

# DESTINY PREVAILS

## A GATEWAY INTO THE EARLY HISTORY OF ISLAM

*By*

Muhammad Mansur Ibrahim

*Translated into English by:*

**Translation Department,  
Ahlul Bayt and Sahaba Foundation, Nigeria**

*Publishers:*



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**ISBN: 978-2076-10-4**

**First Published in Hausa Language with the Name:**  
**KADDARA TA RIGA FATA In 2005**

**First Published in English: 1441H/2019**

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لقد كنت أظن أنني  
أنا الذي كنت أظن أنني

## **Eulogies**

*An Excellent work which derived its authenticity and originality from the main sources of Islamic history. To my knowledge, it is a pioneer work in the field in English language. An indispensable companion for students and researchers.*

- *Mukhtar Umar Bunza, A professor of History in Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto*

*The lies, half truths and misconceptions on the intrigues that occurred in early Muslim history, hitherto buried in books written by adherents of fringe Islamic sects and oreintalists, have come to be outpoured to the world as a result of information explosion, creating confusion and misleading unsuspecting minds. This book has not only cleared the misconceptions and refuted the lies but has filled in the gap left by the dearth of literature from authentic sources. It makes an essential reading for the young, the old and all those interested in enriching their knowledge of Islamic History.*

- *Salisu Shehu, A professor of Psycology at Bayero University, Kano. Deputy Secretary General, National Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Nigeria, Former Dean, School for Continuing Education, Bayero University, Kano & National Coordinator, IIIT Nigeria Office*

*Destiny Prevails is a must-have for collectors of Islamic History. I find that despite its evident academic style – due to which I strongly suggest it to students of both secondary and tertiary institutions – its clear elegant prose makes it very accessible to the general literacy populace. No doubt this book makes a compelling reading in Islamic history.*

- *Prof. Abdurrazzaq AbdulMajeed Alaro, Head, Department of Islamic Law, Faculty of Law, University of Ilorin, Ilorin*

### **... Eulogies**

*An intelligent way of presenting historical facts, especially those touching on the integrity of the past leading flag bearers of the Islamic faith; the companions of the noble Messenger sallallahu alaihi wasallam. It is indeed a must read.*

- *Abubakar Muhammad Sani Birnin Kudu, PhD. A Senior Lecturer, Department of Arts and Social Science Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria & Chief Imam of Jigawa State Central Mosque, Dutse*

*Destiny Prevails gives educative and insightful information about political and social life of the pious predecessors in the first century of Islam. It engages the primary literature through authentic narrations and scholarly interpretation of the reported skirmishes among the companions of the Prophet sallallahu alaihi wasallam. Reading through the pages of the book is worth your while.*

- *Jabir Sani Maihula, PhD. Head, Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Sokoto State University, Sokoto*



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### Preface to the First Edition

#### **In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful**

As one of the disciplines which broaden the thought and worldview of human beings, history guides man and sharpens his attitudes. It serves as a moralistic message through which one reflects and consequently emulates the positives of past communities and refrains from their negatives and areas of shortcomings. Interestingly, the early history of Islam – beginning with the Prophet ﷺ down to his companions رضي الله عنهم is unique and highly distinguishable from conventional history. The companions of the Prophet ﷺ were a set of people chosen by Allah in order to support His Noble Prophet ﷺ. As fallible human beings, they might make mistakes and commit sins, but they were not like the rest of the people. Allah has forgiven them and is pleased with them. They, right from the life of this world, received a guarantee from the Prophet ﷺ to enter Paradise.

It is in the light of the foregoing that the Ahl al-Sunnah prefers to keep off from meddling into the crises and internecine feuds, which transpired among the Sahaba رضي الله عنهم. Since Allah is pleased with them and has instructed us to love and respect them, an attempt to dig deep into their life with a view to picking holes will certainly mislead one away from the directive of Allah in that respect.<sup>1</sup> A Muslim is, therefore, required to avoid such kinds of discourse in an unproductive manner, except in an objective way that will give them excuse and seek Allah's forgiveness for them as Allah commands.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Surah al-Taubah: 100, Surah al-Fat'h: 18 and Surah al-Mujadalah: 22.

<sup>2</sup> Surah al-Hashr: 10, Imam al-Qurtubi: *Jami' Li Ahkam al-Qur'an* (16/332).

Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani elucidates this in his *al-Gunya*<sup>3</sup>:

Ahl al-Sunnah have unanimously agreed that it is obligatory [upon all Muslims] to refrain from meddling into what had transpired among them [the Sahaba] and avoid being obsessed to publicize their shortcomings. Rather, they should be mentioning their good legacies and virtues. Their judgment rests solely with Allah and to Him alone all the affairs and misunderstandings that occurred among Ali bin Abi Talib, Zubair bin al-Awwam, A'isha and Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه shall be referred. It is also incumbent upon all Muslims to respect and acknowledge the virtues of whoever has been honoured and dignified by Allah. He says: -

﴿وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا  
الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا  
إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾

*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" (Surah al-Hashr: 10).*

And He also says:

﴿تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تُسْأَلُونَ  
عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾

*That was a people that have passed away. They shall reap the fruits of what they did and ye of what ye do! Of their merits there is no question in your case (Surah al-Baqarah: 10).*

<sup>3</sup> The full title of the book is *al-Gunya li Talibi Tariq al-Haqq*. Egypt: Mustapha al-Babi Publishers.

Also, the Prophet ﷺ said, “Keep off from [meddling yourselves into the affairs of] my Sahaba” (Tirmizi: 3862). He also said: “Do not abuse my Companions, for if anyone of you spent gold equal to Uhud (mountain) (in Allah's Cause) it would not be equal to a Mudd (two-third of a kilogram) or even a half Mudd spent by one of them” (Bukhari: 3673).<sup>4</sup>

It is imperative to note that albeit the position taken by the Ahl al-Sunnah, in the spirit of objectivity and justice which Allah enjoins, they have not abandoned documenting both the favourable and unfavourable sides of the biography and history of the Salaf. Unfortunately, this aspect of history has been disproportionately abused due to certain sectarian and ideological motives and biased opinions. Out of sheer desire to achieve their evil goals of venting their spleens on certain important historical figures, some historians have been transmitting false stories and unfounded narratives.

Consequently, various historians have emerged each with their own methods and approach of the narration and interpretation of historical accounts.<sup>5</sup> This has resulted into many alterations, interpolations and distortions of

<sup>4</sup> Jilani, Abdulqadir, *al-Gunya li Talib Tariq al-Haqq*, 79.

<sup>5</sup> There were even non-Muslim scholars who have ventured into the art of history writing and who caused a serious damage to the field. They were like Sir William Muir, Gibbon, Irving, etc. As a result, some Muslim historians lifted much from their writings without attempting to interrogate their sources or subjecting them to serious assessment. These can be found in Taha's Husain's *al-Fitna al-Kubra*, Raadhi Abdurrahman's *al-Nuzhum al-Islamiyyah* and Muhammad al-Rais's *al-Nazariyyat al-Siyasiyyah*. Some historians totally ignored the laid down criteria as did Maududi in his *al-Khilafah wa al-Muluk*, Abu Zahra in his *Tarikh al-Umam al-Islamiyyah*, Imam Zaid bin Ali, Sayyid Qutb in *al-Adala al-Ijtima'iyyah*, and so on.

facts. It also brought about diversions and misrepresentations of the intents and meanings of the statements uttered by some historical figures and the circumstances and occasions which led to their articulations.<sup>6</sup> It is common to find how facts and occurrences which were initially done with good intentions and for the collective interest of the Ummah have been turned to political subject matter, with factions and partisan affiliations. Now, rather than a people tied by the bond of brotherhood and friendship, some historians portray important figures in Islamic history as staunch rivals.<sup>7</sup> More or less, this undergirds the position of Muslim scholars on refraining from meddling into these affairs, lest we fall victim of nurturing grudges and hatred against the good and unique set of Allah's servants with whom He is pleased.

It is binding upon Muslim historians to verify the stories they narrate with a view to sorting the wheat from the chaff. As a prerequisite for history writing, they should take into cognizance the Islamic ethics of safeguarding the honour and dignity of all Muslims and thereby look for legitimate excuses and solutions in their actions. This can be achieved when the historians put sincerity and good intention at the back of their minds.

Casting a critical and objective glance at some of the conflicts and misunderstandings which transpired among the Sahaba, we observe that they were not only

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<sup>6</sup> For example, while in the contemporary period there are modern means of transportation and communication, in the past there were no such easy ways of disseminating information. A message that will now circulate within seconds, in the past it would take months to be delivered from Madina to Syria. Therefore, there is the need for historians to take this disparity into cognizance.

<sup>7</sup> See Professor Dukhan's *Ahdath wa Ahadith Fitmah al-Harj*. Sharjah, UAE: Maktabah al-Sahaba, 2003, 67-68.



unintended, but also unavoidable and divinely destined decision over which none of the parties involved in the feuds had choice. Some of the crises were a corollary of mistakes committed by some people as a result of the failure of the parties involved to make a thorough probe and critical investigation. The crisis consequently engulfed innocent people, as we shall see later in the Battle of the Camel. Moreover, there were incidences in which crisis broke as a result of misperceptions, communication gap, or due to wrong interpretation, which is also to some extent excusable in the Shari'ah.<sup>8</sup>

In the same vein, there was room for some of the wrongs done to be righted by those who committed them. They might have also repented or been afflicted with a certain trial, which would result to the expiation of their sins.<sup>9</sup> Also, their sins might be outweighed by their good deeds in the Hereafter and they can also be among those who will be salvaged by the Prophet's intercession. Above all, in His infinite Mercy, Allah may forgive them all their sins because of their *iman*, piety, sincerity and good intention. Being aware of all these will make one cautious of drawing hasty conclusions on the basis of which he vents his vituperation and outright condemnation of a certain Muslim historical figure, who had reportedly committed any mistake. If that is the case, how heinous will it be to condemn someone whose wrongdoing has not been authentically proven, but merely disfigured and

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<sup>8</sup> That was why the Prophet ﷺ did not excommunicate Usamah bin Zaid and did not execute him or judged that he should pay for the blood money of the person he killed after pronouncing the testimony "*La Ilaha Illal Lah*". In Usamah's interpretation, the man's testimony was false and mere self defence.

<sup>9</sup> The Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said, "a Muslim will not cease to be afflicted with trials except that he meets Allah without a single sin with him (Tirmizi: 2401).

misrepresented by false and fabricated historical accounts?

In the opinion of the author, an objective, just and bias-free rendering of the history of Muslim predecessors will, rather than sow the seed of hatred against them, boost and bolster their love among people because of their great achievements. Their history is full of good, pleasant and impressive memories which by far outshine the opposite. It is a unique and peculiar history, which no community other than the Muslim Ummah could present. Hence, it is not objective to mainly concentrate on their few tragic instances to the detriment of the bulk of their prodigious sides when talking about Muslim history. For example, throughout the thirty-year period of the leadership of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs, there were only two internecine crises, while there were hundreds of Jihad expeditions, which facilitated the coming of many territories into the fold of Islam. Similarly, there were relatively very few cases of internal strife during the over one century period of the Umayyad Dynasty. Meanwhile, they extended the message of Islam to almost all the parts of the world. It is, therefore, a big prejudice to conceal and turn a blind eye to these good legacies.

Nonetheless, the instances of shortcomings, which the historians narrated, have their important and didactic messages, which we should learn from. An indifferent attitude and complete silence will understandably leave a vacuum, which may be exploited negatively by people, who, out of some ulterior motives, try to distort authentic historical facts.<sup>10</sup>

This book is primarily meant for the generation of Muslim youth, especially those studying at secondary and tertiary

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<sup>10</sup> In our Hausa program, “*Baraden Musulunci*”, which started on NTA Sokoto in 2005, whose theme forms the thrust of this book, we have tried to establish corroborative proofs on this.

levels. This is more compelling due to the scarcity of books in the area, on one hand, and the damage done by some books to Islamic history, on the other. In the process of writing this book, the author chiefly relied on the primary and earliest sources of history, such as Imam Tabari's *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk*,<sup>11</sup> Ibn Kathir's *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*,<sup>12</sup> Ibn Sa'ad's *Tabaqat*,<sup>13</sup> Imam Zahabi's *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'*,<sup>14</sup> etc.

This book has avoided false and fabricated narrations like that of Abu Mikhnaf Lut bin Yahya,<sup>15</sup> Nasr bin Muzahim,<sup>16</sup> al-Waqidi,<sup>17</sup> Saif bin Umar, Muhammad Sa'ib al-Kalbi and many other narrators whose integrity was subject to criticism by scholars. It nonetheless does not conceal what had been authentically proven to have transpired in history. It is expected to have shortcomings and mistakes therein. I therefore warmly welcome

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<sup>11</sup> *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk* is one of the richest and prominent history sources. It contains both credible narrators and those with questionable integrity because the chains are uncensored.

<sup>12</sup> *Al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya* is also like Tabari's work, though there are many authorial commentaries in the work.

<sup>13</sup> The full title is *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*.

<sup>14</sup> *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'* makes an excellent attempt of narrating the biographies of the Sahaba. Imam Zahabi has another book called *Tarikh al-Islam* which is also one of the most important books in the field.

<sup>15</sup> Lut bin Yahya (d. 157 A.H) was one of Shi'ite scholars in Kufa as affirmed by Ibn Adiyy. He was a great liar and narrated an avalanche of fabricated tales.

<sup>16</sup> As Imam Zahabi in his *Mizan al-I'tidal* said Nasr bin Muzahim (d. 212 A.H) was a notorious Shi'ite. Scholars had rejected his testimonies. He wrote many history books on crises.

<sup>17</sup> Imam Ibn Hibban described him as one of the disciples of Abdullah bin Saba', who claimed that Caliph Ali bin Abi Talib did not die and would come back to the world. See Zahabi's *Mizan al-I'tidal* (3/558) and Ibn Abi Hatim (7/270-271).

corrections and pray that readers will help the cause of truth by drawing my attention to the mistakes, so that corrections will reflect in subsequent editions. Needless to say, it is never a good thing to conceal truth just as it is bad to fail to accept it. I pray this book will be a particularly beneficial and stimulating eye-opener for more robust and insightful researches in the area.

Abu Ramla,

Muhammad Mansur Ibrahim

Makka, Ramadhan 24, 1427 A.H.

### Preface to the Fifth Edition

The original title of this book in Hausa “*Qaddara Ta Riga Fata*” may roughly be rendered in the English proverb as “It is too late to cry when the head is cut off”, despite that it does not give much sense of the divine effect on the particular tragic incidence it expresses. The Hausa proverb indicates that the power of destiny and fate overshadows that of hope and expectation. It suggests that it is not all that one wishes that occurs; one is bound to be faced with unexpected and often unwelcome outcomes. We can see this in the Sirah of the Prophet ﷺ. There were many things which occurred not in the way that he initially hoped and expected. For instance, he ﷺ mobilized Muslim forces primarily to seize the property of Quraysh caravans as booty in exchange of the property and wealth of Muslims which the Quraysh withheld in Makka. But as God had willed, the effort culminated in what is known as Battle of Badr and brought decisive victory to Muslims. Similarly, the Prophet ﷺ set out from Madina with thousands of followers, aiming for Makka to perform Umra (the lesser Hajj) as he saw in a dream. But as God destined, the Prophet ﷺ and his large number of followers did not enter Makka, but rather entered into a peace treaty with the Quraysh known as the Hudaibiyyah. This ultimately opened rooms for more people to accept Islam, as Allah called the truce “*Fat’han Mubinan*” [a clear victory]. The same thing can be said about the Hijra, which the Prophet ﷺ hoped to embark to Abyssinia. But God had chosen Madina rather than Abyssinia for His Prophet’s Hijra. After all, past scriptures foretold the abode of the Hijra, including the description of the city, the Prophet himself and his companions. Having read this in their Torah, the Jews migrated and settled in Madina, anticipating that the seal of Allah’s Messengers would emerge from among themselves.

Apart from these, there are many other precedents, which further buttress our point that destiny and fate have influence over one's wish and expectation. To cite on few other examples, we may recall that the Prophet ﷺ had particularly hoped that his beloved uncle Abu Talib as well as Mut'im bin Adiyy and some few others would accept Islam, as none of them was happy with the way Muslims were persecuted on no crime but on account of their faith. In fact, some of them supported the Prophet ﷺ and played a very influential role in defending him. This greatly helped his mission of propagating Islam. But yet, as Allah destine, they did not embrace Islam. That was why the Almighty Allah said while consoling the Prophet ﷺ :

﴿ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدَاهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَأَنْفُسُكُمْ وَمَا تُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُؤَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ ﴾

*Not upon you (Muhammad ﷺ) is their guidance, but Allah guides whom He wills. And whatever you spend in good, it is for yourselves, when you spend not except seeking Allah's Countenance. And whatever you spend in good, it will be repaid to you in full and you shall not be wronged.*<sup>18</sup> He also said:

﴿ إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴾

*It is true thou wilt not be able to guide every one, whom thou lovest; but Allah guides those whom He will and He knows best those who receive guidance.*<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Surah al-Baqarah: 272.

<sup>19</sup> Surah al-Qasas: 56.

On the other hand, as Allah will it, some among the Quraysh who expressed bitter rivalry against Islam like Abu Sufyan, Khalid bin al-Walid and many others had later accepted Islam. Before their conversion, their rivalry towards Islam reached its apogee so much so that the Prophet ﷺ once expressed a pessimistic view about them, but Allah guided His Messenger ﷺ thus:

﴿وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ  
مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ﴾

*To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth. He forgives whom He pleases and punishes whom He pleases; and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.*<sup>20</sup>

This book takes its title from the concatenation of events, which occurred after the demise of the Prophet ﷺ as destined by God. It is imperative to note that the Prophet ﷺ had foretold almost all the crises which would occur after him and he provided the way out concerning them.<sup>21</sup> Many righteous servants of Allah had been engulfed in the crises without their own volition, it was destined by God. In fact, most of the crises were perpetrated and orchestrated by the foes of Islam who envied its rapid growth and development in Arabia and beyond. However, some of the crises were caused by misinformation and

<sup>20</sup> Surah Ali-Imran: 128.

<sup>21</sup> For instance, the Prophet ﷺ said that whoever lived long among his Sahaba would witness many disputes. He said three of his successors would be martyred. He also mentioned the group that would kill Ammar bin Yasir رضي الله عنه. He told Aisha رضي الله عنها that she would attend an occasion in which people would be killed in her presence. He mentioned the menace of the Khawarij and ordered for their execution. He foretold that his grandson al-Hasan رضي الله عنه would bring reconciliation between two large Muslim factions fighting each other.

communication gaps while others were inevitable human mistakes and shortcomings.

Readers will come across various sad narrations of how many incidences involving those pious servants happened, as destined by God. They will also come across views, which were held; resolutions which were reached; decisions and positions that were taken, and later produced undesired results. This could be found more in the post-Usman leadership period downward. Below are some specific examples:-

1. The decision of Ali bin Abi Talib عليه السلام to delay taking necessary measure against the rebels who assassinated his predecessor, Caliph Usman bin Affan عليه السلام, had brought its own drastic consequences and drawbacks. Likewise, his decision to remove some Governors, especially Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan عليه السلام, from their positions, even though Abdullah bin Abbas عليه السلام advised against the plan.
2. Two conflicting positions taken by Ali bin Abi Talib and Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan عليه السلام, respectively. While Mu'awiyah عليه السلام and his Syrian followers refused to give their allegiance to the new Caliph on grounds that he must bring the assassins of Usman to book, Ali عليه السلام considered their allegiance as the first necessity before implementing their request. As a result, he resolved to bring them to order by using military might. All these positions and resolutions produced undesired results. Ali bin Abi Talib عليه السلام himself would later regret having to resort to the decision he took.
3. The decision taken by al-Husain عليه السلام to fight Yazid bin Mu'awiyah also did not produce good results. His position was in sharp contrast to that of his elder brother al-Hasan عليه السلام, who stepped



down for Mu'awiyah, thereby championing the cause of peace and unity among the Muslim Ummah, as the Prophet ﷺ earlier foretold. Needless to say, al-Hasan had learnt lessons and gained some experience from the earlier crisis, which bedeviled the period of his father's leadership. Naturally, he was averse to chaos and internecine feud.

4. The decision of Talha and Zubair رضي الله عنهما of taking the law into their own hands against the assassins of Caliph Usman رضي الله عنه had also presented its undesirable outcomes.
5. The involvement of A'isha, the Prophet's wife, in the camp of Zubair and Talha رضي الله عنهما in order to bring about a solution of the injustice meted out to Caliph Usman رضي الله عنه by rebels, but as God destined, the move did not succeed and she eventually regret it. In any case, since the Prophet ﷺ had foretold it, the crisis must inevitably come to pass.
6. The execution of Hujr bin Adiyy by Caliph Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه was unwelcome. The former was found guilty of conspiring and spearheading an unsuccessful coup attempt against Mu'awiyah. While it was wished that Hujr and his cronies did not take their rebellious path, it was at the same time prayed that Mu'awiyah should have pardoned them in the interest of diplomacy. Had the Caliph not killed them, he would have saved his administration from the wrath of many influential people among his subjects, including A'isha رضي الله عنها.
7. On one hand, Caliph Mu'awiyah's selection of his son, Yazid, as his successor by appointing him as crown prince was greeted by political brouhaha and the condemnation of some influential youth. On the other hand, the youth's position did not lead to any fruitful end, especially after the death

of Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه when the majority of the populace had recognized Yazid's leadership and gave their allegiance to him. Had al-Husain رضي الله عنه and his followers also surrendered and recognized Yazid as his father's successor, the story would have been different. Nonetheless, God destined otherwise, and so it occurred.

8. The decision of al-Husain رضي الله عنه to set out and make for Kufa, as invited by its people to overthrow Yazid from power was destined by God. The move was unfavourable and discouraged by many Sahaba. Yet Husain رضي الله عنه, as God destined, did not give heed to their pleas.
9. In the aftermath of the execution of Muslim bin Aqil in Iraq, the Shi'ites became insouciant to take any action. Al-Husain intended to drop arms and return to Makka, but the family members of Muslim bin Aqil insisted that the journey should continue and that al-Husain and his followers must reach Iraq to take revenge. This episode added to the number of tragedies, which, as God destined, produced undesirable outcomes.
10. People in Makka and Madina protested against the assassination of al-Husain – a move which escalated to some sort of rebellion. This action did not at all bring pleasant outcomes and was detested by righteous and pious men. But since God destined it, it happened and came to pass.
11. The murder of al-Husain had angered the entire Muslim Ummah, especially in Makka. As a result, Abdallah bin Zubair رضي الله عنه, who was based in Makka, declared himself as Caliph and Commander of the faithful while Yazid was still alive and had been the leader for many years. This development fanned the embers of conflict. As

God destined it, this decision further threw the Umma into divisive lanes.

12. The people of Madina removed their Governor, Usman bin Muhammad bin Abi Sufyan, and expelled him out of the city. They also blocked all access for the free movement of his family. They did that in order to vent their spleen on Yazid. Their decision also did not bring any good.
13. The state of emergency which Yazid imposed on the people in Makka and Madina, giving them the choice to end their rebellion and surrender or face military action. Consequently, he ordered his army to besiege the Holy City. This altogether is a sad memory.
14. Abdullahi bin Zubair made a mistake by rejecting the proposal of surrender and allegiance, which Husain bn Numair, the commander of Yazid's army presented to him after the demise of Yazid. The commander laid the condition that all past atrocities committed would be pardoned. It was rejected outright by Ibn Zubair. Ibn Zubair's decision deprived the Umma of uniting under a single umbrella of his leadership. In any case, this was what Allah decreed.

While the facts adumbrated above were unpleasant and gruesome, one cannot but admit that they would inevitably occur as God planned. Understandably, some of the issues were caused by human mistakes and some as a result of deteriorating things due to political tensions. We are not in a position to pass judgment on what anyone did, especially if there were indications that his actions were informed by good intentions. Above all, he may be one of the righteous predecessors whose immense contribution to the promotion of the Islamic cause had outweighed their shortcomings. The best thing we can do is to pray for them as Allah enjoins, thus: -

﴿ وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا  
الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا  
إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴾

*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."*<sup>22</sup>

Meanwhile, there are important lessons that can be deduced from the incidents, as summarized below:

1. Right from the onset, it must be acknowledged that it is the Sunnah of Allah to subject His righteous servants to trials. The bigger test however, is on later generations of Muslims, who, though saved from witnessing the period of the crises; they on their own volition involved themselves in the feuds. As such, they unnecessarily attracted the wrath of Allah for themselves.
2. Some of the victims of the crises got additional virtue of martyrdom. Caliph Usman, Ali, Hasan, Husain, Ammar bin Yasir, Zubair bin al-Awwam, Talha and many others were all martyred.
3. We learn that no matter how pious and virtuous human beings are, they are bound to make mistakes as long as they are not infallible like Allah's Messengers and Prophets.
4. Besides the lessons we have pointed out, there are many other didactic messages which though not clearly stated in the book, may be easily inferred by readers.

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<sup>22</sup> Surah al-Hashr: 10.

### **Caution-Worthy Points**

Thorough investigation has shown that many allegations tabled against a number of predecessors by some historians are false and baseless. In this book, an attempt has been made to study and examine some of the issues objectively and exonerate the innocent among them. Below we summarize some of the allegations:-

- i. That A'isha رضي الله عنها loathed Ali bin Abi Talib and that she connived with others and fought him. The irony which renders the allegation hollow is that she was one of the companions who had a large number of narrations that show his virtue and honour. She was in the forefront among those who recommended him to succeed Caliph Usman after the latter's assassination.
- ii. Hypocrites alleged that Caliph Usman entertained nepotism in his administration and that he used to dole out public funds to them. These allegations are false and baseless and merely aimed at launching a campaign of calumny against the Caliph through propaganda.
- iii. The allegation that both Ali and A'isha conspired and backed the murder of Caliph Usman was fabricated. In this book, we argue based on substantial proof that there was no single Companion who had a hand in the wanton murder of Prophet's son-in-law, Caliph Usman رضي الله عنه.
- iv. The allegation that Mu'awiyah disagreed with and fought Ali bin Abi Talib because of political leadership is unfounded. The former demanded that the assassins of Caliph Usman

- be brought to book accordingly and made it a condition for his allegiance to Ali عليه السلام.
- v. The allegation that it was Yazid who ordered the assassination of Husain. In actual sense, it was not Yazid who gave the command to unleash the onslaught against the *Ahlul Bait*. In essence, the Shi'ites in Kufa were the masterminds behind the tragedy.
  - vi. The claim that Amr bin al-As had deceived and betrayed Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, his partner in the reconciliation and arbitration committee as some historians narrated is also false. This scenario depicted Abu Musa al-Ash'ari as a sort of wayward fellow. In this book, we broadly explain the activities of the committee and that before it finished its tasks and submitted its report, Ali عليه السلام was already martyred.
  - vii. The claim that Abdullah bin Zubair عليه السلام persuaded and prevailed upon Husain عليه السلام to answer the call of the Kufians, so that the former would be free and independent to declare himself Caliph is baseless. In contrary to the above claim, authentic narrations indicate that Abdallah bin Zubair advised Husain not to go to Kufa.
  - viii. The allegation that the Holy Ka'bah was destroyed or hit with mangonel on the instruction of Yazid or any other person was unfounded and baseless, as we demonstrated in the book.

There are issues which were over-blown by pseudo historians in order to conceal the truth, include the following:

- i. The Prophet ﷺ gave a sermon near the lake of Ghadir in which he expressed some virtues of

Ali bin Abi Talib عليه السلام in order to dismiss cobwebs of doubts from the eyes of some companions, who had a misunderstanding with him on a certain issue. Shi'ite historians quickly turned the Ghadir episode into a big issue, which they considered as an occasion for crowning Ali bin Abi Talib عليه السلام as the Prophet's successor. Consequently, they labelled the entire Prophet's companions as *Kuffar*, alleging that they "Turned deaf ear" on what transpired on the day.

- ii. The consensus of the Sahaba in the Saqifah of Banu Sa'idah as a result of which Abubakar عليه السلام emerged as the Prophet's successor was another event. As many Prophetic traditions indicate, Abubakar عليه السلام was the most fitting man for the job at the time.
- iii. The delay by Ali bin Abi Talib عليه السلام to give his allegiance to Abubakar عليه السلام was, understandably, caused by the former's preoccupation to carry out some functions related to the Prophet's funeral. Ali عليه السلام later gave his allegiance without any misgivings or wariness.
- iv. The request of Fatima عليها السلام to inherit the Prophet ﷺ which she made before Caliph Abubakar عليه السلام. While the story is true, it is good to note that she withdrew her position when satisfactory clarification was made to her on the issue. But strangely enough, however, some historians took the issue with extra seriousness and eventually fabricated copious tales, which altogether diminish the status of the Prophet's daughter and cast her in a bad light.

- v. The involvement of A'isha رضي الله عنها among the troops of Makka in her attempt to mediate and work out peace modalities was also misrepresented. Some historians went to the extent of parading her name as commanding the troops and even portraying her as the mastermind behind the crises. Beside the blatant lie which the narrations embody, they are a direct attack on the person of the Prophet ﷺ.
- vi. Authentic narrations indicate that many historians have gone to an extreme in their position and narrative interpretation of Yazid and his political dispensation.

We have decided to deliberately ignore many other fabricated issues as a way of further dislocating their historical validity, especially those whose fallacy can be easily discerned by readers. An example can be the allegation that Caliph Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه issued a circular, instructing Imams to discredit Ali bin Abi Talib رضي الله عنه in their Friday sermons, which, according to the tale, continued up to the period of Caliph Umar bin Abdul'aziz, who cancelled it. It is highly irrational to believe that a certain leader – whoever he might be, for that matter, would expect scholars and righteous people at that time to dance to his tune! This could be easily understood by someone who read and studies their life, piety, intrepidity, fearlessness and obedience to the Prophet's command and invincible determination and principle to stick to the truth.

In any case, the examples are numerous but in the interest of the reader's conscience, we chose not to show any regard to them in this book.

Finally, an attempt has been made to enlighten the reader where necessary to avoid making improper remarks and misguided comments on whatever sounds or appears uncomfortable to him in the history of the Salaf,



lest he commits a sin. We have explained that these kinds of narrations which misrepresent righteous servants can either be authentic or mere fabrication. The fabricated stories take the greater share of the narrations as a whole. The authentic ones, which are relatively few, revolve around personal reasoning (*Ijtihad*), human mistakes and shortcomings. In the case where one would be found to have committed a sin, his judgment rests solely with Allah; He may punish him according to his sin or forgive him, if He wills. The disciples of the Messenger ﷺ were directly taught and guided by him, and they supported him in all his struggles in the way of Allah, but they are not infallibles. However, we should note that, their good deeds outweigh the bad ones. In this regard, Ibn Taimiyyah delineates:

Though we are required to keep off from meddling into the disputes and crises which occurred among the Sahaba, [and are required also to] love them and seek Allah's forgiveness for them, it is however, not binding to conclude that all of them did what they did out of personal reasoning (*ijtihad*) or personal interpretation (*ta'wil*). There were of course some among them who committed sins, or out of human weakness, were influenced by desire to make mistakes. What we should note is that, someone's good deeds can outweigh the bad ones since Allah forgives sins when they are outweighed by good deeds. It is, therefore, within this framework that Ahl al-Sunnah chose to have a positive opinion and position on them. They do not regard them as infallible like Prophets, but in the class of Allah's servants in whose respects Allah says: -

﴿ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ نَتَقَبَّلُ عَنْهُمْ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا وَتَتَجَاوَزُ عَنْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ فِي أَصْحَابِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعَدَ الصَّادِقُ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ ﴾

*Such are they from whom We shall accept the best of their deeds and pass by their ill deeds: [They shall be] among the Companions of the Garden: a*

*promise! of truth, which was made to them [in this life].<sup>23</sup>*

The point to always consider is the state [of faith] in which one ends and the outcome recorded.<sup>24</sup>

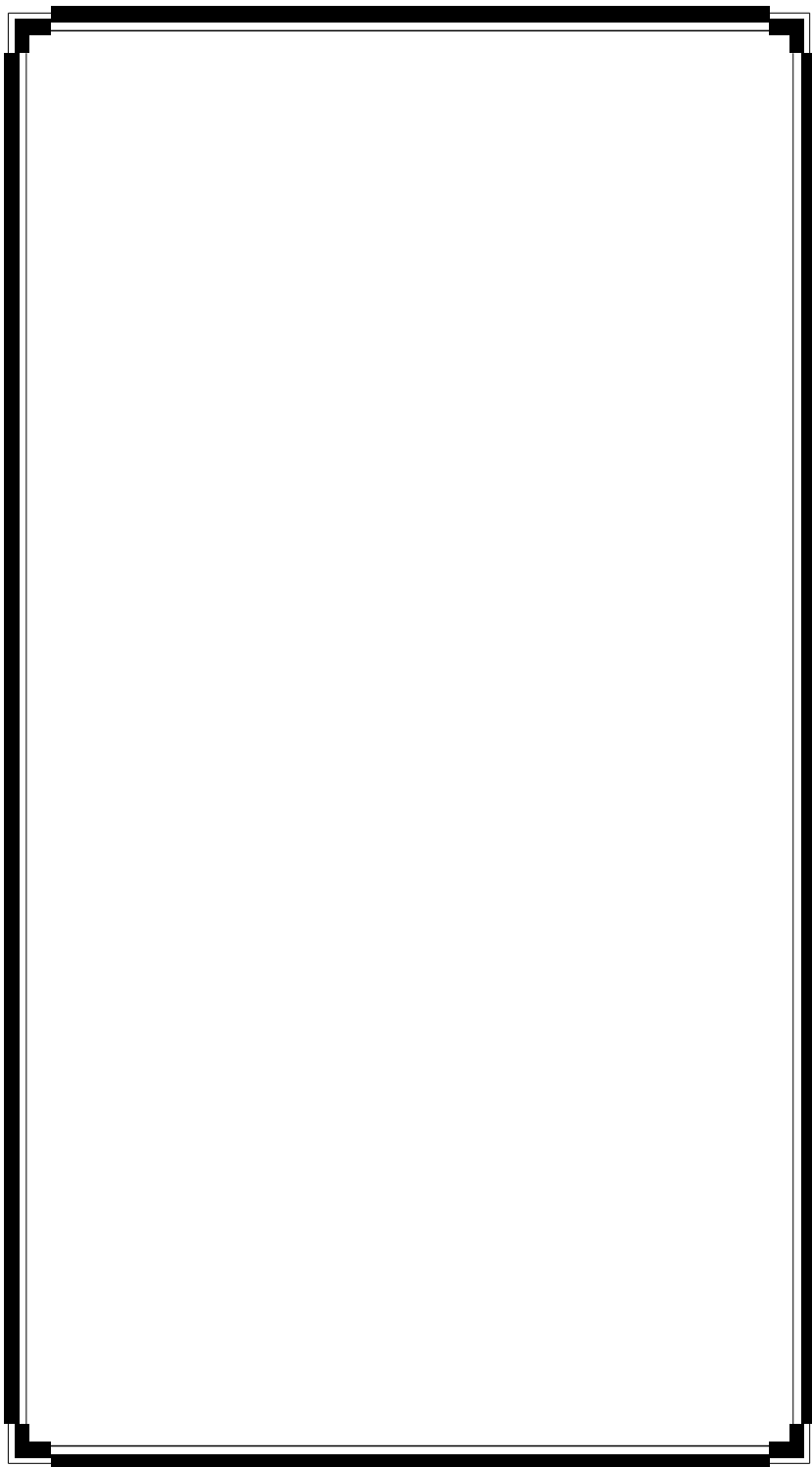
We hereby solicit for Allah's guidance in both our utterances and deeds. May He purify our intentions and reward us where we do well and overlook and pardon our shortcomings. All praise is due to Allah. May His peace and benediction be upon His Noble Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Abu Ramla, Muhammad Mansur Ibrahim  
27<sup>th</sup> Zul Hijjah, 1435 (16/10/2014)  
At Gishlah, Makka, Saudi Arabia

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<sup>23</sup> Surat al-Ahqaf: 16.

<sup>24</sup> Refer to a Hadith narrated by Bukhari (6607) and Muslim (112) in their authentic collections.





## Chapter One

# BACKGROUND

- The Early Stages of the Prophet's Sickness
- Short Recovery
- The Prophet ﷺ in a Critical Condition
- The Prophet's Demise: the Greatest Muslim Tragedy

## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND

#### 1. The Early Stages of the Prophet's Sickness

During the Farewell Pilgrimage in the 10<sup>th</sup> year after Hijra, the Prophet ﷺ gave a sermon in which he addressed a large assembly of Muslim pilgrims. He said: "Take your rites from me, for I do not know whether I will perform Hajj any more after this Hajj of mine" (Abu Dawud: 1970).

Some of the Prophet's companions discerned from the sermon that his time to depart from the world had drawn near.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, a Qur'anic verse was revealed during the Hajj season which indicated that the religion had been perfected and that Allah had fulfilled His bounties on His servants by putting them on the right path of Divine guidance.<sup>26</sup> Some Sahaba, therefore, understood that since the mission of the Prophet ﷺ had been accomplished, his time for departure had come.

A few days after the Prophet ﷺ returned to Madina from Makka, he fell sick and remained on his sick bed for about three months, though at the time, the sickness was not very severe. The Prophet's condition became critical a little time after he mobilized a large Muslim army to be dispatched to fight the Byzantine, the second world super-power. Usamah bin Zaid رضي الله عنه, was appointed to lead the military command at the age of eighteen. From then on, the Prophet's condition became too severe and critical. He himself described the severity of his illness, remarking that it was the Allah's law to multiply the pain of His Prophets and Messengers, so that their reward would also be multiplied.

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<sup>25</sup> Bukhari: 1/96.

<sup>26</sup> Surah al-Ma'idah: 3.

A'isha ؓ who attended to the Prophet ﷺ during his illness narrated that his temperature used to rise high so much so that a container with cold water had to be brought for him to put his hands inside. He would be heard saying, "Indeed death is painful! Oh God! Help me overcome the pain of death!"<sup>27</sup>

The Prophet ﷺ was in a coma for about three times. Each time he recovered, he would ask, "Have people prayed?" and he would be told that they were waiting for him. He would then attempt to rise in order to have a shower but could not. After about three failed attempts, he became convinced that he could not go out. He then sent a word for Abubakar ؓ to lead the prayer.

## 2. Short Recovery

The Prophet ﷺ recovered briefly from his critical condition. He asked his wife, A'isha ؓ, to prepare water for him to have a shower. After the shower, he was able to go out to the Mosque and give a sermon in which he prayed for those who were martyred during the Battle of Badr. He then informed the crowd, "Allah gave a choice to one of (His) servants either to choose this world or what is with Him in the Hereafter. He chose the latter." Abubakar ؓ wept. Sa'ad bn Abi Waqqas said, I said to myself, "Why is this Sheikh weeping, if Allah gave choice to one (of His) servants either to choose this world or what is with Him in the Hereafter and he chose the latter? And that servant was Allah's Messenger himself. Abubakar ؓ knew more than us". The Prophet ﷺ said, "O Abubakar! Don't weep". The Prophet ﷺ added: "Abubakar has favoured me so much with his property and company. If I were to take a *Khalil* from mankind, I would certainly have taken Abubakar but Islamic brotherhood and friendship is sufficient. Close all the

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<sup>27</sup> Bukhari: 6510.

gates in the Mosque except that of Abubakar".<sup>28</sup> In the sermon, the Prophet ﷺ ordered for the dispatch of Usamah bin Zaid's command to fight the Byzantine. The Prophet ﷺ informed the crowd of his awareness of people's talks on the age-factor of Usamah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. He said, "You have said a similar thing regarding his father".<sup>29</sup>

The Prophet ﷺ then made a will in which he counseled the Muhajirun (Muslim migrants from Makka) on the virtue and honour of the Ansar (Muslim hosts in Madina), "O you Muhajirun! Know that the Ansar are the refuge of Islam. So, do well to the one who does well among them and forgive the one who does wrong among them".

It can be discerned that the Prophet ﷺ was indirectly indicating that the Muhajirun would take the lead of affairs of the Umma after him. He therefore, enjoined them to take care of their Ansar brothers and hosts.

### **3. The Prophet's Time for Departure**

The last thing Usamah bin Zaid رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ did before setting out was to visit the Prophet ﷺ to sympathize with him. He hoped to hear some encouraging words from the Prophet ﷺ, having realized the severe condition of the Prophet ﷺ. However, the Prophet ﷺ could not even voice a word. He only communicated to Usamah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ through sign language and prayed for his victory.<sup>30</sup> The Prophet ﷺ was finally heard saying, "Oh Allah! Forgive and have mercy on me. Let me be with the highest companionship. I have

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<sup>28</sup> Bukhari: 466. Perhaps these last words were the final testimony of the Prophet indicating Abubakar as the Prophet's successor. But he then did not want to impose that on people, but rather wanted the Ummah to choose for itself.

<sup>29</sup> Usamah's father, Zaid bin Harithah, was one of the three Muslim commanders who were martyred in the Battle of Mu'tah.

<sup>30</sup> Tirmizi: 3817, See also Al-Ali's Sahih al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah, p. 709.

chosen the highest companionship. I have chosen Paradise". This was how the Prophet ﷺ departed the earth. *Inna Lillahi wa Inna Ilaihi Raji'un*.

Prior to the demise of the Messenger ﷺ, Abubakar had spent about seven days without visiting his youngest wife,<sup>31</sup> who lived at Sunh, a small township located a mile away from Madina city. Therefore, upon the Prophet's short recovery, Abubakar رضي الله عنه was at Sunh with his family. When he returned to Madina, he saw people in a sober mood; people were in bewilderment and in a melancholic state. Umar bin al-Khattab رضي الله عنه unsheathed his sword and threatened to chop off the head of whoever claimed that the Prophet ﷺ had died. As soon as he arrived at the scene, he went directly to the Prophet's house. He entered the room of A'isha رضي الله عنها where the Prophet ﷺ was lay dead. He uncovered the curtain with which the Prophet's face was covered and observed him for a while. He ascertained that the Messenger ﷺ had truly died. He kissed his face and said, "I sacrifice my parents for you, O Allah's Messenger! You shall remain pure, both alive and dead".

When he came out from the house, he climbed the pulpit to give a sermon since the Prophet had already appointed him to lead prayers on his behalf. He, therefore, had a duty toward the Umma at that very sorrowful moment until the Prophet's successor had been selected.

#### **4. Every Soul Shall Taste Death!**

In his sermon, Abubakar رضي الله عنه confirmed the death of the Prophet ﷺ. He cautioned people against nurturing any conjecture that the religion might have come to an end with the Prophet's demise. He recited some verses of the

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<sup>31</sup> She was Habibah bint Khairjah. Before Abubakar died, she was pregnant and shortly after his demise she gave birth to his daughter, Umm Kulsum.



Glorious Qur'an which calmed the atmosphere of the tension that enveloped everybody.

One cannot certainly imagine the sober mood and state of bewilderment in which Muslims found themselves on that day. A'isha ؓ narrated that. "The Prophet's demise rendered many people bewildered like animals, which entered bush late dark at night. The sky was cloudy and about to rain while they were surrounded by predatory wild animals. Also, Umm Salamah ؓ said she did not believe that her husband ؐ had actually died until she heard the sound of digging from the room of A'isha ؓ.<sup>32</sup>

The death of the Prophet ؐ was on the 12<sup>th</sup> of Rabi' al-Awwal, the 11<sup>th</sup> year after Hijra. People kept on trooping from far and near to perform the funeral prayer for him on individual basis within Monday through Tuesday. He was buried in the room of A'isha ؓ late at night before the fajr of Wednesday.<sup>33</sup> The rationale behind the delay for his burial was to give for more people the opportunity to witness and observe the funeral. Yet, many more people came while the funeral was already over.

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<sup>32</sup> See for details Imam Malik's *al-Muwatta*, the commentary of al-Zarqani (2/67) and Ibn Abdul Barr's *al-Istizkar* (3/55).

<sup>33</sup> Check Ibn Hisham's *Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*.





# **Chapter Two**

## **THE CALIPHATE OF ABUBAKAR BN ABI QUHAFAH**

رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ



## CHAPTER TWO

### The Caliphate of Abubakar Bin Abi Quhafah

رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ

#### 2. His Biography

##### 2.1. The Genealogy

Abubakar's full name was Abdullah bin Usman bin Amir bin Ka'b bin Sa'ad bin Taim bin Murrah. His lineal line and that of the Prophet ﷺ met at Murrah who happened to be the sixth grandfather for both of them. Apart from the name "Abubakar", he used to be called "Atiq" and "al-Siddiq". He earned the latter sobriquet when he wholeheartedly believed with all that which the Prophet ﷺ had brought at the time the Quraysh rejected him.

Abubakar's father Usman was otherwise known as Abu Quhafah while his mother was Salma bint Sakhr, also known as Ummul Khair. They both belonged to the Banu Taim clan, which was relatively not as influential as other Quraysh clans like Banu Hashim, Banu Abd Manaf and Banu Makhzum.

##### 2.2. His Birth

Abubakar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was born in Makka fifty years before the Hijra of the Prophet ﷺ. So, the Messenger ﷺ was two years and a few months older than him.

##### 2.3. His Physical Feature

Abubakar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was white in complexion. He was slim with a slightly bigger forehead. He had deep eyes. He was a bit stooped. Abubakar was so slim that trousers did not fit him tightly.

##### 2.4. Abubakar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ Before the Advent of Islam

Abubakar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was one of the prominent and successful businessmen among the Quraysh. He was very kind and generous. He was well respected and accorded high

regard among the Arabs. Even before the advent of Islam, Abubakar رضي الله عنه never tasted wine. He was able to influence his friend, Usman bin Affan, who also never tasted it. Abubakar's teetotal discipline was informed by an ugly scene, which he saw involving a drunkard, who, out of the power of intoxicants, was putting his hand inside his excreta and lifting it up near his mouth. When he smelled the odour, he would withdraw his hand. He was doing this repeatedly. From then on, Abubakar رضي الله عنه became repugnant of wine and vowed never to ever taste it.

Similarly, Abubakar رضي الله عنه never worshipped an idol. This was traced to an episode in which as a child his father took him to idols. He told Abubakar that the idols were his gods, which he should worship. After his father went away leaving him with the idols, he became hungry and asked them for food, but they never uttered a word. As a result, he spat on them, cursed them and made his way home with intense disgust. Moreover, Abubakar did not engage in poetry.<sup>34</sup> Perhaps, he was influenced by his longtime companionship with the Prophet ﷺ since childhood.

## **2.5. His Family**

Abubakar رضي الله عنه had four wives; he married two before the advent of Islam while the remaining two after the beginning of the Prophet's mission. The first two were:

1. Qutailah bint Abdul'aziz: She was the mother of his son, Abdullah, and daughter, Asma' رضي الله عنها.
2. Umm Ruman bint Amir of Kinanah clan. She was the mother of Abdurrahman and A'isha رضي الله عنها.

The second two were:-

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<sup>34</sup> The rationale behind this was that poets mostly tell lies. That was why Allah protected His Messenger and the best among his companions from engaging in the dubious art.

1. Asma' bint Umais: She was first married to Ja'far bin Abi Talib عليه السلام and gave birth to his son, Muhammad. She was later married to his younger brother, Ali bin Abi Talib عليه السلام, after Abubakar's death. She was the mother of three Muhammads; Muhammad bin Ja'far, Muhammad bn Abubakar and Muhammad bin Ali. She also gave birth to Ali's two children; Yahya and Aun.
2. Habibah bint Kharijah al-Madaniyyah. When Abubakar died, she was pregnant and a little later gave birth to his last daughter Umm Kulsum.

## **2.6. Abubakar عليه السلام among the Quraysh before the Advent of Islam**

Abubakar عليه السلام was a specialist in genealogy. He was deeply knowledgeable on lineal relations among the houses and clans of the Arabs and their history and records. He was the representative of his clan in the 10-member council of the Quraysh. Each of the supreme clans had a representation in the council as follows: -

1. Banu Hashim: they were in charge of water supply for pilgrims. Abbas bin Abdulmuttalib, the Prophet's uncle was their representative. The clan retained the responsibility after the Prophet's proclamation of his mission.
2. Banu Umayya: they were in charge of the Quraysh national flag. Whenever there was a vacuum as regard the Quraysh leadership due to death or any circumstance, they served as interim and transitional leaders, pending the time a new leader would emerge. Abu Sufyan bin Harb was the member representing the Umayyads.
3. Banu Naufal: they were in charge of funds that were generated for providing services to pilgrims.



Al-Haris bin Amr was the person representing the Naufals in the council.

4. Banu Abdiddar: their responsibility was to keep the Ka'bah neat and clean. They used to wash and dress it. Usman bin Talha was the clan's representative in the council.
5. Banu Asad: they were in charge of the council's secretariat. They used to sign and stamp on all the documents containing the resolutions and policies to be implemented by the council.
6. Banu Taim: they were in charge of generating funds to be used as blood money (*Diyyah*) for peacemaking processes when conflict erupted among the Arabs. Their office was also shouldered with the responsibility of settling debts incurred by the poor and the less privileged. Abubakar رضي الله عنه was their representative in the council.
7. Banu Makhzum: they were in charge of keeping and maintaining weapons and other military hardware. In other words, their responsibility was taking care of the Quraysh arsenal. Khalid bin Walid was the council member representing the Banu Makhzum clan.
8. Banu Adiyy: they were in charge of Quraysh's foreign policy and international relations, especially on aspects related to war, arbitration and peacemaking among the Arabs. They were also the media arm and mouthpiece of the Quraysh which publicized its pride, glory and political influence over other people. Umar bin al-Khattab was their delegate.
9. Banu Jumah: they were in charge of the lots, which were cast to attract success when they would embark on a journey, trade, marriage and so on. Their delegate was Safwan bin Umayya.

