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<u>Home</u> > <u>The Hidden Truth about Karbala</u> > <u>Chapter 4: Nomination of Ali to the Caliphate by the Prophet</u>
(S) > Conclusion

# Chapter 4: Nomination of Ali to the Caliphate by the Prophet (S)

The chief and only cause for division among Muslims is the question whether or not the Prophet (S) has nominated anyone as his successor. All sects of Muslims universally agree that, of the four caliphs and in fact among all the companions of the Prophet (S), Ali (a.s.) was the most learned, just, valiant, noble and deserving. Yet, the majority sect, the Sunnis prefer to resign themselves to the historical fact that Ali (a.s.) became the fourth caliph, though they readily admit that Imam Ali (a.s.) was, in fact, the most deserving to immediately succeed the Prophet (S), as the first caliph.

The differences and debates begin the moment when the legitimacy of the first three caliphs is put to test. The Sunni do not wish to discuss the impropriety of Ali (a.s.) being relegated to the fourth place. The Shia, on the other hand, believe that the caliphate was usurped through a well planned conspiracy in which, systematically, all the occasions and the sayings [traditions] of the Prophet (S) nominating Ali (a.s.) as his successor, were either erased completely or at least distorted and misinterpreted, in order to justify Ali's (a.s.) exclusion from immediate succession to the caliphate. Let us now examine the rival contentions based on books considered authentic by the various sects.

From the first day when he was commanded to proclaim Islam, to the last day when he was called to return to his Lord, the Prophet (S) had, at every opportunity, identified and nominated Imam Ali (a.s.) as his immediate successor. This was in keeping with Divine Tradition, where every Apostle either appointed or at least indicated his successor according to Divine commands. God chose and appointed His Apostles and their successors. From Adam (a.s.) to the Last Prophet (S), man had no say in their appointment. Wise men like the Magi were given signs by which they recognized and identified prophets and their successors. 1

The prophets themselves sometimes expressly appointed and at other times gave clear indications about their successors. The golden thread in all religions is that a Comforter or Mehdi [as Muslims call him] or a Kalki [as the Hindus call him] will come towards the end of the world to bring Divine Justice

and universal peace. This personality, it is unanimously agreed, is one chosen by God. Prophets are endowed with Divine Wisdom. Therefore, as a part of their mission, they prophesy everything including identifying and nominating their successors as a part of their obligation.

In accordance with the traditions of earlier Apostles, throughout his life, on every important occasion, the Prophet (S) declared in unambiguous terms, often by physically pointing out, that Imam Ali (a.s.) was his deputy [wali], successor [wasi] and Administrator in Chief [vizier].

# (1) The Feast of Youm ad-Dar

On the very first day when the Prophet (S) proclaimed Islam, he arranged for a feast and invited the members of his clan. About forty members from the *Banu Abdul Muttalib* attended the feast. This event is called the Feast of *Youm ad–Dar* (the day of warning). All historians and the narrators of Hadith, both Sunnis and Shias as well as non–Muslim historians record this historical and momentous event unanimously and universally.3

The following is the gist of what transpired on that occasion: The Prophet (S) asked Ali (a.s.) to make bread from one measure of wheat, cook a leg of mutton and provide one pitcher of milk to feed the invitees. On seeing such meager food, the guests made fun of the Prophet (S) saying that the food was not enough even for a young child. However, after all, the guests had eaten to their satisfaction, like the miracle performed by Jesus, the food remained the same quantity as it was prepared. This prompted Abu Lahab, the Prophet's uncle, to declare that the Prophet (S) was indeed a sorcerer and that they should beware being bewitched by his magic. Abu Lahab's allegation of sorcery against the Prophet (S) is similar to the allegations of Pharaoh, his vizier Haman, and Qarun against Moses.5

After the feast, the Prophet (S) conveyed the Divine Message and concluded his speech saying: "Verily God has commanded me to invite you to Him. If you accept Him as the One Unique God, you will be benefited in this life as well as in the life to come. God has appointed me His Messenger. Acknowledge me as the Messenger of Allah and help me in my Mission. Now that I have passed on the Divine Message, I need some one to assist me in carrying forth the Divine Mission after me. Who among you will assist, share, and endure the burden in this mission of mine, for, he shall be my Deputy [Khalifa], my Trustee [Wasi], my Chief Administrator [vizier] both in this world and the life to come."

The entire congregation kept quiet, except Ali (a.s.), who rose and said: "Though I am still in my teens and not strong enough as yet, I shall be your Deputy [Khalifa], Trustee [Wasi], and Chief Administrator [vizier]." The congregation responded by deriding the Prophet (S), some claiming that he was bewitched while others preferred to ignore him.

The Prophet (S) invited the Banu Abdul Muttalib again the next day and on the third consecutive day for the miraculous feast as well as for repeating the Divine Message.

