ask for Allah’s prayer. No doubt, Al-Walid, the Commander of the Believers, has a been given an authority of realm, in which Allah Almighty helped him, and it is for this that it became victorious.”

Nothing would relate the people to the values and good morals when they saw their caliph Abd Al-Malik having selected Al-Akhtal for his companionship, mentioning his bitter severe wicked lampoon of the Ansar, whom the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” had placed in a very high position.

Indeed, the people lost their faith in a lot of values, and fell into a dark confusion between what they saw and heard. Furthermore, their nerves were crushed under the pressure of untruth, falsehood and deceit. They saw the dutiful pious people being slaughtered, and the lowest and the

most wicked rising up. Amidst the crowds, the voices of those few pious good people as Al-Hasan Al-Basri and his companions were lost. Thus, the faith lost its authority, and Islam returned to be stranger, or likely stranger.

As well as the followers of the true religion during the pre-Islamic period of ignorance used to turn their faces in the sky, and wandering on the mountains, seeking for the expected Prophet, in order to take them out from darkness to light, the followers of the true Islam, from among the oppressed and wronged people in this Umayyad age went on looking forward to the sky, in expectation of the star person, with whom Allah Almighty would renew His religion, who would bring back to the caliphate its honour, and relieve people from their burdens and shackles which fascinated them.

It is true that this is a destructive and horrible heritage, but Allah's help and selection are so much sufficient to make easy what is difficult. There was a need for a miracle, and Allah's Right Hand is full of miracles. Is not it time for the oppressed tired persons to get one of them? Nay! it is time for that. No doubt, Allah's mercy is so much spacious, as well as His grant is bounteous.

This event uncovered to him, as we said earlier, the danger of authority. He remembered the saying of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” about it: “how good suckling it is (when it gives to one whatever he wants from it), and how evil weaning it is (when it deprives one of that which it had given to him)!”

He also remembered what the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” had said in this issue: “Although it is governorship in the world, it would be a source of disgrace and ignominy in the hereafter, except for him, who takes it legally, and fulfills what he has to fulfill in it.”

He saw how authority had him involved in some of its committed sins, although he sought for justice and mercy so much. He would spend all of his life as regretful, since the picture of his victims would not leave his mind. Even, when he would become the caliph of Muslims, and bring about his miracles of justice, piety and mercy, which were beyond reason, he would not forget this event, which was against his will and disposition.

Yes. When he became caliph, he used to weep for long times. His disciples and close companions asked him: “What is the reason for your weeping, since Allah has caused you to be successful in doing what might make you one of the inhabitants of Paradise?” but, his tears would flow more and he would say: “Then, what about Khubaib? what about Khubaib?” then, he would cry as loud as if his mother was bereaved of him: “If I am saved from (the crime of wrongly and violently punishing) Khubaib, I would be good.”

Thus, he was not desirous for the position of caliphate. He favoured to live with himself, supplying it with the provision of god-fearing, and make it ready for meeting Allah Almighty when it would meet Him (on the Day of Judgement) while being in its best state, and on the rightest way.

During this period of his life, we might observe that his longing spirit started to change its direction. It gradually began refraining from being involved in elegance and smartness, relieving itself of the burdens of pleasures and delights of life, yearning for living in seclusion, devoting itself to deep consideration.

He restricted his relations to only a few persons of good worshippers, religious scholars and abstinent and pious people. In this period too, his

relation with Raja Ibn Haiwah was strengthened. He was one of the greatest religious scholars and the most meritorious one from among the first generation of followers. He was reliable and confidential to the Umayyad caliphs, with whom he lived for a long time, without losing his good qualities and merits.

Raja Ibn Haiwah was a glorious personality. Whenever we talk about the Commander of the Believers Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz, he could not help bow in respect and greeting for him. He was doomed to be the first and the most important reason for affirming the position of caliphate to the son of Abd Al-Aziz, as we shall see later, from whom the world would see the miracle of the pious pure and just ruler. Allah's peace and mercy be upon you O Raja!

However, the seclusion to which Umar was inclined gradually did not take him from his world, nor did it let him forget the problems of his nation. It also did not lead him to give up the responsibility of warning. During this period, we would see him, in the company of his close friend Raja Ibn Haiwah keeping on ringing the bell of danger, and giving their sincere advices to Sulaiman, the caliph.

No doubt, the absence of both mercy and justice from the Umayyad state embittered Umar most. For this reason, the words of justice and mercy became a sweet hymn on his tongue, with which he chanted and which he poured upon the hearing of the caliph.

One day, the caliph Sulaiman became fatally ill. Before his illness, he had made his son Ayyub his apparent heir. But, according to the son of Abd Al-Hakam, Ayyub died, and with this, the position became empty.

When the ailment of Sulaiman was aggravated, and he felt he was at the threshold of death, he looked at the faces of his sons, and found them still too young to be caliphs. He ordered that they should be dressed in the shirts and garments of caliphate, and they should be given arms, in order that he would see them how they might seem.

They were brought to him, having the dresses and swords of caliphate. But, he found them too young to fill the eyes. He said sadly: "No doubt, my sons are still boys. Prosperous is he, who has young men!"

Then, he sat alone with his sincere advisor Raja Ibn Haiwah, and they went on discussing the matter. Raja said to him: "No doubt, what might save you in your grave, and intercede for in the hereafter is to appoint as

your successor a good man.” Sulaiman said: “Who would he be?” Raja answered: “Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz.”

Sulaiman rejoiced with the advice of Raja, which coincided a desire within himself, if not a determination which he hid for a long time. Sulaiman replied with his famous phrase: “By Allah! I would make a pledge for him, in which Satan would have no portion!”

But, how would it be, since the brothers of Sulaiman stood as tigers, expecting watchfully for the position? Sulaiman was guided to the solution, i.e. to recommend that the apparent heir of Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz would be one of his brothers (i.e. Yazid Ibn Abd Al-Malik).

Raja hastened to complete the plan, and he wrote with Sulaiman the caliph his well: “In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful. This is a document from the slave of Allah, Sulaiman Ibn Abd Al-Malik, the Commander of the Believers, to Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz: I confided to him to be the caliph after me, followed by Yazid Ibn Abd Al-Malik. So, you should listen to him, and comply with his order, and fear Allah Almighty, and do not differ or go on dispute among yourselves, lest you would become vulnerable to the evil desires of your enemies.”

In this way, the first step towards the appointment of Umar as caliph was done, by writing the pledge in which Satan had no portion. Raja hastened to do the coming plan. He called the Umayyad chiefs to meet the caliph. The document had been written, signed with the seal of the caliph, and then folded. Both the caliph and Sulaiman agreed that none should know what was written in it as long as the caliph was still alive.

The Umayyad chiefs gathered round him, and Sulaiman ordered them to give the pledge of allegiance to him, whom he selected as his successor, and whose name he put in the document. Some of them tried to know to whom Sulaiman he confided the position of caliphate before giving the pledge of allegiance, but Sulaiman scolded them, and all of them gave the pledge of allegiance. Then, they turned away, exchanging their anticipations and thoughts.

Where was the son of Abd Al-Aziz at the time this was being prepared? One day, he went to visit Sulaiman, and inquire about his health. Sulaiman said to him: “O Umar! There is nothing concerned me but that I thought of you.” From this day, he had a hidden feeling of suspicion that Sulaiman might do it without his knowledge, and afflict him with the heavy burdens of caliphate.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE GLAD TIDINGS

“By Allah! I would make a pledge for him in which Satan should have no portion!”

now, we return to be in the company of the good pious man, Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz, in order to be acquainted with the extraordinary effort he should make to be able to change darkness into light. The position of caliphate was approaching him. Do you think he had a desire for it? No, he had no desire for it.

No, for Sulaiman Ibn Abd Al-Malik had his sons, and it was the use of the Umayyads to have their sons their successors. This is what was done when Mu'awiyah made his son Yazid his successor, then Yazid made his son Mu'awiyah the Second his successors, then Marwan made his son Abd Al-Malik his successor, who in turn turned his brother Abd Al-Aziz and took the pledge of allegiance for his son Al-Walid.

Furthermore, he did not want to be the caliph, because the caliphate with its implications became a heavy burden upon anyone who fears Allah Almighty, and has a living conscience. The sanctity of his longing spirit started to turn him away gradually from the pleasures and delights of life.

There was an event which occurred during his governorship of Hijaz, which had him frightened and scared from authority and ruling. He lived his entire life after that, tasting the bitterness of this event, and wondering how he was overpowered to do it, in spite of his piety and god-fearing.

When he was governor of Hijaz, he received a letter from the caliph Al-Walid, in which he accused Khubaib Ibn Abdullah Ibn Az-Zubair of instigating the people against the Umayyads. He ordered him to punish him by lashing. Umar lashed him, which led to his death.

When the news of his death was conveyed to Umar, he was shocked, as if the sky rift asunder, and the stars scattered, and the Day of Judgement was established. He was overtaken by a destructive sadness because of the event, which made him close his house wherein he was for seventy days, wearing a black mantle, imploring to Allah to forgive him.

He hurried to meet Raja Ibn Haiwah, to whom he said: "O Raja! I see the Commander of the Believers at the threshold of death, and I do not expect but that he would appoint his successor. I beseech you by Allah that if he mentioned me concerning this matter, you should divert him from me, and if he did not mention me, you should never remind him of me concerning this matter."

Raja had to use his intelligence to withdraw this sense from Umar, for he knew well that if this sense turned to be a strong suspicion, he would apologize to the caliph, and pressingly ask him to exempt him from admitting it. Moreover, perhaps, he would leave for elsewhere, which none could be able to know.

For this reason, Raja performed his role cunningly when he replied to Umar: "No doubt, you have gone as far in your suspicions, as I have not thought you would go. Do you think the sons of Abd Al-Malik let you enter into their matter of ruling?"

Umar rejoiced, and turned away from Raja, who became happy, and went on rubbing his palms so much joyfully and delightfully. He gained the first round from him, who wanted to flee away from ruling, glory and caliphate.

Hisham, the brother of Sulaiman went to Raja, and he was powerfully desirous for the office. He said to him: "O Raja! I have a good relation with you. Tell me please of the news of this matter of ruling. If it is going to me, I would learn and then keep silent, and if it is going to anyone else, you would tell me, and you have a pledge from me not to mention that to anyone." But the reply of this glorious old man was that the caliph entrusted this matter to him, and took the pledge from him not to speak. Thus, Hisham went away from him, in a state of sadness and confusion. He wondered within himself: "If I was turned away from it, to whom would it be? Would the matter of caliphate come out from the sons of Abd Al-Malik?"

One day, Raja went to visit the caliph, and inquire about his health. He found him in his last moments. He sat by his side until his soul departed (and he died). Then, he covered him. He hid the news of his death firmly and constantly, paving the way for announcing the new caliph, giving with such an announcement the greatest glad tidings to the religion of Allah, and the world of people.

Let's us pay attention to him as completing the narration, and describing the scene: "I went out, and sent to Ka'b Ibn Hamid Al-Absi the chief of police, in order that he should gather the household of the Commander of the Believers. They gathered in the mosque of Dabiq, and I said to them: Give the pledge of allegiance (to the coming caliph)!

They said: We've given it once. Would we give it for the second time? I said: This is the desire of the Commander of the Believers. So, you should give the pledge of allegiance to the one in this document, to whom he confided to be the coming caliph!

They gave the pledge of allegiance one by one. When they finished, I was certain that I had put the matter under control. So, I told them that the caliph died, and read to them the document.

Since the tradition of the Umayyad state was that the caliph should appoint his successor before his death, the task achieved by Raja Ibn Haiwah should be considered to be so much great. The man was selected to be the caliph this time was likely matchless. If the most wonderful aspects of democracy known to the world gathered to choose a match to him, surely, they would fail.

But, in spite of that, we would see that he tried to take the first opportunity to drive himself away from the matter of caliphate, and refer the mater to the Muslims to choose whomever they wanted.

We saw then how the Umayyad chiefs gave him the pledge of allegiance, after they had been surprised by the document of Sulaiman which Raja recited to them. Hisham gave the pledge of allegiance to Umar against his will. He proceeded towards Umar and said to him: "We all are to Allah, to Whom we all refer, since it has been turned away from me!" Umar replied to him: "We all are to Allah, to Whom we all refer, since it has ended up to me against my will!"

As soon as he had recovered from the shock of the surprise, he trembled as if he was a little bird covered up by snow. He faced Raja Ibn Haiwah, and said to him blaming: "Have not I beseech you by Allah O Raja (to keep it away from me)?"

Then, he went to the covered dead body of the previous caliph, for whom they offered the funeral prayer, and saw him off to the grave. He returned to console his household, and receive consolation for him.

In the morning of the following day, and the news had reached several parts of Sham, and multitudes of people ran to the mosque of Dabiq, the Commander of the Believers entered the mosque, which was crowded of a great numbers of the coming people. The caliph saw it a good chance to get rid of the position of caliphate before it would stick to him.

Suddenly, he ascended the pulpit, and addressed the people saying: "Now and then: I have been afflicted with this distress against my will, without taking my opinion, or consulting the Muslims. But, I dissolve the pledge of allegiance given to me, and you should choose for yourselves (whomever you think more fitting for you)."

Perhaps, he thought his words would confuse them, and cause them to be silent even for moments, during which he would save himself from the position, claiming that this silence of them meant that they accepted his concession. But, as soon as he had said his phrase "Choose for yourselves (whomever you think more fitting for you)", the mosque was shaken by a horrible strong mutter, sent off by the chanting crying throats: "No, it is you whom we choose O Commander of Believers!"

The gatherings inside and those outside the mosque rushed towards the pulpit, and their breaths were as hot as (if they were) about to fuse it. He descended from the pulpit, trying to find a way to go through amidst the gatherings of people.

Their chanting expounding voices, proclaiming their pledge of allegiance to him turned this occasion into a great festival. Their stretching arms went on pointing to him, rising and lowering as if they were triumphant banners. Their pleased eyes were shining with the delight and joy of life. But, as for him, he went on weeping.

CHAPTER SIX

THE MIRACLE

“Nay! might Allah reward Islam well for (what it has done for) me!”

now, we are facing a new man, very different from that, in whose company we were over the previous pages of the book. How did this man emerge suddenly? How did he appear surprisingly? And from where did he come? Had he been made in the sight of the doom, in order to offer through him a brilliant appearance of virtue and goodness, in a world which was about to be void of both virtue and goodness?

Had the spirit of Islam been working persistently in secret, in order to affirm that it was able to beget from its dutiful sons and supreme, superior and marvelous men those whose time the people thought was over? Had the human conscience been worried by the absence of the good righteous example which should be followed, of which mankind became almost barren, and for this reason, it went on looking for the strongest man, in order that it might realize through and with him its clear appearance and existence, and remind the human ambition of the way of sanctity?

Had the fact, which was disturbed by the genius of organization, knowledge and administration, been working independently, seeking for the spiritual genius, in order that it might fill the lonely space and quench with its active devoutness and noble piety the thirst of the mind of life? Had all of his lurking virtues been growing within himself in secret, increasingly gathering so as to explode, at a certain time, this strong overwhelming energy?

No doubt, all of that had occurred, and for all of that, there came to life this new man, and glorious visitor, Umar, the caliph, on a quick journey, which was no more than two years, five months, and a few days.

Had this caliph been, before his caliphate, one of the normal class of people, and had his environment in which he stayed his childhood, youth and manhood been familiar, and had his astonishing spiritual turning been an extension of a long period of development, and had the direct cause of this turning been anything else other than the position of caliphate, which might kindle the fire of ambitions and desires, and in short, had all of that been so, it would have been easy for us to

understand the marvelous shift which had occurred. But, since it was very different from all of that, then, this marvelous shift would remain a glorious secret beyond reason.