10. Banu Saham: their duty was facilitating the growth and advancement of the Quraysh economy and other services related to their gods. Their delegate was al-Haris bin Qais.<sup>35</sup>

## **2.7. Abubakar's Conversion to Islam**

As historians narrated, before the commencement of Qur'anic revelation to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, Abubakar رضي الله عنه had a dream. He later told Bahirah, the prominent Syrian Christian clergy what he saw and heard. The clergy again asked about Abubakar's city, the branch of the Arabs to which he belonged, and his occupation, which he confirmed as "Makkah", "Quraysh" and "Trade". Bahirah then interpreted the dream to Abubakar. He said that if the dream would come true, "a Prophet would emerge from your people. You would support him throughout his life. After his demise, you would become his successor". Abubakar رضي الله عنه received similar glad tidings when he had a journey to Yemen from the mouth of a monk, who belonged to the Azd clan.

As soon as the Prophet ﷺ proclaimed his mission, Abubakar رضي الله عنه was in the forefront and did not hesitate to believe him. Abubakar رضي الله عنه reasoned that he never witnessed or heard the Prophet telling lies and that the Prophet ﷺ was a man of honesty, truthfulness and integrity. He was kind and generous to people. From then on, Abubakar رضي الله عنه remained the Prophet's closest companion until the demise of the Messenger ﷺ.

## **2.8. Abubakar's Role and Contribution toward the Promotion of Islam**

As a wealthy, influential person among the Quraysh, Abubakar رضي الله عنه had contributed immensely to the

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<sup>35</sup> See Mahmud Shakir's *al-Tarikh al-Islami*, Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami.



promotion of the Islamic cause. At the Makkan phase of Islam, he used to support and defend the Prophet ﷺ against the evils and mistreatments of the Quraysh. Ali bin Abi Talib عليه السلام testified that after his father Abu Talib died, none defended the Messenger ﷺ against the Quraish harassments and intimidations like Abubakar عليه السلام. He spent a sizable amount of his wealth in the service of Islam, so much so that the Prophet ﷺ once declared that “The wealth of Abubakar has benefitted me more than that of anyone else”.<sup>36</sup>

Abubakar عليه السلام assisted in the da’wah of the Messenger by spreading Islam and calling people to the Prophetic guidance. He facilitated the conversion of many of his friends to Islam like Usman bin Affan, Zubair bin al-Awwam, Talha bin Ubaidullah, Abdurrahman bin Awf and Sa’ad bin Abi Waqqas. All of them were among the ten companions who received the Prophet’s glad tidings to enter Paradise. Others who converted to Islam through him were Usman bin Maz’un, Abu Ubaidah Amir bin al-Jarrah, Arqam bin Abi al-Arqam and Abu Salamah al-Makhzumi, among other early Muslim converts.

Abubakar built a mini Mosque in his house in Makka where he used to pray and recite the Qur’an. He had a very nice, lenient and humble voice, often coupled with a cry while he was reciting the Qur’an. As a result, many people in Makka, especially commoners, used to come to his house in order to listen to his recitation. In this way, many of them joined Islam. Quraysh polytheists tried to prevent Abubakar from that action and even threatened to inflict harm on him. But he did not give heed to their threats.

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<sup>36</sup> *Musnad Ahmad* (1/65) and *Sunan At-Tirmidhi* (3661) with an authentic chain of narration.



When the number of Muslim faithfuls reached eighty three, Abubakar asked the Messenger to make the mission public. The Prophet ﷺ cautioned him against the hazards and possible dangers the move entailed, but Abubakar insisted that an attempt should be made. The Messenger approved the move and soon they both went to the Ka'bah. Abubakar took on the stage to introduce the Prophet to the people present. Before he finished his first statement, he was attacked and beaten severely by some Quraysh men. They threw stones at the Muslims who were present and drove them away from the scene. Meanwhile, the Quraysh men kept on inflicting harm on Abubakar; Utbah bin Rabi'ah sat on his stomach, slapping his face with shoes until Abubakar became unconscious. They at the end left him in cold blood.

His relatives among the Banu Taim gathered and approached the scene for his rescue. However, before their arrival the polytheists had already done their worse. So, Abubakar's relatives evacuated him, thinking that he was dead. They pledged to take vengeance and kill Utbah bin Rabi'ah no matter the consequences, even if it could lead to a civil war among the Quraysh. At night, amidst the turbulent mood, Abubakar recovered. The first thing he did was to ask about the condition of the Prophet ﷺ.

## **2.9. His Philanthropic Services**

Abubakar spent his wealth on religious services and noble causes. He bought off and emancipated weak slaves who were oppressed and tortured on account of their faith, such as Amir bin Fuhairah, who was freed from the chains of Tufail bin Abdullah bin Haris. Amir got freedom to practice his religion without obstruction or hindrance and was later to participate in some battles like Badr, Uhud, etc. He was martyred in the Battle of Mu'tah. Bilal bin Rabah, the Prophet's Muezzin (prayer caller) was also emancipated by Abubakar. The latter passed by the scene

in which Bilal was being ruthlessly tortured by his masters and bought him off from Umayya bin Khalaf, the chief of Banu Jumah. Bilal also took part in all the Jihad expeditions that were carried during the Prophetic era. Zinnirah was a slave woman owned by Umar bin al-Khattab before his conversion to Islam. He used to subject her to torture to the extent that she lost her sight. Polytheists used to circulate a rumour that she had lost her vision as a consequence of a curse cast upon her by their idols *Lat* and *Uzza*. Later, she regained her sight as a result of her strong and inflexible faith in the power of God. The polytheists still argued that she regained her vision through the power of “magic” performed by the Prophet. About eleven verses in Surah al-Ahqaf were revealed on the issue, refuting the allegation of the Quraysh. Zinnirah was freed from the menaces of slavery by Abubakar and she joined her fellow Muslims to perform their worship freely.

There were many other Muslims who were liberated by Abubakar from the servitude of the Quraysh clans like Banu Adiiy, Banu Abd Shams, etc. They all benefited from his benevolence and selfless philanthropic services.

## **2.10. Some of His Virtues**

Though all the Prophet’s companions possessed many virtues and good distinctive characters, none of them could match Abubakar. He was the closest companion and confidant of the Prophet. The Messenger used to confide in him his secrets. For example, the Prophet informed Abubakar of his intention to marry Hafsa before he told anyone. There are verses in the Qur’an which solely speak about Abubakar’s generosity, kindness and bravery.<sup>37</sup> The Prophet further confirmed the virtues of Abubakar that he

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<sup>37</sup> See for example, Surah al-Taubah: 40, Surah al-Zumar: 33-35 and Surah al-Lail: 17-21.

would enter Paradise through all its eight gates.<sup>38</sup> He was ahead of all the Sahaba in terms of knowledge. They all believed that apart from his expertise in genealogical science, he understood all the movements, activities and articulations of the Prophet more than anyone else.<sup>39</sup>

There was a time the Prophet had a dream in which he saw someone bringing him a calabash containing milk. The Prophet drank the milk so much so that it reflected in his skin and flesh. He then gave the remaining milk to Abubakar. When the Sahaba later interpreted the dream, saying that the milk referred to the Prophet's knowledge, which he drank and passed on the remaining to Abubakar, the Prophet affirmed their interpretation.

Abubakar was the most punctilious and pious person among the Sahaba. There was a time he forced himself to vomit the milk he drank when he doubted its lawfulness. The Prophet himself vouched for Abubakar's humbleness and self-effacement and confirmed to the Umma that Abubakar was never arrogant.<sup>40</sup> As the Prophet ﷺ mentioned in many occasions, Abubakar's strength of faith and conviction could not be compared to that of any other person. He was the only person who issued fatwa (legal ruling) in the presence of the Messenger just as he was the one who exclusively represented the Prophet in some responsibilities, such as leading prayer, Hajj, etc.<sup>41</sup>

## **2.11. His Courageousness and Determination**

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<sup>38</sup> Bukhari: 1897.

<sup>39</sup> Check Imam al-Nawawi's commentary of Sahih Muslim (15/150).

<sup>40</sup> Even after emerging as the Prophet's successor, Abubakar continued earning his livelihood through trade. It was only when the business of leadership became too time-demanding that, based on the advice of some Sahaba, he stopped his occupation.

<sup>41</sup> Ibn Taimiyyah's *Minhaj al-Sunnah*.



Some historians have misleadingly described Abubakar as someone who was weak, frail and lethargic; whose leniency outdid his physical strength. Whereas they regarded Umar bin al-Khattab as strong, severe and physically vivacious. This causes some readers to have a wrong mental picture of Abubakar. Below are of few examples that refute the claims:

Ali bin Abi Talib was asked about the bravest man among the Sahaba. He replied, "I have never had a clash with someone without defeating him. But Abubakar is the bravest among us". Ali further gave an example of Abubakar's bravery during the Battle of Badr, which was the first physical combat of Muslims and the Kuffar.

Abubakar took part in all the battles the Prophet ﷺ led. He was also appointed to lead the Muslim army many times in which enormous victory was recorded. In the seventh year after Hijra, Abubakar led the Muslim army to a battle against Banu Fizarah which culminated in a massive triumph on the part of Muslims. He was the Muslim army's flag-bearer during the harshest military outing which they were led by the Prophet, i.e. the Battle of Tabuk. During the Battle of Hunain in which Muslims suffered greatly and eventually retreated from the battlefield, Abubakar in company of some Sahaba stood firmly near the Prophet, giving him protection. What extra bravery and strength do we expect above what Abubakar demonstrated?

Abubakar was uniquely a man of strong will and determination and once he believed in a certain cause or mission, did not easily move till he accomplished it. Worthy of recollection is the attempt by Umar bin al-Khattab to persuade Abubakar not to fight Zakah deniers after the demise of the Prophet. The deniers reasoned that Allah ordered mainly the Prophet to collect Zakah and now that he had died, they were not bound to give it to his



successor. In other words, the validity of Zakah, as the deniers argued, had ceased to exist with the demise of the Prophet. In the opinion of Umar, the preparation to fight them should be suspended until things became stable, while Abubakar insisted that they must be fought. At the end, the opinion of Abubakar prevailed; they were vigorously fought and a massive victory was achieved. Moreover, Abubakar insisted on implementing the dispatch of the army of Usamah bin Zaid as initially mobilized by the Prophet, even though in the Sahaba's view, the plan should be suspended. Abubakar was inflexibly determined in his decision and did not change till the rest of the Sahaba became convinced on his point and obliged.

It was Abubakar alone who, despite the tormenting and agonizing mood the Muslims found themselves in, stood firm and gave the official announcement of the Prophet's death. He gave a sermon in which he cut off all the veins of doubt about the religion in the absence of its spiritual guide. He also gave another sermon at Saqifah which, to his credit, discouraged all the prospects of disunity over the selection of the Prophet's successor.

Abubakar's longtime companionship with the Prophet gave him the privilege to acquire exceptional leadership skills, such as foresight and shrewdness. During the Hudaibiyya Treaty, Umar took a harsh stand over the decision of the Quraysh to stop Muslims from entering their native land, Makka, to perform the lesser pilgrimage (Umra). On that day, unlike the majority of Muslims, the Prophet was aware of the success that would follow the treaty and, as such, he declared that he was ready to accept whatever terms and conditions the Makkan polytheists would advance in order to pave the way for peaceful reconciliations. Consequently, as part of the treaty, the Quraysh required Muslims to shelve their plan

to enter Makka that year and return next year. Another condition also was that whoever would migrate from Makka for Madina as a Muslim must not be accepted by the Prophet. On the other hand, whoever among the Muslims would become apostate and decide to go to Makka would be accepted by the Quraysh. The Prophet unreservedly accepted all the conditions, although Muslims were not happy with the resolutions. Angered and moved by what had transpired, Umar in particular, confronted Abubakar and posed some questions, which the latter answered characteristically. "Are we not on the right path" Umar asked, "and they on the wrong?" "Yes", Abubakar replied. "Has the Prophet not told us that Allah promised that we would enter Makka?" Umar retorted and Abubakar replied in the affirmative. Umar asked further, "Why then shall we accept this humiliation in our religion?" "Do you believe he is Allah's Messenger?" Abubakar questioned and Umar answered in the affirmative. "When he told us that we would enter Makka, did he say that we will do so this year?" and Umar's answer was in the negative. "So, you shall exercise patience, for Allah will surely fulfill His promise to His Messenger and He would never let him down" Abubakar counseled.<sup>42</sup>

We can see how determined, steadfast and farsighted Abubakar was in his conversation with Umar. That was why the Prophet inclined to his advice in many issues. An example of that is when the Prophet ﷺ accepted his advice of collecting fines to release the prisoners of Badr as a

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<sup>42</sup> Before talking to Abubakar, Umar had first asked the Prophet these questions. That was why when Abubakar answered Umar exactly as did the Prophet, Umar realized that the matter was final. Umar later would say that he blamed himself for his argument and as a result, he did many righteous deeds with a hope of being forgiven by Allah. See Bukhari: 2529 and Muslim: 3338.

way of showing kindness to them so that they might embrace Islam and also to use the money generated from the fines the prisoners were charged to finance Islamic projects.<sup>43</sup> Meanwhile, Umar suggested that they should be all executed.

## **2.12. Prophetic Allusions on the Caliphate of Abubakar**

The Prophet ﷺ had shown some interest in Abubakar to succeed him. He used to exclusively assign Abubakar some tasks, which he did not assign any other person. Abubakar was the person appointed by the Prophet to serve as the Amir al-Hajj just as he was the only person endorsed by the Messenger to lead Muslims in prayer on his behalf.<sup>44</sup> There was a time some people asked the Messenger to whom they should give their Zakah proceeds after his lifetime and he told them that they should give it to Abubakar. Also, the Prophet asked a woman to come another time for a decision and she asked what to do in an event that did not meet him again. He told her that she should meet Abubakar.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, by these and many other standards Abubakar was qualified more than any other person to succeed the Prophet.

There were times when the Prophet intended to call Abubakar and members of his family to give them a will, but he shelved the plan and reasoned that God would

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<sup>43</sup> Even though the Qur'an had drawn the attention of the Messenger over this decision, God the Almighty had proven His Messenger right by the conversion of many of the prisoners to Islam, sometimes after.

<sup>44</sup> Abubakar started leading Muslims in prayer since before the Prophet felt sick. There was a time the Prophet went to make peace among Banu Amr clan of the Aws tribe in their township near Quba. He therefore, sent a word through Bilal to Abubakar to lead the Muslims in prayer.

<sup>45</sup> Bukhari: 3659 & Muslim: 2386.



definitely not allow Muslims to disregard Abubakar. The last time similar thing occurred was on the Friday when the Prophet requested for something on which to write a will, which would prevent disunity among the Sahaba after him. Sympathetic of the Prophet's condition, Umar remarked that people should not bother and perturb the Prophet since the Qur'an contained every guidance people were in need of. When people kept on talking, the Prophet asked them to leave him alone without insisting that his earlier command be implemented. After all, he lived for more than three days after the episode, and was not heard to raise the issue again.<sup>46</sup>

### **2.13. The Emergence of Abubakar as Caliph**

Leadership is an essential component to the fabric of any society, without which its basis for living is at stake. That was why the Sahaba did not delay to select the Prophet's successor immediately after his demise. In the evening of the very day on which the Prophet died, information reached Abubakar that the Ansar had gathered at an open town hall square called Saqifah Bani Sa'idah located in the northern part of Madina. They assembled in order to deliberate over the issue of the succession of the Prophet. Abubakar set out for the place and on his way

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<sup>46</sup> This indicates that the information which the Prophet intended to pass was neither something new nor a religious pillar. It was also not a message which Allah sent that the Prophet must deliver. Otherwise, he would have definitely delivered it after his brief delivery. We can understand that Umar found himself in bewilderment due to the condition of the Prophet. He did not intend to disobey the Messenger in the same way Ali bin Abi Talib did when the Prophet ordered him to cancel his title as a Messenger during the treaty of Hudaibiyya. Ali refused to cancel the title because he was also angered and shocked by the humiliation the Quraysh subjected the Muslims to at that time. The Prophet reproached neither Umar nor Ali.



coincidentally met two Muhajirun, Umar bin al-Khattab and Amir bin al-Jarrah.

On his arrival, Abubakar inquired what was going on. The elderly among the people of Madina spoke of the Ansar's position, virtue and honour and their contribution and service toward the Islamic cause. Umar rose to speak but was prevented by Abubakar, who then spoke briefly and affirmed all that was said by the Ansar concerning their status, virtues and service to Islam. He cited their other qualities, which they did not mention. He then remarked that it would be difficult for other Arabs to accept the leadership of any Arab tribe than the Quraysh. That was why the Prophet stated that leaders should emerge from among them. Abubakar further asked Sa'ad bin Ubadah, the preferred candidate of the Ansar, whether he had heard the Prophetic statement on that and he answered in the affirmative.<sup>47</sup>

This development worked effectively in the psyche of the Ansar. They realized the impending problem, which might arise if the rein of leadership would fell in the hands of any tribe other than the Quraysh, especially now that there was a Prophetic directive concerning the issue. The Ansar therefore, succumbed to the truth. As a result, Abubakar urged the gathering to choose between Umar bin al-Khattab and Amir bin al-Jarrah as each of them, as he pointed out, was competent enough for the task.

Someone among the Ansar proposed that two people be chosen from among the Muhajirun and Ansar as leaders, so that they would both share power. Zaid bin Thabit from the Ansar objected to the idea, reasoning that since the Prophet was the leader of the Ummah, the Ansar should not be reluctant to support his mission posthumously. Therefore, he maintained that the leader should emerge

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<sup>47</sup> See Imam Ahmad's *al- Musnad* edited by Ahmad Shakir (1/18).

from the Muhajirun and the Ansar should support him. Umar, who also spoke, reminded the Ansar that it was the Prophet who first appointed Abubakar to lead Muslims in prayer. He argued that none could dare relegate Abubakar from taking the lead of the affairs of the Ummah having possessed such uniquely noble qualities. Umar then asked Abubakar to spread his palm for allegiance.<sup>48</sup> From then on, the whole people gave their allegiance to Abubakar as the Prophet's successor. The next Tuesday, people kept on trooping to the Prophet's Mosque to give their allegiance to Abubakar.

#### **2.14. Did Ali Give His Allegiance to Abubakar?**

Authentic historical sources have agreed that Ali bin Abi Talib was not present during the session and deliberation that resulted in the emergence of Abubakar as the Prophet's successor. He was also not present at the Mosque the next day when a mammoth crowd trooped in batches and gave their allegiance to the new Caliph. His allegiance came a little later. Therefore, the question is; was there a long delay between the time people gave their allegiance and that of Ali? What was the cause for the delay? There is sharp disagreement among historians concerning this.

It is imperative to recall that Abubakar gave a sermon in which he said, "I swear by Allah! I have never desired to be a ruler in a day or night. And I have never secretly or

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<sup>48</sup> In Ibn Sa'ad's *Tabaqat*, Umar first asked Abu Ubaidah to accept the allegiance as Caliph since he was crowned by the Prophet as the Trustee of the Ummah. But Abu Ubaidah argued that no one should overtake the Most Truthful person of the Ummah, who was the Prophet's companion during the Hijra. Thereafter, Umar turned to Abubakar and demanded that he present himself for allegiance. For details, see Ibn Sa'ad's *Tabaqat* (3/212). Details on this can also be obtained from Bukhari: (8/25).

openly prayed to get it". On hearing this, both Ali and Zubair who were present during the sermon, stood up and presented their excuse, saying that they, without doubt, vouched for his competence on the position because they were keenly aware of his closeness with the Prophet and how he deputized for him to lead Muslims in prayer. Meanwhile, they were only a bit unhappy because they were not consulted in advance on the issue.

In the narration of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, during the sermon, Abubakar observed that Ali was not present. He ordered someone to call him and when Ali arrived, Abubakar asked him why as Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, would like to cause disunity among the Ummah? Ali calmed Abubakar and stretched his hand and gave his allegiance to him.<sup>49</sup>

Some historians commented that Abubakar was engaged in an issue related to the Prophet's inheritance which his daughter Fatima requested. Abubakar explained to her that Prophets were not to be inherited. Whatever they left belonged to the Umma as Sadaqah. Fatima was not happy with Abubakar's position but never did she raise the issue in the future.<sup>50</sup>

Though Abubakar did not apparently do any harm to Fatima, it was reported that, as way of consoling her, he apologized and asked for her forgiveness.<sup>51</sup> According to

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<sup>49</sup> See Ibn Kathir's *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah* (5/248 & 6/333) and Ibn Asakir's *Tarikh Dimashq* (30/277). Also check the webpage of Shaykh Usman al-Khamis [www.almanhaj.com](http://www.almanhaj.com).

<sup>50</sup> Fatima suffered a protracted illness and died six months after the demise of her father, the Messenger. For details see *Fat'h al-Bari* (7/564) and Imam al-Nawawi's commentary of *Sahih Muslim* 12/77).

<sup>51</sup> See some Shi'ite sources such as: Ibn Abi al-Hadid's *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* (1/57), Ibn Mitham al-Bahrani's *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* (5/507) and Al-Bayadhi's *Haqq al-Yaqin* (p. 180). This refutes the unfounded and fabricated narrations indicating that there

a great Shi'ite scholar, Ibn Mitham al-Barhani, Abubakar met Fatima and said, "Whatever belonged to your father does indeed belong to you. The Messenger of Allah used to first provide for your feeding from the Fadak farm and then distribute the rest to people. I swear by Allah, I will also do as the Prophet did". Fatima agreed with this.<sup>52</sup>

Nevertheless, some historians concluded that the delay of Ali to give his allegiance to Abubakar was the short misunderstanding between Fatima and the new Caliph. Meanwhile, the narration mentioned earlier about Ali's discomfort for not being consulted on the succession issue is relatively stronger and sounder.<sup>53</sup> The Fadak issue, however, was a very mild subject, which Shi'ite historians exaggerated. At the time Ali himself emerged as Caliph, he was reminded of the issue of the farm and his response was, "I would be bashful of Allah if I give something to

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was a stiff dispute between Fatimah and her father's successor. The narrations further depict Fatimah in a very bad light. On this, see *Sunan al-Baihaqi* (6/301 & 471) and Ibn Abdulbarr's *al-Tamhid* (8/164-180).

<sup>52</sup> Ibn Mitham al-Bahrani's *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* (5/107). See also Bukhari: 1759.

<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, one cannot deny the fact that the situation in which the Muhajirun found themselves during the time vis-à-vis their Ansar counterparts, it was better not to delay the succession issue. Any delay at that time could cause unprecedented problems. Even if everybody was present at the Banu Saqifah square, still it was Abubakar who would emerge as the Prophet's successor because of the many Prophetic indications about that. Similarly, Ali had the right to be concerned with the issue of who would succeed his cousin and father in-law. Certainly, if he were present, he would still support the selection of Abubakar as Caliph since for times without number Ali had been saying that Abubakar was the best living creature among the Ummah, and then Umar.

someone whom Abubakar did not and endorsed by Umar”.<sup>54</sup>

In any case, Ali gave his allegiance to Abubakar whether early or late and had taken a significant part in the running of the administration. He fought alongside other Muslim soldiers in the war of apostasy and against Zakah deniers. He was also a cabinet member as well as of a consultative forum, which assisted the Caliph in the business of governance. The delay in giving allegiance did not, in any way, impact on the relationship of Abubakar and Ali. After all, each of the Caliphs including Ali himself would later face a similar or an even bitterer instance of delay in giving allegiance.

### **2.15. The Accomplishments of Abubakar as Caliph**

Though the period of Abubakar’s leadership was very short, it recorded numerous significant achievements, which brought about wide expansions of Islam and fortified the religion against enemies and predators. No sooner than he emerged as the Prophet’s successor, did Abubakar donate his entire wealth to the treasury as charity.<sup>55</sup> He then kept on running his business as a costume dealer in order to earn a living as usual. Afterwards, Umar observed that it would be difficult to undertake the functions of Caliph while simultaneously running the business. He, therefore, suggested that Abubakar should stop doing business and concentrate on leadership responsibility. In return, a certain amount of money should be fixed for him as his salary.

Abubakar began his administration by settling the pledges and gracious promises which the Prophet did to people

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<sup>54</sup> See *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* (16/252) and al-Murtadha’s *al-Shafi fi al-Imamah* (4/76).

<sup>55</sup> As narrated earlier, Abubakar was already a successful businessman who invested much of his wealth in the service of Islam.

before his demise. When a huge amount of wealth came to Madina from Bahrain, Abubakar issued an announcement that whoever had an outstanding pledge or promise by the Prophet should come forward to get his request granted. As such, Abubakar settled all those demands accordingly.

Abubakar ordered for the documentation of the Qur'an, which was hitherto preserved on different things such as skins, hides, stones, leaves, etc. In the aftermath of the Battle of Yamamah, which quelled the uprising of Musailamah al-Kazzab, Caliph Abubakar observed that a number of *Huffaz* (Qur'anic memorizers) were martyred. Therefore, he resolved that the Qur'an should be preserved in a single document instead of relying solely on the *Huffaz* whose number was reducing due to battles.

However, Abubakar's opinion was, at the beginning, contested by Umar رضي الله عنه, reasoning that it was not proper to do what the Prophet ﷺ did not do. Abubakar رضي الله عنه did not relent in his effort to convince Umar رضي الله عنه, pointing out that the measure was very essential in order to protect the Qur'an from loss. Umar رضي الله عنه was finally convinced and so were the rest of the people. This singular foresight of Abubakar's became instrumental in extending the divine scripture to far and distant regions in the Muslim world. It facilitated the protection of the Qur'an from loss, manipulation or distortion.

## **2.16. Battles Fought During the Caliphate of Abubakar**

At the time Abubakar رضي الله عنه emerged as the Prophet's successor, the Umma was shattered between those who became apostates and those who refused to pay Zakah – an important Islamic pillar. With the exception of Makka, Madina, Ta'if and Bahrain, almost all the Arab tribes elsewhere seceded from the Islamic community. A lot of

false Prophets emerged, such as Aswad al-Ansi in Yemen, Musailamah al-Kazzab in Yamamah, Tulaihah al-Asadi in Najd, etc. They all claimed to have received “revelation” from God and, therefore, were sent to their respective tribes as Prophets. This claim was even chanted by Sajah bint al-Harith al-Taglibiyyah, who professed that she was a Prophetess to her people. With strong confidence and determination, Caliph Abubakar رضي الله عنه confronted those multilayered challenges.

A few days after the demise of the Prophet ﷺ, Abubakar رضي الله عنه commanded for the dispatch of the Usamah army, which was earlier mobilized by the Prophet ﷺ. The army was to advance to Balqa’ in southern Jordan and Darum in southern Palestine near Gaza to carry out a military expedition and spread Islam. The decision by Caliph Abubakar رضي الله عنه to dispatch the army was met by some disagreement on the part of the Sahaba, including the consideration of the age of Usamah, the army commander, who was by then very young. The Sahaba were of the opinion that at a volatile and turbulent situation like that, the administration’s concern should be geared towards providing internal security in Madina, rather than bothering with the exterior. Moreover, most of the places the Muslim soldiers were to go to were still under the vassalage of the Byzantine Empire, the then second world super-power.

Nevertheless, Abubakar رضي الله عنه was unmoved by all the concerns raised by the Sahaba. His point was that, since it was the Prophet ﷺ who initially mobilized the army with the intention to send them for a military expedition, there was no way as his successor, Caliph Abubakar رضي الله عنه, would stop the plan. As God would have it, Abubakar’s decision proved uniquely effective. Wherever the army headed, people were fascinated and overwhelmed by the strength of Islam at the time the Muslim community was



supposed to be weakened by the demise of the Prophet ﷺ. On the other hand, this instilled great fear and panic on the psyche of rebellious communities. They became certain that they had no military strength that could match Islam's. This anxiety eventually worked for the Muslim army and helped them to defeat all the rebels and bring them back to order. After about seventy days, Usama رضي الله عنه and his army returned to Madina triumphantly with a huge amount of booty.<sup>56</sup>

From then on, Caliph Abubakar رضي الله عنه mobilized another army, comprising ten commands. They were to quell the serial uprisings perpetrated by the Arab tribal revolts. He set out with the army, though Ali bin Abi Talib رضي الله عنه advised him to remain in Madina as the commander-in-chief of the Muslim armed forces and be issuing orders to commanders. Ali reasoned that the Umma could not afford to lose the Caliph at that critical moment. The Prophet ﷺ once said a similar thing to Abubakar, when he saw his determination and vigor during the Battle of Badr.

## **2.17. Muslim Commanders During the Wars of Apostasy**

Prominent among the Muslim commanders during the series of wars fought against the apostates included Khalid bin Walid رضي الله عنه, who led the command of the army, which attacked the Asad, Gafan and the followers of Tulaihah al-Asadi, one of the false Prophets. Both Ikrimah bin Abi Jahl رضي الله عنه and Shurahbil bin Hasanah رضي الله عنه led the command, which fought the Banu Hanifah clan, under their chief, Musailamah al-Kazzab, also a false Prophet. Khalid رضي الله عنه would later join Ikrimah's army and take the lead of the command when he finished his fight against the followers of Tulaiha al-Asadi and Sajah bint

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<sup>56</sup> See Usman al-Khamis's *Hiqbatun min al-Tarikh*, Maktabatus Sahaba, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1426 (2005), p. 32.

al-Harith. Other commanders included Khalid bin Sa'id bin al-As, who led the army to the Syrian border; Amr bin al-Ass who fought the clan of Khuza'ah, while Ala' bin al-Hadhrami عليه السلام made for Bahrain. Some other commanders also confronted the clans of Hawazin, Sulaim, Kindah, Tamim and Tihamah who lived in Yemen and other neighbouring territories.

In virtually all those battles, the enemies were greater in number than their Muslim counterparts. But with God's assistance and thereafter with the power of the soldiers' faith and good intention to defend Islamic cause, they were able to quash all their enemies. For example, during the Battle of Yamamah, the soldiers of Musailamah numbered about 40,000 while the Muslims under Khalid bin Walid عليه السلام persevered and fought them relentlessly. They killed more than 10,000 soldiers from the enemy. Wahshi bin Harb عليه السلام shot down Musailamah with an arrow and he fell dead. The casualties among the Muslims were less than 600. At the end, Banu Hanifah capitulated and succumbed to Islamic precepts for amnesty and peaceful resolution. They eventually joined Islam in their totality. Huge amount of booty, including slaves and maids, were won from them before their surrender. Khawlat bint Ja'far al-Hanafiyyah one of the maids felt into the booty of Ali bin Abi Talib عليه السلام. She was the mother of Muhammad bin al-Hanafiyyah, one of the "Infallible" Imams according to some Shi'ite denominations.

## **2.18. The Aftermath of the Apostasy Wars**

Caliph Abubakar عليه السلام embarked on spreading and propagating Islam to other parts of the world after his victory over the apostates. It was in that process that some more battles were fought between Muslims and Persians, on the one hand, and Muslims and the Byzantines in

Syria, on the other. Popular among the clashes was al-Yarmuk in which about 27,000 Muslim forces confronted Byzantine soldiers, who numbered more than 120,000. In the clash, Muslims suffered and endured greatly so much so that due to water scarcity, they had to slaughter some of their camel-rides to get water from their tanks. They also had to devise new paths in jungles in order to make their journeys easy.

In the war, Muslims left an unprecedented legacy of showing love and brotherhood among themselves. They suffered immeasurably due to water scarcity and were very much touched by thirst. Some little water was found, which was not enough to quench the thirst of all. But out of selflessness, many would refuse to drink and ask that the water be passed to others to drink first. Some of them had died out of thirst because of this noble selfless gesture.

### **2.19. The Valedictory Stage of Abubakar's Life**

Abubakar رضي الله عنه became very sick. He gathered members of the consultative forum to hear their view on the person to succeed him. All of them left the matter in his hand, saying that they were ready to accept whomever he chose for them.<sup>57</sup> But still Abubakar رضي الله عنه wanted to hear their individual opinions. He called Abdurrahman bin Awf رضي الله عنه and asked his opinion about Umar. The former replied that the qualities of Umar رضي الله عنه were beyond expectations. Also when asked by Abubakar رضي الله عنه, Usman answered that Umar's inner qualities were excellently beyond what people could see.

In summary, all the elderly Sahaba unanimously agreed with Abubakar's choice of Umar رضي الله عنه, though Talha رضي الله عنه had expressed some concern on Umar's harshness. Since

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<sup>57</sup> Tabari's *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk* (4/238) and *AKhbar al-Madina* (1/352).

this latter view represented a minority voice, Abubakar رضي الله عنه went ahead and acted upon the opinion of the majority.<sup>58</sup> Abubakar رضي الله عنه then assembled all the members of the *Shura* consultative forum and briefed them about his resolution to appoint Umar رضي الله عنه as his successor. They all endorsed the choice. The resolution was script-recorded in a document and taken round major cities and provinces for people to know what was going on. The document reads thus;

*Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim*

This is what Abubakar bin Abi Quhafah had resolved at the end of his earthly life and at the start of his afterlife. At this critical moment when the defiant is seeking to return to the meek, the liar is looking for the truth; I hereby announce to you that I have appointed Umar bin al-Khattab to be your leader after me. You should listen to him and obey. I have certainly not ceased to do what is good based on [the command of] Allah and His Messenger. If he exercises patience and leads justly, that is my knowledge and expectation of him. But if he deviates and changes, everyone shall be responsible for his sin. All I aim at is public good and I do not have the knowledge of the unseen. "Indeed those who oppress will gradually know the abode to which they will be returned".<sup>59</sup>

*Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullah.*<sup>60</sup>

Before he died, his daughter, A'isha رضي الله عنها, was sitting in front of him, reciting some poetic lines so as to reduce the pain of the critical moment. Abubakar asked her to read the verse:

(وَجَاءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيدُ)

<sup>58</sup> See Ibn al-Athir's *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh* (2/79).

<sup>59</sup> Surah al-Shu'ara': 227.

<sup>60</sup> Ibn Sa'ad's *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra* (3/200).

*And the stupor of death will bring Truth  
[before his eyes]: "This was the thing  
which thou wast trying to escape!"<sup>61</sup>*

Later, his permission was sought to bring a doctor but he retorted, "A doctor has already diagnosed me". Abubakar رضي الله عنه was asked what the doctor had said and he said, "I will do what I wish", meaning that God was aware of his condition and none could stop Him from doing what He willed.

Abubakar رضي الله عنه died in Jimada Akhir (the sixth month) on the 13<sup>th</sup> year after Hijra. His leadership spanned for two years and three months.

Before delving into the next chapter, which dwells on the second Caliph, his administration, transformations and development, it is imperative to highlight briefly the views and position of Shi'ites on Caliph Abubakar رضي الله عنه.

## **2.20. The Views of Shi'ites on Caliph Abubakar**

A central dogma in Shi'ism is that all the Sahaba were apostates, who turned deaf ears to the will of the Prophet ﷺ of choosing Ali bin Abi Talib رضي الله عنه as his successor. Instead, they "connived" and chose Abubakar رضي الله عنه. That is why the Shi'ites do not have any regard for the Sahaba, even though there are many Qur'anic verses that extol their virtues, strong faith, uncontaminated love to the Prophet ﷺ, and their struggles to defend him and promote the religion.

Kulini, the most prominent scholar of the Shi'ites, dedicated a whole chapter in his *al-Kafi* where he discusses the "apostasy" of the whole Sahaba with the exception of three among them. According to him, Muhammad al-Baqir asserts that, "With the exception of three men, all people [the Sahaba] had turned apostates

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<sup>61</sup>Surah Qaf: 19.

after the demise of the Prophet ﷺ.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, Tustari, another frontline Shi'ite scholar, posits that "just like Prophet Musa came with guidance to the Israels but the majority of them turned apostate since he was alive and none of them remained [with Iman] except Harun, so also Muhammad ﷺ came and guided many people but they became apostate after his demise".<sup>63</sup>

Shi'ites believe that the Sahaba remained apostate throughout their lifetime. Kulini further quotes Abu Ja'far, saying, "Abubakar and Umar died without repenting from their sin, nor did they ponder over what they did to the Commander of the Faithful Ali bin Abi Talib. Therefore, the curse of Allah, His Angels and entire people shall befall them."<sup>64</sup>

It is within this ideological framework that the Shi'ites hate Abubakar رضي الله عنه. They disregard all his virtues in addition to his closeness with the Prophet ﷺ both as friend and in-law and a lifelong companion with whom he undertook the Hijra from Makka to Madina and participated in Jihad and proselytizing mission. The Shi'ites turned a blind eye to all these virtues and embarked on calumny campaigns. They even argue that Abubakar رضي الله عنه joined the Prophet ﷺ during the Hijra purposely to blow his whistle! There is a popular supplication in which the Shi'ites curse both Abubakar and Umar along with their two daughters, A'isha and Hafsa, the wives of the Prophet ﷺ. The Shi'ites consider the prayer a rich source of getting rewards.<sup>65</sup> Part of the rewards for the supplication, which they call *Du'a'*

<sup>62</sup> Al-Kulini, *al-Rawdha min al-Kafi* (8/245-246).

<sup>63</sup> Tustari, *Ihqaq al-Haqq*, p. 316.

<sup>64</sup> Al-Kulini, *al-Rawdha min al-Kafi* (8/246).

<sup>65</sup> According to Sayyid Hasan al-Musawi, Imam al-Khomeini used to make this supplication after every Subhi prayer. See *Lillahi Thumma Li al-Tarikh*, p. 89.

*Sanamai Quraysh* (supplication against the two idols of the Quraysh) is that<sup>66</sup>, “Whoever recites it once, God will record 70,000 rewards for him, wipe away 70,000 of his sins, promote his rank with 70,000 steps and fulfill 70,000 of his demands”<sup>67</sup> and that “Whoever curses Abubakar and Umar in the morning, no sin of his shall be recorded throughout the daytime till evening. And if he curses them in the evening, no sin of his shall be recorded till daybreak.”<sup>68</sup>

The Shi’ites are always allergic at the mention of Abubakar’s title, “al-Siddiq”, even though as ironically contained in their books the name was given to him by the Prophet ﷺ because of his unshakable faith to the Prophet’s mission. Some of their scholars have distorted the title by saying that it originated when Abubakar “believed with those who accused the Prophet ﷺ was a sorcerer”.<sup>69</sup> This allegation shows the folly of its advancers, as they did not remember that Abu Jahl would have also been given that title if at all it referred to believing with the Kuffar’s allegation.

The Shi’ites also fabricated a lot of allegations against Caliph Abubakar and his two immediate successors as compiled by one of their scholars, al-Kufi in a book titled *al-Istigathah fi Bida’ al-Thalathah* (Seeking Aid on the

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<sup>66</sup> This supplication has been narrated by a number of Shi’ites in their books such as al-Majlisi’s *Bihar al-Anwar* (85/260), Kashani’s *Ilm al-Yaqin* (2/701-703), Kaf’ami’s *Misbah al-Jannah al-Waqiyah*, p. 511-514, Asadullah al-Ha’iri’s *Miftah al-Jannah*, p. 113-114, Tabarsi’s *Fasl al-Khitab*, p. 9-10, Mazhur bin Husain’s *Tufah Awam Maqbul*, etc.

<sup>67</sup> Muhammad al-Jauhari, *Dhiya’ al-Salihin*, p. 513.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> See *al-Tafsir* (1/289) by Qummi, *Tafsir al-Burhan* (2/125), *al-Tafsir al-Safi* (1/702), *al-Raudha min al-Kafi* (8/263) and Saffar’s *Basa’ir al-Darajat*, p. 444.

Innovations of the Three Men). The allegations include that Abubakar refused to give Fatima *radihyallahu anha* her entitled share of the Prophet's inheritance as a result of which she met him at a marketplace and insulted him. And that Umar رضي الله عنه, on the instruction of Abubakar رضي الله عنه, beat her severely till she miscarried.

They also believe that both Abubakar رضي الله عنه and Umar will be subjected to a kind of punishment, which is harsher and more painful than the one Iblis (Satan) will be subjected to in the hereafter. They have also quoted a lot of fabricated ahadith to vindicate their claim".<sup>70</sup> Likewise, whoever reserves love for the Sahaba, no matter how tiny, will never enter Paradise, according to them.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> For details, see Ayyash's *Tafsir* (2/224), Mufid's *al-Ikhtisas*, p. 108 and al-Hilli's *al-Muhtadhar*, p. 51.

<sup>71</sup> See Ayyash's *Tafsir* (1/157), *Tafsir al-Burhan* (1/267) and *Bihar al-Anwar* (27/75).







# **Chapter Three**

## **The Caliphate of Umar Bin al-Khattab**

رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ

## CHAPTER THREE

### The Caliphate of Umar Bin Al-Khattab رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ

#### 3.1. His Genealogy

His full name is Umar bin al-Khattab, bin Nufail, bin Abdul'uzza, bin Rabah bin Abdullah, bin Qurt, bin Razah, bin Adiyy, bin Ka'b, bin Lu'ay, bin Ghalib bin Fihr (Quraish). His lineage meets with the Prophet's ancestral line at the former's eighth great-grandfather, Ka'b bin Lu'ay. His father, al-Khattab, belonged to the Adiyy clan while his mother Hantamah bint Hashim belonged to the Banu Makhzum clan.

#### 3.2. His Birth

Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was born a little after *Harbul Fijar* (Sacrilegious War) which took place during the Jahiliyya period.<sup>72</sup> He was 10 years younger than the Prophet ﷺ.

#### 3.3. His Physical Feature and Character Trait

Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was described as white and red-complexioned, with the red more prevailing. He was very tall and well built. When walking in the company of other people, one would assume that Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was riding a camel while the people were walking. Concerning his character trait, Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ inherited his father's severity and harshness that used to be very severe on him. He would give him

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<sup>72</sup> It was a war that was fought by the coalition of the Quraysh and Kinana tribes on one hand, and on the other hand, the Hawazin tribe which attacked them in Makka. At youthful age, not more than 14 years of old, the Prophet ﷺ attended the war together with his uncles. He participated in the war by gathering and arranging the arrows which the enemies threw at their counterparts. For details see Ali al-Halabi's *al-Sirah al-Halabiyyah* (1/127-129).



tedious and overburdening tasks and beat him up upon a slight mistake or when he relaxed out of exhaustion.

Umar's father Khattab had a cousin, the son of his uncle Nufail. Zaid suffered in the hands of Khattab when he resented the worship of idol and was absolved in the search of the monotheistic religion of Prophet Ibrahim *alaihis salam*. Later, Umar would also torture his cousin Sa'id bin Zaid, the husband of his sister, Fatima ؓ, when both converted to Islam.

### **3.4. Umar Before Joining Islam**

In the first phase of his life, Umar bin al-Khattab ؓ, though very young and relatively less influential politically, was very strong and sagacious. He was feared among men. Thus, he was among the ten-man executive council of the Quraysh. He represented the Adiyy clan in the council and in charge of inter-tribal relations of the Quraysh and other Arabs, especially on matters related to war, truce, reconciliation, and so on. In other words, Umar served as minister of external affairs.

Umar's conversion to Islam brought about a new chapter in his life; his influential prestige and everlasting reputation remained an important and symbolic landmark in Islam. Before accepting Islam, Umar was determined to extinguish the illuminating light of Islam and prevent its glow in Makka. He had never spared time to listen to the Prophet's call lest he pondered and contemplated over the mission until he was favoured by Allah, the Almighty to accept the truth.

### **3.5. His Conversion to Islam**

Umar ؓ joined Islam five years before the Hijra. As stated earlier, Muslim suffered greatly in his hand. The question now was what were the underlying factors behind his conversion to Islam? At the time the hardship

and suffering of Muslims in Makka intensified, the Prophet ﷺ made a plea to Allah to strengthen His religion with the conversion of either Umar bin al-Khattab or Abu Jahl bin Hisham. The prayer was answered and as God willed it Umar was lucky to be the chosen one.<sup>73</sup>

Umar's conversion to Islam was preceded by series of interrelated events. At that time, some of the oppressed Muslims were on their way to leave Makka for Abyssinia. Umar asked Umm Abdillah bint Hantamah, one of the migrating Muslims, where they were heading to. She replied that they were leaving Makka because they were oppressed, treated like second class citizens and denied the freedom to practice their religion. They were, therefore, going to the land where they would peacefully worship Allah. On hearing this, Umar wished them well and a safe journey!

Everybody in the company of the migrants was baffled with Umar's expression of goodwill due to his known harshness on Muslims. When Umm Abdillah narrated the story to Amir bin Rabi'ah, the latter queried whether she was thinking that Umar would join Islam and she answered in the affirmative. She reasoned that Umar showed some compassion toward their plight. Amir pessimistically said that Umar would never join Islam except if "The donkey of al-Khattab would convert to Islam".

One day Umar went to the Ka'bah to make *tawaf* and pay some respect and tribute to idols. All of a sudden, he met the Prophet ﷺ inside the Mosque praying. He kept quiet and listened patiently to the Prophet, who was coincidentally reciting Surah al-Haqqah. Umar was greatly captivated by the recitation. He believed that the Quraysh were right to consider the Prophet ﷺ as a poet, though his poem in that regard was incomparably very

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<sup>73</sup> *Fath al-Bari* (7/48).

nice and euphonious. Umar was contemplating this thought when the Prophet ﷺ reached a place in which Allah says: -

﴿ فَلَا أَفْسِمُ بِمَا تُبْصِرُونَ (٣٨) وَمَا لَا تُبْصِرُونَ (٣٩) إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴾

﴿ (٤٠) وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَاعِرٍ قَلِيلًا مَّا تُؤْمِنُونَ (٤١) ﴾ [الحاقة: ٣٨ - ٤١]

*So I do call to witness what ye see. And what ye see not. That, this is verily the word of an honoured messenger. It is not the word of a poet: little it is ye believe!*

On hearing this, Umar told himself that if that was the case, he (the Prophet) should be a sorcerer. Before he finished, he heard the Prophet read: -

﴿ وَلَا يَقُولُ كَاهِنٍ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَدَّكُرُونَ (٤٢) ﴾ [الحاقة: ٤٢]

*"Nor is it the word of a soothsayer: little admonition it is ye receive".*

Umar then asked himself what was the status of the recitation? The answer suddenly came in the verse: -

﴿ تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٤٣) ﴾ [الحاقة: ٤٣]

*[This is] a Message sent down from the Lord of the Worlds "*

At this juncture, Umar's mind began to nurture some doubt, thinking that what the recitation was saying might not be genuine. The Qur'an continued:

﴿ وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضُ الْأَقَاوِيلِ (٤٤) لَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ (٤٥) ثُمَّ

لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِينَ (٤٦) فَمَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ عَنْهُ حَاجِزِينَ (٤٧) وَإِنَّهُ لَتَذْكُرَةٌ

لِلْمُتَّقِينَ (٤٨) وَإِنَّا لَنَعْلَمُ أَنَّ مِنْكُمْ مُكَذِّبِينَ (٤٩) وَإِنَّهُ لَحَسْرَةٌ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ

(٥٠) وَإِنَّهُ لَحُشٌّ يَبِينُ (٥١) فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ (٥٢) ﴾

*And if the messenger were to invent any sayings in Our name. We should certainly seize him by his right hand. And We should certainly then cut off the artery of his heart. Nor could any of you withhold him [from Our wrath]. But verily this is a message for the Allah-fearing. And We certainly know that there are amongst you those that reject [it]. But truly [Revelation] is a cause of sorrow for the Unbelievers. But verily it is truth of assured*

*certainty. So, glorify the name of thy Lord Most High.*

Before the Prophet ﷺ finished the prayer, Umar became totally changed. His heart was subdued and he gave up, though he had hitherto not pronounced his conversion to Islam.<sup>74</sup>

Three days after the conversion of the Prophet's uncle, Hamzah, to Islam, Umar met one of the oppressed Muslims. He spoke harshly intimidating him about his new faith. The Muslim retorted by asking Umar to first go and settle the matter with his relatives, who had equally embraced Islam. Umar furiously queried about the "deserters" among his relatives. The man mentioned that both Umar's sister and her husband had accepted Islam. Without mincing words, Umar left and made for the house of his sister Fatima bint al-Khattab.

As soon as Umar reached the house, Khabbab bin al-Aratt, who was teaching the couples the Glorious Qur'an and heard Umar's steps coming, hid himself. When the door was opened and Umar entered, he charged the couples that while on his way in he heard some unusual sound. He told them that he was aware of their conversion to Islam. Umar ﷺ grabbed and seized his in-law severely. His wife came to his rescue. Umar hit and injured her. She then faced him confidently and boldly confessed that they had both accepted Islam. The boldness and confidence of his sister despite having been wounded made him have some feelings of regret of inflicting harm on her. In a soft and lenient manner, he asked about Islam and before evening on that day he had become a Muslim.

### **3.6. Umar in Islam**

From the time Umar ﷺ joined Islam, he clutched onto the Prophet ﷺ. He became the Prophet's lieutenant and

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<sup>74</sup> *Al-Fath ar-Rabbani*, (20/232).

never did anything even at the level of his personal affairs at home except with the Prophet's consent. He became the closest companion of the Prophet ﷺ, only second to Abubakar رضي الله عنه. He served and defended Islam with all his clout, vigour and valour and stood by the Prophet's course against the tyranny and harm of the Quraysh polytheists. Umar's intrepidity and fearlessness during the Hijra was historically incomparable. While everybody was sneaking clandestinely from Makka to Madina during the Hijra, Umar رضي الله عنه made his Hijra public and challenged the foes of Islam to confront or try to stop him.

In the Madinan phase, Umar رضي الله عنه did all his best to promote the cause of Islam and defend it against the enemy's predation. Moreover, when he emerged as a Caliph years later, he invested all his efforts to uplift the Islamic mission in all aspects. His leadership witnessed a number of Jihad expeditions, which culminated to the greater expansion and widespread of Islam. About one thousand and thirty six cities were brought into the fold of Islam. More than four thousand Mosques were built. Roads and streets were fashioned and laid out. His leadership was characterized by selfless service, equity, justice, the provision of welfare and social amenities. Many new cities and towns were created. He left a political legacy that would make a good model for the leaders who would come after him.