On all the three days, Imam Ali (a.s.) stood up in response to the Prophet's call for a helper and said, "I shall be your Deputy, Trustee, and vizier." The Prophet (S) hugged and blessed Ali (a.s.) and holding up Ali's hand declared: "Oh people, this Ali (a.s.) here is my successor, [wasi], my caliph, and my vizier both in this world and the next." The Prophet (S) then prayed: "O Lord, love him who loves Ali, hold as your enemy whosoever shows enmity towards Ali, help those who help Ali, and abandon those who abandon Ali." On hearing this, people taunted Abu Talib saying, "O Abu Talib, Muhammad has appointed your son as the lord over Muslims. From today, you have to obey your son." All historians and the narrators of Hadith and history record this historical and momentous event unanimously and universally.6

Here it is very important to note that on the Day of Warning, the Prophet (S) was alone, without any support of men, means, or material. Therefore, Imam Ali's offer to support the Prophet (S) could not have been motivated by any materialistic desire. Similarly, the Prophet (S) also could not be accused of trying to confer any benefit or perpetuate family rule, for at that stage there was neither wealth nor estate. Instead of benefits, what was certain was only persecution in the shape of mental and physical harassment. It is a historical fact that as a direct consequence of proclamation of Islam in the feast of *Youm ad–Dar*, the Prophet (S) was banished for confinement in the *Shi'b* (*defile*) of *Abu Talib*. A social boycott was enforced and anyone found to sympathize with the Prophet (S) was subjected to mental and physical torture. Historians record that it was only the support of Abu Talib (a.s.) which deterred the Meccans from carrying out their cherished desire of killing the Prophet (S).

The seeking of a supporter and nomination of Imam Ali (a.s.) by the Prophet (S) in the feast of *Youm ad–Dar* is in accordance with traditions of earlier Prophets. About the Prophet Thul Kifl (a.s.), ibn Kathir writes, 7 "Ibn Jarir and Ibn Hatam narrated on the authority of Dawud bin Abi Hind on the authority of Mujahid that he said, 'When Alyasa [Elisha] became an old man, he said: "If I could find a man who will succeed me in managing the people's affairs while I am alive, so I will be able to see how he is going to serve the people." Then Alyasa called the people, gathered them, and said, "Who will fast in the day and pray in the night and will not be angry, he will be my successor." Then, an ordinary man stood up and said, "I can do that." Alyasa said, "Will you fast in the day and pray in the night and will not be angry?" The man said, "Yes", but Alyasa did not say anything. Then, on the second day happened the same thing, and the people did not answer, but the same man said, "I can", therefore, Alyasa made him his successor, and this ordinary man was Thul Kifl. Regarding the question whether Thul Kifl was merely a righteous person or a prophet, Ibn Kathir states that Thul Kifl's name being mentioned along with the name of other prophets 8 is a proof enough to show that Thul Kifl was in fact a prophet. Moses also sought a helper in facing the Pharaoh and God granted his wish and appointed Aaron as his helper and successor.9

# (2) The Night of Emigration

On the night of his emigration (hijra) from Mecca to Medina, the Prophet (S) asked Imam Ali (a.s.) to sleep in his bed to defeat the conspiracy of the Meccans to kill him. 10 He entrusted and authorized Imam

Ali (a.s.) to do all the things that were to be done by the Prophet (S) himself, including bringing to Medina all the family members of the Prophet's household. Imam Ali (a.s.) remained in Mecca for three days and returned the deposits of money or goods entrusted to the Prophet (S) by the people of Mecca.11

#### (3) The Bond of Brotherhood

First at Mecca and again at Medina, the Prophet (S) created the bond of brotherhood and recited the declaration of fraternity among his companions. He chose Imam Ali (a.s.) and declared him to be his brother in this world and the afterworld. He compared his relationship with Imam Ali (a.s.) with the relationship between Moses and Aaron. 12

# (4) The Sura of at-Tawba

When the ninth Chapter of the Qur'an was revealed, the Prophet (S) asked Imam Ali (a.s.) to recite it to the Meccans, saying that God commanded that either he (the Prophet) himself or a man from him and no one else should carry out that task. The Prophet (S) added, "Ali is from me and I am from Ali; he is my brother, my guardian, my successor, and my caliph over my Ummah after me. He will discharge my obligations and fulfill my promises and none other than Ali (a.s.) can do so."13

# (5) Mubahala

On the occasion of the dispute with the Christians of Najran, the verse known as 'the Aya of Mubahala' was revealed commanding the Holy Prophet (S) to take with him his men, women, and children. 14 The Prophet (S) chose none except his daughter Fatima (a.s.) to represent women, Imam Ali (a.s.) to represent men, and Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn (a.s.) to represent his children. 15

# (6) Madinatul IIm (the city of knowledge)

The most important aspect of Prophethood, one that distinguishes a prophet from ordinary human beings, is the Divine Wisdom bestowed upon the prophet and revealed from time to time through *Wahi* (revelation). 16 About the Divine Wisdom granted to the Prophet Muhammad (S), he said, "*I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate; those, who wish to enter the city of knowledge, should do so by passing through the gate.*" 17

# (7) Ghadir Khum

The final proclamation of Imam Ali's succession was made by the Prophet (S) on his return from the last pilgrimage at Ghadir Khum. The fact that the Prophet (S) had declared that it would be his last pilgrimage was widely known and Muslims gathered in unprecedented numbers to participate in the Hajj

along with the Prophet (S) for one last time. The Prophet (S) himself had invited ambassadors and delegates from various countries to witness the special occasion. These foreign delegates recorded every word, every movement, and every action of the Prophet (S).