The hero of this spiritual turning, whose extraordinary biography we would go through, was not from among the ordinary people, so that it might be said that his abstinence and piety were an extension of his suffering as a result of his hard experiences. But, on the contrary, as of his birth unto his being appointed as caliph, he was the stepson of dominion and power, the grandson of glories, and the son of the rich palaces and abundant blessings.

When he rose up to the position of caliphate, he was not an old man, so that it might be said that his dispensing with its authority, power and pleasures was an aspect of his being satisfied with blessing, authority and power, or it was a sign of this old age, which abandoned the desires and aspirations of youth.

On the contrary, when this holy hero was appointed as caliph, he was at the middle of manhood and strength, which might be abundant of ambitions and aspirations. At this time, he was thirty-five years old. His surprising and astonishing spiritual turning did not last as long as years, months. But it came, as we shall see, a product of the moment in which he was selected as the Commander of the Believers.

the reason for this spiritual turning was not disappointment of achieving a certain purpose, which might exhausted his ambitions, nor was it a result of a certain defeat in his life, for which he was eager to find a substitute, nor was it a natural reaction to excessive desires and inclinations, or pleasures of body, nor was it a shift to uprightness and piety, which led him to go to the hermitages of worshippers, nor was it a tendency of pessimism, which believed in nothingness, and took shelter in apathy, crying that everything is false. On the contrary, the reason for his spiritual turning was much farer from the results to which it led.

It is true that there existed the position of caliphate and the authority and power of ruling, of the greatest empire at its time, but, it is in this alone, apart from other considerations, the holiness of this surprising astonishing glorious spiritual turning, or in short, the whole miracle was visible.

We describe this turning as surprising just because it was actually so. Although the life of Umar, from his childhood, was so much pure and

meritorious, inclined to be more and more upright and pious, and despite the fact that following his being ousted from the governorship of Sham during the time of Al-Walid Ibn Abd Al-Malik, he was devoted to develop his good merits and virtues, and purify himself much more, and started to dilute the excess of his smartness and enjoyment of abundant blessings and rich pleasures, nothing of all of that would be capable of persuading us to believe that this was an introductory to this unique spiritual turning, which transcended even upon itself, and transmigrated the personality of the caliph, at the very moment his mouth watered, out of horror, not of delight, for the heavy burdens and responsibilities of ruling and caliphate.

However, there is no doubt that Allah's selecting him, and granting him success stood, apart from everything, behind this miracle, for Allah Almighty has Power over all things, and He Almighty has better knowledge where to make His message, and put His secret and blessing.

But, if we went on seeking for a reason for, or a factor of this miracle, within the limits of our capability, life, as human beings, having the ability to choose, think, estimate the matters, seek for things which we want, then, where would we find this reason? It, in our opinion, lies in one thing, i.e. the way of the son of Abd Al-Aziz of understanding, and making sense to, and sanctifying the responsibility of ruling. Everything inside and outside his personality would change swiftly according to this responsibility alone.

He was no longer the same person who had been (before the caliphate). The state, the nation, and in short the entire life was transcending upon their whole previous situation so much quickly, in order to take new ones, reflected by the greatness and sanctity of the caliph himself. Moreover, the intimate direct relation of this responsibility, within his conscience, to Allah Almighty prompted him to try to overpower the time in order that the changes would happen.

He could not keep patient even for a day, or an hour on an ancient mistake, for Allah Almighty would ask him why he left this mistake unchanged for an hour, and because he could not guarantee that he would remain alive until the coming hour. Hence, there should be no time for deferment or postponement. Now, let's see.

As soon as he had returned from the burial ceremonies of the previous caliph Sulaiman and sat in the gathering of consolation, he asked his

freed slave Muzahim to bring a blank paper, inkpot and a pen. Raja Ibn Haiwah approached him, after seeing him trembling, as he was suffering from a heavy ailment. He advised him to delay what he wanted to achieve to the coming day, so that he might take rest. But, he answered him, while his tears were flowing from his eyeballs: "You've done it O Raja, so, let me save myself from the punishment of the Great Day."

It was the responsibility being related to Allah, as much as the Greatness, Majesty and Glory Allah Almighty had within Umar. Yes. It was this responsibility, which would not let him feel rest or even sleep.

When Muzahim brought the paper, the inkpot and the pen, the caliph snatched them so much eagerly from him, as if he was taking his life and destiny from the mouth of a hurricane. He wrote hurriedly to Maslamah Ibn Abd Al-Malik, ordering him to return with his army from Constantinople, then to Yazid Ibn Abu Muslim, telling him of his being driven away from the governorship of Africa, calling him to accounts, and to Usamah At-Tanukhi, telling him of his being ousted from the governorship of Egypt, calling him to accounts. He ordered that the letters should be conveyed to their people immediately.

The Umayyad chiefs were astonished by what they had seen. Some of them whispered to one another, commenting on this scene, which irritated their wonder and stupid thoughts. They said: "It is the longing for authority, which could not let him until the next morning."

Indeed, they were poor in thinking. They failed to perceive the spirit of sanctity which started to work within the conscience of the man, who did not find in the position of caliphate, over which they competed one another, no more than a horrible affliction or distress. His decisive hurry to drive away this trio uncovered to us an important aspect of his great loyalty to the responsibility of ruling, and his method of undertaking this responsibility.

As for Maslamah Ibn Abd Al-Malik he was at this time besieging with his great army Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Roman empire. The blockade was about to reach its objective, and open the gates of Constantinople, but for a deceit in which he was involved by the Roman leader Lion. In this way, the army retreated, and its victory was about to turn into defeat.

In spite of the loss of chance, cutting off the lines of supplies, and spreading of diseases and starvation among the Arab soldiers, the

previous caliph Sulaiman rejected to issue his command to the army to return. Perhaps, he did so out of his personal and national arrogance, or out of hope for the improvement of conditions, which might enable him to supply the army with new forces. Thus, the dilapidating army was left vulnerable to loss.

Before his appointment as caliph, Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz was so much furious because of this situation, and he asked Sulaiman repeatedly to call upon it to return, but, there is no opinion of him, who is not obeyed. But, since he became caliph, he could not keep patient and postpone the command of withdrawal to the next morning. But, he started with issuing and sending his order with the messengers during the early hours of his caliphate and responsibilities; and this was the first matter.

The second matter was the dismissal of Usamah At-Tanukhi from the governorship of Egypt. However, Usamah was, as described by Ibn Abd Al-Hakam, wrongdoer and violently brutal. He used to transgress the legal bounds of punishment, with no support from Allah's Book. He used also to cut off the hands, and fill the bellies of animals with the parts of the bodies of his victims, which he would throw to the crocodiles.

Should the son of Abd Al-Aziz keep silent from this man, who belonged to such an evil pattern? He often advised the previous caliph that it was necessary to dismiss him. But, since he had the power of authority, he should not let him in his office even for a single moment, during which he might cut off a hand, which would come on the Day of Judgement, hung in the neck of Umar, in order to say: "O Lord! I was cut off illegally and aggressively during the period when this was caliph."

The third matter was the dismissal of Yazid Ibn Abu Muslim from the governorship of Africa. No doubt, he was so much oppressive tyrant. He used to treat people so much harshly and brutally, and rejoice by seeing them being punished and tasting his torment and excruciation.

In this way, the caliph began his time of ruling with the decisive quick comprehensive change, which was to be at the level of state and nation, as speedy and comprehensive as was the spiritual turning which had occurred within his conscience. There was no time to postpone or defer that, as for the determination of this man, whose eyes kept weeping, and whose tongue kept chanting the following warning Verse: "I fear, if I disobeyed my Lord, a torment of a great day (i.e. on the Day of Judgement)."

If his disobedience to Allah was to neglect change, then, he would be also disobedient to Allah, in his sight, in case he delayed or postponed it. It seemed as if he perceived, with the help of his sixth sense, and his enlightening insight, that his life was (to pass as fast as if it was) on a bird's wing, and that he would not live among the people but for a few time, after which, he would respond to the Call of his Lord.

For this reason, he went on exerting within a crossing moment as much effort as should be done within many years. Now, let's see once again.

On the next day, he got himself ready to take his way to the big tent which was used to be prepared for the first meeting between the new caliph and the elite of his people. As soon as he had placed his feet on the street, he saw a great procession of high horses, amidst which, there was a mare, which was decorated as if it were a bridegroom, in order that the caliph would ride on it.

But suddenly, he trembled and asked in a state of rejection: "What is this?" they answered him: "This is a group of horses, which none else has ridden before, and they used to be prepared for the procession of the new caliph." Umar said: "O Muzahim! Join those to the treasury."

He went on his feet until he reached the big tent, which was a (source of) seduction, as if it were the mansion of Khosrau. He trembled once again and asked: "What is this?" they replied to him: "It is the big tent which should be prepared for receiving the new caliph." He exclaimed: "O Muzahim! Join this to the treasury (of Muslims)." He asked for a straw mat, which he spread on the ground, on which he sat down so much happily.

Then, the decorated adorned garments and palliums were brought to him. He asked: "What are these?" they answered: "These are the garments of caliphate, which the new caliph should wear." He shouted: "O Muzahim! Join those also to the treasury."

Then, the slave girls were offered to him, in order that he would choose from among them the maidservants of his palace. He was scared and then got up and went to them. He asked them one by one: "Who are you? For whom have you been earlier? What is your real country?" when he finished from asking all of them, he called: "O Muzahim! Take care of them, and bring back everyone of them to its country and family."

Behold! Let's save a great portion of our astonishment, surprise and admiration, for we are going to meet a world, full of such miracles.

A short time later, the Commander of the Believers moved to Damascus, the capital of the Umayyad state. From Damascus and Khunāsirah, he would undertake the responsibilities of this great large state, of which he became in charge.

However, the miracles which would occur during his blessed days, were a fruit of two things, to which he stuck firmly and devoutly: the first was his absolute loyalty to the religion. The other was his absolute loyalty to the nation (of Muslims). But, behind both kinds of loyalty, there was a fear of Allah, which was as strong and powerful as if the mountains were to crush because of its like.

As for his absolute loyalty to the religion, his faith in Islam was so much great. In it, he saw the bestower of blessings granted to him, and the Paradise of his life which he lived. Some of his close companions said to him, and they were astonished by his great ruling: "Might Allah reward you well for (what you do for the sake of) Islam!" but, he replied: "Nay! might Allah reward Islam well for (what it has done to) me!"

His faith in the greatness of his religion increased by those brilliant applications, which uncovered its capability of building a just state, and a meritorious nation, during the time when the flag was carried by the first generation of the companions of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", particularly Abu Bakr and Umar.

Although he spent his life from his early childhood, sticking to the orders and limits of religion, since he became the caliph of Muslims, his relation with the religion was no longer only that of a faithful believer, but, it transcended that to take the position of the guardian, the executive, and the responsible for construing the reality and principles of Islam to a general path, on which both the state and society would go on.

As for his loyalty to the nation, it was, in fact, an extension of his loyalty to the religion. The religion in general, as the Superior Word of Allah, has commended man. Islam in particular has been mainly concerned with the matter of mankind. On the other hand, the conditions in which the son of Abd Al-Aziz was appointed as caliph, highlighted his loyalty to the rights of people, as being prompted by a great amount of injustices, grievances, problems and crises, left by the previous Umayyad periods of ruling.

This loyalty of him determined the nature and philosophy of his responsibilities, which he went on carrying out so much earnestly that he was exhausted, and frightened. As for exhaustion, that's because he gave it no time to take rest. As for fright, he feared that he might die before fulfilling its obligations and duties.

If the twenty-nine months, which he spent as caliph, were considered to be no more than a single moment in the history of mankind, this single moment came to give the greatest honour to mankind, and leave the most powerful effect upon the fact. Indeed, it gave all of humanity, in different ages and parts of the world, the good example of sanctity and aspects of marvel the human will could achieve and attain, in case it behaved depending upon the fact that Allah Almighty is watching it, and that the truth is its constitution.

The Commander of the Believers was eager to the necessity that people should understand that he did not bring to them new principles or concepts, since all of that existed in their religion and Qur'an, as well as the tradition of the first generation of the successors and companions of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", and their good followers. But, he brought them a new spirit, i.e. the spirit of the pious sincere responsibility, motivated by a sound good understanding of the real nature of Islam, and the principles of its law.

Thus, we have to observe the path of his relation to his responsibility in three aspects: The first is the clarity of responsibility in his mind. The second is his being involved in it. The third is his loyalty to it.

As for the first, we know well that in order that a certain man might be involved in any case, out of deep faith, and not because of research, it would have become so much clear and apparent in his mind and feeling and turned to be beyond confusion and suspicion. The case in which Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz was involved was of such a pattern. He was not involved in it as a researcher, trying to verify of its validity and reality. But, on the contrary, he was involved in it as a faithful believer, full of certainty.

Let's see now the aspects of its clarity in his mind. If his words and speeches were to express of the reality of his directions and purposes, they would be then sufficient to give us a good illustration of such a clarity.

Let's begin with this speech: "The Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" and his (rightly-guided) successors after him set many traditions. If one stuck to them, this would be a source of holding fast to the Book of Allah, and power to the religion of Allah. No one could change or turn them; and no one should comply with him, who deviated from them. Whoever has been guided by them would be considered to have been guided to the straight path, and whoever depended upon them in seeking for victory would emerge victorious. But, whoever left them, and followed a way other than that of the faithful believers, then, Allah Almighty would let him turn to that to which he followed, and cause him to taste the fire of Hell, and how evil wicked destiny it would be!

O people! There would be no Prophet after your Prophet, nor would there be a Book after the Book of Allah. Whatever Allah has made lawful on the tongue of His Prophet is lawful until the Day of Judgement, and whatever Allah has made unlawful on the tongue of His Prophet is unlawful until the Day of Judgement.

Behold! I'm not a judge among you, but I'm an executive. I'm not an innovative, but I'm a follower (of the sunnah). I'm not the best of you, but I'm no more than an ordinary man among you, though carrying the heaviest burden from among you."

Thus, the responsibility was so much clear in his mind. Its subject matter was this religion, through which Allah Almighty has completed His blessing, and accepted as the religion of all the people. Its carrier was not a legislator or a judge, but he was an executive of the will and principles of this religion. This situation was not to give him any prestige (over the others) "I'm not the best of you, but I'm no more than an ordinary man among you." But, the only distinction between him and the members of his nation was that he carried the heaviest burden from among them, which should be not in his favour, if not against him.

Furthermore, when he called the people to adhere to worship and doing the good deeds, he did not stand in the position of the tutor or preacher in relation to them. On the contrary, he accused himself of being negligent, beseeching to us to believe him, though he attained the highest level of god-fearing, piety, right guidance and perfection.

One day, he addressed the people saying, in a state of weeping and wailing: "By Allah! I say to you what I say, and I do not know that

anyone of you has more sins than I have. So, I ask for Allah's forgiveness, and I repent to Him."

His responsibility as a guardian of Allah's religion had the same clarity which it had as a guardian of the slaves of Allah. In this connection, his wife, Fatimah, daughter of Abd Al-Malik, related this event: One day, I entered into him, and he was sitting in his praying place, putting his cheek on his hand, with his tears flowing. I asked him: "What is wrong with you? What is the reason for your weeping?"

He said: "Allah's mercy be upon you O Fatimah! I have been appointed in charge of the affairs of this nation. I thought of the hungry poor, the lost patient, the abandoned naked person, the humiliated orphan, the oppressed wronged person, the stranger, the captive, the old aged person, the widow woman who has none to take care of her, and the one who has a lot of dependents and a little income, and their like in the different parts and sides of the state. I learnt that my Lord would ask me about all of them on the Day of Judgement, and that the one who argue with me on behalf of them would be Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him". Then, I feared I would have no proof to support me. So, I'm weeping."