### **3.7. His Virtues**

With the exception of Abubakar رضي الله عنه, Umar رضي الله عنه was ahead of all the Sahaba in terms of virtues and honour. He was among the very few lettered people who were able to read and write at the time – an advantage which he used to further develop the Islamic cause. As a Caliph who was first given the title of “*Amir al-Mu'minin*”, Umar رضي الله عنه championed the making of many progressive



administrative inputs; he introduced the Muslim Hijri calendar; employed judges; created government commissions and offices and made and distributed copies of the Qur'an to Muslim cities, provinces and towns.

Umar رضي الله عنه possessed a lot of distinctive qualities, honours and virtues. Below we outline a few among them: -

### **3.7.1. Islam Gained Strength with Umar's Conversion**

No sooner had Umar رضي الله عنه joined Islam than he insisted that Islam should be made public. Muslims were emboldened by the development to go round Makka city in a processional manner. Led by both Umar and Hamzah رضي الله عنه, they walked on the streets of Makka in order to display to the Quraysh that Islam had come of age.

### **3.7.2. The Dreams the Prophet ﷺ Had About Umar**

In the first dream, the Prophet ﷺ saw that people were being mobilized for him. Everyone was wearing a unique gown; some gowns were up to their chests while others below. The Prophet ﷺ then saw Umar رضي الله عنه coming and his long gown covered all his body and was even touching the ground. When the companions asked for the interpretation of the dream, the Prophet ﷺ replied that it [the long gown] was [the spirit of] "religion".<sup>75</sup> That was to say, Umar رضي الله عنه would be enveloped completely by Islam.

In the second dream, the Prophet ﷺ saw that a calabash full of milk was brought to him and he drank it to the fullest till the milk started spilling from his fingers. He then handed over the remainder to Umar رضي الله عنه. The Prophet ﷺ was asked about the dream and his interpretation was "That is knowledge".<sup>76</sup> In other words,

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<sup>75</sup> Muslim: 2390.

<sup>76</sup> Ibn Hajar, *Fat'h al-Bari* (7/47).

the remainder of the Prophet's milk, which Umar ؓ drank, symbolized the knowledge, which the latter would be endowed with.

In the third dream, the Prophet ﷺ saw himself in paradise. He saw a woman performing ablution under a big mansion. He asked about the owner of the mansion and was told that it belonged to Umar bin al-Khattab. The Prophet ﷺ said he remembered the possessiveness of Umar ؓ and, therefore, retreated. When Umar ؓ heard this, he cried out of joy and said, "O Allah's Messenger! How should I show my possessiveness on you?"<sup>77</sup>

In the fourth dream, the Prophet ﷺ saw himself drawing water from a well. Abubakar ؓ collected a pail and drew the water once or twice. Umar ؓ then collected the pail. The Prophet ﷺ said he had never seen a smart leader who drew [water] like him [Umar]; he kept drawing the water until all people and their camels were satisfied".<sup>78</sup> All the things that transpired in the dream had come to pass. After the Prophet's demise, Abubakar ؓ led for about two years and that represented the drawing of water twice. When Umar ؓ took over from him, he led for about 12 years and people reaped the yield of his just and selfless leadership until everybody became comfortable and satisfied. That was what was meant by him multiple drawing of water in the Prophet's dream.<sup>79</sup>

### **3.7.3. Umar ؓ was Feared by Satan**

Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas narrated that some young ladies were afraid and alarmed when they heard the steps of Umar coming. They quickly improved the tying of their

<sup>77</sup> Bukhari: 3679.

<sup>78</sup> Muslim: 2393.

<sup>79</sup> See Imam al-Nawawi's *al-Minhaj: Sharh Sahih Muslim bin al-Hajjaj* (15/161-162).

hijabs. The Prophet ﷺ commented, “O you Umar bin al-Khattab, I swear by the One in Whose Hand is my soul! Satan never meets you in a place except that he changes his way.”<sup>80</sup>

### 3.7.4. The Prophet’s Love to Umar

Amr bin al-As narrated that he asked the Prophet about the person he loved most among the people. The Prophet ﷺ replied, “A’isha”. Amr further said, among men. And the Prophet ﷺ replied, “Her father”. Amr then asked who was next after Abubakar. The Prophet ﷺ replied that it was Umar bin al-Khattab. He then enumerated some other people.<sup>81</sup>

### 3.7.5. The Prophet’s Supplication for Umar ﷺ

There was a time the Prophet ﷺ saw Umar wearing an elegant garment. He asked Umar, “Is this a new or washed one?” Umar ﷺ replied that it was washed. The Prophet ﷺ then made the supplication, “May Allah give you a new one, allow you to live in affluence and make you die as a martyr.”<sup>82</sup>

### 3.7.6. Umar was Given Glad Tidings

Abu Musa al-Ash’ari ﷺ narrated that he was one day together with the Prophet ﷺ inside one of the gardens in Madina. Someone came and sought for a permission to enter. The Prophet ﷺ told Abu Musa to open for the man and then give him the glad tidings of paradise. When the door was opened, the man was Abubakar ﷺ. Another person came and the Prophet ﷺ ordered that the door

<sup>80</sup> Bukhari: 3683 & Muslim: 2386. See also *Fat’h al-Bari* (7/47-48) and Nawawi’s *al-Minhaj* (15/165-167).

<sup>81</sup> Bukhari: 4100 and Muslim: 2384.

<sup>82</sup> Albani’s *Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah*. Hadith no. 352 & *Sahih al-Jami’*, Hadith no. 1234.

should be opened for him and he should be informed of the glad tidings to enter paradise. When the door was opened, it was Umar رضي الله عنه. Then another man came and the Prophet ﷺ ordered that the door should be opened for him and be given the glad tidings of paradise after a certain disaster that would befall him. When the door was opened, it was Usman.<sup>83</sup>

### 3.7.7. Qur'anic Endorsements of Umar's Views

In many instances, Qur'anic verses were revealed to support and endorse the views that Umar رضي الله عنه held. A few examples will be relevant here. Umar advised the Prophet ﷺ to take *Maqam Ibrahim* as a place to perform Salat. Quickly, Allah sent down a verse affirming this advice.<sup>84</sup> He also advised the Prophet ﷺ not to conduct funeral prayer for the remains of *Munafiqun* (Hypocrites) and soon the Qur'an affirmed his position.<sup>85</sup> It was also Umar رضي الله عنه who recommended the Prophet ﷺ to stop men from entering his house and Allah revealed a verse in the Qur'an with an instruction to that effect.<sup>86</sup> In the aftermath of the Battle of Badr, Umar suggested that all the Quraysh prisoners should be executed and the opinion was preferred by Allah, the Almighty.<sup>87</sup> When Umar's daughter, Hafsa رضي الله عنها and the rest of the Prophet's wives had some misunderstanding with their husband, Umar warned and cautioned them against their action, pointing out that if they did not desist, Allah would replace them and marry off better women to His Messenger. Instantly, a revelation came affirming exactly the threat advanced by Umar.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Bukhari: 3290.

<sup>84</sup> Surah al-Baqarah: 125.

<sup>85</sup> Surah al-Taubah: 84.

<sup>86</sup> Surah al-Ahzab: 53.

<sup>87</sup> Surah al-Anfal: 67-68.

<sup>88</sup> Surah al-Tahrim: 5.

All these instances further point to the intelligence, sharpness and closeness of Umar رضي الله عنه to Allah, the Almighty.

### 3.7.8. Umar was an Inspired Man

A hadith was narrated in which the Prophet ﷺ said, “Among the nations (who lived) before you there were *Muhaddathun* (people who were inspired, though they were not Prophets). And if there is any of such a person amongst my followers, it is 'Umar’”.<sup>89</sup> That was why whenever he spoke, it was found to be accurate since he was divinely inspired.<sup>90</sup>

### 3.7.9. Umar as an In-Law of the Prophet ﷺ

Umar's daughter, Hafsa رضي الله عنها was widowed by Khunais bin Huzafa.<sup>91</sup> He proposed to Usman to marry her. But the plan did not work. Usman told him pointblank that he was not prepared for an additional wife at the time. He then requested Abubakar رضي الله عنه but the latter kept mute and did not even voice a word. Umar was in that condition when all of a sudden a word came that the Prophet ﷺ was seeking for her hand in marriage. Umar was greatly elated. Abubakar رضي الله عنه later told Umar رضي الله عنه that he had prior knowledge about the Prophet's plan to marry her and that was why he chose not to either divulge the Prophet's secret or attempt to compete with him in seeking for her hand in marriage. Abubakar رضي الله عنه confirmed to Umar رضي الله عنه that had the Prophet ﷺ changed his mind; he would have definitely accepted the offer.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Bukhari: 3689 and Muslim: 2398.

<sup>90</sup> See Ibn Hajar's *Fat'h al-Bari* (7/50), Nawawi's *al-Minhaj* (15/166) and Ibn al-Qayyim's *Miftah Dar al-Sa'adah* (1/255).

<sup>91</sup> He was also a companion of the Prophet ﷺ. He died in Madina.

<sup>92</sup> Bukhari: 5122.

Secondly, when Umar رضي الله عنه became the Caliph, he expressed interest in marrying Umm Kulsum bint Ali bin Abi Talib. Her mother, Fatima عليها السلام died while she was still a baby. Ali رضي الله عنه explained to Umar رضي الله عنه that the initial plan was to marry her off to her cousin, Abdullah bin Ja'far. But when Umar رضي الله عنه persisted and pleaded with Ali رضي الله عنه that he had no ambition worthier than having a marital tie with the Prophet's relation, having understood his excuse, Ali رضي الله عنه finally married her off to him.<sup>93</sup> This gesture further strengthened the spirit of love and brotherhood between Caliph Umar رضي الله عنه and Ali رضي الله عنه. Umar had earlier hoped that his daughter's marriage with the Prophet ﷺ would perpetuate the tie. But she did not give birth to any child for the Prophet ﷺ. However, Umm Kulsum gave birth to two of Umar's children; Zaid<sup>94</sup> and Ruqayyah.<sup>95</sup>

### 3.7.10. The Prophet ﷺ Sending Gifts to Umar رضي الله عنه

Abdullah bin Umar chronicled that his father saw someone carrying a very elegant garment made with *al-Harir*. He took it and went to the Prophet ﷺ and advised him to buy it, so that he would wear it when guests came for audience with him. The Prophet ﷺ told him that the type of garment was mainly worn by those who were spiritually wretched. One day, the Prophet ﷺ sent a gift of a garment similarly made with *al-Harir* to Umar رضي الله عنه. The latter took the garment and came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, "O Allah's Messenger! How could you send this to

<sup>93</sup> After the demise of Umar bin al-Khattab رضي الله عنه, Umm Kulsum was married to Aun bin Ja'far and after his death she was married to his brother Muhammad bin Ja'far who also died. She was finally married to Abdullah bin Ja'far and she died as his wife. He then married her younger sister Zainab.

<sup>94</sup> Zaid used to boast of the glory that he was the son of two Caliphs; Umar رضي الله عنه as his direct biological father and Caliph Ali through Umm Kulsum. See for details *Tarikh Dimashq* (19/485).

<sup>95</sup> Majlisi, *Mir'at al-Uqul*, a Shi'ite source (2/45).

me despite your [earlier] statement on its type?" The Prophet ﷺ answered, "I have sent it to you so that you may sell it and get some profit". Umar, therefore, sent it as a gift to one of his relatives in Makka, who until then did not embrace Islam.<sup>96</sup>

On one occasion when the Prophet ﷺ would give a gift to him, Umar would ask him to extend the gift to others, who were more needful than him. The Prophet ﷺ would tell him, "O Umar! When you are given wealth without you being desirous or asking for it, take it. But anything other than this, do not invest your interest in it".<sup>97</sup>

### **3.8. Umar رضى الله عنه in the Eyes of His Subjects**

Umar رضى الله عنه was characteristically a distinguishable personality in the eyes of all his subjects. He was held with both respect and in fear. Yet, due to the concern and care he showed toward the welfare of his subjects, people enjoyed the dividends of leadership during his time. He did his best to ensure their wellbeing, security and economic growth and prosperity. There was a time a woman abruptly miscarried when she learnt that a case involving her was appealed to him. Umar رضى الله عنه consulted the Sahaba on this misfortune caused by the woman's fear of him. After hearing all their views, Umar reclined to juristic opinion of Ali bin Abi Talib رضى الله عنه, who judged that the former should atone by giving the blood-money of the lost foetus.

Perhaps one would not much wonder about the women's predicament when we take into cognizance the reports indicating that great Sahaba like Zubair bin al-Awwam رضى الله عنه and Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas رضى الله عنه used to go to Umar

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<sup>96</sup> Muslim: 2068. Umar's son Abdullah also received similar gesture from the Prophet ﷺ of a gift of a horse. See Bukhari: 2009.

<sup>97</sup> Bukhari: 1473 & Muslim 1045.

with an intention of telling him something but would return without being able to do that due to his respectable valour. Abdullah bin Umar رضي الله عنه spent a year always wanting to ask his father about a certain Qur'anic verse, but he could not. It was reported that one day, Umar was having his haircut and he coughed. Out of fear, the barber's clipper fell from his hand and he farted. However, Umar رضي الله عنه used to feel worrisome about the way he was feared by people. He often said, "O Allah! You are aware that I fear you more than they fear me".

### **3.9. His Leadership Style**

Umar's leadership was generally acknowledged for championing the cause and plight of the masses. He was always determined to ensure the welfare of the subjects. As a president and commander in chief of the Muslim army, Umar had the habit of carrying out night patrol in order to inspect the city and monitor what was going on among people. On some of such night patrols, Umar رضي الله عنه apprehended some people with suspicious moves who were trying to unleash havoc against the city. He also during the night vigil tried to find out if there was a traveler or stranger who had no accommodation so that he would be provided with one.<sup>98</sup> Most of the times, Umar رضي الله عنه would come across people who were in need of assistance. For instance, he found a stranger with a pregnant wife in labour. Umar رضي الله عنه instantly returned to his house and asked his wife, Umm Kulsum bint Ali, to take the necessary things and go and assist the woman. He

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<sup>98</sup> This may be the origin of the security process of night patrol. During The Caliphate of Abubakar رضي الله عنه, Abdullah bin Mas'ud was the person assigned to carry the patrol. But during his time, Umar رضي الله عنه used to carry out the patrol himself in company of his personal assistant Aslam and at other times with his friend Abdurrahman bin Awf.



personally followed her with some foodstuff and prepared meals for them.<sup>99</sup>

The patrols also drew the attention of Umar's administration to introduce some reforms and changes in government policies. A few examples may be relevant here. The Caliph introduced a rule that no Muslim soldier who went for Jihad would exceed four months without coming back to see his family. The rule came about as a result of a woman whose husband was away for Jihad for months. While patrolling the city of Madina, Caliph Umar رضي الله عنه overheard the woman expressing her grief over the absence of her husband, who was in the battlefield, for months.<sup>100</sup>

The Caliph also reviewed and expanded his citizens' allowance scheme, which was hitherto given to all subjects, including children who passed the stage of breastfeeding. One day, Umar رضي الله عنه was going round the city at night and observed that one child was incessantly crying. When he inquired what was amiss, he learned that the child's mother had weaned him before right time, so that he would be entitled to the citizen's allowance. Umar رضي الله عنه, therefore, reviewed the scheme to accommodate all citizens, including unweaned children.<sup>101</sup>

As part of Umar's reforms for security and moral aptitude, Nasr bin al-Hajjaj was exiled from Madina city to Basra because he heard some ladies talking immodestly about him. When Umar رضي الله عنه investigated, he found out that Nasr was a handsome and charming young man.

Besides, at the end of every prayer, Umar رضي الله عنه would stay in the Mosque in order to attend to people's needs or go and monitor activities at the market to ensure equity and

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<sup>99</sup> Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah* (7/140).

<sup>100</sup> Ibn al-Jauzi, *Manaqib Amir al-Mu'minin Umar bin al-Khattab*, p. 89.

<sup>101</sup> Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah* (7/140).

justice. There was a time Umar met a man selling milk at an unusual price and decided to have the man either sell at the market price or be expelled. Umar رضي الله عنه also directed that whoever did not have the essential Islamic knowledge of commercial transactions should not engage in trade.<sup>102</sup>

### 3.10. Umar's Love and Concern for *Ahl al-Bait* (The household of the Prophet ﷺ)

Anyone conversant with Islamic history knows that Umar رضي الله عنه as well as other Sahaba loved the Prophet ﷺ and the entire members of his household. One day, Umar رضي الله عنه told Fatima, رضي الله عنها, "O you, the daughter of Allah's Messenger! There was none that we loved on this earth more than your father and after him we love none like you."<sup>103</sup>

It is imperative to note that the Sahaba's love for the Prophet was beyond mouth-utterances. It was translated by their actions as exemplified below: -

Al-Mar'ashi, one of the Shi'ite scholars, narrated that one day many garments were brought to Caliph Umar bin al-Khattab رضي الله عنه from Yemen. After he distributed them all, people dressed in their new garments and began trooping to him in *Rawdha* where he was sitting for people to greet him. He saw Hasan رضي الله عنه and Husain رضي الله عنه coming from their home without the new clothes. Umar رضي الله عنه became furious and when he inquired he was told that none of the new clothes had fitted them. He instantly dispatched a messenger to the Yemen provincial Governor, instructing him to earnestly avail two pieces of clothes that would fit both Hasan رضي الله عنه and his brother, Husain رضي الله عنه. Umar رضي الله عنه regained his comfort only after the clothes were brought

<sup>102</sup> Al-Sallabi, Muhammad Ali. *Fasl al-Khitab fi Sirat Amir al-Mu'minin Umar bin al-Khattab*. Cairo: Dar al-Fajr, p. 200-201.

<sup>103</sup> See Ibn Asakir's *Tarikh Dimashq* (42/166), Khatib al-Baghdadi's *Tarikh Baghdad* (7/452). For Shi'ite sources also, see Mahdi Faqih Imani's *al-Imam Ali fi Aara' al-Khulafa'*, p. 65.

and worn by the two grandsons of the Prophet ﷺ. He remarked, "It is only now that I feel calm".<sup>104</sup>

Umar رضي الله عنه gave a similar gift to Ali bin Abi Talib رضي الله عنه. Ali was once asked about a certain garment which he frequently wore. He replied that "It was given to me by my intimate friend, Umar. Whoever purifies his heart for Allah's sake, Allah will make him pure". Ali could not help crying after his reply.<sup>105</sup>

In our book, "*Su Wane ne Masoyan Ahlul Baiti?*" [Who are the Real Lovers of Ahlul Bait?], we have explained the gracious concern, high regards and favourable treatment which the members of the Prophetic household had got during the leadership of Caliph Umar رضي الله عنه. For instance, in the social welfare scheme introduced by Umar رضي الله عنه, which paid monthly allowances to all citizens, Umar رضي الله عنه reserved a special additional favour to *Ahl al-Bait* more than any other person or group.

"According to this scheme, with the exception of the Prophet's wives and his uncle, Abbas, Ali had the greatest share. The Caliph's allowance was meanwhile below that of the members of the Prophetic household."

"While going through the registers of the scheme, with the specific amount or share of each beneficiary, Umar رضي الله عنه found out that Hasan رضي الله عنه and Husain رضي الله عنه were placed on a scale similar to other children of the Sahaba. Each received 2000 dirhams. Caliph Umar رضي الله عنه upgraded their steps and increased the amount from 2000 to 5000 dirhams like that of their father. The Caliph confirmed that the favour was due to their closeness with the Prophet ﷺ."<sup>106</sup>

<sup>104</sup> Al-Mar'ashi, *Ihqaq al-Haqq* (33/430).

<sup>105</sup> Ibn Abi Shaibah, *al-Musannaf* (12/29).

<sup>106</sup> Al-Ya'qubi, *al-Tarikh* (2/153), Ibn Sa'ad, *al-Tabaqat* (3/213-214), Abu Yusuf, *al-Kharaj*, p. 43-44.

“When Caliph Umar bin al-Khattab رضي الله عنه increased 500 dirhams to the allowance of Usamah bin Zaid رضي الله عنه, Abdullah bin Umar رضي الله عنه (the son of Caliph Umar) complained about his allowance. He pointed out that since Usamah رضي الله عنه was his peer, there should be no distinction between them. Umar رضي الله عنه responded that he favoured Usamah رضي الله عنه because the Prophet ﷺ loved him more than Abdullah just as he loved Usamah’s father Zaid رضي الله عنه more than Umar رضي الله عنه himself.”<sup>107</sup>

Similarly, Umar رضي الله عنه favoured A’isha رضي الله عنها, over other wives of the Prophet, including his daughter, Hafsa رضي الله عنها. The rationale behind this in Umar’s view was the Prophet’s special love and regard for her. However, A’isha رضي الله عنها herself rejected the special offer and told Umar رضي الله عنه that the Prophet ﷺ treated his wives equally on this regard. Consequently, Umar رضي الله عنه rescinded it and put them on the same allowance scale.

Likewise, the same thing can be said with regards to other relatives of the Prophet ﷺ, Umar treated them generously and always brought them near to him. Despite the fact that Abdullah bin Abbas رضي الله عنه was relatively young, Umar رضي الله عنه used to draw him nearer and consult him on personal and state affairs. When Umar رضي الله عنه was challenged about this, he replied that when a child washed his hands, he could eat with kings.

Earlier, during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ, Umar رضي الله عنه had some disagreement with Abbas رضي الله عنه, the Prophet’s uncle, after the conquest of Makka. In the opinion of Umar رضي الله عنه, all the Quraysh captives should be executed since they invested efforts in bringing down the Prophet’s mission. However, Abbas رضي الله عنه reckoned that they should be pardoned. After the exchange of a few words, the latter grew angry and alleged “Is it because they are not your

<sup>107</sup> Ibn Taimiyyah, *Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah* (3/172-173).

relatives?” Umar رضي الله عنه replied that, “I recognize no clannish affiliation over Islam. I swear by Allah, when you joined Islam, I was happier more than if it were my father who did because I know the Prophet ﷺ would be extremely glad with your conversion to Islam.”<sup>108</sup>

Caliph Umar رضي الله عنه used to favour and prefer the Prophet’s relatives over his members of his own household and relatives. Here is a narration to buttress the points: -

One day Umar رضي الله عنه sent someone to call al-Shifa’ bint Abdullah رضي الله عنها, one of his relatives. On her way, she met another woman, Atika bint Usaid رضي الله عنها and so they both approached Umar رضي الله عنه. When Umar رضي الله عنه saw them coming, he brought two veils, a small one and a big one. He gave the big one to Atika and the small one to Shifa’. The latter did not conceal her dissatisfaction over the preferential treatment. She complained why a woman who came on her own should be treated more favourably than his own relative, who came on his invitation. Umar رضي الله عنه explained to her that he initially intended to give her the two veils but when he saw Atikah رضي الله عنها, and remembered her closeness with the Prophet ﷺ, he realized that she deserved the bigger one. He then asked her to be patient.<sup>109</sup>

From these accounts, one will understand the reason why members of the Prophet’s household liked Umar رضي الله عنه. To clear some doubts, it is good to illustrate by giving a list of ten men from among the descendents of Ali رضي الله عنه, who were all named after Umar رضي الله عنه: -

1. Umar al-Ashraf bin Ali
2. Umar al-Asgar bin Ali
3. Umar bin al-Hasan bin Ali

<sup>108</sup> Ibrahim, Muhammad Mansur, *Su Wane Masoyan Ahlul Bait*. Jos, Al-Ihsan Publishers, 2006, p. 76-79.

<sup>109</sup> Ibn Hajar, *al-Isabah* (4/25).

4. Umar bin al-Husain bin Ali
5. Umar bin Hasan bin Hasan bin Ali
6. Umar bin Ali bin Husain bin Ali
7. Umar bin Musa al-Kazim bin Ali
8. Umar bin Muhammad bin Umar al-Ashraf bin Ali
9. Umar bin al-Hasan bin al-Aftas bin Ali
10. Umar bin al-Husain bin Zaid bin Husain bin Ali<sup>110</sup>

Beside that, there are also marital ties between them and many narrations reported within both Umar and Ali's households speak on the virtues of each of them. The foregoing further refutes the Shi'ite claims about the alleged mutual animosity between them.

### **3.11. The Economic and Financial Policy of Umar Administration**

As a Caliph, Umar رضي الله عنه managed matters that were related to the treasury, finance, economy and other forms of wealth meticulously. He did not give room for himself and his family to assume that his position was a source for luxurious life and enjoyment at the expense of the poor masses. Below are some few reports about his restraints on wealth-related matters.

- a. Umar رضي الله عنه used to put the official lamp off when he was through with public activities and light his private lamp when doing his personal activities.
- b. There was a time when the personal assistant to Umar رضي الله عنه gave him some milk, which Umar thought came from his personal camels. When he later realized that the milk was from public camels, he could not but seek juristic verdict from

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<sup>110</sup> For details see a Shi'ite book of Sayyid Husain al-Zarbati: *al-Jaridah fi Usul al-Ansab* (1/207). Among the Sunni books see: Sayyid bin Ahmad Ibrahim: *al-Asma' wa al-Musaharat bain Ahl al-Bait wa al-Sahaba*, p. 24.

- his in-law, Ali bin Abi Talib رضي الله عنه, who judged that there was no sin on him.
- c. When Umar رضي الله عنه learnt that his son's camels were being tended together with state-owned camels at the public orchard, he instantly stopped that and ordered his son to return all the camels born by his initial camels during their stay at the orchard.
  - d. Umm Kulsum bint Ali, the wife of Umar, one day sent a gift of some perfume to the Byzantine emperor's wife through a messenger, who was dispatched to deliver a letter by the Caliph. The messenger returned and brought some token gifts from the emperor's wife. Umar رضي الله عنه ordered that the token be returned to the treasury since the messenger was employed by the government. Not satisfied with Umar's decision, she appealed the case to her father, Ali bin Abi Talib رضي الله عنه, who eventually endorsed the judgment of Umar رضي الله عنه, though he advised that she might be compensated with something to the value of her initial gift.
  - e. Umar رضي الله عنه used to disallow his wives to use the surplus of whatever was distributed to people like perfume, oil, etc. In his opinion, his wives did not have the right to use them.

### **3.12. Umar's Policy on Appointing Public Officers**

Competence was one basic criterion that Umar رضي الله عنه consider when appointing public officer. Many a times, the Caliph would appoint men, who in people's eyes were people of low influence, to a certain position once they possessed the competence to discharge the task more than others. Before he finally appointed someone, he would subject him to some aptitude test in order to ascertain his eligibility. For example, he called Ahnaf bin Qais and asked him to live in Madina for about a year. Finally, he

told him that he was satisfied with his competence and fitness to undertake a task and could vouch for his eligibility. He consequently appointed Ahnaf as Governor.

Another story that further explicates his meritocratic policy of appointment is that of Shuraih al-Qadhi (the Judge). The story goes thus;

One day, Caliph Umar رضي الله عنه hired a horse from one of his subjects. He told the man that two of them (Umar and his friend) would mount on it. The horse was too weak to endure carrying two men. Nevertheless, the man consented perhaps out of courtesy to the Caliph. After all, if anything happened, the man hoped, Umar could understandably compensate him. However, the man was perceptively wrong. When the horse failed, Umar رضي الله عنه told the man to take away his horse. The man claimed damages and Umar رضي الله عنه did not agree. When they could not reconcile, Umar رضي الله عنه advised him to look for someone to judge over the issue. The man named Shuraih, one of the prominent and learned men among the Tabi'un. After some investigation, Shuraih passed a verdict that Umar رضي الله عنه must compensate for the damages caused to the man's horse. Consequently, upon consideration of Shuraih's fearlessness and the investigative steps he took before passing the verdict and the courage he summoned not to rule in favour of the Caliph, Umar رضي الله عنه instantly appointed him as a judge. Therefore, Shuraih became the first appointed full-fledged and full time judge in Islamic history.<sup>111</sup>

Caliph Umar رضي الله عنه used to make consultations on whom to assign for a certain responsibility. When he approved to appoint somebody as a Governor, an appointment letter,

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<sup>111</sup> Waki'u bin Jarrah: *Akhbar al-Qudhat*, Beirut, Alam al-Kutub, vol. 2. P. 189.





stamped and signed by the Caliph, would be issued to him. The letter clearly indicated the conditions of service and other clauses related to the assignment. On the day the letter would be handed over to the new Governor, Umar رضي الله عنه would invite some people to witness the occasion. In a modern age, this resembled the inauguration ceremony in order to swear in the Governor to assume his new duties.

Umar رضي الله عنه used to appoint a leader to people from among themselves. He did not appoint someone to lead people who did not have their socio-cultural and geographical experiences. He preferred to appoint a learned individual so that he would teach people. Compassion was another point that was considered when appointing someone during Umar's administration. That was why he refused to appoint someone from Banu Sulaim when the man confessed that he had never kissed any of his children.

As a condition to work under his government, Umar رضي الله عنه prohibited all Governors from engaging in trade and other occupational ventures. According to the Caliph, that would warrant them to present themselves in a position of bargaining and conciliation that would negatively affect their administrative activities. Their courage to establish equity and justice among their subjects would be drastically influenced. Therefore, he would at times send memos to provincial Governors and other appointees to remind them of their terms of reference and statutory responsibilities of establishing justice, equity and honesty among their subjects.

### **3.13. Caliph Umar رضي الله عنه and His Provincial Governors**

Provincial Governors who were appointed by Caliph Umar رضي الله عنه had greatly helped in the triumph and progress of his leadership. Most of them subscribed to his policy of

observing restraint on issues related to wealth. Thus, they largely held a mystic life. Umar's policy of accountability dictated that all the assets of a Governor should be counted when assuming duty and when leaving office. When his assets were found to have increased due to trade and other occupational ventures, it would be duly confiscated and returned to the public treasury.

Caliph Umar issued a circular in which all Governors were instructed to attend the Hajj with their subjects so that a sort of annual town hall meeting would be held. As such, the masses would have the opportunity to have audience with the Caliph and lodge their complaints to him. Umar رضي الله عنه used to tell the Governors, "I have not appointed you to accumulate their wealth or humiliate them or shed their blood. I have sent you in order to establish Salat among them, teach them about their religion and judge between them with fairness". He used to encourage the subjects that they had the right to appeal any case to him on anything, including matters regarding the way they were treated by their Governors.

On the other hand, Umar رضي الله عنه never tolerated insubordination and disloyalty of the subjects toward their Governors. Governors and other public officers were given their due regard and respect. No belittling or downgrading of leaders was accommodated.

### **3.14. Jihad and Spread of Islam During Umar Administration**

Caliph Umar رضي الله عنه exerted his effort to ensure that all the Jihad expeditions which started during his predecessor Abubakar رضي الله عنه were accomplished during his time. The Jihad activities were divided according to geographical focus; one division headed the eastern territories, which comprised Iraq and the Persian provinces, towns and cities. The other concentrated on the western countries



which by then included (but were not limited to) Syria, Egypt and Libya.

Many eastern cities were brought to the fold of Islam, such as Kaskar, Sabat, Mada'in (the capital of the Persian Empire), Jalula, Tustar, Jundi-Sabur and Nahawand. Others included Hamadhan, Rayy (Tehran), Qums, Jurjan, Tabaristan (Mazandran), Azerbaijan and Khorasan. All these regions and cities were formerly fiefs under the Persian Empire led by Chosreau. Other regions that were turned to Islam included Turkish territories, such as Istakhr, Fasa, Dura-Bijird, Koraman, Sijistan, Makaran and other Kurdistan territories.

Meanwhile, in the west Muslims defeated the Syrian cities, which comprised Damascus, Fihl, Bisan, Tabaria, Hims, Qinnisrin, Ceisaria and Jerusalem. They were under the Byzantine Empire. With Allah's support, Muslims won all these places and carried the light of Islam there during the Caliphate of Umar bin al-Khattab رضي الله عنه. Egypt, the second largest vassalage of the Byzantine Empire, was also won by the Muslims. All the Egyptian cities within their territories were defeated. From there, the Muslim troops marched further to Barqa' and Tripoli where they got enormous victory and the cities were brought into the fold of Islam.

From the foregoing, one can see that Umar's leadership conquered the two world super-powers, Byzantine and Persian empires, which were feared for years because of their incomparable military might. During his leadership, Islam grew and went as far as China and other parts of the world. Thus, the Islamic Caliphate became the strongest and most influential super-power. As such, all ethnic, racial, tribal, geographical and cultural jingoism that characterized the socio-religious life of people were abolished. People became free to practice their religion and lead a comfortable life under Islamic administration.

### **3.15. The Military Tactics and Strategies of Umar's Administration**

During the turbulent years in which Muslims engaged their enemies in battles and wars, as Commander-in-Chief Umar رضي الله عنه used to give directives from Madina. For accuracy, he would require for a map, so that he would have the graphic picture of the position of the Muslim army. When he sent an expedition, Umar made constant follow-ups and established strong contacts with commanders on the updates of the wars. At times, he would even go to the outskirts of the city to ask caravans approaching Madina of news related to the condition of the army.<sup>112</sup>

Umar رضي الله عنه used to emphasize on appointing pious, determined, patient, perseverant, tactical, intelligent, brave and far-sighted men when making an appointment of a commander. His military wisdom can further be discerned from his abrupt removal of Khalid bin Walid رضي الله عنه from leading the command no sooner than the former had assumed office. Khalid رضي الله عنه had been leading the Muslim military command since the Prophet's time and

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<sup>112</sup> It was reported that the herald dispatched by Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas the commander of Muslim forces at Qadisiyyah, came to Madina and was at the outskirts of the city, asked by Umar رضي الله عنه about the update of the war. Not knowing that it was Umar, the messenger gave a hurried answer that Allah had destroyed the Kuffar and said he would give details in the presence of Amir al-Mu'minin. Umar followed the man inquisitively asking for specific details and the man was giving answer while riding his horse, trying to reach the heart of Madina to get the Caliph. The man only discovered that it was the Caliph who had been all along following him when he saw people greeting and saluting the Amir al-Mu'minin. He then alighted from the horse and asked for forgiveness. Umar رضي الله عنه said the messenger did not commit any sin. He then requested for details. See Tabari's *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk* (4/408).

through the period of Abubakar رضي الله عنه. He had a very good, unique and successful military record throughout all these years. Muslim historians have given a number of opinions on the rationale behind Umar's decision to remove him. Some believed that Umar رضي الله عنه was afraid and uncomfortable with the way people were holding Khalid رضي الله عنه to the extent of suggesting that without him as a commander, victory would be hardly got. In order to bring people back to their faith, Umar رضي الله عنه removed Khalid رضي الله عنه at a very critical moment, so that people would know that with or without Khalid رضي الله عنه, victory would come only from God.

In any case, Khalid رضي الله عنه was removed from leading the command and was replaced with Abu Ubaidah. Upon taking the lead of the command, Abu Ubaidah divided the duty of leading the Muslim platoons and smaller commands to some of the Muslim soldiers. He chose Khalid رضي الله عنه to lead some of the platoons alongside other commanders like Yazid bin Abi Sufyan, Shurahbil bin Hasanah and Habib bin Maslamah. Meanwhile, as the overall commander, Abu Ubaidah oversaw all the military activities. On his part, Khalid رضي الله عنه did not show any sign of indignation over the development. He did not for once refuse to cooperate to the success of the expeditions. His mission was to get the pleasure of Allah and promote the cause of Islam.

### **3.16. Some Lessons from the Jihad Expeditions**

#### **Lesson 1: Unity among the Sahaba**

The enormous success recorded during the battles fought by Umar administration was a product of sustained unity and cooperation; every one contributed his quota and complied with the directive of the Caliph. For example, among the Muslim forces who attended the Battle of Qadisiyya, there were over seventy Sahaba among those

who attended the Battle of Badr, over three hundred Sahaba who attended *Bai'at al-Ridhwan*, over three hundred Sahaba who participated in the conquest of Makka and over seven hundred children of the Sahaba. This can explain the competence, skills, bravery and experience the Muslim forces had demonstrated in the Battle of Qadisiyya, which culminated to the defeat of Persian forces.

### **Lesson 2: Bravery, Honesty and Conviction**

In all the series of the battles fought during the leadership of Umar رضي الله عنه, Muslims demonstrated a strong determination and perseverance. The Persians were extremely shocked and thus demoralized when they saw Muslim soldiers crossing River Tigris without any watercraft. History will never forget the roles played by warriors, such as Qa'qa' bin Amr and Nu'man bin Miqrin in the battles of Nahawand and Tustar.

In terms of honesty and accountability, Caliph Umar رضي الله عنه himself had to salute all the commanders because of the humongous amount of booty they sent to Madina. The Caliph رضي الله عنه was glad and satisfied with the honesty and integrity of the commanders. Among the booty were the exorbitant swords and golden belt of Chosreau, the Persian emperor, as well as other elegant and expensive assets and riches accumulated from both the Byzantine and Persian empires. In all the battles, the dedication and patriotism of the Sahaba and their disciples toward the service of Islam were demonstrated. In an incidence where a Muazzin (caller to prayer) was dead and quite a number of people competed to replace his service to the extent that voting had to be conducted.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Tabari, *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk* (4/390).

**3.17. The Demise of Umar bin al-Khattab رضي الله عنه**

In the 23<sup>rd</sup> year after Hijra, Umar رضي الله عنه had a dream in which he saw a cock striking him twice. He narrated the story to a prominent dream interpreter, Asma' bint Umais, the widow of Abubakar رضي الله عنه, who later married Ali bin Abi Talib رضي الله عنه. She interpreted that someone among the non-Arabs (*ajam*) would assassinate him.

Though it was the policy during the leadership of Caliph Umar رضي الله عنه that no mature male unbeliever was allowed to live in Madina, Umar granted this request of the Governor of Kufa, al-Mughira bin Shu'bah. The latter requested to send Abu Lu'lu'ah, one of the skillful persons among the Persians, to Madina. The young man, still non-Muslim, was competent and good at some handwork like smithery, carpentry, drawing, painting, etc.

Little after his landing in Madina, Abu Lu'luah clamoured for the Caliph to reduce the amount of money he was taxed by his master, al-Mughirah. Umar رضي الله عنه asked him how much he paid annually. He answered that it was a hundred dirhams. Umar رضي الله عنه asked about his occupation and he replied, "Smithery, carpentry and painting". Umar رضي الله عنه told him that the amount was not much, but nevertheless ordered that it be reduced. Umar رضي الله عنه never knew that the man was all along an agent of the devil.

At the dawn of the 26<sup>th</sup> of Zul-Hijjah in 23<sup>rd</sup> year AH, while leading the morning prayer inside the Mosque of the Prophet ﷺ, there was sobering silence heard. Alas! It was Abu Lu'lu'ah's actions. He had stabbed Caliph Umar رضي الله عنه many times. Umar in cold blood dragged Abdurrahman bin Awf to continue leading the prayer. While trying to escape, Abu Lu'lu'ah stabbed more people and in the end a robe was thrown over him. It wrapped him. Knowing fully well that he could not escape, he stabbed himself with the same knife and soon died.

After he recovered from coma, Umar's first question was, "Have people prayed?" He was replied in the affirmative. He remarked that there was no good for one who did not pray. He asked Abdullah bin Abbas who his assassin was and was told that it was the Persian Zoroastrian. Umar رضي الله عنه thanked God for not letting the burden of his murder be shouldered on someone who had ever performed Salat. For about three times, Umar رضي الله عنه tried to pray after he had performed ablution, but could not because of the pain. It was in the third attempt that he was able to say his last prayer.

Before the arrival of a doctor, people did not think that Umar رضي الله عنه would pass away because of the tragedy. The doctor came and gave him some medication, which reacted by coming out through the places on which Umar رضي الله عنه was stabbed. On seeing that, the doctor advised that Umar رضي الله عنه should make his will. Soon people present began crying but Umar رضي الله عنه barred them and reminded them of the Prophet's Hadith that "The deceased is punished when his bereaved cry for him".

The elderly Sahaba had gathered near Umar رضي الله عنه, consoling and sympathizing with him. They reminded him of his righteous deeds, closeness with the Prophet ﷺ and his just and selfless leadership. Thus, Umar رضي الله عنه was more touched by the pleasant remarks of Abdullah bin Abbas رضي الله عنه. Umar رضي الله عنه asked him if he could bear witness before Allah on the remarks. Ali bin Abi Talib رضي الله عنه encouraged Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه to say "Yes". Umar رضي الله عنه said that what he was only after was to get the reward of his Jihad with the Prophet ﷺ, while on the leadership burden, if he scaled through with neither a reward nor sin it would be fine".<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Righteous and pious people usually do not boast about their deeds but rather feel fearful of slipping or doing the deeds not in an actual



Abdullah bin Abbas رضي الله عنه narrated that “At the time Umar’s dead body was put on the bier, people surrounded it and prayed for him. Somebody came and put his hand on my shoulder. When I looked back, I found it was Ali bin Abi Talib, who prayed for Umar and then lamented, “There is none among the living that I would like to meet Allah with record similar to the record of his deeds like you. May Allah join you with your both friends (The Prophet and Abubakar). I have several times heard the Prophet ﷺ say, “I have gone together with Abubakar and Umar. I have entered together with Abubakar and Umar. I have come out together with Abubakar and Umar.”<sup>115</sup>

Before his death, Umar رضي الله عنه had ordered his son, Abdullah رضي الله عنه, to count the number of debts he owed people. Abdullah told him that they reached 86,000 dirhams. Umar رضي الله عنه then asked him to auction all his belongings and settle the debts with the money. If the debts could not yet be settled, Abdullah should seek the support of the Banu Adiyy clan. If they could not yet settle the debts, then he should seek the support of the Qurasyh, but not beyond that. Umar رضي الله عنه then sent his son to seek for permission from A’isha رضي الله عنها to be buried in her room close to his two companions. A’isha رضي الله عنها was very sympathetic and compassionate for Umar رضي الله عنه and instantly she granted the request, despite her initial plan for her to be buried near her husband and father. On hearing that, Umar رضي الله عنه asked his son, before conveying his dead body to the grave, to seek for her permission again, in case she would change her mind. In that case, therefore, Umar رضي الله عنه should be taken to the ordinary Muslim cemetery.

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and perfect way as it is required. Their description is given in Surah al-Mu’minin: 60.

<sup>115</sup> Bukhari: 3685.

It was in that situation that a young man came to register his sympathy with Umar رضي الله عنه. He prayed for Umar رضي الله عنه and prepared to leave. Umar رضي الله عنه observed that the young man's clothing was below his ankle. He instantly drew his attention to take up his clothes above his ankle, noting that, "It is closer to neatness and also more compatible with Allah's pleasure".

Allahu Akbar! Such were the great men. Despite the traumatic and painful condition, Umar رضي الله عنه could not be prevented from admonition and guiding others to the way of Allah. Successful and prosperous though his administration was, here was Umar dying and leaving back a backlog of debts to the tune of 86,000 dirhams.<sup>116</sup>

In the evening, having learnt that the time for departure was drawing nearer, Umar رضي الله عنه asked his son to take away his thigh on which Umar رضي الله عنه was reclining, so that his head would touch the ground, as a way of showing humility and submissiveness to Allah. He kept on seeking for forgiveness until he breathed his last. Prior to his demise, Caliph Umar رضي الله عنه, he had laid down some succession criteria for Muslim leadership. He left a will indicating the steps to be followed to produce his successor. Umar رضي الله عنه served as Caliph and Commander of the Faithfuls for twelve years, five months and twenty-one days.

### **3.18. Why is Umar Hated by Shi'ites?**

It is rather ironic that having known the position of Umar رضي الله عنه, the uniquely numerous virtues of his and the

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<sup>116</sup> These debts were accumulated by Umar رضي الله عنه through some public services which he used to execute with the funds from the treasury. However, Umar رضي الله عنه had kept personal records of all the debts with an intention to pay back until he was stabbed. This is a great lesson for individuals at the helm of people's affairs who are entrusted to administer public treasury.

enormous and high role he played in establishing the Islamic state by defeating the then world powers, the Shi'ites would still hate him, and object to calling him al-Faruq (the distinguisher between truth and falsehood). They, in fact, distort the title and claim that it refers to someone who invites others to falsehood.<sup>117</sup> One will really wonder the magnitude and degree to which the Shi'ites nurse grudges against him. Below are some accusations that they attribute to him:

1. They alleged that Umar was a 'hypocrite' (*munafiq*), who inwardly opposed Islam but openly pretended to have embraced the religion just to cause trouble and damage it. This was narrated by a body of Shi'ite scholars, such as al-Bayadhi in *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*,<sup>118</sup> al-Karki in *Nafahat al-Lahut*,<sup>119</sup> Tustari in *Ihqaq al-Haqq*,<sup>120</sup> and Zanjani in *Aqa'id al-Imamiyyah*.<sup>121</sup> According to some of them, Umar's "disbelief" was worse than that of Iblis, as mentioned by Ayyashi in his *Tafsir*,<sup>122</sup> al-Bahrani in his *al-Burhan*<sup>123</sup> and al-Majlisi in his *Bihar al-Anwar*.<sup>124</sup> In the same vein, al-Jaza'iri stated that Satan would just have to watch the kind of "Torture" Umar will be subjected to in the hereafter.<sup>125</sup>

What is more ironic is how the Shi'ites tend to ignore that as a "hypocrite" as they alleged, Umar was yet lucky to get his daughter, Hafsa be one of the wives of the Prophet

<sup>117</sup> Al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar* (30/194).

<sup>118</sup> Bayadhi, *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* (3/129).

<sup>119</sup> Al-Karki, *Nafahat al-Lahut*, p. 49.

<sup>120</sup> Tustari, *Ihqaq al-Haqq*, p. 284.

<sup>121</sup> Zanjani, *Aqa'id al-Imamiyyah* (3/27).

<sup>122</sup> Ayyash, *Tafsir* (2/223-2224).

<sup>123</sup> Al-Bahrani, *al-Burhan* (2/310).

<sup>124</sup> Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar* (8/220).

<sup>125</sup> Al-Jaza'iri, Ni'matullah, *al-Anwar al-Nu'maniyyah* (1/63).

ﷺ. He also married the Prophet's grand daughter, Umm Kulsum, the daughter of Ali bin Abi Talib عليه السلام. He even had children with her. How would a hypocrite get the honour of assuming this great position which would only be reached by a sincere Muslim? He stood on the Prophet's pulpit and gave sermons while the Prophet's companions were present.

2. The Shi'ites also accused him of hating *Ahl al-Bait*. They even claimed that one day he knocked the door of Ali's house and when Fatima came out, Umar عليه السلام beat her up severely, so much so that she had a miscarriage.

What perhaps they do not remember is, where was Ali عليه السلام when all that happened and why didn't he take action? Would Ali عليه السلام reward Umar عليه السلام beating his wife, the Prophet's daughter, by marrying off her daughter to him?<sup>126</sup>

3. The Shi'ites claimed that Umar عليه السلام connived with other Sahaba and usurped the reins of the *Khilafah* and gave it to Abubakar instead of Ali. And that the gesture was reciprocated by Abubakar عليه السلام when he appointed Umar عليه السلام as his successor.

An objective reader would wonder how the Prophet ﷺ would spend more than twenty years training, grooming and mentoring this generation of pious believers and all of a sudden someone claims that the whole Prophetic effort went in vain?

4. They also blame him for "changing" the Qur'an, as mentioned by Rustum in *Dala'il al-*

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<sup>126</sup> Umar عليه السلام married Umm Kulsum bint Ali bin Abi Talib عليه السلام during his *Khilafah*. For details on this check Shi'ite sources such as Kulini's *al-Furu' min al-Kafi* (6/115), Ash'ath al-Kufi's *al-Ash'athiyat*, p. 109, Murtadha's *al-Shafi*, p. 216, Mufid's *Awa'il al-Maqalat*, p. 200-202, Majlisi's *Bihar al-Anwar* (9/621-625) and Tustari's *Masa'ib al-Nawasib*, p. 169.

*Imama'*,<sup>127</sup> Kashani in his *Tafsir*,<sup>128</sup> Abul Hasan al-Amuli in *Muqaddimah al-Burhan*,<sup>129</sup> Bahrani in *al-Burhan*,<sup>130</sup> Nuri al-Tabrasi in *Fasl al-Khitab fi Ithbat Tahrif Kitab Rabb al-Arbab*,<sup>131</sup> Muhammad Sadiq al-Tabataba'i in *Majalis al-Muwahhidin*,<sup>132</sup> Muhammad Ridha al-Hakimi in *Sharh al-Khutbah al-Shaqshaqiyyah*<sup>133</sup> and many other Shi'ite scholars.

It is imperative to note that the Almighty Allah Himself promised to guard His Book against any form of distortion and corruption as He says: -

﴿ إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴾ [سورة الحجر: ٩]

We have, without doubt, sent down the Message (Qur'an); and We will assuredly guard it [from corruption].<sup>134</sup>

Therefore, how could Umar رضي الله عنه change the Qur'an? Where was the original, the unchanged one? Why then was Ali رضي الله عنه and the rest of *Ahl al-Bait* not aware of the original and did not teach it to others?

5. The Shi'ites also charged that Umar رضي الله عنه was ignorant of Qur'anic injunctions. They said as Caliph, he did not even know the penalty of someone who drank beer until he was informed by Ali.<sup>135</sup>

<sup>127</sup> Al-Tabari, Rustum, *Dala'il al-Imama'*, p. 257-258.

<sup>128</sup> *Tafsir al-Kashani* (2/62).

<sup>129</sup> *Muqaddimah al-Burhan*, p. 171, 249, 260, 270 & 341.

<sup>130</sup> Bahrani, *al-Burhan* (4/187).