The proclamation of the nomination of Imam Ali (a.s.) was thus witnessed by foreign ambassadors, recorded, and preserved by their chroniclers in their own countries and languages. Though, after the Prophet (S), an attempt was made to burn or dispose off as rubbish all books except the Qur'an in an attempt to obliterate any record of this event, the chronicles narrating the event, survived in foreign countries, such as Spain, Holland, France...etc. Thus, this event came to be recorded alike by historians and Sunni and Shia narrators of traditions and is universally accepted as genuine.

We give below a gist of the event, for brevity's sake, incorporating the salient features of the event: When the Prophet (S) was informed that he was to join the Lord soon, he wished to perform his last Hajj and left Medina on the 23rd February, 632 A.D. On learning this, the Muslims considering that it was probably their last opportunity to perform the Hajj alongside the Prophet (S) especially gathered in great numbers.

While returning from the Hajj at a place called 'Khum', the Prophet (S) received the following verse: "O Messenger, proclaim that which has been made manifest to you by your Lord. If you fail to do so, the Mission shall remain unfulfilled. Allah will protect you from [evil] men. Surely, Allah does not guide the non believers." 18

The message in the verse was imperative and it cast an immediate obligation on the Prophet (S) to disclose it to the Muslims, despite his fears and awareness of possible undermining opposition by the hypocrites who had by then surrounded him in good numbers. The verse was the penultimate verse revealed to the Prophet (S), for, after this verse, the verse regarding the completion of the Prophetic Mission and Divine Guidance, was revealed as the last verse of the Qur'an. 19

The Prophet (S) immediately halted the caravan, had the area cleared of shrubs so as to accommodate the large gathering. He then ordered that those who had gone forward to retrace their steps and those who were lagging behind, to hurry up to join him. Wooden saddles of camels were collected and heaped one upon another to form a high pulpit or pedestal.20

The Prophet (S) ascended the pulpit along with Ali (a.s.) and in full view of the gathering he tied a turban on his head in a gesture widely prevalent and understood in the East and by the Arabs to symbolize confirmation of succession to estate and office.21

The Prophet (S) then asked the gathering, "Do you bear witness that I have discharged my Mission and guided you in the path of Allah?" The crowd replied, "Indeed we bear witness to that." The Prophet (S) said, "Very shortly I will be recalled to my Creator. I am leaving behind me two precious things amidst you. One is the Qur'an – the Word of God; and the other is my progeny [Ahlul Bayt]. They are both intrinsically and inseparably linked with each other and will remain so linked until they reach me at the

Hawdh [pond] on the Day of Resurrection. Firmly adhere to both of them. You will, then, not go astray or be misled into error."22

The Prophet (S) then said, "God is my Moula (guardian). Am I not the Moula of you all (the Muslim Ummah)?." They replied, "Certainly you are our Moula and the Moula of all Muslims."

The Prophet (S) then held aloft Ali (a.s.) in his arms so much so that the Prophet (S) himself was hidden behind Ali (a.s.). Holding Ali (a.s.) thus, the Prophet (S) declared, "Whoever I am his guardian, this Ali is to be his guardian."

The Prophet (S) repeated this thrice and then prayed, "O God, Be a friend to the friends of him; be an enemy to the enemies of him; help those who help him; abandon those who abandon him." 23

The Prophet (S) then commanded all those who were present to remember and record this message and pass it on to everyone in their respective cities, towns and villages and to propagate it to whoever was not present at that time and to repeat it whenever any two Muslims met, so as to preserve the message for posterity.

Then, the Prophet (S) got down from the pulpit along with Ali (a.s.). He set up a separate tent in which he seated Ali (a.s.) and directed all those present to congratulate and swear allegiance to him (Imam Ali).

For three days, the proceedings went on. People like Abu Bakr, Umar ibn al-Khattab, and other companions were among the first to rush forth and congratulate Imam Ali (a.s.) on his appointment as the immediate successor to the Prophet (S). They paid their fealty and swore their allegiance to Imam Ali (a.s.).24

## (8) Authenticity of the event of Ghadir Khum

The authenticity and genuineness of the above event of *Ghadir Khum* has been researched extensively by later historians and accepted as an undeniable historical fact. We extract below the opinion of a few such scholars:

Justice Amir Ali wrote, "It is generally supposed that the Prophet (S) did not expressly designate anyone as his successor in the spiritual and temporal government of Islam; but this notion is founded on a mistaken apprehension of facts, for, there is abundant evidence that many a time the Prophet (S) indicated Imam Ali (a.s.) for the vicegerancy, notably on the occasion of the return journey from the performance of the 'Farewell Pilgrimage' during a halt at a place called 'Khum'. He convoked an assembly of the people accompanying him, and used words which could leave little doubt as to his intention regarding a successor. "Ali", he said "is to me as Aaron was to Moses. O Almighty God, be a friend to his friend and a foe to his foes; help those who help him, and frustrate the hopes of those who betray him."25

The renowned Sunni writer Shah Abdul Haq of Delhi, wrote regarding the tradition of Ghadir Khum: "This tradition is undoubtedly correct and genuine; no less than sixteen and according to Ahmed ibn Hanbal, thirty companions of the Prophet (S) who had themselves heard it from the Prophet (S) testified to its correctness and genuineness when called upon by Ali (a.s.) to mention it on oath. Many eminent traditionists, for example, al Nassa'i, al Tirmithi, and Ahmed bin Hanbal have related it and testified to its genuineness; it has been related through many channels; most of its 'Asaaneed' [testimonials] are correct and unimpeachable. No attention should be paid to those who criticize it, nor to those who say that the sentence 'O God!, be a friend to his friend and a foe to his foes' is an interpolation, as that sentence is also reported through unimpeachable authorities, most of which have been scrutinized by ath–Thahabi and ibn Hajar and found correct."26

Another Sunni historian, Mirza Muhammad ibn Mo'tamid Khan writes, "The tradition of Ghadir is genuine and very well known. No one doubts its genuineness and authority except a begotten [bastard] and no reliance can be placed on the word of a begotten person.27

Yet, another reputed Sunni narrator of Hadith, Qazi Sanaullah of Panipat, India, writes about the reports [hadith] of the events of Ghadir Khum: "This hadith is no doubt genuine. It has reached the degree of Tawatur (i.e:continuos and uninterrupted chain of narrators of unimpeachable authority). Thirty of the companions of the Prophet (S), like Abu Ayyub, Zaid bin Arqam, al-Bara' ibn Aazib, Ammar ibn Murra, Abu Huraira, ibn Abbas, Imara ibn Buraid, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, ibn Umar, Anas, Jarir ibn Abdullah al-Bajali, Malik ibn Huwairith, Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri, Abu Tufail, Huthaifa ibn Usayd, and others have mentioned this hadith in their books, and have verified its genuineness." 28

The well–known historian and narrator of *Hadith*, Ali Muttaqi, examines the sources and narrators of the event and quotes Zaid bin Arqum as saying, "I asked Zaid bin Arqam whether he himself has heard this from the Prophet (S). He replied that everyone who was there saw with his own eyes and heard with his own ears. Muhammad bin Jarir at–Tabari has related this very 'Riwaya; tradition' through Atiyya al–Awfi from Abu Sa'eed al–Khudri."29

Agha Muhammad Sultan Mirza, an eminent legal luminary and retired Judge, has written a very detailed book under the title '*The Caliphate; its Conception and Consequences*', solely devoted to the matter of Imam Ali's nomination to succeed the Prophet (S). Mirza was born in Delhi in 1885 and died on 17–12–1965 AD. The book runs into 362 pages of excellent research and analysis and was ready by 27 February 1949, but unfortunately, it could only be published posthumously, towards the end of 1988. On the subject of *Caliphate,* the book is an unimpeachable authority. 30

#### (9) The Last Will

Under Islam, it is incumbent, if not mandatory, upon every Muslim to make a will in order to prevent future disputes among his children. It is also incumbent on those who are present at the time of making a will, to strictly enforce the wishes of the dying person.31 For instance, Abu Bakr, during his last

moments, sent for Uthman and dictated his will nominating Umar as his successor, saying that he could not leave such a grave affair as the *Caliphate* to future dissension in the absence of his will.

Jurists allocate a chapter exclusively on 'Wills' in every book on Islamic Jurisprudence. The last important historical event in the Prophet's life is recorded universally by all historians and narrators of traditions as the time when the Prophet (S) called for parchment and pen so that he might write down his last will, and prevent all dissension. Al-Bukhari reports the event under seven headings in his Sahih. Muslim, like several others, reports the incident in several places.32

This incident is popularly known as the 'Event of the Parchment and Pen' (al-Qirtas wel-Qalam).