As such was the clarity of his responsibility of his nation and all of the people, according to his saying in the different parts and sides of the state.

His great pious heart was with every individual of his nation, with every orphan, with every old aged man, with every widow, with every poor, with every patient, with every depressed one, with every wronged one, with every captive, and with every oppressed one. All of those lie in his conscience, asking him for their needs, proclaiming their complaints, waiting him, as he understood, until they would argue him on the Day of Judgement before Allah, the Lord of all worlds. Nothing would save him from them on that day, except whatever justice, goodness, right and dutifulness he might do for them in this world.

From this glance at the clarity of his responsibility in both his mind and heart, we shall move to another glance at his wholeheartedly involvement in this responsibility. The responsibility enclosed him, to the extent that he forgot himself, his family, and his world, and in short, he forgot everything except for it. Moreover, he forgot his right of making sense to pleasure and safety as a reward for all loyalty and dutifulness he

offered for the sake of Allah's religion and the world of the people. He forgot this right of him because of his strong fear of Allah.

He no longer mentioned anything but his formidable responsibilities. His great deeds seemed to him very insignificant. Only one image dominated his feeling and mind, i.e. his standing before Allah Almighty (on the Day of Judgement), in order to ask him about everything concerning His religion, and about everyone of His slaves.

Fatimah, his wife said also in this issue: "Whenever he mentioned Allah in his bed, he would tremble as if he was a little bird out of his severe fear (of Allah), to the extent that I might say: In the coming morning, the people would have no caliph for them (for he would die)."

Ali Ibn Zaid said too: "He seemed (to fear Allah so much) as if the fire of (Hell) has not been created but for him."

Maimun Ibn Mahran said: "Once, I saw him weeping, and behold! He was weeping (so much as if his tears turned into) blood."

The Divine content of the responsibility made him more involved in it to the furthest depth. He came to feel shy of his Lord for fear that a delicious morsel might be seen in his mouth, or a soft garment might be seen on his body, or even a smile, merely a smile might be seen between his lips. Since he was appointed as caliph until he died and met Allah, he had never been seen smiling.

The man, who was, a few minutes before his appointment as caliph, seen very smart, good looking, scented with perfume, turned, by the help of responsibility, within (a time, as short as) a glance, to be a different person, disheveled and covered with dust, just like his great grandfather, Umar Ibn Al-Khattab. If anyone who did not know him, met him, he would ask him: Where could I find the Commander of the Believers? He absolutely rejected all pleasures and delights of life, and took shelter in a severe austerity and hardship.

Indeed, the great shake resulting from the clarity of his responsibility, with its glory and majesty, took his life from its orbit to another new one, whose axis was Allah's asking him about all rights of religion, state and nation. Although he worshipped Allah so much, the Worshipped One, not the worship itself, was the source of his fears and concerns.

Since he became the caliph of Muslims, his relation with Allah Almighty became no longer a normal relation of a worshipper with his

Worshipped One, but, it should be, before all of that, a relation of a guardian with Him, Who placed him in this position of caliphate.

Fatimah, his wife said in reply to a question about his worship: “By Allah! He was the most of all the people to perform prayers and observe fasts, but I’ve never, by Allah, seen a man more god-fearing than him.”

Yes. Had those fears (of Allah) been of one, who was afraid that he might have been short of worship, surely, they would have found harbour immediately. But, on the contrary, they were fears of a guardian one, who saw that Allah Almighty entrusted to him the affairs of religion and world, as well as all of the people, and living beings.

Thus, the way, in which he was involved in his responsibility, which, in turn enclosed him elaborately was a fact, beyond description and exaggeration. We might observe the aspects of his involvement successively along all levels of his life, as a caliph, a husband, a father, a brother, a relative and even a friend.

All of his relations with himself, his clan, and all the people were sunken with him, in the far depths of his involvement. Furthermore, the people themselves were submerged with them at different levels, according to their nearness to him. The result of this was that his kinship and friendship turned to be a source of great loss for all his kith and kin, and his friends.

One of his servants, who was driving his workhorse expressed of this fact very elegantly when he (Umar) asked him about the state of people. He replied to him: “All people are in a state of comfort and rest except for you, I, and this workhorse.”

His involvement in his responsibility was reflected upon himself, his family, and all people around him. As for him, as we saw earlier, a new astonishing person was placed within his skin. Let’s pay attention to Muhammad Ibn Ka’b Al-Qarzi who said: I visited Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz after his appointment as caliph. His body became lean, his hair mostly removed, and the colour (of his complexion) changed. We had seen him in Medina, when he was its governor, of fleshy built-body.

I went on looking at him, without turning my sight from him. He asked me: “O Ka’b! why are you looking at me in such a way that you’ve never looked at me before?” I said: “Out of my astonishment, O Commander of Believers.” He said: “What is the reason for this astonishment?” I said: “Because your body became lean, your hair

removed, and the colour (of your complexion) changed. Where is this bright colour, this pretty hair and this abundant rich body?" he said to me commenting: "Then, you would be more astonished and disapproved of me when you see me three days after my going to the grave, when my eyes would fall on my cheeks, and the worms would inhibit my nostrils and mouth!" then, he went on weeping more and more.

The picture and the frame changed so much. The abundant rich body, which was fed by the blessing and delights of life, became lean under the pressure of his horrible sense of responsibility. From the early days of his caliphate, he called his wife Fatimah unto him, and faced her with his new reality. He gently told her that he would not practice his role as a husband, for the burdens he carried became so much heavy, and he had no single moment to give to anything other than those heavy burdens. But, he gave her a full right to choose her destiny and future .

Fatimah would remain elegant in our awareness along those pages we are writing about her husband, the caliph, as well as we would remain showing all respect and admiration of which she was worthy. She kept herself by the side of her husband, the caliph, joining him the severe austerity which he imposed upon himself. Whenever she became so much hungry, or whenever she suffered from a severe cold, she would not say more than the following: "Would that we have been as far from the position of caliphate as is the East from the West! By Allah! We've never rejoiced or been happy since we experienced it."

Indeed, he took her with him unto the depths of his responsibility and involvement. Thus, the lady, who was a wife of a caliph, a daughter of a caliph, a sister of a caliph, and who turned herself in the brightest and most precious valuable kinds of silk, gold, pearl and blessing the world had ever known at this time, came to own no more than two coarse garments. The caliph took all of suits, dresses and garments of him, her and his sons and daughters, and ordered that they should be sold, and placed their price in the treasury of Muslims. Furthermore, she came to eat, and it was the best food she could eat, the dried bread wetted with oil, or fragmented and mixed with lentil. She also became of a pale face and a weak lean body.

One day, the Commander of the Believers came upon her, while she was sewing her garment with her hands. He patted on her shoulder, and said to her jokingly: "O Fatimah! No doubt, our life during the period we spent in Dabiq (before getting the position of caliphate) were more

blessed and delightful than we are today.” He pointed to their rich life which was abundant of blessings and delights in Marj Dabiq, before he was appointed as caliph. Fatimah replied to him: “By Allah! At this time, you was not capable (of getting as much blessings and delights as you want) than you are today.” She meant that since he became now the caliph and ruler of a great state, he then had more power to get as much blessings as he wanted than he had earlier before his appointment as caliph. Suddenly, he turned to be pale, and his tears flowed, knowing that he had exceeded the reasonable limits with this fun. He said to her: “I fear, if I disobeyed my Lord, the punishment on the Great Day (of Judgement).”

But, it was not after a long time that Fatimah became familiar with the austerity and hardship of life he selected for himself and his family, and went on living it joyfully and wholeheartedly. The blessing of her holy husband touched her, and she went on detecting the real blessing lurking in the austerity of life, and looking forward, from behind our perishing world to the Highest Paradise, and the Great Pleasure of Allah.

With this apparent clarity of his responsibility, and with this great involvement of him in it, the loyalty would be integrated with the absolute fidelity, which intimately and firmly linked it with this responsibility. The fidelity to any kind of responsibility is the preventive strong wall, which might keep it within its real objectivity, and save it from the aggression of selfishness and inclinations.

This was the nature of fidelity which the Commander of the Believers, Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz had. He was not involved in it in such a way as to achieve through it a personal glory, or to get an individual gain, but, he was involved in it so much wholeheartedly and devoutly, and nothing in front or behind of him, on his right or on his left, could divert him from it, or instigate him to leave it.

It was fidelity, reflected by his loyalty to Allah, the Lord of all worlds. When such a man as Umar became loyal to Allah Almighty, even one thousand worlds like this of ours could not interfere as partner in this deal. He “Allah be pleased with him” often used to repeat the following Verse: “And most of them believe not in Allah without associating (others as partners) with him.” He took from it a warner, with which he used to frighten himself so that his fidelity to his Lord, religion and responsibility would attain the furthest point the strong determined rightly-guided men could reach.

He perceived, with the light of his deep insight, that any kind of flatter on the account of his fidelity to his responsibility would be considered as hidden disguised blasphemy, belonging to such a sort as of which the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" had warned his companions, telling them that it had a creeping like the creeping of ants.

Indeed, this holy man succeeded in saving his fidelity from such a creeping of ants. The people came to talk to one another, saying: "This is the first Umayyad caliph, for whom we have no need to knock at his door, for whatever rights we have come to us while we are sitting in our homes, and whatever rights we do not deserve would not be accessible to us, and we would die before getting them."

Yes. There was nothing, whether of kinship or friendship, to compete the fidelity of the son of Abd Al-Aziz (to his responsibility). There was difference between him and some of the Umayyad chiefs over some rights they thought they should take. One of them said to the caliph: "I would bring you the document of Al-Walid." But Umar said decisively: "Is it the Mushaf which you are going to bring me?"

Thus, the right itself became the arbitrator and the judge. There should be no treaties nor documents except for those of the right. There should also be no kinships nor relations except for those of the right. There should no intercession, nor desire nor fear to prevent him from giving or taking the right.

His paternal aunt, Umm Amr, daughter of Marwan was admired by the Umayyad caliphs. She was favoured and beloved to Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz. When he cancelled all the assignments of the sons of Marwan, hers was also cancelled. She hurried to meet him, and he was sitting, having his supper. She greeted him and sat down. She went on gazing with her eyes, and she likely did not believe what she was seeing. All food he had in front of him was dried bread, a dish of lentil, and a few quantity of salt.

She was astonished. Is there Umar, who used to plunge into riches and blessing, and now, he eats such a food after becoming the caliph? she could not help weeping. Then she said: "I've come to you in order that you might fulfill a need for me, but, as soon as I had seen you, I saw I should begin with you before myself." The caliph said: "What is the matter O my aunt?" she said: "If you have a food much softer and easier

than that (it would be better).” He said: “I have nothing other than it, and had I had, surely, I would have done so.”

Then, she said: “Your uncle Abd Al-Malik assigned to me (a yearly income) which you know. Then, Al-Walid came and increased it, and so did Sulaiman. Then, you’ve become the caliph, and you cancelled it.” He said to her: “O aunt! My paternal uncle Abd Al-Malik, Al-Walid and Sulaiman gave you from the property of Muslims. This property is not mine, so that I might give you from it. But, I might give you from my property if you so like.”

She asked: “What is your property O Commander of Believers?” he said: “My income is two hundred Dinars a year.” She asked: “How could your income benefit me?” then, she turned away from him, in a state of despair and misery. It was she, before whose desires the Umayyad caliphs used to bow, and whose inclinations they would hurry to fulfill.

Did there remain any intercession of an interceder, or any desire of a greedy one? No, for in the glare of his fidelity, all desires and aspirations burnt. Furthermore, this fidelity surrounded him by a strong wall, from which all desires and inclinations would retreat powerless and helpless. It also surrounded him by a cover of self-safety, which was too strong and defensive to be impenetrable and inviolable by threat or fear.

One of his close companions said to him, when he deprived the Umayyad chiefs of their property, which he gave to the treasury: “O Commander of Believers! Do you not fear the evil intrigues of your people?” the repenting forbearing quiet weeping man trembled as if he were a lion, and say roaring: “Do you frighten me with anything else other than the Day of Judgement? I’m not to fear anything, though being a source of fear, except for the Day of Judgement.”

It is true. The virtue might be reward for itself. When one has such a loyalty to the truth as we see, his loyalty would bestow prestige upon him tens of times stronger and powerful than what he might attain by intelligence or effort.

The obstacles which were too strong to keep Umar off the way, were beyond energy and capability. He, with the help of his great loyalty and fidelity, was able to overpower the desires of the Umayyad chiefs, the class of rich people which gave preference to its interests and authority, produced by Umayyad ruling, in addition to the spreading corruption, the

dilapidating economy, the critical overwhelming crises, and his relations with his friends and companions.

If this fidelity of him was able to amaze us with its brilliant capability of overcoming and crushing all kinds of obstructions, it should, before that, astonish us with the concept it had in the awareness and conscience of Umar himself.

In spite of all of his intelligence, talents and skills, he saw that he had no right to undertake his responsibility depending upon his intelligence. But, he had to undertake and fulfill it depending upon his fidelity. He freed himself before Allah Almighty from all might and power he had. Within the light of his fidelity, he escaped from his (limited) capability to the (infinite) Capability and Power of Allah, from his choice to that of Allah, and from his opinion to the success granted to him by Allah.

For this reason, the favorite invocation to him was: “O Allah! Might You make me pleased with Your Decree, and bless me in Your Fate, so that I would not like the advancement of what You’ve deferred, or the postponement of what You’ve advanced or brought forward.”

He was well-aware of the fact that if fidelity implied and then fused the forces of human intelligence, it would increase many times the efficiency of this intelligence, in such a way that instead of being dispersed by the different inclinations and purposes, it would be much more elegant by virtue of the unity of action and direction; and it is this unity, which fidelity and loyalty might prompt.

As well as electricity produces the movement, the fidelity to the responsibility of ruling produced and prompted the movement of the life of the son of Abd Al-Aziz. This movement was nothing other than the holiness, which, in turn, was the final product of the virtues and good merits of the spirit as elegant and graceful as it could be.

As such was the holiness, and as such was the holy person. However, the responsibility bestowed upon Umar success, which raised such virtues of his spirits as piety, abstinence, god-fearing and devoutness up to the highest level. Hence, the responsibility was a direct cause of his holiness; and this was the essence of his unique marvel.

If he was a holy person earlier, and then he was appointed as caliph, while being in the height of holiness and virtue, surely, he would remain firmly and constantly loyal to it. But, what happened was that the position of caliphate, which might be a source of seduction for everyone

to be anything except for a holy one, came, and then, the consequential formidable responsibilities, which acted as the ascender for his great pure spirit, took him, within (a time, as short as a) glance up to the Paradise of holiness, and made him occupy the position of a holy person.

However, there is a phrase, written by the narrators of his biography in this issue, at which we might stop and which we should admire so much. It goes as follows: “Then, Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz was given the pledge of allegiance”, said the historians, “and he sat on the ground (to receive the people and settle their injustices).”

No doubt, this short phrase would open our eyes to the power and wonder of the holiness with which Allah Almighty had endowed His good righteous slave, Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz. It was a power, able to transcend all regular situations and familiar relations, in order to establish its own particular situations and different relations.

There is no harm for any caliph to meet the people in a sitting place, as wonderful and bright as to give the position of caliphate its required prestige and majesty. Yes, there is no harm in doing that. Umar himself was well-aware of this fact, according to his great religious knowledge and open-mindedness. But, from the very moment he was encircled by responsibility, it was the spirit of the holy person, and not the spirit of the caliph, which started to move him.

Holiness always tends to raise the means up to the level of the high purpose (it seeks for achieving). It is only concerned with attaining the purpose as far as it is concerned with the quality of the means (used for it). Moreover, it has its own means and logic. It always deals with the nature and essence of things, and not with the things themselves.