<sup>131</sup> Nur, al-Tabrasi, *Fasl al-Khitab fi Ithbat Tahrif Kitab Rabb al-Arbab*, p. 219.

<sup>132</sup> Al-Tabataba'i, Muhammad Sadiq, *Majalis al-Muwahhidin*, p. 691.

<sup>133</sup> Al-Hakimi, Muhammad Ridha, *Sharh al-Khutbah al-Shaqshaqiyyah*, p. 220-222.

<sup>134</sup> Hijr: 9.

<sup>135</sup> Yahya bin Al-Husain's *Al-Ahkam* (2/365-366), Amuli's *Wasa'il al-Shi'ah* (28/220), Qutb al-Rawandi (2/378).

To come more plainly, if Umar رضي الله عنه would spend more than two decades under the tutelage of the Prophet ﷺ as disciple but remained ignorant, to whom are they then shifting the blame?

6. The Shi'ites also charged that the leadership of Umar رضي الله عنه was tyrannical. Ironically, some of their scholars narrated a lot of stories, which indicate his justice. For example, both Bayadhi and Zanjani narrated how Umar رضي الله عنه executed *hadd* (a proscribed punishment by Islamic law) on his son, Abdurrahman, who was found guilty of consuming alcohol in Egypt. The Governor of Egypt, Amr bin al-Ass, had initially executed an indoor punishment on the Caliph's son. When the news reached Umar رضي الله عنه, he ordered that his son be brought to Madina and he punished him publically. According to Umar رضي الله عنه, there should be no going back on implementing Allah's law amidst publicity.<sup>136</sup>
7. The Shi'ites used to attack the person of Umar رضي الله عنه despite the fact that, he was the noble Prophet's inlaw. They said that he was born out of wedlock. They concocted a tale in which they narrated that his mother used to be a "prostitute" and through that means she gave birth to him. Moreover, they even accused him of sodomy, as narrated by Jaza'iri in *al-Anwar al-Nu'maniyyah*,<sup>137</sup> Muhammad Kazim al-Kafa'i in *al-Zahra' fi al-Sunnah wa al-Tarikh wa al-Adab* and many other Shi'ite scholars.

Here, let us first ponder over the following verses: -

<sup>136</sup> See Bayahdi's *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* (3/14), Zanjani's *Aqa'id al-Imamiyyah* (3/31) and *Talkis al-Shafi*, p. 437-438.

<sup>137</sup> Ni'matullah al-Jaza'iri, *Al-Anwar al-Nu'maniyyah* (1/63).

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ  
وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ بَغَيْرِ  
مَا اكْتَسَبُوا فَقَدْ احْتَمَلُوا بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا مُبِينًا ﴾

*Surely (as for) those who speak evil things of Allah and His Apostle, Allah has cursed them in this world and the hereafter, and He has prepared for them a chastisement bringing disgrace. And those who speak evil things of the believing men and women without their having earned (it), they are guilty indeed of a false accusation and a manifest sin.*<sup>138</sup>

All the allegations the Shi'ites put forth against Umar رضي الله عنه are mere fabrication. Umar رضي الله عنه is exonerated from all their baseless allegations, as we also learn from the words of Ali bin Abi Talib رضي الله عنه, "I swear by Allah! There is none on earth that I would like to meet Allah with record similar to that of his deeds like this man, (Umar) you have shrouded".<sup>139</sup> Similarly, as countless narrations indicate, when Ali رضي الله عنه was asked about the best and most righteous man among the Muslim Ummah after the Prophet ﷺ, he replied "Abubakar". And when asked who was next to Abubakar رضي الله عنه, his answer was "Umar".<sup>140</sup> On the other hand, the Shi'ites venerate the assassin of Caliph Umar رضي الله عنه, Abu Lu'alu'ah, even though they are aware of and cannot deny the fact that he was not a Muslim but Zoroastrian (a worshipper of fire). They

<sup>138</sup> Surah al-Ahzab: 58-59.

<sup>139</sup> See Majlisi's *Bihar al-Anwar* (10/296, and 28/105 and 117), *Irshad al-Kutub* (2/119), *Ma'ani al-Akhbar*, p. 412 and *al-Fusul al-Mukhtara*, p. 58.

<sup>140</sup> See Tustari's *al-Sawarim al-Muhriqah*, p. 266, Armani's *al-Ghadi* (8/39), *Bihar al-Anwar* (10/417), *Ikhtisas*, p. 128, *al-Fusul al-Mukhtarah*, p. 168 and Khu'is *Mu'jam Rijal al-Hadith* (9/341).

regard him as a “great religious” champion. According to them, he would enter paradise as a reward of his action. In fact, there were some among the Shi’ite scholars who left a will in which they requested their families to bury them near the grave of Abu Lu’lu’ah, so that they would “benefit” from his “Intercession”.<sup>141</sup> They organize anniversaries to celebrate the day Umar رضي الله عنه was killed. The Shi’ites even narrated some tales about the reward of such anniversaries. All these are stashed in their books like *Aqd al-Durar fi Baqr Batn Umar*. One would really see queer and wild narrations. In the book, there are songs that were composed to celebrate the events.

Perhaps, these are enough eye-openers for one to understand the causes and degree of hatred and grudge the Shi’ites nurse against Caliph Umar bin al-Khattab رضي الله عنه. He played an instrumental and influential role in uprooting the Zoroastrian religious establishment, which was replaced with the light of Islamic monotheism. All the symbols and installations of fire-worship were dismantled in the entire cities, provinces, towns and villages within the territories of the Persian Empire.

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<sup>141</sup> His grave which has been turned to a shrine is now in Kashan, in the province of Isfahan, Iran and is visited as pilgrimage site. Readers will wonder how Abu Lu’lu’a’s grave was relocated to Iran since he committed suicide in Madina shortly after he assassinated Caliph Umar رضي الله عنه.







## **Chapter Four**

### **The Caliphate of Usman bin Affan**

رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ



## Chapter Four

### The Caliphate of Usman Bin Affan

ﷺ

#### 4.1.1. His Full Name and Lineage

He was Usman bin Affan bin Abi al-As bin Umayya bin Abdi Shams bin Abd Manaf. His lineal line meets the Prophet's at Abd Manaf. Abd Manaf was the fourth grandfather of Usman and the Prophet's third grandfather, respectively. Usman's maternal grandmother, Umm Hakim Baidha', was the Prophet's paternal aunt; she was a twin sister to the Prophet's father, Abdullah. Baidha' was the mother of Arwa bint Kuraiz, the mother of Usman. Therefore, from the paternal line, the Prophet ﷺ was an uncle to Usman while from the maternal side they were cousins.

#### 4.1.2. His Birth

Usman bin Affan was born in Ta'if, in the year 47AH. He was six years younger than the Prophet ﷺ. Usman's father, Affan, was a successful international businessman. He used to import merchandise from Syria to Makka. He died while Usman was still young and left vast wealth, which Usman inherited. Usman grew up as an influential young man among his clan, the Quraysh and Arabs in general. He was respected and held with high esteem due among other things, to his generosity and nobility.

#### 4.1.3. His Character Traits

The Prophet ﷺ described some qualities of his companions which they possessed distinctively. Abubakar رضي الله عنه was the most merciful among them; Umar رضي الله عنه was the most inflexible and steadfast concerning application of religious dictates; Usman رضي الله عنه was the most shy; the most knowledgeable on Halal and Haram was Mu'az bin Jabal

ﷺ; Ubayy ﷺ was the most competent in Qur'anic recitation; the most learned one on inheritance was Zaid bin Thabit ﷺ; while Abu Ubaidah ﷺ was the most candid.<sup>142</sup>

Usman ﷺ possessed two unique traits, which distinguished him from other companions of the Prophet ﷺ. The traits were generosity and shyness. As reported in the hadith, Angels themselves used to feel shy in the presence of Usman.<sup>143</sup> Usman ﷺ was shier than the whole of the Ummah. Concerning his generosity, it is enough to recall that the Prophet ﷺ confirmed in the hadith that Allah had forgiven Usman for whatever he would do because of his investment in the service and promotion of Islam.<sup>144</sup> Apart from these two traits, Usman, like other Sahaba, possessed virtuous and exemplary noble qualities such as kindness, piety, humbleness, patience, simplicity, etc.<sup>145</sup>

#### 4.1.4. His Family

Usman had married 8 wives in his lifetime. He was survived by three among them. He had fifteen children; nine males and six females. Let us have few notes on some of them: -

Before the beginning of the Islamic mission, the Prophet's daughters, Ruqayyah and Umm Kulsum ﷺ, were married to the sons of Abu Lahab, Utbah and Utaibah. However, due to Abu Lahab's staunch enmity to Islam and the Prophet, he ordered his sons to divorce their wives. That measure was meant to infuriate the Prophet

<sup>142</sup> Imam Ahmad's *al-Musnad*: 12493.

<sup>143</sup> Muslim: 2401.

<sup>144</sup> Albani, *Sahih Sunan Tirmizi*: 2921 (3/209).

<sup>145</sup> Sallabi, *Sirat Amir al-Mu'minin Uthman: Shakhshiyyatuhu wa Asruhu*, p. 97.

ﷺ.<sup>146</sup> Usman, therefore, sought the hand of Ruqayyah in marriage and was privileged to marry her. They had a son, Abdullah. Both Ruqayyah and Usman took part in the Hijra to Abbyssinia and then to Madina. Ruqayyah died in the second year after Hijra during the process of her second delivery. That was at the eve of Battle of Badr. For the noble Prophet's sympathy and care to Usman, the sister of his deceased wife Ummu Kulsum was married off to him. She also eventually died shortly after the consummation of the marriage.<sup>147</sup> That unique advantage of marrying two daughters of the Prophet consequently, earned Usman the title of *Dhun Nurain* – the owner of two lights.

Apart from these two noble daughters of the Prophet ﷺ, Usman رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ married other women, such as Fakhitah bint Gazwan, who gave birth to Abdullah, the younger, named after Ruqayya's son, who died at the age of six. Umm Amr bint Jundub was another woman whom Usman رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ married. She was the mother of his children, Amr, Khalid, Aban, Umar and Maryam.

Usman رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ also married Fatima bint al-Walid, the mother of Sa'id, Walid and Umm Sa'id. Other women whom he married included Ummul Banin bint Uyainah, who gave birth to Abdumalik; Ramla bint Shaibah, who gave birth to A'isha, Umm Aban and Umm Amr. Finally, he married Na'ilah bint al-Farafisa, who gave birth to his daughter, Maryam.<sup>148</sup>

<sup>146</sup> Ridha, Muhammad Rashid, *Zun Nurain Uthman bin Affan*, p. 12.

<sup>147</sup> It was reported that the Prophet ﷺ consoled him and even wished that if there he had another daughter he would marry her off to Usman. See: Haithami's *Majma' al-Zawa'id* (9/83). See also: Bukhari: 5122 and Sallabi's *Sirat Amir al-Mu'minin Uthman: Shakhshiyyatuhu wa Asruhu*, p. 41-42.

<sup>148</sup> Sallabi, op cit p. 17-18.

When Usman رضي الله عنه died, he was survived by two wives, Ummul Banin and Fakhitah, while Na'ilah was martyred on the day he was also assassinated. Details on this will come later.

#### **4.2. His Conversion to Islam**

Usman رضي الله عنه was among the early converts to Islam. In fact, he was one of the first ten people who accepted Islam after the proclamation of the Islamic mission by the Prophet ﷺ.<sup>149</sup> Usman first heard about the Prophet's mission from his maternal aunt who was once a magician during the Jahiliyya period. She was the first person to advise him to accept Islam after she embraced Islam. Usman رضي الله عنه went to Abubakar رضي الله عنه and consulted him on the issue. He further encouraged him to accept the religion of Islam. Abubakar emphasized to Usman the greatness and nobleness of Islam, which virtuous men like him should not afford to disregard. Nevertheless, Usman requested to be given some time to consider and ponder over the matter.

After a few days, while the Prophet ﷺ was together with Abubakar رضي الله عنه, they saw Usman approaching. Abubakar رضي الله عنه informed the Prophet ﷺ about his discussion with Usman and encouraged the Messenger ﷺ to invite him to the fold of Islam. Abubakar رضي الله عنه stressed the need to get generous and benevolent people like Usman in the portrait of Islam. The Prophet ﷺ instantly approached Usman and called him to Islam, which he instantly accepted. Some other narrations indicate that Usman and Talha bin Ubaidillah were convinced to join Islam after each one of them heard a unanimous voice addressing them, "Wake up! Here he is; Ahmad has emerged in Makka".<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> He was the fourth among males after Ali, Abubakar and Harithah.

<sup>150</sup> Ibn Sa'ad, *Tabaqat al-Kubra* (3/55).

### 4.3. His Virtues

As mentioned earlier, Usman رضي الله عنه was among the early converts to Islam. From that time, he had been a close companion to the Prophet ﷺ. He heard and learned the Qur'an from the Prophet ﷺ. He was one of the scribes of the Qur'an and among those who taught it in the Prophet's lifetime.<sup>151</sup> His wife, Na'ilah, reported that her husband used to recite the whole of the Qur'an in a single prayer.<sup>152</sup>

Usman رضي الله عنه had actively participated in the two dimensions of Jihad; he had physically taken part in battles and proved to be a great warrior and defender of Islam, just as he was never reluctant to spend his wealth in the service of Islam. He was a philanthropist and had helped and provided solace and relief to the poor and the downtrodden.

It was only Usman رضي الله عنه who had the singular honour of marrying the two daughters of the Prophet ﷺ. Such unique honour was unprecedented even among past communities. Usman رضي الله عنه was the first person to have migrated in the cause of Islam.<sup>153</sup> He was one of the three in-laws of the Prophet ﷺ who at the same time had relation with him. He was also among the ten companions of the Prophet ﷺ who were given the glad tidings to enter paradise.<sup>154</sup> Usman was also one of the one thousand and four hundred companions to whom the Prophet ﷺ said, "You are the best [set of people] among the whole people on earth",

<sup>151</sup> A number of Tabi'un had memorized the Qur'an under his tutelage. They were like Abu Abdirrahman al-Sulami, al-Mughirah bin Abi Shihab, Abul Aswad, Zirr bin Hubaish among others. See Zahabi's *Tarikh al-Islam* (3/467).

<sup>152</sup> Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah* (7/225).

<sup>153</sup> Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Sawa'iq al-Mursala* (1/314).

<sup>154</sup> Bukhari: 3695.

during the Hudaibiyyah Treaty.<sup>155</sup> Usman served as the Prophet's emissary to the Quraysh prior to the Hudaibiyyah Treaty. At the time, the companions gave their allegiance to the Prophet ﷺ upon which Allah Himself expressed His pleasure over all the Sahaba, who took part in it.<sup>156</sup> In lieu of Usman's allegiance, the Prophet ﷺ placed his other palm on the other hand on which the Sahaba placed theirs as a form of allegiance. The Prophet ﷺ remarked, "This [my hand] is in place of Usman's hand".<sup>157</sup>

#### 4.4. His Philanthropic Services to Islam

As mentioned earlier, Usman رضي الله عنه was a stupendously rich businessman like his father. He was well known in providing relief and assistance to the Muslim society. He used his wealth in the service and promotion of the Islamic cause in many ways and in many occasions. For instance, he alone voluntarily sponsored the whole expenses of the Muslim forces that went to the Battle of Tabuk when the Prophet ﷺ issued the announcement seeking for material support for the expedition. Usman availed three hundred camels, which carried loads of foodstuff.<sup>158</sup> He bought a well called *Bi'r Ruma* at the cost of thirty five thousand dirhams and donated it to Muslims for Allah's sake. That was when a Jew who owned the well, placed exorbitant charges for those who would make use of its water. At the time, there was abject water scarcity in Madina and people were suffering.<sup>159</sup> Usman

<sup>155</sup> Muslim: 1485.

<sup>156</sup> Surah al-Fat'h: 18.

<sup>157</sup> Tirmizi: 3702.

<sup>158</sup> Sallabi, op cit p. 45.

<sup>159</sup> There is a narration which indicates that the well was owned by a Muslim who used to sell its water. The Prophet ﷺ requested the man to sell off the well and the man expressed his need to use the money



also bought a house that was near the Prophet's Mosque at the rate of 25,000 dirhams, so that it would be smashed and the space be used for the expansion of the Mosque.<sup>160</sup>

#### 4.5. The Emergence of Usman as Caliph

Before Umar رضي الله عنه died after the tragic Mosque incident, he was concerned with the future of the Umma regarding its leadership affairs. He, therefore, began putting forth plans and processes of his succession. Umar رضي الله عنه listened to a lot of suggestions from the companions about who should succeed him, including the suggestion that he should appoint his son, Abdullah رضي الله عنه, to which Umar رضي الله عنه did not give heed. Finally, Umar رضي الله عنه constituted a six-man committee made up by the most competent and qualified members of the Sahaba. Their task was to decide, deliberate and select one among themselves to succeed the dying Caliph. Members of the committee were Usman bin Affan رضي الله عنه, Ali bin Abi Talib رضي الله عنه, Talha bin Ubaidullah رضي الله عنه, Zubair bin al-Awwam رضي الله عنه, Abdurrahman bin Awf رضي الله عنه and Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas رضي الله عنه.<sup>161</sup> Umar رضي الله عنه gave them three days within which to

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he acquired from the well to cater for the needs of his family. Instantly, Usman رضي الله عنه bought the well in order to make the Prophet ﷺ happy and bring relief to Muslims. For details check Albani's *Sahih Sunan al-Nasa'i* (2/766), al-Mubarakfuri's *Tuhfah al-Ahwazi* (10/196), Ibn Hajar's *Fat'h al-Bari* (5/408). Bukhari also made reference to the narration in Hadith number 2778.

<sup>160</sup> Albani's *Sahih Sunan al-Nasa'i* (2/766).

<sup>161</sup> Both Usman and Ali رضي الله عنه were related to the Prophet ﷺ from the paternal line while Talha and Zubair from the maternal line. Meanwhile, both Abdurrahman and Sa'ad were prominent Sahaba whose integrity and virtue were testified by the Prophet ﷺ. Therefore, the six of them were all qualified and each one among them could discharge the duty competently. All of them were among the 10 people who were given the glad tiding to enter paradise. Only Sa'id

deliberate and reach consensus about who they would recommend to succeed him.<sup>162</sup> Meanwhile, he ordered Abu Talha al-Ansari to oversee the security affairs in Madina while the committee was carrying out its assignment. Umar also appointed an interim Imam in the person of Suhaib al-Rumi, a prominent companion, who was tormented and persecuted during the Makkan phase of Islam, and Abdullahi, his son to be in attendance during the committee's proceedings.

The Caliph also cleared Sa'ad of any faults or suspicion which he said was never the reason for his removal, so as to dismiss doubt over his eligibility for his possible nomination as Caliph. Umar رضي الله عنه said, "If you choose Sa'ad, you are right, and if you do not choose him, then let the one who is appointed carry him along and give him a certain position of responsibility. You should know that I have not relieved [him of his position] due to any malfunction or breach of trust."<sup>163</sup>

After the funeral prayer and burial exercise of the Caliph, the committee had its first inaugural meeting at which the terms of reference given by the late Caliph were reviewed. Abdurrahman bin Awf suggested that three members should step down for the remaining three, who would now be the nominated candidates. Zubair bin al-Awwam

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bin Zaid among the 7 living people who were given the glad tiding to enter paradise was not involved in the committee. Caliph Umar deliberately refused to include him in the committee because he was his cousin, besides that Sa'ad was marrying Umar's sister. Umar wanted to distance his family and all his relations from taking leadership responsibility after him.

<sup>162</sup> Ibn Sa'ad, *Tabaqat*, (3/364), Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah*, (7/142), *Awlawiyyat al-Faruq*, p. 124.

<sup>163</sup> Bukhari: 3700.

stepped down for Ali;<sup>164</sup> Talha stepped down for Usman; while Sa'ad stepped down for Abdurrahman. As the contestants now became three, Abdurrahman asked his two counterparts, Ali and Usman, to consider stepping down for one of them. That was to say, either Usman or Ali should step down for the other. Both candidates remained speechless.<sup>165</sup> Having observed that the suggestion did not bring about a final solution, Abdurrahman then proposed another way forward; with their consent, he suggested that both Usman and Ali should withdraw and give their mandate to him, and in turn, should, without prejudice, select one of them. Both Usman and Ali agreed with the suggestion.

Abdurrahman then began to seek for the opinions of the public by contacting both the elderly and the young Sahaba about the two candidates. In fact, he followed a house to house method of gathering public opinions, listening from heads and members of households, including men and women. This task took him about three days to accomplish.

When the three days given by Umar رضي الله عنه to the committee were about to finish, Abdurrahman bin Awf called on his nephew, Miswar bin Makhramah, and requested him to discuss with the two candidates before he (Abdurrahman)

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<sup>164</sup> We will shortly narrate what transpired between these two good friends, Ali bin Abi Talib and Talha. The decision taken by Zubair to step down for Ali indicates that there was no enmity or grudges between them. After all, they were both cousins.

<sup>165</sup> In the authour's humble opinion, both Usman and Ali refused to step down for each other because each one of them received a will from the Prophet ﷺ concerning leadership, and each of them did not want to disobey the Prophet ﷺ. However, none of them was aware of when the will of the Prophet ﷺ about their leadership would happen. We will elaborate on this when we come to discuss the leadership of each one of them.

would meet them himself on the matter. At the meeting which lasted for a longer time, each of the contestants pledged to exhibit justice and equality and conversely, if his counterpart happened to emerge as the next Caliph, he would accept the decision and be loyal to the new leadership.

Up till the dawn of the third day, no one knew who would be the next Caliph. People were keenly following the activities of the committee and the success it had been recording toward facilitating the emergence of the Caliph through peaceful means. After the Morning Prayer, Abdurrahman stood in front of people and asked both Usman and Ali to come forward. He informed the people of the promises of both the candidates to accept the outcome of the committee's resolution upon which they both accertained. He then announced the final result by saying that, "I found the vast majority of you people preferred Usman". Then he extended his hand to Usman and gave his allegiance to him. On the spot, Ali gave his allegiance to Usman and soon people joined him. That was how Usman emerged as the third successor of the Prophet ﷺ. This happened toward the end of Zul Hijjah, 24A.H.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Among all the four Rightly Guided Caliphs, Usman's emergence as Caliph enjoyed the backing of consensus more than all the remaining three. For details see Imam al-Khallal's *al-Sunnah*, p. 320. In the Shi'ite sources such as Tusi's *al-Amali*, p. 518, Majlisi's *Bihar al-Anwar* (32/262), readers will find the sermon given by Ali bin Abi Talib ؑ in which he said, "you gave your allegiance to Abubakar without me. I later gave my allegiance to him like you. You also did to Umar as you did to him [Abubakar], and then you did [give allegiance] to Usman as I did to him. . ."

#### **4.6. The First Challenge Confronted by Caliph Usman**

No sooner had Usman assumed the Caliphate office than he faced a great challenge, which was the case of Ubaidullah bin Umar bin al-Khattab, who was imprisoned before Usman emerged as Caliph. He was charged with killing three people whom he accused of having a hand in the assassination of his father.

Ubaidullah had some leakage that Abu Lu'lu'ah was not alone in the murder of his father, as there was the complicity of other parties. Abdurrahman bin Abubakar had confirmed that he saw Abu Lu'lu'ah and two other people, a Christian called Juhainah and Hurmuzan, the Persian member of royal kingdom, who had caused a colossal damage to Muslims before the Persian Empire was finally liquidated. He was caught by Muslim soldiers and brought to Madina as war captive. He later professed to have converted to Islam, though people were still skeptical of the sincerity of his claim due to some of his habits that were still typical of the *Kuffar*.<sup>167</sup> Abdurrahman bin Awf added that he saw a double-edged hand-belted scimitar fall in the midst of the trio; Abu Lu'lu'ah, Hurmuzan and Juhainah who, were conversing. When an investigation was conducted, it was found that Abu Lu'lu'ah used that same weapon to carry out his murderous project. It was based on that testimony that Ubaidullah rushed to the lodge of these two suspects and killed them both. Out of fury and from there, he went to Abu Lu'lu'ah's house and found one of his daughters and killed her.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Besides this, he followed some deceptive and tricky ways in front of Caliph Umar in order to save himself from execution, as a result of which he embraced Islam. For details check Tabari's *Tarikh Umam wa al-Muluk* (5/66) & Abu al-Fida's *al-Mukhtasar fi Akhbar al-Bashar*. It can be accessed on <http://www.alwarrak.com>.

<sup>168</sup> Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah* (7/154).

Ubaidullah became uncouthed and turned out to be a big security threat in Madina; he threatened to kill all the non-Arabs in Madina. He even had some skirmishes with Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas and Usman bin Affan, when they cautioned him against his move. His rowdiness was calmed only when Amr bin al-As devised a plan and seized the dangerous weapon he was holding. Thereafter, he was apprehended and eventually imprisoned. All these incidences happened before the selection of the new Caliph and after Umar's death. So, there was no strong authority to take legal action on the damage Ubaidullah sought to make. Therefore, when Usman رضي الله عنه became the Caliph, it was incumbent upon him to do something as regards the issue.

Usman رضي الله عنه was in a conundrum about this case. On one hand, some of the companions like Ali bin Abi Talib opined that Ubaidullah should be executed since he took law into his own hands by killing innocent souls and there was hitherto no official verdict on their complicity upon which they should be declared guilty.<sup>169</sup> However, executing Ubaidullah would be ill-timed and even drastically fatal, since it was only three days that his father, Caliph Umar who was extremely loved and tremendously missed by everybody, was assassinated. Moreover, there was a strong probability that those killed by Ubaidullah had a hand in the murder of his father, Umar bin al-Khattab. After all, Juhainah was a Christian

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<sup>169</sup> The most unfortunate thing that happens – due to the chaos that erupted in the Madina city - was lack of opportunity to conduct proper investigation and submit an official report about those who were involved in the whole crime of Umar's assassination. Those found guilty would have been made to face the wrath of the law according to their action and this would certainly have quelled the security threat posed by Ubaidullah. In any case, this was what God the Almighty destined.

while Hurmuzan was merely seen as a nominal Muslim, albeit that he claimed to have joined Islam. It was, therefore, understandable that while the former's complicity in the crime might have been informed by the nostalgic sympathy he had toward the Byzantines, his theological masters whose empire was vanquished by Umar's leadership, at the same time, if his acceptance of Islam was insincere, as felt by some Muslims, Hurmuzan would naturally nurture similar feelings toward his much-coveted Persian empire whose political and religious establishments were brought to an abrupt end under the leadership of Umar bin al-Khattab رضي الله عنه. Meanwhile, Abu Lu'lu'a's daughter was still a young girl, but she was reportedly the one who secured and kept the weapon with which Umar رضي الله عنه was helplessly murdered.<sup>170</sup> If that was the case, why should Ubaidullah be executed because he killed these suspects?

Caliph Usman رضي الله عنه was greatly worried about the situation and the appropriate judgment he should pass against Ubaidullah. Amr bin al-As advised that the Caliph should compensate the families of the deceased, since when Ubaidullah committed those "crimes", there was no substantive leadership which would enforce law and order. Caliph Usman accepted this advice and acted upon it.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Bahansawi, *al-Khilafah wa al-Khulafa' al-Rashidun bain al-Shura wa al-Dimukratiyyah*, p. 218-219.

<sup>171</sup> Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah* (7/154). Nevertheless, some narrations indicate that Caliph Usman had surrendered Ubaidullah to Qamazban, the son of Hurmuzan to avenge the killing of his father but people intensely appealed to him to forgive, and he did. Afterwards, Caliph Usman paid the blood money (*diyya*) of the three people killed. However, the chain of this narration is weak.

#### 4.7. The Accomplishments of Caliph Usman

Within the twelve year period of his *Khilafah*, Usman رضي الله عنه was able to complete all the projects that were initiated by his predecessor, Umar bin al-Khattab رضي الله عنه. He also introduced and accomplished many other initiatives. For example, Caliph Usman رضي الله عنه continued the efforts of his predecessor toward spreading Islam to other territories. As a result, Islam had crossed the ocean of Sind. The first ten years of Caliph Usman's administration recorded a huge success in the development and spread of Islam. It is unfortunate that some historians would turn a blind eye on all those magnificent records in favour of crisis which erupted during the remaining two years.

Before we give the account of some of the Jihad expeditions that were carried out during Usman administration and the crises which erupted toward the end of his leadership, it is pertinent to highlight some of his achievements.

In the year 26 A.H Caliph Usman ordered for the expansion of the Prophet's Mosque in Madina. He bought some houses near the Mosque and demolished them in order to have more space for it. The reason behind the decision was that the Muslim population had significantly increased and the Mosque could not contain their number.<sup>172</sup> Thus, Usman became the first person to have expanded the Prophet's Mosque.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> The owners of the houses had first protested against the idea but Usman used his veto power to serve the general interest of the public. He ordered for their arrest. He gave them money as compensation but they declined. So he put the money in the *Bait al-Mal* (public treasury). For details check Tabari's *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk* (5/250).

<sup>173</sup> Zahabi, *al-Ibar fi Khabar Man Gabar*. It can be accessed on <http://www.alwarrak.com> (1/5). There was another time that Usman expanded the mosque without affecting people's houses.



It was also during the leadership of Caliph Usman that the Glorious Qur'an was standardized after it was compiled in a single document at the time of Abubakar رضي الله عنه. The difference between Usman's compilation from his predecessor's was that all the Qira'at (variant recitals of the Qur'an) were compiled in a single document. Thus, Usman's compilation contained the variant recitals, which were collected from the Prophet ﷺ. Afterwards, multiple copies were made from the standardized one and dispatched to other Muslim cities and provinces. The old unofficial copies owned by the people were then withdrawn.<sup>174</sup>

#### **4.8. Military Tactics and Strategies of Usman Administration**

Military expeditions had paused after the conquest of Tripoli and many other territories during the *Khaliifah* of Umar رضي الله عنه. Likewise, all the efforts put in place by Mu'awiyah to secure Umar's permission to navigate and cross the sea for a military offensive did not for certain consideration get the Caliph's approval. However, when Usman assumed the responsibility of a Caliph, he allowed for the continuation of the expansion of the Islamic territory, including navigation of the sea, in order to invite people to the fold of Islam.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> The goal of Usman's standardization was to forestall the possibility of proliferation of recitals that were not taught by the Prophet ﷺ as a result of orthographical differences. Therefore, no other copy of the Qur'an now remains except the one standardized during Usman, known popularly as *al-Mushaf al-Usmani*.

<sup>175</sup> It should be noted that the Prophet ﷺ had earlier foretold that his Ummah would fight in the sea and he expressed his pleasure and satisfaction over the roles played by Muslim soldiers and that they were all given glad tidings to enter paradise. For details see *Fath al-*

Though Usman's military policy had brought about positive development, it nonetheless met some challenges, as regards the expansion of Islamic state. Territories that were too far from Madina became very difficult to control. Thus, the enormous clout which Muslims used to wield in the eyes of the enemies began to weaken because their attention was split. Due to this ugly development, many non-Muslim territories, which earlier surrendered to the authority of Islam and pledged to pay Jizyah and other charges in lieu of peace, had withdrawn from these peace pacts. For example, in the 25<sup>th</sup> year A.H, Alexandria retracted from the amnesty pact that was granted to the city during the time of Caliph Umar رضي الله عنه. Alexandria's example was followed by Africans, as they also renounced the peace treaty. Meanwhile, the whole people of Jurjan,<sup>176</sup> who had embraced Islam, became apostates. Khorasan also reversed their peace agreement between them and Muslims.<sup>177</sup> In the east, both Armenia and Azerbaijan<sup>178</sup> had also retracted from the pact, which was agreed between them and Huzaifah bin al-Yaman since the reign of Caliph Umar. Meanwhile, the situation was not allowed to go like that. On the instruction of Caliph Usman, strong contingents of the Muslim army were mobilized and dispatched for the return of order and the triumph of the Islamic mission in these territories.

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*Bari* (6/22). Muawiyah رضي الله عنه was among the Muslims who were endowed with this favour because he led the battle.

<sup>176</sup> Jurjan is a region located along the eastern coast of Qazvin Sea. Formerly, it used to be called Bakteria. The Zaradisht religion originated from there.

<sup>177</sup> Khorasan is now located in Iran. Formerly, its headquarters was located in Marwa which is the modern day Tehran.

<sup>178</sup> The region is located along the western coast of Qazvin. It originally meant "the Land of Fire". "Ardabil" was its headquarters.

In the 29<sup>th</sup> year A.H, Usman رضي الله عنه ordered his provincial Governors in Khorasan and Sijistan<sup>179</sup> to continue the Jihad. As such, they conquered Farghana, Kabul, and Istakhr down to the ocean of Sind. In the 21<sup>st</sup> year A.H, the Governor of Egypt, Abdullah bin Sa'ad bin Abi Sarh, led massive battalion of Muslim soldiers in a battle, popularly known as Zat al-Sawari. Constantine, the Byzantine emperor himself led the Christian forces and came out with more than five hundred watercrafts in order to confront the Muslim forces. The Muslims fought and defeated the Byzantines. The latter's Emperor Constantine fled for his life. The same thing happened with the remnants of the Persian Empire, as Muslim forces led by Abdullah bin Amir forced Yazdgird to flee to Kirman. In the 32<sup>nd</sup> year AH, Caliph Usman sent a letter to Kufa instructing Governor Sa'id bin al-Ass to mobilize an army under the command of Salman bin Rabi'ah al-Bahili to lay siege on al-Bab.

#### **4.9. The Roles of the Sahaba in the Expeditions**

Many companions of the Prophet ﷺ had actively participated in the Jihad expeditions that were carried out during the reign of Usman رضي الله عنه. For example, during the clashes that resulted to the conquest of Cyprus under the command of Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه, many Sahaba like Ubada bin al-Samit, his wife Umm Haram, Miqdad bin Amr, Shaddad bin Aws, Abu Zarr al-Ghifari and many others had taken part in the battle. Likewise, in the battle against Khorasan in which Sa'id bin al-As led the Muslim forces, there were prominent Sahaba, such as the two sons of Ali bn Abi Talib رضي الله عنه, Hasan رضي الله عنه and Husain رضي الله عنه, Abdullah bin Abbas, Abdullah bin Umar and Abdullah bin Zubair.

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<sup>179</sup> The area is located in the western part of Khorasan. Its headquarters was "Bustu" which meant "the Land of Dogs". The area is now known as Sijistan.

From Khorasan, they advanced to Qaumas and after conquering it they moved further to Jurjan.

Before the end of Usman's leadership, the entire super-powers and non-Musim empires had collapsed in the hands of Muslims. Nothing prevailed other than the Islamic religion. There was in the world over no one except he who identified himself as a Muslim or those who were non-Muslims but capitulated and submitted to the will of God. Thus, there was every reason for Islam to flourish and expand without let or hindrance.

#### **4.10. A New Dawn in Usman Administration**

It can be observed that the leadership style of Caliph Usman differed sharply from that of his predecessor Umar in many respects. To begin with, the nature of these two great Muslim leaders was different. While Umar رضي الله عنه was no nonsense, Usman رضي الله عنه was reclining more to leniency. That was why in the latter's era, people enjoyed relaxed freedom in the first six years of his administration more than they did in the era of the former. However, the situation did not persist, as people exploited the opportunity to trample over the law and rights of the leader. As such, Caliph Usman began to take stricter measures. For example, at the time he resolved to expand the Prophet's Mosque, Usman رضي الله عنه required the owners of the affected houses to sell them off for the project, but they all refused. In fact, instead of them to agree and accept compensation, they went ahead to protest and oppose the decision. The Caliph told them pointblank that "You have indeed taken the advantage of my leniency". Therefore, he ordered for their arrest and the compensation money was returned to the treasury. Later, Abdullah bin Khalid bin Usaid intervened and they were eventually released"<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Tabari, *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk* (5/250).

Though there was much inflow of wealth during the era of Caliph Umar رضي الله عنه, the wealth and luxury witnessed at the time of Caliph Usman رضي الله عنه were comparatively higher. Here comes the interpretation of the Prophetic Hadith in which he expressed his fear that his Umma would be engulfed in the desire of corrupt luxurious life brought about by too much affluence.<sup>181</sup> This was exactly what happened. People enjoyed luxurious and lavish lifestyle. The administration ensured that justice and equity prevailed in the distribution of wealth to the masses. Soon, people, out of merry and joy, began relaxing spiritually while worldly desiring and committing crime the more. Caliph Usman رضي الله عنه had to even deport some people from Madina due to the heinous crime they were committing. As such, they would go to other places like Egypt and Iraqi cities, such as Basra and Kufa.<sup>182</sup>

Moreover, the expansion of the Islamic state paved the way for the coming of many other cultures and societies into the fold of Islam. Some of them embraced Islam without adequate sincerity while some who genuinely converted had failed to assimilate to the practical Islamic worldview. This gave way for any type of campaign that would emerge in their midst to gain ground. While some would import many corrupt practices into Islam, others went to the extreme of making it a harsh and almost impracticable religion. It was against this background that

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<sup>181</sup> We can now understand the wisdom of Caliph Umar رضي الله عنه who prevented the Sahaba from leaving Madina. When they sought for permission to go for Jihad, he would tell them that the Jihad they went during the Prophet's time was enough for them. And that they should not be exposed to the luxury of life. For details see Tabari's *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk* (4/414).

<sup>182</sup> Tabari, *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk* (5/415).

Khawarijism spread, as will be detailed later in this book.  
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It is good to remember that communities who became apostates after the demise of the Prophet ﷺ were decisively fought and brought back to the Islamic fold during the Caliphate of Abubakar رضي الله عنه. At that time, for security reasons, former apostates were restricted from holding some responsibilities like joining Muslim military forces, lest they took that advantage to bring schism in the midst of Muslims.<sup>184</sup> During the Caliphate of Umar رضي الله عنه, the restriction was relaxed a bit and former apostates were allowed to partake in the series of battles Muslims fought against the Byzantine territories in Syria and Iraq.<sup>185</sup> Therefore, when Caliph Usman رضي الله عنه took over, he felt that Islam was firmly established in their hearts and, as such, gave them the chance to take part in different aspects of state affairs. Unfortunately, some of them had negatively contributed in corrupting<sup>186</sup> big Muslim cities in Iraq like Kufa and Basra.

There was also the conspiracy of the Jews and Christians, who were completely banned from living in the Arabian Peninsula as instructed by the Prophet ﷺ. They migrated from Madina, Khaibar and neighbouring territories to Iraq. Their presence there contributed adversely to the crises that kept on erupting amidst the Muslim Ummah.<sup>187</sup> This factor also, coupled with the grudge nurtured by Persian Zoroastrians, who claimed to have joined Islam, were looking for an opportunity to do their worse, one

<sup>183</sup> Sallabi, *Sirat Amir al-Mu'minin Usman: Shakhsiyyatuhu wa Asruhu*, p. 332-333, also *Dirasat fi al-Ahwa' wa al-Firaq wa al-Bida'*, p. 161.

<sup>184</sup> Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, (6/347).

<sup>185</sup> See *Abdullah bin Saba' wa Atharuhu fi Ahdath al-Fitnah*, p. 156.

<sup>186</sup> See *Abdullah bin Saba' wa Atharuhu fi Ahdath al-Fitnah*

<sup>187</sup> *Dirasat fi Ahd al-Nubuwwah wa al-Khilafah al-Rashidah*, p. 381.

cannot imagine the amount of damage they could have done to Islam. Thus, we can understand that the Islamic state was no longer a homogeneous community with the same cultural and moral upbringing but had turned into a heterogeneous one with diverse cultural and ideological backgrounds.

#### **4.11. The Escalation of Crises**

Though silenced militarily, the enemies of Islam were still hell-bent on extinguishing its gleaming light of guidance. They changed tactics and resorted to propaganda and the campaign of calumny, which did not require any weapon or physical confrontation. They partly mounted on the back of the lenient character of Usman and the relative ignorance and lack of religious consciousness that prevailed in some provinces.

Some Iraqi cities, especially Kufa, were used by those agents of disunity to advocate their campaign of calumny and propagandist mission. They chose Kufa largely due to the non-presence of the Sahaba in the city, in addition to other factors, such as ignorance; belligerence and the violent tendency the people were known for. From the start, they complained about Governor Mughira bin Shu'ba and he was removed by Caliph Usman. They also tabled another complaint about the new Governor, Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas, and Usman رضي الله عنه replaced him with Walid bin Utbah.<sup>188</sup> Their belligerence did not stop there,

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<sup>188</sup> Ibn Utbah was among the younger Sahaba. He was the son of Prophet's aunt and a maternal brother to Usman رضي الله عنه. He was a dedicated fellow and was shouldered with different tasks and responsibilities during the time of Caliphs Abubakar and Umar رضي الله عنه. He was the officer in charge of war letters and had served as a commander, Zakat collector and held many other posts during the time of Abubakar رضي الله عنه. During the leadership of Umar رضي الله عنه, Walid served as a Governor in Jazira and the Taghlib province. Both the

as they also alleged him of consuming beer and, as a result, Caliph Usman relieved him of his post and replaced him with Sa'id bin al-As.<sup>189</sup> Soon they marched

Taghlib and Iyadh clans, who were formerly Christians, embraced Islam through him. Caliph Usman appointed him as the Governor of Kufa and he demonstrated an exceptional quality of justice, equity and honesty. Throughout the almost five years of his governance, the door of his house was always gateless. Some *Mufasssirun* narrated that he was sent by the Prophet ﷺ to the Banu al-Mustalaq clan to collect Zakat. But before he reached the people, he feared them and came back to the Prophet ﷺ and informed him that they refused to pay Zakat. And that a Qur'anic verse was revealed on the issue. The whole of this story was baseless and unfounded. However, there was an authentic narration, which indicates that Walid was found guilty of consuming wine and was lashed accordingly. Even in this regard, Ibn Hajar narrated that the allegation was concocted to defame his character and he was eventually punished and relieved of his post as Governor of Kufa by Caliph Usman. For details see Zahabi's *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'* (3/412-413), Ibn Hajar's *al-Isabah* (3/638), Ibn al-Arabi's *al-Awasim min al-Qawasim*, p. 93, al-Garsi's, *Fasl al-Khitab fi Mauqif al-As'hab*, p. 78 Andalus's *al-Tamhid wa al-Bayan fi Maqtal al-Shahid Uthman*, p. 40. The story can also be found in hadith collections such as *Sunan Abi Dawud* (4/227-228) and *Sunan Ibn Majah* (2/858).

<sup>189</sup> He was regarded as one of the most eloquent men among the Quraysh and his speech resembled the Prophet's speech. He had been with the Prophet ﷺ for nine good years. To demonstrate his strong conviction in Islam, historians narrated that Sa'id had some misunderstanding with Umar bin al-Khattab. The latter told him that he was the one who killed the former's father in the battle of Badr. Sa'id replied that there would be no cause for worry even if it were Umar رضي الله عنه who killed his father since he was a Mushrik. Sa'id bin al-As was a member of the committee of standardization of the Qur'an during the time of Caliph Usman. He served as a commander several times and was the brain behind victories that were recorded during many battles. There was a time as a Governor of Kufa, he came back





in protest against Sa'id bin al-As, who was also substituted with Abu Musa al-Ash'ari.<sup>190</sup> They were also not comfortable with Abu Musa and they soon accused him of not knowing how to perform Salat perfectly even though he was a Governor, and therefore, an Imam during the Prophet's time. By implication, the people were not ready to live peacefully with their Governors.

It was now clear that the Iraqi people had begun implementing their campaign of calumny and propaganda against all their Governors, who were appointed by Caliph Usman. They would concoct false stories and spread rumours that they were tyrants and oppressors of their subjects. Their campaigns had largely succeeded because at that time there were no faster means of communication through which to verify such stories. It would, therefore, take a longer time before people would be able to physically verify the stories, at the time they might have gained currency among the public.

Caliph Usman رضي الله عنه himself was not spared in the calumny campaign. He was faced with a lot of allegations, including that he used to favour his relations among the Umayyads over others, especially when it came to political appointments. In other words, he was accused of nepotism. Those who tabled the accusations deliberately ignored that most of the Umayyads who had political posts during the era of Caliph Usman were appointed by

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from his trip to Madina and found that the people of Kufa had mobilized hooligans and laid siege in his house.

<sup>190</sup> He was one of the memorizers of the Qur'an and among those who used to give fatwa during the time of the Prophet ﷺ in his mosque. He served as a Governor twice during the time of the Prophet ﷺ in Zabid and Adan provinces. Throughout the era of Caliph Umar رضي الله عنه he was the Governor of Basra and later Kufa during the period of Caliph Usman before they tabled this allegation against him and was eventually relieved of the job.

his predecessors, including the Prophet ﷺ. Therefore, like every other shrewd leader, Usman رضي الله عنه saw no reason to remove them; so far they were qualified and competent. After all, there were only eight persons among his relations who had political appointments, which meant they represented only sixteen percent of the overall appointments in his government.<sup>191</sup> Usman's accusers also refused to acknowledge that the Caliph kept close inspection and monitoring of his appointees, so much so that he had established *hadd* (penalty) on one of his relatives, who was a Governor, and eventually sacked him.<sup>192</sup>

They further accused Usman رضي الله عنه that he prohibited the mingling of state-owned animals with those of the masses in the same pasturage. What may even sound so ridiculous was that they blamed him for standardizing the Qur'an in a single document and distributed copies to Muslim provinces and cities.<sup>193</sup> They added that Usman

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<sup>191</sup> For details see Khalid al-Gais, *Nazaratun Hadi'a ma'a Ashiritat Qisasin min al-Tarikh al-Islami*. Jeddah: Dar al-Andalus al-Khadra', pp. 19-23.

<sup>192</sup> He was Walid bin Uqbah who was accused by some of his subjects of drinking wine. Based on the advice of Ali bin Abi Talib رضي الله عنه, the Governor was supposed to be lashed according to the Shari'ah. Ali was shouldered with the responsibility of executing the hadd and ordered his son al-Hasan to implement it. The latter was not at all convinced with the ruling because the Iraqi people were mostly unreliable and even the testimony they gave was incomplete; one of two witnesses said that he saw Walid vomiting it. Ali ordered his nephew Abdullah bin Ja'far to carry out the punishment after which Usman removed him from his position. For details check Bukhari: 3220.

<sup>193</sup> Usman's standardization of the Qur'an was the continuation of the Qur'anic compilation project, which started during the era of Caliph Abubakar based on the consultation of the Sahaba, who considered

did not attend the Battle of Badr and that he was not among those who gave their allegiance during the Hudaibiyya. And that he was among the companions who ran away during the Battle of Uhud.<sup>194</sup> It was based on these and other allegations that the perfidious and belligerent thugs in Kufa, Basra and Egypt were mobilised to march to Madina in order to bring Caliph Usman to “order”.

#### 4.12. Rebellion and the Martyrdom of Caliph Usman رضي الله عنه: A Foretold Destiny

A lot of narrations indicate that Caliph Usman رضي الله عنه was adequately aware of the rebellious moves that were going on and was confident it would culminate to his martyrdom. More than once, Usman رضي الله عنه had heard the Prophet ﷺ foretell about the incident. Whenever the Prophet ﷺ spoke to Usman on the fateful issue, the latter would only say “*Wallahu al-Musta'an*”, meaning “from Allah alone we seek help”. Therefore, Usman was fully aware of the moves and was acting on the instructions of the Prophet ﷺ, as hinted by the hadith in which the Prophet ﷺ said, “O you Usman! Indeed! Allah would clothe you with a [kingly] garment. When the hypocrites demand that you should remove it, never remove it till you join me”.<sup>195</sup>

Not only Usman, there were some other Sahaba, who on many occasions heard the Prophet ﷺ talk on those crises

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the public interest the project entailed. For details on this check Ibn Dawud's *Kitab al-Masahif*, p. 98 and Ibn Asakir's *Tarikh Dimashq* (39/245).

<sup>194</sup> For elaborate discussion on this, read: *al-Awasim min al-Qawasim*, edited by Muhibbuddin al-Khatib, Morocco: Dar al-Ma'refah, p. 54-109

<sup>195</sup> Imam Ahmad's *al-Musnad*: 24045 and Albani's *Sahih Sunan Ibn Majah* (1/25).

and pointed to the appropriate measure, which Usman should take. The Prophet ﷺ also cautioned the Sahaba against involving themselves in the crises. To buttress this point, let us quote some ahadith as follows: -

1. Abdullah bin Hawal رضي الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Whoever escapes three things, will be indeed saved”. He [the Prophet] said it three times and then continued, “These things are my demise, [the coming of] Dujjal and the murder of a clement Caliph, who was on the right path”.<sup>196</sup>
2. Abdullah bin Umar narrated that the Messenger ﷺ mentioned that “a crisis would occur. A man came trying to pass and he the [Prophet ﷺ] said, “In it [the crisis], this man who covered his head will be murdered”. Ibn Umar said that when he looked at the man, he found that it was Usman bin Affan.<sup>197</sup>
3. Ka'b bin Ujrah رضي الله عنه said that the Messenger ﷺ mentioned that there was a crisis that would soon occur. The Messenger ﷺ then said, “On that day, this will be the one on the right path”. Ka'b said, “I quickly moved and grasped Usman and I looked at the Prophet ﷺ and said, “This one?”. The Messenger ﷺ said, “Yes. He is the one”.<sup>198</sup>

There are many other ahadith in this regard, such as the hadith of Murrah al-Bahazi رضي الله عنه, the hadith

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<sup>196</sup> *Musnad Ahmad* edited by Ahmad Shakir, (4/419) and (5/346). The demise of the Prophet ﷺ became a test to some people, so also the murder of Caliph Usman. Up to this time, some people are not able to conduct themselves and control their mouth in this respect. On Dujjal however, we seek Allah's refuge to prevent us from witnessing it.

<sup>197</sup> Imam Ahmad's *Fadha'il al-Sahaba* (1/551) with a sound narration.