Regarding this incident, learned scholar M.S. Mirza comments: "This was the final attempt by the Prophet (S) to prevent his flock from going astray and having to wander in the wilderness in search of a true leader. Both explicitly and implicitly, by word and by deed, by proclamation, exhortation and announcements, in fact by every means available to him, he had tried to make his Umma see which quarter they should look to for true leadership. However, ambition and avarice blinded them, and they failed to heed his advice.33

Mirza then quotes from al-Bukhari and Muslim: "Ibn Abbas mentioned Thursday and wept profusely, and said that it was on a Thursday that the Prophet (S) asked them to bring ink-pot and parchment, so that he might write the will which would save them till eternity from going astray. But, they said that the Prophet (S) was talking nonsense [yahjur]. Ibn Abbas said that during his last illness near his death, when many companions including Umar, were in the house around him, the Prophet (S) said, 'Come, I will write to you a document which will protect you until eternity from going astray'. But Umar said: 'The Prophet is under the influence of the disease and we have the Qur'an. The Book of God is sufficient for us'. Those present became divided into two factions; one party was for supplying the writing material to the Prophet (S), and the other supported Umar. When the unseemly disorder and uproar increased, the Prophet (S) told the squabblers, 'Begone hence, this very moment'.34

According to Kanzul Ummal, Umar recounted, "When the Holy Prophet fell ill, he asked for parchment and ink so that he might make a testament which would save us till eternity from going astray. His wives cried from behind the veil, 'Don't you hear what the Prophet is saying?' I said, 'You are like the deceitful women of Joseph. When the Prophet is ill, you weep, and when he is healthy you sit upon his neck'. The Prophet (S) said, 'Go away. They are better than you'."35

Curiously, about such an important event, most of the narrators, for whatever expediency, do not narrate anything about what the Prophet (S) proposed to write in his will. Some narrators comment that the Prophet (S) intended to name his successor so that there may not be any dissension or dispute about it.36

# (10) The Oral Will

Having been frustrated in reducing his will into writing, the Prophet (S) made an oral Will. Al-Bukhari narrates that just before his death, the Prophet (S) made an oral Will about three matters, but the narrators remembered only two of the matters namely, [1] to expel the Jews from the Arabian Peninsula and [2] to accord the same treatment to foreign dignitaries, as the Prophet (S) himself had accorded. They said that they did not remember the third matter. 37 Of course, the third matter they forgot was obviously the express nomination of Imam Ali (a.s.) as the immediate successor of the Prophet (S).

Ibn Hajar al–Makki narrates explicitly, "On his deathbed, the Prophet (S) said, 'O my people, shortly I will accompany the angel of death to heaven. I have already declared, and I declare again, that I am leaving among you the Book of God and my progeny [Ahlul Bayt] '. The Prophet (S) then caught hold of Ali (a.s.) by the arm and raised it up saying: 'This Ali here is with the Qur'an and the Qur'an is with Ali. The two shall never separate until they meet me at the Hawdh (pond). Therefore, hold on to them both firmly so that you may never go astray'."38

The political climate made it difficult for the narrators to relate the truth. Therefore, they sought an easy way out from certain persecution, by pleading that they did not remember the third aspect willed by the Prophet (S). Regarding this forgetfulness, Mulla Mo'in comments that it was a political expediency that made the narrator suffer amnesia in order to suppress the truth.39

Abu Bakr acted upon the two matters spoken to by the narrators as a part of the oral Will made by the Prophet (S). Obviously, there was no place in the scheme of the Caliph for third aspect so conveniently forgotten by the narrators regarding the appointment of Ali (a.s.) by the Prophet (S) as his immediate successor.

## (11) Miscellaneous Traditions

The Prophet (S) declared on numerous occasions that the obligations and duties of Prophethood could only be discharged either by himself as the Prophet (S) or by Imam Ali (a.s.) as the Divinely appointed successor and none else. 40 The Prophet (S) proclaimed repeatedly that just as obedience and love for him was made obligatory, obedience and love for Imam Ali (a.s.) was also made obligatory on every Muslim.41

The Prophet (S) declared, "Whoever curses Ali (a.s.) in fact curses me." 42 The Prophet (S) said that he who is inimical to Ali (a.s.) is in fact inimical to him [the Prophet] and he who is an enemy of him [the Prophet] is an infidel [Kafir], and such persons offend God.43

#### **Conclusion**

From the above, it is obvious that the Prophet (S), at every stage and until the very last moment of his life, made every possible effort to discharge his duty commanded by God to nominate Ali (a.s.) as his successor. When he tried to make a Will, he was prevented by some of the people surrounding him. He then made an oral will, the crucial part of which was conveniently claimed to have escaped the memory of those who witnessed the oral will.

But, the best evidence of Ali's nomination by the Prophet (S) from his deathbed, is the statement Umar made during his conversation with Abdullah ibn Abbas recounted by Ibn Abil Hadid the mo'tazilite who records that Umar said: "There is no doubt that the Prophet (S) said and did many things in this connection which do not support our view that he did not nominate Ali (a.s.) as his successor. The fact is that on many occasions the Prophet (S) did go to the extreme in favoring Ali (a.s.). It is a fact that during his last illness, the Prophet (S) wanted to write a will designating Ali (a.s.) expressly to the Caliphate, but I prevented him from doing so. By Allah, the Quraysh will never unanimously agree to Ali's Caliphate, and if he is ever selected as Caliph, the Arabs will attack him from every direction." 44

Some Sunni historians claim that the 'election' of Abu Bakr at *Saqifa* was an impulsive action taken on the spur of the moment to prevent the *Ansar* from usurping the *Caliphate*. Such a claim inherently means two things; firstly, that there was no sanction from the Prophet (S) to elect a leader for the Muslims, and secondly, that the hasty manner in which the affair was conducted implies that except for the few who were available on the spot at *Saqifa*, the general body of Muslims had no knowledge or say in what took place at *Saqifa*. What is sought to be implied is that there was no prior planning and therefore no malice can be imputed or attached to the deed.