Since the essence of authority in view of holiness was to comply absolutely with the rights of people, of whom the caliph was the guardian, and responsible for their affairs, his natural place then should be before (not superior to) them, and not that they should be seated before (or lower to) him.

The form of embodying this reality, in the sight of Umar, was that he should sit on the ground among them. Then, it was not his sitting on the ground which concerned him, but the glorious reality which such a sitting might represent, i.e. that the authority was to absolutely be subject to the rights of the people. Thus, let it take, from the point of view of form, the

most expressive aspect of subjection, as well as it would take, in view of content, the most expressive aspect of commitment.

For this reason, the caliph sat on the ground, with nothing between him and it but a humble straw mat. He sat on the ground in order to ruin all dissipation and superiority the authority had, and take it down from its throne of arrogance and falsehood, to the earth of simplicity, humbleness and good relations.

However, the holiness of Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz was of such a sort as of a man whom Allah Almighty showed what to do. He used to see with the help of light from his Lord, and look over everything without being detained inside a hermitage of worship, or narrow-mindedness or introversion.

It was a holiness, which might astonish us with its astuteness, skill and resolution. However, none might imagine that such a holy person as him, who kept on worshipping Allah, would say, when he was required to agree on spending a large amount of money on covering the Ka'bah: "I think it is better to feed with the help of this money the poor hungry persons, for they have more right (in this money) than the Ka'bah."

None could imagine that such a holy worshipping devout man had done so. But, it was the intelligent holiness, which used to look for the nature and essence of everything, paying attention to it, and seeking for the places of the truth, in the same way as the birds seek for the wet places.

One day, it was mentioned to this repenting devout worshipper that a certain preacher called the people to do things of worship which he himself did not do. The holy person commented on that saying: "If everyone does not order others to do good, and prevent them from doing evil until he himself adheres to that, there will be no exhortation of doing good, nor prevention from doing evil, and then the preachers and the seekers for giving advice to the people will reduce."

It was an intelligent penetrating holiness, a holiness of a man, who used to invoke his Lord saying: "O Allah! Might You make my mind be of use to me! It was a holiness, which was able to make one of the noblest and justest changes the world of people has ever seen. It was a holiness, which came to life, having all abstinence, piety, god-fearing, purity, justice and mercy, of which the people thought the world had become void forever.

It was a holiness, which had no sooner sat to the people on the ground than the ground yielded all justice and mercy, and the sky rained justice and mercy, and both the wolf and the goat grazed from the same pasture in a state of brotherhood and peace.

Indeed, the holy man accomplished all of this great change, which seemed as if it was a change in the chemistry of time and life, with a method, of which we do not know whether it was so much easy, or so much difficult, or that both easiness and difficulty withdraw, in order to give room to another description, more appropriate and fitting for it. Yes. That's so. Let's say then that it was an astonishingly inimitable method.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE METHOD

“Nay! both justice and right would straighten them. So, you should spread that among them!”

Once, his appointed governor of Khurasan sent to him a letter, excusing him to give him permission to use some force with its inhabitants, saying in his message to the caliph: “Indeed, nothing except for (striking with) sword and lash would straighten them.”

But, his decisive reply to him, showing all god-fearing was: “Nay! you are liar! Both justice and right would straighten them. So, you should spread that among them! You should also know that Allah Almighty is not to set right the deeds of the mischief doers.”

It is both justice and right then, upon which, and with which, the method of the Commander of the Believers would be established. His steps would go on their straight way, taking with him on that way all people, their chiefs and commons, their rich and poor persons, and their strong and weak ones.

The man, whom we see always weeping, if not wailing, whenever he mentioned Allah Almighty and the Last Day, and who might tremble out of god-fearing as if he was a little bird, so that we would think he was fitting for nothing other than sitting in a hermitage for worship, this caliph would astonish us so much when we go through his method and way of ruling. We would notice from behind the overflowing tears a supreme spirit, struggling as bravely and courageously as it could be, in order to attain the highest horizon of justice and right. We also might observe a deep penetrating insight, from which nothing would escape, and a decisive will, which would not be weakened by any kind of difficulty, nor would it be endangered by any sort of threat.

Suddenly, we would see those eyes, always sunken in their tears gazing as sharply as the eyes of a falcon, sending an appealing shine, so as to persuade anyone receiving it that he was facing penetrating sharp eyes, which there would be no way to deceive.

Indeed, the continuous difficulties, conspiracies and dangers would not but strengthen and sharpen more and more the will, which was

raising the banner of justice and right. Let then the evil consequences sing for themselves! But, as for him, he would be careless for what was or what would be. He would stick to the right, with which he would go to obliterate all traces of injustice and darkness of the last sixty years of the Umayyad ruling, turning their darkness into light, scorching desert into garden, excessive luxury into satisfaction, dissoluteness into uprightness, arrogance into humbleness, and oppression into mercy, or perhaps safety.

With the help of his divine capable determination, his words went on overpowering the force of arrogance and challenge: “By Allah! Unless the right gets up in order to cancel and refute falsehood but by cutting of my limbs and organs, surely, I would do so happily and joyfully.” He also said: “By Allah! If I stay among you (as caliph) for fifty years, I will not hold but whatever justice I want to establish.”

Let’s follow his method in order to see. But, we have not to let the more details divert us from the main bases and fundamentals. We have to be careful in mentioning the scenes and events describing the characteristics and qualities of the method, in order that this concentrated vision would result in similar concentrated mental and spiritual pleasure. In short, we would choose from the method only its central and main points, upon which all applications and details depended.

However, these central points might be summarized as follows:

His view of the role and function of the state.

His view of the role and function of consultation.

His view of the role and function of wealth and property.

His situation from the unity and safety of the nation.

His way of working.

“Firstly” The state should be an example to be followed.

The rulers, who take refuge to the power of the state in order to implement the authority of law, do not do anything new, for this is a conventional tradition, i.e. that the power should protect the law. But, the rulers, who themselves protect the law, which they implement by force, transcend what is normal to what is extraordinary; and Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz was one of those rulers.

Before the period of his ruling, the state lived far from its real function and role, since it left its workplace, and surrendered itself to the

misleading inclinations and individual tendencies. The state, in his sight, consisted of all public organizations, at the top of which there came:

- 1- The caliph who was the president of the state.
- 2- The governors, who were the rulers of different territories and countries.
- 3- The judges.
- 4- The treasurers.

The caliph, any caliph, though being, according to his function and responsibilities, the president of the state, would remain unable to carry out his role and function, unless his governors, judges and treasurers rose up in order to stand at the same, or at least close to the level of him.

In this context, Umar said: “No doubt, the power of authority should have many corners, without which it could not be firm. The appointed governor is a corner. The judge is a corner. The treasurer is a corner. The fourth corner is I (as being the caliph).”

Thus, in order that the state might be an example in undertaking the responsibilities the religion of Allah, and the rights of people, this example should consist of the behaviours of those four altogether: The caliph, his appointed governors, his judges, and his treasurers.

In order that the state might be an example, it should be, with its officials, at the top of whom there comes the Commander of the Believers, in the lead of work.

In this way, Umar went on placing the whole entity of the state, at the top of which he was, at the position of the example, carrying all responsibilities supposed to be carried by such an example, offering whatever required sacrifices. Before he ordered his appointed governors and judges to do so, he had started with himself.

We offered earlier his good phrase “I’m no more than anyone among you, except that I carry the heaviest burden from among you.” Here, we might observe his way of putting this principle to practice so much decisively and uniquely.

His yearly income until the day he was appointed as caliph was forty thousand Dinars. It consisted of his assignments as a Umayyad chief, the land which was in his possession, and the huge portion of property and wealth he inherited from his father Abd Al-Aziz Ibn Marwan.

But, since he became caliph, his insight opened to the deep fact, when he saw that this great richness of the Umayyads, including him, did not come to them with the help of their hard work and earnest efforts, and all of this wealth which existed at the hands of a few men, i.e. the Umayyad chiefs and the elite of people, was nothing but the rights of millions of ordinary and common people, usurped from them illegally and by force.

Immediately, he took his decisive resolution of canceling the assignments of all Umayyad chiefs, and the assignments of their guards and servants. He also made a decision of depriving them of the large agricultural territories granted to them as fief, and returning them to the treasury.

He started with himself. He conceded all his wealth and property, even the land of Fadak in Khaibar, the best and the most valuable of his property. Indeed, no one granted it to him (as a fief), but, he inherited it from his father. But he wondered from where his father had brought it.

On the day of the holy battle of Khaibar, Allah Almighty bestowed it upon the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, which he assigned to the wayfarers. It remained as such until Mu’awiyah became ruler. Then, he granted it to Marwan, from whom Abd Al-Aziz, the father of Umar inherited.

We say that he gave up even this land, and wrote to his appointed governor of Medina, ordering him to join it to the treasury, and spend its revenue and proceeds in the same way as it used to be spent during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” and his rightly-guided successors.

He also gave up every Dirham of his salary as the Commander of the Believers. He was satisfied from all of his world with a small piece of land, which he had bought with his own money. It yielded no more than two hundred Dinars yearly, with which he and his big family lived.

Only two hundred Dinars yearly became the income of the man, whose yearly income had been, just a few days before his appointment as caliph, forty thousand Dinars. Only two hundred Dinars became the yearly income of the ruler of the greatest, most powerful, and the richest state in its time, with which he lived along the year, with his family, which was, a few days earlier, was sunken in the water of blessings and pleasures of life.

But, there was no harm in that. Is it not that he took the right as a law, and justice as a method? Let it be then sufficient for him that the flag (of both right and justice) would not fall from his right hand, and let it be sufficient for him to raise it up as high as none could ever attain.

He left all of his land which was in his possession to the state, and paid all of his money to the treasury. Furthermore, he gathered all of good garments and suits of him, his wife, and his sons, all of his mounts, perfume and luggage, which he sold, and gave the price, estimated at three hundred and twenty thousand Dinars to the treasury.

Furthermore, he forbade to himself his right of the salary of his job as caliph, and he could concede a half or even two-thirds of it. But, he rejected it entirely, and lived only on the returns of his small piece of land. It yielded no more than two Dinars yearly, i.e. three-quarters a Dinar per day, for the spending of the Commander of the Believers, the wife and dependents of the Commander of the Believers.

Was it not enough for him that he himself would undertake the burden of being the good example, leaving his wife and children live even at the level of the ordinary people? No doubt, had that been the case, it would have been, in his thought, a manipulation of responsibility, and fleeing away from the consequences of being a good example. Furthermore, he would see himself being encircled by accounting and punishment of fire.

Whoever thought we made an exaggeration of illustration, let him go through this event. Once, he returned home after offering Isha prayer. He saw his young daughters, whom he greeted as usual. But, instead of returning back the greeting, they hastened to cover their mouths with their hands, and rush towards the door to close it.

He asked about their matter. He learnt that since they had no supper except for lentil and onion, they disliked that he might detect the smell of onion in their mouths, and it is for this reason that they avoided him. The Commander of the Believers wept and said addressing them: "O my daughters! Would you be pleased to get the delights of life, and your father would be brought into the fire (of Hell)?"

One of his young daughters saw a friend of her adorning her ears with two beautiful pearls. She sent one of them to her father, beseeching him to buy the like of it for her. The Commander of the Believers called his servant, and ordered him to bring two pieces of fire. Then, he said

addressing his daughter: "If you are able to put those two pieces of fire in your ears, I would bring you two pearls."

The responsibility of being an example then was not restricted to him as a caliph and ruler, but, according to his method, it should imply all of his household, even his young daughters. Thus, he went on prompting them to sacrifice (everything) in the cause of responsibility and ideal.

One day, he came close to his wife Fatimah and said to her: "No doubt, you do not know from where your father Abd Al-Malik brought you those jewels. Would you be pleased if I put them in a box, and placed it in the furthest end of the treasury? I would spend from the treasury until when I reach it, I would spend it in fulfillment of the needs of Muslims."

Nothing remained with Fatimah except for those jewels, which were dear to her, because they were the present of her father on the day of her marriage. But, she was not to argue her holy husband, even about this. She deprived her breast and hands of them so much happily and with all pleasure and delight.

The Commander of the Believers left the palaces of caliphate, and lived in a humble home, in which, fire was hardly kindled (in view of the scarcity of making cooked food). He pledged to himself that he would not take for himself any kind of this world and delights of life until he would die and meet his Lord.

In this issue, Ibn Ayyash narrated: Umar had two ladders, on which he used to ascend from the hall of his house to his chamber. One of them was ruined, and one of his family rebuilt it. When Umar came and saw it, he asked about the one who rebuilt it. They said to him: "So and so." He ordered that he should be brought to him.

When he came to him, he said to him: "Woe to you! Are you jealous of Umar that he would get out of this world, without placing a brick over another? By Allah! Had my crushing it not been a kind of corruption, surely, I would have ruined it, and made it as it had been (before your rebuilding it)."

Once, one of his close companions came upon him, while he was sitting in one corner of his house, covered up by son, and he had wrapped himself in a mantle. The visitor thought he had been sick. He asked him: "What is wrong with you?" the Commander of the Believers said to him: "Nothing, except that I'm waiting my dress until it is dry."

The visitor asked him: "What is your dress O Commander of Believers?" he said: "A shirt, an upper garment and a lower garment." His companion said: "Do you not take another shirt, another upper garment and another lower garment?" the caliph said: "Surely, I had, but they became old and shabby."

The visitor asked: "Would you not take another dress?" here, his words mixed with his tears, since he went on weeping, reclining his forehead against his palms, reciting the following Verse: "That Home of the Hereafter we shall give to those who intend not high handedness or mischief on earth: and the End is (best) for the righteous."

Since he wanted the state during his ruling to be a source of mercy and compassion, he deprived it of all arrogance, pride and favouritism. He started with himself. He prevented the guards to bow in respect for him. He prevented them, as well as he prevented all the people, to stand up (in respect) for him whenever he appeared to them. He said to them in this connection: "The people would stand only to the Lord of all the worlds."

Once, a man from among the Muslims called him: "O viceroy of Allah on the earth!" he trembled and shouted to the man: "When I was born, my family named me Umar. If you call me Umar, I would respond to you. When I grew up, I had the nickname of Abu Hafs. If you call me Abu Hafs, I would reply to you. When you selected me to be your ruler, you named me the Commander of the Believers. If you called me the Commander of the Believers, I would answer you. As for being the viceroy of Allah on the earth, I'm not so, for the viceroys of Allah on the earth are only His Messengers and Prophets."

He forbade the invocation for him from over the pulpits on Friday sermons, and sent a decisive letter concerning this matter to his appointed governors in all countries, in which he said: "Order those (preachers) to ask for Allah's blessing and prayer upon the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him", in which they should lengthen their supplications and prayers. Then, let them ask for Allah's blessing upon the believing men and women, and ask for Allah's support and victory. Let them invoke Allah Almighty for all of Muslims."

If he and his family with him undertook the responsibility of being a good example in such a uniquely glorious way, and if they undertook it submissively and willingly, this would not be sufficient for him. It should be undertaken also by all chiefs of the sons of Marwan, willingly if they

so liked, or unwillingly. He was not to let them spend lavishly, and be self-indulgent in his name, taking refuge to their belonging to his kinship, making use of it as a source of gain. If it was necessary, let this kinship be a shelter for their desires and ambitions, and a source of gain for them, through their commitment to the method of (ruling and life, adopted by) the Commander of the Believers.

But, apart from that, their world during the period of his ruling would not be the same as it was earlier. They would not live as a social class, superior to all the people. They would not get one-third the national income, as they used to do before there came to existence the days of the son of Abd Al-Aziz.