<sup>198</sup> Imam Ahmad's *al-Musnad* (5/33) with multiple chains of narration which complement one another.

collected from Abu Hurairah and the other one collected from A'isha, <sup>199</sup>

#### **4.13 Usman bin Affan: an Imperturbable Fellow**

The rebels had finally arrived in Madina and were warmly received by Caliph Usman. He allowed them to mention all their grievances. Accordingly, Usman responded to them one by one. Those who were sincere in their protest became satisfied with the Caliph's response and consequently advised their fellows to go back to their respective homes. After their departure, some of their leaders met and orchestrated a plot and eventually came back to Madina. This time, the Sahaba stood speechless as Usman implored them not to utter a word. Despite this, some of the elderly Sahaba like Ali, Talha and Muhammad bin Maslamah could not resist talking. The gang leaders presented some demands to the Caliph, including that he must sack some Governors and restructure the policy of resource distribution. The Caliph granted all their demands and in return they expressed contentment with it and left to join their followers.<sup>200</sup>

However, on their way before reuniting with their people, the gang leaders machinated another plot. They forged a letter in the name of Caliph Usman in which a purported instruction was given that all those gang leaders should be executed.<sup>201</sup> Before they even met their followers, the

<sup>199</sup> Sallabi, *Sirat Amir al-Mu'mini Usman bin Affan*, p. 47-50.

<sup>200</sup> The reader may be surprised that Usman had all along been patient with them and was responding to their clamours. Why won't he allow the Sahaba to deal with them decisively? The answer is that, Usman رضي الله عنه was working according to the directives of the Prophet ﷺ and plainly informed the Sahaba about this. For details see Imam Ahmad's *Fadha'il al-Sahaba* (1/605) with sound narration.

<sup>201</sup> Some historians accused Usman's Principal Private Secretary, Marwan bin al-Hakam of having hand in the saga. But this allegation

news about the purported letter and how it was tracked from a certain messenger had widely spread within their camps. The issue of going back home had, therefore, come to an end. Soon, they returned to Madina and besieged the Caliph's house, demanding that he must come out and defend himself.

Meanwhile, they asked Ali عليه السلام to accompany them to Usman عليه السلام so as to establish proof about their allegation but Ali refused. They then queried why had he (Ali) sent a letter to them? Ali عليه السلام denied having any knowledge about the letter. Similarly, A'isha whom they claimed to have sent a letter in which she invited them to revolt against Caliph Usman, denied ever having any clue about it. It was obviously a strategy worked out by the ringleaders in order to gain some legitimacy in the eyes of their followers, so that they would be persuaded to believe that the Sahaba had endorsed and supported their cause.<sup>202</sup>

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lacks substantive evidence. It can be noted that Marwan would not derive any benefit from this saga. It is important to also remember that Marwan was one of the great Quraysh youths who rose to prominence and attracted public fame during the leadership of Caliph Usman. Some historians even counted him among the Sahaba while others argued that he was not. He served as a Governor and exhibited excellent leadership qualities characterized by equity and justice. After the assassination of Caliph Usman, Marwan joined Talha and Zubair in search for justice against the killers of his relative, Usman. For details check Ibn al-Athir's *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh* (4/74), al-Maqdisi's *al-Bad' wa al-Tarikh* (6/19), Ibn Taimiyya's *Minhaj al-Sunnah* (3/197). Al-Majlisi one of the Shi'ite scholars narrated that Hasan and Husain عليه السلام used to pray behind Marwan when he served as a Governor. See *Bihar al-Anwar* (44/123).

<sup>202</sup> There are some people who believe that some Sahaba had supported the rebellion. But their folly will come to light when one recollects that the Sahaba who had records of participating in Jihads would never succumb to some street touts and thugs who came from

On his part, Caliph Usman also swore that he did not have any knowledge about the letter attributed to him. He asked them to present witnesses but their brazen and stern reply was that he was a “Hypocrite”<sup>203</sup> and their one and only demand was that he must resign. All along, Usman رضي الله عنه was still not unaware of the Prophet’s will about the crisis. Therefore, he did not give heed to their demands and refused to give permission to the Sahaba to fight the rebels. His point was that, just to protect his single soul, he would not allow for bloodshed that would result to the loss of other people’s lives.<sup>204</sup> As the days passed, the rebels intensified their protest and even prevented Usman from coming out of his house to go to the Mosque without submitting his letter of resignation. They went ahead and appointed one of them, al-Gafiqi bn Amr, to lead prayer. Later, they blocked the supply of water to the house of the Caliph. Nevertheless, when his sister, Umm Habibah رضي الله عنها, who was one of the Prophet’s wives took some water to him, she barely escaped their torture. Safiyya, also among the Prophet’s wives took some relief material to Usman.

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Kufa just to cause disunity and schism regarding the Muslim leadership. The Sahaba would derive no pleasure from such revolt.

<sup>203</sup> They were the ones that should be called hypocrites as the Prophet ﷺ said, “O you Usman! Indeed, Allah would clothe you with a [kingly] garment. When the hypocrites demand that you should remove it, never remove it till you join me” *al- Musnad* of Imam Ahmad: 24045 and Albani’s *Sahih Sunan Ibn Majah* (1/25).

<sup>204</sup> The Prophetic wisdom of preventing Usman to resign as inferred by some scholars was that, the rebels were not essentially after the life of Usman. Rather, they wanted to cause schism and create chaos among the Muslims so that the esteemed regard and recognition with which the leadership was held would be eclipsed. This would then give them license to revolt against the subsequent leaders whenever they wanted. For details check *Tahqiq Mawaqif al-Sahaba fi al-Fitnah* by Professor Muhammad Amhazun, pp. 343-346.

Later, Ali رضي الله عنه warned them against their action and at last they rescinded the order of blocking water supply to the Caliph.<sup>205</sup>

As the situation became more volatile and tension-packed, some youth among the sons of the Sahaba like Hasan bin Ali and his brother, Husain bn Ali,<sup>206</sup> Muhammad bin Talha, Abdullah bin Zubair and many others gathered in the house of Caliph Usman رضي الله عنه. They sought for permission to deal with those belligerent folks but Usman persistently swore that because of his single soul, he would never allow for a civil war to escalate, which would also result to the desecration of Madina's sanctity. Nevertheless, they remained in the house in order to give him protection.

This was in the month of Zul-Qa'dah, the 35<sup>th</sup> year after Hijra close to the time of the Hajj exercise. Caliph Usman appointed Abdullah bin Abbas رضي الله عنه, who was among the youth guarding him, as *Amirul Hajj*. Though Ibn Abbas was not happy with that development, as he preferred to stay in Madina to defend the Caliph, he could not help obeying the directive. Throughout the Hajj exercise, Muslims were worried and fearful of how things were going out of hand in Madina.<sup>207</sup>

Meanwhile, the news of the rebellion in Madina had reached many remote Muslim cities and provinces.

<sup>205</sup> Zahabi, *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'* (2/237). This harassment, intimidation and maltreatment, which the rebels subjected the two wives of the Prophet ﷺ made, some other wives of the Prophet go out of Madina and head Makka for the Hajj. Details can be found in Tabari's *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk* (5/401).

<sup>206</sup> Both Hasan and his brother Husain were ordered by their father Ali bin Abi Talib to go and guard Caliph Usman as narrated in the Shi'ite's one of the most prominent sources; Bahraini's *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah* (4/354).

<sup>207</sup> Sallabi, op cit, p. 405.



Governors quickly began mobilizing an army to suppress the revolt. Already, Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه in Syria had directed battalions of soldiers to make for Madina.

#### 4.14. The Last Sermon of Caliph Usman

As the tension-packed situation grew worse, Caliph Usman رضي الله عنه ordered that people should gather in front of his house, so that he would address them. Ali, Talha, many other elderly Sahaba, the rest of many inhabitants and the rebels as well attended the gathering. In his sermon, Usman had given a sobering admonition, which made many attendees weep. Below is an excerpt of the sermon: -

Oh people! You should know that God has given you the world so that you should seek with it the hereafter. He has not given you the world so that you will recline toward it. The world will definitely end while the hereafter will remain forever. Therefore, you should not allow the world to take away your attention from the Day of Resurrection. Remember that you shall return to your Lord, so you shall fear him, for only the fear of Allah can shield you from His torment.

You shall have unity among yourselves, and you should not be divided into groups. Allah the Almighty said: -

﴿وَاَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ﴾

#### Translation:

*And hold fast, altogether, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves; and remember with gratitude Allah's favour on you; for ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His grace, ye became*

*brethren; and ye were on the brink of the pit of fire, and He saved you from it. Thus doth Allah make His signs clear to you; that ye may be guided.*<sup>208</sup>

Oh people of Madina! I am bidding you farewell and praying for Allah to give you a good leader after me. You should know that I shall not present myself to anybody until Allah implements His will on me and I swear that I shall disregard these rebels who are besieging my house without giving them anything with which they will cause a setback in the religion of Allah or in your worldly affairs. I will leave them with Allah to do with them as He wishes.

Usman رضي الله عنه then instructed people to go back to their homes and urged them not to engage in violence with anybody. With the exception of a few youth among the sons of the Sahaba, who were instructed by their parents to defend Caliph Usman, the whole people dispersed. Thereafter, Caliph Usman entered his house and never came out again.<sup>209</sup>

#### **4.15. Caliph Usman Had a Dream**

A day before Caliph Usman would be assassinated he had a dream in which he saw himself together with the Prophet ﷺ and his companions, Abubakar and Umar. The Prophet ﷺ told him “Come and join us for breakfast”. The next morning, Usman رضي الله عنه commenced fasting which he should break with the Prophet and Abubakar in the other world.<sup>210</sup>

#### **4.16. The Martyrdom of Caliph Usman**

After the Hajj exercise, pilgrims converged and resolved to come to the aid of Caliph Usman in Madina. Provincial

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<sup>208</sup> Surah Ali-Imran: 103.

<sup>209</sup> Tabari, *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk* (5/399-400).

<sup>210</sup> Tabari, *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk* (5/402).

Governors also mobilized and sent battalions of army to suppress the rebellion in Madina. Meanwhile, the rebels were well aware of the rebellion in Madina. When the Syrian forces advanced and reached a place called Wadil Qura, the rebels tried to plunge into the house of Usman but they were repelled by the young Sahaba, who were guarding the house. Caliph Usman peeped through the entrance and pleaded with his defenders not to fight or raise an arm against anybody, but they did not give heed to his plea. They said they did not know what to say in the Day of Resurrection if they would forsake him to be murdered helplessly. Therefore, they steadfastly stood against the rebels and fought them decisively. Three persons defending Usman رضي الله عنه, Mughira bin Akhnas, Nayar bin Abdullah and Ziyad al-Fihri, were killed. Four others were wounded. They were al-Hasan bin Ali, Abdullah bin Zubair, Muhammad bin Habib and Marwan bin al-Hakam.<sup>211</sup>

Amidst that tension, some of the rebels slipped through the backyard between the house of Caliph Usman and that of his neighbor, Umar bin Hazm. They burnt the door of Usman's house and pushed in. They found him reciting the Qur'an. Their Imam, al-Gafiqi, tried to hit the head of Usman with a weapon but his wife, Na'ilah, rose in his defence, saying, "Why would you kill the man who recites the whole Qur'an in a single *Witr* prayer".<sup>212</sup> One of the rebels called Sudan smote her with a sword and chopped off her fingers.<sup>213</sup> Two other people, Qutaira al-Sakuni and Kinana al-Tujibi,<sup>214</sup> then attacked the Caliph and killed him while he was reciting: -

<sup>211</sup> Sallabi, *Mausu'at al-Siyar*, (4/412).

<sup>212</sup> Umar bin Shabbah, *Tarikh al-Madina* (2/1272).

<sup>213</sup> Tabari, *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk* (5/406-407).

<sup>214</sup> All these people were among those who became apostates after the demise of the Prophet ﷺ. It can be understood that they reverted to

﴿ فَسَيَكْفِيكَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴾

But Allah will suffice thee as against them, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.<sup>215</sup>

With the exception of Caliph Usman's servants, people in front of the house were still oblivious of what was going on inside. One of the servants killed Sudan and he was afterwards killed by Qutairah from among the rebels. Qutairah was then killed by another servant called Subaih. Thereafter, the remaining rebels looted everything in the house and moved to the *Bait al-Mal*; treasury and carted away all the state property.<sup>216</sup>

This was how the era of Caliph Usman رضي الله عنه came to an end. He was martyred on the 18<sup>th</sup> of Zul-Hijjah, the 35<sup>th</sup> year A.H at the age of eighty-two. His leadership spanned for twelve years.<sup>217</sup>

#### 4.17. Who Was the Mastermind of the Rebellion?

The rebellion was initiated by an old mischievous Jew, called Abdullah bin Saba'. As authentic narration both from the Sunni and Shi'ite sources indicated that, the man pretended to have embraced Islam.<sup>218</sup>

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Islam insincerely when they were fought by Caliph Abubakar. They possibly had some machinations on their part. For details refer to Sulaiman Auda's *Abdullah bin Saba' wa Atharuhu fi Ahdath al-Fitnah*, p. 15.

<sup>215</sup> Surah al-Baqarah: 137.

<sup>216</sup> Tabari, *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk* (5/406-407).

<sup>217</sup> Sallabi, *Sirah Amir al-Mu'minin Uthman*, p. 415-416.

<sup>218</sup> Among the Shi'ite sources, refer to Qummi's *al-Maqalat wa al-Firqah*, p. 20, Nubakhti's *Firqah al-Shi'ah*, p. 222, Tusi's *Tahzib al-Ahkam* (2/322), Hilli's *Kitab al-Rijal*, p. 469, Ahmad Muradha's *al-Bahr al-Zakkhar*, p. 22-23 and Mamaqani's *Tanqih al-Maqal* (2/183-184). For elaborate names of Sunni sources refer to Abul Hassan al-

We earlier mentioned that non-Muslims were convinced that they were defeated by Muslims and they were never a match of the Muslims in terms of military strength. Therefore, they resorted to a mischievously deceptive strategy. It was within that framework that Abdullah bin Saba' professed that he had embraced Islam. He was the mastermind behind the rebellion during the leadership of Caliph Usman رضي الله عنه. Thereafter, the Jew continued spreading his evil mission in the era of Usman's successors and was largely successful in fuelling the crisis that resulted in a civil war during the administration of Caliph Ali رضي الله عنه. Needless to say, Abdullah bin Saba' was the initiator of the Shi'ite group, which claimed to rally their support to Ali bin Abi Talib رضي الله عنه. Later, the Jew claimed to be the champion and liberator of the Prophetic household from their "oppressors" – apparently referring to the Sahaba. Abdullah bin Saba' was also behind the emergence of the Khawarij, who vehemently opposed Caliph Ali bin Abi Talib رضي الله عنه and eventually assassinated him.

Interestingly, no single companion was involved in the crisis that cost Usman's life which was perpetrated and carried out mainly by the hypocrites and deceived ignorant folks. Ibn Kathir buttressed this point: -

What some people claim that the Sahaba had surrendered Usman or that they had endorsed his murder is false. The entire Sahaba had vehemently repulsed the revolt and expressed their vituperation on the perpetrators. Nevertheless, there were among the Sahaba like Ammar bin Yasir, Muhammad bin Abubakar, Amr bin al-Hamiq<sup>219</sup> and so on who felt

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Razihi's *Taudhih al-Naba' an Mu'assis al-Shi'ah Abdullah bin Saba'*, Alexandria: Dar al-Iman, pp. 85-101.

<sup>219</sup> He was a companion who embraced Islam after the treaty of Hudaibiyya. He became so close to the Prophet *Sallallahu alaihi wasallam* and once gave drinking water to the Prophet after which the

that had Caliph Usman رضي الله عنه resigned at that turbulent moment, it would have been better.<sup>220</sup>

#### 4.18. The Views of Shi'ites on Caliph Usman

The Shi'ites, as we had seen earlier, have no regard for all the virtues, honours and righteous acts of Caliph Usman رضي الله عنه and his closeness to the Prophet ﷺ. They allege that he was among the masterminds of the plot, which aborted the "plan" for Ali رضي الله عنه to succeed the Prophet ﷺ. In fact, they even claimed that he was a "Hypocrite". It is on that basis that they made it a religious duty to insult and curse him, as we can hear from the words of their scholars as follows: -

Al-Karki, one of the prominent scholars of the Shi'ites said: -

whoever does not harbour the hatred of Usman in his heart and does not consider it lawful to attack his person and does not believe that he was a kafir, that person is an enemy of God and His Messenger and has disbelieved in what Allah has revealed.<sup>221</sup>

Another Shi'ite scholar, Ni'matullah al-Jaza'iri said, "Usman was one of those who openly proclaimed Islam but hid hypocrisy during the time of the Prophet ﷺ".<sup>222</sup>

Al-Bayadhi also blamed that Caliph Usman was an "Irresponsible delinquent".<sup>223</sup>

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Prophet prayed for him to enjoy his youthfulness as a result of which he lived more than 80 years without any whitish hair on his head or his face. He was accused falsely of conniving with those who killed the Caliph Usman. He later joined the forces of Ali during the civil wars. See: Zahabi's: *Tarikh al-Islam* (3/448), Ibn Kathir's: *al-Bidayah wa an-Nihaya* (8/167-168) and Ibn Hajar's: *Al-Isaba fi tamyiz as-Sahaba*, (4/514).

<sup>220</sup> Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah* (7/207).

<sup>221</sup> Al-Karki, *Nafahat al-Lahut*.

<sup>222</sup> Al-Jaza'iri, *al-Anwar al-Nu'maniyyah*, (1/81).

<sup>223</sup> Al-Bayadhi, Ali bin Yunus, *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* (2/30).

Apart from these scholars who died many centuries ago, there are in the contemporary time many Shi'ites who follow in their footsteps. For example, Ali Shari'ati who died in 1977 said, "Abdurrahman bin Awf was a servant of money; Usman was a dictator; Khalid bin Walid was non-patriotic fellow while Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas did not have a fear of God".<sup>224</sup>

Concerning the successes and accomplishments recorded during the Usman administration, especially the spread of Islam to other parts of the world, the Shi'ites have concluded that all the people who embraced Islam during his era were never true and sincere Muslims, since they accepted Islam in the hands of a misled set of folks.<sup>225</sup>

One can easily observe the correlation between the views of the Shi'ites and the crisis that led to his assassination. Considering sound and concrete proofs, it is legitimate to conclude that all those crises, including the ones which erupted later during the Caliphate of Ali bin Abi Talib عليه السلام (as we will discuss shortly), were perpetrated by the Shi'ites. It is hard to believe that a genuine and sincere Muslim who reads the Qur'an and reflects upon its meanings would turn a blind eye on the virtues of the Sahaba, and instead, criticize or even attack their person. How could a Muslim ignore the position of prominent companions like Caliph Usman, who right from the start answered the Prophetic call at the time when people rejected Islam and in the cause of which they were subjected to sheer forms of torture and were consequently driven out of their homes and most beloved city? In addition, the companions assisted and supported the

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<sup>224</sup> Shari'ati, Ali, *Fatimah Hiya Fatimah*, 207.

<sup>225</sup> Mazandarani, *Sharh Usul al-Kafi* (12/348), Majlisi, *Mir'at al-Uqul* (26/233-234) and Khu'i, *Mu'jam Rijal al-Hadith* (4/315-316).



Prophet's mission till they earned Allah's pleasure and were even guaranteed to enter paradise.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Refer to the Glorious Qur'an: Suratut Tauba: 88-89, 100 Suratul Fath: 29



# **Chapter Five**

## **The Caliphate of Ali bin Abi Talib**

رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ

## Chapter Five

### The Caliphate of Ali bin Abi Talib

ﷺ

#### 5.1.1. Genealogy

Ali bin Abi Talib, bin Abdulmuttalib, bin Hashim was the Prophet's cousin, as Abdulmuttalib was the grandfather of both of them. Ali's father, Abu Talib, was the guardian of the Prophet ﷺ who looked after him and brought him up following the will of his father. Ali's mother was Fatima bint Asad bin Hashim.<sup>227</sup> The Prophet ﷺ grew under her care. She embraced Islam after the death of her husband, Abu Talib. She was among the first set of Muslim women who migrated in the cause of Allah. The Prophet ﷺ reserved great respect, love and admiration for her. He used to pay a visit to her and stay long in her home. At times, he even used to have his nap there. When she died, it was the Prophet ﷺ who led her funeral prayer.

#### 5.1.2. His Birth

Ali was born on the year 23BH. He was ten years old when the Prophet ﷺ began his mission. He was, therefore, thirty years younger than the Prophet ﷺ. He was brought up and looked after by the Messenger ﷺ.

#### 5.2. His Virtues

Ali was brought up in the Prophet's house. He came under the care of the Prophet at the age of 10. Ali had a unique opportunity to sniff the fragrance of divine guidance directly from the Prophet ﷺ. No sooner had the Prophet ﷺ proclaimed his mission than Ali embraced Islam. As a

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<sup>227</sup> She was also the granddaughter of Hashim bin Abdmanaf and a maternal aunt to the Prophet ﷺ, beside being the wife of his uncle and guardian, Abi Talib.

result, he was the first person to accept Islam among young male Muslims after the Prophet's wife Khadijah, who was second to none in the series of the earliest converts to Islam. Though very young in the Makkan phase of Islam, Ali عليه السلام had played a very important role in its development. He was the person who fearlessly camouflaged and slept in the Prophet's room during the Hijra to Madina.

Ali عليه السلام participated in the Battle of Badr and proved to be a great warrior. He killed Walid bin Utbah bin Rabi'a in a duel and assisted his uncle, Hamzah, in finishing the former's father, Utba bin Rabi'a. In the Battle of the trench (Khandaq), Ali had defeated and killed one of the fearless and strongest warriors, Amr bin Abd Wudd al-Amiri, when the two clashed in a fight. While mobilizing the Muslim forces to advance to Khaibar for a Jihad against the Jews, the Prophet ﷺ declared that he would give a flag to someone who was loved by Allah and His Messenger ﷺ and he also loved by Allah and His Messenger. Most of the Sahaba were very curious to know who among them would get that singular honour. Ali عليه السلام was the person to whom the Prophet ﷺ gave the flag. Ali عليه السلام was among the Sahaba who participated in the allegiance of al-Aqabah and were consequently crowned with the honour of having attained the pleasure of Allah.

Ali عليه السلام married Fatima, the Prophet's daughter, and she had been his single wife until her death, after which he married another woman.

Ali عليه السلام was appointed by the Prophet ﷺ to oversee the affairs of Madina when the Prophet ﷺ led the companions to the Battle of Tabuk. Ali عليه السلام showed his unhappiness to be away from the Prophet's company in the battle, but the Messenger ﷺ consoled him and told him that his position was closer to that of Prophet Harun to Musa. The

difference was that no Prophet would be sent after Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Ali عليه السلام was the person who, in the eighth year after Hijra, was sent by the Prophet ﷺ to deliver a message of some verses in Sura al-Taubah to Makkan polytheists during the Hajj exercise, which was headed by Abubakar عليه السلام.

### 5.3. Ali عليه السلام and the Previous Administrations

As mentioned earlier, Ali عليه السلام had given his allegiance to Abubakar عليه السلام, the Prophet's first successor. But because his wife, Fatima *rahdiyallahu anha* was sick, he was not frequenting the Caliph's council until after her death. Nevertheless, he was among the closest members of Abubakar's circles who gave counsel and advice to him. For instance, while Umar عليه السلام disagreed with Abubakar عليه السلام on the issue of fighting Zakat deniers, Ali عليه السلام firmly supported the Caliph's view, noting to Abubakar that "If you [as Caliph] do not fight them, in my opinion, you are swerving from the Prophet's Sunnah".<sup>228</sup> Moreover, Ali عليه السلام participated in the battles, which were meant to bring both Zakat deniers and apostates to order, including the false Prophets.

Ali عليه السلام was one of the six strong commanders appointed by Caliph Abubakar عليه السلام to defend the city of Madina against predation or attack of neighbouring villages, who used to support the apostates. Thanks to the farsightedness of Caliph Abubakar عليه السلام, within three days of the installation of military commands to defend the interior of Madina, some army contingents among the enemies confronted the city. A kind of joint military task force among the six commands headed by Ali, Zubair, Talha,

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<sup>228</sup> Zamakhshari, *al-Mukhtasar min Kitab al-Muwafaqa bain Ahl al-Bait wa al-Sahaba*, p. 48.

Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas, Abdurrahman bin Awf and Abdullah bin Mas'ud رضي الله عنه combined their efforts and repelled the attack. In fact, they pushed the enemies as far as Zu Hasa before they returned.<sup>229</sup>

As the battle against the apostates was becoming heated, Caliph Abubakar رضي الله عنه decided to join the Muslim army in Zu Hasa in order to take the lead of the command. While he was set on the back of his ride, Ali رضي الله عنه approached him and advised that the Caliph should not go out to the battlefield himself. Ali رضي الله عنه was able to convince Abubakar رضي الله عنه to eventually reverse his decision.<sup>230</sup>

Many a times, Caliph Abubakar would give honorary gifts to Ali رضي الله عنه. Notable among those prestigious gifts was Sahba', a pretty maid, who was among the captives of Ain Tamr battle. She was the mother of Ali's children, Umar and Ruqayyah. Likewise, in the aftermath of the Battle of al-Yamamah, which silenced the rebellion of Musailama al-Kazzab and his followers among the banu Hanifa clan, Khaulat bint Ja'far was caught among the booty. Caliph Abubakar رضي الله عنه ordered that she should go to Ali رضي الله عنه as a concubine. She was the mother of Ali's son, Muhammad al-Akbar, who was popularly known as Ibn al-Hanafiyya, one of the 'infallible' Imam's according to some Shi'ite theological denominations.<sup>231</sup>

In fact, beyond gifts Ali served as a treasurer during the era of Caliph Abubakar رضي الله عنه. He was in charge of the allocation and distribution of wealth gathered through the state's sources of revenue, such as war booty, tax and so on.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah* (6/311) and Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh* (2/206).

<sup>230</sup> Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah* (6/314).

<sup>231</sup> Ibn Sa'ad, *Tabaqat* (3/20).

<sup>232</sup> Al-Sayyid Hasan al-Husaini, *Mausu'at al-Hasan wa al-Husain*, p. 163.

Asma' bint Umais, one of the wives of Abubakar رضي الله عنه, was the woman who looked after Ali's wife Fatima رضي الله عنها throughout the period she was sick. Before her death, Fatima رضي الله عنها left her will to Asma' in which she requested that she should carry out her funeral bath and cover her remains with Abyssinian shrouds.<sup>233</sup> Ali رضي الله عنه later married Asma' after the death of Abubakar رضي الله عنه. He took care of her four children, Abdullah, Muhammad and Aun, the three being the sons of Ja'far bin Abi Talib, and the fourth, Muhammad bin Abubakar, who had served as Governor of Egypt during the Caliphate of Ali رضي الله عنه.<sup>234</sup> Asma' was the grandmother of Ja'far al-Sadiq, one of the infallible Imams, according to the Shi'ite theology. Her granddaughter, Umm Farwa bint al-Qasim bin Muhammad bin Abubakar, was the wife of Muhammad al-Baqir, the father of Ja'far al-Sadiq. That was why the latter used to gloriously boast and say, "I was born twice by Abubakar",<sup>235</sup> meaning that the father of his mother, Umma Farwa, was al-Qasim bin Muhammad bin Abubakar while her mother was Asma' bint Abdurrahman bin Abubakar. In addition to the fact that he was the grandson of Ali through his father, this is one of the

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<sup>233</sup> Asma' was among the women who migrated to Abyssinia. She was with her former husband Ja'far bin Abi Talib until his martyrdom during the battle of Mu'ta. She was later married to Abubakar رضي الله عنه. For details see Baihaqi's *Sunan al-Kubra*, hadith number 6721 and Ibn Abdilbarr's *al-Isti'ab* (4/1898). According to them, the chain of transmission is good.

<sup>234</sup> For Sunni sources check Ibn Sa'ad's *Tabaqat al-Kubra* (8/285) and Zahabi's *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'* (3/482). From the Shi'ite sources check Majlisi's *Bihar al-Anwar* (42/162).

<sup>235</sup> From Sunni sources check al-Mizzi's *Tahzib al-Kamal* (5/75) while from the Shi'ite sources see Ali Arbili's *Kashf al-Gummah* (2/374).

reasons why historians crowned him as “a pillar of nobleness”.<sup>236</sup>

All this undergirds points vividly to the love, brotherhood and camaraderie that existed between Abubakar and Ali عليه السلام. The latter was the first person in the history of Banu Hashim to name his child “Abubakar”.<sup>237</sup> Thereafter, his children al-Hasan and al-Husain, took a leap from him and each of them had a son named Abubakar and Umar.<sup>238</sup>

During the Caliphate of Umar عليه السلام, Ali عليه السلام remained as a close and respected member of the Caliph’s council. He wielded enormous clout so much so that no decision would be taken without his consent, consultation or even approval. The battles that led to the victory over Bait al-Maqdis, Mada’in and Nahawand were all the product of his intelligent guide. Ali عليه السلام was the person who advised Caliph Umar عليه السلام to shelve the plan to lead the Muslim armies in the successive clashes which uprooted the Byzantines. He noted to Umar that “If you go out [to the battle] and you are killed, the Muslims will never get another fort. So, I advise that you send someone who is very brave and experienced together with other military geniuses, who are smart and tactical [about military fight]. If they triumph, that is what we do hope, and if otherwise, your life remains a strong fort to Muslims”.<sup>239</sup> Conversely, when in another episode Umar عليه السلام sought the advice from both Usman عليه السلام and Ali عليه السلام on going to Jerusalem in the aftermath of its conquest to finalize and

<sup>236</sup> See a Shi’ite book *Umdat al-Talib*, p. 195 by Ibn Anaba.

<sup>237</sup> See Tabari’s *Tabaqat* (3/162) and for Shi’ite sources see Mufid’s *al-Irshad*, p. 248.

<sup>238</sup> See the previous books and also Asfahani’s *Maqatil al-Talibiyyin*, p. 57.

<sup>239</sup> All these are contained in the Shi’ite books such as Majlisi’s *Bihar al-Anwar* (31/135) and *Nahj al-Balagh* (2/18).

endorse the amnesty deal which the defeated Christians sought from the Caliph, Usman رضي الله عنه advised against Umar's plan to go while Ali رضي الله عنه supported it. Umar رضي الله عنه worked according to Ali's opinion. Umar رضي الله عنه, therefore, set for Jerusalem after he appointed Ali رضي الله عنه to oversee the affairs of people in Madina.<sup>240</sup>

Ali's concern toward the success of Muslim leaders by expressing his honest views on different matters earned him great respect and prestige in the eyes of Caliphs before him. That was why Caliph Umar used to say, "Ali knows how to pass [an Islamic] ruling more than all of us".<sup>241</sup> In the same vein, Ali had served as a judge and for a number of times acted on behalf of the Caliph in Madina whenever he would travel outside the city.<sup>242</sup> Ali رضي الله عنه was a father-in-law to Umar رضي الله عنه. The latter expressed strong wish to have a tie with the Prophet's household. So, he sought the marriage of Umm Kulsum, the daughter of Fatima. Though Ali's initial plan was to marry her off to his nephew, Abdullah bin Ja'far, he changed his mind and agreed to marry her off to Umar رضي الله عنه, having understood and got convinced with the latter's sincere aspiration.<sup>243</sup>

<sup>240</sup> *Futuh al-Sham* (1/236), Tabari's *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk* (2/449) and Ibn al-Athir's *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh* (2/348).

<sup>241</sup> Ibn Abdilbarr, *al-Isti'ab*, p. 1102.

<sup>242</sup> Since the time of the Prophet ﷺ, there was no permanent Governor or administrator in Madina since it was the capital and residence of the supreme leader. Whenever he would go out of Madina, he would appoint someone to act as an overseer.

<sup>243</sup> As God had planned, Abdullah bin Ja'far would still marry Umm Kulsum. After the demise of Umar bin al-Khattab رضي الله عنه, Umm Kulsum was married to his brother Aun bin Ja'far and after his death she was married to his brother, Muhammad bin Ja'far, who also died. She was finally married to Abdullah bin Ja'far and died as his wife. He then married her younger sister, Zainab. We do hope that she will be his wife in paradise along her younger sister, Zainab.



Through this marital tie, the bond of brotherhood became very strong between Umar رضي الله عنه and Ali رضي الله عنه. Umar was extremely glad to regain a sense of connection to the Prophet's household since his daughter, Hafsa, did not have a child. On the other hand, Umm Kulsum became the mother of Umar's two children, Zaid<sup>244</sup> and Ruqayyah.<sup>245</sup>

Before the death of the Caliph Umar رضي الله عنه, he constituted a six-man committee shouldered with the responsibility of selecting his successor from among them. There was an indication that Umar رضي الله عنه had initially wanted to appoint Ali رضي الله عنه to succeed him. But his integrity and principle prevailed on him to avoid mentioning his in-law just as he refused to even include his nephew, Sa'id bin Zaid, in the committee, albeit that he was the only person among the *al-Asharah al-Mubassharun bi al-Jannah* who was not a member of the committee. In any case, Umar رضي الله عنه allowed Muslims to choose their leader after him and they eventually chose Usman.<sup>246</sup> There was no surprise if Umar رضي الله عنه wished that Ali رضي الله عنه be his successor due to the similarity of their characters, just as Usman رضي الله عنه was more like Abubakar in terms of leniency and imperturbability.

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<sup>244</sup> Zaid used to boast of the glory that he was the son of two Caliphs; Umar رضي الله عنه as his direct biological father and Caliph Ali through Umm Kulsum. See for details *Tarikh Dimashq* (19/485).

<sup>245</sup> Majlisi, *Mir'at al-Uqul* (2/45).

<sup>246</sup> This assertion can be corroborated with the narration that says Abdullah bin Umar entered the room of his dying father after the committee was constituted and he heard him saying that should people choose that baldheaded one (referring to Ali), he would have put them on the right path. Abdullah then asked why Umar won't then name him as his successor. Umar reasoned that he would not take the burden of leadership alive and then continue to be held responsible on it after death.

Ali عليه السلام was the first person to give his allegiance to Usman when the latter emerged as Umar's successor. Similarly, he acted as a member of Usman's cabinet and had been his counselor throughout the period of his leadership. Earlier, we highlighted the role he played in the defence and protection of Usman against the rebels, who assassinated him.

#### 5.4. The Emergence of Ali عليه السلام as Caliph

The assassination of Usman had wreaked havoc and disorder in Madina. Things got out of hand, especially due to the fact that many Sahaba did not yet return from Hajj. The rebels began thinking of the way to escape the united effort of Muslims, who would take actions against them when they returned. As a result, they decided to actively participate in the process of power transition to the next leader. They shamelessly went to both Ali, Talha, Zubair and Abdullah bin Umar عليه السلام and proposed to all of them to accept the reins of power. Each one of them ignored the rebels and refused to dance to their tunes. According to these great Sahaba, the rebels were not in the position to determine who would be the leader of Muslims.<sup>247</sup>

As things were further becoming worse, the rebels were still scheming and searching for a solution in order to evade facing the consequences of their actions when pilgrims returned to Madina. As such, they became wild and even threatened to kill each of the four Sahaba, who rejected their proposal. On that note, some of the Sahaba like Talha, Zubair, Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas and others deliberated and resolved that lest the situation escalate to anarchy, Ali عليه السلام should accept the leadership. Talha عليه السلام

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<sup>247</sup> This shows that the rebels were not only after the life of Usman but mainly hell-bent on sowing the seed of schism and disunity among the Muslim Ummah. Otherwise, if it was merely a coup, they would have already had someone whom they should enthrone.

was the first person to extend his hand of allegiance to Ali عليه السلام. He was immediately followed by the rest of the remaining Muslims. Ali emerged as Caliph on Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> of Zul-Hijjah of the 35<sup>th</sup> year after Hijra.<sup>248</sup>

No sooner had Ali عليه السلام emerged as Caliph than security was restored in Madina. Moreover, pledges of allegiance began trooping to Madina from Basra and Kufa where the rebels came from. Similarly, Muslim soldiers who were far away in the battle-fields also sent delegates with their respective messages of allegiance.

Meanwhile, the tragic news of Usman's murder and the subsequent emergence of Ali عليه السلام as his successor spread simultaneously far and wide in Muslim territories. Most people outside Madina who were now aware of the unfortunate development inquisitively asked about the whereabouts of the rebels, the roles played by Ali in aborting their actions and the measures he took when he emerged as Caliph. Failure to get access to convincing and evidentiary answers provoked some people in Egypt, Syria, Yemen and Makka to refuse to recognize Ali عليه السلام as the new supreme leader for Muslims.

In particular, people in Syria were more intensely opposed to the situation.<sup>249</sup> Syria was headed by Mu'awiyah عليه السلام, who had been its Governor for about two decades. He was a relative of the deceased Caliph Usman عليه السلام and was deeply touched by his murder, especially at the scene of his blood-stained garment, which was taken to him in Syria. Mu'awiyah was very popular among the Syrians and enjoyed their utmost loyalty and unflinching support. He gave a heavy-worded sermon in which he expressed his tirade on the tragedy and solicited for the support and

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<sup>248</sup> Ibn Sa'ad, *Tabaqat* (3/31).

<sup>249</sup> In those days, Syria comprised the modern day Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine.

cooperation of his subjects on revenge. The entire Syrians, including housewives, wholeheartedly answered his call and pledged to rally around their Governor to take a decisive action against the rebels.

### 5.5. Ali Constituted Government Officials

In the meantime, Ali عليه السلام was totally unaware of what was going on in Syria. He was busy constituting cabinet members and public officials in Madina, including provincial Governors. Many administrators who served the previous government like Mu'awiyah were now phased out. Though Abdullah bin Abbas عليه السلام had advised Ali عليه السلام against the decision, noting that it should come after securing the allegiance of the Syrians, Ali went ahead to implement the decision.

There were some exchange of letters and dispatch of emissaries to and from Madina and Syria between Caliph Ali عليه السلام and Mu'awiyah عليه السلام. When one of Ali's emissaries, Bashir bin Abu Mas'ud, delivered Ali's letter to Mu'awiyah عليه السلام reminding the latter to fear God and give his allegiance to the new leadership, Mu'awiyah's reply was: -

Afterwards, if you are really sincere, then allow us to kill our enemies who assassinated Usman. If you do this, we will be in the forefront to bow to your leadership. But if you do not do this, swearing with God, there will be nothing between you and us except the sword. I swear with the One who there is no deity worthy of worship except Him, we must avenge the murder of Usman [even if it be] on land, sea and mountains until we see their end or else we all go to our Lord Allah the Almighty. Wassalam.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> Tabari, *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk* (3/77) and Ibn Hibban's *Kitab al-Thiqat* (2/287).

Meanwhile, A'isha ؓ, was still in Madina throughout that turbulent period. She left for Makka to perform the pilgrimage after securing permission from the late Caliph Usman. She only heard the tragic news of Usman's murder in Makka. She was in that sober mood that when Talha and Zubair met her after they sneaked from Madina on a pretext to perform Umra (lesser Hajj), they left Madina because they were dissatisfied with the decision he took toward the rebels, despite their advice and pledge to mobilize military support to quash the rebels – to which he did not give heed. Therefore, they left Madina for Makka hoping to meet different people with whom to decide the next line of action on the issue.<sup>251</sup>

Deliberations and consultations were still going on among the people in Makka. It was learnt that most of the rebels had already left Madina and gone back to their various cities and villages. Talha and Zubair were lucky to convince A'isha ؓ, on the need for her to join their movement so as to boost the morale of soldiers during a

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<sup>251</sup> Rashid Ridha's *Imam Ali* published by Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 2001, p. 74. It is imperative to remember that during the process in which Usman ؓ succeeded Umar, Zubair had stepped down for Ali and the contestants became two, Ali and Usman. Also, after the assassination of Caliph Usman, Zubair was also contacted with the proposal to become the next Caliph but he rejected the offer in favour of Ali ؓ. Therefore, Zubair should not be mistaken as a political opponent to Ali bin Abi Talib ؓ. The misunderstanding between them was on the time and approach of confronting the rebels and bringing them to book. Zubair and some other Sahaba viewed Ali's attitude toward the rebels as too lenient. That was why they went ahead to take action according to their Ijtihad and were wrong in this. Therefore, they would get the reward of their Ijtihad just as Ali ؓ would also get his reward when he decided to fight those who refused to give him their allegiance even though he would come to regret taking such action.

decisive war they were planning to wage against the rebels. It was resolved that support should be mobilized in Iraq and that the reprisal offensive should be launched there, so that they would commence with the insurgents there.

On their way to Iraq before arriving at Basra, they passed by a lake called Hau'ab. Hearing this name mentioned, A'isha ؓ paused and declared that she would go back. She reasoned that she heard the Prophet ﷺ telling his wives, "Who among you would hear the bark of Hau'ab's dogs while she was amidst soldiers in a battle, many people will be killed by her right and left sides and she will narrowly escape death?"

There is no way one can evade what God has destined. Both Talha and Zubair discouraged her from going back, pointing out that she would not need to partake in the battle. Her presence would be meant to keep the soldiers convinced that she was in support of them and that would definitely bolster their morale. Though, A'isha ؓ was not fully convinced with their point, as God destined, she could not help but do as they wished.<sup>252</sup>

## 5.6. The Battle of the Camel

### 5.6.1. The Role Played by Talha and Zubair ؓ

Talha and Zubair demanded that Ali should allow them to go to Basra and Kufa in order to mobilize military support

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<sup>252</sup> This narration is authentic though Ibn al-Arabi criticized it in his book, *al-Awasim min al-Qawasim*. For details on the authenticity of the narration check *al-Musnad* of Imam Ahmad (6/52), al-Hakim's *al-Mustadrak* (3/120), Ibn Hajar's *Fat'h al-Bari* (13/45), Albani's *Silsilat Ahadith al-Sahihah* (1/473). Ibn al-Arabi was influenced by fabricated narration, which indicates that Zubair and Talha gave a false testimony to Aisha by saying that the place was not called Hau'ab. It was based on this that Ibn al-Arabi altogether falsified the narration.

with which to bring the assassins to order, but Ali عليه السلام excused that it was not yet right time for that. Therefore, Zubair and Talha's meeting with A'isha رضي الله عنها, went coterminous with Ali's plan to go and extract the allegiance of the Syrians by force, especially when they expelled their new Governor, Sahl bin Hunaif, who was posted to Syria by Ali عليه السلام.<sup>253</sup>

Therefore, when Ali عليه السلام learnt of the plan of Talha and Zubair, he changed his mind and made for their routes, so that he would stop them from going to Basra. In his view, they should not go ahead to take the law into their own hands without securing his approval. However, before he was able to meet them, they had already reached Basra and had begun implementing their mission.


On his part, Usman bin Hunaif رضي الله عنه, the Governor of Basra sent two delegates, Imran bin Husain and Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali, to meet the leaders of Makkan troops and inquire about their mission. They replied that they came to gather military support with which to launch a retaliatory offensive on the insurgents and perpetrators of Usman's assassination.

In the meantime, before the arrival of the Makkan troops at Basra, the Governor had already called for a town hall meeting in order to hear people's opinions on the appropriate step and measure to take. When the people gathered before the governor uttered a word, one of the people interrupted and said, "If these people are demanding for revenge, we are not the ones who killed

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<sup>253</sup> The same occurred to Khalid bin al-Ass, the new Governor Ali عليه السلام posted to Makka; he was also expelled by the people in Makka. Nevertheless, Qusam bin Abbas was posted to Makka again as Governor by Ali; he did not meet any resistance. Similarly, the new Governors Ubaidullahi bin Abbas and Qais bin Sa'ad who were posted to Yemen and Egypt respectively did not meet any resistance from their subjects.

Usman, and if they want peace, why would they leave the city in which even a bird is not threatened?” Someone stood up and said, “They are coming so that we support them over the killers [of Usman] whether they are part of us or not”. People instantly began throwing stones at him. At the time, the report had gained currency that Makkan troops were on their way to Iraq.

Upon their arrival to Basra, the Makkan troops did not enter the city but took a base at a place called Mirbad. Their supporters from other places joined them there. Likewise, the Governor of Basra went there with his entourage to discuss with them. Both Talha and Zubair spoke and expressed their grief and disappointment over the tragic incident, which occurred in Madina. They also encouraged people to cooperate toward taking revenge. Some members of the Governor’s entourage reacted negatively. A’isha herself had to speak. Soon some skirmishes erupted, with both sides throwing stones at each other before the tension was calmed. Yet, before the meeting ended, Hakim bin Jabala, one of the rebels who led the command of the cavalry during the murder of Usman, attempted to ignite a fight. All the efforts made by A’isha ﷺ to restore order proved futile as the fight broke out and which lasted for about two days. Many casualties were recorded from both sides. Eventually, the Makkan troops succeeded in suppressing the people. The Governor of Basra was caught but he was released on the recommendation of A’isha, ﷺ. She also ordered that those who took part in the rebellion which resulted in the assassination of Usman among the people of Basra be identified and summarily executed. Meanwhile, their families mobilized and came rescue. About 600 soldiers from the Banu Sa’ad clan came out to rescue a single relative of theirs, Hurqus bin Zubair. This was what Ali  had been trying to avoid by not prosecuting and



eventually executing the rebels at the time Talha and Zubair wanted it.

When Caliph Ali عليه السلام approached Basra, he sent one of his soldiers called Qa'qa' bin Amr to go and call Talha and Zubair to order and inform them, in the interest of unity, to subject themselves to the loyalty of the Caliph. Below is how the exchange of communication ensued: -

As soon as al-Qa'qa' arrived, he went straight to A'isha رضي الله عنها, and asked about the purpose of her coming. She told him that she came in order to bring reform among the people. He asked her to call Talha and Zubair to hear their opinions. Both Talha and Zubair came and gave a similar answer to A'isha's. He then asked whether or not they still had loyalty to Caliph Ali, remarking that if they were still loyal to him, they should mention the kind of reform they wanted to bring. They replied that they were mainly concerned and worried with the perpetrators of Usman's murder; they should be brought to book according to the laws of Allah.

Qa'qa' responded that now the clashes which so far occurred between them and the people of Basra had cost about one hundred lives and that they could not kill a single person, who was enjoying the defense of his 600 kinsmen. "If you let him go scot free, you have abandoned the Book of Allah, and if you insist on killing him, you will cause great damage to the Ummah. In essence, you have revived an ethnic rivalry in the midst of the Muslim Ummah".

On hearing this, A'isha, رضي الله عنها consulted Qa'qa' about the way out. He said the first thing was to calm the tension that haunted people and then if the Caliph arrived, they should join him and remain under his umbrella so that everyone would know that they were united and spoke with one voice. Therefore, all the recalcitrant people

would not dare them. In return, the attempt to avenge Usman's murder would be pursued further.

Almost everybody was satisfied with those peaceful resolutions. Letters were exchanged between Makkan troops headed by Talha, Zubair and A'isha and Caliph Ali bin Abi Talib عليه السلام. Things began returning to normalcy.

Before he finally entered Basra, Ali عليه السلام gave a sermon in which he outlined some severe measures against those who were known to have a hand in the murder of Caliph Usman. He also banned them from following him. This development made the rebels realize that their end would come if they kept silent and did not do anything. They deliberated within themselves and resolved to ignite the fire of conflict among the Muslim Ummah.

While A'isha رضي الله عنها was waiting for Ali's arrival, a report reached her through Ka'ab bin Sawr, the judge of Basra, that a fight had erupted among Muslims. He urged her to quickly intervene, so that peace would reign. She instantly rode her camel and headed for the battlefield. She met the Caliph who was trying to calm the conflict. She ordered her servant, Ka'ab, who was holding the reins of her camel to go and call people to the Book of Allah. But Alas! Before the twinkling of an eye, the fighters had killed him and thrown stones at A'isha رضي الله عنها. Talha was severely wounded. He was taken to Basra on the advice of Qa'qa' and died shortly there. Having observed how things turned, Zubair tried to retreat but was pursued by a small contingent of rebels led by Amr bin Jarmuz. They eventually killed him.

The centre of the fight now turned to the camel of A'isha رضي الله عنها. More than forty people were killed. Having read the danger involved surrounding the camel, Ali ordered that it be slayed instantly. This measure made the fighters disperse from the place. Meanwhile, Ali عليه السلام ordered A'isha's brother, Muhammad bin Abubakar and Budail



bin Warqa', to help and lead her away from the battlefield. Thereafter, Muhammad accompanied her to Basra late at night and she got refuge in the house of Safiyya bint Haris, the wife of Abdullah bin Khalaf.

On Monday, the 14<sup>th</sup> of Jimada Thani in the 36<sup>th</sup> year after Hijra, Caliph Ali عليه السلام entered Basra after leading a funeral prayer for those killed in both sides and prayed for Allah to forgive the ones who had good intentions among them.<sup>254</sup> He then went directly to A'isha رضي الله عنها, and they condoled each other for the unfortunate and tragic clash. While seeing her off, they bade farewell to each other. Both of them lamented and expressed dismay over what happened, which was caused by the refusal of the parties involved to give heed to their instruction. In her speech, A'isha spoke pleasantly in respect to Caliph Ali عليه السلام, recalling his youthful days when he was brought up in the Prophet's household. She expressed that Ali عليه السلام had never mistreated her as her husband's cousin. On his part, Ali stressed the virtue and position of A'isha in the Muslim Ummah, noting that she is "The wife of the Prophet both in the world and in the hereafter".

