

Introduction

Initiated by the Prophet, the intellectual and moral preparation for 'Ali b. Abi Talib's Guardianship and Succession proceeded along two parallel but complementary lines: the preparation of Ali and of the *Ummah*, both at the same time. While the Prophet, as Leader, was committed to a special intellectual and doctrinal education for `Ali that conformed to a rigorous daily schedule, he also took charge of the Muslim *Ummah's* mental adjustment.

He undertook to educate it intellectually and doctrinally in order firmly to establish `Ali's Guardianship. He wanted to ensure that `Ali was qualified to lead the journey, the whole experience, of Islam immediately after he departs. According to numerous sources, as we shall see, direct Revelation was another interposing factor pointing in this direction.

Invariably, the Qur'an comes down sometimes lauding Ali's virtues and other times pointing to his special qualities. It identifies him as being unique, to the point of making the delivery of God's Message conditional upon the announcement of his Guardianship or its proclamation to the *Ummah*. We shall be seeking to establish this in our appendix to Imam al-Sadr's already deep and original inquiry.

We shall arrange our own study into three discussions. The first discussion will present 'Ali's intellectual and moral preparation for the task of leading after the Prophet. The second will deal with the intellectual and moral preparation of the Muslim *Ummah* for the sake of this task. The third will demonstrate the pertinence of `Ali's unique and special knowledge of the Qur'an to this task.

In this summary essay, we shall try to shed light on these facts by relying on the accepted rules and principles of scholarly investigation, without exaggeration or artifice. The study will be based on *had'ith* and exegetical works written by scholars, traditionists, renowned researchers and prominent Sunnis. We pray that God may extend His assistance.

<https://www.al-islam.org/emergence-shiism-and-shiites-sayyid-muhammad-baqir-al-sadr/introduction-0#comment-0>