They did their best in beseeching him to retain some of their privileges. But, when they failed, they started to threaten him. But, the holy man stood for them as strong as the fate, and was able to restrain their inclinations and haughtiness. Then, he succeeded in driving him before him on the way of justice and right, getting rid of their excessive lavishness and dissipation.

Once, he sent to everyone of them an amount of money, in order that they might use in arranging their affairs, and facing their new rough life. They called upon each other to meet, and they gathered, and decided unanimously to delegate to him one of his friends, asking him to raise their gifts. But, his reply to this friend: "By Allah! I've regretted for that which I sent to them, of which there are, from among the Muslims, those who are more in need, and in which they have more right than them."

Their envoy returned to them, and hit their hearings with his warning words, saying to them: "O Umayyads! Do not blame but yourselves! You let your relative Abd Al-Aziz Ibn Marwan marry the grand daughter of Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, who gave birth to (a grandson so much similar to) Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, though wrapped in the dress of Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz. So, do not blame but yourselves!"

The caliph returned to put both his eyes on the governors, judges, and treasurers, whom constituted, with him, the four corners of the state and authority. He thought that the governors as his deputies in ruling the different countries, the judges who decide the matters of people with the power of act they had from law, and the treasurers with their direct control over the public wealth and incomes of people, the most dangerous and sensitive positions in the state. He also thought that their

right and straight conduct was the main and the most important factor, which would enable the caliph to undertake his responsibilities justly and successfully.

Thus, the holy person went on completing the qualities of the ideal for the state by choosing his appointed governors, judges and treasurers, as careful as if he was to choose his consequential destiny. Since it was admitted that he would not find anyone, to be at the same level of his piety and devoutness, he went on seeking for those, who might be at the level of his expectation and as reliable as to be worthy of his confidence.

He hastened to oust all previous governors, who worked in the service of the earlier injustices, and replaced them with those, whom he selected for this glorious mission, such as Abu Bakr Ibn Hazm, Abd Ar-Rahman Al-Qushairi, and Adi Ibn Arta'ah Al-Fazari, in addition to others like them. The first thing with which he recommended them to do was the following comprehensive command: "Work in the service, and for the sake of justice, doing good, and charitableness, as much as your predecessors worked in the service of, and for the sake of injustice, doing mischief, and aggression."

The first thing, with which he introduced his governors to the people was represented in those beautiful words: "I've appointed as your governors men, who, I do not say, are the best of you, but I say that they are better than those who have been worse than them."

Indeed, he was to put all of his entity on the balance of acts, in such a way that all of his actions, words, decisions and emotions would move according to a specific amount.

Then, his governors went to their countries, and undertook their responsibilities so much sincerely and faithfully, right-guided on their straight path, and set firm by the biography of their holy just caliph. Indeed, this biography of him was widespread as fast as the light of sun, as aromatic as perfume.

They would feel shy if anyone of them seemed to be negligent in anything. Whenever anyone of them was prompted only by whispers of himself to do anything evil, he would immediately remember his holy caliph, in his rough life and old patched clothes.

The caliph went on sending to them his advices, one after another, in a letter after another, one of which goes as follows: "Now and then: No doubt, the matter of authority is a source of great disastrous affliction for

anyone befallen by it. so, we ask Allah to provide us with power and help us to deal with it successfully.

I call you to restrain yourself in secret and public to the point at which you expect to be saved by your Lord. Then, you should remember whatever mistakes you might have done, and correct them before anyone else would do that on behalf of you. Let not the speech of people (who might criticize you) prevent you from doing so. You should be sincere to those, of whom Allah Almighty has made you governor, concerning their religion and honour. You should conceal their defects, and have great control over yourself before them whenever you fell or became angry.”

As well as he did well in selecting his governors, he was perfect in selecting his judges and treasurers, whom he ordered to choose their employees and assistants from those faithful to the religion of Allah, trustworthy of the world of people. In this way, the lights of his holiness and ideal went on rising up so much high, until they became as luminous as guiding minarets, which extended over all the state and nation with their overwhelming lights and firm right guidance.

“Secondly” the matter of consultation is necessary and obligatory.

Let’s now move to the second point of the method adopted by the holy ruler, in which, we might notice that he took a situation from consultation, so much uniquely astonishing. He perceived that nothing would guarantee the survival of this strong upright straight good world which he well established other than a preventive wall which would save and protect it.

This wall, in his sight, was to extend the base of responsibility, so as to imply all who had right in it, ruling or ruled they might be. The only way to that was to hold a clear true consultation, and establish among the people a brave true conscious public opinion, which might criticize the mistakes, and contribute in correcting them.

Although his age did not experience the parliamentary organizations, the democracy of the ruler in him was as visible and clear as the sunlight through his way of ruling, as well as of choosing his appointed governors and retinue, his readiness to accept criticism, his listening to the word of right, his view of the nation which he ruled, and his sticking to its rights and freedom.

With this standard, Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz was matchless in this field. He surrounded himself by a group of dutiful persons, who did not fear,

for the sake of Allah's pleasure, the blame of any blamer, who did not forge their beliefs in which they had faith, nor did they mix truth with falsehood, even if they were to be killed, with their necks cut off.

He gathered them around him, and asked them to think with him. Furthermore, he recommended some of them to sit in front of him while being in the hall of ruling, watching carefully his speech and motions, and if he forgot and said something, or did a certain motion bearing a suspicion of mistake, they would immediately draw his attention with the help of a sign, on which he agreed with them.

He believed that consultation was necessary and obligatory, and not luxurious, and the more it extended, the more the matter of ruling became straight, right became widespread, and justice became constantly firm, with the result that the people would live as free as their religion wanted them to be, and as their mothers had given birth to them.

For this reason, he was as fast as the light speed in creating a conscious true public opinion along the whole state. He put both the governors and the governed people face-to-face with their joint responsibilities, in refuting the mistakes, and committing to the truth.

He wrote to his appointed governors saying: "No doubt, you regard as disobedient the one who escaped from the oppression of his ruler. Behold! The one who is worthier of being disobedient is such an oppressive ruler."

He wrote to the people in different countries: "If anyone of my appointed governors deviated from the right, and did not act upon the Book of Allah and the sunnah, then, he would have no right upon you to obey him. Furthermore, I delegated his matter to you, until he returns to the right acquiescently."

Once, he wrote to one of his appointed governors saying: "The complaints against you have increased, while the thanks have decreased. you should adhere to the right, otherwise, you should be ousted."

In this way, he raised the authority of the people to stand at the same level of the authority of government. He let the public opinion take the reins of his appointed governors and employees to the way of right submissively or forcefully. In order to support this authority of people, he left his gates open to anyone complaining or having a grievance against his oppressive governor. In this issue, he sent a short handout to all countries, in which he said: "Whoever has a complaint against his

governor might come upon me, without the need for taking my permission to be admitted.” He meant, let him visit me in my house, with no permission to be admitted.

Indeed, his unique way of prompting the brave public opinion, and encouraging the freedom of constructive criticism to the furthest end. To attain this, he sent some gifts from the treasury for anyone who detected or uncovered a certain mistake, or guided to the right.

Let’s read with all respect this handout which he wrote and ordered that it should be recited in all gatherings of people: “Now and then: If there comes upon us a certain man having an injustice which should be lifted, or a matter, with which Allah Almighty would bring back the right to its owner, or cancel a falsehood, or in short, which would produce goodness, he would receive from us a gift of one hundred to three hundred Dinars, according to the trouble he suffered from on his way.”

Is not astonishing that which we read and see from him? but, what is more astonishing than that is that both the age and environment of this hero were not able to form his structure. But, it was the true religion of Allah, and the miracle of Islam. How truthful he was when he said: “If Allah Almighty delegated me in charge of (accounting) myself, I would be as one (accounting) anyone else other than him.”

He set forth the highest example in accepting the criticism of others, although the people did not know he had committed a single mistake during his caliphate. He would be so much pleased whenever he found anyone of the ordinary people having asked him about anything. He then would pat on his shoulder, make him closer to him, and say to him: “Give me more (of your knowledge or advices), O my brother, might Allah Almighty reward you well!”

He used to seek for wisdom and right from the sincere people, even if they were boys. Once, a delegate from Medina came to visit him. A young boy from among them introduced in order to speak to him on their behalf, and offer their case. The Commander of the Believers gazed at him and said to him: “O my son! Let the one who is older than you speak!” it seemed that the Arab young boy had an apparently early genius. He immediately replied to the Commander of the Believers: “O Commander of Believers! Anyone should be regarded according to his smallest organs, his heart and tongue. Had it been according to the age, surely, there would have been from among the Muslims those who have

more right than you to get the matter of ruling.” Suddenly, the tears of pleasure flowed from the eyes of the holy person, who became cheerful. He then said: “You’ve told the truth! Instruct me O my son!”

Once, one of the people intruded the mosque of Medina, carrying his sword, and went on abusing and insulting the Commander of the Believers in public, and in the sight and hearing of the governor of Medina, who detained him, and sent to the Commander of the Believers a letter, telling him of his matter, saying that he had intended to kill him.

As soon as the Commander of the Believers had read the letter, he replied to it immediately, saying: “Had you killed him, I would have killed you for him.”

One day, one of the ordinary people entered suddenly the ruling hall, shouting in the face of the Commander of the Believers with words, which might provoke the anger of the most forbearing one. But, the Commander of the Believers did no more than he said: “Perhaps, you wanted Satan to prompt me with the help of the power and arrogance of the authority, with the result that I might take from you today in this world what you might take from me later in the hereafter before Allah Almighty. But, it is not (I’m not to do so). Go away, might Allah Almighty forgive you!”

The most intelligent and brilliant thing the son of Abd Al-Aziz did in order to promote a true sincere public opinion, faithful to, and capable of undertaking its responsibility was to constrain the overwhelming extension of the power of poetry and poets, which was well-established at this time. We saw earlier how the Umayyad misused poets in forging the truth, and strengthening their power and authority on the account of all good values and morals, to the extent that those poets themselves stood as a strong obstacle against knowing and seeing the truth.

But, the holy hero introduced and released the wind of the truth, in order to clear up this clouds of forgery, leaving the horizons of knowledge as clear, rising with the light of the truth. He stood and addressed the people saying: “Whoever wants to be our companion, let him adhere to five things, otherwise, let him depart from us. He should convey to us the need of him, who could not convey it, help us with his effort to do good, guide us to whatever goodness, to which we could not be guided, not speak to us badly about anyone who is absent, and not interfere in anything with which he has nothing to do.”

It is significant to mention here that all books of history which transmit this speech comment on it saying: The result was that all poets and orators dispersed from him, while the abstinent people and religious scholars remained with him.

Yes. The poets of his time, particularly Al-Akhtal, Al-Farazdaq and Jarir were not to keep up pace with anyone of those five principles. They used either to praise those who were not worthy of being praised, or lampoon those who were not worthy of being lampooned. In both cases, they prevent the public opinion from seeing the truth, with their spreading falsehood and lies.

But, there came to them a great man, who was not in need to them. He had no enmities, which he needed poetry to provoke, nor had he ambitions, which he needed poetry to proclaim, nor had he desires, which he needed poetry to adorn, nor had he any mistakes, which he needed poetry to justify.

Moreover, he had no longing for authority so that he might be in need of poetry in order to keep it longer. He and his nation had no time for this large poetic humor, which the poets spread among the people at this time.

Thus, with all determination, he drove the poets away from his door, and none of them was able to get even a single Dirham from the treasury of the Muslim nation, in reward for a praise or for fear of a lampoon. On the other hand, the Commander of the Believers supervised the process of spreading the truth among the people, with the help of his handouts, which he sent to the governors of different countries.

He started with abrogating this sinful mistake which the Umayyads used to practice wickedly, i.e. cursing the grand imam Ali from over the pulpits. He ordered that the deliverers of sermons should recite instead of those sinful words the pure following Verse: "Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and he forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: he instructs you, that ye may receive admonition."

"And those who came after them say: Our Lord! Forgive us, and our brethren who came before us into the Faith, and leave not, in our hearts, rancour (or sense of injury) against those who have believed. Our Lord! Thou art indeed Full of Kindness, Most Merciful."

In this way, he lifted the lies and raised the truth, abrogated the falsehood and supported and strengthened the right. This was an effective contribution in promoting a faithful sincere conscious public opinion.

Umar, the Commander of the Believers did not only perceive the value and significance of the consultation from his position as a just pious good ruler, but also, he perceived its essence and nature in the same way as a philosopher might do. He did not see in it a merely just organization of the relation of the authority with the nation, and their mutual responsibility for both the state and society. But, he went towards the final analysis of its essence and function.

According to his view, every individual should get his right of selecting that, with which he was persuaded, and the right of such a persuasion to be expressed without falsehood or confusion. That's because when the people falsify their persuasions, for the sake of desire or fear, it would be impossible, for this reason, to have a better knowledge of their real opinions.

Since the true real opinions constitute both the material and tools of consultation, the concealment of those opinion would be considered to be burial of consultation alive, and abrogation of its mission.

At this point, we might notice the greatness of Umar, the holy person, when he accepted and admired the people's persuasion, no matter different from him they might be. However, there were multitudes of events, which affirmed his firm loyalty to the sanctity of people's persuasion during the twenty-nine months, which he spent as caliph and imam. But, we would choose the following event, which gives us almost the final manifest of this loyalty.

We might know more about the Kharijites, who broke away from the grand imam Ali, and one of them killed him. They turned into many factions during the Umayyad ruling, which carried their arms and plunged into many wars against the state, in which thousands of them fell as victims. In addition to this military activity, some of those had many opinions and beliefs, which had no basis in the Qur'an and the sunnah.

But, in spite of all of that, the repenting worshipping pious caliph did not forget their right to have their own persuasion, nor did he forget his duty to respect this right of them, and to give them an opportunity to express of their opinions publicly, as long as their activity would not turn

into a terrorist action, aiming at shedding the blood of others, who differed from them in their opinions and beliefs.

Furthermore, we would see that he saw, with his brilliant intelligence, that in order to divert them from terrorism, they should be given chance to express themselves, in such a way as to set free the suppressed opinion, before it turned within the oppressed spirit into a furious resentment, and a flighty bullet.

Thus, as soon as one of those factions had started to move, during the early days of his caliphate, in order to resume the armed rebellion, he sent to its chiefs a letter, which goes as follows:

“Now and then: I’ve been informed that you’ve set out (for war) prompted by anger for the sake of Allah and His Messenger. No doubt, you do not have more claim to do so than me. So, let me argue with you. If the truth is with us, you would enter into it, and if the truth is with you, we would change our mind, and reconsider our matter.”

When the rebellious chief read the words of the holy person, he felt shy. He put down arms, and sent his envoys to the capital of the state, in order to discuss with the caliph the matters of dispute between them.

The dialogue between them was so much wonderful and expounding, in which the talent of the son of Abd Al-Aziz of seeing the fact, directing the way of thinking, and attracting both minds and hearts was visible.

The result was that this faction put down arms, after knowing that it was in the age of a new man, much closer (in good morals, principles and right guidance), to the time of Prophethood and Divine revelation, i.e. a man, of whom Satan might feel shy to distract or challenge.

There is a similar event, which, in spite of the great significance of the previous one, might complete the image of the loyalty of this caliph to the freedom of opinion and the sanctity of persuasion. Although he was well-aware of the invalidity of more thoughts and proofs of the Kharijites, he was not of the opinion that the power might be the only way to refute and suppress such thinking of them. On the contrary, he saw that establishing more rightly-guided thinking, and much clearer and more truthful proofs would be the only way to disclose the truth, and extinguish the falsehood.

Another faction of Kharijites known as the Haruriyya of Mawsil wandered in different countries, spreading their opinions and thoughts.