Finally, Caliph Ali عليه السلام ordered his children and forty other women to accompany her. This was how the Battle of Camel, which was orchestrated by the rebels, came to an end. According to the most authentic source, the death toll reached 2,500 of the Makkan troops and 4000 of Ali's soldiers. Evidentiary accounts show that both Ali and A'isha were personally innocent in the battle. To buttress this point, it is pertinent to recall that the person who killed Zubair came to Ali boasting that he was the killer of the latter's "enemy", but Ali responded furiously and even

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


<sup>254</sup> For Shi'ite sources see: Amuli's *Wasa'ill al-Shi'ah* (15/83), Majlisi's *Bihar al-Anwar* (29/45), Burujardi's *Jami' Ahadith al-Shi'ah* (13/93), Ayyashi's *Tafsir* (2/152) and *Tafsir Furat al-Kufi*, p. 193.

warned the person to prepare for hellfire!<sup>255</sup> A'isha , herself was rueful on the event. She cried profusely so much so that her veil got wet with tears.<sup>256</sup> That was why she changed her earlier plan to be buried in her room near the Prophet  and his two companions.<sup>257</sup>

Even though both parties involved in the battle above had expressed regret in the aftermath of the battle, as we have narrated, it is good to also remember that God had already destined that it must inevitably occur. What is similarly worrisome was that however, in less than three months' time, another battle erupted.

## 5.7. The Battle of Siffin

### 5.7.1. Mu'awiyah's Position on Ali's Leadership

After the Battle of the Camel, Ali  sent an emissary called Abu Muslim al-Khawlani to call Mu'awiyah's attention toward unity by joining the rest of the Muslim Ummah who had given their allegiance to him as Caliph. The response of Mu'awiyah was not positive as he inflexibly insisted on his position. Ali  sent another emissary in the person of the great companion, Nu'man bin Bashir, but yet there was no positive development from Mu'awiyah. Therefore, Caliph Ali  resolved that the next line of action was to fight. About six to seven thousand soldiers were mobilized and Ashtar al-Nakha'i was appointed as the commander.

Earlier, Ali had gauged the strength of Mu'awiyah's military forces. He gathered intelligence through one of his most trusted men, whom he sent to Syria. The man

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<sup>255</sup> Albani, *Silsilat al-Ahadith al-Sahihah*, hadith number 1877 and his *Zilal al-Janna*, hadith number 1388.

<sup>256</sup> Ghunaiman, *Mukhtasar Minhaj al-Sunnah*, p. 294. Among the Shi'ite sources also see Nasir Makarim Shirazi's *al-Tafsir al-Amthal* (13/245).

<sup>257</sup> Ibn al-Athir's *Usdul Ghaba* (3/88-89).

disguised as a merchant from Iraq and approached Mu'awiyah. He hinted to him that Ali عليه السلام was on the way leading forces to fight to him. Therefore, Mu'awiyah gathered all the Syrians and gave a sermon in which he sought their opinions on the next line of action. They all kept mute but after a while, one of them called Zul Kila' rose and said, "The decision is in your hand while ours is to implement". Ali's spy returned and fed him with all that he witnessed of the readiness and absolute loyalty of the Syrians to Mu'awiyah عليه السلام. Nevertheless, Ali عليه السلام did not become reluctant and went ahead with his plan.

Mu'awiyah عليه السلام also began mobilizing an army with a similar number of soldiers. As the Syrian forces headed by Mu'awiyah set out, reinforcement sent by Amr bin al-As reached a place near a lake called Siffin. Some clashes would later ensue in that place between the followers of Caliph Ali عليه السلام and Mu'awiyah. Afterwards, some ceasefire and eventual agreement were reached which allowed both camps to make mutual use of water from the Siffin Lake.

In the meantime, Caliph Ali عليه السلام sent a special emissary in the person of Hashim bin Utba bin Abi Waqqas to the Governor of Kufa, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, asking the latter to solicit and mobilize military support from the people of Kufa. However, the Governor was among the people who had earlier expressed misgivings about the decision to fight. Therefore, when he showed some coldness on the Caliph's request, he was without delay removed and replaced with Quraza bin Malik. Ammar was then sent to persuade the people and solicit for their support. Ali عليه السلام ordered his son, al-Hasan, to join Ammar and complement his task. Al-Hasan obliged albeit that he was altogether against the military option. Therefore, wherever they went, al-Hasan never talked but sat on the pulpit while Ammar gave a sermon beneath him. The campaign

had proved enormously fruitful, as it garnered huge military support. More than 12,000 soldiers were gathered and they rallied around Caliph Ali عليه السلام.

The fight between the followers of Ali and Mu'awiyah عليه السلام continued. Ammar bin Yasir عليه السلام had a fatal encounter with one of Mu'awiyah's soldiers. His death caused strong consternation and confusion especially on the followers of Mu'awiyah عليه السلام, so much so that some of them decamped to the side of Caliph Ali عليه السلام. They remembered the Hadith in which the Prophet ﷺ said, "Ammar will be killed by a transgressing faction". Mu'awiyah interpreted the Hadith as referring to the followers of Caliph Ali عليه السلام, because they were the ones who took him out from the comfort of Madina as a result of which he met his tragic fate.

What appeared more ironic during the battle, however, was the mutual relation and reciprocal cooperation that existed between members of the two warring camps. Whenever the fight paused for a break to pray; each soldier could enter the camp of the opponents and do any other business as he wished. Both the camps drew water from the same well. In the evening when the fight stopped, it was Ali عليه السلام who led the funeral prayer for the deceased of both camps. A captive of either camp was not killed but disarmed and released. If he resisted being disarmed, then he would be chained and kept in detention. Likewise, no camp had attempted to take booty from the other. That was perhaps why some historians said there had never been a fight in history like the Battle of Siffin. Muslim jurists also extracted elaborative jurisprudential rulings regarding battle and military engagements between Muslims in the light of this unique battle.

#### **5.7.2. Ceasefire**

As the fight was reaching flashpoint, both the sides had suffered casualties, with some people still fanning the embers of conflict. Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه proposed a ceasefire on the recommendation of his close associate, Amr bin al-As. Caliph Ali bin Abi Talib رضي الله عنه instantly accepted the advice for ceasefire. It was clear that everyone was tired of the fight and realized that it was needless. During the ceasefire, an agreement was reached to constitute an arbitration committee. Two men were selected from both sides and were shouldered with the responsibility of working out modalities for peace and a lasting solution.

Ali رضي الله عنه expressed regret over the whole decision of resorting to military option. It was clear to him that the decision did not yield productive results and it was hence extremely difficult to extract the loyalty of the Syrians through military might. Our claim that Ali رضي الله عنه was rueful of the fight is undergirded by his nomination of Abu Musa al-Ash'ari to serve as his representative in the arbitration and reconciliation committee. After all, Ali رضي الله عنه was fully aware that Abu Musa right from the onset was not in support of the fight and did not join the group of Ali as a fighter. In Abu Mus'as view, it was totally wrong for Muslims to gather in a theatre of a fight rather than an umbrella of unity and peace. That was why Ali رضي الله عنه earlier removed him from his position as a Governor. On his part, Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه nominated Amr bin al-As to represent him in the two-man committee.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> Perhaps it will be good to give some notes on the position and virtues of these two companions. Abu Musa al-Ash'ari was an experienced politician and long-term public official who served previous administrations. During the time of the Prophet ﷺ, he served as a Governor twice; first in Zabid province and later in Adan province. He was the Governor of Basra throughout the era of Caliph Umar bin al-Khattab رضي الله عنه. During the era of Caliph Usman رضي الله عنه, he was posted to Kufa to serve as their Governor. Similarly, he remained

The 27<sup>th</sup> of Ramadhan, in the 37<sup>th</sup> year after the Hijra of the Prophet ﷺ was earmarked for the first sitting of the committee. Daumatul Jandal was the agreed venue. The committee was formally inaugurated by Ash'ath bin Qais on behalf of the two sides. Though himself a follower of Ali, Ash'ath bin Qais promised that the recommendations and resolutions of the committee would be worked with.

Imam al-Zuhri narrated that lots of lives were lost and the death toll rose high so much so that corpses had to be buried in mass graves. As we have mentioned earlier, no captives were taken as prisoners. Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه was the first to release a captive. In a rather humorous narration, a handcuffed captive rose in front of Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه and

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as Governor in Kufa and was not removed until when things began getting out of control. Abu Musa was one of the memorizers of the Glorious Qur'an during the time of the Prophet ﷺ. He was also one of the most learned men and among the six jurists who used to give fatwa in the Prophet's mosque since the Prophetic era. It was generally believed that apart from Caliph Ali, no one was more knowledgeable than Abu Musa during the *Khilafa* of the fourth Caliph.

Similarly, Amr bin al-As was the person who was described by the Prophet ﷺ as someone who attained a great level of Iman while people had just surrendered to Islam. The Prophet ﷺ also described him as one of "the righteous Quraysh men" (Albani, *Silsilat al-Ahadith al-Sahihah*, hadith number 653). He embraced Islam and joined the Muslim community in Madina. He was regarded as one of the shrewd and wise men among the Arabs. That was why one day the Prophet ﷺ asked him to make judgment between some disputants. He replied how would he dare make judgment while the Prophet ﷺ was alive? The Prophet ﷺ encouraged him to oblige and commented that when a judge makes a right judgment he will get double reward and when he errs he has a single reward. (For details see Bukhari, the Book of *I'tisam* (8/157). Amr bin al-As served as a commander during the Battle of Zat al-Salasil.



said that since Mu'awiyah was his uncle, he should grant a pardon to him. Mu'awiyah retorted how came he did not know the man? The captive replied that since he was a Muslim, he must be the son of Ummul Mu'minin (mother of the believers), Mu'awiyah's sister, Umm Habibah, one of the Prophet's wives. Therefore, like every other Muslim, he must be the nephew of Mu'awiyah.

Ali عليه السلام also released all the captives among Mu'awiyah's followers, and Mu'awiyah reciprocated by also freeing all the captives among Ali's followers. Thus, the fire of the battle had died down.

The battle took place from Wednesday to Friday in the early 37<sup>th</sup> year after Hijra. As authentic narrations indicate, numerous lives were lost.<sup>259</sup>

### 5.7.3. The Opinions of the Sahaba on the Battle

It is imperative to note that none of the parties involved in the battle had excommunicated the other party (i.e. considered them as *kuffar*). Caliph Ali عليه السلام himself said, "We did not fight them because we considered them as *kuffar*. We fought [them] because each one of us saw himself as being on the right."<sup>260</sup> He also said, "Our Lord is one, our Prophet is one, our call to Islam is one. We do

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<sup>259</sup> There were some narrations that go to the extreme of saying that the battle cost about 70,000 lives. While in essence, the battle did not last longer than three days and the actual hours in the battlefield were not more than 30 hours. We should consider that even in the battle of Qadisiyya, not more than 8,500 were killed and historians have unanimously agreed that the battle of Siffin was not in the slightest sense comparable with the battle of Qadisiyya which was ran through series of decisive clashes between the Muslims and the Persians. See Sallabi's *Asma al-Matalib fi Sirat Amir al-Mu'minin Ali bin Abi Talib* (2/653-654).

<sup>260</sup> See a Shi'ite source *Qurb al-Isnad*, p. 45 and *Bihar al-Anwar* (32/324).

not consider ourselves as having more claim of belief in God and His Messenger than them nor do they consider themselves as having more claim than us. We have a common cause but differ only on the issue of Usman's blood on which we did not have any hand".<sup>261</sup>

During the days on which the fight was on, Ammar رضي الله عنه heard an Iraqi soldier among the followers of Caliph Ali رضي الله عنه saying that the Syrians (Mu'awiyah and his followers) were *kuffar*. Ammar interposed and said, "You should stop saying this. Our Prophet is one, our Qiblah is one. The issue is just that they involved themselves in chaos, and it becomes incumbent upon us to bring them to order",<sup>262</sup> referring to their delay to give allegiance to Caliph Ali رضي الله عنه. In any case, the crisis fell within the spectrum of internal feud about which God says: -

﴿ وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَىٰ فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّىٰ تَبْغِيَ إِلَىٰ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴾ [سورة الحجرات: ٩]

*If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make ye peace between them: but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then fight ye [all] against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah; but if it complies, then make peace between them with justice, and be fair: for Allah loves those who are fair [and just].*<sup>263</sup>

<sup>261</sup> *Nahj al-Balagh*, p. 448 and *Biharal-Anwar* (33/306).

<sup>262</sup> Ibn Abi Shaibah's *Al-Musannaf* (8/722) and Ibn Asakir's *Tarikh Dimashq* (1/348).

<sup>263</sup> Surah al-Hujurat: 9.

There were about four opinions about this battle as far as the Sahaba were concerned. There were among them those who opined that it should not have happened at all. Rather than being obsessed with fighting one another, the Umma should unite under one umbrella. This category of the Sahaba recognized the leadership of Ali عليه السلام and had pledged their allegiance to him. They were in essence, against the fight, especially looking at the fact the authentic Prophetic traditions, which clearly cautioned people against meddling into a conflict that would occur among Muslims. The Hadith said, “There will erupt conflicts [among Muslims]. He who sits down [at home] is better than he who stands up in them [the conflicts]. He who stands up is better than he who walks into them. He who walks into them is better than he runs in to them”.<sup>264</sup>

This and many other ahadith served as a deterrent for the majority of the Sahaba to shun the battle. They chose to play the role of peacemakers and bringers of reconciliation.<sup>265</sup> The Sahaba who belonged to this category included Sa’ad bin Abi Waqqas عليه السلام, Muhammad bin Maslamah عليه السلام, Abdullah bin Umar عليه السلام, Abu Musa al-Ash’ari عليه السلام, Abu Bakra al-Thaqafi عليه السلام and Abu Mas’ud al-Ansari عليه السلام, among others. Some of them were personally cautioned by the Prophet ﷺ to avoid partaking in conflict against fellow Muslims”.<sup>266</sup>

<sup>264</sup> *Sahih al-Bukhari* (3601) and *Sahih Muslim* (2886).

<sup>265</sup> Al-Hasan al-Basri one of the prominent and senior disciples of the Sahaba (Tabi’un) said that there were about ten thousand companions of the Prophet ﷺ alive at the time of the crisis, but there were no more than thirty among them who were involved and took part in the feud. This was narrated by Imam Ahmad in his *al- Musnad*. According to Ibn Taimiyyah in his *Minhaj al-Sunnah* (3/186), the story’s chain of transmission is one of the overall best and most sound chains.

<sup>266</sup> *Sahih al-Bukhari*, the Book of Fitana (8/95), *Sunan al-Tirmizi*, also the Book of Fitana (3/332) and *al- Musnad* of al-Imam Ahmad (4/225).

The second category of the Sahaba represented those who supported Caliph Ali رضي الله عنه in his fight. In their opinion, since he was the full-fledged supreme Muslim leaders recognized by the majority of Muslims, he must be assisted and obeyed unreservedly. Therefore, whoever disobeyed him must be decisively fought. They corroborated their stand with Qur'anic verses and Prophetic traditions, which indicate the obligation of being loyal to leaders and complying with their directives. Among the Sahaba who shared this view were Abdullah bin Abbas, Ash'ath bin Qais, Ammar bin Yasir, Malik bin Ka'b al-Hamdani and some few others.

Below is a conversation between Ammar bin Yasir and Abu Mas'ud al-Ansari, the latter being among those who opposed the idea of fight: -

Abu Mas'ud: Oh you Ammar! You should know that you are above all your peers in my eyes. You have never meddled yourself into a matter that would tarnish your image like your hasty involvement in this crisis.

Ammar: Oh you Abu Mas'ud! On my part, since the demise of the Prophet ﷺ, you and your friend (Amr bin al-As) have never had any taboo that demeans your icon except your withdrawal from this matter.

(Ammar was referring to their refusal to support Ali).

The third category of the Sahaba was those supporting the cause of the Syrian Governor Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه. Their main point was that Mu'awiyah was demanding for the revenge of the murder of his relative, Caliph Usman رضي الله عنه. They said he must be assisted and supported to accomplish the task, which Allah the Almighty enjoins in Surah al-Isra': -

﴿ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَمَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا

فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لَوْلِيٍّ سُلْطَانًا فَلَا يُسْرِفُ فِي الْقَتْلِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مَنْصُورًا ﴾

[سورة الإسراء: ٣٣]

Nor take life - which Allah has made sacred - except for just cause. And if anyone is slain

*wrongfully, we have given his heir authority [to demand qisas or to forgive]: but let him not exceed bounds in the matter of taking life; for he is helped [by the Law].*<sup>267</sup>

They also reasoned with the Prophetic traditions, which show that some crises would erupt and that Usman رضي الله عنه and his followers were in the right position.<sup>268</sup> Therefore, since they were the ones fighting because of him, they were his followers. Among the companions who shared this view were Amr bin al-As رضي الله عنه, Ubada bin al-Samit رضي الله عنه, Abu al-Darda' رضي الله عنه, Abu Umama al-Bahiliy رضي الله عنه, Amr bin Ambasa رضي الله عنه and some few others.

The fourth category comprised the Sahaba who were looking for peaceful resolution and reconciliation. They included the Makkan troops led by Talha, Zubair and A'isha رضي الله عنها who earlier set out for that mission. Since the crisis emanated as a result of Usman's assassination and the consequent quest for vengeance, the people considered taking remedial measures very mandatory, which might inevitably necessitate the execution of the perpetrators of Usman's murder. All the Sahaba in this category recognized Ali رضي الله عنه as the Caliph and had given their allegiance to him. More or less, they had sound reasons for the step they took. After all, both Talha رضي الله عنه and Zubair رضي الله عنه had been favourably cleared in Prophetic Ahadith, such as the one in which the Prophet ﷺ gave glad tidings of the martyrdom to Talha رضي الله عنه<sup>269</sup> and the one

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<sup>267</sup> Surah al-Isra': 33.

<sup>268</sup> Imam Ahmad's *al-Musnad*: (5/33).

<sup>269</sup> *Tirmizi*: the Book of Virtues, the Chapter on the Virtue of Talha bin Ubaidullah, hadith number 3739 and Albani's *Silsilat al-Ahadith al-Sahihah*, hadith number 126.

in which the killer of Zubair رضي الله عنه was condemned as an inmate of hellfire.<sup>270</sup>

#### 5.7.4. The Power of Destiny

It is pertinent to note that none of these fights was ever meant to dethrone Caliph Ali رضي الله عنه from his position. In fact, he was the one who left Madina for the purpose of bringing those he considered disloyal to him to order, and as a result, it escalated to fight. It was only in the Battle of Siffin that he had first ordered for a military attack, unlike in the Battle of Camel which had already started and was at its peak before his arrival to the scene. He was then forcefully drawn into it.

It should be noted also that Talha and Zubair رضي الله عنه were never the target of Caliph Ali رضي الله عنه. They aimed at bringing the Iraqi rebels who killed Caliph Usman رضي الله عنه to book. But in the process, when Caliph Ali رضي الله عنه reached them, fight just broke between them to the proportion that they themselves could not control. Ali رضي الله عنه would later regret and felt touched by the death of Talha and Zubair as a result of the fight. He even quoted the Prophetic Hadith which shows that the killer of Zubair was condemned and would become an inmate of hellfire.<sup>271</sup>

A close observation of the issue will reveal that Caliph Ali's position to exercise respite on taking action against the assassins of Usman رضي الله عنه until the return of normalcy was not different from the view of Usman himself before he was murdered. He insisted that they should not be touched or engaged militarily, so that chaos would be avoided. That was what Ali رضي الله عنه also sought to avoid.

Mu'awiyah's clash with Ali رضي الله عنه was mainly related to the assassination of Caliph Usman. The Syrian Governor

<sup>270</sup> Imam Ahmad's *al- Musnad* (1/89) and Albani's *Silsilat al-Ahadith al-Sahihah*, hadith number 1388.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

considered himself the rightful person to avenge the murder while Ali عليه السلام maintained that the former must first give his allegiance to him and then table his grievance before the government for consideration and taking necessary action. Mu'awiyah عليه السلام insisted that he would not give his allegiance until action was taken against the killers or he should be allowed to avenge.<sup>272</sup>

As such, the situation became a cul-de-sac. Though both sides had substantive and legitimate claims, the position of Caliph was sounder and more appropriate, strategically speaking. Thus, the fight did not yield any productive results. It was on that basis that the position of the Sahaba, who opted to avoid partaking in the crisis, enjoyed more support and corroboration of Shari'ah stipulations. Ali عليه السلام himself had later regretted and even confessed to his son, al-Hasan, "Woe on me! I would have followed your advice! I wish I would have died twenty years ago".<sup>273</sup> This partly explains why al-Hasan would later work out a peaceful process of reconciliation by ceding his mandate of being his father's successor and stepping down for Mu'awiyah. This decision was one of al-Hasan's great virtues with which he shall be remembered forever in Muslim history. The Prophet ﷺ had foretold the Umma of this decision and praised his grandson for championing the cause of unity for his Ummah.

Mu'awiyah's refusal to give his allegiance to Caliph Ali at the appropriate time was a mistake for which we pray to Allah to forgive him. Nonetheless, it is wrong to assume that he was contesting for the position of *Khilafa*.

As highlighted earlier, both Ali عليه السلام and Mu'awiyah عليه السلام felt the pain of what occurred. Ali عليه السلام in particular, used to say, "Woe on me! I wish I would have died twenty

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<sup>272</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *al-Muqaddimah* (1/257).

<sup>273</sup> Ibn Taimiyyah, *Minhaj al-Sunnah* (6/209) and Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghabah* (6/209).

years ago”.<sup>274</sup> Likewise, Mu’awiyah رضي الله عنه expressed regret when he went to Makka for Hajj. He visited Madina and met some Sahaba, including Sa’ad bin Abi Waqqas رضي الله عنه, Abdullah bin Umar رضي الله عنه and Abdullah bin Abbas رضي الله عنه. Sa’ad told him that the Prophet ﷺ had said in Ali’s respect, “You are with the truth and the truth is with you wherever you turn”. Mu’awiyah رضي الله عنه looked daggers at him and demanded that he must present a proof. They went to Umm Salamah who testified that the Prophet ﷺ had actually said that. Thereafter, Mu’awiyah expressed deep regret, saying, “O Abu Ishaq! You should not be blamed on anything other than that you have heard this [on Ali] from Allah’s Messenger and you yet refused to follow him.”<sup>275</sup> “Have I heard it from the Messenger of Allah, I would have subjected myself to his service till the end of my life”.<sup>276</sup>

#### 5.7.5. Rift among the Followers of Ali

Despite Ali’s determination and effort to avert the disunity of the Ummah, thereby accepting the proposal of reconciliation, what he loathed would still occur. Little after the ceasefire in the Battle of Siffin, a faction emerged among his followers. Members of the group withdrew their allegiance and support from him and appointed one, Shabas bin Rib’iy, as their leader. Their new Imam was Abdullah bin al-Kawa. This group would

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<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

<sup>275</sup> Sa’ad bin Abi Waqqas refused to follow Ali because he felt that Ali though on the right path, should have abandoned that cause in the interest of peace. After all, Ali himself had expressed his approval of the position of Sa’ad, Abdullah bin Umar and Abdullah bin Abbas. See Ibn Hajar’s *Fath al-Bari* (12/67).

<sup>276</sup> Ibn Asakir, *Tarikh Dimashq* (22/246). The Hadith is in Hakim’s *al-Mustadrak ala- al-Sahihain* (3/119). The Hadith is sound according to Hakim.



later come to be known as the Khawarij. Their main reason for seceding from Ali's camp was that, according to them, it is a "kufr" (disbelief) to constitute the arbitration committee and that members of the committee were "Taghut", since they were regarded as having the authority to make law other than God. To support their position, the Khawarij used to quote the following Qur'anic verse: -

﴿ إِنِ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ ﴾ [الأنعام: ٥٧]

*The law rests with none but Allah.*<sup>277</sup>

This unfortunate development further worsened matters for Caliph Ali عليه السلام and diverted his attention and determination of bringing the Syrians to order. The Caliph, however, reacted to the Khawarij issue in a very diplomatic way. He sent messages to them and gave them chance to express their grievances. The approach proved workable, as a significant number of them had, upon hearing a convincing argument abandoned the group and joined mainstream Muslims. Nevertheless, there were more than four thousand men among them who doggedly held their view and considered any other view as deviant. They appointed Abdullah bin Wahb al-Rasibi as their leader. With this, it became apparently inevitable that they must be engaged militarily.

#### 5.7.6. The Task Still Unfinished

The day assigned for the committee's sitting had come. People assembled and stayed within an earmarked distance for them to witness the deliberation of the committee. Those who attended from the side of Caliph Ali عليه السلام included Abdullah bin Abbas, Ash'ath bin Qais, Abdullah bin Tufail, Uqba bin Ziyad, Hujr bin Yazid, among others. From the followers of Mu'awiyah عليه السلام,

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<sup>277</sup> Surah al-An'am: 57.

those who attended included Utba bin Abi Sufyan, Abu al-Anwar al-Sulami, Mukhariq bin Haris, Subai' bin Yazid and Abdurrahman bin Khalid bin Walid, among others.

As the committee began its session, the members recommended that the Shura consultative forum, which was formed by Caliph Umar, should be part of the committee.<sup>278</sup> The challenge however, was the emergence of the Khawarij most of whom were among the rebels, who had earlier objected to any peaceful resolution and reconciliation. They represented a big hitch and stumbling block to the process. On that note, Caliph Ali عليه السلام realized that there was a lot to do, as his attention was divided. Therefore, he decided to end his fight against the Syrians, so that he would fully concentrate on the threat posed by the Khawarij. In the meantime, he also chose not to abruptly fight the Khawarij until they committed an offence that would warrant engaging them militarily.

Amidst that situation, the Khawarij killed one of the Sahaba, Abdullah bin Khabbab, and his pregnant wife. They cut her stomach and took out the fetus. Caliph Ali عليه السلام sent a message of warning to them. They instantly killed the messenger. With this development, Ali عليه السلام announced his plan to fight them. They were fought decisively. Those who ran away were chased and

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<sup>278</sup> It was not meant that they would remove Ali and appoint someone since he was unanimously selected by the forum and endorsed by the rest of Muslims. Therefore, the disagreement was not about his leadership but rather on his right for allegiance on Mu'awiya and the Syrians and also the blood of Caliph Usman and the process of avenging. The myth which some people used to publicize that Amr bin al-As deceived Abu Musa al-Ash'ari and removed Ali from his position was unfounded and baseless, and was meant primarily to tarnish the image of these great people.

scattered so much so that only a few of them could escape.

The Khawarij became notorious of excommunicating fellow Muslims. Paradoxically, they were famously ahead of everyone in terms of praying, fasting and recitation of the Qur'an. Moreover, they were perseverant when they confronted their enemies. This and other considerations made a lot of Ali's followers fearful and skeptical of clashing with the Khawarij.

It is imperative to mention that the entire Sahaba, including those who objected his position as regards the previous crises, had converged and unanimously affirmed Ali's decision to fight the Khawarij. A number of Mu'awiyah's followers joined Ali in the fight, especially when they became aware of the many Ahadith, which enjoined them to fight rebels.<sup>279</sup> Conversely, there was no single Hadith to support the idea of engaging in military confrontation with Mu'awiyah and his followers. It was an Ijtihad exercised by the Caliph.

### 5.8. The Martyrdom of Caliph Ali رضي الله عنه

Caliph Ali رضي الله عنه met his tragic death in the hands of the Khawarij who objected to his decision of resolving the dispute through reconciliation and peaceful means. Initially, they orchestrated a plan to eliminate Ali, Mu'awiyah and Amr bin al-Ass رضي الله عنه, whom they alleged as the "Taghut" of the season. They earmarked the 17<sup>th</sup> of Ramadhan of year 40 after Hijra as the day on which they would carry out their deadly operation when each of the targeted Sahaba would come out for the Subhi prayer.

Therefore, Abdurrahman bin Muljam headed for Kufa, the base of Caliph Ali رضي الله عنه. Al-Barak bin Abdullah went to

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<sup>279</sup> See the ahadith enjoining fighting the Khawarij in Bukhari, the Book of Fitan, the Chapter on Fighting the Khawarij.

Syria to eliminate Mu'awiyah, who was by then suffering from a wound in his thigh, as a result of which many guards were for the first time in Islamic history deployed to defend him. Similarly, Amr bin al-As was sick on the appointed day, so he could not come out for the Subhi prayer. Therefore, on that fateful dawn, Amr's second in command Kharijah bin Huzaifah, was the one who came out to lead the prayer. The assassins could not identify him and mistook him as Amr bin al-As due to darkness. They eventually killed him.

In Kufa, the operation of the Khawarij went as planned. Abdurrahman bin Muljam attacked Caliph Ali on his way to Mosque and stabbed him. Thus, Ali became the third Caliph to be murdered after his two predecessors, Umar and Usman. As God had destined, Ali would never go back to Madina. His son, al-Hasan, had predicted this and advised his father to shelve his plan. In any case, since only God knows the unseen, Ali was not in the position to certainly know what would happen.

It was reported that Mu'awiyah was greatly touched by the news of Caliph Ali's gruesome murder. When his wife rebuked him on that, he replied, "Do you really know the kind of person we have lost?"<sup>280</sup>

Ali's martyrdom was on the 17<sup>th</sup> of Ramadhan, year 40 after the Hijra. His *Khilafa* spanned for three years and nine months. He was survived by his four wives and 31 children, 14 males and 17 females. Most of them were martyred together with their brother, Husain, during the infamous Karbala tragedy, as we will see later. Most of his descendants came through his children, al-Hasan, al-

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<sup>280</sup> Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah* (8/14, 130).

Husain, Muhammad bin al-Hanafiyyah, Abbas and Umar.<sup>281</sup>

### 5.9. The Position of Shi'ites on Caliph Ali

The foregoing biographical account of Caliph Ali عليه السلام, including his virtues, the roles he played in early development of Islam and his accomplishments up to the time of his murder, is the position of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah. They love him, extol his virtues and wish to be raised with him on the Day of Resurrection. As narrated in Kitab al-Gharat, "Two categories of people will be condemned as regards Ali bin Abi Talib; those who go to extreme in his love and those who go to extreme in his odium".<sup>282</sup> The Khawarij were the ones who went to extreme in hating Ali, as can be seen in their attempt to stir hostilities and disputes between him and his fellow Muslims. They later dumped him, turned against him and eventually transplanted someone to kill him. The Shi'ites were, on the other hand, the category which goes to extreme in his love.

The Shi'ites singled out Caliph Ali alone from the Prophet's household and his companions. They not only uphold and regarded him above all others, they also defamed the character of the entire Sahaba, with the exception of Ali's wife, Fatima عليها السلام, and her two children and three other people, Ammar bin Yasir, Abu Zarr al-Ghifarri and Salman al-Farisi. Some Shi'ites include Miqdad bin al-Aswad. The rest, however, such as the entire wives of the Prophet عليه السلام, his disciples, emissaries and soldiers, who dedicated their lives and property in defense of Islam to the extent that God had praised them

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<sup>281</sup> See Maqrizi's *Itti'az al-Hunafa' bi AKhbar al-A'imma al-Fatimiyyin al-Khulafa'*, vol. 1. Also available <http://www.alwarrak.com>.


<sup>282</sup> For Shi'ite source see Ibrahim al-Thaqafi's *al-Gharat* (2/590).

in the Qur'an, were, according to the Shi'ites, not righteous people, since they did not select Ali as the Prophet's successor until after three among them had ruled.

Moreover, in Ali's respect, in addition to the countless virtues and honours, which are authentic, they fabricated a lot of lies and absurd narratives that would be difficult to believe. They have turned his imamate position as a pillar and condition of Islam. Below are few examples of their fabricated narrations: -

Zurarah bin A'yan narrated that Abu Ja'far *alaihis salam* said, "Islam was built upon five pillars; Salat, Zakat, Fast, Hajj and Wilayah (Ali's leadership)". When asked which among these pillars was the greatest, Abu Ja'far said, "Wilayah is the greatest because it is the one that serves as key to them".<sup>283</sup>

Likewise, Majlisi has narrated in his *Bihar al-Anwar* that the Prophet ﷺ said, "O you Ali! God never sent a Prophet except that He called him to believe in your Wilayah, whether he likes or not". In another narration by Kulini, "The Wilayah of Ali was written in all the scriptures of the Prophets. And God would never send any Messenger except with the [news of the mission of] Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and the Wilayah of Ali *alaihis salam*".<sup>284</sup>

According to the Shi'ites, the Imamah which they ascribe to Ali  was similar to the position of Prophethood.<sup>285</sup>

On that basis, they excommunicated whoever does not believe in it, as affirmed by al-Mufid, one of their scholars, "The Imamiyyah Shi'ites have reached a consensus that whoever rejects the Imamah of any of the Imams and the obligation of obedience to them is a *kafir*

<sup>283</sup> Kulini, *Usul al-Kafi* (2/18).

<sup>284</sup> Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar* (11/60) and Kulini's *al-Kafi* (1/437).

<sup>285</sup> See one of the Shi'ite's work, Muzhaffar, *Aqa'id al-Imamiyyah*, p. 91.

(disbeliever), a deviant and will remain in hellfire forever”.<sup>286</sup> Tusi also said “Rejecting Imamah is a *kufir* like rejecting Prophethood, since there is no difference in ignoring them”.<sup>287</sup>

In fact, Wilayah as Shi’ites uphold, is even “Written’ on the door of paradise. Therefore, none shall enter paradise except those who believe in the Wilayah. There are, of course, a lot of fabricated stories in this regard, but which we for some reasons skipped.<sup>288</sup>

#### 5.10. The Shi’ites Insulting Ali عليه السلام

Shocking as this caption may sound, there are authentic proofs to substantiate it, which further dismiss the pretentious and hypocritical claim of the Shi’ites on their love to Caliph Ali عليه السلام. We will in due course present some sample of Shi’ites’ abuse, insult and attack on the person of Ali bin Abi Talib, including his portrayal as a chicken-livered fellow and his wife a nincompoop and an evil woman, as stashed in their books.

In his Qur’anic exegesis (*tafsir*), al-Qummi chronicled that when the Prophet ﷺ decided to marry off his daughter, Fatima, to Ali, she was extremely unhappy about it because he was worthless and destitute, likewise his parent. She also dismissed him as a bald-headed, ugly person with a big stomach, long forearm, large eyes and a spotted knee like that of a camel.<sup>289</sup>

The Shi’ites also point out that Ali expressed some skepticism during his conversion to Islam. Ibn Tawus, one

<sup>286</sup> Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar* (8/366).

<sup>287</sup> Tusi, *Talkhis al-Shafi* (4/131).

<sup>288</sup> For example, *al-Kafi* (4/220), *al-Ihtijaj*, p. 83, *Man La Yahduruhu al-Faqih* (4/374) and Tusi’s *al-Amali*, p. 115 and *Mustadrak al-Wasa’il* (7/266), etc.

<sup>289</sup> *Tafsir al-Qummi* (2/336), Saduq’s *al-Amali*, p. 326, *Bihar al-Anwar* (40/6), Abu al-Faraj, *Maqatil al-Talibiyyin*, p. 26.

of their scholars, narrated in *Sa'ad al-Su'ud* that when the Prophet invited Ali to Islam, the latter merely replied, "What you are saying contradicts the religion of my father. But give me some time to mull over it".<sup>290</sup>

They further accuse him of failing to take care of his family. Arbili in *Kashf al-Gumma*, narrated that the Prophet ﷺ went to his daughter's house and met her crying. He said, "Oh my daughter! What is worrying you? She said, "Lack of enough food and too much worry and agony. I swear with God, my agony is intense and my destitution is increasing".<sup>291</sup>

In *Bihar al-Anwar*, one of the most revered books according to the Shi'ites, a strange and exceedingly bizarre story is told that during the time of Caliph Umar a woman complained that she was raped. She even showed some sperm drops in her thigh. Before Umar passed judgment, Ali ﷺ observed and looked at the cleavage between her thighs closely and discovered that it was not a sperm but an egg liquid, which she cunningly put on her thigh!<sup>292</sup>

Another more gruesome allegation is the claim that during his leadership, Ali ﷺ advertently refused to implement *hadd* (penalty) of thievery even though the thief was, upon sound proof and personal confession, found guilty of the crime.<sup>293</sup>

In the Shi'ite theological compendium, *al-Kafi*, which is equivalent to the Sunni's *Sahih al-Bukhari*, it is chronicled that Caliph Umar ﷺ sought the marriage of Ali's daughter, Umm Kulsum. Her father told Umar that

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<sup>290</sup> Ibn Tawus, *Sa'ad al-Su'ud*, p. 216, Sharif al-Murtadha, *al-Fusul al-Mukhatarah*, p. 280 and *Bihar al-Anwar* (38/286).

<sup>291</sup> Arbili, *Kashf al-Gumma*, (1/149-150).

<sup>292</sup> *Bihar al-Anwar* (40/303).

<sup>293</sup> See one of the Shi'ite sources, al-Qummi's *Man La Ya Dhurruhu al-Faqih* (4/62).



she was too young to marry him. Umar then went to Abbas عليه السلام, Ali's uncle, and asked if he [Umar] had any defect. Abbas عليه السلام inquired what was amiss. Umar informed him that he went to his nephew seeking for his daughter's marriage but he objected to "marrying her off for me. I swear, I will destroy the Zamzam well and every other thing you are proud of. And I will provide two witnesses to testify that he [Ali] had committed theft and I shall cut off his hand!" Abbas met Ali and talked to him. Thereafter, [Ali] allowed for the marriage.<sup>294</sup> In a different narration, Ja'far al-Sadiq, one of the Shi'ite distinct Imams, was asked on this issue of the marriage and he lamented that she [Umm Kulsum] was forcefully snatched.<sup>295</sup>

Though in the Shi'ite legal system, when someone is found under the same bedding with a woman other than his wife, he is considered a fornicator or adulterer,<sup>296</sup> it is narrated in their book that the Prophet ﷺ, his wife, A'isha, and Ali "slept" inside one bedding and the Prophet even went out for night prayer and left them "sleeping" inside the bedding.<sup>297</sup>

There are stories in advanced Shi'ite books, which are full of lies and absurdities in respect to the dignity of Fatima, the wife of Ali عليه السلام. She is described as 'irresponsible harlot', always quarrelling with people at the marketplace and insulting the in-laws of her father, Abubakar and Umar, from the comfort of her bed!

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<sup>294</sup> Kulini, *al-Kafi* (5/336).

<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

<sup>296</sup> *Al-Kafi* (7/181).

<sup>297</sup> *Bihar al-Anwar* (40/2).



# **Chapter Six**

## **The Caliphate of Al-Hasan Bin Ali رضي الله عنه**

# CHAPTER SIX

## The Caliphate of Al-Hasan Bin Ali

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### 6.1. His Genealogy

Hasan bin Ali, bin Abi Talib ﷺ was known as Abu Muhammad.<sup>298</sup> His mother was Fatima bint Rasululllah ﷺ. Al-Hasan was born in the middle of Ramadhan, the third year after the Hijra. His name was chosen by his grandfather, the Messenger ﷺ. So also the sacrificial ram for his naming was slaughtered by the Messenger ﷺ.<sup>299</sup> His mother gave out the charity of silver that equaled the measure of the baby's weight.<sup>300</sup> According to Imam al-Nawawi, the names of two Prophet's grandsons, al-Hasan and al-Husain, were historically unprecedented. They were never given to anybody before them.<sup>301</sup>

Despite that, until the Prophet's demise he was still a boy, al-Hasan could recall some of the things that occurred during the time of his grandfather. One day, Abu Hurairah asked al-Hasan the things he could recall when the Messenger ﷺ was alive. He replied, "I took a date from the goods brought as Sadaqah. The Prophet ﷺ took it out

<sup>298</sup> Ibn Hajar, *al-Isabah* (1/507).

<sup>299</sup> After two months, Fatimah ﷺ conceived again and toward the end of Sha'aban in the fourth year after Hijra, gave birth to his brother al-Husain ﷺ. See Imam Ahmad's *al-Musnad*, hadith number 769, Ibn Hajar's *al-Isabah* (6/243) and *Nasab Quraysh* (1/23).

<sup>300</sup> *Muwatta' Maliki*: 1067, In the narration of al-Baihaqi in his *Sunan al-Kubra* (9/304), she did that on the instruction of the Prophet ﷺ. He also ordered her to do the same when Husain was born. According to Albani, the Hadith's chain of transmission is sound.

<sup>301</sup> Al-Nawawi, *Tahzib al-Asma' wa al-Lugat* (1/210).

from my mouth while it [the date] was full of my saliva and he returned it to where I took it”.<sup>302</sup>

The Prophet ﷺ had a deep love, affection and concern toward his two grandsons.<sup>303</sup> He used to pray for them, saying, “O God! Indeed, I love them. So love them, O God”. This equally earned them respect, love and affection of the Sahaba. Whenever they went for Tawaf, a mammoth crowd would rally around them, as if they would overwhelm them, trying to say “*Salam*” to them and be graced with their handshakes.<sup>304</sup> Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه used to wipe dust away from one of them with his clothes. He would say, “Since I heard that speech from the Prophet ﷺ, there is none that I love like them”.<sup>305</sup>

## **6.2. His Physical Features**

Historians have described al-Hasan as a very handsome young man. He was white in complexion with a mixture of some red. His eyeballs were large and his beard very long. He had a long neck. He was an averagely tall man and had a relatively wide chest. He always looked prestigiously respectful. He was always jovial and an extrovert person. He was very generous and always imperturbable. He was a devoted servant of Allah, who was constantly engrossed in worship and spiritual meditation.<sup>306</sup> He used to read the whole of Surah al-Kahf before going to bed every night.

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<sup>302</sup> Ibn Hajar, *al-Isabaha fi Tamyiz al-Sahaba*, edited by Muhammad al-Bijawi, published by Dar al-Jil, Beirut, 1412 A.H (2/69).

<sup>303</sup> We have already indicated that they were not twins. Al-Husain was 11 months younger than al-Hasan. But because of the proximity of their age, many people thought that they were twins.

<sup>304</sup> Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah* (8/37).

<sup>305</sup> *Sahih al-Bukhari*: 5545 and Hakim’s *al-Mustadrak* (3/163).

<sup>306</sup> Zahabi, *Siyar A’lam al-Nubala’* (3/49).

Al-Hasan shared a close physical resemblance with the Prophet ﷺ. As narrated by historians, he resembled the Messenger ﷺ in the upper part while his brother, al-Husain, looked more like the Messenger in the lower part. That is to say, al-Hasan's countenance was more identical to his grandfather while Husain's body looked more like that of the Prophet ﷺ.<sup>307</sup>

Al-Hasan performed Hajj twenty times and trekked to Makka in most of them and left his camel with a companion of his. It was reported that on three different occasions, al-Hasan عليه السلام had divided his entire wealth into two and gave out one part as charity.<sup>308</sup> At a single time, he used to give charity of one hundred thousand dirhams to a single person.<sup>309</sup>

There was a time he heard someone making supplication, asking God to give him ten thousand dirhams. Al-Hasan instantly went back home and sent an exact amount of dirhams to the person.<sup>310</sup> Stories about the generosity and benevolence of al-Hasan are indeed very many more than there is space here to enumerate them.<sup>311</sup>

### 6.3. His Virtues and Honours

There have been a lot of narrations that account the virtues, merits and honours of both al-Hasan عليه السلام and al-Husain عليه السلام. They were both the grandchildren of the Prophet ﷺ and the source of his eye's comfort. His love for them was never hidden. He used to put them on his ride and go to places with them. An authentic Hadith

<sup>307</sup> Bukhari (2/381) and Ibn Asakir's *Tarikh Dimashq* (14/125-127).

<sup>308</sup> Zahabi, *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'* (3/260).

<sup>309</sup> This account was given by Ibn Sirin, one of his disciples. See al-Mizzi's *Tahzib al-Kamal* (6/234).

<sup>310</sup> Zahabi, *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'* (3/260).

<sup>311</sup> Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah* (11/197) and Ibn Asakir's *Tarikh Dimashq* (14/185).

shows that they would be the youth leaders of paradise,<sup>312</sup> just as Abubakar and Umar رضي الله عنهما would be the leaders of the elderly people in paradise.<sup>313</sup> Al-Hasan had a unique virtue. As the Prophet ﷺ foretold, he would be a leader that would put an end to a crisis which would erupt between two mighty factions among the Muslim Ummah.<sup>314</sup>

Al-Hasan and his brother, al-Husain, began partaking in Jihad during the leadership of Caliph Usman رضي الله عنه. Both of them defended and protected Caliph Usman رضي الله عنه during the uprising, which culminated in his murder. They further took part in other Jihad expeditions in the defense of Islam throughout their lives.

#### 6.4. His Family

Al-Hasan رضي الله عنه had altogether married six wives. Three of them gave birth to his children. They are as follows: -

1. Umm Kulthum bint al-Fadhl bin Abbas: She was his first wife. After his death, she married Abu

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<sup>312</sup> The Hadith is Mutawatir (narrated by a mammoth crowd of people). It was virtually collected from almost all the Sahaba, who used to narrate Hadith from the Prophet ﷺ, such as Umar bin al-Khattab, Abu Hurairah, Abdullah bin Umar, Abdullah bin Abbas, Abdullah bin Mas'ud, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, Jabir bin Abdullah, Usamah bin Zaid, Anas bin Malik, Huzaifah bin al-Yaman, Qurrah bin Iyas al-Muzani, Malik bin Huwairith, Bara' bin Azib, Buraidah bin Husaib, Rifa'ah bin Yathrib, Jaham al-Balawi. It was also collected from Ali bin Abi Talib and his son al-Husain. See *Tirmizi*: 3768, Imam Ahmad's *al-Musnad* (3/3 & 3/62) Hakim's *al-Mustadrak* (3/167), *Mawsu'at al-Hasan wa al-Husain* by Sayyid al-Hasan al-Husaini, p. 96-97.

<sup>313</sup> This hadith was narrated by al-Husain. For details see Ibn Asakir's *Tarikh Dimashq* (30/179).

<sup>314</sup> *Sahih al-Bukhari* (7/74) and Tirmizi's *As-Sunan*: 3775.

- Musa al-Ash'ari and after his death she was married by Talha bin Ubaidullah.
2. Khawla al-Fazariyya: she was the mother of his son, al-Hasan al-Muthanna.<sup>315</sup>
  3. Umm Bashir bint Mas'ud al-Badri: she was the mother of his children Umm al-Hasan, Umm al-Husain and Zaid.<sup>316</sup>
  4. Umm Ishaq bint Ubaidullah: She was the mother of his child, Talha. After al-Hasan's death she was married by his brother, al-Husain, and gave birth to the latter's daughter, Fatima.<sup>317</sup>
  5. Ja'dah bint Ash'ath bin Qais: She did not give birth to any child for him.
  6. A'isha al-Khas'amiyyah: She also did not give birth to any child for him.

Apart from these, al-Hasan also had many concubines through whom he had many other children, such as Abubakar, Umar, Qasim, Abdullah, Fatima, Umm Salama, Ruqayya, Ja'far, Ahmad, Ya'qub, Aqil, Hamza and Ismail. Both Abubakar and Umar were martyred together with their uncle, al-Husain, during the tragic clash of Karbala.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>315</sup> She was the mother of many of his children like Zainab, the wife of Caliph Walid bin Abdulmalik, one of the Umayyad leaders.

<sup>316</sup> He was the father of al-Hasan, who served as Governor in Madina during the reign of Abbasid Caliph, Abu Ja'far al-Mansur. He was also the father of Nafisa, the wife of Caliph Walid bin Abdulmalik, one of the Umayyad leaders.

<sup>317</sup> Her son Talha was one of al-Husain's followers who were martyred during the Karbala tragedy.

<sup>318</sup> For biographies and stories about the family of al-Hasan see the following books:

Among the Sunni Sources: Tabari's *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk* (3/343) and Ibn Kathir's *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah* (8/189) and Ibn al-Athir's *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh* (3/443).



### 6.5. Al-Hasan's Role in Jihad Expeditions

Both al-Hasan and his brother al-Husain grew up at the time the Islamic state was gaining influence beyond the capital, Madina. All the internal threats posed by the hypocrites and other enemies of Islam had been neutralized. At a youthful age, they attended all the expeditions that brought many territories to the fold of Islam during the *Khilafa* of Umar رضي الله عنه and his successor, Usman رضي الله عنه. Al-Hasan and al-Husain were among the twenty five thousand Muslim forces that were sent to East Africa by Caliph Usman in the 26<sup>th</sup> year after Hijra in modern Tunisia under the command of Abdullah bin Sa'ad bin Abi Sarh.<sup>319</sup> They opened many Berber territories like Subaitila and got reinforcements of about 120,000 soldiers. Their expeditions recorded huge success with humongous booty. They killed Jurjir, one of the commanders of their enemies.

In the 30<sup>th</sup> year after Hijra, both al-Hasan and al-Husain joined Muslim forces under the command of Sa'id bin al-As and headed for Tabaristan,<sup>320</sup> They demonstrated courage and exemplary bravery; they fearlessly fought their enemies at Tamis. Scores of territories entered into the fold of Islam while many others entered treaties and sought for amnesty according to Islamic foreign policy.<sup>321</sup>

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Among the Shi'ite sources see: al-Khuwarizimi's *Maqatil al-Talibiyyin* (2/47) and Mufid's *al-Irshad*, p. 248 and Qummi's *Muntaha al-Amal* (1/544).

<sup>319</sup> Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah* (8/59), Ibn Khaldun, *al-Tarikh* (2/573) and *Akhbar Duwal al-Maghrib al-Aqsa* (1/92).

<sup>320</sup> Tabaristan is now known as Mazandran. It is situated 200 kilometers away from Tehran, the capital of Iran.

<sup>321</sup> Tabari, *Tarikh al-Umam* (5/57) and *al-Futuh al-Islamiyyah* (1/175).