To the contrary is the view of the Shia, as could be seen from the *Book of Sulaym bin Qais al–Hilali*, an early companion of the Prophet (S) and of Imam Ali (a.s.). Sulaym narrates that while answering Talha ibn Ubaidillah, Ali (a.s.) took out a parchment and said: "*This is a written pledge taken by five people in the Ka'aba at the time of the Prophet's last Hajj. Those five people had sworn that they would wrest the Caliphate from me and divide it [circulate it] among themselves, when the Prophet (S) is killed or he dies."45* 

About Umar's appointing of a committee that selected Uthman as the third caliph, Imam Ali (a.s.) asked the second caliph's son Abdullah ibn Umar: "How come I was included by your father in the shura 46 as one of the prospective candidates for the post of caliph, when he himself along with Abu Bakr had stated that the Prophet (S) had excluded me and the Ahlul Bayt from the caliphate?"

Imam Ali (a.s.) then asked Abdullah ibn Umar to tell truthfully what his father, Umar, had told him just before he died. Abdullah replied, "My father said that if these people [the ummah] paid allegiance to that man from Banu Hashim who has no hair in the middle of his head, he will lead them to the right and enlightened path and will make them act according to the Book of Allah and the Traditions of the Holy

#### Prophet."

Imam Ali (a.s.) asked Abdullah as to what he then told his father Umar. Abdullah replied that he asked his father what then was holding him back from making Ali (a.s.) as the Caliph. Then Imam Ali (a.s.) questioned Abdullah ibn Umar as to what his father said in reply. Abdullah did not reply and preferred to keep silent.

Then, Imam Ali (a.s.) said, "Though you may prefer to conceal it, the Holy Prophet (S) had told me the details of the conversation that took place between you and your father on that occasion."

Abdullah ibn Umar asked, "When did the Prophet tell you?" Imam Ali (a.s.) replied, "The Prophet (S) told me personally at that time [during his last Haji] and later in my dream when your father died."

Abdullah said, "What did the Prophet tell you?" Imam Ali (S) replied, "O Abdullah ibn Umar, for the sake of God, will you confirm if what I say is true?" Abdullah replied, "I may not openly confirm it but would prefer to remain silent if what you say is the truth."

Then, Imam Ali (a.s.) said: "Your father told you that what was holding him back from making me the caliph was the written pledge [sahifa] that was sworn to by five persons in the Kaaba at the time of the Prophet's last Hajj." Sulaym bin Qais reports that at that time he found tears welling in the eyes of Abdullah ibn Umar and his throat was choking."47

Sulaym continues that Salman then said, "The five persons who had taken the pledge in the Ka'aba were the same persons who falsely attributed a hadith to the Prophet (S) saying that the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) had chosen the 'aakhira' [afterlife] in preference to the 'duniya' [worldly life], and that the Prophet (S) did not wish to combine the Nubuwwa [prophethood] and the caliphate to be in the same house. Those persons are Abu Bakr, Umar, Abu Ubaida bin al–Jarrah, Salim [slave of Huthaifa] and Mu'ath bin Jabal.48

The above report of a prior conspiracy is supported by the following circumstances:

(1) During the Prophet's return from the last pilgrimage, the Archangel Gabriel informed him that in pursuance of a conspiracy some persons had planned to assassinate him in a valley called al–Aqabah. The Prophet (S) ordered that none should ascend the valley until he had passed through it. However, Huthaifa who was holding the reins and leading the Prophet's camel, saw some persons with masked faces, standing ahead of them in the valley. Immediately an alarm was raised and Ammar pursued them, but the masked persons took to their heels. The Prophet (S) told Ammar the names of all the masked hypocrites, but he asked him to keep the secret because the hypocrites pretended to be close companions of the Prophet (S).49 From that day, Ammar came to be called 'the keeper of the Prophet's secrets', for he never divulged the names though several prominent companions would frequently approach and inquire if they were the ones who were named as 'hypocrites'.