The governor of Mawsil wrote to him, asking for his permission to suppress them by force. The Commander of the Believers replied to the governor of Mawsil saying: "If they accepted to wander in the countries causing no harm to the people of Scripture living under the protection of Muslims, or to anyone of the Muslim nation, let them go wherever they want. If they caused harm to anyone belonging to the people of Scripture living under the Muslim protection or belonging to the Muslims, you should judge them according to the law of Allah."

By Allah, how just and wonderful he was! He regarded himself having no right to restrain the opinions of others, or to suppress them. As a ruler, he saw himself having no right to interfere except in case he was faced by an armed danger, threatening the safety of the state and nation. Apart from that, every opinion had its sanctity, and every persuasion had its right and freedom to exist.

It was this successful rightly-guided method, which enabled the consultation during his ruling to reach such a point as no other democracy could not attain.

It was often said to him at this time that the Kharijites spread among the people wrong thoughts and mix truth with falsehood, and leaving them go here and there in the countries would have dangerous consequences. But, the great holy person would do more than reminding his companions and those who instigate him of the Verses of the Holy Qur'an, in which Allah Almighty forbade His Messenger to rule the people by force and oppression:

"If it had been thy Lord's will, they would all have believed, all who are on earth wilt thou then compel mankind, against their will, to believe."

"We know best what they say; and thou art not one to overawe them by force. So admonish with the Qur'an such as fear My Warning!"

"Thou art not one to manage (men's) affairs."

However, the results came to support him and prove that he was true in his opinion, intelligent in his estimation. The Kharijites, who did not put down arms from the ruling of Mu'awiyah until the time of Sulaiman, and whose increasing numbers of victims made them much more challenging, and more violent and fierce, put down at last, during the period of this holy caliph, their arms, forgetting during the whole period of his ruling all retaliations they had with the Umayyads.

“Thirdly” the money is no more than a deposit

concerning the financial and economic problems of income and distribution, which always used to confuse even the greatest states, Umar did not fail to find the solution. The reason for this is that he believed that both right and justice were more capable of solving the problem than both organization and administration were.

The Muslim state, during this time, was not short of wealth or money, but it was short of adhering to the right in getting it, and the justice in distributing it, and before both, it was short of provoking the sanctity of the public wealth within the conscience of the state itself with its officials, and the nation with its individuals. However, his situation from the national started with Allah’s saying: “Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and spend (in Charity) out of the (substance) whereof He has made you heirs. For, those of you Who believe and spend (in Charity)- for them is a great Reward.”

Thus, the resources of production and wealth are no more than a deposit of Allah, which He Almighty has left with His slaves, in form of states, nations, groups, and individuals. Those deposits of Allah have their sanctity, which should keep them far from any kind of indulgence, dissipation, corruption, transgression and monopoly.

This sanctity should increase and become stronger whenever these deposits turn into a public wealth. That’s because its being a public wealth means that all individuals of the nation have constantly common rights in it. Every widow, orphan, old aged man, child, infant, poor, disabled, and patient has a right in it. So, in view of its being Allah’s deposit, and a public wealth, in which all people have a right, it should have a great amount of sanctity.

The son of Abd Al-Aziz saw himself responsible for announcing this sanctity, and saving this right. He expressed of this fact with his decisive words: “I would introduce my proof for (the way of spending) the wealth of Muslims (on the Day of Judgement).”

Moreover, he manifested with his behaviors this fact so much astonishingly. On a very cold wintry day, he sent his servant, in order to warm the water for him to perform ablution. When the servant returned with the hot water, the caliph asked him where he had heated up it so much quickly. The servant answered: “In the kitchens of Muslims.”

Umar had established a lot of public kitchens, on which he spent from the treasury. The caliph blamed the servant for what he had done, and rejected to have his body touch the water unless the servant went and paid to the caretaker of those kitchens the price of warming up this few quantity of water.

We all know this famous event, when he used to run the affairs of the state at night on the light of a lamp, whose oil was taken from the treasury. But, whenever a personal problem appeared to him to solve during this period, whatever short time it might take, he would extinguish the lamp of the treasury, and kindle his own candle or lamp until this problem was over.

Some people might see in this conduct a kind of exaggeration. They also might see that all of this concern with those crossing formal aspects of the president of such a great state as this ruled by Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz, was unusual, if not undesirable.

But, if they thought in such a way, they would not notice that what prompted the concern and piety of the caliph were not these formal aspects, but, it was the great significance within his conscience, which constituted his behaviours towards the sanctity of the public wealth, no matter as little as less than a single Dirham, or as much as filling a room of gold it might be.

He used to mention, and remind the people of the Holy Verse: “Do prophet could (ever) be false, he shall, on the day of judgment, restore what he misappropriated; then shall every soul receive its due, whatever it earned, and none shall be dealt with unjustly.”

The misappropriation of the cheapest thing, in his sight, was the same concerning the most valuable thing. It also applied to whatever he might take for himself, in the same way as to whatever he might bestow upon others. He also regarded the gifts as a kind of misappropriation.

One day, a gift was presented to him, but he did not accept it. It was said to him that the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him” used to accept gifts. He answered: “No doubt, this was a gift for the Messenger of Allah “Allah’s blessing and peace be upon him”, but it might be a bribe for us.”

His situation from the wealth of the nation was so much wonderful. It had, in his pious god-fearing heart, the same sanctity which both faith and monotheism had. Once, one of his appointed governors asked for his

permission to use more candles of lighting the house of governorship, and the way of the governor to the mosque for performing the Isha and Fajr prayers.

He replied to him with this message, in which he said: "I knew you O Ibn Hazm, before you had been governor, when you would get out on the cold wintry night with no candle. No doubt, you had been at this time much better than you are now, although you had what might suffice you from the candles of your family."

Another governor wrote to him, asking for more pens and papers. The caliph replied to him saying: "When this letter of mine has reached you, you should dispense with using a great amount of pens and papers, and you should collect as much needs as you wanted in a single paper. Indeed, the Muslims were not in need of much surplus speech, which might harm their treasury."

This is the main point, i.e. his saying "which might harm their treasury." The problem was not of using much or few candles, pens and papers. Indeed, there is no state which could not fill its ground with candles, pens and papers. But, what is more significant was the consciousness this holy ruler had, the sanctity of this public wealth, the necessity of keeping away from indulgence in it, and the high degree of loyalty to looking after and saving it.

With this standard, every kind of misusing or trifling with it should be rejected, whatever trivial and slight it might be. That's because the indulgence in a pen or candle, might become later, in case it was underestimated, in things, of more serious consequences and evil results. Thus, he established deep-rooted rules of respect and admiration for the sanctity of the public wealth.

Let's now return to his situation from the problem of the national income and distribution. We said that at this time, the state was not short of richness, but it was short of getting wealth rightly, and then distributing it justly.

Concerning the national income, since the dissipation and excessive luxury, during the ruling of the caliphs before him, troubled the state budget, they went on recompensing that through collecting money depending upon illegitimate means, and imposing unjust taxes.

It is well-known that those of Scripture who embraced Islam should be exempted from paying the tribute. But the Umayyad government

rejected to carry out the judgement of Islam in this issue. It kept on taking the tax from those who embraced Islam, claiming that they embraced Islam just to flee away from paying the tribute.

When this just caliph came, he rejected this false claim, announcing that Islam's pleasure with a single individual entering into the circle of its right guidance and light should be much more important than with money, as much as to fill all of earth with gold.

In this context, the Commander of the Believers put it enlighteningly: "No doubt, Allah Almighty has sent Muhammad as a guide (to the straight path), and He Almighty has not sent him as a tax collector."

Adi Ibn Artah, the governor of Iraq sent to him saying: "The people entered into Islam in crowds, to the extent that I fear the taxes would reduce." But, the great just right caliph replied to him: "By Allah! I would like that all the people embrace Islam, (and there would be no taxes to be collected) to the extent that both you and I would work and eat from the earnings of our labour."

He also investigated all the taxes imposed by the previous caliphs upon the people, which he cancelled. He also would cancel some agricultural obligatory charity whenever a catastrophe befell the yields of somebody. In this issue, he wrote to Urwah Ibn Muhammad, the governor of Yemen saying:

"Now and then: you've sent to me that when you came to Yemen, you found a tax being enjoined upon its people, like the tribute, which they should fulfill, no matter yielding or unyielding their land might be, living or dead they might be. Glory be to Allah, the Lord of all worlds! When this letter of mine comes to you, give up this falsehood which you reject, and implement the truth which you know well. It should be known to you that if you do not send to me but (as little taxes as) no more than a small handful of Katam (plants from which dye and ink are produced), Allah Almighty knows well that I would be pleased with it, as long as both right and justice are looked after."

Some of us might be astonished. It is expected from us, while talking about the income, to point to discovering some additional resources which would increase, or even double it. But, we praised the policy of the caliph in dealing with the public wealth, because he cancelled more of those resources.

But, what do we have to do, since this was the philosophy of the blessed holy caliph, the son of Abd Al-Aziz? The most important point in his sight was not muchness, i.e. the large quantity of wealth, but it was the abundance, i.e. plentifulness of money. This abundance or plentifulness comes from the blessing in the lawful and legitimate, and not from the muchness of what is unlawful and usurped.

It is obligatory to say to the historians who refer the trouble from which the state budget suffered following the death of the Commander of the Believers Umar to his tax policy, that they were mistaking. All matters during the whole period of his ruling were very good, with no portent of any trouble or deficit. On the contrary, there were signs of its increasingly growth, abundance and going to be more stable.

But, it fell into trouble after the holy hero had disappeared from the arena of justice and right, which gave way to the policy of dissipation, excessive luxury, and corruption, in addition to usurpation, following the death of the heedful vigilant guardian holy ruler.

When the caliph cancelled the unjust taxes, he recompensed the state with another yielding resource, by restoring to it all land and property which were in the possession of the Umayyad chiefs. There was also another resource, which the Commander of the Believers regarded as the most fruitful and the richest one in the income of the state. It was to put every single Dirham in its right place, and spend it properly. This catered for preventing every kind of lavishness and dissipation.

Yes. Putting the money in its right place, and spending it properly and at necessity was, and still would be the best, and the most important resource of income. Umar adhered to this method with himself, his family, with his appointed governors, with his kith and kin, with his friends, and in short, with all the people.

Once, Anbasah Ibn Sa'id, one of the closest friends of him, who was favorite to him, went to him in order to ask him for some need. The caliph said to him: "O Anbasah! If your property which you possess is lawful, it would suffice you. But, if it unlawful, then, do not add to it more of its kind. But, anyway, tell me O Anbasah! Are you really in need?" he answered in the negative. He said to him: "Are you in debt?" he replied in the negative. The caliph then said: "How do you wish that I should give you from the property of Allah when you are not in need, and leave the poor persons from among the Muslims? Had you been in debt,

surely, I would have fulfilled your debt on behalf of you. Had you been in need, I would have given you what would help you. (But, since you are far from any of both), let your property then suffice you! Fear Allah and ask yourself from where you have collected it, and then reckon yourself before Allah, the Fastest to reckon the people would count you.”

What he said to Anbasah, his intimate friend was the same he would say to anyone, who came to ask him for anything, in which he had no right. But, what was right in his estimation was no more than the minimum necessities of living.

In this way, he was able to turn the sadness of the miserable persons into rising smiles and pleasure, without turning the rich people to become an alternative class of the miserable ones. What he did was that he took from those (rich people) their excessive luxuries and extra satiety, and let them live generously and humbly.

At this point, our talk about the income moves us to the distribution. How did then the holy ruler distribute the income of the nation, and how did he place it among the people? However, he returned the money to its real function, giving it its authentic role to undertake its main responsibility of being in the service of whole the nation, and for covering its needs.

He started with defining the limits of the comprehensive surety of all the citizens, which the state would bear for every individual in it. Consequently, he defined the responsibility of the treasury in covering such a surety. We might notice this in his letter to his governors:

“Every Muslim should have a residence to live in it, a servant to suffice him his profession, a horse to fight his enemy on it, and furniture for his house. So, you (as governors) should spare all of that to him. Whoever is in debt, then fulfill his debt on behalf of him.”

The word Muslims here does not mean to exclude those privileges and rights only to the Muslims, but he used it just because the Muslims formed the majority of people. Furthermore all those privileges and rights were for all citizens, Muslims as well as those of Scripture.

The caliphs ordered his governors to give priority to covering the needs of their countries, and then send the surplus to the public treasury. But, whoever had the income of his country short of covering its needs, then, the caliph would supply him with what might cover his deficit.

He wrote to his governors in this issue: "Take the tax rightly and then distribute and spend it justly. If it is sufficient for covering the needs of the people, that would be good, otherwise, write to me a letter, so that I would send to you whatever money you might use for sparing the takings of people."

The blessed holy person went on installing houses for hospitality in all parts of the state, for receiving the travellers and wayfarers. He also raised the standards of wages, and guaranteed all needs of religious scholars and jurists in order that they would be devoted to their knowledge and message, without waiting charges from anyone.

He gave his governor big salaries so that they might be devoted to their tasks and jobs, (without being concerned with getting their livelihood), and they might not be tempted to accept what is unlawful.

Along the large state, he ordered that every blind person should have a guide to lead him and fulfill his needs on the expense of the state, and that every one of two sick persons should have a servant on the expense of the state.

He also ordered his governors to count the persons who were in debt, and he fulfilled their debts on behalf of them. He paid ransom for releasing all Muslim captives, and gave them generously from the treasury. He also warranted the orphans who had no sustainer in all parts of his large state.

As well as his great grandfather Umar Ibn Al-Khattab had done earlier, he also ordered that every newborn child should have a salary from the treasury, immediately after his birth, and not after his weaning, so that mothers would not be hasty to wean their infants, with the result that they would not grow up naturally.

He prohibited that a single person should get two salaries, in order that the takings offered by the state might not be misused by the covetous desirous people. He prevented all employees of the state to get two kinds of salaries. In this way, all the people during the period of his great ruling were equal in getting whatever goodness Allah bestowed upon them.

However, we should be astonished by the fact that all historians were unanimous that poverty and poor persons almost disappeared during the time of the ruling of this pious holy person, Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz. It was said that the rich people would set out with the obligatory charity of

their wealth, but they would find no poor person to take it, or even stretch his hand towards it.

That's because the justice of Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz did not only suffice the poor their needs, but it also instigated their feeling of satisfaction and honour. The charity did no longer appeal to them, no matter enormous or abundant it might be, after Allah Almighty had made them rich out of His Grace, with the help of both right and justice, in addition to His good slave, Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz.

“Fourthly” the unity and safety of the nation

the good pious inherited the caliphate over a dispersed society, whose members had mutual grudges against one another, and all against the state itself. The Umayyad caliphs used to provoke all aspects of tribalism, racism and regionalism in order to strengthen their authority. Some of them was inclined to the tribe of Qais, others to the tribes of Yemen, others to the people of Sham, and others to the inhabitants of Iraq.

The tribes and their chiefs were infected from the rulers and caliphs. Some people appeared to call for the leadership of the dwellers of cities and towns, and others, on the opposite side, called for the leadership of the desert dwellers.

Furthermore, the Umayyad rulers were inclined to regard as lower and inferior the Muslims of non-Arab origins, known as Mawali. They enjoined upon them the tribute illegally, and prevented them from getting the right guaranteed to them by Islam, in spite of their great efforts (in spreading Islam), and the emergence of many of them, raising up the banner of Islam everywhere in the world.

Besides, there were many fighting factions such as the Kharijites, Shiites and Mu'tazilah (who isolated themselves from others). Some of them carried arms in the face of the state, as well as their opponents, whose opinions and thoughts were different from theirs. Some of them did not carry the arms, but instead, they had the poisoned words. Others adhered to the limits of logic and argumentation.