### **6.6. Al-Hasan Succeeded His Father, Ali عليه السلام**

We have earlier mentioned that al-Hasan detested his father's resolution to go out of Madina to fight those he considered disloyal to his leadership, but yet al-Hasan obliged to get out with him. Later, when things got out of hand, thereby becoming increasingly chaotic, Ali عليه السلام would admit that his son's advice would have been a better option.<sup>322</sup>

Before Caliph Ali died, there were many great Sahaba who were ahead of his son, al-Hasan, like Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas and Sa'id bin Zaid, who were both among the ten people given glad tidings of paradise by the Prophet. After all, Sa'ad was among the six people who were nominated by Caliph Umar عليه السلام to select his successor from among them, which meant that Sa'ad was himself qualified to succeed the former. Likewise, Sa'id bin Zaid عليه السلام was also qualified to become Caliph at the time but Umar عليه السلام deliberately skipped him because of his closeness with him; Sa'id was Umar's brother-in-law, having married his sister, Fatima bint al-Khattab, رضي الله عنها. Besides, there were many of al-Hasan's peers like Abdullah bin Umar, Abdullah bin Abbas, Abdullah bin Zubair, who were equally qualified.

Al-Hasan was not at all interested in leadership, especially after having seen how his father suffered. On the other hand, there were the recalcitrant and perfidious attitudes of Ali's followers in Iraq. Nonetheless, al-Hasan could not do otherwise than to accept their allegiance as his father's successor, especially looking at the fact that the commanders of Caliph Ali's armed forces had unanimously zeroed in on the resolution.

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<sup>322</sup> Ibn Taimiyyah, *Minhaj al-Sunnah* (6/209) and *Usd al-Ghabah* (6/209).

### **6.7. Al-Hasan and His Father's Followers**

Before he finally accepted their allegiance, al-Hasan عليه السلام had laid down some conditions by which his followers must abide. He said they should support him in any fight he would wage and also absolutely comply and accept whatever treaty, peace accord or reconciliation he would make. Some followers became reluctant, nurtured some suspicions and doubted if he would sincerely accomplish the task of continuing with the fight against the Syrians, which was started by his father.

Amidst that situation, some soldiers among his followers mutinied and even attacked him as a result of a rumour, which gained ground that Qais bin Sa'ad, one of his commanders, was murdered. The mutineers alleged that al-Hasan was behind the purported killing. They threw stones at him and even wounded his thigh. However, in actual sense Qais was alive and not murdered as rumoured. By God's mercy, al-Hasan عليه السلام escaped death as a result of this attack. After few months, he recuperated. This development further increased his wariness and resentment toward the Iraqis and even the leadership itself.

Al-Hasan عليه السلام gave an uncompromisingly harsh sermon in Kufa Mosque in which he accused the Iraqis of insubordination. He called their attention to the position and virtues of *Ahl al-Bait*. At the end of the sermon, many among the audience were deeply touched and could not help crying.

Meanwhile, Mu'awiyah عليه السلام was still enjoying the unflinching support and absolute loyalty of his Syrian followers. After the assassination of Caliph Ali عليه السلام, they had pledged their allegiance to Mu'awiyah as Caliph. Thus, this development brought about some disunity, as the Muslim Ummah now had two supreme leaders, Mu'awiyah عليه السلام and al-Hasan عليه السلام.

The Iraqis exerted every possible effort to persuade al-Hasan عليه السلام to wage war against Mu'awiyah عليه السلام. Al-Hasan عليه السلام mobilized troops who numbered about 40,000. He dispatched the first batch of 12,000 soldiers under the command of Qais bin Sa'ad bin Ubada. On their way to Syria, they had a stopover at a place called Maskan. Through intelligence reports, Mu'awiyah عليه السلام learned that the Iraqis had set out in a large military force and their mission was to wage war against him. Therefore, he set out and planned to meet them. On his way, he branched at a place near a bridge called Mambij.

### **6.8. Laying Foundations for a Lasting Solution**

Al-Hasan عليه السلام was still uninterested in furthering military onslaught among Muslims, which had curtailed efforts of spreading the Islamic mission to other territories. Mu'awiyah عليه السلام was shocked at the sight of the Iraqi "Thursday Troops". His closest associate, Amr bin al-As, told him that, before these troops could be pushed away, they must be able to kill a sizeable number of Syrians. Mu'awiyah عليه السلام then remarked that once that happened, one could not imagine the number of women who would be rendered widows and the children who would be orphaned. He wondered what kind of leader would be comfortable if that could happen to his subjects. As a result, they sent some delegation to al-Hasan عليه السلام and proposed that some reconciliatory measures be taken rather than resorting to a show of military muscle. Therefore, Mu'awiyah's delegates, Abdullah bin Amir bin Kuraiz<sup>323</sup> and Abdurrahman bin Samurra', met and

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<sup>323</sup> He was born in the 4<sup>th</sup> year after Hijra. He was taken to the Prophet ﷺ as a little boy after a year of Hudaibiyah treaty. While with the Prophet ﷺ, the boy yawned and the Prophet ﷺ blew his saliva in his mouth and said, "Is [this boy] from Sulamiyya's house?" He was replied in the affirmative. He remarked that the boy "resembled

discussed with al-Hasan عليه السلام. After some deliberations, for peace to reign, al-Hasan عليه السلام informed them of his plan to conditionally step down for Mu'awiyah عليه السلام. However, this decision was met with some stiff resistance on the part of the "Thursday Troops". Commander Qais bin Sa'ad seceded from the followership of al-Hasan عليه السلام and began moves to vehemently challenge the decision.

### **6.9. The Reigning of Peace and Muslim Unity**

Against the pressure of resistance from the angle of Qais bin Sa'ad and his followers, al-Hasan عليه السلام insisted on his move to step down for Mu'awiyah. Here came the realization of the Prophet's Hadith, "Indeed, this son of mine is a chief, Allah shall bring peace between two parties through his hands".<sup>324</sup>

On the day he would step down for Mu'awiyah عليه السلام, al-Hasan عليه السلام gave an intelligently rich sermon which indicated his foresight and compassion toward the Muslim Ummah. He outlined the reasons which prompted him to opt for peace and reconciliation. He enjoined people to know that

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us". So, he kept on blowing his saliva for a while. The Prophet ﷺ then added that "this is the one to be watered [henceforth]". That was why wherever Abdullah dug a well, water would easily be found stashed therein. He was appointed by Caliph Usman عليه السلام to serve as Governor of Basra in the 29<sup>th</sup> year after Hijra. He also served as Governor during Mu'awiyah's reign for three years. He died in Makka in the 59<sup>th</sup> year after Hijra and was buried in Arafat. He was described as a generous, brave person who valued knowledge. He was the person who brought the remnants of the Persian Empire to a halt; he pursued and finished with Persian leader and military commander Yazdajrid and Khurrazad. See Zahabi, *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'* (3/19), Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghabah* (3/293) and Ibn Sa'ad, *al-Tabaqat* (5/31).

<sup>324</sup> Bukhari: 2704, Tirmizi: 3773 and Zahabi, *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'* (3/259).

... The cleverest person is he who fears God. The most foolish is the one who deviates. Oh you people! Right from the start, I hated this matter [the crisis] more than you. And here I am now the one who is bringing reconciliation to it. I would return right to the one entitled to it, or rather I will give up my right for the interest of my Prophet's Umma. Oh you, Mu'awiyah! You should know that God has entrusted this responsibility to you because of a good with you or evil that is with you.

He then recited:-

{ وَإِنْ أَدْرِي لَعَلَّهُ فِتْنَةٌ لَكُمْ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ } [الأنبياء: ١١١]

*I know not but that it may be a trial for you and a grant of [worldly] livelihood [to you] for a time.*<sup>325</sup>

Al-Hasan عليه السلام relied on the condition of compliance and absolute loyalty to his decision, which he initially laid down to his followers among the Iraqis. Therefore, it became incumbent upon them to accept reconciliation. Interestingly, those who opposed his decision like Qais and his followers later sheathed their swords and reunited with al-Hasan. The latter even brought Qais to Mu'awiyah for allegiance. Though Qais was first a bit reluctant to extend his hand for Mu'awiyah, the new supreme leader did not hesitate to extend his own hand, and both eventually shook hands. Thus, Qais's allegiance was finally secured.

This was how a lasting solution that bandaged the wounds of the disunity which had been haunting the Umma was brought. With the exception of the Khawarij, the entire Muslim Ummah became united under the umbrella of one supreme leader. The year in which the peaceful solution was brought would be historically known as "*Am al-Jama'ah*", meaning "The year of people's unity".

<sup>325</sup> Surah al-Anbiya': 111.

### **6.10. An Enormous Reward for al-Hasan**

In His infinite wisdom, as authentic narrations indicate, God will raise a reformer toward the end of the world. He will be among the descendent of al-Hasan عليه السلام. This can be seen as a commensurate reward to al-Hasan for bringing peace and lasting solution at very turbulent period of crisis and disunity among the Muslim Ummah. Mahdi will emerge at a time when the world is full of corruption and the prevalence of moral degeneration caused largely by lack of adherence to Islamic teaching and, on the other hand, the absence of a strong and universally recognized supreme leadership to whom all Muslims will have absolute loyalty. Mahdi will come and take the lead.<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> There are at least three views concerning Mahdi. The first view says he was Prophet Isa *alaihis salam*. The second view contends that he was the Abbasid Caliph, Mahdi bin Abi Ja'far al-Mansur. The Twelver Shi'ites hold that he was Muhammad bin al-Hasan al-Askari, one of the descendants of al-Husain. There were some people who also held that the Mahdi was the Moroccan, Muhammad bin Tomarat, who claimed to be one. In his Mahdist mission, he killed many innocent people and kidnapped their women and children. There was another person with the name Ubaidullah bin Maimun al-Qaddah, who was originally a Jew but grew up in the midst of Zoroastrian pagans. He claimed to be a Mahdi and a descendent of the Prophet ﷺ. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century after Hijra, there was someone who also professed to be a Mahdi in Sudan. Likewise, in the beginning of 1400 after Hijra, someone called Juhaiman bin Muhammad Saif appeared in the Holy Ka'bah and spent 17 days massacring people in the name of being a Mahdi. Details on his story can be found in Abu Umar al-Zagbi's *Sahih Ahdath al-Nihayah wa Fitana Akhir al-Zaman*, p. 430-431.

That all said, authentic narrations indicate that Mahdi will come and he will be a descendent of al-Hasan. See Ibn al-Qayyim's *al-Manar al-Mufid*, p. 43.

### **6.11. Al-Husain and the Aftermath of Reconciliation**

Though there were certain things about which al-Husain was not inwardly happy, he maintained absolute silence and never allowed that to be understood. He pledged his allegiance to Mu'awiyah. Before his demise, al-Hasan رضي الله عنه had cautioned his brother, al-Husain رضي الله عنه, to be careful of his relationship with the people of Iraq. In particular terms, he warned him against being lured and deceived by them to withdraw his allegiance from Caliph Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه. From all indications, al-Hasan رضي الله عنه pointed out that God did not plan to combine Prophethood and leadership within the household of the Prophet ﷺ.

Al-Husain listened to his brother's will and sincere counsel with utmost alacrity. He never attempted to reverse his pledge of allegiance from Mu'awiyah throughout the latter's reign. However, al-Husain would later resist Mu'awiyah's plan to appoint his son, Yazid, as his crown prince and de facto successor. Al-Husain was not alone in this regard, as some few others like Abdurrahman bin Abubakar would also resist the plan.

As we will highlight later, before Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه died, he drew the attention of Yazid to be vigilant and extra-meticulous in his dealings with certain public figures one of whom was al-Husain رضي الله عنه. Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه noted that they wielded enormous clout and enjoyed the popularity and support of the masses.

### **6.12. The Demise of al-Hasan**

Al-Hasan had lived for more than a decade after the reconciliation that gave Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه the mandate to become the supreme leader of Muslims. Throughout those years, there was a prevalent atmosphere of peace and social stability. The relationship between Caliph Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه and al-Hasan رضي الله عنه was very cordial; the latter and his brother, al-Husain رضي الله عنه, used to send



goodwill messages to the Caliph and accorded him with commensurate respect and regard. They never rejected his honorary gifts and souvenirs.

In the 42<sup>nd</sup> year after Hijra, al-Hasan met his tragic death as a result of poisonous food, which he ate.<sup>327</sup> The prime suspect was a woman, who used to be his wife before they both separated.

Before al-Hasan breathed his last, he made a will to his brother, al-Husain, as we have mentioned earlier. He also sent him to A'isha requesting her favour to be buried near the grave of his grandfather ﷺ. If she did not grant the request, al-Hasan demanded, he should be taken to Baqi'ah and buried like everybody.

Though A'isha ؓ had granted the request, a skirmish broke out. Marwan, one of the close relatives of Caliph Usman, resisted the move of burying al-Hasan in A'isha's room. His point was that when Usman ؓ died, a similar request was made to A'isha which she graciously granted, but some people resist it. To avert plunging into another internecine feud, which was then looming, Abu Hurairah ؓ mediated and it was subsequently agreed that al-Hasan should be buried in Baqi'ah.<sup>328</sup>

Albeit that al-Hasan's reign was relatively very short, it was full of blessings to the Ummah. His leadership spanned for six months only. While he had the support and loyalty of the whole Iraq and many other territories, Mu'awiyah held a firm grip of the loyalty of the entire Syrians. But within a short period, workable processes

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<sup>327</sup> This indicates that members of the Prophet's household did not know the unseen. Otherwise, al-Hasan would have been aware of the poison and duly avoided the food.

<sup>328</sup> It is a divine wisdom that apart from the graves of the Prophet ﷺ and his two companions who were buried in Aisha's room, the graves of all other prophets and companions are not known with utmost certainty. See Usman bin Fodio's *Takhlis al-Ikhwan*.

were in put place and soon became united under the umbrella of one and united leadership.

### **6.13. The Views of Shi'ites on al-Hasan**

Although al-Hasan was the second Imam according to the Shi'ite's political theology, they never hold him with commensurate regard. This was informed by al-Hasan's role in calming the fire of crisis, which they initially ignited. They never feel reluctant to vent their spleen and animosity to the reconciliation he brought, which resulted to the emergence of Mu'awiyah as Caliph. In fact, the Shi'ites regard al-Hasan as the "disgracer of Muslims".<sup>329</sup>

On the other hand, they revere and venerate his brother al-Husain. They exaggerate his love and consider him as the champion of a rebellion, which their ancestors orchestrated. Instead of uttering "*Ya Allah* (O God)", when they are in need for aid, they cry "*Ya Husain* (O Husain)". In their view, his fight with the Umayyads was one of his greatest achievements. Among other reasons beside their exaggerated love for al-Husain and his offspring was that he married Shaharbanu, the daughter of Chosreau, the Persian leader, who was the matriarch of their nine Imams.

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<sup>329</sup> *Bihar al-Anwar* (65/44) and Al'amin's *al-Ghadir* (6/11).





# **Chapter Seven**

## **THE LEADERSHIP OF MU'AWIYAH BIN ABI SUFYAN**

رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## The Leadership of Mu'awiyah Bin Abi Sufyan

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### 7.1.1. Genealogy

He was Abu Sufyan, Mu'awiyah bin Sakhr bin Harb bin Umayya bin Abdishams bin Qusayyu bin Kilab. His father, Abu Sufyan, Sakhr bin Harb, was one of the prominent Quraysh elite who challenged the Prophet ﷺ and his mission at the early stage of Islam. Abu Sufyan was one of the people who were said to resemble the physical feature of the Prophet ﷺ.<sup>330</sup> Mu'awiyah's mother was Hind bint Utba bin Rabi'a bin Abdishams. She and her son embraced Islam but were not able to migrate to Madina. His sister, Ramla, however, had migrated with her husband after whose death she was married by the Prophet ﷺ. Mu'awiyah was born eighteen years before the Hijra.

### 7.1.2. His Physical Feature

Mu'awiyah is described as a tall, whitish and pretty young man. He looked very stout and respectful, so much so that Caliph Umar رضي الله عنه used to joke with him and called him the Chosreau of the Arabs (for Chosreau was a legendary figure and model of prettiness in Persia). This would later be demonstrated during his reign as Caliph.

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<sup>330</sup> Historians have narrated that there were four people who shared some physical resemblance with the Prophet ﷺ. They were: al-Hasan, al-Husain, Abu Sufyan and Sa'ib bn Ubaid; the grandfather of Imam al-Shafi'i.

### **7.1.3. His Family**

Mu'awiyah married five wives at different times. They are as follows: -

1. Maisun bint Bahdal from the Banu Kalb clan. She was the mother of Yazid and a young girl, who died at an early age.
2. Kitwa bint Qurazah: she attended the conquest of Cyprus and died there. Afterwards, Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه married her sister:
3. Fakhita bint Quaraza: she was the mother of Abdullah who was mentally challenged and Abdurrahman, another son of Mu'awiyah who died young.
4. Na'ila bint Umar: she was also from the Kalb clan. She was divorced by Mu'awiyah and later married by Habib bin Maslama al-Fihri and subsequently to Nu'man bin Bashir.
5. Qaribatu bint Abi Umayya: she was a sister to Umm Salama, the Prophet's wife. Umar bin al-Khattab رضي الله عنه was her first husband who married her during the Jahiliyya period. Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه married her later and after their separation, she was married by Abdurrahman bin Abubakar.

It can be understood that Mu'awiyah had only a female child and she died young. He had three male children, Yazid, Abdullah and Abdurrahman. The latter also died before reaching adolescence. Abdullah grew up with mental retardation. Therefore, Yazid could be said to be the only normal son to Mu'awiyah. Unfortunately, Mu'awiyah became infertile as a result of an injury, which he suffered during the attempt of the Khawarij to kill him. His doctor prescribed two options for him; either healing the wound by sterilizing the germs with fire or giving him some consumable medicine. The second option which

Mu'awiyah preferred had a side effect; it caused infertility.

#### **7.1.4. Mu'awiyah's Conversion and His Contribution to Islam**

Mu'awiyah embraced Islam at the age of 25 in the 7<sup>th</sup> year after Hijra during the Hudaibiya Treaty. He used to hide this from his father, though Abu Sufyan would later come to know about it and rebuke him.

Mu'awiyah was one of the scribes who wrote down the Qur'anic revelation as he heard it from the Prophet's mouth. The Prophet ﷺ prayed for him, asking God to guide him and make him an agent through whom others would be guided.<sup>331</sup> Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه was one of the soldiers who participated in the Battle of Hunain. God, the Almighty sent down a testimony about the strong faith and conviction (iman) of the Muslims who attended the Battle and gave them assurance of His peace and tranquility.<sup>332</sup> Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه was also among the set of the Prophet's companions to whom God gave the glad tiding of al-Husna (paradise) because they had spent their wealth in His cause after the conquest of Makka.<sup>333</sup>

He also took part in other battles with the Prophet ﷺ after Fath Makka, such as the Battle of Ta'if. He was the first Muslim leader in history to launch a Jihad at sea. The Prophet ﷺ gave the glad tidings to the Muslims who would wage Jihad at sea. The Prophet ﷺ informed the Sahaba that the soldiers were shown to him sitting on thrones like kings.<sup>334</sup>

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<sup>331</sup> Tirmizi's *al-Jami'* and Ajurri's *al-Shari'ah* (5/2437) with sound chain of transmission.

<sup>332</sup> Surah al-Taubah: 26.

<sup>333</sup> Surah al-Hadid: 10.

<sup>334</sup> *Fat'h al-Bari* (6/22).

### **7.1.5. Mu'awiyah's Bravery and Political Dexterity**

Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه was born five years before the commencement of the Islamic mission by the Prophet ﷺ. Therefore, he rarely witness the many episodes of oppressions and persecutions to which the Quraysh subjected the Muslim converts. Though at 20 Mu'awiyah was still following his ancestors' religion, he did not participate in the Battle of Badr. His brothers, Hanzala and Amr, who were also siding with the Quraysh, had attended the battle. The former was killed while the latter was captured as a prisoner.

However, still with the Quraysh, Mu'awiyah took part in the Battle of Khandaq in which the confederates of unbelievers gathered and united against Madina. The coalition's mission to unleash a decisive attack which would completely uproot Islam ended in a fiasco. God had sent a mighty and insane wind, which threatened them and as a result, they fled for their lives. Surah al-Ahzab gives some account on the battle.

After joining Islam, on the day of Fath Makka, Abu Sufyan migrated to Madina together with all members of his family. That gave Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه the chance to take part in all the subsequent battles, which were led by the Prophet ﷺ.

Mu'awiyah's inkling for political leadership traced its origin since the time he heard the Prophet saying to him, "O Mu'awiyah! When you take this affair [leadership], fear God and tender [it with] justice".<sup>335</sup> Mu'awiyah's

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<sup>335</sup> This is one of the miraculous statements of the Prophet ﷺ. a great deal of Mu'awiyah's life, which spanned for about 78 years, was spent in leadership. He began leading military commands in his pre-thirties. He gradually rose to higher ranks up to the time he was appointed as Governor and spent twenty years with the rank. He also became the supreme Muslim leader and led for almost another twenty years.



initiation into the leadership circle began during the *Khilafa* of Abubakar رضي الله عنه, who appointed him to lead a contingent of Muslim reinforcements, which was sent to his brother, Yazid bin Abi Sufyan, one of the four commanders, who were leading the Muslim forces to the series of wars against the Byzantines.

Under the command of his brother, Mu'awiyah proved a fearless warrior. He was successively assigned to lead smaller commands and platoons and his effort and bravery were commendable, as enormous victory was recorded. When Umar bin al-Khattab رضي الله عنه took the reins of leadership, Yazid رضي الله عنه received orders to appoint Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه to advance to Qeisaria. The expedition was equally very successful. There was an outbreak of an epidemic called Amwas<sup>336</sup> in Syria, which caused the death of all the Muslim commanders in the region. Caliph Umar رضي الله عنه ordered Mu'awiyah to take over the lead of the entire commands.

During his tour to Syria, Umar رضي الله عنه was shocked and surprised with the policies and exclusive administrative style, which Mu'awiyah had put in place in the state. Mu'awiyah explained to him the wisdom behind the adoption of such an exorbitant style; the non-Muslim enemies in the neighbouring territories might degrade and belittle the Muslims upon seeing their humbler leadership style.

Long before the emergence of Usman as Caliph, Mu'awiyah had consolidated his political influence in Syria and demonstrated his military prowess in the

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For the Prophet's glad tiding to Mu'awiya, see: Imam Ahmad's *al-Musnad*, Hadith number 16872 and Zahabi's *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'* (3/131).

<sup>336</sup> It had cost the lives of over twenty five thousand people within short period of time. See Abul Fida's *al-Mukhtasar fi Akhbar al-Bashar*. It can be accessed on <http://www.alwarraq.com>.

defence of the Islamic state from the attacks of the Byzantine enemies. That was one of the reasons he was retained by Caliph Usman and his effort was complemented with the support of other Sahaba like Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, Abu Zarr al-Gifariy, Shaddad bin Aws, Miqdad bin Amr and Ubada bin al-Samit, who was accompanied by his wife, Umm Haram.

Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه was a veteran politician who enjoyed the absolute loyalty, wide popularity and enormous support of his subjects. He was loved by the masses, respected by his armed forces and greatly feared by the enemy. That was why Abdullah bin Abbas advised Ali bin Abi Talib to be meticulous about removing Mu'awiyah from his post as Governor because of the wide vacuum his removal would create. But as God destined it, Ali did not take the advice, and as a result, what Ibn Abbas predicted had to occur. The entire Syrians rallied around Mu'awiyah and supported him unflinchingly. They were with him throughout the turbulence up to the time of the reins of the overall leadership returned to him. He spent 20 good years as full-fledged supreme leader and his reign marked a significant landmark in the rumbustious economic growth, prosperity and the reigning of peace which the Muslim Ummah witnessed.

#### **7.1.6. The Achievements of Caliph Mu'awiyah**

Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه was the first Muslim leader to introduce personal guards and security orderly after a failed attempt to assassinate him by the Khawarij. He was also the first to introduce a post office called “*al-Khatam*”, which was charged with the task of keeping the official stamps of the Caliph in order to safeguard the Caliph's letters from forgery.<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>337</sup> This was necessitated by an episode in which Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه ordered his Governor in Iraq to dole out one hundred thousand dinars

Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه had great concern about public security and social stability. He created many commissions and charged them with affairs of public security. As such, the Islamic state became much protected, strong and feared by all the then global powers. Furthermore, Mu'awiyah's leadership introduced many schemes for promoting education and providing good conditions of service for teachers. To further develop the spirit of intellectualism, research and translation, an independent centre was established called *Bait al-Hikmah*. Moreover, the Caliph had exerted effort in making masses-centred policies, which guaranteed their welfare and social security. All the services related to pilgrims were provided free of charge.<sup>338</sup> Similarly, as a result of hardship the masses in Madina were experiencing due to water ways and channels, especially in the rainy season, efforts were geared toward finding lasting solutions by constructing drainages.<sup>339</sup>

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to Amr bin Zubair, so that the latter would reduce the loads of debts he had accumulated. A letter with effect of this directive was given to Amr to take to the Governor. On his way, Amr opened the letter and padded another hundred thousand dinars, making them altogether two hundred thousand dinars. When this deal was later uncovered, Mu'awiyah pressed Amr so much so that his brother, Abdullah bin Zubair, intervened and bailed him out by paying the padded one hundred thousand dinars. Henceforth, Mu'awiyah took that measure on all letters that were dispatched from the Office of the Caliph.

<sup>338</sup> Ali Sallabi, *Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan: Shakhshiyyatuhu wa Asruhu*, (Alexandria: Dar al-Qimmah), p. 333.

<sup>339</sup> One of these drainages had run through the cemetery of martyrs. It was narrated that there was a time this drainage got cracked, corpses were seen with grasses planted on their legs but their faces were looking like that of fresh corpses.

### **7.1.7. Mu'awiyah's Leadership Style**

Mu'awiyah was described as an imperturbable and clement person. This trait was largely instrumental in shaping his politics and administrative style. Some of his policies resembled Caliph Umar's, especially with regard to affairs that were related to the masses. He ensured that they got their rights. In line with this, he issued a circular to all provincial Governors, instructing them to be contacting their subjects if they had any complaints, pleas or advice to his administration or their Governors. In fact, he ordered that whenever the Governors would send any message to him in Syria to check with their people if any of them had any complaints, so that the Governors would send their messages alongside the public letters. People used to write their complaints about his leadership or any of his Governors. Some even wrote in order to admonish him and draw his attention to certain matters. Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه would read the letters one after another and take appropriate actions.

Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه expressed his politics and administrative style vividly in his words:

I have put a thread between myself and all people.  
One part of it is in my hand while the other in their  
hands. Whenever they pull me, I relax [and slacken]  
and whenever they relax, I pull with relative  
severity.



He was also reported to have said, "No drink is sweeter than a harsh talk if you can swallow it to earn the pleasure of Allah". He used to say also, "I promote myself by not allowing a crime to override my clemency, or any nonsense to subdue my conscience or some privacy to be above my secrecy or any unpleasant act to override my generosity".<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>340</sup> Ibn Asakir, *Tarikh Dimashq* (62/123).

When asked about the person he liked much, Mu'awiyah's reply was, "The person who makes people like him more".

These philosophical quotes of Mu'awiyah were illustrated in his actions as exemplified below: -

Al-Miswar bin Makhrama narrated his visit to Caliph Mu'awiyah  and how he approached the leader severely. Using highly emotional and vituperative language, al-Miswar admonished and warned the Caliph in a manner that showed little or no regard to his position. After the entire tirade, Mu'awiyah asked al-Miswar if he himself had sins and the answer was in the affirmative. He further asked if Miswar had any good deed for which he hoped for reward and Miswar again answered in the affirmative. Mu'awiyah then queried why Miswar would desire for Allah's mercy more than Mu'awiyah while the latter's good deeds were more than the former's. Mu'awiyah enumerated some good deeds regarding public interests and religious services, which solely relied on leadership. He then remarked that whenever he was faced with an option to do something, he never opted for the one which would lead to committing a sin. Miswar finally felt ashamed of his attitude toward Caliph Mu'awiyah .<sup>341</sup>

There was a time one of his subjects came to Mu'awiyah's palace and spoke very unfavourably in respect of Mu'awiyah. The Caliph did not utter a word. When he was later asked for the reason behind leaving the man to go scot free, Mu'awiyah remarked, "Why would I interfere between him and his tongue since I am not the one who gave him the tongue?"

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<sup>341</sup> Ibn Taimiyyah, *Minhaj al-Sunnah*, (1/299), (the abridged version of Shaykh al-Gunaiman) and Ibn Sa'ad's *Tabaqat* edited by Dr. A/Aziz al-Sulami (1/148-149).

Mu'awiyah one day embarked on a tour to Madina. When he arrived at the city, none of its residents came to welcome or receive him. He asked people in Madina if anything was amiss. One of them sarcastically responded, "We do not have the horses on which to ride and come to your welcome". Thinking that the man was not up to anything, Mu'awiyah asked, "So, where are your horses?" The man replied, "We slaughtered them while looking for your father on the day of Badr". Mu'awiyah kept mute. The man continued and said that the Prophet ﷺ had foretold that "Tyrannical leaders like you would emerge. Mu'awiyah interrupted the man, "What did the Prophet say shall be done?" The man replied, "Patience shall be done". Mu'awiyah said, "Then you should exercise patience!" Mu'awiyah never raised the issue again.

People used to stand up in respect for the king during Mu'awiyah. One time, he observed that two men did not stand up for him. Mu'awiyah commended their action and quoted the Prophet's statement, "Any leader who desires that people should stand up for him shall get his seat in hellfire".<sup>342</sup>

Perhaps the most surprising account which further shows Mu'awiyah's clemency is a story about one young man. Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه sent the young man with a gift of money inside a bag to his father. The father was very angry and furious with the gift. He ordered the boy to take the money back to Mu'awiyah and throw it at his face. The boy reluctantly obliged and met Mu'awiyah at his palace. He informed him about his father's response and instruction. Mu'awiyah lifted his palm across his face and ordered the boy to do as his father willed, so that he would fulfill his vow. Therefore, the boy threw the bag at Mu'awiyah's face! His son, Yazid, was very angry when

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<sup>342</sup> *Musnad Ahmad* (4/100).

he took notice of the issue. He met his father and argued that his action had transcended clemency and bordered on cowardice and laissez-fairism. Mu'awiyah drew his attention and said that clemency never produces bad result or causes one to regret.<sup>343</sup>

It was also narrated that Zubair bin al-Awwam once wrote a very harshly-worded letter from Madina to Mu'awiyah when he was the Governor in Syria, in which he bitterly complained that Mu'awiyah's labourer working in a nearby farm had done something very harmful to him. Mu'awiyah sent a very soft reply to Zubair, expressing his sadness over the issue and recognizing the great position and virtues of Zubair. He further ordered the farm to be given out as a gift to Zubair.

### **7.2.1. The Continuity of Jihad**

There was a long pause of Jihad expeditions after the assassination of Caliph Usman رضي الله عنه, because of the internecine strife among Muslims. The development had been tempered with the glory and prestige of Muslims in the eyes of the enemy. The situation reached a point where Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه had to enter into some form of peace agreement with the Byzantines in order to avoid abrupt attack on their part. An agreement was reached that the Syrians under Mu'awiyah would pay a poll tax to the Byzantines.

The situation continued until the beginning of the 41<sup>st</sup> year after Hijra, which was known as "*Am al-Jama'ah*" (the year of unity) when Mu'awiyah took over from al-Hasan, who stepped down for him. It was at that time that Mu'awiyah regained the spirit of Jihad and expeditions

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<sup>343</sup> Abu Mu'az bin Mansur's *Iskat al-Kilab al-Awiya bi Fadha'il Amir al-Mu'mineen Mu'awiya*, published by Maktabah al-Ulum wa al-Hikam, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1426 A.H, p. 93-94 and *Ansab al-Ashraf* (5/86).

for the spread of Islam. Soon the army was mobilized and preparations were put in place to carry out Islamic missions. The army was divided into three commands according to geographical targets as follows: -

**Command Number 1:** to head to territories along the seacoast.

No sooner had Mu'awiyah took over as the Caliph than he ordered his newly appointed Governor in Basra, Abdullah bin Amir, to mobilize soldiers and begin launching a Jihad on Sijistan and Khorasan.<sup>344</sup> He then led a massive awareness campaign in which Muslims were encouraged to live in Khorasan so as to consolidate the Islamic faith and values in the region and stop the cases of apostasy through teaching and preaching.<sup>345</sup> Plans and packages were made to ensure the welfare and comfort of Muslims, who agreed to live in the city for the said purpose.

In the 46<sup>th</sup> year after Hijra, al-Hakam bin Amr al-Ghifariy, one of the Muslim commanders, received orders from Mu'awiyah to advance to the regions, which sat on the mountains of Gur and Farwanda in modern Afghanistan.<sup>346</sup> The mission was successful. On the

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<sup>344</sup> These territories were opened by Mu'awiya during the *Khilafa* of Usman رضي الله عنه. They became apostates at the time the Umma plunged into internal crisis.

<sup>345</sup> The difference between Muslim conquest and colonialism lies in the goal and purpose of the two missions. While colonialism was primarily targeted at enslaving and exploiting the colonies, including tapping their rich deposits of natural resources, Islamic conquest mainly aimed at extending the mission and divine message to people. Once they accepted, they became equal to all Muslims and were parts and parcels of the Islamic state. Those who did not accept would not be coerced but would require to pay some tax in lieu of their protection against harm and external predation.

<sup>346</sup> Farwanda is about 145 kilometres away from southern Kabul.



troop's way back, the Commander died in a city called Rayy situated now in modern Tehran. In the 51<sup>st</sup> year after Hijra, Commander Rabee' bin Ziyad led a battalion of Muslim soldiers to Balakh, near Mazar Shariff (now in Afghanistan) and also to Quhustan in eastern Iran.

In the 54<sup>th</sup> year after Hijra, Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه instructed commander Ubaidullah bin Ziyad to cross the Jehon Sea, which ran through Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan in the old Soviet Union. From there, the troops advanced to Bukhara and Ramsin, which until the advent of Islam served as the tourist site for royal elite of Bukhara. The soldiers also marched to Bikanda, which was 44 kilometres away from Bukhara.<sup>347</sup> In the 56<sup>th</sup> year after Hijra, Mu'awiyah ordered Sa'id bin Amr bin al-As to lead an expedition to Samarqand and Tirmiz in Uzbekistan. Both the cities entered into the fold of Islam.

**Command Number 2:** - it was to head the western territories, which included Egypt and eastern African regions called Ifriqiya. The Muslim forces were divided into two units, one comprised infantries led by the Companion, Ruwaifi' bin Sabit al-Ansari رضي الله عنه, and the other units composed of Muslim navies under the command of another Companion, Fadhala bin Ubaid رضي الله عنه. In the 50<sup>th</sup> year after Hijra, Muslim forces led by army general, Uqba bn Nafi', reached Tunisia and within short time it entered into the fold of Islam. On the instruction of Caliph Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه, Uqba founded the Qeirawan city

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<sup>347</sup>People in Bukhara were, until then, followers of a pagan religion called Zaradisht. They were very affluent people so much so that, according to some historians, a pair of sock belonging to the wife of their king, which she left behind when they fled after learning about the coming of Muslim troops, was valued at 200,000 Dirhams.

and a very big Mosque was constructed in the city's capital.<sup>348</sup>

**Command Number 3:** to head the Byzantine territories. These territories were more dangerous than the previous ones. The enemies also were comparably mightier. Therefore, Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه selected prominent warriors and fearless warlords, including many from among the Sahaba. The commanders included Busr bin Artah, Abdurrahman bin Khalid bin Walid and Malik bin Abdullah al-Khas'ami, among others. Yazid bin Mu'awiyah led the largest battalion, which conquered Constantine, the capital of the Byzantine Empire. The Prophet ﷺ had earlier given the glad tidings in which he said that the first Muslim forces to conquer the city would automatically get the mercy of Allah.<sup>349</sup>

Many prominent Sahaba took part in the battle, such as Abdullah bin Abbas, Abdullah bin Umar, Abdullah bin Zubair and Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (the latter having been martyred toward the end of the battle). Muslims

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<sup>348</sup> The idea behind creating this city was informed by the scheme of *Ribat* (military base for protecting borders from raids and abrupt attacks by enemies against Muslim territories) when many African converts were becoming apostates owing to lack of religious awareness. The city was, therefore, meant to serve as a centre for Islamic teaching, preaching and Jihad. The residential area of the city was chosen along seacoast near thick plantations, which served as a haven for carnivorous animals. God had shown His sovereignty by empowering the commander, Uqba bin Nafi', to perform wonders. He prayed for God to make life easy for them in the newly founded city. No sooner than he finished praying, the wild animals were seen taking away their younger ones and leaving the city. This unique wonder made a great number of Africans, especially Berbers, embrace Islam in mammoth crowds.

<sup>349</sup> *Fat'h al-Bari* (6/120).

succeeded in pushing the Byzantines away and prevented them from returning to the Armenian region, which was one of their strongholds.<sup>350</sup>

### **7.2.2. The Military Strategies of Mu'awiyah Administration**

Military engagements during the administration of Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه were characterized by the following tactical strategies; -

1. The Muslim army did not wait for the enemy to start unleashing attacks on their part. They tried to be the first to launch the offensive, so that the enemies would be obsessed and preoccupied with self-defense.
2. Much effort was geared toward neutralizing the most powerful territories like the Byzantines. This tactic had the prospects of scaring away smaller and less militarily sophisticated territories.
3. A concerted effort was exerted to capture the islands, which sat on the seacoast, so that the naval forces of the enemies would be engaged wisely and in a way that would prevent many casualties on the part of Muslims.
4. Institutions and centres for learning and the dissemination of knowledge were established in Khorasan in the east and Qeirawan in the west so that the menace of apostasy in the regions would be curtailed and properly addressed through intellectual tools.

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<sup>350</sup> Armenia is a small region in eastern Asia along southern coast of Black Ocean. It was named after the Arman racial group, a combination of Indian and European migrants who inhabited the area. They had been followers of Christianity since the 4<sup>th</sup> century C.E. About half of the region is now situated in Turkey while the other half is in Russia.

### **7.2.3. Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه and the Iraqis after the Demise of al-Husain رضي الله عنه**




The Iraqis had invested too much interest in creating feuds between Mu'awiyah and al-Hasan رضي الله عنه. They exerted strenuous efforts to persuade al-Hasan to take up arms and confront Mu'awiyah, albeit the former's decision to step down for the latter. Meanwhile, never did al-Hasan trust them nor did he ever give heed to their clamours.

In the 51<sup>st</sup> year after Hijra, the year in which al-Hasan died, a group under the leadership of Hujr bin Adiy emerged in Iraq.<sup>351</sup> Their goal as they publically declared was to topple Mu'awiyah from his seat through strong armed struggle. Instantly, Caliph Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه ordered for their apprehension and soon an investigative process began. The Iraqis did not hesitate to deny any involvement in the saga. Upon consulting scholars and stakeholders in his government, the group members were pardoned with the exception of seven ringleaders, including Hujr bin Adiy who were all executed.


It can be observed that Mu'awiyah's clemency did not in any way, mean that perpetrators of violence would be tolerated. He did not, in the interest of freedom of speech, compromise the atmosphere of peace and security of the state. However, there were some people who expressed

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<sup>351</sup> According to Ibn Abd al-Barr and Zahabi, Hujr was a Sahabi. But other historians were of the view that he was not a Sahabi and this view seems to be the most authentic. After all, his rebellious action contradicts the actions of the Prophet's companions as well as the instructions of the Prophet ﷺ. In fact, there was a time while a Governor in Iraq was giving a sermon, Hujr stood up and instructed people to rise. This provoked hostility and soon stones were being thrown at one another by people inside the mosque. For details refer to *Hiqbat min al-Tarikh*, p. 146 and Abu Mu'az bin Mansur, op cit, p. 137-140.

dismay over the execution of Hujr bin Adiy in particular. Notable among them was, A'isha  who pointblank stated her position to the hearing of Mu'awiyah  during Hajj. He tried to defend himself before her by pointing out that nipping the crisis in the bud was very necessary so as to avoid engulfing into another civil strife. He reasoned that the rebellion which culminated to Usman's murder had started like that.<sup>352</sup> Finally, Mu'awiyah  said to her, "O Mother! Leave Hujr and myself alone to meet before Allah!" She said, "We leave both of you to Allah".<sup>353</sup>

#### **7.2.4. Appointment of Crown Prince**

Mu'awiyah's son, Yazid, had become very popular as a result of the Muslims' victory in the Jihad he led against the Byzantine in Constantine. In the 50th year after Hijra, a year before the demise of al-Hasan , he was appointed to serve as Amirul Hajj (leader of the Hajj exercise). It was the same year that Sa'id bin Zaid departed this life. He was one of the 10 people who were given the glad tidings to enter paradise by the Prophet. At this time, only Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas remained among them. He was also the only living person among the six-man committee assigned by Umar to choose Caliph after him. He died in 55<sup>th</sup> year after Hijra.

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<sup>352</sup> Perhaps Hujr was the person on whom the Prophet's instruction "whoever comes and tries to create schism among you while you are united under the umbrella of one leader, you shall kill him" was applied. See *Fat'h al-Bari* (7/68 and 13/195-196) and Imam Nawawi's Commentary of *Sahih Muslim* (12/242). For more details, check: Dr. Khalid al-Gais's *Marwiyat Khilafat Mu'awiyah fi Tarikh al-Tabari*, Dar al-Andalus al-Khadra', Jeddah, 2000 (1420 A.H), p. 403.

<sup>353</sup> This is the best remark that one can make; let them both be left to God's judgment.

In the 56<sup>th</sup> year after Hijrah, Mu'awiyah resolved to appoint Yazid as Crown Prince, which meant Yazid was his de facto successor. The question that should perhaps be asked is why, did Mu'awiyah take that decision? Only God knows! Mu'awiyah on his part never uttered a word about the issue. Meanwhile, a lot of people had voiced different opinions, which may be summarized into two; those who justified his action and others who did not. The first category of people projected the following excuses for Mu'awiyah:-

1. That Mu'awiyah wanted to prevent the breakup of the succession crisis after his death. This was because the territorial boundaries of Islam had extended to far and wide places. Many cities and provinces came into the fold of Islam. Likewise, people of different cultural and social backgrounds who had different motives had professed Islam. He therefore wanted to forestall all the escalation of crises that might erupt if he did not solve the problems before his death.
2. Yazid had demonstrated extraordinary bravery and uncommon competence in leadership and administrative matters, especially when he served as Amirul Hajj during one Hajj exercise and when he led the virtually hugest battalion of Muslim soldiers which seized the capital city of the Byzantines – the then world super-power. Husain himself partook in the battle, as he partook in other battles during the leadership of Mu'awiyah and the latter's predecessors like the battles of Tabaristan, Fustat and Tripoli. Husain and his brother Hasan took part in the battles, which led to the conquest of many African territories under the command of Abdallah bn Sa'ad bn Abi Sarh during the time of Caliph Uthman bn Affan.<sup>354</sup>

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<sup>354</sup> Ibn Asakir: *Tarikh Dimashq* (14/111), al-Safadi: *al-Wafi bil Wafiyyat* (12/262) and Ibn Kathir: *al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya*. For

3. Having been in Syria for twenty years as Governor enjoying the utmost support and cooperation of the loyal Syrian people, plus other 15 years as a full-fledged Caliph, Mu'awiyah would find it easier to nominate Yazid as his successor.

On the other hand, those who accused Mu'awiyah argue that he was "selfish". He turned the Muslim political leadership into a hereditary system – something that appeared new in the history of Muslim leadership. They further argued that Hasan was chosen to succeed his father, Ali bn Abi Talib, through the institution of Shura and not on the latter's will or request. However, the Shi'ites' view is that Ali made a will of succession to his son, al-Hasan, and his subsequent descendants. Therefore, we can conclude that according to the Shi'ites, Ali was the first to turn the Caliphate to a hereditary affair".<sup>355</sup>

In any case, the loyal Syrians acceded to Mu'awiyah's request and implemented it accordingly. Moreover, all provincial Governors, commanders and warlords of the regime were consulted about the issue and they all endorsed it. Al-Hafiz Abdulganiy al-Maqdisi mentioned that there were about 60 companions of the

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Shi'ite references check: *Hayat al-Imam al-Husain Alaihis Salam* by Baqir Sharif (1/394) and *al-Akhlaq al-Husainiyya* by Ja'far al-Bayati, p. 131.

<sup>355</sup> It is good to state that there are also some books of Shi'ites which maintain that al-Hasan was chosen according to the Shura not a will. For example, *Nahj al-Sa'ada* (2/733) by Mahmudi and *Muruj al-Zahab* by Mas'udi (2/425) both narrate that when the Iraqi people informed Ali bn Abi Talib that they resolved to choose his son al-Hasan as his successor, he told them he would not order them for that and would not stop them. This means that there was certainly no will behind the emergence of al-Hasan as his father's successor.

Prophet who endorsed the decision of appointment of Yazid as Caliph.

The four prominent figures were reported to have resisted the decision and refused to recognize the Crown Prince. They were al-Husain bin Abi Talib رضي الله عنه, Abdullah bin Umar رضي الله عنه, Abdullah bin Zubair and Abdurrahman bin Abubakar. The latter died shortly and they became three. Little after Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه made his decision, he invited these three men and discussed with them. They agreed to give their allegiance to Yazid on condition that Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه should resign, since Muslims should not have two leaders at a time. In the interest of peace, Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه did not force them to recognize his son as Crown Prince and warned them against divulging their views. He then pretended to have secured their allegiance before the public to prevent any breach of peace.

### **7.2.5. Mu'awiyah's Will to Yazid<sup>356</sup>**

A few days before his death, Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه summoned Yazid and gave him some words of advice, which included the following: -

1. He reminded him of the plan to appoint him as his successor. "But you should know, I have never in my entire life done something most dangerous like your appointment. Therefore, if you do well, we will be saved altogether. But if you do otherwise, we will all be condemned". Mu'awiyah then charged his son to ensure the development, progress, prosperity and welfare of people.
2. He also charged him to regard the Syrians as his counsellors and close associates for their

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<sup>356</sup> The narration can be found in the Shi'ite books such as al-Tusi's *al-Amali*, p. 216 and Ha'iri's *Ma'ali al-Sibtain* (1/200).



subordination, loyalty and support toward his leadership.

3. Mu'awiyah warned his son against allowing conflict to break out between him and the Iraqis. He advised him that it would be better to change their Governors each morning if they would demand than to do what would push them to rebellion.
4. He then called on Yazid to be cautious in his dealings with the three figures, that did not recognize him as Crown Prince. Mu'awiyah noted that al-Husain عليه السلام, one of the three men, enjoyed much of people's sympathy and regard and was held in high esteem, in addition to his unique honour and glory, which must be protected. "Therefore, you should not ever take any action against him. If the Iraqis tried to persuade him to do something, they would betray and let him down as they did to his father and his senior brother". Concerning Abdullah bin Umar عليه السلام, Mu'awiyah advised Yazid not to worry, as Abdullah was a man who got absolved in acts of worship to the Almighty and was not interested in leadership affairs. Meanwhile, Mu'awiyah عليه السلام pointed out that Abdullah bin Zubair عليه السلام was very clever. "So, whenever he invites you for reconciliation, accept. Try your best to safeguard people against bloodshed".

#### **7.2.6. The Position of Shi'ites on Mu'awiyah**

Mu'awiyah عليه السلام was among the popular companions of the Prophet ﷺ whose mention is echoed with some notoriety in Shi'ite literature. The Shi'ites have no regard or positive recognition to the entire virtues, merits, honours and esteemed position of Mu'awiyah عليه السلام, such

as his being the Scribe of Wahy (Revelation) and other confidential messages of the Prophet ﷺ and the role he played in the development and spread of Islam in the four decades he had spent in government and many other qualities of his. According to the Shi'ites, the conversion of Mu'awiyah and his father to Islam was not sincere but a hypocritical conspiracy to bring down the Prophetic mission. The Shi'ites lay emphasis and often exaggerated the disagreements that ensued between him and Caliph Ali عليه السلام after the assassination of Caliph Usman عليه السلام which culminated in the Battle of Siffin that lasted for three days. They also castigated Mu'awiyah عليه السلام for appointing his son, Yazid, as Crown Prince and blamed him for all the woes and miseries that befell the Muslim Ummah during his sons' leadership. They never gave a damn to the fact that his son deviated from his father's will, on one hand, and, on the other, the role their ancestors (the Iraqi Shi'ites) played in fanning the embers of conflict to jeopardize peace and social stability during Yazid's regime. The Shi'ites are strongly averse to the honorific title given to Mu'awiyah by historians as the "Uncle of the Believers", having been a full brother to Umm Habiba, the Prophet's wife and one of the Mothers of the Believers.<sup>357</sup>

Mu'awiyah is described in the works of Shi'ites as a "staunch enemy" of Islam whose evil and danger were worse than the devil's.<sup>358</sup> They give certain derogatory and condemnatory labels to him, such as "The leader of

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<sup>357</sup> We have already mentioned the rationale behind this title. Nonetheless, it is not surprising if the Shi'ites reject him as their uncle since they also reject the Prophet's wife as their mother.

<sup>358</sup> Mamaqani: *Tanqih al-Maqal* (3/222).

Kufr".<sup>359</sup> They also accuse him of tyranny and other evil doings.<sup>360</sup>

### 7.3. On the Road to the Hereafter

Before his demise, Mu'awiyah bequeathed half of his entire wealth to the *Bait al-Mal* (Muslim Treasury) as Caliph Umar used to do for his Governors. He brought out the Prophet's garment, which he had all along been keeping. He made a will that he be shrouded with the garment. He also brought out some nails of the Prophet ﷺ, which he kept and ordered that they should be put inside his eyeballs and mouth when he died. With this, he hoped that Allah would have mercy on him. Mu'awiyah gathered his family and gave them his last words. He warned them to fear Allah for "Allah protects he who fears Him, and whoever does not fear Allah, he has no protection". He then breathed his last.

Caliph Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه died in the month of Rajab, the 60<sup>th</sup> year after Hijra at the age of 78. His reign spanned for 19 years, 3 months and 27 days.<sup>361</sup> His funeral prayer was led by Dhahhak bin Qais.