- (2) Despite repeated and strict orders of the Holy Prophet (S) asking all the *Muhajirin* and the *Ansar* including Abu Bakr and Umar to assemble under the command of Usama to proceed on an expedition, Abu Bakr and Umar disobeyed and remained in Medina.
- (3) Instead of participating in the solemn occasion of the burial rituals of the Prophet (S), Umar and Abu Bakr hurried to and remained at the *Saqifa*; Obviously, the only urgency in the matter of the caliphate was that if any time is given, the ummah including the Ansar would discuss the competence of each of the candidates in the light of the facts known to them as well as the various traditions of the Prophet (S) relating to the caliphate and would have certainly chosen Imam Ali (S) as the caliph, in keeping with the desire and directions of the Prophet (S), so often proclaimed in his life. The imagined urgency is belied by the fact that after Umar's death, for three days there was no *Caliph*, for the committee appointed by him could not arrive at a conclusion till three days later.
- (4) Having met the Ansar at *Saqifa*, the three men of Quraysh could have convinced them to postpone the matter of succession at least until the completion of the burial rites of the Prophet (S).
- (5) All the persons who had taken the pledge in the Ka'aba were the only persons who presented and relied upon a fabricated tradition which misled the Muslims into believing that the *Ahlul Bayt*, the chief of whom was Ali (S), had renounced their share in worldly matters, more particularly the claim to the *Caliphate*, in preference to the life of the hereafter and that the Prophet (S) had declared that spiritual leadership and temporal leadership should not remain in the same house.
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  - 2. Qur'an, 26:214.
  - 3. Musnad of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, vol. 1, p.331, Abul Fida, Part 1, p.116, at-Tabari, vol. 2 p. 217, ibn al-Athir, vol. 2, p.22; Mustadrak of al-Hakim, vol. 2 p. 133, Habib Al-Sayar, vol. 2, Part 3, p.160, ibn Kathir's Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 40, Kanzul Ummal, vol. 6 p. 392, 397, 401 and 408, Rawdatus Safa, vol. 2 p. 278 and 279, Ibn Taymiya's Minhajus Sunna, vol. 4, p. 80, al-Mohib at-Tabari's Ar-Riyadul Nadira, Part 2 chap. 4 Section 6 p. 168, 202,203, Gibbon's 'Decline & Fall', vol. 2, p. 422, Thomas Carlyle's Heroes & Hero Worship', Lecture 2, p. 78, M.S. Mirza's 'The Caliphate' 121–132... etc.
  - 4. Al-Majlisi's Hayatul Quloob, p. 185, The Caliphate, p. 131-134.
  - 5. Qur'an, 40:23-24, 42:29 51, ibn Kathir's Qasasul Ambiya 219.
  - 6. Musnad of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, vol. 1, p.331, Abul Fida, Part 1, p.116; at–Tabari, vol. 2 p. 217, ibn al–Athir, vol. 2, p.22, Mustadrak of al–Hakim vol. 2 p. 133, Habib Al–Sayar, vol. 2, Part 3, p.160; ibn Kathir's Tarikh vol. 3, p. 40, Kanzul Ummal, vol. 6 p. 392, 397, 401 and 408, Rawdatus Safa, vol. 2 p. 278 and 279, Ibn Taymiya's Minhajus Sunna, vol. 4, p. 80, Mohib at–Tabari's ar–Riyadul Nadira, Part 2 chap. 4 Section 6 p. 168, 202, 203, Gibbon's 'Decline & Fall' vol. 2, p. 422, Carlisle's 'Heroes & Hero Worship', Lecture 2, p. 78, M.S. Mirza's 'The Caliphate' 131–134.
  - 7. Qasasul Ambiya, p. 182.
  - 8. Qur'an, 21:85-86, 38:45-48.
  - 9. Qur'an, 28:33-35.
  - 10. Ameer Ali's the Spirit of Islam, p. 47.
  - 11. At-Tabari, vol. 2 p.244, ibn Khaldun, vol. 2 p.15, ibn Hisham, vol. 2 p. 94, Abul Fida, vol. 1 p.126, ibn Kathir, vol. 7 p.338, al Kamil of ibn al-Athir, vol. 2 p. 38, al-Mas'udi, vol. 2 p. 174-175, Dayarbakhti vol. 1 p.367.
  - 12. Sahih of Al-Bukhari, Bab Manaqib Ali, vol. 3, p. 146, Sahih of Muslim, Bab Fadha'il Ali [s], vol. 7 p. 120, Sunan of ibn Maja, vol. 1 p. 55, at-Tabari vol. 3, 144, Musnad of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, vol. 1, p. 170, 173, 175, 177, 179, 182, 184 and 185, vol. 3 p.32, 338, vol. 6 p. 369, 438, Tabaqat of ibn Sa'd, vol. 3 Part 1, p. 14, Tarikh of ibn Kathir, vol. 7 p.224, 334,