The holy man then inherited the ruling of this society, which was dispersed as such, in which he breathed of his pure victorious blessed soul, which drove away from it, within a single moment, all impurities it had, and purified not only the form and apparent relations of the society, but also its conscience and spirit.

During the days of his ruling, the Muslim society experienced a kind of firm intimate brotherhood. Everyone in it did not only take his right, but also he became satisfied with this right.

As for the Kharijites, we saw how he made them stop from violence through the clear proof and evidence. As for the Mawali, he lifted the heavy burdens they had born, and set right their position. Concerning tribalism and regionalism, he extinguished it with his right hand, in such a way that there no longer were such inclinations as to those of Qais or Yemen, Sham or Iraq, Arab or Mawali. That's because Islam came to equally join all of its followers. Moreover, its great spirit returned once again to be predominant, according to Allah's saying: "No doubt, all faithful believers are but brothers (in the religion of Allah)."

The notion and understanding of the son of Abd Al-Aziz of the unity of the nation was not restricted to those limits, but he went as far as to deal with the situation of the minorities, which he submerged in the whole body of the Muslim society, and kept for them all right they had.

We saw earlier how he said in a message he sent to one of his governors, concerning the Kharijites: "If they wandered about in the land, without causing harm to the people of Scripture living under the protection of Muslims, or to the Muslim nation, then, let them."

In many letters he sent to his governors, he affirmed the necessity of treating well the people of Scripture living under the Muslim protection, according to the pledge and covenant made by Islam to safeguard them (in return for a tribute which they should pay).

During the period before his appointment as caliph, they used to receive so much persecution, and suffer from the pressure of heavy unjust taxes. But, as soon as he had become the ruler, he issued a decisive command that nothing should be taken from them more than the tax set by Islam, in return for protecting and safeguarding them.

His situation from the Church of Johan in Damascus is a wonderful brilliant example of his great hard work for supporting the unity of the nation, regardless of the differences in religion, colour of complexion and race of its people. Al-Walid Ibn Abd Al-Malik had ruined a big portion of it, in order to extend the great Umayyad mosque. When Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz was appointed as caliph, the Christians of Damascus complained to him of what had happened to their church.

What do you think the Commander of the Believers would do? The part of the church which was ruined became a portion in the mosque. What any ruler could do on this occasion is to give the Christians a plentiful compensation, or at least an alternative piece of land.

But, the son of Abd Al-Aziz used to deal with right and justice in a way, very different from ours. It was a holy glorious way. He issued his astonishing command that this great portion of the mosque should be ruined, and the piece of land on which it was built should return to the church.

The religious scholars and jurists of Damascus were puzzled. they sent a delegate to try to persuade the Commander of the Believers to cancel his resolution. But, the commander of the Believers issued a further command, in which he fixed the day and even the hour of implementation the process of ruining and then handing over the land.

The religious scholars had no way to rescue the mosque but to negotiate with the Christians of Damascus, and hold a treaty with them, with which the later were pleased, according to which, they conceded this portion taken from their church. A delegate from the two parties went to the caliph, and briefed him of the agreement, for which he praised Allah. Then, he sanctified it.

Based on this fact, how should we interpret his situation from some Christians, when he ordered that they should be subject to a special treatment, according to which they were constrained and put to difficulty? On the light of his general situation we've seen earlier, we could but say that he was prompted to take his special emerging situation by the behaviours of those Christians, who worked as a fifth row in favour of the Roman empire, which used to wages wars, in the name of the cross, against the Muslim state.

His message which implied his orders concerning those Christians might confirm this opinion. It concentrated upon confiscating all arms they had in their houses, and this was a sign that there was a conspiracy, which they intended to carry out.

But, in his situation from them, he did not take any violent action against them. All what he ordered to do was that they should be made distinctive in their clothes, (so as to be too easy to recognize). This action hinted to the fact that he had doubt in them. So, he wanted to distinguish them, in order to be easy to detect them.

But, if we left this faction, which lost its loyalty to the state, we would find that his situation from the Christians in general was that of the honest guardian of their rights, treaties and honour.

Indeed, his situation from the religions (other than Islam) and from the right of the minorities in his rightly-guided state astonished the world surrounding him. The Roman emperor Lion the Third, who was a stubborn enemy of the Islamic state expressed of this admiration.

As soon as this Roman emperor had learnt of the death of Umar, the Commander of the Believers, he wept bitterly for him, which amazed his retinue and bishops. When they asked him about the reason for that, he replied to them with some words, regarded as the truest statement said in lamentation of the Commander of the Believers. He said:

“By Allah! A just king died, who has no match. the people should not admire a monk, who left the world in order to worship Allah in his hermitage. But, they should admire much more a man, beneath whose feet was the world, but, he was abstinent in it. No doubt, he was rather expected to die soon, for the good people could not live with the evil ones for a long time.”

Would this emperor utter such a witness if he learnt of the least persecution of the people of Scripture during the time of his ruling? Moreover, would the chief of Roman bishops would hasten to go to him, as soon as he had learnt of his ailment, in order to treat him?

Let's return to what the Commander of the Believers had done in the cause of the unity of the nation, in order to see how it was, at the same time, in the service of its interior safety and peace. The interior peace would be available as far as the individuals of the nation come altogether to be as close to one another as brothers. Indeed, Allah Almighty bestowed upon him and his nation the unity of Islam, as he hoped for.

What then about the foreign peace, and putting an end to the wars which were flaming outside the borders of the state? From the early hours of his caliphate, he issued his commands to the army which was exhausted by besieging Constantinople for a long time, to withdraw. He paid ransom for all captives to be released and then brought back to their homeland.

He put an end to all military actions being implemented by the state, announcing that Islam became powerful and strong much enough with the conquests which were achieved, and that the army of the state should

not set out for fighting but in defense of the borders whenever they were attacked, or in defense of the safety or peace of the nation whenever it was endangered.

He substituted for military procedures his letters, which he sent to the rulers of India and the governors of its different territories, calling them to Islam. However, most of them embraced Islam, by virtue of the news of his abstinence, piety, greatness, and god-fearing which reached them.

He also sent letters to the Barbarians, calling them to Islam, which they embraced in crowds. He sent letters to the kings of the countries behind the sea, calling them to Islam, and most of them embraced, and raised the banner of Islam. Was not this holy person a blessed one?

“Fifthly” His way of implementation.

What would the nation benefit from his piety, abstinence, god-fearing and justice, unless his competence of carrying out was equal to his competence of undertaking the responsibility to which he was faithful? Here, we would meet with one of the most wonderful, the richest, and the most powerful sides of the personality of this holy intelligent decisive strong man. We would meet him always vigilant, on the alert.

He devoted all of his time to his responsibilities, except for the period assigned to his prayers and worships, and the daily two to three hours, during which he would sleep and take rest. Apart from that, he had no time but for his sacred responsibilities.

He had a unique way of achieving this responsibility and implementing its method. He had lenience with firmness, deliberateness with decisiveness, widely general supervision with decentralism, patience with vigilance. All of those qualities would work altogether with integrity, and in great harmony, not being confused with one another.

One day, he became so much tired. Some of his companions asked him to take rest, but he replied to them: “Who would do the work on behalf of me today?” they said to him: “You might achieve it tomorrow.” He said: “The work of a single day troubled me to the extent that you asked me to relieve myself. How would I be if I have to do the work of two days?”

He used not to make a final account with himself every month, or even every week. But everyday had its own responsibilities and final

account. He was not to load the duties of a day to another, for everyday had its burdens and occupations.

He was, in relation to the tens of millions living in his state, to respond to every call for relief. There was no single need or a complaint of an individual calling upon him, but that it would find him, as if he was expecting it. Whatever significant or insignificant a matter might be, it had the same concern and haste of achievement.

Once he received a message sent from Giza in Egypt by a woman known as Fartunah the Black, in which she complained to the Commander of the Believers that a wall in her house was ruined, which the thieves used to jump and (enter into the courtyard of the house in order to) steal her hens, and she had no money to spend on rebuilding it.

The caliph had no sooner read the letter, and he was in the capital of his state in Sham, than he sent to his appointed governor of Egypt Ayyub Ibn Sharhabil the following letter: "From the slave of Allah, Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz, the Commander of the Believers, to Ayyub Ibn Sharhabil: Allah's Peace be upon you. Now and then:

Fartunah the Black sent to me a letter, in which she complained of the shortness of the wall of her house, which encouraged the thieves to steal her hens, and she asked me to build up it. So, when this letter of mine comes to you, go to her by yourself, and build up it for her."

The same mail, which carried the letter to the governor of Egypt, had another letter from the caliph to Fartunah the Black, in which he said: "From the slave of Allah, Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz, the Commander of the Believers, to Fartunah the Black: Allah's Peace be upon you. Now and then: I've received your letter, in which you complained of the shortness of the wall of your house, into which the thieves enter and steal your hens. I sent a letter to Ayyub Ibn Sharhabil, ordering him to build up a wall for you. So, fear nothing, Allah willing."

Ibn Abd Al-Hakam who narrated this wonderful event said commenting: When the letter of the caliph reached Ayyub Ibn Sharhabil, he went to Giza, and asked about the residence of Fartunah until he found her. Behold! She was a black poor needy woman. Then, he built up the wall of her house.

No doubt, he was a holy caliph, from whose mercy, justice and fatherhood nothing escaped. His great heart and determination would extend to imply everything. See what he had written to the governor of

Egypt: “Now and then: I learnt that the carters in Egypt carry things on the backs of camels, heavier than their capability. When this letter of mine comes to you, make the highest limit for loading on camels no more than six hundred pounds.”

On one of his tours, he found some people carrying sticks, at the end of which there were pieces of iron, with which they would poke their mounts. As soon as he had gone to his sitting, he issued a decision of prohibiting the use of such sticks.

Once, two big baskets full of the fresh dates from Jordan were brought to him as a gift. When he asked about them, he was told that they were fresh dates, sent by the governor of Jordan to the Commander of the Believers. He asked once again: “How were they brought?” he was told that they had been carried on the mounts of mail.

He nodded and said: “You’ve made them carry what is beyond their capability. Sell the fresh dates, and buy with the price fodder for the mounts which carried them.”

We are astonished by his lenience, deliberateness and limitless wholeheartedness. Such wholeheartedness stems within him from his great authentic mercy, for which it was not sufficient to sympathize with the people, but also to fulfill their rights, by helping them overpower the tendencies of evil in them, and the points of weakness.

We might observe his compassion and nobility in his supplication, with which he used to implore to Allah so much: “O Allah! Might You give the charitable from among the nation of Muhammad the ability to be more charitable, and have the evil one from among the nation of Muhammad repent to You! O Allah! Might You reduce their sins by virtue of Your Mercy!”

He did not search for the mistakes in order to give punishment for them, but in order to treat them with his mercy and compassion. The mistakes of the people used to occupy him as far as we have seen earlier. He would not regard them from the perspective of a ruler, but as a worshipper, who would pray to Allah to forgive their doers.

His deliberateness, forbearance, and tolerance were not to be restricted within himself as personal morals, but he turned them into philosophy and method for ruling. So much frequently, he recommended everyone of his appointed governors to follow the following advice: “If you’ve a

medicine to treat anyone other than cauterization, then, you should never cauterize him.”

Before him, the governors of the different regions had the right to execute the sentence of death upon anyone, justly or unjustly. When he became caliph, he forbade this right to them, and issued his order that the sentence of death should not be executed unless he became acquainted with his case, and decide the matter himself. He went on avoid all kinds of violence and cruelty, saying in this issue: “By Allah! I’m not to straighten the affairs of people on the account of damaging my religion.”

However, his lenience and deliberateness towards all of the members of the nation, were not to seduce people to regard him as weak person, or to deceive him. That’s because he was always vigilantly and strongly decisive with everyone attempting to do evil.

All of his virtues and good merits were always ready for protecting themselves, in order to play their roles so much properly. Whenever there was a situation which required mercy, it would not find it absent, and vice versa, whenever there came a situation catered for decisive resolution, it would find it on the alert.

We might see him, in dealing with the public and commons of people, trembling as a little bird, out of compassion and mercy. But, in treating the tyrant people, he would be as roaring as a lion, so much strong, that he might be feared.

After the Umayyad chiefs were disappointed to take back their land and property through beseeching and imploring to him, they instigated one of them, i.e. Umar Ibn Al-Walid Ibn Abd Al-Malik to write to him a letter in which he threatened him. It goes as follows:

“Now and then: You’ve been careless for what the caliphs before you had done, and followed a way and a method very different from theirs. The result is that you severed (the relations with your kith and kin) that Allah Almighty has ordered to be kept as good. You also have maltreated illegally your kinship, and usurped unlawfully and aggressively the property and heritage of Quraish, which you placed into your treasury. So, you should fear Allah O son of Abd Al-Aziz, for you are about to lose your office.”

At the very moment the caliph finished from reading this foolish wicked letter, the characteristic of decisiveness introduced to play its role in dealing with the falsehood, which threatened the truth to take back its

authority and tyranny. The Commander of the Believers wrote his reply, which goes as follows:

“From Umar, the Commander of the Believers, to the son of Al-Walid: Peace be upon him, who followed the right guidance. Now and then: I knew you when you was a miserable tyrant. Now you write to me, accusing me of doing wrong because I withheld from you and your family the wealth of the Muslims, which is the right of the weak, poor, needy and wayfarer.

However, I would tell you who is more wrongful and deviating from the pledge of Allah than me, if you so liked. He is your father Al-Walid, who, when he was the caliph of Muslims, appointed you as guardian of them, while you was young foolish wicked one, judging unjustly their lives and property. So, woe to you, and woe to your father! How many your adversaries would be on the Day of Judgement.

But, who is more wrongful and oppressive, more deviating from Allah’s covenant than me was him, who appoint Al-Hajjaj Ibn Yusuf as governor of Muslims, shedding the sacred blood unlawfully, and killing the Muslims illegally. who is more wrongful and oppressive, more deviating from Allah’s covenant than me was him, who appointed Yazid Ibn Abu Muslim as governor of the all countries of Maghrib, collecting money unlawfully, and shedding the sacred blood illegally.

Behold! Be quiet O son of Al-Walid! If I should live longer, I would be dedicated to you and your family, in order to straighten your crookedness.”

Let’s put his previous letter to Fartunah the Black opposite to this letter he wrote to this arrogant haughty Umayyad chief, in order to see, with no need for comment, how the virtues and good merits of this glorious brilliant wonderful astonishing man worked.

This amiable lenient man, who used to sit among the people on the ground though being caliph, would turn into a destructive hurricane in order to face the tyranny of falsehood, whatever violent, powerful and strong it might be.

He took the same situation from the Roman emperor. He was told that one of the soldiers who were besieging Constantinople, and he was a strong fighter, fell as captive at the hands of the Romans. He was transported to the emperor, who tried to force him to leave his religion of Islam, but he rejected. The emperor ordered that his eyes should be

branded. The news of this event reached the Commander of the Believers, who hastened to treat the situation with his strong resolution.

He took his pen and wrote to the Roman emperor the following letter: “Now and then: I’ve been informed of what you had done with your captive so and so. I swear by Allah, unless you send him to me immediately, I would send to you soldiers so much numerous that they would fill the long distance between you and me.” In this way, the captive returned to his homeland and family.

His vigilance was so much comprehensive, not only in the achievement, but in seeing all the matters, and perceiving the general points and details. If we go through his letters he sent to his governors, surely, we would observe many astonishing signs of his vigilance, comprehensive view. But, let’s be satisfied only with some paragraphs from those letters.

“Follow what Allah Almighty has made lawful, and abandon what He has made unlawful. Recognize the right of Him Almighty, and judge according to what He has prescribed.