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<sup>359</sup> Murtadha: *al-Shafi*, p. 287.

<sup>360</sup> See for example, Saduq's *al-Khisal* (2/457-460), Bayadhi's *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* (3/50), Kashani's *Tafsir al-Safi* (2/740) and Kashif al-Gita's *Asl al-Shi'ah wa Usuluha*, p. 45-47.

<sup>361</sup> This is based on the consideration of Mu'awiyah's emergence as supreme leader after al-Husain رضي الله عنه had stepped down for him. Otherwise, the Syrians had pledged their allegiance to him as Caliph since the demise of Caliph Ali bin Abi Talib رضي الله عنه. Hence, according to this latter view, he had spent twenty years without two months as Caliph. Altogether, he had been an administrator in Syria for four decades.



## **Chapter Eight**

# **The Leadership of Yazid bin Mu'awiyah**

# CHAPTER EIGHT

## The Leadership of Yazid Bin Mu'awiyah

### 8.0. His Full Name and Genealogy

He was Yazid bin Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan. His cognomen (*kunya*) was Abu Khalid. His mother was Maisun bint Bahdal from the clan of Banu Kalb, one of the popular and strong Arab clans.

### 8.1. His Birth and Growth

Yazid was born in the 26<sup>th</sup> year after Hijra during the *khilafa* of Usman رضي الله عنه. He grew up in a royal household since his father, Mu'awiyah رضي الله عنه, was already a Governor in Syria. He received military training at an early age and soon he became a great warrior. At the age of 24, he led the largest army battalion, which chased away the Byzantines from their capital, Constantine. Thereafter, his fame began spreading among youth. His virtue is found in the Prophetic tradition, which was narrated by Umm Haram bint Malhan in which the Messenger ﷺ said: -

Paradise will be granted to the first batch of my followers who will undertake a naval expedition."

Umm Haram added, "I said, 'O Allah's Messenger! Will I be amongst them?' He replied, 'You are amongst them.' The Prophet ﷺ then said, 'The first army amongst my followers who will invade Caesar's city will be forgiven their sins.' I asked, 'Will I be one of them, O Allah's Messenger?' He replied in the negative.<sup>362</sup>

The Hadith indicates the virtue of both Yazid and his father, Mu'awiyah, رضي الله عنه who first led the Jihad against the Byzantines at sea in the 27<sup>th</sup> year after Hijra during the era

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<sup>362</sup> Bukhari: 2924.

of Caliph Usman. In the 52<sup>nd</sup> year after Hijra, Yazid led the Jihad which resulted in the defeat of Constantine. The army command led by Yazid included some prominent Sahaba like Abdullah bin Umar, Abdullah bin Zubair, Abdullah bin Abbas and Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, (the Prophet's host in Madina) رضي الله عنه. Both al-Hasan and al-Husain رضي الله عنهما were also among the Muslim soldiers.<sup>363</sup> Earlier, in the 50<sup>th</sup> year after Hijra, Yazid served as Amirul Hajj during the Hajj exercise of that year.

## 8.2. His Physical Feature

Like his father, Yazid was a handsome young man, though he was relatively fatter than his father. He had a big head and longer fingers. He was described by historians as a persuasive and eloquent orator.<sup>364</sup>

## 8.3. His Family

Yazid had married two wives as follows: -

1. Umm Hashim bint Abi Hashim bin Utba bin Rabi'a: she was the mother of his three children; Mu'awiyah, Khalid and Abu Sufyan. After his death, she was married by Marwan, the fourth Umayyad Caliph.
2. Umm Kulsum bint Abdallah bin Amir: she was the mother of his child called "Aswar"

Moreover, Yazid had many children through his concubines like Abdallah, the junior, Abubakar, Umar, Utba, Abdurrahman, Harb, Rabee' and Muhammad. The latter was the ancestor of Banu A'id bin Mar'iy, who became the kings of the eastern part of Saudi Arabia before the founding of the Saudi Kingdom.

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<sup>363</sup> Ibn Hajar: *Fat'h al-Bari* (6/120) and Ibn Kathir: *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah* (6/249).

<sup>364</sup> Ibn Tolon: *Qaid al-Sharid min Akhbar Yazid*, p. 24.

#### 8.4. Different Views of Scholars on Yazid

Yazid is arguably a personality with the most controversial record and contradictory accounts by historians. Considering the body of his admirers and defenders, on one hand, and the bulk of his critics and opponents on the other hand, readers will be rendered confused and inconclusive of the actual and genuine facts about the man. Few examples are given below: -

##### Example 1

Ibnu Abdi Rabbihi narrated that Yazid was not happy to hear that his father, Mu'awiyah, had appointed him as a commander. Yazid's belief was that his father wanted to get rid of him by sending him to a war, so that he might be killed. That was why Yazid composed a poem in which he criticized Mu'awiyah. He, therefore, went to the war and led the army command not out of his own volition.<sup>365</sup>

But Ibn Tolon's account says: -

Fakhitah, the wife of Mu'awiyah, one day made an insulting remark about Yazid in the presence of his father. He [Mu'awiyah] told her that Yazid was smarter and more intelligent than her son, Abdullah. They bandied words for a while on this and then Mu'awiyah called Abdullah in her presence and said [to him], "Ask me whatever you want; I have decided to give you whatever you desire today." Abdullah answered, "I want you to buy a donkey for me, O dad". Mu'awiyah then said [in dismay], "You are a donkey yourself! How can we buy a donkey for you?" He then called Yazid and asked him as he asked Abdallah. Yazid instantly prostrated and thanked Allah and then said, "All praise is due to Allah for giving the Commander of the Faithful this long life for us to witness this". He then requested five things from his father as follows: -

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<sup>365</sup> Ibn Abdi Rabbihi: *al-Iqd al-Farid* (4/367).



1. To appoint him as a commander after which he will let him
2. Serve as Amirul Hajj
3. To inform the public that Yazid's request for increment of salary/allowance has been granted.
4. To inform the public that a new allowance scheme for orphans has been designed and approved based on Yazid's request.
5. To appoint him as a crown prince/successor.<sup>366</sup>

We can therefore see the glaring dichotomies between these two narrations. The first narration indicates that Yazid was not pleased with his appointment as commander to the extent that he composed a poem criticizing his father's decision. In the second narration, however, Yazid presented some requests to his father, including appointing him as commander. The first narration depicts Yazid as a mere nincompoop, who was obsessed with merriment and luxury, while in the second, he is portrayed as a great, astute and shrewd warrior, who had foresight and interest in the welfare of the masses.

### **Example 2**

In the narration of Ibnu Abdi Rabbihi, Mu'awiyah wrote a will to Yazid while the latter was away entertaining himself with hunting and athletics and did not return until after the death of the former.<sup>367</sup> On the other hand, Dinawari's narration indicates that Mu'awiyah wrote the will in the presence of Yazid.<sup>368</sup>

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<sup>366</sup> Ibn Tolon: op cit, pp. 25-26.

<sup>367</sup> Ibn Abdi Rabbihi: op cit, (4/372).

<sup>368</sup> Dinawairi: op cit, p. 255.

**Example 3**

In his compendium of history, Ibnu Asakir has chronicled a lot of Ahadith, which vilify Yazid. But one can easily discern their status as they are self-explanatory in terms of their lack of authenticity and baselessness. To cite but an example, there is a “Hadith” which says the Prophet ﷺ one day saw Mu’awiyah carrying Yazid, and he [the Prophet] said “Up there is a resident of Paradise carrying an inmate of hell”. The question is where would Mu’awiyah see Yazid at the time of the Prophet ﷺ, when at that time Mu’awiyah did not even marry the mother of Yazid until the time of Usman’s *Khilafa*?<sup>369</sup>

**Example 4**

While there are many narrations that depict Yazid as a drunkard, there are other narrations like that of Muhammad bin Ali bin Abi Talib known as Ibn al-Hanafiyah which refute them.

**Example 5**

On one hand, there are narrations which indicate that Yazid was elated with the assassination of Husain and, on the other hand, some narrations indicate that he not only expressed his grief over the tragic incidence, but also swore that he would never give a command for the murder. He only gave a directive for the prevention of Husain from leading a rebellious move that would pose a

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<sup>369</sup> Ibn Asakir narrated many pleasant as well as damning narrations in respect of Mu’awiyah, his son, Yazid, and other personalities like Ali bin Abi Talib عليه السلام. Those who defend Mu’awiyah and Yazid support their views with the pleasant narrations while the opponents justify their opinions with the damning narrations. Meanwhile, the moderate position is to separate chaff from the wheat by stating the truth and being objective to all while narrating their actions. And this represents the unique position of *Ahl al-Sunna*.

threat to his leadership or even unseat him from the throne.<sup>370</sup>

Similarly, it was said that Yazid made the head of Husain an object of play with which he toyed, just as it was said that he was annoyed with the dismemberment of the head and that he ordered for a proper burial of the head in Madina near the grave of Fatima ؓ.

After the crisis of Karbala, as some Shi'ites' narrations indicate, those from among Husain's family who accompanied him to Karbala were humiliated and intimidated. But some narrations revealed that Yazid accommodated them in his house and the death of Husain was mourned for three days there. He later sent them to Madina in full escort of security.

These are but a few examples of the heated debates and controversies, which revolved around Yazid as an important historical subject. In any case, God upholds the spirit of being just and objective as He says: -

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴾ [المائدة: ٢]

*Indeed, Allah loves those who do justice*<sup>371</sup>

Let us now outline some of the criteria considered by Sunni Ulama (scholars) when passing judgment on anybody. They are: -

1. A Muslim is honored and dignified by Allah and this must be protected and not tempered with except with a genuine and valid excuse considered by the Sharia.
2. It is more logical to think well of a Muslim than to disparage his person. One may be excused and forgiven by Allah in the former case, while in the

<sup>370</sup> See some Shi'ite sources on this like Tabarsi's *al-Ihtijaj* (2/40) and Turaihi's *al-Muntakhab*, p. 471.

<sup>371</sup> Surah al-Ma'idah: 42, Surah al-Hujurat: 9 and Surah al-Mumtahanah: 8.

latter case, he will be called to account on his utterances on the Day of Judgment.

3. Except on the basis of an eye-witness account, any testimony may be deemed incomplete since it is not built on strong proof. Allah says: -

﴿إِلَّا مَنْ شَهِدَ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ﴾ [الزخرف: ٨٦]

... only he who bears witness to the truth, and they know (what they bear witness to).<sup>372</sup>

4. A testimony of an enemy is subject to doubt. It needs critical examination and verification before it is accepted. If the enemy is known as an objective, reliable and trustworthy person, it may be considered for acceptance. But on the other hand, if the enemy is not reliable, his testimony must be compared with other available narrations in order to ascertain the authentic position.

5. There are facts that are by common sense attributable to a certain person, looking at his biography and other issues associated with his life. Therefore, before we give our opinion about him, we must know his biography comprehensively. That is why our scholars maintain that we must be extra-cautious whenever we talk about the companions of the Prophet ﷺ because of their virtues, which the Glorious Qur'an numerous extols. How can we point accusing fingers on the class of people whom Allah praises in innumerable places in His Glorious Book?

6. Even if someone commits a sin, there are a lot of ways in which he may repent. His good deeds may as well wipe away the bad ones or he may be inflicted with a trial, which will wipe away the bad deed. He may also be part of those who will enjoy the intercession of the Prophet ﷺ on the Day of Judgment. Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* may in His infinite mercy forgive him. It is not therefore, the

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<sup>372</sup> Surah al-Zukhruf: 86.

tradition of *Ahl al-Sunnah* to insult or curse any one. There is no point trying to meddle between God and His creatures.

These criteria are universal and not just applicable to the case of Yazid only. But in actual sense, the majority of narrations which condemn him were from Kufa, a city that was known to be the haven of rebels and those who were strongly opposed to his regime. It was on that basis that they plotted a coup against him. Moreover, the narrations which show that it was Yazid who actually ordered the killing of the Prophet's grandson came from Kufa, despite that other non-Kufa narrations reveal otherwise. Similarly, it is in the Kufa narrations that we find the tale which says that the families of the martyred Husain عليه السلام were humiliated and intimidated. Other narrations maintain that Yazid cried profusely and cursed Ubaidullahi bin Ziyad, the Governor of Kufa. He showed his worry and heartfelt sympathy over the incident. Based on the criteria we adumbrated earlier, it would be very difficult to prove Yazid as the culprit behind the tragedy of Karbala.

### 8.5. Yazid's Emergence as King<sup>373</sup>

The first thing Yazid did after the funeral prayer and burial of his father, Mu'awiyah, was to announce the expected policies of the new administration. He ordered for the withdrawal of naval forces that were engaged in war on the seacoast. The policies also contained the suspension of Jihad during cold seasons. Meanwhile, the new king pledged that he would pay three months'

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<sup>373</sup> Mu'awiya separated with Maisun, the mother of Yazid when she was pregnant. She had a dream in which she saw a moon coming out from her body. Later, the dream was interpreted to her that she would give birth to a king, and so it occurred. Yazid became a king in the month of Rajab, 60th year after the Hijra at the age of 35.

salaries and allowances in advance. This was the approach of Yazid as the new supreme leader.

The Syrian people as well as other people from different Muslim cities and provinces, including Makka and Madina, had paid their courtesy of allegiance to Yazid. As pointed out earlier, the only people who did not give their allegiance to him were Husain bin Ali عليه السلام and Abdullah bin Zubair عليه السلام. While Abdullah bin Umar عليه السلام had later acceded to Yazid's leadership, Abdurrahman bin Abubakar had already died before the passing away of Mu'awiyah. Abdullah bin Abbas and Abdullah bin Umar had also given their allegiance to him. Yazid's attention now focused on how to get the allegiance of the two people, Husain and Abdullah bin Zubair عليه السلام. He (Yazid) ordered Walid bin Utbah the Governor of Madina, to ensure that he secured their allegiance. However, they both fled to Makka for fear of being coerced to do what they were not prepared for.<sup>374</sup>

## **8.6. Position of Husain عليه السلام on Yazid's Leadership**

### **8.6.1. Husain عليه السلام and the Shenanigans of the Iraqis**

The Iraqis had all along been following what was going on. They understood the stand of both al-Husain عليه السلام and Abdullah bin Zubair عليه السلام on Yazid's leadership. Therefore, they began writing some letters to al-Husain, inviting him to join them in Iraq so that they would pledge their allegiance to him. Al-Husain informed Abdullah bin Abbas of the development and the latter advised that the former should instruct them to first remove their Governor. If they could not, then there was no way they could unseat King Yazid and install him.

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<sup>374</sup> Husain fled in company of his family and relatives with the exception of Muhammad bin al-Hanafiyyah who was opposed to the position his brother took. Muhammad had already given his allegiance to Yazid and advised his brother to follow suite.

Al-Husain sent his cousin, Muslim bin Aqil, to inquire and investigate the issue in Iraq. On his way, due to hazardous nature of the journey, Muslim thought of changing his mind to go back. Already, someone in his company had died due to lack of water. He, therefore, sent a letter to Husain informing him of the condition and seeking for permission to return. Despite all this, Husain ordered his cousin to continue the journey. So, Muslim obliged and moved on.

No sooner had Muslim arrived in Kufa than the Shi'ites rallied around him in a mammoth crowd and pledged their allegiance to him on Husain's behalf. About 18,000 men gave their allegiance to him. As a result, Muslim dispatched a herald with a letter to Husain informing him of the "positive" development in Kufa and inviting him to set out for Iraq.

#### **8.6.2. Brotherly Counsels for al-Husain**

Al-Husain عليه السلام resolved to set out for Iraq when he received the letter from Muslim bin Aqil. A lot of well-wishers, including prominent Sahaba, had for numberless times trooped to his door to advise him to shelve his plan. Among those who advised him were Abdullah bin Abbas, Muhammad bin al-Hanafiyya, Jabir bin Abdullah, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, Abu Waqid al-Laithi, Umar bin Abdurrahman bin al-Harith and many others. Similarly, letters were sent to him on the issue from prominent figures like Abdullah bin Ja'far, Amr bin Sa'id bin al-As, Amrah, one of the female scholars at the time who was a student of Umm al-Mu'mineen A'isha, and so on. Likewise, Abdullah bin Umar, who earlier objected the idea of appointing Yazid as Crown Prince during Mu'awiyah's era, now followed Husain and spent two days pleading with him to scrap his plan of going to Kufa. He reminded Husain of the belligerence, unreliability and irresoluteness of the people of Iraq. He said, "You should

remember how they caused untold sufferings to your father and let down your brother”. When Husain brought out and showed the letters and pledges of solidarity and support of the Iraqis to Abdullah bin Umar, the latter could not help but allow him to go. In his parting words to Husain, Abdullah bin Umar expressed some consternation to the effect that he would not meet the former again.

Husain used to respond to those who advised him against going to Kufa by saying, “May God rewards you abundantly. I really understand your point of advice and sincere counsel and I appreciate you for that. But whatever Allah has decreed, it must come to pass whether I take your advice or not”.

When one compares the position of al-Hasan and that of his brother, al-Husain, he will get an antithetical result. The former was a full-fledged leader, who was appointed by the Iraqi followers of his father after his death. He enjoyed the loyalty of a large army with which to fight Mu’awiyah. But he stepped down for Mu’awiyah and, as a result, peace and social stability reigned. Husain, however, was among the few who were opposed to Yazid’s leadership; he did not possess much military resource with which to subdue and subsequently unseat Yazid from the throne. This further reveals the folly of those who consider both al-Hasan and al-Husain as infallible: who between them was right and who was wrong?<sup>375</sup>

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<sup>375</sup> Nonetheless, it should be noted that Husain was not in the wrong, having refused to recognize Yazid as Crown Prince. Unlike when he became the full-fledged leader who was recognized by the entire Muslim Ummah (with the exception of not up to 4 people). There are many Prophetic traditions which indicate that subjects should be tolerant of their leaders even if they are worse than Yazid. Rather than the leaders to be fought, they should be admonished and wisely



### 8.6.3. Husain Set Out for Kufa

Husain continued with his journey and on his way met al-Firazdaq, the legendary Arab poet whom he asked about the situation in Iraq. The poet replied that based on what he witnessed; the Iraqis were exhibiting loyalty to Husain. But as regards their military might, that rested solely in the hands of the government. Only God knew what would come up if Husain should proceed! On hearing this report, Husain continued the journey. He also met al-Hurr bin Yazid al-Tamimi on the way. The latter advised him in the strongest possible terms to forget about the Iraqi issue and return to Makka. Only God knows what prevented Husain from changing his mind, as he was obviously convinced by the wise and sincere counsel of Hurr. Husain was also met by Abdullahi bin Muti' when he stopped over on his way. The latter was on his way back from Kufa. This time around, he not only advised Husain to go back to Madina and protect the honour, glory and sanctity of the Prophet's household, but also expressed his pessimistic remark of the possibility of Husain's assassination.

### 8.6.4. The Situation in Kufa

No sooner had Husain set out for Iraq than the news of his mission spread like a wildfire across cities and provinces. As soon as Muslim bin Aqil, Husain's ambassador arrived at Kufa, people numbering about 18,000 trooped to him and gave their allegiance to him. The news of what was going on in Kufa now reached Yazid in Syria. Caliph Yazid grew very worried and indignant. He instantly removed the Governor of Kufa, Nu'man bn Bashir. The latter, according to Yazid, did not take any serious action to thwart the growth of the impending revolt nor did he

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counseled in the interest of the growth and prosperity of the Umma. See *Sahih al-Bukhari*: 6644 and *Sunan al-Tirmizi*: 2190.

send any report to Syria for superior action. The Governor of Basra, Ubaidullah bn Ziyad, was ordered to oversee Kufa and solve the problem.

The first step Ubaidullah took was to find out who was the emissary sent by Husain to Kufa. He discovered that, Muslim bin Aqil was Husain's emissary and that he was being hosted by Hani' bin Urwa al-Muradi. The Kufans had, in the first instance expressed their utmost support for Husain's ambassador. They took to the streets to demonstrate their loyalty to Husain. Furthermore, they mobilized a big mob and besieged the lodge of Ubaidullah, the Governor of Kufa. Out of the 18,000 people who had earlier given their allegiance to Husain, about 4000 participated in the anti-Syrian regime demonstration, but before evening, the number had slashed to 500.

Meanwhile, Ubaidullah summoned all the provincial tribal chiefs to discuss the situation in Kufa. The furious Governor however, gave the chiefs stern warning against fueling the fire of the impending revolt. He also doled out money to each of the chiefs as a token of appreciation for their cooperation.

This measure dealt a serious political blow to the mobilization movement championed by Muslim bin Aqil. On that very day, after Maghrib prayer, people started sneaking gradually and withdrawing their support from Muslim bin Aqil. With the exception of his single companion, the entire people had deserted his company. He then began scheming for his escape. He was pursued by the state police as he was looking for somewhere to hide. When he entered a house, people would shout and blow whistle as if he were a thief. He ultimately surrendered and the police took him to the Governor.<sup>376</sup>

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<sup>376</sup> Ibn Hajar: *al-Isaba* (1/228).

The following day, Muslim bin Aqil was brought and hanged in front of the public in a city composed mainly of Shi'ites who did not rise to his aid.

This unfortunate incident occurred on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Zul Hijjah, the 61<sup>st</sup> year after Hijra, a day after Husain left Makka for Iraq. He was totally unaware of what was going on. He only came to know what was happening when he got near Iraq where he met a messenger sent by the late Muslim bin Aqil to inform Husain of the insecure atmosphere in Kufa. This development, coupled with the failure of the Iraqis to take retaliatory action against the murder of his envoy, had nettled Husain beyond measure. Therefore, he decided to go back. However, the family members of the slain Muslim bin Aqil insisted that the journey be continued, so that they would take revenge.<sup>377</sup>

#### **8.6.5. The Arrival of Husain in Karbala**

Husain was still on his way to Kufa. He reached a certain place called Karbala. He decided to branch there and rest for a while. Little later, a battalion of army led by Umar bin Sa'ad – the very person who carried the news of Muslim's fate to Husain arrived. Their mission as revealed by Ibn Sa'ad was to arrest Husain on the

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<sup>377</sup> It can be understood that the decision of the family of Muslim bin Aqil to go on with the journey to Kufa was only destined by Allah the Almighty since they could not militarily speaking, challenge the power which executed him. They were not altogether more than 50 in number, including women and children, ranging from the families of Husain and his murdered envoy, Muslim bin Aqil. It is clear that Husain did not attend Kufa with a mission to fight there but to assume the position of Caliph, as the Iraqi people succeeded in coaxing him. But contrary to what Husain thought, the people that invited him had now changed their minds and his envoy had even been killed. In any case, this was what Allah the Most Wise decreed and there was no way Husain would run away from it.

instruction of Ubaidullah bin Ziyad the Governor of Kufa. The situation became very tough to Husain. While he was expecting to see the troops of his Kufa loyalists who should escort him to his destination, he instead, fell into the hands of government forces that came to arrest him.

After a long discussion between him and the soldiers of Ubaidullah, Husain decided to go back to Makka. The soldiers said before they allow him to go back as he decided, they must receive an order from the Governor of Kufa. In the first instance, the Governor saw no threat of allowing the Prophet's grandson to go back home, since it was now clear that the support he thought he would get in Kufa was merely a mirage. Nonetheless, the Governor changed his mind after he was influenced by the advice of Shamir, one of his close stalwarts. Shamir pointed out that if Husain was released, he would never go back home but would rather retreat somewhere, re-strategize and gather enough military might and stage a comeback to Kufa for a bigger and decisive attack. This advice had really worked in the nerves of the Governor. He therefore, ordered that Husain should not be allowed to go back home. Husain placed another request that he should be allowed to join the Muslim forces that were defending the borders of Muslim territories and waging jihad in the course of Allah, or he should be allowed to go to Syria and give his allegiance to Yazid. Both these requests were turned down.

As Husain was denied all these requests, he was left with no option but to fight. There was no way he would allow himself and his retinue to be subjected to disgrace and humiliation. On the 9th of al-Muharram, he gathered all his followers and gave them a sermon in which he informed them that, on the following day, there would be a clash between them and the troops of Ubaidullah who numbered 4000. He also granted permission to whoever

was not interested to take part in the fight to withdraw. He asked that anyone who decided to go should please carry one of his family members. There were of course some people who resolved not to take part in the clash. This action further slashed the number of soldiers on the side of Husain.

#### **8.6.6. The Martyrdom of Husain**

In the following morning, the two forces met for a fight. Initially, the main aim of the Kufan soldiers was to get hold of Husain and take him to their leader, Ubaidullah, as a captive. Meanwhile, as things appeared not as easy as the soldiers of Kufa thought, Shamir ordered for a decisive fight. On their part, the followers of Husain were determined to defend their leader at all cost. They fought with the last drop of their blood. They killed about 88 soldiers among the Kufan troops. While many soldiers on the Kufan side were evading Husain, as the fight continued, some of them like Zur'at al-Tamimi, a Shi'ite, approached Husain and stabbed him on the shoulder. He was followed by Sinan bn Anas, who attempted to cut the throat of Husain but his weapon landed at the latter's chest. As Husain was about to fall down, another soldier Khuli al-Asbahi – also a Shi'ite, cut off his head! Allah is the greatest! What had been done could not be undone!

#### **8.6.7. Martyrs Recorded among the Followers of Husain**

It can be said that almost all those who followed Husain were martyred except a few like his son, Ali, known as Zain al-Abidin. He was sick on the day the two parties clashed. Though captured after the clash, Zain al-Abidin was later released since he did not physically take part in the clash. Meanwhile, Husain's brothers, Ja'far, Abbas, Abubakar, Umar, Muhammad and Usman, were all martyred. His nephews, Abdullah, Qasim and Abubakar,

were also martyred. His sons, Ali (the Big) and Abdullah, were among the martyrs as well.

Other martyrs included Ja'far, Abdullah, Abdurrahim – all the sons of Husain's uncle, and the latter's grandsons, Muhammad bin Muslim, whose father was earlier, killed in Kufa. Among the sons of Abdullah bn Ja'afar martyred during the clash were Aun bin Muhammad. Including Husain himself, altogether about 18 people, all related to the Prophet ﷺ were killed. What a great calamity!

#### **8.6.8. The Position of Yazid on Husain's Assassination**

The most authentic narrations say that Yazid was touched by the sight of Husain's dismembered head. In a state of shock and compassion, Yazid asked, "Who killed Husain?" He swore that he never gave any order for the killing nor was he pleased at hearing the tragic news. He further cursed the Governor of Kufa over his actions and blamed him for not protecting the sanctity of the Prophet ﷺ. Yazid then accommodated the remaining members of Husain's family in his house where they spent the usual three-day mourning sessions. Afterwards, he ordered for their conveyance to Madina in tight security. He also ordered that Husain's head be buried in Madina near the grave of Fatima ؑ.

#### **8.7. The Aftermath of the Assassination of Husain**

The news of the assassination of Husain had soon spread like a wildfire. The Muslim Ummah was taken aback with shock to wake up and find that Husain had been killed by Muslims, who might need to enjoy the Prophet's intercession on the Day of Judgment. The Umma had at that time found itself in a very catastrophic situation on hearing what had transpired in the Karbala tragedy. There was no disaster that threw the Umma in a state of anxiety and disquietude like the murder of Husain. People all over

the Muslim world, especially in Makka and Madina, were in the forefront in the expression of worry and agony.

A lot of people in Kufa had realized that the tragedy of Husain was as a result of their betrayal and insincerity, having invited him but only to forsake and let him down at the very hour he was in need of their support. They brought him out of the comfort and sanctity of Makka but ignored his plight and left him to suffer in the hands of the Kufa forces. Along this line, some of them began to think of ways of relieving themselves of their sins. This led to the emergence of a group of men called *Jaish al-Tawwabin* (the camp of repentant). The main goal of the camp was to mobilize support and rebel against the regime of the Umayyads, which, according to them, did not protect the sanctity of the Prophet's household. Another goal of the camp was to retaliate for the blood of the members of *Ahl al-Bait* that was shed. This determination-free movement did not however bring any considerable effect. Instead, it further worsened the status quo by causing additional troubles to the Ummah. The move was a mere pretext and its eventual consequence was to further throw the unity of the Umma at stake.

Soon emerged from this camp one called Mukhtar al-Thaqafi. He pledged to take a fatal measure against whoever had a hand in the murder of Husain. He killed hundreds of innocent people along with some others who participated in the Karbala episode. Mukhtar's mission took another dimension, as he claimed that he was receiving revelation from angel Jibril, who instructed him on how and what to do about his mission. He by this, seemed to have declared himself a Prophet.

At the time the news of the Karbala incident reached Makka, Abdullah bin Zubair sought the support of people to endorse him as Caliph – a request that was granted

without the slightest resistance.<sup>378</sup> According to Makkans, it had become mandatory upon the Umma to rise against the regime that had committed atrocities of such magnitude.

Meanwhile, people in Madina not only showed their worry and anxiety over the Karbala incident but also gathered and removed their Governor, Usman bin Muhammad bin Abi Sufyan and replaced him with Abdullah bin Hanzala. Moreover, they caught all the Umayyads living in Madina and confined them in the house of Marwan bin al-Hakam before they later exiled them from the city.

The measure taken by people in the two holy cities, Makka and Madina, had further plunged the Umma into another situation of turmoil and social instability similar to the situation that greeted the assassination of Caliph Usman رضي الله عنه.

The wind of the Madina revolt continued to blow despite attempts to chart out reconciliatory measures, which spanned for more than ten months. The people in Madina became bold and held tight to their position. As such, Yazid dispatched an army under the command of Muslim Bn Uqba with a mission to carry out raid against the holy city if the people defied a 3-day ultimatum issued to them. All attempts to persuade the people in Madina to sheathe their swords and submit to the constituted authority

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<sup>378</sup> Some people accused Abdullah bin Zubair of inciting Husain to go to Iraq, so that he would be free and alone to spread his influence in Makka. But this allegation is unfounded and baseless, as there are authentic narrations which indicate that he rather advised Husain against going to Iraq. It is thoughtless to suggest that a prophet's companion like Abdullah bin Zubair would nurture such a mean ambition. As we have emphasized severally, though the Prophet's companions were humans and did make mistakes, they were yet pious and sincere in their actions and dealings with people.



proved abortive. All arbiters got despaired and took to their ways. Yazid's soldiers at the end advanced to the holy city and carried out their offensive without the slightest regard to the sanctity of the place. A lot of innocent lives of the pious people including scholars, children of the Sahaba and prominent Tabi'un were lost. Now that Madina fell into the hands of Yazid under the command of Muslim bin Uqbah, the latter appointed Rauh bin Zinba' to oversee its affairs. This event took place in Zul-Hijjah, 63<sup>rd</sup> A.H.

Muslim bin Uqba and his army then headed for Makka on the instruction of Caliph Yazid in order to confront Abdullah bin Zubair. Muslim, however, died on the way and Husain bin Numair took over command. Their arrival at Makka coincided with the season of Hajj. Therefore, they stayed at Minna and then went to Arafat. But the big challenge was how to enter Makka for Tawaf and Sa'y, as the soldiers of Abdullah bin Zubair had surrounded all the entrances to Makka. On their part also, those inside Makka could not go to Arafat. This was how the two parties missed significant pillars of Hajj and eventually lost the Hajj altogether in that year.

The blockade of Makka by Syrian troops lasted up to four months. People in Makka suffered a great deal. Hunger, thirst and all forms of hardship prevailed. No supply of food was allowed to enter and no one could go out of the city. All of a sudden, the news came to Makka that Yazid had died. Allah had answered the pleas of the masses. The Syrian army commander, Ibn Numair, offered to join hands with all his troops to surrender to Abdullah bn Zubair on condition that all past atrocities committed would be pardoned. The former pledged that if this request was granted, he guaranteed the latter the loyalty and support of the whole Syrians. However, Abdullah bin Zubair refused to accept these conditions. Ibnu Numair,

therefore, became disappointed and wondered why Ibn Zubair simply chose to slam shut the door of power that was about to be opened for him without bloodshed.

Meanwhile, the issue of succession was still heightening in Damascus. The late Caliph did not leave a will about to succeed him. At the end, the majority of opinions resolved that his son, Mu'awiyah, the second be appointed. However, within a few months Mu'awiyah - the second - abdicated because of the crisis that plagued the Umma at the time. As the seat of Caliph now became vacant, the Umayyad family failed to resolve among themselves as no one was interested in the leadership. They finally resolved to head for Makka to surrender the reins of leadership to Abdullah bin Zubair but they were persuaded by Ubaidullah bin Ziyad to change their minds. Eventually Marwan was chosen as the new supreme Muslim leader.

### **8.8. Distortions of the Narrative by the Shi'ites**

These events were also narrated in the books written by Shi'ites but often with disproportionate distortions. First of all, Shi'ite historians blamed Husain's murder on Caliph Yazid. According to them, Yazid was not only pleased with the tragedy but also celebrate it. They said that he had subjected the dismembered head of Husain to a jest and that he toyed with it carelessly. Authentic narrations show that Yazid was worried to hear the news of the assassination of Husain and he outrightly swore that he never ordered for such a heinous act. Likewise, there was no trace of authenticity in the narration, which said that Husain's head was dismembered and taken to Syria.

Another blatant lie in the Shi'ite accounts is that Husain's corpse was mutilated after horses rode over it. It was also said that his family members were dragged to the court of

Yazid and paraded as war captives.<sup>379</sup> In fact, some of the Shi'ite books go to the extent of saying that the sky had dropped elongated rainfall of blood after the Karbala sad event and that the halo that appeared in the sky after sunset was a reflection of Husain's blood.<sup>380</sup>

### 8.9. Scholars' Views on these Crises

Muslim scholars are always the torch with which the Umma shines in its day-to-day activities. At the time of crisis, it was incumbent upon them to enlighten people on the appropriate measure they should take which would earn the pleasure of Allah and at the same time distance His wrath away from them. This was exactly what the pious and God-fearing disciples of the Prophet ﷺ, the Sahaba, did. They did not keep mute when the people in Madina withdrew their allegiance from Yazid, the supreme Muslim leader. They explained that it was mandatory upon Muslims to be loyal to the leader even if he were morally bankrupt. Islam places high priority on the protection of life which would be threatened by the escalation of violence.

Below we give few examples of the views of some earlier Muslim scholars.

#### 8.9.1. Abdullahi bin Umar

We have mentioned in several places in this book that Abdullahi bin Umar was among the people who were not comfortable with the appointment of Yazid as crown prince and automatic successor of the seat of the Caliphate. He did not recognize him until after the death

<sup>379</sup> Sharaf al-Din: *al-Majalis al-Fakhira fi Masa'ib al-Itra al-Tahira*, p. 82.

<sup>380</sup> Saduq: *al-Amali*, p. 193, Maghribi: *Sharh Akhbar* (30/166), al-Majlisi: *Bihar al-Anwar* (45/216), al-Tabarsi: *A'lam al-Wara* (1/431), Sharaf al-Din: op cit, p. 82 and Bahrani: *Madinat al-Ajiz* (4/178).

of Mu'awiyah when he became a full-fledged Caliph. Meanwhile, at the time the wind of revolt was blowing against the regime of Yazid, Ibn Umar gathered all members of his household and cautioned them against involving themselves in the crisis. He further admonished that: -

You should know that we have given our allegiance to this man [Yazid] on the basis of trust in Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet ﷺ. I heard the Prophet ﷺ saying, "On the Day of Judgment, a flag of betrayal will be installed for whoever betrays and it will be announced that the flag represents the betrayal done by so and so person". There is certainly no act that is most heinous apart from Shirk (associating somebody with Allah in worship) than for one to pledge allegiance [to a leader] on the basis of trust in Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ and then reverse it. You should not therefore rise against Yazid. None of you should try to take part in this crisis. Whoever dares do so, it is at his own peril.<sup>381</sup>

In his move to minimize the magnitude of the crisis, Abdullahi bin Umar not only cautioned his family against taking part but also went to the extent of going to the ringleader of the rebels, Abdullah bin Muti'. The latter warmly welcomed him and offered him a seat but Ibn Umar declined and said that he came only to remind Ibn Muti' of a Hadith in which the Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever defies loyalty (to a leader) will meet Allah without any proof to present. And whoever dies on isolating terms with people, he has certainly died in a state of Jahiliyya".<sup>382</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> Muslim: Hadith number 58 and 1851.

<sup>382</sup> Ibid.

**8.9.2. Muhammad Ibn al-Hanafiyyah<sup>383</sup>**

Prior to the outright rebellion of Madina, some people had sought the view of some prominent scholars. Muhammad bin Ali, known popularly as Ibn al-Hanafiyya, was among the scholars contacted. He asked about the cause of the revolt and queried why people wanted to unseat Yazid. Abdullah bin Muti' reasoned that Yazid did not use to pray and did not carry out his activities as a Caliph according to the dictates of the Glorious Qur'an. Ibn al-Hanafiyya retorted that he had a stint with Yazid but could not see any trace of their claim. Rather, he testified that he used to see Yazid praying, doing good, seeking knowledge and clutching on to the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. The rebels further argued that if really Ibn al-Hanafiyya had seen Yazid praying, the latter must have feigned it. But Ibn al-Hanafiyya counter-argued that Yazid was not a man to fear him lest he did some acts of piety only in his presence. As regards the allegation that Yazid used to consume beer, Ibn al-Hanafiyya reasoned that except if they (the rebels) were also Yazid's partners in drinking, they could not prove to see him drinking. Otherwise, they should not make an allegation about something they were not certain. When they maintained that their allegation was right, Ibn al-Hanafiyyah quoted:

(إِلَّا مَنْ شَهِدَ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ) [الزخرف: ٨٦]

... only he who bears witness to the truth, and they know (what they bear witness to).<sup>384</sup>

<sup>383</sup> Muhammad bin al-Hanafiyyah was a brother to Husain as they shared the same father. His mother belonged to the Banu Hanifa clan. She was among the portion of Ali's booty caught during the battle of Yamama led by Khalid bin Walid as Muslim commander while Musailama was leading the camp of the enemies.

<sup>384</sup> Surah al-Zukhruf: 86.

When they insisted on dragging him to the crisis willy-nilly, he took chance and fled to Makka.

### 8.10. The Death of Yazid

Historical narrations revealed that the murder of Husain in Karbala had dealt a serious blow to the psyche of Caliph Yazid. It was the one tragedy that kept on haunting him till the end of his life. It was narrated that Yazid's last words on his deathbed were: -

O God! Do not hold me responsible on what I neither gave a command nor did I get pleasure over it. O God! Make a clear judgment between me and Ibn Ziyad [the Governor of Kufa who ordered the assassination of Husain].<sup>385</sup>

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<sup>385</sup> In the author's opinion, Yazid should have considered the action he took against the people of Madina more painful and traumatizing to him than the Karbala tragedy. In the latter case, Yazid subjected Madina to such an infamy in order to protect his seat. Similarly, he should have been rueful of his actions against Makka. In the case of the Karbala tragedy, Yazid knew that Allah is just and will not hold someone to account on what he had not done. In any case, this is not a matter people should worry to meddle into. If Allah wills it, He will hold His servant to account on the sins he committed and if He wills, he will forgive him. Allah has power to do as He wills and no one can query Him. Of course it is not something alien for leaders to present excuses on issues like this. It can be remembered that Ali bin Abi Talib عليه السلام himself insisted that Mu'awiya and his followers must give their allegiance to him to the extent that the two giant leaders had to confront each other in a fight. This did not contribute anything other than woes and more disunity among the Umma. We should remember that everybody will meet his actions whether good or bad. We therefore ask Allah the Almighty to guide our actions in this world and pardon our gaffes in the hereafter. As for our predecessors we always recall the saying of Allah: *"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*

Yazid died on the 14th day of Rabi' al-Awwal, 64 A.H. He reigned for the period of 4 years or thereabout. His regime was characterized by serious conflicts and internal feuds. The Muslim community at that time lost much of its prestige, influence, valor and prowess in the eyes of the world community.

### 8.11. On Cursing Yazid

Several mentions have been made about the different and divergent views of historians concerning Yazid and his actions. They can be categorized into three; those who severely vilify him, those who present him as a hero and those who take a middle course. The last category seeks to be as objective as possible by placing Yazid in the rank of bad leaders, who brought a lot of woes and destructions to the Umma during their leadership.

It is not one of the virtues of good Muslims to curse Yazid or any other Muslim for that matter. When we curse somebody, we are trying to distance him from the mercy of the Almighty Allah. We shall not therefore hope to dismiss any Muslim – alive or dead, from the mercy of his Lord. If he is alive, he may one day repent and if he is dead, he may be pardoned by Allah even if it means he shall be punished before he enters paradise. The Prophet ﷺ said: “It is not the virtue of a believer to condemn or curse or utter a lewd or salacious statement”.<sup>386</sup>

Though the majority of the Salaf were of the view that Yazid had committed many fatal mistakes in his leadership, especially his cruelty against the people of Madina, they nonetheless used to keep off from cursing him.

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*injury] against those who have believed. Our Lord! Thou art indeed full of kindness, most Merciful” (Surah al-Hashr: 10).*

<sup>386</sup> Tirmizi: 1900.

### 8.12. Comments on the Assassination of Husain

The assassination of Husain, one of the grandsons of the Prophet ﷺ and the source of his eye's comfort, was unarguably among the greatest disasters that befell the Muslim Ummah. When we deeply reflect on the whole menace, we realize that destiny was all the more an influential factor behind the tragedy, which might be due to some unique divine wisdom.<sup>387</sup> The people who betrayed Husain and let him down were already used to that attitude. His brother al-Hasan used to warn and caution him to be vigilant on his dealing with them. Likewise, many well-wishers, including prominent Sahaba had drawn his attention and counseled him sincerely but as God destined, he could not escape fate.

However, some groups of Muslims turned this issue into a matter on which they conduct yearly anniversaries. This contradicts the teaching of Islam. Before the Karbala tragedy, a number of good and righteous people were killed. Not to talk of even the many Prophets killed by the Jews during their times. A few years before Husain was killed, his father, Ali bin Abi Talib عليه السلام, was also killed. Caliph Umar and Usman عليه السلام were also murdered in cold blood.

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<sup>387</sup> Both al-Hasan and his brother al-Husain were very young during the time of the Prophet ﷺ. Therefore, they were not able to participate in Jihad expeditions with him like some other Sahaba. They were not also subjected to persecutions and sufferings like some of the Sahabah were subjected to in Makka. Since God has crowned them as youth leaders of the Gardens of Paradise, He destined that they would be martyred. This is the view of Ibn Taimiyyah in his commentary on the issue. There may be other wisdoms which only God knows. We have highlighted this so that reader will not mistake the issue and think that Husain had merely refused to accept advice. See Ibn Taimiyyah's *Minhaj al-Sunnah*.



Islam does not enjoin all these anniversaries let alone the series of innovations that are associated with them like subjecting oneself to self-assault and distinguishing the self in black attire that symbolizes ill-will and the obsession of hatred against righteous people.

When the prominent scholar among the Tabi'un, Rabi' bin Khuthaim, was informed of the murder of Husain, he retorted: "They killed him". He then said. "Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'un" Then he read verse 46 of Surah al-Zumar where Allah says: -

﴿ قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ

أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِي مَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴾ [الزخرف: ٦]

Say: "O Allah! Creator of the heavens and the earth! Knower of all that is hidden and open! It is Thou that wilt judge between Thy Servants in those matters about which they have differed."<sup>388</sup>

He then kept quiet.<sup>389</sup>

Before the assassination of Husain عليه السلام, the tenth of al-Muharram was already the day on which God saved His Messenger, Musa *alaihis salam*, from the tyranny of Pharaoh, who faced him and his people with a battalion of troops. That was why Prophet Muhammad ﷺ used to fast on the tenth of al-Muharram as a way of showing thanks to God for the favour he bestowed upon his predecessor Prophet, Musa, *alaihis salam*. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ also enjoined Muslims to fast whenever the day comes. Anything beyond this is an innovation, which can never dislodge the authentic religious practice, which Islam teaches on the issue. *Alhamdu lillah*

<sup>388</sup> Surah al-Zukhruf: 46.

<sup>389</sup> Al-Qhadi Ibn al-Arabi Al-Ishbili: *al-Awasim min al-Qawasim*, p. 131.

**Some Refresher Questions on the Book**

1. Mention 7 Caliphs after the Prophet ﷺ
2. Why did the Ulama say we should not keep meddling into the misunderstandings that transpired among the first generation of Muslims?
3. What distinguishes the history of the Sahaba from that of other people?
4. In which year did the Prophet ﷺ die?
5. Who officially announced the Prophet's ﷺ death?
6. Who among the Sahaba became so confused and even unsheathed his sword to kill whoever said the Prophet ﷺ had died?
7. Mention A'isha's description of how people became bewildered when they heard about the demise of the Prophet ﷺ
8. With which ancestor did the genealogy of Abubakar meet with the Prophet's?
9. What was the name Abubakar was popular with during the time of the Prophet ﷺ?
10. By how many years was the Prophet ﷺ older than Abubakar?
11. Who among the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs was a business tycoon?
12. Mention two people among the slaves emancipated by Abubakar
13. In which area of knowledge did Abubakar specialize since before the advent of Islam?
14. Mention three among the 10-member council of the Quraysh.
15. Who among the Sahaba built a mini Mosque inside his house during the Makkan phase of Islam?
16. Who among the Sahaba will be called to enter paradise through all its gates, as the Prophet ﷺ mentioned?

17. Some analysts are of the opinion that Umar was the bravest among the Sahaba while some believe that Ali was the bravest. Discuss this issue in the light of what you have read in this book.
18. Mention the name of the place in which consensus was reached for Abubakar to emerge as the Prophet's successor.
19. Why do some people think that Ali did not give his allegiance to Abubakar?
20. Mention the name of the concubine Ali got during the war of apostasy and mention one of her children with him.
21. Who among the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs donated his entire asset to *Bait al-Mal* (treasury) when he emerged as Caliph?
22. Mention the name of the war as a result of which Abubakar executed the project of the Qur'anic compilation.
23. Mention one person among those who declared themselves as Prophets after the demise of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.
24. How many flags were hoisted during the war of apostasy as instructed by Abubakar رضي الله عنه? Mention any two Muslim soldiers who were given the flags.
25. State the battle in which there was scarcity of water and the Sahaba out of selflessness, refused to drink water in favour of another.
26. State two among the men consulted by Abubakar before he appointed Umar as his successor.
27. Describe the physical features of Umar as described by historians.
28. What was the process through which Umar converted to Islam?

29. State one instance in which Umar's view on something was supported and endorsed by the Qur'an.
30. Who among the Caliphs was so prestigiously fearful to the extent that one day the clipper of his barber fell down when he coughed?
31. Who was the first person among the Muslim leaders to introduce night patrol?
32. Bring an example which indicates the love of Umar to members of the Prophet's household.
33. Briefly explain the ways followed by Caliph Umar to prevent the treasury from misappropriation.
34. State the policy of appointing a Governor during the *Khilafa* of Umar bin al-Khattab.
35. Who killed Umar and what was his religious affiliation?
36. When Umar was killed while leading prayer, who among the Sahaba continued leading the prayer instantly?
37. What was the statement of Umar when he regained consciousness after he was stabbed before he died?
38. How much money did Umar leave as a debt when he died?
39. Mention any two members of the Shura Consultative Forum who were appointed by Umar to select his successor.
40. How many years was the Prophet ﷺ older than Usman?
41. What were the unique qualities of Usman which distinguished him from other Sahaba?
42. Who among the Sahaba had married two daughters of the Prophet ﷺ and what were their names?

43. Mention any two philanthropic works of Usman toward the promotion of Islam during the time of the Prophet ﷺ.
44. What was the first challenge faced by Caliph Usman after he was appointed?
45. Who was the mastermind behind the wind of rebellion that blew during the *Khilafa* of Usman?
46. Who was the first person among the Muslim leaders to expand the Mosque of the Prophet ﷺ?
47. During whose leadership did Muslims begin fighting at sea?
48. Which Governor was accused of consuming wine during the *Khilafa* of Usman رضي الله عنه and what measure was taken against him?
49. What was the name of the woman whose fingers were chopped off in defence of Usman before his assassination?
50. Who among the Four Rightly Guided Caliph was the closest relative of the Prophet ﷺ?
51. In which month was Ali martyred and how was he killed?
52. What differentiates the position of al-Hasan and that of his brother, al-Husain, on the leadership of the Umayyads?
53. How can you describe the misunderstandings that transpired among the Sahaba?
54. How can you explain the views and positions of the Sahaba during those crises?
55. What was the goal of A'isha رضي الله عنها, when she joined the Makkan troops and how did the things go out of hand and escalate to a fight between them and Caliph Ali?
56. For how many days did the Battle of Siffin last?

57. What was the number of the members of the reconciliation committee which was constituted after the Battle of Siffin and who were they?
58. Who led the funeral prayer for the deceased of the Battle of Siffin of both camps?
59. How can you explain the features in which al-Hasan and al-Husain resembled their grandfather, the Prophet ﷺ?
60. What condition did al-Husain put on the Iraqis before he agreed to become the Caliph and why did he put the condition?
61. Which year was called *Am al-Jama'ah* and what was the rationale behind giving it that name?
62. How many years did Mu'awiyah spend in governance and who was the first person to appoint him as a public officer?
63. Mention any three projects executed by Mu'awiyah during his leadership.
64. In which battle did Yazid serve as a commander and what was the glad tiding given by the Prophet ﷺ on those who participated in the battle?
65. What do you understand by the divergent views of historians on Yazid?
66. Who were the masterminds behind Husain's mission to overthrow Yazid from his position and what role did they play in causing failure to the mission?
67. What was the name of Husain's envoy to Kufa and how did it end between him and the people in Kufa?
68. Mention any three people among those who were martyred together with Husain in Karbala.
69. What was the position of Yazid on the assassination of Husain?

70. What is the position of Islam on the yearly anniversaries celebrated by Shi'ites to commemorate the assassination of Husain?