- 338-341, The Caliphate, p. 168.
- 13. Al-Bukhari's Kitabus Salaat, p.238, at-Tbari vol. 3, p.154, ibn Khaldun, vol. 3 p.222-225, Habib al-Sayar, vol. 1 Part 3, p.72, Tabaqat of ibn Sa'd, vol. 2 Pat 1, p.121, Abul Fida, vol. 1, p.150, Tarikh al-Khamis, vol. 2, p.156, Fat~h al-Bari, vol. 8, p.241, ibn al-Athir, vol. 2, p.111, Madarij an-Nubuwwa, vol. 2, p.492, ibn Kathir, vol. 7, p.337, 357.
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- 15. Madarij an-Nubuwwa, Part 2, p.498-500, Sahih of Muslim, vol. 7, p. 120-121, Habib as-Sayyar, vol. 1, Part 3, p.73-74, ibn Hajar al-Makki's as-Sawa'iq, Ch. 9, Section 1, p.93 and Section 2 p.72, Tarikh of ibn Kathir, vol. 7, p.3, as-Sayuti's ad-Durr al-Manthur vol. 2, p.39, al-Riyad of Mohibat-Tabari, Part 2, CH 2, Section 6, p. 188, Fakhruddin ar-Razi's Tafseer al-Kabeer, vol. 2, p.700, al-Kashshaf of az-Zamakhshari, vol. 1 p.307.
- 16. Qur'an, 2:31, 2:247, 5:113, 18:65, 19:12, 21:79.
- 17. Ibn Hajar al-Makki's as-Sawaiq, chap 9, Section 2, p. 73, Mustadrak, vol. 3, p. 126–127, Yanabee'ul Mawaddah, chap. 14, p. 65, 71–72, Mohib at-Tabari's ar-Riyad an-Nadira, Part 2, Ch. 4, Section 6, p. 193 Kanzul Ummal, vol. 6, p. 152 and 401, ibn Kathir's Tarikh, vol. 7, p.358–359, ibn Abdul Barr's al-Isti'ab, Part 2, p.474–475.
- 18. Qur'an, 5:67.
- 19. Qur'an, 5:4, as-Suyuti's ad-Durrul Manthur, vol.. 2, p. 259.
- 20. Ad-Durrul Manthur of as-Suyuti, vol. 2, p.298.
- 21. Musnad of Taylasi, p. 23, Hadith No. 154 Mohibuddin at-Tabari's ar-Riyad an-Nadira, Part 2, Ch. 4, Section 9, p. 217.
- 22. Sahih of Muslim, vol. 7 p. 122–123, Mustadrak, vol. 3 p. 109, 110, 148, Musnad of Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal, vol. 3 p. 14, 17, 26 vol. 4, p. 367, 371 vol. 5 182, 189, ibn Asakir's Tarikh, vol. 5 p.436, Shibli's Siratun Nabi, vol. 1 Part 2, p. 131–132. Kanzul Ummal, vol. 6 p.390, vol. 3, 61, The Caliphate p. 181
- 23. Musnad of Ahmad bin Hanbal, vol. 1, p. 152, vol. 4, p. 282, 368 and 372, Mishkat, p. 565, ibn Kathir's Tarikh, vol. 5 p. 208–214, Tathkiratul Huffadh by ath–Thahabi, vol. 3 p. 231, ibn Hajar al–Makki's as–Sawa'iq, Ch. 9, Section 2, p. 7, Kanzul Ummal, vol. 6 p. 403, 407, Mohibbuddin at–Tabari, Part 2, Ch 4, Section 6, p. 169, 170, 204, Habib al–Sayyar's Tarikh, vol. 1 Part 3, p. 77, Madarijun Nubuwwah, Part 4, Ch 13, p. 220, Tathkira of Sibt ibnul Jawzi, Ch. 2, p. 18, The Caliphate, p. 181–182.
- 24. Musnad of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, vol. 4, p. 281, Kanzul Ummal, vol. 8, p.60, Tarikh of Habibus Sayyar, vol. 1 Part 3, p.77, ar-Riyadun Nadira, vol. 2, Ch.4, Section 13, p. 230, Madarijun Nubuwwa, Part 4, Ch.13, p.217.
- 25. The Spirit of Islam, Part 2, Ch. 8, p.292-293.
- 26. 'Al-Ash'iatul Lami'a, vol. 4 P.668 quoted in The Caliphate, p. 182.
- 27. Nuzulul Abrar, p.21.
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- 36. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani's Fat~hul Bari, vol. 1 p. 186, vol. 8 p. 101.
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- 38. As-Sawaiq of ibn Hajar, ch. 9, Part 2, p. 75.
- 39. Madarijun Nubuwwa, Part 4, Ch. 14, Section 3, p.229.
- 40. Al-Bukhari, Ch. 2, Manaqib Ali, Ibn Maja's Sunan, Part 1, p.56, Mishkat, Bab Manaqib Ali, p.564, Sunan of At-Tirmithi, Bk. 46, Ch 19 and 20, Musnad of Ahmad bin Hanbal, vol. 3 p.483 vol. 4 p.164,165 vol. 5 p. 204, ibn Hajar al-Makki's as-Sawa'iq Ch9, p.73, 75, ibn Kathir's Tarikh vol. 7, p.224, 344, 356, Yanabi'ul Mawaddah ch.7, p 52, 56 al-Ashi'atul Lami'ah of Shah Abdul Haq, vol. 4 p 665, Muhibbuddin at-Tabari's ar-Riyadun Nadira, Part 2, Ch.4, Section 6, p. 172, 174, Kanzul Ummal, vol.6, p.153.

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- 44. Sharh Nahjul Balagha, vol. 3 p. 97 quoted in The Caliphate, p.46.
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- 48. Kitab Sulaym bin Qais, Hadith No. 19, p. 171.
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