Open for the Muslims the gate of migration. Let the Muslims practice the trade with their own property. Do not prevent Muslims from reaching the sources of their living.

Make the protected zones of grazing available to all Muslims in general. The chief and the governor should not have his right more than the right of anyone of the people.

The wine is the gate of committing the mistakes, so you should prohibit any intoxicating drink.

You should oppose those who deal with fraud, and weigh less than the due.

Do not practice the trade while you are governors, for if the governor practices trade, he would give preference to himself, and do wrong to others, even in case he was careful not to do so.

Do not take from the property of the people more than Allah Almighty has made legal, and apart from that, let it, and there is no difference in this issue between a Muslim and a non-Muslim.

Do not force the people to work for you with no fare, and everyone should have a charge for his labour.

Return the farms to that for which they have been made. Indeed, they were made to help the Muslims get their livelihood.

Do not take doormen or gatekeepers, lest they might prevent the people who have needs from getting into you.

Suppress the tendencies of tribalism and fanaticism within yourselves, and do not let anyone say I'm from the tribe of Mudar, and another say I'm from Yemen, for all the faithful believers are brothers (in the religion of Allah).

The horses are (important part of) the equipment of fighting in the Cause of Allah. So, do not let them run for anything other than that.

Prevent the women from spreading their hair and setting out weeping and wailing behind the dead bodies.

Fight your inclinations and desires as well as you fight your enemies.

Guide the secessionists to the right, and instruct them gently, and teach them (the true principles of religion). If they were guided, it would be out of Allah's blessing and grace, and if they rejected, you should follow the right in punishing them.

Invoke Allah so much to provide you and those, of whom you became guardians by virtue of Allah, with power. Indeed, you would benefit from straightening them more than they would do, as well as you would be harmed by their doing mischief more than they would be.

Keep contact with your doormen, guards, soldiers and employees, and ask about what they do in order that you would be certain they do not commit wrong.

Do not become haughty by the people's respect for you, or their talk about you, and you should always put your eyes upon those, who are more pious and dutiful, and be sincere and faithful to Allah, the Lord of all worlds.

Let all of your jobs when the prayer is established, for of one lost the prayer, he would waste everything else.

Search for the truth and right, and act upon it, whatever the results to which it might lead you and me, even if it caused us to sacrifice our lives for the sake of it.

Those are many samples of his orders and commands, which highlight how comprehensively vigilant his thinking, feeling and will were. It was an vigilance, , which used to give the simple particles the same concern it might give to the overall matters.

With this method, which stems from his sanctity, intelligence and determination, the son of Abd Al-Aziz went on his way, depending in his blessed course upon the spirit of achievement and quick movement (towards what is better).

His responsibility was, in his sight, as clear and bright as the sun. indeed, the problems from which the state and the nation suffered were not in need of being uncovered or defined within a certain framework. But, they were rather in need of the one, who would face them sincerely, truthfully and firmly. So, what is the reason then for any kind of deferment in dealing with them?

Thus, he went on achieving and achieving so much earnestly, assigning to every official the task which he had to do, ordering him to carry out it deliberately, bravely and wisely.

However, he used to prevent his appointed governors to be reluctant, or to hesitate in carrying out the orders and commands. He would be so much pleased with his governors whenever he saw them involved in their responsibilities bravely, achieving them decisively, turning their faces and hearts towards nothing other than the truth, to which they could find no match (to turn to it), even if it was the caliph himself.

In this issue he said to them: “If I sent to you a command which might violate what is right, then, you should turn away from it, and stick to that which is right.”

On the other hand, he used to help them overpower their fears of undertaking the burdens of responsibilities, by giving them a larger amount of decentralism. Once, he sent to one of his appointed governors, to do something, who in turn, sent to him, asking for some details. The caliph frowned and wrote to him a letter, in which he said: “Now and then: I see that if I sent to you a command to slaughter a goat, and distribute its meat among the poor persons, you would send to me asking of which sort it should be. If I answered you, you would ask me once again whether it should be young or old. If I answered you, you would send to me asking whether it should be white or brown. So, if I sent to you a certain command, you should do it rightly.”

Indeed, he wanted that the rights of people would not be deferred because of the futile routine formalities. He regarded himself responsible for the deferment of dealing with every mistake or complaint for even as little as

a moment. For this reason he was so much hasty in investigating and then correcting every kind of mistake, and verifying and fulfilling every sort of right to his claimant.

With this decisive resolution, he used to change every governor, judge, storekeeper, chief of police, or in short any employee, who was proved, by the quick experience, to be inept in his job. Furthermore, if he was deceived in regarding anyone as fitting for a certain office, to which he proved to be not suited, he would not let him for a moment, out of flattery or shyness.

Indeed, his achievements and vigilance of thinking and feeling helped in constructing all countries of the state, and exploded the energy and power of the people. Although he saw that the ideal he was giving to the people with his good conduct and behaviours had a great influence upon them, and was as impressive as magic, he was not to keep himself away from watching the implementation of his method by himself. He used to get himself disguised on many occasions, in order to investigate the facts and be acquainted with the realities of people.

In fact, nothing in this life, more pleasant and enjoyable to him than to see or hear that a grievance had been removed, that a justice had been established, or that a right had been brought back to its real claimant, without his interference.

On one of those tours of him, he set out, accompanying with him Muzahim, his freed slave. He went to the place where the caravans of travelers would cross. While being disguised, he asked the travelers (about their cases. There was a comer, whom Umar approached and asked: "How did you leave the people in your country?"

the man said: "If you like, I could tell you in short, and if you like, I could tell you in detail." The caliph smiled and said: "You might tell me in short." The man said: "I've left the country, where the wrongdoer is being oppressed, and the wronged one is victorious, the rich one is at convenience, and the poor one is not in need of money."

Umar hastened to turn away from the man, lest the tears of thankfulness and joy which flowed from his eyes might disclose him. He returned in a hurry, while his thankful heart and tongue which used to celebrate Allah so much were imploring to Allah with the words of thanks and praise. Then, he turned to Muzahim and said: "By Allah, if all the countries are as described by this man, it would be better for me than everything in the world on which the sun rises."

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE DEPARTURE

“If I die, then, I’m not keen on your companionship (in this world)” the burdens of this world became too heavy for the hero to bear, as much as he became too hard for (the inhabitants of) it to bear. Under the pressure of his rigid piety, and decisive justice, it came to be troubled.

That’s because he decided to undertake the responsibility of ruling in the pure conscience of Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, though at a time very different, if not so much contradictory to, that of Ibn Al-Khattab. The son of Al-Khattab lived at a time, which was really an extension of the age of Prophethood and Divine revelation, having from the glorious companions who helped him carry out both right and justice.

On the other hand, the son of Abd Al-Aziz lived in the heritage of a dictatorial kingdom, at a time of luxury, deviation (from the right path), and loss (of values), having none but a very few men, who helped him carry out what is right and just.

Although he achieved an unprecedented success in implementing his determination, but, this wonderful brilliant success was accomplished on the account of every atom and particle of his power and life.

However, when we review his daily program of actions, we would not be astonished by the short period of his caliphate, but, we would be astonished by the fact that his body was able to forbear this fatal effort, and continue living as such for two years and five months, until he died.

This body, which used to grow up and thrive, before the caliphate, with the best kinds of food and blessing was forbidden suddenly, at the very moment its owner was appointed as caliph, not only such blessings, but also the necessary fundamentals of life.

Furthermore, his effort was not fitting for the increasingly weakness of his health. He exerted an effort of a man, who regarded himself directly responsible for every individual of his big state. He did not only suffer from the crushing crises of the state, but also he lived as involved in his problem with himself, with death, and with his destiny later in the Hands of Allah, the Most High, the Greatest.

He used, as described by his contemporaries, to tremble (out of fear of Hell), as if the Hell was not created but for him alone. Allah’s mercy be upon you, O Abu Hafs! From which thing did you fear? If you did not

take a full fortune from the Paradise, Pleasure and Glory of Allah, then for whom else have they been made?

But, O son of Abd Al-Aziz, this is the characteristic of him, who could estimate Allah so much rightly. Yes. No holy person would have a sin, or an aspect of indulgence, of which he would be careful. But, it is the Majesty and Glory of Allah, before Which, anyone might collapse and fall down.

Indeed, although the period of his caliphate he lived was nearly twenty-nine months, it was (so much full of hard work and achievements) as if it was twenty-nine centuries. During every minute of it, he used to exert as much effort as should be made in a year.

The change which he wanted for the state and the nation would have required nearly one or two successive generations. But he insisted on accomplishing it during his remaining days he lived on the earth among the people. Which sort of change it was! It was not sufficient for it to be done within the lifetime of a single caliph, but within the lifetimes of ten caliphs, everyone of whom should have the spirit of a Messenger.

He wanted, in fact, to apply (the values and principles of) the time of Divine revelation and Prophethood to the world of luxury, corruption and deviation from the straight path. He did not only want to apply that to the organization of the state and society, but also to the hearts, consciences and behaviours of people.

From this short illustration, we might observe how heavy and destructive the extraordinary burdens which he carried wholeheartedly were. However, some of those burdens were (as strong and powerful as) to destroy mountains, then what about all of them? What would they be if they were mixed with distresses being put on their way?

Yes. While the great fedayee was going on his way, he lost the most beloved persons to him, the most loyal to him, and the most dutiful to him. He lost his brother Sahl, then his son Abd Al-Malik, and then his freed slave Muzahim. They departed from him successively, and left their places beside him empty, but from the remembrance, which would stimulate both pain and grief.

He did not miss in them the brother, the son, and the friend. But he lost in them his assistants to the right, and the true ideals of the good merits of the age of the Divine revelation, for which he had a great longing.

He felt that their going away from him was a commencement of his going, and that their departure was a warning of his departure. Would he then keep quiet and take rest? On the contrary, he went on duplicating the

efforts for achieving the work before death would come to him. He went on going beyond any capability and energy available to mankind.

Nothing no longer worried him but the desire that when the moment of death would approach him, while catching hold, with his strong hand, of the banner of Allah, as victorious and triumphant, so that he would say to his Lord at the time of meeting Him: "This is Your banner, which I did not surrender, and this is Your deposit with me, to which I kept faithful."

While he was occupied by his suffering and efforts, there was a conspiracy and a crime being planned and prepared for getting rid of him. Although the twenty-nine months which he spent as ruler passed as a happy dream to almost the whole nation, every moment of it was felt as a tiresome nightmare by the chiefs of the Umayyads and the elite of the people, who had their own interests and privileges, which were damaged by the procession of the truth, led by the father of the nation, and the Commander of the Believers.

They conspired against him. They, according to the books of history, poisoned his food. But, the power of his spirit never disappointed him. He went on racing the death, in order to achieve what he could be able to achieve. He kept saying: "Indeed, Allah Almighty has a set of laws and canons, and if I live, I would instruct you to them, and have you abide by them, and if I die, then, I'm not keen on your companionship (in this world)."

Yes. Nothing related him to this world but the message, which he undertook so much piously, constantly and persistently, and to which he offered his life so much sincerely and devoutly. But very soon, the hereafter sent its commencements in a form of a strong longing for Allah Almighty, which overwhelmed both his heart and spirit.

However, his longing for meeting Allah flared up, and he concentrated in his supplications and invocations to Allah upon his hopes and expectations for such a meeting. He used to repeat so much his favorite supplication: "O Allah! Might You take me unto You, while being far from indulgence and negligence (concerning the matters of Your religion and slaves)!"

He sent a message to Abdullah Ibn Abu Zakariyya, a good worshipping old person, to come to him. He was famous for the fact that his invocation used to be responded to by Allah. When he came to him, he asked him pressingly to invoke Allah Almighty to hasten to take him unto Him.

To this extent his longing pushed the boat of his life to the happy port (of the hereafter). He ordered that a piece of land in a place known as Dir Sam'an should be bought for him, in order that he might have his grave in it.

At this time, some of his close intimate companions said to him: "If you went to Medina, and then death caught you, you would be buried by the side of the Messenger of Allah "Allah's blessing and peace be upon him" and his two companions." But behold! He trembled so strongly as if he was a shot bullet, and then he said: "By Allah! If Allah Almighty punished me with everything other than the fire, on which I could not keep patient, it would be better to me than to regard myself in such a position."

His ailment was aggravated, and the millions of people from among his nation seemed as if they children, who would be about to become orphans, by missing their father. They were the hungry persons who became satisfied, the naked ones, who were covered, the fearful ones who felt safe, the weak persons who became powerful, the orphans who found the father in him, and the widows who found him their guardian, the lost ones, who found in him their shelter, and the straying ones who found their guide in them.

All of those, and in other words, all the members of his nation were crushed by the news of his fatal illness. Furthermore, the people from outside his nation, who knew him well in view of the news of his biography, which was in circulation among them, were affected and scared by his ailment.

The Roman emperor himself, the great enemy of the Islamic state, sent the chief of his bishops, who was professional in medicine, and ordered him to do all he could do in order to save the life of this good neighbour, the just caliph, and the glorious holy person.

But, the glorious holy person rejected every kind of medicine and treatment, and went with his great longing, expecting for the moment at which he would be called (to death).

He was lying in his humble house, on his straw mat, when his cousin Maslamah Ibn Abd Al-Malik came upon him, and said: "O Commander of the Believers! Would you not make a bequest (of some property) to your children, for, in fact, you've made them very poor, and left nothing for them?"

Umar said to him: "Do I have anything in my possession to bequeath it for them, or you want me to give them from the property of Muslims? By Allah! I should never give them the right of anyone. Indeed, their state would be one of two: If they are good, then, Allah Almighty would take care of them, and if they are not good, then, I should not leave for them what might help him to be more disobedient to Allah."

Then, he ordered that his children should be brought to him. They came, and they were twelve males and females. They were unkempt,

covered with dust, whose faint pale bodies had left the joy of blessing (since he was made caliph). They sat around him, and he caught a compassionate grief glimpse of them, touching with his right hand their shabby torn clothes, trying to overpower his tears, which overcame him and flowed from his eyes. He hid his tears behind his words, with which he bade farewell to his children and those whom he loved as well as they loved him:

“O my children! Your father has been made to choose between two things: Either you would become rich, and in this case, he would enter into Hell, or you would remain poor, and in this case he would be admitted in Paradise. He favoured Paradise, and in this way, he left you (poor) under the care of Allah Almighty Who sent the Book, and it is He, who looks after the good people.”

Then, his sight flashed up, and his countenance shone, while gazing at the direction of the door so much eagerly, as if he saw some dear guests. He smiled to his children, their great mother, who was also his sincere loyal wife, and required them to get out. While they were turning away from him, he moved his hands, pointing with them as if he was greeting coming guests.

Yes. A delegate of honour from among the angels came to accompany the (soul of this) holy person to the party of his crowning there, in Allah’s Paradise of eternity. Those who were standing outside the chamber heard him reciting the following Holy Verse: “That Home of the Hereafter we shall give to those who intend not high handedness or mischief on earth: and the End is (best) for the righteous.”

Raja Ibn Haiwah, his great advisor and intimate friend came upon him. He approached him and asked him: “How are you O Commander of the Believers? But, the Commander of the Believers continued reciting this glorious Verse: “That Home of the Hereafter we shall give to those who intend not high handedness or mischief on earth: and the End is (best) for the righteous.”

Suddenly, his head, which was overburdened by the concerns of his nation, turned backward, in order to recline against a cushion, stuffed with fiber of date-palms. Then, he shut his eyes, which never turned away from anyone of the rights of Allah and the people. In this way, the traveler returned to his homeland, and resided in his abode (in the hereafter), in the company of the Prophets, truly faithful believers, martyrs and good pious people, upon whom Allah Almighty bestowed His blessing; and what good companions those would be!

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